



Department of International Relations

Course of Global Justice

The evolution of the balance between
international environmental protection and
economic development in emerging countries

The case of the Brazilian protection of the Amazon
(1992-2018)

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Academic Year: 2019/2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my parents and family. Gracias Mamá y Papá, por motivarme siempre a ser mejor, por ser ejemplo para mí todos los días y por enseñarme que lo más importante de todo es ser buena persona.

Gracias a mi familia por haberme apoyado desde el principio, por siempre estar ahí, por haber confiado en mí y por enseñarme la importancia del esfuerzo y de la dedicación. Gracias Tita Esther, por ser luz cuando me desmorono.

I would like to acknowledge the fundamental pillar in my life, Gabriel. Thanks for always being there and for giving me the patience and confidence in myself that I always lack.

Thanks to Julia, Marta and Cristina for trusting and encouraging me in every decision I make in my life. I acknowledge my friends, for each of the people that the different stages of my life have brought me. You are my second family. Each and every one of you has taught me something fundamental.

I would like to thank the two institutions, the ULB and LUISS Guido Carli, that have helped me to become the person I am today and have transmitted me the passion for knowledge and the adoption of a critical spirit always seeking to discover more. Thanks to the supervisors and co-supervisor of this work, Frédéric Louault, Marcello Di Paola, and Valentina Gentile for your comments, indications and patience.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who are dedicated body and soul to the defense of the environment, your passion and dedication have motivated me throughout the process of developing this work.

"The Cold War is over; the green war has begun"

South Magazine, June 1990

"The end of the forest is the end of our lives"

Sister Dorothy Stang

"Os seringueiros, os índios, os ribeirinhos há mais de 100 anos ocupam a floresta. Nunca a ameaçaram. Quem a ameaça são os projetos agropecuários, os grandes madeireiros e as hidrelétricas com suas inundações criminosas"

Chico Mendes

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Access and Benefit-Sharing
CBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
CBDR	Common but Differentiated Responsibilities
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EMBRAPA	Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria
FREL	Forest Emission Reference Levels
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GEG	Global Environmental Governance
GHG	Greenhouse gas
INDCs	National International Contributions
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
LMMC	Group of Like-Minded Mega-Diverse Countries
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry
MAT	Mutually Agreed Terms
MCTIC	Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MMA	Brazilian Ministry of Environment
MRE// Itamaraty	Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MYPOW	Multi-Year Program of Work
NAMAs	Nationally appropriated mitigation actions
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NC	National Communication
ODA	Official Development Agency
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
PPP	Polluter Pays Principle
PPP	Per Capita
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TPES	Total Primary Energy Supply
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
UNCTAD	UN Council on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
COP	Conference of the Parties
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

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Summary

Environmental concerns have taken the frontline of international discussions and meetings. As the nature of the causes of environmental degradation was discovered to be increasingly complex, the essence of the discussions was also becoming exponentially more intricate. More actors and therefore, different interests and realities, were introduced to the scenario. This is the context of emerging powers which were willing to participate in the international environmental agenda by moving forward their national rights and needs to develop in the economic and social spheres. Against this backdrop, the concept of sustainable development arises; a term that has proved to be highly political. This research aims at assessing the role of developing countries in transforming the concept of sustainable development, taking Brazil as the perfect case study because it gathers crucial elements such as its mega-diversity condition, its economic and social development and its political relevance in the regional and international scenarios. This research is centered on the study of how Brazil, as an emerging country, has defended and evolved in the defense of the balance between the economic, social and environmental pillars of the term sustainable development at the international conferences that dealt with the defense and protection of the environment. The thesis presents a three-phase qualitative assessment of the hypothesis of the transformative role of Brazil in the context sustainable development during three major international scenarios: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; Emerging Countries; Brazil; Amazon; Transformative role; International Environmental Summits

I. Introduction

The continuous environmental catastrophes, the increase of global temperatures and the usual consequences of climate change unfortunately explain in themselves the relevance of a master's thesis centered on environmental degradation, making of it the core of its research. Environmental concerns are at the forefront of international discussions, where sustainable development has been promoted as one of the remedies to environmental degradation. Nevertheless, the interpretation of such sustainable development has been different depending on the State. Driven by social or international pressure, or by increasing concerns for the environmental cause, developing countries have been trying to merge the human well-being of their populations, the right to develop and the protection of the environment. Consequently, their role has been crucial to the development of a definition and connotation of such a tridimensional term as sustainable development is.

This is, in fact, the baseline of the present work. Starting from the conceptualization of the concept of sustainable development, as the term aiming at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED 1987, 8), this work seeks to analyze the role played by emerging powers in the elaboration and transformation of the term at the international level. In other words, the research question of this work, about how emerging countries have historically transformed the concept of sustainable development, seeks to analyze the power of influence of these powers in modifying the concept, but most importantly in changing the understanding of sustainable development. Therefore, the dependent variable of the research question is the one of the transformation of the concept of sustainable development, while the independent variables are the ones of special and social circumstances of emerging countries.

Framed in this logic, this research studies the case of Brazil to assess three different but highly connected hypotheses. First of all, the hypothesis that the Brazilian position in international environmental negotiations has constructed a conceptualization of sustainable development that differs from the one defended in the mainstream of global environmental governance. Furthermore, the research goes one step further by trying to assess that Brazil's green diplomacy, defined in the context of this work as environmentalist diplomacy, has instrumentalized the concept of sustainable development to create a powerful tool contesting the leadership of the Northern powers, but in the national stage has applied a different connotation of the term. Finally, following this vein, the research tries to validate the hypothesis arguing that by perpetuating the bargaining tool created from the role of Brazil in the

environmental agenda and its involvement in international environmental discussions, it has provoked a bargaining tendency that has moved away from the essence itself of protecting the environment.

The choice of Brazil as the case study of this work is based on the consensual scientific consideration of the country as gathering a significant combination of crucial aspects to the correct assessment of the question of this study. First of all, Brazil is considered as an emerging country because of its economic position, it is one of the five major emerging economies (i.e., BRICS). Also, Brazil's importance in the discussions of the environmental agenda lies on its relevant natural resource reserves and its mega-biodiversity: it is the home of some of the greatest biomes on Earth. Furthermore, because of its geographical position in Latin America, its consideration as a leading regional power and its political and diplomatic relations, the country has proved to be a fascinating case study for the scientific community. Its national politics also play a crucial role in the development of the environmental discourse, where a political impeachment in, a widespread economic crisis and political corruption scandals, but also the election of Jair Bolsonaro as the current President of Brazil, have led to a possible climate and energy policy slowdown.

The originality of this research is not found in the choice of Brazil as the case study of this research since several authors have decided to observe the country's involvement and commitment in the environmental question by applying different lens. Some have decided to focus on the emerging power value of the country to assess the perception of Brazil as a global environmental player (Barros-Platiau 2010) while others have preferred to assess the environmental engagement or actions of Brazil by linking it with the economic performances of the country (Viola and Gonçalves 2019; Basso 2019). Some researchers have preferred to focus on the Brazilian role on the environmental agenda in general terms (Drummond and Barros-Platiau 2006; Barros-Platiau 2015) but also on the specific diplomatic actions and strategies of the country comparing Brazilian commitments and the reality of the actions undertook by the country. Examples of these studies could be the concept of "climate myth" defended by Franchini and Viola (2018) or the concept of self-image constructed by Brazil (Hochstetler and Viola 2012).

Nevertheless, the originality of this research lies on its effort to assess the combination of the environmental commitments of Brazil and its attempts to merge the concept of sustainable development to the economic exploitation of the Amazon, as the country is home to much of the Amazonian rainforest. Brazilian largest source of emissions by far is land-use change and

the forestry sector (Carbon Brief 2018), that is why it is highly relevant to assess how the country has managed to merge both realities, the environmental and the developmental one in the international meetings when referring to deforestation or forest management. It's also not new to focus on the defense and treatment of the Amazon by Brazil, since many scholars have largely studied the capital importance of the rainforest for Brazil, but also for many global actors, such as companies, other countries sharing the Amazon, NGOs, developed countries, and other developing countries dealing with the same issues as Brazil such as desertification, protection of natural resources, etc. (Drummond 2000; Sayar 2013). Besides, there have been articles focusing on the national interpretations of the sustainable development in the Amazon (Bramant 2019, Carvalho et al. 2010) that have shown how the different understandings of the development of the rainforest often collide with its protection and which cause clashes of interpretations concerning the application of a more democratized and inclusive vision of the term (Albaladejo y Sartre 2005) or a more economic one. Other articles have chosen to focus on the international dimension of this position towards the Amazon but focusing rather on the description over time of the Brazilian position (De Wit and De Freitas 2019). However, the concept of sustainable development has never been assessed by analyzing Brazil's transformative capacity as an emerging country. Furthermore, the assessment is performed using a constructivist lens of international relations theory to evaluate the creation and construction of this Brazilian reality and its influenced connotation of the term.

In order to correctly assess the research's hypotheses and the question of the research, the study starts with a description of how Brazil has been contemplated in the academic field in relation to the environmental agenda. Then, it develops the main concepts needed to address the question of the research and the test of the hypotheses, such as the concept of sustainable development, emerging countries, or regime theory, all fundamental to assess the influence of Brazil, as the case study of this research based on the multilayered process of global environmental governance (GEG), where new and multiple actors intervene using different strategies to try to enhance their interests and perspectives. Finally, we move towards the methodology of the research and the assessment of the hypotheses. This part is divided in three different phases aiming at addressing the hypotheses from different angles and to get a better understanding of the possible transformation of the concept of sustainable development by Brazil. The presentation of the analysis part responds to a "funnel logic" that starts with a first general approach to the term and then goes into more depth in the treatment and defense of

sustainable development. The assessment ends with a very precise scenario directly affecting the situation of the Amazonian rainforest.

First of all, the analysis starts with the assessment of the different Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In this part, the assessment focuses on the official reports and final outcomes of the different meetings always making the comparison with the different submissions and speeches of the Brazilian Delegations to the different occasions and the position statements of the Brazilian President or Ministers. The second phase of the analysis responds to the intention of addressing international discussions on the very essence of the concept of sustainable development. For testing the hypotheses, this analysis considers the different sessions and proposals submitted in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The CSD also offers an in-depth analysis of Brazil's role in the formation and development of documents of capital importance for the progress of the environmental agenda such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Post-2015 Agenda, in which forests play a fundamental role. Finally, this research ends with the assessment of the different conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, always following the same logic of comparing the official documents resulting from the different meetings with the Brazilian positions and statements. The objective of this phase is to verify or not the hypothesis of the transformation of sustainable development and hence, the environmental, social and economic treatment to the Amazon.

II. Review of the literature

A. Brazil as the Perfect Case Study for Several Authors

Brazil has been a highly compelling case for researchers studying the role of these new actors in the international environmental governance, because it gathers several key elements making of it a stimulating subject. It is a country that outstands because of its consideration as an emerging power, but also because of its crucial role in Global Environmental Governance (GEG), and its leadership in international discussions of environmental degradation, adaptation, and sustainable development. In other words, Brazil is considered, under the logic of this research, as the perfect case study because it gathers very disparate components that are crucial to its environmental action assessment, such as its high share of global carbon emissions, its mega-biodiversity condition, as it is considered as the greatest holder of biological wealth in the world, its vast freshwater resources, large territory, large population, and significant economy. Therefore, there is a broad consensus about Brazilian importance in GEG, either by

its biomes' richness or by its active contributions in international negotiations and meetings (Viola and Gonçalves 2019, de Wit and de Freitas 2019, Hurrell and Sengupta 2019).

In addition to all of this, it presents a thriving economy in constant growth (de Caria Patrício 2011), which earned it a place among BRICS¹. Being recognized as an emerging power has contributed to perceiving Brazil as a global environmental player (Barros-Plataiu 2010). Therefore, Brazil is one of the few countries in the world that are both an economic powerhouse and megadiverse (Hochstetler and Inoue 2019). Furthermore, choosing Brazil as the case study of this research offers the highly interesting possibility of observing not only its role but also its strategic participation in groups such as the Group of 77 (G-77)² and BASIC³.

To explain Brazilian performances in the context of international environmental protection and international discussions about the environment, several authors have focused on Brazil's economic profile and trajectory. That is the case of Viola and Gonçalves (2019), who have argued that to raise national concerns about the environment, a country must see its economic necessities and wealth covered. In other words, there is a direct link between the state of the environment of one country and its economic development. That is especially true in the case of middle-income countries like Brazil. The authors elaborated a timeline of Brazilian national economic performance. In the period 2004-2013, Brazil experienced significant economic growth, with an annual rate of 3.5%, well above the average of the period 1979-2018, and a reduction of income inequality which was captured by a change in the GINI Index moving from 0.58 to 0.53. This growth was generated by the pro-market economic reforms of 1994-2005 and by the global commodities super-boom of 2004-2013. However, a significant vulnerability remained: the low growth of worker productivity and a very dysfunctional and low-quality educational system (Viola and Gonçalves 2019). In the period 2006-2014, economic policies that generated serious macroeconomic unbalances were implemented. Among these economic policies, the authors highlight the growing subsidies to fossil fuels; the big loans to major Brazilian corporations at subsidized rates or the customs protection and the tax exemptions to

¹ The term BRICS refers to the association of emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The term was proposed by the economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 in his paper "Building Better Global Economic BRICS".

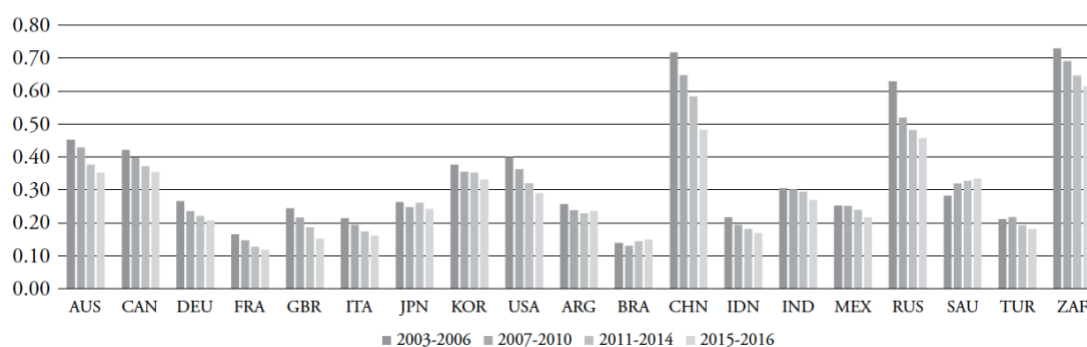
² The Group of 77 (G-77) was established during the first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva in 1964. It has remained as the main advocate of developing countries within the UN system. It is considered as one of the most important institutional expression of the interests and views of the "South" in the current international system (Kasa et al. 2008)

³ The term BASIC refers to the countries of Brazil, South Africa, India and China

noncompetitive firms (Viola and Gonçalves 2019). Since 2015, Brazil has experienced a recession and stagnation that are the product of the macroeconomic unbalances accumulated in this last period, but also explained by the country's long history of "crony capitalism" (Viola and Gonçalves 2019, 7), public-private corruption, political and economic elites that historically have governed aiming at self-interests and appropriating of the common goods, populism, and a very dysfunctional pension system.

For other authors like Basso (2019), the improvement of the economic sector supposes greater environmental degradation. The successful industrialization of Brazil gained it a place among the world's largest economies, but it also supposed large GHG emissions and alarming environmental degradation. The author analyzed the volume of emissions related to the industrial levels of a country by accounting for the carbon intensity of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or how much carbon is emitted to produce a unit of GDP. The carbon intensity of GDP can be decoupled in two. First, energy intensity of GDP, or how much energy is used to produce a unit of GDP; second, carbon intensity of Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES), or how much carbon is emitted by using one unit of energy (Basso 2019). Thanks to a benchmark of the carbon intensity of GDP of the 20 most powerful States of the world (G20), we realize that Brazil has been one of the two only countries that have increased its historical emissions levels (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Carbon intensity of economy in the G20, average, 2003-2016 (kgCO₂/USD, 2005 prices – PPP)

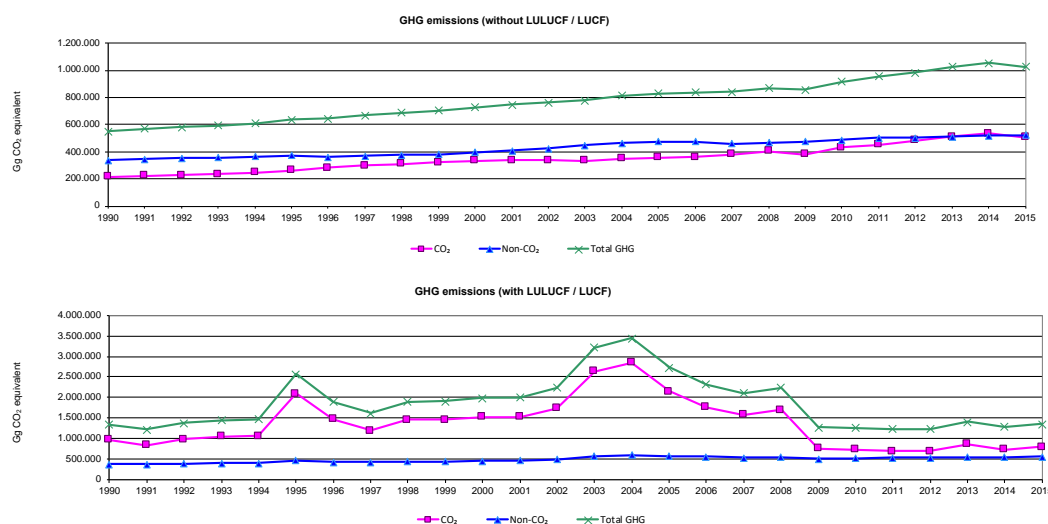


Source: Basso 2019, based on data from IEA 2018

Nevertheless, Brazil occupies a unique position in the global carbon cycle. Unlike its fellow BASIC countries (this term is properly defined in the following sections), carbon emissions from the modern sector of the economy — industry, energy, and transportation — were already quite low in Brazil (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). An energy sector strongly grounded in renewable energies like hydropower and biofuels accounts for this outcome. Instead, land use and land-use change, especially deforestation, accounted for 61% of Brazil's GHG emissions

in the Second National Emissions Inventory Communication of 2005, while agriculture contributed another 19% (Brazil 2010). Since 1990, Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) has been the greatest driver of Brazilian emissions (Basso 2019). Therefore, deforestation has always been a major issue in Brazil (**Figure 2**). Nevertheless, when deforestation rates were finally reduced, thanks to the reform of the forest code in 2012, agriculture/livestock emissions and energy emissions became more relevant (Basso 2019).

Figure 2: Total GHG emissions, without and with LULUCF / LUCF



Source: UNFCCC GHG Profiles – Non-Annex I

Basso (2019) analyzes the general trends that Brazil has followed in its energy and total emissions by elaborating the following timeline diagram. First, Brazilian total emissions have decreased between 2003 and 2017 due to the control of Amazon deforestation. However, emissions from all other economic sectors – as well as from deforestation in other biomes – have been increasing. Second, as LULUCF emissions decreased, emissions from other sectors, especially agriculture/livestock and energy, became relatively more relevant in Brazil. Third, energy-related emissions were rising faster than agriculture/livestock. Fourth, although Brazil has a higher share of low-carbon sources in its energy matrix compared to the global average and peer countries, this share has been decreasing. Last but not least, both energy consumption and energy intensity of GDP have increased in Brazil between 2003 and 2017.

According to its economic power, Brazil has performed a proactive and decided foreign policy, on a multilateral and bilateral basis, in the different subjects of the international agenda; the environmental question was also the case (de Caria Patrício 2011). It has not always been like that, as it has presented many ups and downs alongside its environmental performance. As Drummond and Barros-Platiau (2006) argue, Brazil was definitely not an environmentalist

society for most of the 1934-2002 period. It was precisely the opposite, a pro-development society that argued that it is the end that justifies the means. In other words, there was in Brazil a deep and lasting social consensus in favor of economic growth, what the authors referred to as "developmentalism". This phase lasted for almost 60 years in Brazil, whose major objective was to turn Brazil into a major world power at the expense of political liberty and the natural resource endowment.

In accordance to Drummond and Barros-Platiau's findings (2006), Brazilian environmental laws and associated policies can be divided into three major phases. The first goes roughly from 1934 to 1964 marked by strong development efforts based on pervasive state intervention and investment, and on the expansion of agricultural frontiers. The second phase goes from 1964 to 1988, again marked by strong State intervention and swift economic expansion (including the agricultural frontier), but also by renewed environmental regulations and policies. The third phase started in 1989, marked by weak economic growth or even stagnation, diminished and increasingly ineffective state intervention and expanded environmental legislation and policies (Barros-Platiau 2006). During the last period, environmental laws became more encompassing, more scientifically based and more punitive. For obvious reasons, this research will focus on this last phase of environmental actions in order to assess how Brazil has managed to balance economic development and environmental protection.

The work of Friberg (2009) is also highly interesting because by analyzing the international discussions in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), he has defined the Brazilian position in these negotiations as complex and mainly based on three main lines: responsibility based on historical contributions of countries to the problem of climate change; financing for clean development; and engagement on discussions on forests and the forestry sector.

Complementing the assessment of Brazil's environmental commitment and policies, Franchini and Viola (2018) have presented the concept of "climate myth" when referring to Brazil's environmental actions. This term refers to the distance between the Brazilian self-image in GEG and its real commitments, power, and leadership (Viola and Gonçalves 2019). Brazil has consolidated a narrative of commitment with the international environmental agenda, as being a reformist power in the governance of climate change (Viola et al. 2012). However, there is a strong dissonance between the Brazilian government's discourse on environmental issues and the policies implemented in the period 1989-2018 and Brazilian actions. Such a myth has been

abandoned since the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of Brazil, in October 2018, who is not willing anymore to sell this image of Brazil to the foreign scenario.

According to the authors, the dimension of this ‘self-image’ of Brazil lies on its preponderance as a major agent in the global carbon cycle and as a fundamental actor in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), especially taking into consideration the defense of a radical interpretation of the common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) principle and the fact that Brazil has taken voluntary commitments to tackle climate change with examples such as the Amazonian deforestation control (2005-2012) or its commitment to reduce 2020 emissions by 36.1–38.9% below what they would otherwise have been (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). All of this is counterbalanced by some empirical facts that show a completely antagonistic image of Brazil. For example, during the period 1989-2004, Brazilian emissions were the most irrational in the world because they produced massive destruction of the Amazonian forest without producing economic growth as a counterpart (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). Other examples include the net increase in emissions from deforestation in the Amazon since 2013 (modest from 2013-14, very strong from 2015-18), or the country’s radical defense of CBDR at most UNFCCC negotiations and the increase in the share of fossil fuels in the energy matrix accompanied by massive subsidies to fossil fuels (Nuaimy-Barker 2015).

This argument is complemented by de Caria Patrício (2011) who defends that the Brazilian environmental policy has evolved from a position that did not pay much attention to the environmental issues (period 1990 to 2004) to a position that raises concerns about the questions of sustainable development together with the defense of the common principles of Brazilian foreign policy stance, such as the defense of the concept of common responsibilities and its sovereignty. The defense of its sovereignty has been at the core of the Brazilian position because it has worked to erode accusations of degrading its natural resources without consideration. More precisely, Brazil has worked to dismantle the general conception of the Amazon as the "lung of the world" that will lead to the treatment of the Amazon as a Common Heritage of Humanity and, thus, it would take it away from Brazilian sovereignty (de Caria Patrício 2011). Diplomatic positions also evolved towards the multiplicity of actors and the inclusion of different ministries, even social and non-state actors were included in the environmental question.

Brazil has always had some actors with strong principled commitments to national climate action, whom DeSombre (2000) called “Baptists”. Through most of Brazil’s participation in global climate negotiations, they have failed to influence national representatives who preferred

to stress the historical responsibility of developed countries to act first. This second category of actors, which DeSombre (2000) called “bootleggers”, support climate action for instrumental reasons and as a strategy to gain public support, mainly for winning presidential elections (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). Carvalho (1987) has argued that another critical factor that has encouraged Brazilian environmental commitments and statements is its historical capacity of "foretelling" civil society demands and of actually shaping them (Carvalho 1987).

The assessment of Brazilian actors’ performances in GEG has also been analyzed by Barros-Platiau et al. (2015), identifying three prime changes. Historically, the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication (MCTIC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty or MRE), have been the two institutions that have dealt with the environmental question. The MCTIC has been for a long time almost the only Ministry dealing with this field. Nevertheless, as the climate question was becoming more complex and global, other Ministries have joined the discussion. Today, the question is tackled in a more cooperative manner, where the lead is taken by the Ministry of Environment (MMA), but its actions are followed by the still fundamental role of the MRE and the MCTIC. To all of this, we have to add the “Presidential Diplomacy” (Barros-Platiau 2015), which was really strong with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula's actions committed to the promotion of the consideration of biofuels, one of the main strengths of the Brazilian economy and energy-supply sector, as the prime solution to the question of decarbonization and Climate Change. Nevertheless, these commitments with the environment were progressively neglected by Rousseff and later by Temer, and finally almost completely abandoned by Bolsonaro. President Jair Bolsonaro has sent the environmental question to the bottom of the Brazilian agenda by actions such as the nomination of ministers who are skeptical to Climate Change or by ministers that privilege the economic side to the environmental one (Louault 2020).

B. Review of the Literature about the Brazilian Environmental Relation with the Amazon

Several authors have decided to focus on the analysis of the Amazon to assess the Brazilian international performance on Global Environmental Governance (GEG). With a population of approximately 38 million people, the Amazon takes up 40% of the South American territory and is home to the largest, most diverse forest as well as to 20% of all species of fauna and flora in the world (Itamaraty). Rainforest, such as the Amazon, covers only 8% of the Earth's land surface and may contain more than half of life forms (Drummond 2000). Furthermore, the Amazon basin owns about 20% of the planet’s freshwater, counting with a complex system of

aquifers and groundwater, it covers an area of nearly 4 million km². The rainforest's richness also lies on its vast natural pharmacopoeia; plant and animal tissues obtained from the rainforest are used in the production of chemicals of known medicinal potency (Sayar 1993). Given its strategic importance, Amazon offers to the countries sharing this ecosystem, significant challenges, and even greater opportunities (Itamaraty). The Brazilian part of the Amazon rainforest is divided into 9 of the 26 different regions of Brazil. The Brazilian Amazon includes the States of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins, and part of the States of Mato Grosso and Maranhão ([Appendix I](#)) covering a total area of approximately 5 million km². Of this total, forest vegetation classes cover around 4 million km² (Brazil INC 2004, 249).

In the debate about GEG and sustainable development, the Amazon region must be considered because of its role in driving change and also because the area is very vulnerable to global climate change (Inoue 2012) and environmental degradation. Deforestation has certainly been at the core of the problem of all the environmental degradation of today's Amazon. Furthermore, the Amazon rainforest, because of this importance for the global climate regime, has been called a 'tipping element'. Lenton et al. (2008) mobilized the term 'tipping point' to refer to a critical threshold at which a tiny perturbation can qualitatively alter the state or development of a system and the term 'tipping elements'⁴ to describe large-scale components of the Earth system that may pass a tipping point. A combination of global climate change and local land-use change might turn the Amazonian rainforest from a carbon sink into a carbon emitter (Nepstad et al. 2008).

Forests are an interesting issue to focus on when discussing the tailoring of the concept of sustainable development inside GEG. Although they are perceived as central to most countries, the governance of the issue is so fragile and fragmented that it may be stated that there is no regime yet (Barros-Platau 2010). This inconsistency and instability are even greater in the case of the rainforest because of its key role and importance to the nations within their expansion and to the global state of the environment. That is why, the discussion about them involves issues related to national sovereignty, international relations, national policies, regional issues

⁴ The different tipping points identified by Lenton et al. (2008) are the Change in ENSO Amplitude or Frequency, the Boreal Forest Dieback, the Dieback of Amazon Rainforest, the melt of Greenland Ice Sheet, the Atlantic Deep Water Formation, the Sahara Greening, the West African Monsoon Shift, the Climate Change-Induced Ozone Hole, the Instability of West Antarctic ice sheet, the Changes in Antarctic Bottom Water Formation, the Indian Monsoon Chaotic Multi-stability, the Permafrost and Tundra Loss.

about development, and, finally, environmental conservation policies (Drummond 2000). Formal agreements about forests' protection comprise mainly a 1992 non-binding Declaration of Principles on All Types of Forests (Barros-Platau 2010). Deeper agreements about this issue have been encountered by Brazil and other developing countries. Brazil's specific opposition in this regime lies in its willingness to have a declaration on all types of forests, not only the rainforest, to avoid international interference in what was considered a national issue (Lago, 2006).

Forests' talks were to a large extent transferred to climate change talks since deforestation accounts for a large percentage of GHG emissions. An estimated one-quarter of total anthropogenic GHG emissions arises mainly from deforestation (Arneth et al. 2019). Thus, one of the most challenging negotiations passes under the structure of REDD. REDD was created on COP-13 in Bali, 2007, as a platform aiming at sharing outcomes, experiences and lessons learned to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+ 2019). The creation of this project was mainly defended by Brazil and a group of international NGOs in 2004 with the idea of creating a mechanism that could compensate tropical forest countries for reducing deforestation (De Carvalho 2012, 149). Today the discussion on REDD+ has been polarized between a position, defended by Brazil, that it should be financed by public funds and not a market mechanism to maintain the environmental integrity of the mitigation system and another position supporting the opposite (De Carvalho 2012).

Brazilian positions on the different international discussions about forest protection and emissions mitigation have been studied by De Carvalho (2012), who states that the Brazilian stance has moved from a veto position to a proposition one. De Carvalho defends that the first position characterizes the period from 1997 to 2005, when in the context of international environmental negotiations, Brazil was considered as leader of the coalition of developing countries (G-77 and Chinas). Chasek, Downie and Brown (2006) highlight the importance of the veto power as one of the leady characteristics of global environmental policy. Either by an individual or a coalition strategy, the veto power provides the holder with the capacity to modify decisions, entailing a bargaining method for these countries. From 2005 onwards, the Brazilian position has moved towards a proposition attitude by the submissions of possible solutions and

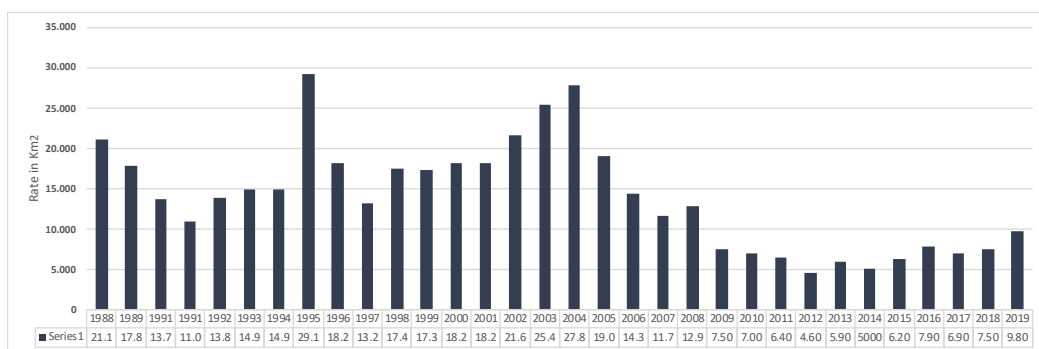
⁵ G-77 is often called the G-77/China since China is officially only an associate member.

strategies to tackle deforestation and Climate Change (de Carvalho 2012). However, de Carvalho's assessment ends in 2005.

As explained before, one of the preeminent challenges to Brazil and the Amazon is the huge share of the Amazonian deforestation and other land uses in Brazilian GHG emissions. The two worst years in terms of deforestation have been until now the years 1995 and 2004 (**Figure 4**).

As we can perceive from figure 4, the deforestation rate in the year 2019 has risen to similar levels to the rates of 2008, supposing a mounting to previous years and a harmful take back to the former deforestation rates. This tendency presents a significant upsurge of 278 % in relation with the month of July 2018 (Louault 2020). It should be noted that the high deforestation rates are not only the consequence of Brazilian actions but behind these deforestation figures there is the central role played by Northern consumption and Northern corporations (Sagar and VanDeveer 2005).

Figure 4: Satellite Monitoring of Deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon Forest.



Source: Elaborated by the author using data from TerraBrasilis. PRODES:

http://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal_amazon/rates

The considerations and positions toward the Amazon are complex because there is not only one but different ones, depending on the actors and on the period, constituting contested visions for the region. For some, especially state planners and military leaders, the Amazon is symbolically wrapped up with a nationalist drive for territorial control (Bramant 2019). For others, the globalist vision conceives the Amazon as a critical carbon sink, highlighting its environmental value. Then, there are those perspectives on the Amazon that lie somewhere in the middle, aiming to provide Brazil with commodity-based economic growth through the production of soy and beef that derives from the Amazon but on lands that would involve no new deforestation (Bramant 2019). These three visions collide at the same time with the myriad of

other aspirations and realities that are the result of the local experience of living in the Amazon for the millions of residents that call the region home (Bramant 2019).

Bramant (2019) bases his research on these different visions about the Amazon by analyzing the discrepancies observed in the plans and strategies related to the rainforest. Bramant identifies as the main confrontation, the one between conservation and development. ‘Developmentalism’ in the Amazon has been approached by the creation of thousands of kilometers of roads in the Amazon region, by attempts to make the Amazon region more economically productive and a significant contributor to the national economy, by boosting its industrial potential, and finally by stimulating colonization methods in order to ignite Brazilian growth by modernizing the Amazon and expanding Amazonian frontiers. Bramant also states that the different Brazilian programs in the Amazon can be framed in the logic of defending Brazilian sovereignty on the Amazon and the need of development. For developmentalism, deforestation is perceived as a sign of national progress (Bramant 2019). As one Congressman stated in 1977 “the green area of Amazonia should be totally devastated... because the forest represents the paralyzation [sic] of the country’s development” (O Globo, 1977 in Giamo 1988, 537). Also framed in this logic, Bramant talks about the program of Operation Amazonia, established in the mid-1960s, and *Polamazônia*, in 1974. Both plans were aiming to create incentives for urban development, frontier expansion in the Amazon by creating more roads connecting the region to the rest of the nation and also to facilitate deforestation (Bramant 2019). From 1992, after the celebration of the *Earth Summit* in Rio, there was a shift on the connotation of sustainable development in the Amazon. The project of Forest Code, in place since 1995, hardened the provisions for legally protected forests reserves and established the obligation of maintaining 80% of the landowners’ land as intact forests. With projects and statements in this tune, Lula’s administration moves the question of development to a position of “neo-developmentalism” (Bramant 2019) that combines economic development, embracing neoliberal prescriptions and a developmental approach.

Concerning Brazil’s position towards the Amazon environmental situation, de Wit and de Freitas (2019) have identified three positions that have negatively affected climate commitment: Amazon Paranoia, Amazon Impotence, and Amazon Neglect. Amazon Paranoia describes behavior based on the notion that the region and its resources are desired by the Global North. Bramant (2019) talks about this sentiment by emphasizing the Brazilian discourse of ‘internationalist conspiracy’ aiming to steal and control Amazonian resources. In this context, it is possible to frame a plan called *Nossa Natureza* (Our Nature). The plan, which was formally

approved in 1989, had a nationalist tone: President José Sarney said, “Amazonian is ours, even to destroy” (Bramant 2019). Amazon Impotence reveals the notion that deforestation is unstoppable. Finally, Amazon Neglect justifies behavior based on the notion that even when deforestation is possible, it is not a policy priority. Although Brazil was able to overcome the first two types of behavior, Amazon Neglect has been rapidly increasing since 2011 (Bramant 2019). For example, Amazon Neglect is the case for Brazil’s domestic National Adaptation Plan (NAP), as it contains few references to the Amazon. Although it describes the dangers the region will face such as higher temperatures, reduced precipitations, and possible droughts and floods (De Wit and De Freitas 2019).

The Brazilian consideration of sustainable development as passing through the multiplication of highways to communicate the different areas of the Amazon and to ease the implementation of a capitalistic logic aiming at leading to the development of the native communities has also been remarked by Carvalho et al. (2010). Other authors have argued that the way of implementing the logic of sustainable development in the Amazon rainforest only passes through democratizing the concept itself (Albaladejo and Sartre 2005) by including the understanding of the indigenous practices of the region and linking them with the economic, social, and environmental objectives of sustainable development (Albaladejo and Sartre 2005).

Framed into this logic, some of the central Brazilian environmental actions related to the Amazonian protection were the 2009 National Plans to reduce 80% of the deforestation rate by 2020, the *Fundo Amazônia*, which was created to fight against deforestation with international financing, Brazilian active interventions and contributions in REDD+, the “nationally-appropriated mitigation actions” (NAMAs) of Brazil together with China and South Africa, or the National Voluntary Commitments. These actions and contributions to the Forest protection and Climate Change solutions will be assessed in the operationalization section of this research. Authors like Bratman (2019) have argued that despite offering a positive vision for change, the framework of the application of sustainable development instead tends to reproduce and reinforce existing inequalities. Land use and infrastructure plans conducted in the name of sustainable development often perpetuate and reinforce economic and political inequalities. Examples of these plans could be the project *Avança Brasil* which aimed to fund the paving of 7,500 km of Amazonian roads or the rapid expansion of industrial soybean production that led Brazil to quickly become a global leader second only to Argentina in terms of soybean exports by 2003 (Bramant 2019).

III. Theoretical Development

Alongside the review of the literature about the question of Brazilian performance concerning the question of environmental protection and commitments, different concepts have been discussed, such as the concept of sustainable development, global environmental governance, leadership, power, the environmental regime, emerging countries. This specific section aims at offering the academic and theoretical tools to apply these terms to the assessment of Brazil's position at international environmental summits.

A. Sustainable Development

To address the problematic of this research, the first question should be what the concept of sustainable development entails and what has been its evolution and the progression of international environmental protection. The evolution of this concept involves contestations, discussions and alternative definitions that are composed by States' interests and political aims. That is the reason why, the study of the progression of sustainable development by comparing the formal definition with the nuances proposed by emerging countries such as Brazil is highly interesting for International Relations' researchers.

1. The Historical Progression of the Concept of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development was formerly introduced during the Brundtland Commission in 1987. During this meeting, the former definition of sustainable development perceived it as the ability of humanity to:

"[...] make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 8).

The direct consequences of the Brundtland Commission's definition imply limitations imposed by the state of technology, the social organization on environmental resources, and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities (WCED 1987). Later on, the Brundtland Commission's report specified that:

"[...] in essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (WCED 1987, 46).

Sustainable development is, thereby, not an actual state but a goal to globally achieve by taking into account multiple aspects. This multiplicity of perspectives about the term is defended by

Elliot (2004), who argues that the definition of sustainable development of the Commission underpins two central principles: the accountability of needs and the reference to the physical limitations to such development. Starting from the discussion about needs, the report states that special priority must be given to the essential needs, and mainly to the crucial needs of the poor. In this sense, the report links the fulfillment of sustainable development with the eradication of poverty⁶. Secondly, the definition also implies that sustainable development's fulfillment must take account of the limits that technology and social organization impose on the ability of the environment to meet those present and future needs (Elliot 2004).

Another crucial aspect of the term is that different States present different conditions and patterns, therefore, the main issue is how far sustainable development is universal, or, in other words, to identify its convergent and divergent dimensions (Nayar 1998). These diverse conditions of social realities lead to the consideration of sustainable development as generally full of friction (Bramant 2019). Developing and emerging countries, such as Brazil or China, have considered the junction between development and poverty reduction as essential (Becard et al. 2015). The consideration of diversity supposed a victory for developing countries, because it resulted in the right to development, consecrated in environmental law, but also the need of international cooperation for the incorporation of this concept to worldwide decision-making (Patrício de Caria 2011).

Although the formal conceptualization of the term dates back to 1987, it was the product of a previous long chain of events and decisions around the question of environmental degradation and thereby, environmental protection. It is crucial for this research to mention the celebration of the Panel of Experts on Development and Environment, held at Founex, Switzerland from 4 to 12 June 1971. It is during this meeting that the relationship between environmental damage and economic development was further discussed. Egelston (2006) makes an interesting point about this meeting by referring to the Southern accusation of the instrumentalization of the idea of sustainable development by the wealthy nations to impose a neocolonialism dominance upon the South. In the context of this research, when using the concept instrumentalization, we refer to the series of social, political and economic processes that turn an object into a strategic

⁶ According to the report of the Commission: "The Commission believes that widespread poverty is no longer inevitable. Poverty is not only an evil in itself, but sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations for a better life. A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes" (WECD, 1987, p.8)

instrument aiming at legitimizing or delegitimizing social practices or other actors (Canut and Duchêne 2011, 1).

One of the major steps in elaborating the domain of environmental protection linked with sustainable development was the Stockholm Conference and the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. From this meeting, the overall spirit was that it was:

"desirable to provide a framework for comprehensive consideration within the UN of the problems of the human environment to focus the attention of Governments and public opinion on the importance and urgency of this question" (UN 1968).

The discussions and the countries' statements presented during this meeting institutionalized the emergence of the dissonance between the North and the South when considering environmental commitments and protection. Indeed, this conference also formalized the idea that the "production and overconsumption of goods caused Northern environmental problems, while poverty and underdevelopment were at the root of environmental problems in the South" (Egelston 2006, 71).

During the preparatory discussions of the meeting, the "North" was aiming at using the conference to find a solution to the deteriorating physical characteristics of the environment, while the "South" wanted to use this structure to ensure its future development (Egelston 2006, 69). Framed in this context, the General Assembly Resolution 2849 (XXVI) of December 1971, introduced the ambitions of the global South countries into the scheme of the Stockholm Conference. These statements blamed developed countries for environmental degradation (Egelston 2006, 69). More importantly, the resolution also aimed at making developed countries clean their internal environments and pay developing countries for all the environmental damage provoked by developed countries in their territories.

Aside from this, the framework of Stockholm was based on the overall assumption of the importance of development, mainly industrialization, over environmental protection. The conceptualization of all these ideas was concentrated on the term 'eco-development', introduced by Maurice Strong⁷, who was at that time the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations. According to him, the term eco-development supposes the first stone of the progressive

⁷ The figure of Maurice Strong is capital to illustrate the international path towards the consideration and institutionalization of environmental protection. His commitment to the environmental cause was one of the leady reasons of the celebration of the Stockholm Conference, but also of the future Conferences that helped to build the concept of sustainable development.

construction of sustainable development. Strong was trying to merge together the incapacity of the Earth's natural resources to continue with the business as usual consumption patterns of the industrialized countries and the needs to create conditions in which developing countries can meet the growing needs of their populations without compounding the damage caused by developed nations (Strong 1992). The realization of eco-development required an international system that offers developing countries the financial and technological support to perform the transition to strong and ecologically sustainable economies (Strong 1992).

Following the Stockholm celebration, and as proof of the success of its celebrations, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was created. It was expected “to safeguard and enhance the environment for the benefit of present and future generations of Man” (UN 1972), by coordinating environmental policies and activities taking place in other UN bodies. Interestingly, this organ was established in Nairobi, Kenya. When assessing this decision through the lens of International Relations (IR) theory, Egelston (2006) considers this physical proximity to the South as a guarantee that environmental protection would not be used as an excuse to halt developmental aid, while at the same time insulating Northern countries from their responsibility for the global environmental crisis.

After Stockholm, international environmental agreements continued to succeed one another until arriving at Cocoyoc, Mexico, in 1974. This meeting was jointly sponsored by the UN Council on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNEP, and it received the name of a symposium on “Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies”. The importance of this event lies in the fact that it provided the first look at the environmental issue arena from the perspective of the Third World’s populations. The final document included ideas such as the overconsumption of the North in comparison to the absolute poverty of the South and placed eradication of poverty at the core of the international agenda about development and environment. In other words, the Cocoyoc Declaration brought the concept of social justice to the forefront of what would become the concept of sustainable development (Elliot 2004).

The next major step to the consolidation of the concept of sustainable development after Stockholm, Cocoyoc and the Brundtland Commission, was the celebration of the Earth Summit from the 3rd to the 14th of June of 1992. It is also known as the Rio Summit, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or just UNCED. As Le Prestre (2005) described, this Summit was the representation of all the hopes and all the disappointments related to the environmental policy (Le Prestre 2005, 167). It supposed the deepening of the definition of sustainable development but also it received critics because of the consideration

that it "codified existing principles and statements rather than providing guidance and inspiration to the pursuit of a new global ethic of sustainable development" (Elliot 2004, 19).

The UNCED was celebrated in a context characterized by elements such as the irruption of problems at the global extent, the worsening of environmental indicators, and the end of the Cold War. These events were supposed to bolster the stimulation and institutionalization of the global willingness to protect the biosphere and the quality of life of populations, all of that based on a bargaining logic between the North and the South (Le Prestre 2005, 167). From this meeting, three agreements were concluded: the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the Statement of Forest Principles. Furthermore, three separately negotiated conventions were also open to signature: the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has today a near-universal membership. The 197 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. It entered into force in 1994 and has the central objective of "stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention. All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, where they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and make decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements. They were settled as annual organizations (a detailed list of all the different COPs is presented in [Appendix II](#)) to reach global commitments under UNFCCC's umbrella (Rinaldi and Martuscelli 2016).

The leading protocol of the UNFCCC is the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. It sets emission reduction targets for the industrialized and post-Soviet countries, at levels that followed a political rather than an environmental logic (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). The Kyoto Protocol follows the UNFCCC's principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR), splitting the world into developed and developing parts. This principle is an attempt to meet Northern concerns that all countries have obligations and Southern concerns that those obligations are not the same. The concept is meant to convey both solidarity and a particular kind of burden-sharing that takes account of inequities in global resource use and contribution to environmental degradation (Elliott 2004).

Agenda 21 is, like the Rio Declaration, a non-binding agreement. It is composed of 24 chapters that set out a detailed plan of action for implementing the principles of the Declaration and for achieving sustainable development. It aimed for the identification of the questions that require special political attention for dealing with the environment (Le Prestre 2005, 182). Given the importance of Agenda 21, the Commission on Sustainable Development was created to monitor and review its implementation. The extent of the definition defended in the Rio Declaration of sustainable development is wider than its predecessor, because in this case, besides taking into consideration all the nuances of the concept of eco-development, it also includes references to women, youth and indigenous communities, which are recognized as important participants in the pursuit of sustainable development.

From the Rio Summit also emerged the Forest Principles, a non-binding instrument whose preeminent objective is the management, conservation and the sustainable development of all forests in the world (Elliot 2004, 183). It symbolizes the first global consensus towards the question of forestry protection and the first attempt on this domain to solve the conflicts between the rich and developing countries. Those conflicts are rooted on the extent of this protection; for rich countries, these principles are primarily entitled to the protection of rainforest, whilst for developing countries, this initiative represented a "thinly disguised attempt to maintain the rich countries' stranglehold on their forestry resources and the obstruction of their development" (Elliot 2004, 183).

According to Dryzek (2005), sustainable development advanced as a discourse for all, North and South. In 2002 Johannesburg hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the world's largest-ever international conference. The WSSD endorsed a "Plan for Implementation" for Agenda 21. The importance of highlighting this meeting lies in the fact that it was here where the 'traditional' positions to the concept of sustainable development started to shift. Until this moment, Northern countries had been the ones claiming for environmental concern, but then they shifted to a position of defense of development that could be achieved by the benefits of free trade and globalization. For their parts, Southern countries overcame their initial consideration of the environment as a concern for rich countries and recognized the severity of their environmental problems (Wapner 2003). According to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's own words, the Johannesburg Summit made "sustainable development a reality" (Elliot 2004).

From this moment, several international actors as organizations, NGOs, states, and institutions started to elaborate their interpretations of the concept. Emerging countries were not an exception

to this. These countries started to negotiate and to discuss about their commitment to environmental actions together with the poorest countries in groups like the G77/China bloc through most of the 2000s, with the general idea of not making any commitment until the wealthy countries make it. It is precisely here where this research is enrolled, aiming at assessing how Brazil, as the representation of emerging countries in this work, has been defending its own consideration of the term and whether it has managed to institutionalize this own interpretation in pivotal documents such as the Bali Roadmap, the Copenhagen conference in 2009 or the Durban Agreement 2011, to mention just a few. All of these meetings, together with the other cornerstone decisions made in the context of the protection of the environment linked to the concept of sustainable development, are assessed in the section of the operationalization of the hypotheses.

Additionally, it is important to mention the decision made in 2015 among the United Nations members: the establishment of 17 goals that should guide countries to the fulfillment of the eradication of poverty, the protection of the planet and the improvement of the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere (UN Sustainable Development Agenda). These objectives were called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.

2. Understanding the Contestations to Sustainable Development

Once the timeline is presented and with the required perspective to see the whole picture, some conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the concept of sustainable development born as a compromise between two different discourses, the first one promoting economic growth and the second one insisting upon finite limits to growth (Egelston 2006, 85). The first type of discourse is called development discourse (Egelston 2006), the second one receives the name of limits discourse (Dryzek 2005, 19). When referring to discourse, this work means "a shared way of apprehending the world" (Dryzek 1993, 9). Following the consideration made by Egelston, "discourses rely upon language to socially construct new relationships or meanings, or to alter existing relationships or meanings" (2006, 13). As defended by Campbell, the discourses are the representation and constitution of the real (Campbell 1992, 6), where the 'real' refers to a social construction and an interpretation of the world and its agents. Consequently, sustainable development discourse does not only cover the relationship between humans and the environment, but also the relationship between different states and the balance of power. Another author such as Egon Becker considers the "career of sustainable

development” as a keyword for a new understanding of the modern world results from its function as a link between two different crisis discourses (one being on the environment and the other on development) and the tacit promise of a possible rescue from both crises (Becker 1999, 287).

The second main assumption of the evolution of sustainable development is that its emergence supposed the apparition of contestations (Lorraine 2004, 157). It is difficult to imagine a discourse not wanting to have sustainable development; few would venture to argue that we should not strive for such a laudable objective (Bratman 2019, 6). Furthermore, while ubiquitous, the discourse about sustainable development tends to highlight the inadequacy at applying its formula, because of the difficulties of triangulating effectively the often-competing aims in dynamic economic, social, and ecological environments (Bratman 2019, 5). In other words, sustainable development is a perennial element in international discourses, but simultaneously, societies and governmental leaders do not fully understand what it means to live within sustainable development as a feature of contemporary times (Bratman 2019). It is precisely at this point where this research frames the justification and pertinence of the central objective of this work, given the fact that the conceptualization of sustainable development, a major environmental discourse, continues to be problematic because of the disparate connotations and the political bargaining behind the concept. The main contestations that this research will analyze are the ones accentuating the distance North-South. These contestations revive the traditional claims of increasing of financial aid, the enhancement of technological transfers, and a reform of the international economic relations and the decision-making procedures of international organizations (Le Prestre 2005). There are some critical perspectives as well about the evolution and definitions of the concept of sustainable development as the one defended by Antonio Escobar (1995, 193), who argues that the concept itself has emerged as the willingness to combine the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment into one single Western exploit.

Several observers of this field agree that multilateral negotiations on climate change have become "ossified" or "gridlocked" since the creation of the UNFCCC, and otherwise unlikely to produce meaningful results shortly (Depledge 2006; Dimitrov 2010, Keohane and Victor 2011). Le Prestre (2005, 220) also notices that international meetings' occasions are no longer used to conclude new agreements but to find a joint position toward the application of the already existing ones. In the context of this research, I would venture to show that possibly one of the main causes of this international environmental politics' sclerosis is due to the

international attachment to principles such as the discussion about CBDR, the eternal debate about the polluter-pay principle (PPP), or the historical responsibility principle.

B. Global Environmental Governance

The increasing number of extreme weather events, provoked and/or aggravated by Climate Change, has consolidated the perception that we are no longer facing theoretical speculations distant in time, but that it is an urgent and tangible reality in front of our eyes (WMO 2011). Indeed, climate change is one of the scientifically defined planetary boundaries to establish a safe operating space on earth, and Global Environmental Governance (GEG) is fundamental to stop development from trespassing these boundaries (Steffen et al. 2011). When talking about boundaries we are referring to the concept developed in 2009 by the Stockholm Resilience Center to define the set of nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come, these are the nine processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth system; crossing these boundaries increase the risk of generating large-scale abrupt or irreversible environmental changes⁸.

Environmental degradation is caused by the combination of several factors, and it is interlinked with diverse human actions. Climate Change is the most visible form of this degradation and is caused by an increased concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere which is caused, in turn, by the GHG emissions produced by billions of severally innocuous individual actions (Di Paola 2014), but also by the decisions and development method of the different countries, such as vertiginous rates of deforestation or astronomical levels of irrational consumption caused by hyper-materialism (Viola et al. 2008).

It is widely agreed that one of the crucial aspects of climate change is its global extent, as being a phenomenon affecting all the States in the world, but in distinct dimensions and gravity. Countries also contribute to climate change in different degrees and manners. However, according to Bulkeley and Newell (2010, 2-3), it is important to discuss the "global" categorization of the problem. They argue that how "global" is interpreted can lead to different understandings of where, and with whom the challenge of addressing climate change lies. Most

⁸ The nine planetary boundaries areas identified by the Stockholm Resilience Center are: stratospheric ozone depletion, loss of biosphere integrity (biodiversity loss and extinctions), chemical pollution and the release of novel entities, climate change, ocean acidification, freshwater consumption and the global hydrological cycle, land system change, nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans, and atmospheric aerosol loading. More information in: <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>

of the time, global refers to the physical nature of climate change, which leads to an understanding of being an international problem.

Global Environmental Governance (hereafter GEG) is used to coordinate global actions, create spaces of discussion and find a solution to this planetary problem but, what does it refer to? Firstly, its basis lies in the concept of global governance. Rosenau (1995) used this term to refer to an international scenario that was changing and that was starting to be composed by "more than the formal institutions and organizations through which the management of international affairs is or is not sustained" (Rosenau 1995, 2). He explained that the term governance "encompasses the activities of governments, but it also includes the many other channels through which "commands" flow in the form of goals framed, directives issued, and policies pursued" (Rosenau 1995, 3). In other words, what he emphasized was the perceived change of governance in a more and more globalized world and the resulting multiplicity of actors and mechanisms (Wit and Martins de Freitas 2019).

Later on, Keohane and Nye defined governance as "the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restraint the collective activities of a group" (2000). Avant et al. (2010, 14), argued that global governance describes the different policymaking activities that produce coordinated action in the absence of world government. Finally, Elliot (2004) remarks that "governance is more than institutional structures and processes. It includes the norms, principles and political practices that inform decision-making and influence social and economic behavior" (Elliot 2004, 93). Nevertheless, if we tilt to the critical approach, one possible definition of governance refers to the "political practice which simultaneously reflects, constitutes, and masks global relations of power and powerlessness" (Elliot 2004, 93). Governance for sustainable development is generally considered a sub-field of environmental governance, which often emphasizes participatory processes, coordinating policies, sharing information, establishing common criteria for success, and a host of other criteria that help establish effective institutions and incentives for desired outcomes to be achieved (Bratman 2019).

The aspect that underpins the term global governance is that the international is a changing scenario. Indeed, since the middle of the last decade, several events have boosted profound changes at the international level, placing newcomers' actors and topics at the forefront. The three most visible and transcendent recent events have been the migration of the climate crises to the core of international politics, the consolidated position of emerging nations, and the global economic crisis (Viola et al. 2012, 11). The consolidation of power redistribution in the

international structure, as identified by Joseph Nye (2011), constitutes a shift, not only geographical but also from state actors to non-state actors. In the first case, an example of this new geography of power is the reproduction of groups of emerging countries to broaden their presence and influence in the system (Viola et al. 2012). The most relevant of such groups is the one of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS⁹).

Nevertheless, the current international system is still rooted in a “conservative hegemony” (Viola et al., 2012), which is at the center of the global dynamics that navigate to the dangerous transgression of the planetary boundaries and is the prime obstacle to the definition of the safe operating space for humanity. The term “conservative” here reflects the incapacity of current structures of global governance for responding to global and interdependent problems, among which – and mainly – climate change (Viola et al. 2012, 3). Indeed, if the international institutions and cooperative behavior that have developed in recent decades to deal with environmental problems have proved insufficient in the Holocene, they become obsolete in the Anthropocene¹⁰ (Franchini et al., 2007), simply because unilateral action by states has proved “ineffective in the face of transboundary and global problems and inefficient in the face of shared or common problems” (Elliot 2004, 93).

The urgency of all the events related to environmental degradation, in addition to the characteristics and functions of global governance, has justified the importance of having a field specially focused on the environment. GEG presents the characteristics of being part of a multilayered process, which encompasses modern forms of steering that are often decentralized, open to self-organization, and less hierarchical than traditional governmental policymaking (Biermann et al. 2009). The governance process of the environment is multilayered because spatial and social interdependencies are functions of the global system that can transform local environmental degradation into transregional, or global, social, economic, and political crises (Biermann 2006). Schroeder (2010, 321) states that a global problem manifests nationally, regionally, and locally and that the responses to this kind of

⁹ Inspired by a 2001 report from Goldman Sachs the group started working in 2006 as a discussion forum on great subjects related to global governance and became formal in 2010. However, one of its biggest disadvantages are the major differences among the members.

¹⁰ The Holocene demarcated the flowering of civilization in the last 12 millennia. Anthropocene refers to the new geological epoch in which human action has become fundamental to creating a new kind of equilibrium that avoids catastrophe, i.e., building and maintaining a safe operating space for humanity. Anthropocene emphasizes the acceleration of the degradation of the biosphere in recent decades and concludes that humanity has already abandoned the previous period of stability.

problem happen in the same way. Furthermore, climate change is not only an environmental issue, but it is also an economic, social, and mainly security issue (Barros-Platau 2010).

Bulkeley and Newell (2010, 2) state that it is precisely this multilayered structure that entails the high complexity of this process. It involves multiple scales of political decision-making, fragmented and blurred roles of the state and non-state actors, and a deeply embedded nature of many different processes that led to the emission of Greenhouse Gas (GHG). The global aspect embedded in the conception of Climate Change and the multilayered property of GEG results in one of the main problems of this type of governance that is highly linked with the concept of interdependence. More specifically, it is linked to the lack of institutions compatible with the current level of interdependence. Interdependence refers to the international situation where the States or international actors develop a situation of common dependence, where the actions and decisions of one actor have a beneficial or harmful effect on others.

As several authors state, some of the central problems of the existing climate regime are its fragmentation and weak interstate negotiations at the core of a diverse set of activities, actors, and institutions (Hochstetler and Viola 2012, Engel and Saleska 2005, Depledge 2006, Dimitrov 2010, Keohane and Victor 2011). Finally, in this highly complex and interconnected context, green diplomacy enters into the analysis of this research as one of the core actors of GEG. Green diplomacy can be understood as environmentalist diplomacy (Iftime 2014), but more precisely as the diplomacy in which “the expert’s work is more important, the technical nature is more obvious, the civic participation is more direct and shared responsibility more significant” (Iftime 2014).

When applying all the observations described in this section, this research affirms that the global environmental governance is composed by a multiplicity of national and international sources of law, opinions, directives and very different actors with diverse profiles, necessities, and petitions. In the case of Brazil, this diversity of actors includes the civil society, indigenous communities, regions, the government, and experts. GEG constitutes an innovative political practice, coming from a moving and changing international, and political, scenario, that influence decision-making and policy directions but that could also mask very traditional patterns of power relations based on an embedded power hierarchy responding to levels of leadership, but also commitment, in all its different regime dimensions. Those terms are defined in the following sections.

1. The Concepts of Commitment, Leadership and Cooperation as Main Components of GEG

Two of the leading forces tailoring the structure of GEG are the degrees of commitment and leadership. In particular, the degree of climate commitment inside this context classifies the different actors of GEG as reformists or conservative (Viola et al. 2012). Regarding international actors, especially the great state powers, the more they commit to the construction of collective mechanisms of climate and economic governance, the less the system becomes conservative (Viola et al. 2012, 13). On the other side, the concept of leadership in GEG is defined as the relationship between actors in a negotiation process (to define the agenda or to implement it), in which one of the actors wants to take the lead in negotiations (aspiration), and is able to act and transform reality in a way that the other actor(s) in the relation follow(s) (Young 1991). Three elements compose the concept of leadership: policy-based leadership, structural leadership, and institutional leadership (Papa and Gleason 2012). Policy-based leadership, refers to the ability to frame problems, promote particular policy solutions, and implement them (Grubb and Gupta 2000). The second element, structural leadership, is associated with the exercise of power derived from political strength in the global order and the weight of an actor with respect to the problem at hand (Grubb and Gupta 2000). Structural leadership in the context of coalitional behavior refers to the emerging powers' ability to jointly exercise their influence to mobilize others toward sustainable development goals and create incentives and benefits for others to pursue sustainable development (or costs if they do not). Finally, instrumental leadership refers to the ability of an actor to apply negotiation skills and to politically engineer consensus (Grubb and Gupta 2000).

Leadership is also complemented by the degree of climate power of the different actors of GEG. Viola et al. (2012) conclude that the concept of power in GEG comprehends a combination of diverse dimensions of power: military capacity and economic power, which have been largely contemplated in traditional IR theory, and climate power. This third source of power is more innovative and closely related to the climate issue. Climate power resides in the volume and trajectory of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere; human and technological capital to generate a considerable impact on the transition to a low-carbon economy; and the relation between resources and energy culture (Viola et al. 2012), also called energy behavior. The concept of climate power does not exclude non-material power factors, like influence and prestige. Depending on the results given by these three different variations of power it is possible to identify superpowers, as the United States, China or the European Union; great powers, as Brazil; and finally, middle powers, like South Africa, Canada, or Argentina (Viola et al. 2012).

One of the key elements to construct an effective and efficient global governance is the shifting from sovereignty to post-sovereignty in global societies (Viola et al. 2012). This transformation requires moving from narrow interest, where the national states prevail over individual rights and over international institutions, to a broader sense of national interest interconnected with universal interests, which is characteristic of the societies where the national state is restricted by individual rights and surrenders part of its power to international institutions. Although the novelty of the specific field of global governance to the environment, this domain has suffered several changes. De Wit and De Freitas (2019) highlight two major shifts in the field of GEG. First, a shift from a single focus on climate change, to the mitigation and adaptation combo. Adaptation is about reducing the effects of climate change on both human and natural systems; and mitigation is about reducing the causes of climate change by decreasing the anthropogenic impact on the climate system (Harry and Morad 2013). Secondly, the other major shift in GEG entails a conversion to a more polycentric and multi-actor governance since the celebration of the Paris Agreement.

When placing the adaptation and mitigation combo under the focal of sustainable development, we obtain a very stimulating remark. Mitigation and adaptation both aim at reducing the risks of negative climate change impacts; but while mitigation aims at reducing the climate change effect, adaptation aims at reducing vulnerability to these effects (Harry and Morad 2013). As will be seen in the operationalization of the hypotheses, developing countries rely on this vision of vulnerability to defend their construction of the concept of sustainable development, as a term that should be intended to help them to overcome this situation of vulnerability.

As we have seen, environmental degradation and its consequences are global, thereby, countries are required to collaborate to modify their status quo and to find long-term solutions to the current dramatic situation. In other words, a state that wants to address climate change should seek formal international cooperation (Hochstetler and Viola 2012), as it should want to see other states bounded by institutions that “help states achieve their objectives through reducing contracting costs, providing focal points, enhancing information and therefore credibility, monitoring compliance, and assisting in sanctioning deviant behavior” (Keohane and Victor 2011, 8). As the reader can perceive, several crucial concepts, largely discussed in the IR theories, have been touched.

First of all, the term ‘cooperation’ has been largely discussed by the academic community, starting from the definition proposed by Keohane, who interprets cooperation as the phenomenon occurring when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences

of others through a process of policy coordination (Keohane 1986). Policy coordination supposes that the policies of each state have been adjusted to reduce their negative consequences for other states (Milner 1992). Therefore, two central elements can be drawn from this definition: each actor's behavior is directed towards some goal(s), and cooperation provides actors with gains or rewards (Milner 1992).

Cooperation, the willingness of being part of a Multilateral Environmental Agreement (hereafter MEA) and constituting an actor of GEG respond to many different explanations, including national and international inter-linkages (Boulet et al. 2016). Regarding the national context, the elite strategies, executive-legislative relations, and political pressure from interest groups and public opinion are decisive to understand the level of cooperation and involvement of a State (Lantis 2006, Barros-Platau et al. 2012). For the international level, the level of commitment of a State to the cooperative system and its level of commitment could be explained by a large array of factors. Some of them could be a State's desire to participate in a global order of liberal inspiration, certain strategies developed to set up a regional or international leadership, or the maintenance of an international reputation. Therefore, it is possible to interpret the outcomes of interest here as a two-level game, where leaders make choices facing both domestic and international arenas (Putnam 1988).

From the International Relations theory, the research agenda that suits the best the research question, hypotheses and GEG interpretation of this work is the constructivist approach. The constructivist theory argues that States are agents of the social world, as the world is socially built and perceived, and not only actors. They act towards objects, including other actors, based on the meaning that these objects have for them (Wendt 1992, 397). The constructivist approach is also interesting because what really interests this approach is not the analysis of the internal social nor historical construction of States, but the assessment of the social construction of States at the international field and the interstate social networks where States are rooted and that shape their perceptions of the world and the role they play in it (Battistella 2009, 328).

Finally, the constructivist approach is also interesting for the interpretation that it gives to the interests and identities of States. According to this approach, the national interests of States don't depend on their material factors, but on the States' identities, which refers to the representations States have of themselves and of others, of the international system, and of their place inside it and the place of other actors on the international field (Battistella 2009, 329). According to Wendt, identities refer to what actors are, and the interests refer to what actors want (Wendt 1999).

Under the logic of this research, this study considers that it would be interesting to mobilize the reasoning behind the constructivist theory of IR to assess how Brazil has constructed its environmental status since 1992 and how it has defended its issue-matters above the international agenda, but mainly its defense of sustainable development. The constructivist approach emphasizes the impact of ideas, they regard the interests and identities of States as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes (Walt 1998, 40-41).

Complementing the tools of the constructivist theory, this research supplements the assessment of this paper using the post-structuralism logic to assess the Brazilian discourse about sustainable development. This approach argues that there is an indivisible relation between language and the social representation of the world. The ‘real’ world exists without any doubt, nevertheless, it is impossible to us, as social beings, to know it beyond the fact of its assertion because the existence of the world is inconceivable outside of the language and our traditions of interpretation (Campbell 1992, 6). As an example, the work of Barros-Platiau et al. (2004) analyzes the decision of using the term Earth or World, as a way of showing the understanding of the environment as a physical space or as a human space, respectively. Nevertheless, the physical space, even if it is composed of physical and natural realities, can be as well socially constructed, or even better, the fact of referring to it as Earth or environment strongly depends on the way human beings socially feel towards it. For its part, the word World refers to the political, economic, and social interactions among all the world’s individuals (Barros-Platiau et al. 2004).

The role of Brazil in GEG offers to the context of this paper the perfect case study on the basis of its unsteady trajectory in the environmental field. It has been constructing some proper statements and positioning to defend its discourse and to be placed as a key player in GEG. This case study also offers the possibility to deconstruct the Brazilian defense of sustainable development, not with the intention of assessing what is true and what is not, but of assessing the consequences of such an interpretation and revealing its status in the international field.

As the review of the literature has shown, Brazil’s statements in the international environmental protection has shifted from a veto to a proposition position. It has also been accused of “climate myth” (Franchini and Viola, 2018) by presenting an image at the international field but proving the opposite at the national stage. Brazilian environmental concern is highly linked to its economic situation, two elements that are proved difficult to merge, as the main contestations to the concept of sustainable development has proved. The perfect case study to assess this intersection between these two fields is the Amazon, where deforestation and land use and land

change clash with environmental concerns and suppose main challenges to the Green Brazilian Agenda, which faces both international and national contestations and positions.

C. Emerging Countries

There is a considerable literature about the emergence, development, and role of countries such as Brazil, China, India, or South Africa. Categorized as emerging countries, they have been a very stimulating topic that has caught the attention of several scholars during the last decade. There is the general perception that power is shifting in global politics and that emerging powers are assuming a more prominent, active, and essential role (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). Much of the attention has been placed on the relationship between emerging and traditional powers (Hochstetler and Inoue 2019), but it would also be interesting to combine this traditional stance and the assessment of the relationship of these countries with other developing countries, especially on the field of GEG.

Possible contemplation of what it means to be considered as an emerging power is given by Macfarlane (2006), who defines the notion of emerging powers as presenting the common characteristics of regional preponderance, aspiration to a global role, and the contesting of US hegemony. Special attention is placed on this idea of contestation because labels like ‘South’, ‘third world’, ‘emerging countries’ or ‘developing countries’ insist on their essential similarity: opposition to the developed ‘North’ (Hochstetler 2012). Katzenstein (2005) contributes by arguing that in order to assess a country as emerging, two material indicators should be taken into account: the strategic action and sheer weight (Katzenstein 2005, 21).

The countries categorized as ‘emerging’ share a set of material features that are commonly analytically associated with being an ‘emerging power’, but each has a somewhat different set of the attributes (Collier and Mahon 1993, 847). China and India share the distinction of having had very fast economic growth rates for the last decade or more, while Brazil and South Africa are closer to the global average (Hochstetler 2012). Furthermore, Brazil, China, and India are among the top 10 of the world’s very largest economies. All are considered regional powers, although China and India are neighbors, and so cannot both be in any straightforward sense (Hochstetler 2012). This pattern extends to the climate area, where all of the four are increasingly important current contributors of greenhouse gases (GHG), but China and India contribute through increasingly high aggregate emissions while Brazil and South Africa are higher in per capita terms (Viola 2010).

Of course, the fact of being considered or to be denoted as emerging does not only imply analytical consequences, but there are political reasons and interests hidden under the concept. First of all, behind the idea of ‘emerging power’ or ‘emerging country’ lies the theoretical assumption that the international behavior of states is determined by their place in the international system (Macfarlane 2006). In other words, they do what they do because they are where they are. The main objective of these countries when labeled as emerging is to obtain leadership and hegemony (Hochstetler and Inoue 2019) but also to be considered as ‘global players’ in the international scenario (Becard et al. 2015). This implies not only the search for material and economic development but also, they are seeking for status and recognition (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). It is interesting to take into account the contribution of Becard et al. (2015), which states that these countries share the common interest of using the context of BRICS for discussing the questions of development and showing to the traditional international powers that they can take the lead at solving the problems of their members.

The logic inside GEG is deeply shaped by these discourses and the global distribution of economic power, mainly because of the direct link between environment and economic development, but also because environmental problems alter the traditional North-South relationship. States seek to develop a successful national economic development, which passes through a prosperous economy, wealthy social lifestyles and high consumption patterns. The combination of all these elements in a business as usual scenario leads to greater national power and autonomy, on the one hand, and the degradation of the environment, on the other. In addition, the question related to climate change is linked with questions of relative power and global inequality and, thereby, the environment is central to the development-power-autonomy nexus, sharpening resource competition and intensifying distributional conflicts (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012).

The study of GEG and how emerging powers are trying not only to enter but to level this field defending their discourse is highly interesting for the political science and under the international relations’ theoretical lens. We are witnessing how the global scenario is changing as a result not only of globalization, but as well, and inherent to it, of the breaking of the bipolar and then unipolar system, mostly because of the rise of new powers (Boulet et al. 2016). It is not hard to imagine the degree of complexity that these new actors’ statements and incorporation have supposed to GEG and principally to the traditional dynamics of power competition. They provoke that the traditional powers find more difficult to attain international compromises and a global positioning towards the question of the environment. Their economic

size and dynamism, their increasing share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and their overall political salience and foreign policy activism have all become more prominent (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). Nevertheless, the extent to which these powers have been able to seize this opportunity is part of the questions this paper seeks to answer.

Related to the discourse of emerging powers in the context of GEG, they self-perceived themselves as members of the South, and have made great emphasis on arguments for fairness, most especially concerning the historic responsibility for climate change (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). What they refer to this historical responsibility is that environmental degradation, mainly climate change, is a problem that has been primarily caused by past overconsumption by the planet's wealthiest inhabitants but whose brunt will be borne mostly by the poorest. Nevertheless, given the latest economic parameters and updated GHG emissions data, several international actors and authors consider that these countries should drop the developing country categorization and they should not hide behind the idea of not taking responsibilities.

The degree of involvement or influence of emerging countries is analyzed by DeSombre (2000b), who argued that two important characteristics of environmental issues influence developing country actions in negotiations on international environmental issues and their ability to gain certain types of outcomes in these negotiations: the extent to which an environmental issue is excludable, when states can keep others from enjoying the benefits of a protected environment, and the extent to which a resource is rival (i.e., when the use of the resource by one actor diminishes that resource's value to another actor).

Emerging countries tend to work in a coalition with developing countries and/or in a group with all the emerging powers. In this sense, the context of GEG offers the possibility of assessing the coalitional power of emerging countries. The two more important associations of these characteristics are the G-77/China and the BASIC group. The role of the Group of 77 (G-77) in GEG is to merge all the common developing countries' positions and be the "negotiating arm of the developing countries' collective" (Hochstetler, 2012). Besides, four of the largest and/or fastest-growing developing states – Brazil, China, India, and South Africa – joined together for the first time as the BASIC group in Copenhagen in 2009 (Hochstetler, 2012). They issue Joint Statements at the end of each meeting, which report that they also use the meetings to share successful experiences and to work through key concepts like equity, and in the case of this work, we will assess the discussion of this group, placing special attention to the contributions of Brazil, about the concept of sustainable development. Over time, the G-77 and BASIC have moved away from a strong stance that assumes that greater environmental

protection is incompatible with its development goals, accepting the aim of sustainable development, although G-77's member states have defined the effectiveness and legitimacy of international environmental agreements in terms of whether they result in development outcomes like poverty reduction (Najam 2005).

IV. Methodology of the Research and Operationalization of the Hypotheses

It would be useful at this point to recall the research question of this work. The prime objective of this research is to take the case study of the Brazilian position to protect the Amazon at the international level in order to assess the evolution of the balance between international environmental protection and economic development. By sharpening this objective, the research question of this work is how emerging countries, in this case Brazil, have constructed a different connotation of the term sustainable development in the international scenario that takes into consideration their economic and social circumstances. Therefore, the dependent variable of our research question is the one of the transformations of the concept of sustainable development, while the independent variables are the ones of special and social circumstances of emerging countries. Once this is detailed, the hypotheses that this work aims at assessing are the ones of the possible Brazilian construction of a conceptualization of sustainable development that differs from the originally defended consideration; the possible instrumentalization by Brazil of the concept in the international stage to contest Northern leadership; and finally, the distancing from the true essence of the term by reducing it to a bargaining tool. In order to verify or discard these hypotheses, the indicators on which this work bases the operationalization are those of the positions and statements made by Brazil during international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development, in order to check whether these statements are different from the original conceptualization of the term or whether they propose changes. Secondly, the final official documents of each of the international meetings are also mobilized as indicators in order to check whether the Brazilian statements manage to permeate the official documents and therefore Brazil has succeeded in transforming the term into one that better reflects its special circumstances. Finally, in order to verify the hypotheses of instrumentalization and distancing from the true essence of the term, the indicators applied are those of Brazil's arguments on the different occasions and the proposals and actions carried out by the country.

When developing the operationalization of this work's hypotheses, we are conscious of the complexity to assess not only the evolution of the concept of sustainable development in the international sphere, but also, the difficulty of assessing the different nuances, intentions and

political power that the Brazilian government has given to the concept. It is for this reason that this work tries to operationalize the hypotheses by performing a deep qualitative research method of the official documents, position statements, and speeches of Brazil in the context of international summits and negotiations from 1992 to 2018. Given the density and large quantity of official documents in GEG and the limitations of this research, we have focused on the different meetings to three major conventions and commissions. First of all, the different Conferences of the Parties (COPs) since 1995 to 2018 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Secondly, this work studies the different sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Finally, the different COPs of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In these summits Brazil has not only played an important role (as it is going to be detailed), but also the Amazon is considered a key element.

Furthermore, the reader should be aware that the logic behind the presentation of the analysis responds to a ‘funnel’ logic, from a vaguer to a more precise analysis of our case study: the protection of the Amazon and the defense of the concept of sustainable development. In this sense, this research analyzes the different speeches, position statements, and contributions of Brazil during the meetings, but also the original, collective and shared definitions and descriptions of sustainable development during the different meetings in order to assess the possible evolution and inclusion of the Brazilian remarks. In order to ease the comprehension of such an abstract assessment of the question of research and hypotheses of this work, each phase is at the same time divided in different subsections aiming at testing the different hypotheses of transformation, instrumentalization and distancing from the pure essence of protection of the environment of the concept sustainable development. The reader must bear in mind that, as the hypotheses of this research are highly connected to each other, the statements presented in these different subparagraphs could be considered as highly related to each other as well. For understanding the correct timeline of the COPs to the different Conventions, a detailed list is presented in [Appendix II](#), including the different dates and locations of the meetings.

Major attention has been placed on the analysis of the documents submitted and produced in the context of the Earth Summit in 1992, the Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 in Johannesburg, Rio+20, and finally, the Paris Agreement. The reasons why these occasions are considered as fundamental in order to correctly test the hypotheses of this research and to gain insight of the Brazilian possible leadership in GEG, respond to reasons of location of the meetings, but mostly because of the subject at the spotlight of the meetings: Sustainable

Development itself. Furthermore, it is also interesting to remark that the analysis of these summits offers us the possibility of assessing the possible evolution of the concept and the contributions of Brazil.

The first phase of the operationalization of the hypotheses aims at setting the basis of national and international interests in the defense of sustainable development as a term that at its beginnings dealt with the protection of the environment and as one of the solutions for tackling Climate Change. Secondly, the analysis of the different sessions to the Commission on Sustainable Development seeks at isolating the term in its most precise context in order to assess not only the transformation motivated by Brazil but also the possible instrumentalization of the term aiming at contesting the Northern leadership. Finally, the third phase of this operationalization, centered on the context of the COPs to the Convention on Biological Diversity, targets the evaluation of the hypotheses of transformation of the concept of sustainable development and the creation of a bargaining tool in the international context but sharpening the focus on the Amazon rainforest.

A. First Phase: Brazilian evolution and contributions to the concept of sustainable development in the context of COPs to the UNFCCC (1992-2018)

The first phase of the assessment of this research's hypotheses will deal with the different conference of the parties (COPs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The reason behind the choice of assessing these international summits responds to the fact that the discussions about climate change supposed the beginning of the diversification of domains about environmental protection. Furthermore, given the breadth of topics discussed in these meetings and a large number of Member States to the Convention¹¹ (Parties), the analysis of this COPs offers the perfect opportunity to start outlining the lines of the possible transformation, instrumentalization and distancing from the true essence of the of sustainable development.

1. Brazilian Transformation of the Concept of Sustainable Development

The first COP to the UNFCCC was held in Berlin in 1995, however, given the hypotheses and the question of this research, we shall begin by the analysis of the Rio Summit of 1992. Rio-92 was not only of capital importance because it was hosted by Brazil, but also because three

¹¹ When referring to the Convention, we are referring to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in New York on 9 May 1992.

crucial documents to the evolution of the international fight against Climate Change and the protection of the environment were elaborated: the Rio Declaration, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Statement of Forest Principles. The Convention on Biological Diversity will be analyzed in deep in the phase 3 of the analysis, but, at this point, it must be acknowledged that within the negotiations of this document, the main problematic issue was that there was the perception by certain sectors that biological and genetic resources should be included in the *global commons*, in other words, resource domains to which all nations have legal access (Buck 1998, 6).

The position of Brazil during the Earth Summit was influenced by several aspects such as its important role in the environmental issue because of its megadiverse condition, but also, according to the Brazilian green diplomacy, the country was concerned by the entire environmental agenda: pollution, forests, fishing, population, poverty, biodiversity, desertification and drought, soil resources, water resources, toxic waste and emissions (Brazil, Itamaraty 2009). Furthermore, the country is considered as in a prominent position among developing countries and regional leadership. All of these aspects together with the hosting of the Summit led former President Fernando Collor, in 1990, to present Brazil as the world leader of the environmental cause:

“(Brazil) leads with conviction and firmness the fight for the protection of the environment and for the strengthening of ecological awareness in Brazil and all over the world”¹².

With this backdrop, Brazilian adopted a leadership posture in the meeting mainly based on its contribution to uniting all of the common positions of Latin America and the Caribbean, hence increasing its regional leadership. Indeed, Brazil took the lead by merging all these common positions in a joint document, the Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development.

Aiming at starting to outline Brazil's leading positions in the international defense of the environment, it seems convenient to start by describing the main parts of the Rio Declaration and its core principles. The final document considers sustainable development as the harmony between humans and nature (Principle 1). Always taking into consideration their sovereignty (Principle 2), States have the right to develop but always taking into consideration the needs of present and future generations (Principle 3). Nevertheless, in order to achieve sustainable

¹² COLLOR, Fernando. Speech given during a visit to the Tijuca National Park, Rio de Janeiro, 11th August 1990. In Brazil, Itamaraty (2009), page 145.

development, “environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development of the process” (Principle 4). In this context, the special needs and situations of developing countries and least-developed countries shall be given special priority (Principle 6). The Principle 7 and Principle 12 of the Declaration underscore the necessity of interstate cooperation to pursue the objective of sustainable development. It is interesting to remark that in Principle 7 of the Declaration of the Earth Summit in 1992, it is already present the concept of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities”, related to the different States’ contributions to environmental responsibilities. It should also be remarked that in Principle 8, countries compromised to reduce and to eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. These principles should be kept in mind to assess their evolution through time and this analysis.

Another crucial document elaborated during this Earth Summit is the final report of Agenda 21. It envisages the accomplishment of Sustainable Development as the global promotion of trade liberalization, making trade and environment mutually supportive (paragraph 2.3, point b). Agenda 21 also devotes a chapter to the question of deforestation (Chapter 11: Combatting Deforestation). The objective of Agenda 21 in this domain is:

“To strengthen forest-related national institutions, to enhance the scope and effectiveness of activities related to the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, to effectively ensure the sustainable development of forests and its production of goods and services in both developed and developing countries” (Agenda 21, 1992, chapter 11, 11.2, point a).

Brazilian main position towards the question of forests was to avoid measures that emphasized the role of forests as CO₂ sinks, “which removed the focus from those truly responsible for emissions: the industrialized countries” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 150) but also, as it will be discussed in the third and final phase of this assessment, to include different types of forests into the umbrella of Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity and not only tropical forests.

The final document acknowledges the urgency to apply the concept of sustainable development to forests, because, as it is specified in the report, “forests worldwide have been and are being threatened by uncontrolled degradation and conversion to other types of land uses” (chapter 11, paragraph 10). Most importantly to the objective of this research, signatory countries commit themselves to “ensure sustainable management and, where appropriate, conservation of existing and future forest resources” (point c) and to “maintain and increase the ecological, biological, climatic, socio-cultural and economic contributions of forest resources” (point d). In fact, in order to well-address the question of the protection of forests, Agenda 21 subscribes that it is

really important to rightly categorize the different forests within the framework of long-term forest conservation and management policies, into different forest types and setting up sustainable units in every region (Chapter 11, paragraph 11.13). With the inclusion of the specifications ‘worldwide’ and ‘economic contributions of forest resources’, the text positions itself in accordance with the Brazilian petitions, because all forests are concerned, and it accepts that developing countries can develop through their forest resources.

Besides, three lead subjects were discussed during the debates about Agenda 21: to create an independent financial mechanism with significant resources; to enable efficient technology transfer and to reform and strengthen institutions that will lead to the institutionalization of sustainable development; and the monitorization of the commitments and national situations. Some of the most heated debates turned around the domain of financial mechanisms: The Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

According to the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty), GEF “was far from being the financial mechanism that the developing countries would have liked to have seen created in Rio [...] because GEF could not, nor intended to, provide the resources deemed necessary for the execution of Agenda 21, also because GEF was placed under the aegis of the World Bank” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 71). Brazilian statements in this subject were asking to greater transparency, universality and balance in the management of financial mechanisms and decision-making process of GEF (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 72).

The Brazilian response to Agenda 21 arrived in the form of *Agenda 21 Brasileira*. This document was produced by Brazil in the year 2002, responding to the celebration of the Rio+20. Several documents discuss the basis of Agenda 21 and the definition of sustainable development defended in the original document. An example of this is the *Gestão dos Recursos Naturais* published by the *Ministério do Meio Ambiente* in 2000. In this document, Brazil defends that development and environment are a central and indissoluble binomial¹³. Furthermore, they add to this definition the “need to change the traditional models of the economic development that has provoked serious and negative impacts in the society and the environment”¹⁴. The question at this point is, what does Brazil refers to when talking about

¹³ Translation proposed by the author for: “*desenvolvimento e meio ambiente constituem um binômio central e indissolúvel*” (Brazil MMA, 2000)

¹⁴ Translation proposed by the author for: “*A base dessa construção – o conceito de desenvolvimento sustentável – surge como contraponto aos tradicionais modelos de desenvolvimento econômico, caracterizados pelos fortes impactos negativos na sociedade e no meio ambiente*” (Brazil MMA, 2000)

traditional models? The answer is given in *Agenda 21 Brasileira*. The report specifies that Brazil's definition of sustainable development is the one of Brundtland of 1987. Nevertheless, the report develops a particular conceptualization of the concept by arguing that this definition mostly refers to the willingness to transform the traditional model that harms society and the environment, meaning by traditional model the one imposed until now by the developed countries. The report argues that:

“The concept of sustainable development must refer to a stable social and economic development, balanced, with mechanisms for the distribution of the wealth generated and with the capacity to consider the fragility, interdependence and time scales specific to natural resources”¹⁵. (Brazil MMA, 2000)

In the context of this work, we also analyze the official report of the Actions taken during the Third Conference of the Parties (document FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1) and the Report of the Conference (FCCC/CP/1997/7) in order to evaluate whether the Brazilian proposals had been taken into consideration. Doing so, it is possible to find in the two reports references to the Brazilian proposals and the intention to study the technical propositions of Brazil in order to include and discuss them in the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties:

“At its 5th plenary meeting, on 5 December, the Conference of the Parties, on the proposal of the President, decided that the proposal presented by Brazil in document FCCC/AGBM/1997/MISC.1/Add.3 should be referred to the SBSTA¹⁶ for its advice regarding the methodological and scientific aspects. It authorized the SBSTA to seek inputs, as appropriate, from its roster of experts and from the IPCC, and requested it to make its advice available to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session. The representative of Brazil made a statement in connection with that decision” (FCCC/CP/1997/7, point 70).

After analyzing the Report and Actions taken of COP-4, we realize that the Brazilian proposals were validated by the SBSTA but that it was necessary to continue with their study in order to assess its applicability in the future in order to take into consideration the level of emissions of the Parties (FCCC/CP/1998/16/Add.1, 71).

Nevertheless, we should note the Statement made by the President of the Conference at its fourth session, Ms. María Julia Alsogaray, Secretary of Natural Resources and Sustainable

¹⁵ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Desenvolvimento sustentável deve, portanto, significar desenvolvimento social e econômico estável, equilibrado, com mecanismos de distribuição das riquezas geradas e com capacidade de considerar a fragilidade, a interdependência e as escalas de tempo próprias e específicas dos recursos naturais*” (Brazil MMA, 2000)

¹⁶ Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Development of Argentina. It is interesting because, during her speech, the President directly referred to the discourse of the differentiation between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties regarding the definition of sustainable development and asked for further commitments of developing countries:

“The role of non-Annex I countries should not be limited to demanding that the industrialized countries should reverse the damage caused by development models that did not take environmental considerations into account. They too had the ethical duty to adopt social, economic and technological models that would lead to sustainable development. It was time to stop arguing about who was to blame for the past and to start taking the steps needed so as not to be blamed for the future” (FCCC/CP/1998/16, 7).

If we move forward in time, we arrive to COP-6, celebrated in The Hague in 2000. It is, by analyzing the reports of the meetings, that we find that the Parties argued to submit different national communications in order to assess an optimal pursuing of the concept of sustainable development and avoid maladaptation by a case-by-case analysis that would lead to the maximization of each countries’ benefits from sustainable development ((FCCC/CP/2000/5/Add.3 (VOL II), 6). The relevance of this statement in the context of this research is to justify the consideration of the arguments put forward by Brazil, and hence, the case-by-case consideration of environmental commitments and responsibility.

Until this point, one thing is clear, there is a difference between Parties when talking about their commitments to halt Climate Change and their interpretation of the concept of sustainable development. Several of the main decisions taken under COP-6 illustrate this point, such as the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allows industrialized countries to fund emissions reduction activities in developing countries as an alternative to domestic emission reductions. Additionally, one of the prime decisions taken during COP-6 was the acceptance of carbon sinks. It is interesting because the core positioning of Brazil was to avoid the consideration of forests as carbon sinks. Nevertheless, this idea of carbon sink was mixed with financial bonifications for well-functioning carbon capture’s activities, meaning that credit would be granted for broad activities that absorb carbon from the atmosphere or store it. Within these activities, forest and cropland management were included, but also, activities of revegetation. Most importantly, there was no overall cap on the amount of credit that a country could claim for sink activities (Karling 2007).

Resulting from COP-8 (2002, New Delhi) discussions and negotiations, the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development emerged. Analyzing the

document, we are able to find some of the positions that the Brazilian delegations have been defending up to this point. First of all, the document specifies that sustainable development comes with economic and social development first, and hence, eradication of poverty is “the first and overriding priority of developing country Parties” (FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, 3). In this sense, the document also makes particular reference to differentiation between developed and developing countries. Nevertheless, this reference is made specially to Africa because the document recognizes that “Africa is the region suffering the most from the combined impacts of climate change and poverty” (FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, 3).

Furthermore, the necessity of cooperating is repeated several times in the document by technology transfer and the exchange of information. Nevertheless, the most interesting paragraph of the document, always in the context of this research, is paragraph *d*, which specifies:

“All Parties, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, should continue to advance the implementation of their commitments under the Convention to address climate change and its adverse effects in order to achieve sustainable development” (FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, 4).

Not only is the distinction between countries embodied in the document, but social development is defined as the greatest international priority where countries have a duty to promote it. Furthermore, the paragraph makes references to the commitments done under the Convention in order to achieve sustainable development. This is therefore, an example of how Brazil's arguments are taken into consideration and manage to permeate the final and official COPs' documents.

Regarding the celebration of COP-9 in Milan, 2003, an interesting change on the Brazilian strategy was applied: the position of Brazil started to change towards the one of a voluntary participation and collaboration on the reduction of emissions, as the discourse of the former Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Claudio Langone, defended:

“Brazil, although it has no explicit obligations to reduce its emissions, in accordance with the Convention on Climate Change, promotes a series of actions that contribute to the objective of the

Convention: reduce the pollution released into the atmosphere which has contributed to the amplification of the greenhouse effect and to global warming”¹⁷ (MMA, December 2003)

It is exactly at this point where Brazil based its leadership in the environmental question in GEG, because, according to the Brazilian green diplomacy, even without having any responsibility or obligation to commit to protect its environment, they have made great engagements.

In the year 2004, Brazil published its First National Communication (NC) to the UNFCCC. These NCs themselves could be considered as a success for the petitions of a more case-by-case interpretation of sustainable development and protection of the environment. The content of each NC aims at presenting the efforts, situations and special circumstances of each State at implementing the decisions of each COP to the UNFCCC and tackling Climate Change. The report of Brazil outlines the sustainable development of the Amazon as the perfect combination of its three pillars, but also as the exploitation of forest resources based on an equilibrium between regeneration and production. It defines sustainable forest management as “the forest administration to obtain economic and social benefits, while respecting the maintenance mechanism of the ecosystem that is the object of management” (Brazil INC 2004, 244), and alleges that the main threats to the rainforest are the low profitability of forest management as a consequence of the competition caused by illegal deforestation, market failures related to the lack of definition of property rights, institutional failures and difficulties in regulating property rights, the weak institutional structures of the region and the unequal distribution of land (Brazil INC 2004, 245).

Brazil considers that the implementation of sustainable development in the long-term, as we have seen, passes through the eradication of poverty, the international cooperation and multilateralism, the economic development of the country, the transfer of technology and capacity-building in order to implement sustainable methods to develop the country, the participation of all the different levels of governance, and the rise of awareness of the population regarding the environmental question. Regarding the Amazon, the report develops this question in the section entitled as Land-Use Change and Forestry. According to Brazil, the respect of sustainable development in the Amazon implies a holistic consideration of not only

¹⁷ Translation proposed by the author for “*o Brasil, apesar de não ter obrigações explícitas em reduzir suas emissões, de acordo com a Convenção sobre Mudanças Climáticas, promove uma série de ações que contribuem para o objetivo da Convenção: reduzir a poluição lançada na atmosfera que tem contribuído para a ampliação do efeito estufa e para o aquecimento global*” (MMA, December 2003)

the necessities of the country, but also of the different regions of the Amazonian rainforest. For them, the unsustainable methods of the Amazon are not recent, but they respond to a historical tradition based on low prices of the lands, the historical perception that resources are inexhaustible, the traditional governmental incentives to attract the private sector to the rainforest that “have only sought to get the biggest benefits without considering the environmental damages” (Brazil INC 2004, 243).

During the celebration of the COP-11, 2005, the former Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva pronounced a speech full of very interesting arguments. The Minister presented Brazil as the author of the idea of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and “responsible for the largest number of CDM projects approved so far by the Executive Board”¹⁸ (Marina Silva, December 2005). Based on this leadership and commitment, the Minister urged Parties to the Convention to seize the opportunity of the meeting to launch the process of negotiations for the second period of compromises under the Kyoto Protocol.

When analyzing the final report of COP-11 of 2005, we find the section dedicated to the issue of development and transfer of technologies. In this part we find the following paragraph:

“At its 8th meeting, on 9–10 December, the COP, acting upon a recommendation by the SBSTA, adopted decision 6/CP.11 entitled “Development and transfer of technologies” (FCCC/CP/2005/5/Add.1)” (FCCC/CP/2005/5, 16, point 68).

The paragraph is interesting because it does not only consider the issues of the transfer of technologies and international cooperation, but also, it refers to the SBSTA as the organ recommending the best solution to the questions related to them. This is relevant because, as the United Nations details, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), together with the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), work on cross-cutting issues always taking into consideration the vulnerability of developing countries to climate change and response measures. Therefore, the decisions taken under the shadow of SBSTA are based on developing countries best interests. The mere existence of these organs reflects the consideration of the statements made by these countries.

¹⁸ Translation proposed by the author for: “*O Brasil, autor da ideia do MDL, ainda em 1997, responsável pelo maior número de projetos de MDL aprovados até o momento pelo Executive Board*” (Marina Silva, December 2005)

In the Report of the meeting, we also find the intervention of the President of the Conference, Mr. Stéphane Dion, former Minister of the Environment of Canada. Based on the consultations the President had undertaken in preparation for the COP, he indicated that:

“There was room for improvement in several key areas of operationalization of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, the clean development mechanism should be strengthened, and measures on adaptation and the transfer and development of technologies had to be enhanced” (FCCC/CP/2005/5, 8).

It is not difficult to identify that in this room for improvement of the framework of implementation of that time, the President identifies many of the factors that Brazil, as emergent country, had identified. This Conference of the Parties is also highly interesting because it is possible to find an example of the coalitional power of developing and emerging countries. In the field of “Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action”, Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica submitted a document entitled *FCCP/CP/2005/MISC.1* where they expressed their common views to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries. In the document, they identified as the main aspects on this issue, the exchange of relevant information and experiences, but also the exchange of policy approaches and positive incentives. This document was not only submitted by these two countries, but several nations supported the document, and tried to encourage the implementation of the proposals detailed within it. These countries were asking for greater incentives and a mandate within the UNFCCC for reducing emissions from tropical deforestation.

Apparently, and as illustrated at the end of the submission, in Annex I, Brazil was not one of the Parties that had submitted an official expression of support for the inclusion of an agenda item on “Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries: approaches to stimulate action”. Nevertheless, in the website of the Ministry of the Environment, it is possible to find an article, dating from 2006, thus, the celebration of the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention in Nairobi, Kenya, on which a very similar proposal to the one of Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea is presented:

“The Environment Minister Marina Silva will present on Wednesday (15th), during the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP-12) in Nairobi, Kenya, the Brazilian proposal to create a positive incentive mechanism for developing countries that effectively reduce their

greenhouse gas emissions by fighting deforestation. The event brings together over 180 nations"¹⁹ (Brazil MMA November 2006).

The article, in addition to serving as a possible affirmation of Brazil's leadership among developing countries and the region, continues by making reference to the fact that all the commitments and proposals of Brazil and developing countries in terms of reducing the effects of Climate Change are voluntary, and that developed countries are the ones that have the obligation to halt these harming effects. Also, it blames developed countries to have primary responsibility for the environmental situation because of their energy matrix, mainly based on fossil fuels. For Brazil, this is not a crucial question, according to the article, because it counts with al already clean energy matrix (Brazil MMA November 2006).

One of the main cornerstones in the historical evolution of GEG is the celebration of COP-13 in 2007. During this meeting important decisions were made, but the central one was the elaboration of the Bali Road Map. The Bali Action Plan consists of a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome with concrete action, resources and timelines (FCCC/CP/2007/6, 14). At the beginning of the Report, the President of the 13th Conference of the Parties, Mr. Witoelar, declared that the situation of the transfer of technologies and multilateral cooperation have not been enough up until then, and that little progress has been made until this point (FCCP/CP/2007/6, 6). This is another point benefitting Brazilian interests, because it matches with the major statements highlighted by Brazilian delegations.

Furthermore, this summit also offers the possibility of assessing the role of Brazil and the importance of coalitions, as the report indicated how developing countries were supporting each other and highlighting their homologues' remarks, as it is shown in the point 61 of the Report:

"Costa Rica supported South Africa and stated its understanding that national circumstances, in particular between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, as well as among non-Annex I Parties, would be considered. Turkey supported the statement by Bangladesh and other delegations that joined the consensus. **Egypt stated its understanding that "appropriate" in paragraph 1 (b)(ii) referred to**

¹⁹ Translation proposed by the author for: "*A ministra do Meio Ambiente, Marina Silva, apresenta nesta quarta-feira (15), durante a 12ª Conferência das Partes da Convenção sobre Mudança do Clima (COP-12) em Nairóbi, no Quênia, a proposta brasileira de criação de um mecanismo de incentivos positivos para países em desenvolvimento que efetivamente reduzirem suas emissões de gases de efeito estufa por meio do combate ao desmatamento. O evento reúne mais de 180 nações*" (Brazil MMA November 2006)

different levels of development in developing countries. A number of Parties expressed support for these statements, including Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. South Africa stated that, in its reading, paragraph 1 (b)(ii) took commitments of developing countries further than what was expected of them under the Convention. He noted that developing countries were voluntarily saying that they were prepared to commit to measurable, reportable and verifiable actions. **In addition, Brazil stated that the text with the proposed amendments presented a balanced and fair basis to launch the efforts by the international community to arrive at a stronger universal arrangement and that it was prepared to work positively in a proactive way by adopting measurable, reportable and verifiable national actions”** (FCCP/CP/2007/6, p. 15, point 61).

Both, the statement of Brazil and the Egyptian proposition of ‘appropriate’ seek to achieve a more individual approach that takes into account the special and unique circumstances of each country. It was also during the celebration of COP-13 that Brazil announced the program *Fundo de Proteção e Conservação da Amazônia Brasileira*. The objective of the initiative was to transform the reduction of emissions from deforestation into a financing system for the conservation and sustainable use of the forest. The country was hoping to attract additional resources for Amazon conservation and to demonstrate the viability of the positive incentive mechanism, under discussion in the Climate Change Convention (Brazil MMA, 12 December 2007). By reading the basis of the initiative, we can argue that for Brazil the main elements to the sustainable development of the Amazon passed through the incorporation of different actors, the three different levels of government and the civil society, the monitoring of the deforestation trends, payment for environmental services, training and qualification, transfer of technologies and capacity-building to Brazil and from Brazil to other developing, tropical countries (Brazil MMA, 12 December 2007). Besides, after assessing all the documents and the different contributions of Brazil during COP-13, it is possible to remark one important step for considering that the Brazilian success at transforming GEG and, hence, the connotation and breadth of sustainable development. We are referring here to the Brazilian success at getting reductions of emissions from deforestation contemplated under the Convention for the first time (Brazil MMA, 30 December 2007).

In the report about the actions taken during the celebration of the COP-14, the Parties to the Convention accepted the petitions of developing countries to improve the mechanism of the transfer of technologies and its direct link with the development and implementation of sustainable development. Indeed, in the Decision 2/CP.14 paragraph 1 the Conference states that it “welcomes the Poznan strategic program on technology transfer, as a step towards scaling up the level of investment in technology transfer in order to help developing countries address

their needs for environmentally sound technologies, and recognizes the contribution that this strategic program could make to enhancing technology transfer activities under the Convention” (FCCP/CP/2008/7/Add.1, 3).

During COP-15, Copenhagen 2009, former President Lula da Silva, pronounced a speech charged with references to what we have seen until this point. Da Silva declared that by controlling global warming we are protecting the environment as well, promoting economic growth and overcoming social exclusion (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009). He also declared that Brazil needed:

“concrete and fair actions supported by expressive financial and technological means. They should reflect the participation of each country, over the last centuries, in the increase in temperature. It is fundamental to respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities”²⁰ (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009).

This intervention is relevant because, firstly, da Silva considers the concept of sustainable development as the combination of the protection of the environment with the economic sphere and the eradication of poverty, because according to Lula, the “fight against climate change cannot be based on the perpetuation of poverty”²¹ (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009). Secondly, the discourse of the president manifests the need of improved international cooperation as well, which takes into consideration the historical situation of all the Parties and their contributions to the environment. It is related to this point where the former President made reference to the concept of comparability in the Bali Action’s Plan, that is to say, developed countries must make bigger commitments, but also developing countries must make their correspondent contribution to the global mitigation effort (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009). Nevertheless, as understood by the last part of this point, da Silva also denounced the lack of proper instruments to help developing countries to boost their propositions and projects. Despite proposing projects that could have a major positive effect on environmental protection at national, but also international level, they could only be carried out “if international flows of

²⁰ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Precisamos de ações concretas e justas, amparadas em meios financeiros e tecnológicos expressivos. Elas devem refletir a participação de cada país, ao longo dos últimos séculos, no aumento da temperatura. É fundamental respeitar o princípio de responsabilidades comuns, porém diferenciadas*” (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009)

²¹ Translation proposed by the author for: “*O combate à mudança do clima não pode fundamentar-se na perpetuação da pobreza*” (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009)

technological and financial support cease to be – as they are today – timid promises or perhaps just a mirage”²² (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009).

The Conference’s outcome was the Copenhagen Accord. In the report of the Actions Taken during COP-15, the Parties emphasized their “strong political will to urgently combat climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (FCCP/CP/2009/11/Add.1, page 5, point 1). Parties also stated that they “should cooperate in achieving the peaking of global and national emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that the time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries and bearing in mind that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries and that a low-emission development strategy is indispensable to sustainable development” (FCCP/CP/2009/11/Add.1, p. 5-6, point 2).

Another of the main points of the Copenhagen Accord proves the awareness and implementation of Brazilian statements. The Parties, after recognizing the crucial role of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, agreed on “scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding” (FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1, p. 6-7, point 8). It was also agreed that developing countries shall have improved access to this funding in order to support and enable enhanced action on mitigation, but most important, developing countries should have access to substantial finance “to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), adaptation, technology development and transfers and capacity-building, for enhanced implementation of the Convention” ((FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1, p. 6-7, point 8). In this sense, Parties accorded to create the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund to work as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects and program policies related to mitigation in developing countries. Among these activities, REDD+ received an important consideration, but also capacity-building and technology development and transfer.

Decision 4 of COP-15 also merits consideration as it is concerned with the methodological guidance for activities related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. The simple fact of including this topic as one of the core

²² Translation proposed by the author for: “Mas tal ambição só poderá se concretizar plenamente se os fluxos internacionais de apoio tecnológico e financeiro deixarem de ser - como são hoje -tímida promessa ou talvez apenas uma miragem” (Lula da Silva, 17 December 2009).

decisions of the Conference already shows great consideration of the Brazilian and developing countries' statements to place forests at the core of the discussions but mainly to consider also forests as eligible for international financing.

In the website of the *Ministério do Meio Ambiente* of Brazil, it was published an article shortly after the end of the celebrations of the COP-16, celebrated in Cancun (Mexico) in 2010, where they described how the former Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, argued that Brazil was the protagonist during the meeting, because it demonstrated three necessary qualities to contribute to the success of international conferences: the ability to discuss, efficient diplomacy and technical knowledge (MMA, 15 December 2010). According to the minister, during the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention of Climate Change, in Mexico, Brazil surprised all the participants due to its commitment to pursue the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and its willingness to overcome the deep rifts during the second phase of its implementation. According to the official Statement of the Brazilian Delegation to COP-16, Brazil deeply believes that a multilateral approach is essential to reach the objective of a future low-carbon economy, to which the country is strongly committed. Nevertheless, this multilateral stance must be transparent, inclusive and based on compromises from all the Parties to the Convention (MMA 10 December 2010). Furthermore, Brazil considers the Kyoto Protocol as essential and it supports the establishment of a legally binding instrument.

In the same vein, Minister Izabella Teixeira, seized the opportunity “to reiterate the commitment of Brazil with sustainable development” (MMA 09 December 2010), besides, she defined the concept as based on three main pillars: the social, economic, and environmental dimensions. In the discourse, the Minister presented Brazil as a role for all the Parties of the Convention on the implementation of sustainable development and commitment to the reduction of emissions. Very interestingly, Izabella Teixeira argued that:

“Brazil had broken the common assertion that economic development would always be accompanied by an increase of emissions” (MMA 09 December 2010).

In the speech, Brazil is presented as the perfect case showing how economic growth, social justice and environmental protection are compatible and suppose a strategy for development, but it is also portrayed as a leader “of south-south cooperation programs to transfer technologies that contribute to foster sustainable development, such as the forest monitoring systems” (MMA 09 December 2010). The discourse admitted that deforestation was the main source Brazil's emissions, and that attention had been paid to this domain, but, they also did not forget the other sources of emissions. The statement of the Minister also made reiterated references to

the voluntary economy-wide targets to reduce emissions and voluntary programs to reduce the Brazilian contribution to Climate Change, such as the Amazon Fund or the Climate Change Fund.

In the report of the actions taken by the Parties at COP-16, the main decision adopted were the Cancun Agreements. The Agreements tried to be one step-forward the realization of the Kyoto Protocol and aimed at tackling the current situation and consequences of Climate Change. The Agreement contemplates Climate Change as one of the preeminent challenges of our time and considers that the only option to confront it, is to strengthen international cooperation, as Brazil has argued. This action must be based on the concepts of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, page 2, 1). We can observe the proximity of this wording to the Brazilian statements. Furthermore, the major proximity to the Brazilian position is embodied in decision “A shared vision for long-term cooperative action” of the report, where the document highlights that this long-term vision must address:

“[...] mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfers, and capacity-building in a balanced, integrated, and comprehensive manner to enhance and achieve the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention, now up to and beyond 2012” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, page 2, 1).

This position is reinforced by paragraph 18 of the Report, where it is indicated that developed countries must help developing countries Parties with new and additional finance, technology and capacity-building in order to implement short-, medium-, and long-term adaptation actions. All of this will be materialized, under the framework of the Cancun Agreements, by an Adaptation Committee that will be charged with the implementation of such actions.

Brazil arrived at the meeting asking for mitigation actions by developed countries, and finally this petition was included in the final outcome document. In addition, the Agreement elaborates the section, “enhanced action on mitigation”. It is indicated that developed countries’ mitigation commitments and actions should be based on their responsibility for the largest share of historical global emissions of greenhouse gases. Indeed, the text urged developed countries “to increase their ambition of their economy-wide emission reduction targets” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, par. 37) same point that, as we have verified, Brazil has been making in every discourse and statement submitted up to this moment. Certainly, when referring to developing countries the document clarifies that they should take mitigation actions always in the context of sustainable development.

Nevertheless, the most interesting aspect of the document in the context of this research is found on point c, which develops the policy approaches and incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation and sustainable use of forests in developing countries. The report indicated that developing country Parties should submit national strategy or action plans and monitor the levels of deforestation. To accomplish this, the document understands that this process must be implemented in phases and it urges developed countries “to support multilateral and bilateral channels, the development of national strategies or action plans, policies and measures and capacity-building” (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1).

We arrive to the celebration of COP-17 in 2011 in Durban, where Brazilian statements considered social inclusion and poverty eradication as main elements to take into consideration within the discussions about sustainable development. Nevertheless, the major petition of Brazil during the meeting was to elaborate and adopt a “second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in the short, medium and long-term” (Brazil December 2011), and through a collaborative manner, a new legally binding instrument under the Convention. The collaborative and equity petitions were incorporated by the Convention in the form of an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, aiming at ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, decision 1, par. 7), but also equitable access to sustainable development (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, decision 2, par. 4).

Brazil also requested the need of defining the rules of LULUCF. The Conference of the Parties in its 17th meeting continues setting the bases by requesting the Parties and the different organs working on the topic to define those rules in the future. It continued leaving the initiative of action to the individual developing countries dealing with deforestation and forest management, arguing that if developing countries want to obtain finance from developed countries, they should have a transparent and clear national strategy or action plan, monitoring systems, national forest reference emission levels and a system from providing information. In other words, the Conference of the Parties in this subject is simply repeating what was said during COP-16.

The Green Climate Fund was also adopted after COP-17. In many of the Brazilian position statement submissions, former Minister of the Environment, Dr. Izabella Teixeira, was asking for the implementation and launching of these instruments in order to enhance the Brazilian and developing countries actions and programs to base their development on sustainable development. The report of the Actions taken during COP-17 also establishes the objectives

and guiding principles of the Fund. This research argues that it will be interesting to assess if these objectives and principles coincide with the ones defended by Brazil until this point. Firstly, by analyzing the stated aim of the Fund, it is detailed that it would make contributions to the global efforts to combat climate change, mainly by helping developing countries at achieving the goal of sustainable development, always being conscious of their specific necessities (FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1, Decision 3, Annex, par. 35). Therefore, even though it is indicated in the report that all Parties to the Convention are eligible to receive resources from the Fund, developing countries are placed in the bullseye target of the Fund and in addition, the organ will always take into account the myriad of different situations of the Parties.

It was during the celebration of the 18th Conference of the Parties, celebrated in Doha in 2012, that the second period of the Kyoto Protocol was approved. According to Minister Dr. Izabella Teixeira, its simple approval shows how the international community has understood that the only single way of protecting the environment is through cooperation. Although it was a great step forward, Teixeira illustrated that more was needed and that this was not enough:

“The Kyoto Protocol is more than a document, it expresses the conviction that climate change requires multilateral action, a rules-based approach. The Kyoto Protocol is the standard for environmental integrity [...] we (Brazil) wanted more. We believe more is needed. Nevertheless, we also believe that a Conference that secured the second period of the Kyoto Protocol is, by definition, a success”²³ (MMA 8 December 2012).

It is highly pertinent in the context of this work to analyze the statements made during COP-18 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of BASIC, which were both supported by Brazil, to assess if it is possible to find the same points as in the Brazilian statements. First of all, during the meeting Algeria pronounced a discourse on behalf of the G77 and China. According to it, the Parties to the Convention succeed in adopting a “balanced package based on mutual reassurances” in Durban (COP-17) and that in Doha, Parties “must ensure that the package is fully implemented to ensure the strengthening of the principles of the Convention, the safeguard trust in the multilateral process and to ensure a successful and meaningful conclusion of the pillars of the Bali Road Map” (UNFCCC G77, 26 November 2012). The Statement of G77 and

²³ Translation proposed by the author for: “O Protocolo de Kyoto é mais do que um documento, ele expressa a convicção de que a mudança climática exige uma ação multilateral, a abordagem baseada em regras. O Protocolo de Kyoto é o padrão de integridade ambiental [...] queríamos mais. Acreditamos que é necessário mais. Mas também acreditamos que uma Conferência que garantiu o segundo período do Protocolo de Kyoto é, por definição, um sucesso” (MMA 8 December 2012)

China also claims for additional efforts by developed countries, especially on the domains of adaptation, financing, and technology transfer. In other words, these countries were also asking for more and more efficient measures in order to fulfill the commitments of all Parties to the Convention.

In the case of the statement made by China on behalf of BASIC, it declared that climate change is a main challenge concerning many different aspects that undermines the ability of developing countries to achieve sustainable development. It stated that a multilateral rules-based climate regime and concrete actions in accordance with the principles of the Convention are fundamental if we want to combat climate change. It also urged developed countries to “honor their commitments to reduce their emissions ambitiously and provide adequate financial, technology transfer and capacity building support so as to enable developing countries to take actions on combating climate change” (China, 26 November 2012). The key positions of BASIC are the same as the one we have seen for Brazil, that is to establish a ratifiable legally binding second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and ensuring implementation of the financing commitments by developed countries for adaptation and mitigation.

It is under the context of the celebration of the 19th Conference of the Parties, celebrated in Warsaw, Poland, in 2013, that the Parties decided that the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) actions in developing countries will be funded by an international mechanism. The position of Brazil underlines ambition as the main guiding thread of this meeting but as well of the coming meetings, citing the following COPs in Lima and Paris as examples. The understanding of the implementation of sustainable development in the national sphere is the same as defended in previous conferences, because, as the Minister of the environment, Izabella Teixeira stated:

“Brazil will continue to drive its development policies by balancing the imperatives of promoting economic growth, social inclusion and the sustainable use of its natural resources” (Izabella Teixeira 20 November 2013).

Minister Teixeira asked the President of the 19th Conference of the Parties to ask collaboration of all Parties and “set in place effective economic instruments to value environmental assets, such as REDD+” (Izabella Teixeira, 20 November 2013). The Minister also seized the opportunity of the meeting to start outlining the necessary points of a successful international framework for the international commitments to reduce global emissions. In this vein, Brazil considers that:

“The extent to which each party should contribute to global emissions reduction should be defined domestically, taking into account historical responsibilities, national circumstances and capacities. A science-based reference to each and every countries’ historical responsibilities for climate change will be a particularly important tool in this aspect” (Izabella Teixeira, 20 November 2020).

Furthermore, the delegation of Brazil, as it is indicated in the speech of Teixeira, presented the proposal of inviting the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to develop a common and simplified methodology to enable Parties to quantify national contributions to climate change on a historical basis. Although, according to Teixeira, developing countries welcomed the idea, it was discarded by the developed country Parties. The Minister finished this paragraph by assuring that Brazil will take this discussion forward.

It is clear that given the domain of this research, the analysis of the decisions taken during COP-19 is going to be focused on the several decisions related to the treatment and introduction of forest management and emissions related to deforestation into the Agreements of the Conference. Decision 10/CP.19 aimed at encouraging developing countries to provide information and exchange information about their national situations regarding forestry. Decision 11/CP.19 called Parties to create and keep track of the deforestation levels on their countries and the forest management by systems of monitoring. Furthermore, the Conference admits that in order to do so, it is necessary to count on an adequate and predictable support, including financial resources and technical and technological support to developing country Parties.

Another evidence showing how Brazilian expertise and arguments have been taken into consideration, establishing its international key role in the domain of GEG, arrives with the celebration of COP-20 in Lima, Peru, in 2014. As we have seen until this time, the emissions related to deforestation and land-use change have been included into the discussions about the reduction of emissions in order to combat Climate Change, and therefore, into the discussion of the implementation of sustainable development. The Conference of the Parties has argued that one of the main elements to tackle deforestation in developing countries is the elaboration of monitoring strategies that would lead to strategic national and international plans and that would contribute to the transparency and exchange of information. During the celebration of COP-20, Brazil seized the opportunity to explain and present its monitoring programs of the Amazon. Indeed, the Brazilian delegation at the Summit held an event about the “Amazon Forest Monitoring: a regional work based on the Brazilian expertise” (MMA 5 December 2014).

On 9 December 2014, the official site of the Ministry of the Environment of Brazil published a statement where it declared that Brazil has been a leader in GEG because it was the first of the countries that started to relate forestry to Climate Change. According to the Ministry, this leadership was proved because during COP-20, four countries (Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Mexico) followed Brazil's pioneering efforts to combat the greenhouse effect by preserving forests (MMA, 9 December 2014). This pioneering role is proved by the fact that Brazil was the first country in submitting the report Forest Emission Reference Levels (FREL). This report is a component required by the UNFCCC for the recognition of REDD+ results. The document is relevant because it defines the reference period and the scale at which REDD+ activities are measured, from a historical or estimated perspective. This leading position was reiterated by the Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, in her speech at the COP-20. Furthermore, she highlighted one more time the importance of setting specific goals for developed and developing countries (MMA 10 December 2014).

The result of this meeting was the Lima Call for Climate Action, which continued to set the basis for the upcoming second-term period of the Kyoto Protocol. The text produced in Lima took up elements considered important by the Parties such as the need of "reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances" (FCCP/CP/2014/10/Add.1, Decision 1/ CP.20, par.3). Nevertheless, for Brazilian authorities, a more in-depth discussion on National Intentional Contributions (INDCs) was necessary (MMA 14 December 2014).

With all these indications, we arrive to one of the major moments of the international discussion of protecting the environment and combatting Climate Change. The Conference of the Parties in its 21st session, celebrated in Paris in 2015, which resulted in the elaboration of the Paris Agreement. During this meeting, the Brazilian Delegation presented its main points to be included in the final text of the compromise. According to the MMA, the central points of the Agreement are the prediction of an increase beyond \$100 billion per year for developing countries to fund actions starting in 2020, set the goal of keeping the global average temperature increase well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels and ensuring efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, and finally, and very importantly to Brazil, to establish a process that presents INDCs, with individual country targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions (MMA 12 December 2015). The document is also very important for Brazil because it ensures one of its prime petitions, that is to review, each 5 years, countries' efforts as a way to enable greater ambition according to national circumstances (MMA 12 December 2015).

In the text of the Paris Agreement it is possible to observe the differentiation between developed and developing countries, a petition that Brazil has been largely defended since the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Another of the main statements of Brazil is also included in the text of the Paris Agreement, that is the fact that nations should progressively have more robust obligations. As Brazil expressed in a position statement presented in 2016, submitted by the Ministries of Environment, Technology and Foreign Affairs, the Paris Agreement incorporated the differentiation proposal presented by Brazil: developed countries should lead global greenhouse gas mitigation efforts and developing countries would be encouraged to strengthen their actions and adopt similar targets.

Izabella Teixeira, the Minister of the Environment stated during the meeting that: “Brazil is very pleased with the agreement [...] the text adopts the flexibility and progression in differentiation, which are based precisely on Brazil's proposal”²⁴ (MMA 12 December 2015).

The meeting also offered an extraordinary opportunity to assess the role and influence of emergent countries. These countries worked as a coalition during the meeting, merging their objectives and positions in order to increase their strength and succeed at introducing their common positions in the final text (MMA 8 December 2015). The main position of these countries was that the final text should allow for a progressive increase in the targets assumed by developing countries, position expressed by the South Africa's Environment Minister Edna Molewa. The President of the Brazilian Republic at the moment of the meeting, Dilma Rousseff, declared in her discourse the same position as South Africa, when declaring that “in relation to cumulative emissions, greenhouse gas mitigation actions should be accompanied by adaptation measures in developing countries, especially in the most vulnerable ones” (Dilma Rousseff, 30 November 2015). As illustrated by the Brazilian authorities, Brazil's contribution under the Paris Agreement was ambitious, as it was the only big developing country to adopt absolute reduction targets for its whole economy (Brazil 2016). Brazil presented itself in this meeting, as an already consolidated low-carbon economy (Brazil MMA December 2015).

The Indian Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar declared that attention must be placed as well on adaptation to Climate Change. For him, the text should include measures to avoid damage and explore opportunities to reduce the vulnerability of people and the areas of the

²⁴ Translation proposed by the author for: “*O Brasil está muito satisfeito com o acordo*”, “*O texto adota a flexibilidade e progressão na diferenciação, que é baseada justamente na proposta do Brasil. Vamos, sim, para uma nova fase de clima*” (MMA 12 December 2015)

planet most exposed to extreme natural events. As these interventions show us, emerging countries are further strengthening their power by forming coalitions and expressing common positions. Moreover, on this occasion we can also demonstrate again Brazil's self-consideration as a key player in GEG.

Using the Brazilian words to describe this meeting, it supposed a 'starting point', after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, for the international community "for a new stage in the international climate change regime under UNFCCC" (Brazil 2016). COP-22 and COP-23 sought to strengthen the foundations of the Paris Agreement.

The most interesting points of the commitments made under COP-22 is the part related to the management of the Amazon. Under the context of the Paris Agreement, Brazil compromised to protect the Amazon by strengthening policies that enforce the Forest Code, implementing policies and measures to halt illegal deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon by 2030, compensating for greenhouse gas emissions from legal vegetation removal by 2030 and by restoring and reforesting 12 million hectares of forests and therefore enhancing sustainable native forest management systems (Brazil 2016).

2. Instrumentalization of the Concept of Sustainable Development for Countering the Dominance of the Northern Powers

Throughout the various celebrations of the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, there are also multiple opportunities to assess the possible instrumentalization of the concept of sustainable development by Brazil to contest the power of developed countries. Clear examples of this are the repeated Brazilian references to the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities. In every statement pronounced by Brazil there is a clear reference to the need of not only contesting the model perpetuated by the Northern powers, but also to break it.

In the context of the celebration of COP-3 in Kyoto in 1997 and the elaboration and implementation of the Berlin Mandate, Brazil submitted an additional document detailing its main priorities, its consideration of climate change, and their proposals to the Kyoto Protocol. This document, entitled *FCCC/AGBM/1997/MISC.1/Add.3* and published on 30 May 1997, is highly interesting because it presents the prime Brazilian concerns regarding the international agenda of environmental protection. The pivotal elements for Brazil to negotiate the Kyoto Protocol passed through the consideration of common but differentiated responsibilities and the polluter pays principle. This document proves that Brazil's willingness to participate in GEG responds to the differentiation between countries, between their capacity to pollute and the

international understanding of the need to develop of developing countries. Indeed, Brazil argued in the document that:

“It is also acknowledged by the Convention that the per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs” (UNFCCC, 30 May 1997).

All of this is better illustrated by one of the paragraphs Brazil introduced in this document, where it clarifies that its proposals to better apply the Kyoto Protocol concern only to Annex I countries:

“It may be noted that the proposal is neutral to Brazil, as a non-Annex I Party, and the assignment of Brazilian share in the clean development fund distribution proposed is in accordance with its relative contribution to climate change” (UNFCCC, 30 May 1997).

Against this backdrop, Brazil lists proposals like relative responsibility, effective emissions reduction targets and ceilings for Annex I countries. Nevertheless, the main Brazilian contribution is the proposal of the Clean Development Fund for non-Annex I countries arguing that the:

“largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gas has originated in the developed countries [...] (and) per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs” (UNFCCC, 30 May 1997).

We should, thus, consider this Clean Development Mechanism as a cornerstone of the Kyoto Protocol, not only symbolizing the materialization of a distinction between developed and developing countries, but also the realization of Brazilian demands to include this differentiation in GEG and to implement a mechanism that will facilitate the transfer of technology to developing countries.

In this line, it is also interesting to notice that Brazil also included in this document an appreciation arguing that the differentiation between Annex I and non-Annex I countries regarding the common but differentiated responsibilities may lead to an overestimation of “the non-annex I Parties share of responsibility because it does not take into consideration the different industrialization processes and consumption patterns” (UNFCCC, 30 May 1997). That is the reason why, Brazil mobilized the concept of ‘relative responsibilities’ for overcoming this situation. The concept considers the relative resulting change in global mean temperature, taking into account the initial concentrations of Annex I and non-Annex I countries (UNFCCC, 30 May 1997).

Another major occasion to test the hypothesis about instrumentalization arrives with the speech of Marina Silva during the celebration of the COP-11 in Montreal in 2005. In this case, she argues that:

"Brazil, alongside developing countries, has been a permanent advocate of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This principle is enshrined in most international environmental agreements and my country, while reaffirming it, also means to the world that differentiated responsibilities do not mean absence of responsibilities. That is why Brazil has done its part"²⁵ (Marina Silva, December 2005).

This discourse is interesting because the intention behind the use of the principle of CBDR is to precisely identify the real culprits in environmental degradation and their duty to take the lead and solve the consequences caused by them. Nevertheless, the discourse is framed in the period of 2004-2005. During this period the highest rates of deforestation in the Amazon were registered (TerraBrasilis, PRODES) but also, Brazil was starting to take the first voluntary emissions reductions, and first commitments to respect the Protocol of Kyoto and to halt Climate Change. During the celebration of COP-11, Marina Silva delivered a speech where she underscored these Brazilian commitments, but also urged developed countries to follow the example of developing countries, and make commitments and changes, as Brazil did, even though Brazil, as a developing country, "have no responsibility for the climate regime"²⁶ (Marina Silva, December 2005).

During COP-13, 2007, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim identified the forest management, deforestation and the emissions related to land-use changes, as the main problems of developing countries (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007). Additionally, the major obstacle of developed countries to halt climate change is cutting industrial emissions. The transformation of land-use patterns and forest management's patterns supposes huge efforts for developing countries, according to Amorim, therefore, "positive incentives from the international community would greatly assist these efforts, particularly in the case of the poorest

²⁵ Translation proposed by the author for: "*O Brasil, ao lado dos países em desenvolvimento, tem sido um permanente defensor do princípio das responsabilidades comuns mas diferenciadas. Trata-se de princípio consagrado na maior parte dos acordos internacionais ambientais e meu país, ao tempo em que o reafirma, quer também dizer ao mundo que responsabilidades diferenciadas não significam ausência de responsabilidades. Por isso o Brasil tem feito sua parte*" (Marina Silva, December 2005)

²⁶ Translation proposed by the author for: "[...] *a argumentação de que países em desenvolvimento não têm responsabilidades com o regime do clima*" (Marina Silva, December 2005)

countries”²⁷ (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007). Nevertheless, Amorim changed the focal by considering that this problem of deforestation, is smaller than the problem of fossil fuels. That is the reason why, he proposed to the international community to rely on the biofuels produced by Brazil, such as ethanol, in order to boost the change towards sustainable development. However, according to him, developed countries are not only reluctant to use this option and raise barriers to developing countries’ biofuels, but also, they are obstinate in continuing to use and spend large amounts of money on fossil energies, which only accentuates environmental degradation²⁸ (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007). This statement is highly important for verifying the hypothesis of instrumentalization of the concept of sustainable development. In fact, Celso Amorim supports the use of biofuels, which greatly benefit Brazil, advocating this use for the sake of sustainable development. Brazil's strong advocacy for biofuels is also analyzed in the context of the hypothesis on the distancing of the true protective essence of the environment from the term sustainable development.

The speech continues by arguing that fossil fuels and trade barriers hindering the trade of biofuels are against the logic of sustainable development. In order to implement the logic of sustainable development, Brazil considers that these barriers to the alternatives of developing countries must be removed. Once again, Brazil mobilizes the argument that sustainable development requires a change of the traditional production and consumption patterns. This argument will constitute a principal statement of Brazil in the context of its defense of sustainable development.

Carlos Minc, former Minister of the Environment of Brazil, arrived in 2008 at the celebration of the COP-14 in Poznan, Poland, with the main Brazilian ambition of pursuing the claim of Brazil to merge the fight against Climate Change and the need of reducing the deforestation rates in the Amazon. It is for this reason that the Minister arrived at the meeting with the mission of “publicizing *Fundo Amazônia* (Amazon Fund) among participants and convince them to cooperate with Brazil in the effort to combat deforestation, which at that moment represented

²⁷ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Incentivos positivos por parte da comunidade internacional ajudariam muito esses esforços, particularmente no caso dos países mais pobres*” (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007)

²⁸ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Os biocombustíveis produzidos nos países em desenvolvimento apresentam grande potencial, ainda inexplorado, para reduzir as emissões de gases de efeito estufa. No entanto, grandes consumidores de energia no mundo desenvolvido têm colocado todo tipo de barreira aos biocombustíveis dos países em desenvolvimento. Ao mesmo tempo, gastam bilhões de euros e dólares subsidiando seus produtores ineficientes*” (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007)

75% of the greenhouse gas emissions and placed Brazil as the world's fourth-largest emitter”²⁹ (MMA, 8 December 2008). According to the official articles of the MMA, Brazil arrived at the meeting with the ambitious commitment of reducing 72% of the deforestation rate in the Amazon by 2017. It also identifies the questions of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), the transfer of technologies, financing mitigation, and adaptation and quantitative greenhouse gas emission reduction targets as the main questions to be discussed during the meeting (MMA, 8 December 2008).

During the meeting, Carlos Minc called for the engagement of developing countries in combating climate change, not without first urging the most developed countries, and therefore more polluting, countries to commit themselves in a much greater extent, to the fight against climate change. The Minister also proposed to create a global fund to guarantee investments and technology for developing countries (MMA, 10 December 2008). According to him, fight against Climate Change and the implementation of sustainable development must require that:

“richer countries meet their financial obligations under Bali (the Bali Road Map) to support technological change, reduce deforestation and enhance the replacement of dirty sources of energy in developing countries”³⁰ (MMA, 10 December 2008).

In other words, Minc was asking for greater responsibility of developed countries towards Climate Change and, therefore, their obligation to provide more substantial financial and technological input for developing countries. Once again, the protection of the environment, under the understanding of the Brazilian delegations, passes through a complete change of the traditional model defended by the Northern powers, but also by combining resources and efforts to help developing countries apply the holistic interpretation of sustainable development. According to the Minister, this cooperation should take the form of a ‘Technological Alliance of Anticipation Innovations’. Minc defined it as:

²⁹ Translation proposed by the author for: “Minc, que chefia a delegação brasileira, terá a missão de divulgar o Fundo Amazônia entre os participantes e convencê-los a cooperarem com o Brasil no esforço de combate ao desmatamento que hoje representa 75% das nossas emissões de gases estufa e nos coloca como quarto maior emissor mundial” (MMA Brazil, 08 December 2008)

³⁰ Translation proposed by the author for: “Para ele, os países mais ricos devem cumprir suas obrigações financeiras, nos termos de Bali para apoiar mudanças tecnológicas, redução do desmatamento e substituição de fontes sujas de energia nos países em desenvolvimento” (MMA, 10 December 2008)

“an unprecedented and continuous effort, interactive and appropriate to local realities, to decarbonize emerging economies. Patents can be free of charge and compensated by a Global Fund of the Technological Alliance”³¹ (MMA, 10 December 2008).

This paragraph is not only interesting because it illustrates the consideration of Brazil about the implementation of sustainable development, based on international cooperation, technological transfers and complete consideration of all the actors of every society, but it is as well, the first time that, in the context of the Conference of the Parties, Brazil refers to itself as an emerging economy, rather than a developing country. This change is complemented with the swift in the rhetoric of the speech, which suggests a consolidation of the self-perception of Brazil as leader of the group of developing countries, as a country that is willing to share its expertise, experience, and know-how with developing countries and the least-developed ones. To illustrate this argument, the Minister affirmed that Brazil “wanted to share with other countries a South-South cooperation program, where Brazil, with its experience, will support developing countries in the sustainable production of biofuels that will suppose economic, social, and environmental gains and an increased energy autonomy”³² (MMA, 10 December 2008).

In addition to the common points defended by Brazil until now, the Minister of the Environment Dr. Izabella Teixeira, identified during the celebration of COP-17 in Durban, South Africa, the main positions of Brazil as the urgency of further commitments for Annex I Parties, the inclusion of further Annex I quantified emission reduction targets and for the definition of rules on Land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF), to operationalize the institutions agreed to in Cancun (as the Adaptation Committee or the Green Climate Fund), a global step up the actions both mitigation and adaptation (guided by science and equity), and to include in the decision-making and implementation of the national actions all the different levels of governments and the whole society (Brazil December 2011).

The Conference of the Parties also urged developed countries to increase their ambitions on emissions reductions concerning the commitments and decisions made under the Cancun

³¹ Translation proposed by the author for: *"Esta responsabilidade deve ser diferenciada, proporcional e acompanhada de aporte financeiro e tecnológico. Este deve se dar sob a forma de uma Aliança Tecnológica de Inovações Antiaquecimento. Um esforço inédito e contínuo, de caráter interativo e adequado às realidades locais para descarbonizar as economias emergentes. As patentes podem ser sem ônus e compensadas por um Fundo Global da Aliança Tecnológica"* (MMA, 10 December 2008)

³² Translation proposed by the author for: *"Queremos compartilhar com outros países um programa de cooperação sul-sul, onde o Brasil, com sua experiência, apoiará países em desenvolvimento na produção sustentável de biocombustíveis, com ganhos econômicos, sociais, ambientais e aumento de autonomia energética"* (MMA, 10 December 2008)

Agreements (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, part II, A.). Indeed, the essence of this section lies on further petitions to increase the level of commitment of developed countries Parties to halting Climate Change. It is in this section as well, where the Conference of the Parties request developed countries to submit to the UNFCCC biennial reporting guidelines (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, part II, A.). Section B of the second section of the Actions taken during COP-17, “enhanced action on mitigation”, is dedicated to developing countries. In the introduction of this section, the Conference of the Parties recognizes that “developing country Parties are already contributing and will continue to contribute to a global mitigation effort in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, and could enhance their mitigation actions, depending on provisions of finance, technology and capacity-building support by developed country Parties” (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, part II, B.). They also recognize that “social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing country Parties, and that a low-emission development strategy is central to sustainable development, and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs” (FCCP/CP/2011/9/Add.1, part II, B). Also, they recognize that developed countries shall provide enhanced financial, technology and capacity-building support for the preparation and implementation of nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries.

The statement of Brazil adopted on the occasion of COP-18 in Doha, a highly denouncing tone, arguing that very little has been done up to this moment and that many important issues are still not correctly addressed such as financing, intellectual property rights that were not clearly addressed and that comparability of the mitigation efforts of developed countries is still elusive (Izabella Teixeira 2012). The discourse also stated that developed countries have not been able to take the lead and make proper commitments to combat climate change. Instead, according to the minister, developed countries are “shifting the burden, suggesting that developing countries should take the lead” (Izabella Teixeira 2012). Consequently, the Minister categorized this behavior as unacceptable.

After the celebration of COP-21 and the elaboration of the Paris Agreement, everything turned around the deepening of the commitments made during this meeting. The main task of COP-22 was to establish the ‘rule-book’ of the Paris Agreement and to assess the implementation of the commitments presented by 2020. Brazil arrived at the meeting with a new initiative called the ‘Biofuture Platform’, a partnership with other countries to promote advanced low carbon and bio-refined fuels. The proposal was launched and followed by twenty countries: Argentina,

Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Morocco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Paraguay, the Philippines, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay. This initiative is framed in the commitments Brazil did under the Paris Agreement, where it defended their view of sustainable development and implementation of the Agreement as the increase of the share of sustainable bioenergy in Brazil's energy consumption and increase the share of renewables in the energy matrix.

During the celebration of COP-23 (2017), Brazil published a position statement together with the delegations of Argentina and Uruguay, where they declared that they were concerned about the attempts of some developed countries to adopt unilateral eligibility criteria to accept developing countries to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Nevertheless, Brazilian positions aimed at highlighting the huge importance of having adopted the Paris Agreement and asking for the elaboration of the roadmap to the complete and proper implementation of the steps detailed in the Agreement.

3. Distancing from the Pure Essence of the Concept of Sustainable of Protecting the Environment

Substantial to the subject of this research, it is important to mention one of the discourses of the former Brazilian Minister of the Environment, Marina Silva. This specific speech was pronounced during the opening of the National Conference of the Environment celebrated in November 2003. This work includes this discourse because it embodies the perfect occasion to verify the possible distinction between the discourses pronounced in the national sphere and the ones pronounced during international summits. It is easy to remark the difference of rhetoric and exigence of the wording of this discourse if compared with the Brazilian position and speeches pronounced in the different COPs analyzed until this point. If this hypothesis is validated and indeed there is a difference between the national and international discourses, this would prove the hypothesis that at the international summits, the discourse about sustainable development has moved away from the need of protecting the environment and instead it is based on a struggle for influence and leadership that seeks maximum individual benefit.

One of the most remarkable paragraphs of the speech denounces the contrast between the discourse and the actions of Brazil:

“Since the beginning of this country's foundation, we have maintained a dubious relationship: we praise nature in prose and verse, we exalt the beauty and wealth of our land, where, according to the national anthem, the fields have more flowers and the forests have more life; but, at the same time, we have destroyed 93% of the Atlantic Forest, desertified the Northeast, polluted our rivers, advanced in an overwhelming way

over Cerrado, and we are threatening the integrity of the Amazon in a worrying way”³³ (Marina Silva, November 2003).

Furthermore, the discourse asserts that it is now the time to stop opposing the economy to the need to protect the environment:

“The time has come to become aware of reality, to get out of the schizophrenia that opposes naturalist romanticism to economic pragmatism”³⁴ (Marina Silva, November 2003).

It is clear that when comparing the national discourses and the ones at the international stage, the wording, rhetoric, and ideas expressed are different, showing a harsher tone in the national scenario than in the international one. In this sense, it seems interesting to compare the wording and ideas of this first speech with the one of Marina Silva in the context of COP-10 in 2004. Indeed, the speech continues with the objective of boosting the change and encouraging the needed transformation to face the climate change phenomenon and adapting to the current situations. Marina Silva considered that:

“The current moment requires overcoming old deadlocks and building balanced policies that focus on adapting the prism of the most immediate and longer-term impacts”³⁵ (Marina Silva December 2004)

Again, we see how the discourse go back to the position of asking for a more balanced consideration of the different situations of countries. Marina Silva argued that one of the main obstacles of Climate Change is the one about the imprecision of its future implications, primarily for developing countries, that is the reason why she considered that it is only through cooperation based on science and technology that the objectives of the Convention can be met. One thing is clear, in the discourse of Marina Silva, the need for consideration of a difference and a special treatment to developing countries is repeated. There is no hint of the rhetoric used in the previous speech, where the former Minister asked for a stronger compromise of Brazil

³³ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Desde o início da formação deste país, mantivemos uma relação dúbia: louvamos a natureza em prosa e verso, exaltamos a beleza e a riqueza de nossa terra, onde, segundo o hino nacional, os campos tem mais flores e os bosques tem mais vida; mas, ao mesmo tempo, destruímos 93% da Mata Atlântica, desertificamos o Nordeste, poluímos os nossos rios, avançamos de forma avassaladora sobre o Cerrado e estamos ameaçando a integridade da Amazônia de forma preocupante*” (Marina Silva, November 2003)

³⁴ Translation proposed by the author for: “*É chegada a hora de tomar consciência da realidade, sair da esquizofrenia que opõe o romantismo naturalista ao pragmatismo economicista*” (Marina Silva, November 2003)

³⁵ Translation proposed by the author for: “*o momento atual requer a superação de antigos impasses e a construção de políticas equilibradas que enfoquem a questão da adaptação do prisma dos impactos mais imediatos e daqueles de mais longo prazo*” (Marina Silva December 2004)

towards the responsibility of protecting the environment, but in this case, the discourse is consistent with the idea of promoting international cooperation and differentiation of countries regarding their development status:

“[...] the issue of vulnerability and adaptation must be addressed in an objective manner, including the development of models that take into account the needs of developing countries”³⁶. (Marina Silva, December 2004)

The speech is also interesting because it suggests the categorization of Brazil as a developing country and of vital importance in GEG because of its mega-diversity, mainly because of the Amazon Rainforest. Marina Silva defends that there has been a huge effort in Brazil to reduce deforestation in the Amazon and to protect it, but that the major blame of the continuous degradation of the Amazon is international. Marina Silva argues that:

“Practically nothing has been done so far not only to assess and understand the impacts of climate change on vulnerable ecosystems such as tropical forests, but also to adopt concrete measures to support developing countries in adapting to these impacts. The consequence of inaction in this case is the substantive loss of biological diversity that the same countries that are here are fighting so hard in other international forums”³⁷ (Marina Silva, December 2004).

Nevertheless, the most remarkable point made by Marina Silva appears in the closing of her speech when she argues that:

“It seems clear that those most affected by climate change, developing countries, are not having their needs recognized by those who are not only primarily responsible for these impacts but also have the greatest capacity to mitigate them, study them and promote the necessary adaptation measures. Nor does the principle enshrined in this Convention that responsibilities are common but differentiated seem to be being recognized”³⁸ (Marina Silva, December 2004).

³⁶ Translation proposed by the author for: “*A questão de vulnerabilidade e adaptação deve ser tratada de maneira objetiva, inclusive com o desenvolvimento de modelos que levem em conta as necessidades dos países em desenvolvimento*” (Marina Silva, December 2004)

³⁷ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Praticamente nada se fez, até agora, não só para avaliar e entender os impactos da mudança climática sobre ecossistemas vulneráveis como as florestas tropicais, como, também, para a adoção de medidas concretas que apoiem os países em desenvolvimento na adaptação a esses impactos. A consequência da inação, nesse caso, é a perda substantiva da diversidade biológica que os mesmos países que aqui estão tanto combatem em outros foros internacionais*” (Marina Silva, December 2004)

³⁸ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Parece evidente que os mais afetados pela mudança climática - os países em desenvolvimento - não estão tendo suas necessidades reconhecidas por aqueles que não só são os principais responsáveis por esses impactos mas também são aqueles que mais capacidade têm de mitigá-los, estudá-los e promover as medidas de adaptação necessárias. Tampouco parece estar havendo o reconhecimento do princípio consagrado nesta Convenção de que as responsabilidades são comuns, mas diferenciadas*” (Marina Silva, December 2004)

The speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil during the COP-13 in 2007, Celso Amorim, repeats the factors that we have seen until this point. Nevertheless, it also makes some interesting remarks such as the need of liberalizing Brazil and introduce it into the logic of international trade in order to enhance sustainable development in the country, which could mean a possible alienation with the official conceptualization of the term. Nevertheless, Celso Amorim repeats again that even though all countries have responsibilities, they should be differentiated. In the speech, the Minister declared that:

“All Parties must take bigger and bolder steps to reduce emissions. The responsibilities are and must be differentiated. However, the Parties must not forget that they are also common. As President Lula said at the United Nations General Assembly, ‘it is not acceptable that the greater burden of the improvidence of the privileged fall on the dispossessed of the Earth’”³⁹ (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007)

Another possibility of validating the hypothesis about distancing arrives with the discourse of the Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, during the celebration of the COP-19, regarding LULUCF and REDD. She made special reference to the Brazilian reduction of emissions from LULUCF. Nevertheless, the point is accompanied by the explanation of these reductions, by specifying that these Brazilian plans passed from prevention and control of deforestation in Brazilian forests and savannahs to the expansion of hydroelectric and other sources of renewable energy and the reduction of emissions in the industry sector. This position is important because it serves to show a possible validation of the hypothesis on distancing from the essence of environmental protection of the term sustainable development. As it was detailed in previous sections, there are different interpretations of the Amazon within Brazilian borders, among which, developmentalism has played an important role. The construction of hydroelectric facilities in the Amazon advocates a shift to renewable energies for the benefit of sustainable development, but do not take into account the ecological impact on the rainforest. In other words, they lean towards the economic pillar of sustainable development, leaving the environmental pillar unbalanced.

Before moving on to the next phase, it would be useful to summarize the major findings of this first phase of the analysis. First of all, the self-consideration of Brazil as a pivotal Party to the

³⁹ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Todos nós devemos dar passos maiores e mais ousados para reduzir as emissões. As responsabilidades são e devem ser diferenciadas. Entretanto, não podemos esquecer que elas são comuns. Como disse o Presidente Lula na Assembléia Geral das Nações Unidas, "não é admissível que o ônus maior da imprevidência dos privilegiados recaia sobre os despossuídos da Terra"*” (Celso Amorim COP-13, 2007)

Convention and of its key role in the different meetings is easily demonstrable. The country has based its leadership not only on its environmental relevance, but also in its political power to form and influence coalitions. As it was detailed in the theoretical development of this research, leadership can be measured by three different components: policy-based leadership, structural leadership, and instrumental leadership (Grubb and Gupta 2000; Papa and Gleagon 2012). Thanks to this first phase of the assessment, Brazil has shown an important policy-based leadership because it has proved to have the ability to frame problems and promote particular policy solutions with its clear advocacy for its clear advocacy of a more social approach to the term sustainable development, but also for its promotion of solutions to climate change, such as the use of biofuels or renewable energy. The country has also shown great structural and instrumental leadership because it has had the ability to form and influence coalitions but also to manage its assets very well to apply negotiation skills and build consensus. Several examples of this assessment have shown how Brazilian arguments have been incorporated to the final formal documents of the meetings.

Another main conclusion of this first phase is that Brazilian statements regarding the application of sustainable development in forests have led to a transformation of this applicability, as shown by the analysis of the treatment to carbon sinks, firstly affecting merely rainforests, but later extending its margin to all kinds of forests and including a reward for good practices. Further transformations of the concept of sustainable development are implicit in the Brazilian successes in giving more weight to the development and social components of the concept. Moreover, the hypotheses of instrumentalization and distancing from environmental protection are also validated in this first analysis. Firstly, all Brazilian statements are accompanied by arguments aiming at breaking with the traditional model developed by developed countries. The continuous reiteration of the CBDR and Polluter Pays principles, or even the Brazilian proposition of the term ‘relative responsibilities’, move away for the real need of protecting the environment.

B. Second Phase: Brazilian Evolution and Contributions to the Concept of Sustainable Development in the Context of Sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (2004-2018)

The logic behind this second phase of the assessment focused on the analysis of the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), responds to the ‘funnel’ logic that was introduced in the methodology part of this assessment. The first phase has served to get a global perspective of this work’s research question. Moreover, this part seeks to assess the concept of

sustainable development in its purest form in order to test how Brazil has transformed the concept but also, to validate or not the hypotheses of instrumentalization and distancing of the essence of the concept.

The CSD is the subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the mandate to monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. Its functions were defined by the General Assembly in resolution 47/191 and later further detailed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In contrast to the COPs to the UNFCCC that are held every year, the CSD decided, in its Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPOW), to stagger the consideration of specific sustainable development issues in biannual cycles until 2017.

In the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the position of Brazil is quite different from the one we have seen in the previous assessment. It is possible to find some common points to the rhetoric used in the context of UNFCCC, such as the categorization of Brazil as a megadiverse country, which hence seems to justify its significant role in the question of sustainable development. Furthermore, in the different Brazilian statements, references to the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities are very repeated. In addition to all of this, the statements in the CSD are mainly framed as well on the aspects of technological transfers and capacity-building and the need to involve civil society and other subnational levels.

Nevertheless, we also find some divergences. For example, in this context, Brazil has repeatedly criticized the CSD as mainly focused on the environmental nuances of the concept, and consequently, according to Brazil, it does not contemplate the concept under a cross-cutting approach. This point is highly interesting because by stating a point like this, Brazil is already showing its interpretation of the concept. The concept started as an idea of not compromising the needs of future generations, which has a highly environmental connotation, but for Brazil, the concept must focus on its social and developmental dimensions. Brazil has also undermined CSD to simply a secondary and complementary organ to the main discussions about the protection of the environment. Additionally, this statement also justifies the importance of having analyzed the different COPs to the UNFCCC. Because, as Brazil states, it is in these discussions that Brazil advances its most relevant positions.

An example of this is the statement of Brazil during the 15th session of CSD:

“Brazil agrees that the CSD can help understand and explore the interlinkages between climate change and other issues related to promoting sustainable development, such as promoting renewable

energies. These discussions should not, however, substitute or preempt current talks under the UNFCCC regime on issues such as flexibility mechanisms or the future of the climate regime” (Brazil May 2007).

1. Brazilian Transformation of the Concept of Sustainable Development

One of the major meetings of this Commission was the Johannesburg Summit. It was celebrated in a completely different political, social, and economic context than the celebration of the Earth Summit. According to Brazil, the ten years following the Rio Conference constituted the period of greatest economic growth in history, mainly because of the end of the Cold War and China’s decision to progressively integrate aspects of the capitalist system into its model, technological advancements enabling huge sectoral leaps and the exponential increase in the flow of financial and trade transactions (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 80). Therefore, the process of globalization started to gain more and more relevance, to the point of collision with the sustainable development model, not because of the nature itself of globalization, but because at that moment the model “corresponded more to wild capitalism than to the more humanistic vision contained in the concept of sustainable development” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 80).

For Brazil, as we have seen, this humanistic vision of sustainable development supposes the eradication of poverty and a better framework to enhance and boost international cooperation. The focus on poverty and its eradication is well-considered in the Johannesburg Declaration as the main obstacles to overcome. Nevertheless, Brazil has persistently added the North-South controversies into the debate. Indeed, the focus on poverty was well received by developed countries during the Summit, because it would mean the improvement of the situation of important sectors of civil society in their territories. However, the relationship between poverty and the environment was interpreted in different ways for developed and developing countries. For the first, the decrease in pollution is linked to the decrease in the poor population, with initiatives like birth control and not development. For the developing countries, the fight against poverty is the central path towards sustainable development.

Regarding also the final document of the Johannesburg Summit, sections on globalization (section 5) and means of implementation (section 10) were also influenced by the Brazilian statements. Brazilian interventions ensured that the references to globalization would not be limited to a group of references when referring to means of implementation but would constitute an independent section reflecting the importance of the phenomenon and the opportunities and challenges it presents to sustainable development. Furthermore, Brazil managed to include in the final document the concept of corporate responsibility and accountability (par. 140, f) in the

section of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the international level and in the paragraph 49 of the Plan of Implementation.

An essential part of the power of Brazil to influence and modify elements of sustainable development lies on its high participation, cooperation and collaboration in the context of these international summits. Proof of this could be found as well in the Brazilian advocacy for biofuels. In one of the statements pronounced during the 18th session of CSD, the one pronounced on the 4th of May 2010, Brazil announced that it has “expanded its international cooperation in biofuels, within the framework of sustainable development and food security”. For doing so, Brazil opened office in Ghana for *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria* (Embrapa) to promote cooperation agriculture and food security. Emphasis is placed on the development of agricultural production and the use of technologies that lead to economic growth, preservation, and development of environmental quality, reduction of social inequalities, and the inclusion of African producers in the global market.

The main strategy of Brazil has been to associate with developing countries, asking for a holistic implementation of sustainable development based on its three fundamental pillars: the environment, the social and the economic regards. Indeed, it is more common in the context of CSD than in the context of COPs to the UNFCCC to observe Brazilian statements declaring the Brazilian association with the declarations made by countries on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States).

During the celebration of the 18th Commission of Sustainable Development, Brazil asked to improve the institutional framework for sustainable development, by improving finance, capacity-building, and technology, and also by engaging civil society in the process. According to Brazil, the application of sustainable development should take into consideration the principles defended in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), it has to articulate with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), respect the specific conditions and foremost, the particular needs, of developing countries and shall strengthen the international institutions and organizations that deal with sustainable development, including the support to relevant local, national and regional institutions (Brazil 17 May 2010).

Brazil also criticized the institutions applying at that moment the concept of sustainable development and argued that an ‘umbrella’ consideration of it was fundamental to correctly apply the term. Therefore, the delegation of Brazil for the 18th session of the CSD argued that:

“The need for coherence and efficiency, as well as effectiveness, would necessitate the redefinition of the role and the mandates of the present institutions, with an emphasis on the ECOSOC, UNEP and CSD, with an ‘umbrella’ or ‘roof’ institution built on the existing structure. This overarching structure would have the objective of coordinating those institutions as well as the MEAs, with an emphasis on integrating the economic and social pillars” (Brazil 17 May 2010).

Once again, the position of Brazil is based on asking a consideration of sustainable development more tilted to the economic and social dimensions of the concept and, hence, to take into consideration the needed boost for the development of emerging and developing regions.

Another manifestation of the cross-sectoral approach that Brazil has been defending is its supporting position to the implementation of ‘green economy’. Brazil defended this concept as the:

“tool for reducing international inequalities and for opening up new opportunities for developing countries, including through trade and investment under a supportive international framework”. (Brazil 7 March 2011)

Nevertheless, Brazil underscored that this ‘green economy’ approach should be flexible and that it should reaffirm the balance between the three pillars of sustainable development always with the human being at the center of our efforts (Brazil 7 March 2011). The ‘green economy’ is envisaged as the perfect pretext to “support the change in unsustainable patterns of consumption and production” (Brazil 7 March 2011), always emphasizing that developed countries should take the lead.

The report of *Towards a Green Economy*, published in 2011 by the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), defines the green economy as the “one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one that is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive” (UNEP 2011, 9). In the definition, we can appreciate the balanced combination of the three different dimensions conforming sustainable development, but even more importantly, we perceive how the human being, is placed at the beginning of the sentence, as illustrating its privileged position in this hierarchy. The flexibility on the application of the concept, as Brazil and other developing countries were asking, is also included in the report:

“The transition to a green economy will vary considerably between nations, as it depends on the specifics of each country’s natural and human capital and on its relative level of development” (UNEP 2011, 11)

The importance of referring and dedicating some paragraphs to green economy lies on the fact that during the negotiations and celebration of Rio+20 and the preparatory committees and final drafting of the report A/RES/70/1, elaborating the concept and implementation methods of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and thus, the Sustainable Development Goals, it is possible to observe that one of the major debates was around the major inclination to one of the sustainable development’s pillars, the environment, leaving the other two as secondary. Brazil has criticized this preference in several occasions. One example is one of the statements submitted by Brazil on the 8th of March 2011, during the 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting UN Conference on Sustainable Development. During this meeting, Brazil argued that “one can observe a marked disconnection in the treatment of sustainable development issues, erroneously viewed by some as restricted to environmental aspects, separate from financial (e.g. the Monterrey Consensus, the financial crises) and social issues” (Brazil, 8 March 2011).

During the celebration of RIO+20, three major decisions were made: the elaboration of the report *The Future We Want* as a political outcome of the meeting; the decision to continue the legacy of the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) with the discussion and future adoption of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) in the context of the post-2015 development agenda; and the creation of a high-political level political forum for the discussion of the dimensions related to sustainable development.

Given the essence of this research, it is highly interesting to analyze the content of the report *The Future We Want*. The document makes reference to plenty of issues related to sustainable development and protection of the environment. By making special attention to the relation between the Brazilian statements and the rhetoric and points made in the final report we find that, first of all, poverty eradication is categorized as the “greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development” (A/RES/66/288, Our Common Vision, par. 2). Furthermore, the document recognizes that “people are at the center of sustainable development and, in this regard, we strive for a world that is just, equitable, and inclusive, and we commit to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all” (A/RES/66/288, Our Common Vision, par. 6).

The success of Brazilian delegations in incorporating the arguments of Brazil in the final report is confirmed in the key objectives of the report. It tries to boost cooperation and a case-by-case interpretation to meet sustainable development, particularly regarding finance, trade and technology transfer, capacity-building, transparency, and accountability (par. 19). This case-by-case interpretation adopts a different perspective when talking about developing and developed countries, because “the more over-consumption, the more the responsibilities to reduce it; the more under-consumption, the greater the need to make use of natural resources, increase access to basic services and lift people out of poverty and hunger” (Brazil, 2 July 2015). In fact, the Rio+20 Outcome Declaration makes several references to the principle of CBDR (par. 56, 58 (b), 63, 103, 127, 239, and 247).

However, one of the greatest successes of Brazilian environmental diplomacy in the final outcome of RIO+20 is paragraph 273 of the report, which requested the Secretary General to find options for a facilitation mechanism that promoted the development, transfer, and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies (A/RES/66/288, par. 273). Furthermore, regarding the previous positions of Brazil, the report also recognizes the crucial role of renewable energies and energy-efficient technologies for sustainable development (par. 128).

Another major point is the one related to forests and biodiversity. The report underscores the huge role of forests’ management and biodiversity conservation and protection for sustainable development, calling for “cross-sectoral and cross-institutional policies promoting sustainable forest management” (A/RES/66/288, par. 193). In this sense, the report calls for “enhancing efforts to achieve the sustainable management of forests, reforestation, restoration and afforestation, and we support all efforts that effectively slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, including promoting trade in legally harvested forest products”, in this sense also by protecting, taking into account and considering local communities and traditional knowledge. This point is relevant because after having read all the positions statements made by Brazil in the context of the CSD, the country has not submitted not even one position regarding the Amazon.

An interesting occasion to assess the hypotheses of this research arrives with the analysis of the process of elaboration and the discussion meetings to produce the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the final report presenting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Before the production of the final report, several discussion meetings were held where Parties defended their points of view related to sustainable development. In the case of Brazil, the

country has shown a very consistent strategy of associating with emerging and developing countries in order to move forward their common positions and objectives. All of the different position statements analyzed in this context, started with the reference to the support to the declarations made by other countries on behalf of Group of 77 and China and CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States).

The elaboration of this Post-2015 Development Agenda consists of the elaboration of 17 goals and 169 targets concerning different dimensions of sustainable development and objectives to embrace the concept in the realities of every single country. It is not hard to imagine the complexity in deciding which were going to be the goals and the wording of the final report of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The document, as argued by all Parties and as proposed and supported by Brazil and the rest of developing and emerging countries, is organized in four main sections: a Political Declaration, Means of Implementation, a set of goals and targets, and fourth, a mechanism for the follow-up and review of the progress and implementation of the collective commitment.

All of the parts have been under long and complex debates trying to produce a final document that encompasses the collective understanding of sustainable development. One of the major discussions centered on the inclusion or not of the need to strengthen the implementation of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, as one of the 17 goals. The Brazilian position towards this question, consistent with what we have seen up to now, was based on rejecting the elimination of this objective of the list as the Means of Implementation, as developed countries were advocating for. Therefore goal 17 of the SDGs, means of implementation and global partnership, is of vital importance for Brazil and for developing countries (Brazil, 28 July 2015). This is also illustrated in its statement of 19 January 2015:

“To make our groundbreaking Post-2015 Development Agenda implementable we need to ensure the means of implementation for the full set of goals and targets. In other words, to do more we need more” (Brazil, 19 January 2015).

In addition to this, the three core pillars of sustainable development are complemented with the fixing of five elements: People; Planet; Prosperity; Peace; Partnership, meant to be included in the Preamble of the final report. Brazil did not support the inclusion of the six elements, but it wanted to reduce them to four: people, prosperity, planet, and partnership. According to Brazilian declarations, this last one was proposed by them in reference to the Means of Implementation (Brazil, 20 February 2015). The Brazilian delegations have opposed to the inclusion of Peace as an element to sustainable development because it is “not a RIO+20

overarching concept, nor an inherent pillar of sustainable development” (Brazil, 21 July 2015). Those elements are included on the Preamble of the Resolution, preamble to which Brazil was convinced of its necessity (Brazil, 31 July 2015).

The Brazilian position towards the drafting of the Political Declaration has been to defend the importance of “poverty eradication and combatting inequality within the context of sustainable development” (Brazil 17 February 2015) as the main objective of sustainable development, placing people at the top of the priorities of the new Agenda. That is why many of the proposals of the Brazilian delegation have been to state that environment underpins the final objectives of the economic and social development, and that this point must be included in the Declaration. The perfect occasion to prove this is given in the Brazilian statement of 21 July 2015, where it they proposed the following amendments to the draft of the Resolution:

“In order to integrate the first three Ps, we need to bridge the gaps between the three silos. We suggest the inclusion of:

- In ‘People’: “ensure equal access to natural resources and a healthy environment for all”
- In Planet we should acknowledge that “the sound management of natural resources underpins economic and social development”
- In Prosperity, we should make reference to “the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production”
- In Peace, there is need to be consistent with SDGs language, referring to ‘inclusive’ instead of ‘harmonious’ societies.” (Brazil 21 July 2015)

When assessing the influence of these proposals in the final Resolution, we realize that in the case of the proposals about Peace, Brazilian comments were introduced in the sentence “to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment” (A/RES/70/1). In the case of the proposals regarding Planet, the petition of Brazil is not included, but it acknowledges one of the central statements of Brazil, the one related to the change and consideration of sustainable consumption and production. Brazil has argued in several occasions the vital importance of SCP (sustainable consumption and production) to the consideration of sustainable development. In fact, Brazilian delegations have argued to the inclusion of SCP in the preamble of the Resolution:

“In the short preamble, we need to add a reference to SCP as a central component of Planet. I don’t think the planet will be safe and that we will all prosper if we do not agree to make our SCP more sustainable” (Brazil, 31 July 2015).

Another reason behind such strong commitment of Brazil towards sustainable production and consumption is that, according to Brazil, sustainable production has been the object of great attention during the negotiations of SDGs, nevertheless, there has been a tendency to forget about sustainable consumption. This is another example of how Brazilian defense of its own consideration of sustainable development passes through the break with the traditional models of the developing countries. According to Brazil, change in consumption patterns must be urgently addressed if sustainable development wants to be consolidated, and for doing so, great commitments by the part of developed countries must be done (Brazil, 19 January 2015).

Regarding Prosperity, the final version of the report did not exactly represent Brazilian propositions, but the ideas are embodied in the paragraph concerning Partnership, where the implicit idea of ‘promotion’ as presented by Brazil is embodied in the wording of the element’s description. Finally, for the case of Peace, the paragraph uses the word inclusive instead of harmonious:

“We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence” (A/RES/70/1).

Another major position of Brazil has been to criticize and oppose to the intention of developed countries to introduce the term of ‘shared responsibilities’ into the final political declaration of the report, because, according to Brazil, it contradicts CBDR. The concept does not take into account the idea of differentiation, because:

“If responsibility for sustainable development were now to be shared, we would be providing countries who most exploited resources and other countries in the past (colonialism and war) a clean slate, and basically relieving them of their commitments and obligations in terms of development assistance and a special and differential treatment for developing countries. Simultaneously, we would be making poor developing countries equally responsible alongside rich developed ones, for achieving sustainable development, no matter how different or asymmetric their respective capacities to do so” (Brazil 20 February 2015).

In this same line, Brazil also argued that the concept of ‘universality’ must be always accompanied by the concept of ‘differentiation’. As Brazil argued, “universality is not the same as equal responsibilities. Universality entails different responsibilities to countries that are intrinsically different from each other. That means that different countries will focus on different challenges, according to their national circumstances, but foremost, according to their historical responsibilities (Brazil, 22 June 2015).

With regard to the final text of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, we find that there is no mention of universality in the sense that Brazil has proposed. Nevertheless, there is also no mention to equal responsibilities, concept to which Brazil was vehemently opposed. For what concerns to the concept of shared responsibilities and common but differentiated responsibilities, the final document makes particular reference to the principles of the Rio Declaration and reaffirms the political commitment to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (par. 12). Nevertheless, Brazil has argued that just the mention of this principle is not enough, and the text needed to be impregnated with the meaning of the term (Brazil, 20 July 2015). In this sense, another proposal of Brazil argued that in paragraph 5 of the Resolution, “after “rich and poor countries alike”, it should be added the expression: “taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities” (Brazil, 21 July 2015). When checking these paragraphs, it is possible to remark that this reference to differentiation is added in the final document. However, the draft also refers to shared responsibilities, as in paragraph 36:

“We pledge to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development”

Target 6.6 of the Declaration also led to major discussions. In goal number 6 that aims at ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, presents target 6.6 which final wording is presented as: “by 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”. The discussion of Brazil is that during the preparatory meetings, the proposed wording was to talk about ‘full protection’ of water-related ecosystems. Brazil responded that this expression “disregards the key concepts of sustainable use of natural resources. Those are the concepts applicable for biodiversity in general, including forests and other ecosystems” (Brazil, 23 June 2015). As we can observe, there is no mention in the final wording of the target to the full protection of water-related ecosystems. This point is relevant because it shows how Brazilian contemplates the application of sustainable development to its different biodiversity hotspots, such as forests.

2. Instrumentalization of the Concept of Sustainable Development for Countering the Dominance of the Northern Powers

Brazil’s leadership on Johannesburg is considerable when its influence to place renewable energies at the core of the discussions about sustainable development. When assessing this

Brazilian strategy, it is possible to find many common aspects with its defense of biofuels. This leadership is both regional and international and can be evidenced by the organization and celebration by Brazil of the International Seminar Rio+10, which took place in Rio de Janeiro from June 23rd-25th 2002. The goal of the seminar was to bring together personalities and specialists to discuss the obstacles that had been verified in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, reasserting the importance of the 'Rio legacy' and identifying the results that could be expected in Johannesburg (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 159).

When referring to this domain, Brazil has placed itself as a role model with a significant percentage of the Brazil's total energy mix made up of renewable energies such as hydropower and biofuel. When reading the report of the 15th session of the CSD, we find that there are clear references to the debates related to energy for sustainable development. The report also recognized the statement arguing that "energy was crucial for sustainable development, poverty eradication and achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and implementation of the Johannesburg Plan" (UN ECOSOC 2007, 10). The report also illustrates the debate about the fossil fuels and alternative energy sources like renewable energies. Nevertheless, the report stated that:

"There was considerable discussion on the issue of fossil fuels and their role in the energy mix. While it was emphasized that fossil fuels would continue to play a dominant role in the energy supply for decades to come, some countries stressed that every effort should be made to diversify the energy mix, giving far greater attention to rapidly increasing the share of renewable energy in the mix" (UN ECOSOC 2007, 10-11).

It is really interesting to take the field of biofuels and assess their Brazilian defense in the context of CSD. Seizing the 14th session of the Commission in 2006, the Brazilian delegation established its main objectives that sustainable development should cover: the eradication of poverty, the change of unsustainable production and consumption practices and the promotion of human health. It is in this logic that Brazil presented during the meeting, biofuels as the leady elements encompassing all of these aspects of sustainable development. This defense of biofuels serves us to assess the Brazilian influence in this field. One year later, in the 15th session of CSD, Brazil, China, India, South Africa, the United States and the European Commission, celebrated a Press Conference where they announced the launching of the International Biofuels Forum that "would contribute to creating a world market for alternative fuels, resulting in economic, social and environmental benefits for developed and developing countries alike" (UN Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, 2 March 2007).

This defense of biofuels, in addition to presenting Brazil's consideration of sustainable development by focusing on the social aspect of the term that ensures the growth of developing countries, shows aspects that serve to validate the hypothesis of instrumentalization. In the first place, as up to now, Brazil's defense of sustainable development is accompanied by a strong criticism and request for change of the model imposed by the Northern powers. In addition, by qualifying biofuels as encompassing sustainable development, Brazil is betting on a sector that benefits the country enormously. The defense of biofuels in the context of sustainable development supposed a major political turning point as well for developing countries, because it started to break the cohesion among them. Until this point, we have seen how Brazil has defended the coalitions with the Group of 77 and China and BASIC as an instrument to boost and support its ambitions, because they were similar to the targets of the rest of developing countries. Indeed, in the statement made by Minister Antonio Simoes, deputy head of the Brazilian delegation to the 15th session of the CSD, he stated that: "For developing countries, to use biofuels means significantly reducing their dependence on imported oil, redressing their trade imbalances and saving income in order to increase investments in health, education, and social development" (Brazil February 2007). Nonetheless, several of the main exporters of fossil fuels, such as petroleum and coal, are developing countries.

Nevertheless, Brazil has not been interested in harming the relations and coalitional potential of the Group of 77 and China. In most of the statements made by Brazil, the delegation has aligned with the statements made on behalf of the coalition and its statements the vast majority of the times, associate with the ones made by the diverse members of the Group.

The Brazilian defense of biofuels continued in the different statements of Brazil over time, arguing that they entail the perfect intersectoral aspect that will merge the different elements conforming sustainable development:

"Biofuels are not a one-dimensional energy alternative. They can be associated with income generation, job creation, rural development, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and increased access to energy. They are at the intersection of several public policies: social, agricultural, economic, environmental, energy, and technological" (Brazil CSD 2008).

After having read and immersed in the Brazilian statements through all this period, one of the principal conclusions that we can make is that among the central positions of Brazil, one of the most important has been to claim for the introduction of the element of international equality into the concept of sustainable development. For developing this point, we can use one of the statements of Brazil pronounced on the 25th of June 2015, where the Brazilian delegation

argued that “equality means treating differently those that are differently situated or in different circumstances and treating equally those that are similarly situated or that are in like circumstances” (Brazil, 25 June 2015). This is not only a position but also a contribution to the international consideration of the concept of sustainable development as we have verified how this element is present in all of the international decisions, reports, and final treaties analyzed in this research. Furthermore, the analysis of the CSD sessions has mostly shown that the proposals of the Brazilian delegations are indeed taken into account and included in the final official documents, thus changing the final connotation of the term towards a more social and less global and universal one in which all countries are considered individually.

After having analyzed all the different positions, publications and documents submitted by Brazil in the context of CSD, it is possible to state that the tone used in this framework is more direct, trying to guide the direction of the concept for the best interests of Brazil in a much more obvious way. An example of this is one of the statements pronounced by Marina Silva during the 13th session of the Commission in 2005:

“For sustainable development to succeed as a practical, applicable concept, it should always be viewed as an asset, never as a liability”

Furthermore, this phase has served to identify the preeminent clashes between developed and developing countries when referring to sustainable development, which also confirms the hypothesis of instrumentalization of the concept to contest the power of States. The hypothesis of distancing from the original essence of protecting the environment is also confirmed because in the whole assessment of Brazilian statements, there has been extremely few mentions of the environmental dimension of the term.

C. Final Phase: Brazilian Evolution and Contributions to the Concept of Sustainable Development in the Amazon in the Context of the COPS to the CBD.

The total sharpening of the research question of this work comes with this third phase that seeks to analyze how all the aspects identified so far are applied to the Brazilian treatment of the Amazon. The reason why this thesis has chosen to end this assessment by focusing on the CBD instead of a Convention on Forests is because of the impact of the positions of developing countries and mainly of Brazil. These Parties were opposed to the negotiation of such convention. Instead, at the end of the celebration of the Earth Summit, a list of Forest Principles was elaborated, which was the result of great dissonances between Parties. Developing countries managed to avoid the mention of a future convention on forests and to reduce the

emphasis on the role of the forests as carbon sinks. What can be drawn as a conclusion of the main Brazilian contributions to the final outcome was the emphasis of the importance of international cooperation, the success in including austral, boreal, sub-temperate, temperate and sub-tropical forests together with tropical forests in the Convention, and the recognition of the importance of populations living in the forests and their right to social and economic development on a sustainable basis.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), signed in Rio de Janeiro by one hundred and fifty-four countries established three very clear objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of these resources. The CBD sets a global institutional and normative framework within which the states should organize their national efforts to protect biodiversity. One important point of the Convention is that it established the precautionary principle, which means that the lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason to postpone or not to take action against the threat of reduction or loss of biodiversity.

1. Brazilian Transformation of the Concept of Sustainable Development

Also concerning the Brazilian position in CBD, Brazil has defended its crucial role in the negotiations and as a leading force of the outcomes of the Convention:

“The country found itself simultaneously as a country possessing biotechnology, with jurisdiction over the largest share of biological and genetic resources of the planet, and as a *demandeur* of more resources and the transfer of new technologies” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 150-151).

In this context of CBD, the country has also combined this role with a very active involvement in the negotiations of most of the aspects related to the entire biodiversity regime. It has also been a leading role in the regional context and in coalitions of developing countries with examples such as being a member of the “Group of Like-Minded Mega-Diverse Countries” (LMMC) or the IBSA Dialogue Forum. The LMMC, created under CBD, consists of 17 developing countries⁴⁰, which together contain more than 70 percent of the world’s biodiversity. The IBSA Dialogue Forum is formed by India, Brazil, and South Africa with the objective of finding common positions on CBD. Moreover, Brazil has been able to exert its leadership by elaborating concrete proposals, like programs with respect to “Monitoring and Indicators of Biodiversity”. The government held several technical workshops throughout the

⁴⁰ Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, and Venezuela.

different meetings and has prepared several publications on how to carry out monitoring and indicators for biodiversity, which also put forward recommendations.

In the Convention on Biological Diversity, Brazil had to prevent above all else the notion that biological resources represented a “common heritage of mankind” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 150). This position was mainly the one of the United States and the G7 countries that considered global biological resources as a common heritage, while Brazil, China, India, and the G77’s approach tried to combine conservation, research and sustainable use of the resources (Brazil MMA 2013, 26). One more time, we can perceive the conflict between the positions of developed and developing countries. According to Brazil, the North-South cleavage resulted in a Convention that balances the differences among the Parties, emphasizing sovereignty over biological resources and the need for partnerships for technology transfer, science, and sustainable use of biodiversity. Brazil, together with developing countries, achieved the recognition of sovereignty over natural resources, because the final document states that biological resources are national, and that biodiversity protection should be addressed in national legislation (CBD 1992, preamble).

Another primary goal of the document is to promote integration between technology that is available in high-income countries and access to genetic resources that exist more abundantly in developing ones. The Brazilian position was key to include the concept of benefit-sharing as one of the three pillars of the CBD, i.e., to share the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 162). The Brazilian position has also been decisive for the recognition of the economic value of compensating local and indigenous communities for the utilization of their traditional knowledge (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 150).

During the 6th meeting of the COP to the CBD in 2002, the Parties negotiated the first Strategic Plan of the CBD. Brazil played an influential role based on its proposal to approach the Plan with a new perspective, to look the CBD from a holistic approach applying already existing plans, where the CBD was fulfilling the role of “architect and not of a builder just stacking bricks” (Brazil MMA 2013, 28).

Special attention must be placed on COP-8, which took place in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006. It is considered to be less ambitious in substantive terms when compared with previous COPs, but the procedural decisions taken were necessary to refine the negotiations that followed on the international regime for Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) (IISD 2006, 22). Brazil and Malaysia focused on tackling substance and the deliberations on ABS ended up focusing on the

process for developing an international regime, with a proposal from Malaysia for a 2010 deadline for this purpose, establishing an expert group on the certificate of origin, source, legal provenance, measures to support compliance with prior informed consent (PIC), and mutually agreed terms (MAT) (IISD, 2006, p. 5, 22).

For Brazil, COP-8 can be considered a highlight. The country not only hosted the conference, but also, the meeting marked the beginning of a process of a more important application of multilayered governance, with broader involvement of subnational and local governments, of the private sector, as well as of civil society as a whole. Furthermore, during this meeting, for the first time, the Brazilian government got the private sector involved. Businesses and their associations were invited to a meeting in São Paulo that resulted in a private sector proposal to the CBD. When Brazil refers to this meeting and its hosting experience, it highlights the strong dissemination campaign within the country to mainstream issues, including among indigenous peoples, which has had a lasting effect (Brazil MMA 2013). Since COP 8, Brazil has been participating in the COPs by taking large delegations and being more active (Brazil MMA 2013).

Regarding the celebration of COP-8, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, ambassador Celso Amorim, pronounced a speech during the opening session of the Eighth High-Level Segment Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP-8. In this speech, Celso Amorim mobilized the reference to the concept of sustainable development, arguing that it is one of the main cornerstones of the Brazilian politics. The speech also makes several references to the huge importance and crucial role of Brazil in the context of environmental protection, with arguments such as “we are the most megadiverse country in the world”⁴¹ (Amorim 2002) or of “Brazilians are aware of the richness of their environmental heritage and of the strategic importance of biodiversity resources for the sustainable development of the country”⁴² (Amorim 2002).

At the moment of referring to sustainable development, Amorim makes special emphasis on the trident of realities under the concept, first of all, the economic development of Brazil, secondly, social progress, and in third place, the environmental protection. Nevertheless, the attention and concern of Amorim regarding the protection of the environment and the

⁴¹ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Somos o país mais megadiverso do mundo*” (Amorim 2002)

⁴² Translation proposed by the author for: “*Os brasileiros têm consciência da riqueza de seu patrimônio ambiental e da importância estratégica dos recursos da biodiversidade para o desenvolvimento sustentável do País*” (Amorim 2002)

implementation of sustainable development are always nuanced with the need for international cooperation, the logic of the common but differentiated responsibilities, and, very interestingly, the fair distribution of benefits. Indeed, Celso Amorim considered that:

“The celebration of COP-8 is the perfect occasion for all Parties to pursue in the objectives of the Convention, all of them based on the principles of the sovereignty of the States of their natural resources and in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities”⁴³ (Amorim 2002)

It is worth mentioning that the speech of Celso Amorim, made specific reference to the need of hearing and considering the opinions of indigenous and local populations. It is at this point where Brazil started to outline its lines to the defense of ABS, protection of traditional knowledge, and justification of the exploitation of the natural resources coming from the Amazon.

The analysis of CBD also validates the hypothesis of the instrumentalization of the concept of sustainable development. The COP-9, Bonn 2008, is considered the largest and most fragmented biodiversity meeting (IISD, 2008, p. 19), because of the relevance of the issues at the spotlight: ABS and climate change. Regarding the ABS international regime negotiations, the G-77 and China were in favor of a legally binding regime as an incentive for conservation and sustainable use (IISD, 2008, p. 9). For Brazil, the linkage between climate change and biodiversity included biofuels for their mitigation potential and competition for land for food production (Brazil MMA 2013). Indeed, when assessing the summary of the session, the final decision regarding agricultural biodiversity and biofuels reflects in some degree the Brazilian position that biofuel production contributes to sustainable development, food and energy security.

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Nagoya, 2010, was a landmark for the Convention as is shown by the decisions adopted. During the meeting, decision X/2 was introduced, which called upon Parties to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It includes 20 ambitious Aichi Biodiversity Targets to be achieved by 2020 or earlier. These Targets are important because the CBD Parties committed to revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), in line with this Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing was adopted, showing the

⁴³ Translation proposed by the author for: “A COP 8 constitui oportunidade para avançar na implementação da Convenção, com base no princípio da soberania dos Estados sobre seus recursos naturais e no princípio das responsabilidades comuns, porém diferenciadas” (Amorim 2002)

high degree of institutional development and intergovernmental cooperation, along with the Strategy for Resource Mobilization. The final outcome of this package of documents was influenced by the active role of Brazil during the preparatory meetings before the COP. In fact, Brazil strongly worked to highlight the linkage of the Strategic Plan with the Strategy for Resource Mobilization (Brazil MMA 2013).

Brazil played a relevant role in terms of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), which was considered by the Brazilian diplomacy as the most important item of the conference (Brazil MMA 2013). Initially, as this field was new, Brazil negotiated for clear rules, which were agreed during the UN's Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg Summit in 2002. For Brazil, the Nagoya Protocol and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are fundamental, because the Protocol guarantees that access to genetic resources that exist in the country's territory and the benefits arising from their use are a national right that is internationally recognized (Brazil MMA 2013). However, this Protocol gains interest in this research because, to date, Brazil has not concluded the process of ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, nor has it renewed the pertinent national legislation in this regard. According to Brazil, "several provisions like the scope, utilization and derivatives, MATs, prior informed consent (PIC), traditional knowledge, incentives to biotechnological research and development and compliance-related issues are of fundamental relevance for the workings of the ABS regime" (Brazil MMA 2013). This action collides with the Brazilian statements about the Protocol that we have seen until this point. One more proof of this argument is the Brazilian speech during the celebration of COP-11 where the country underscored that:

"Brazil advocates the prompt entry into force of the Protocol, as an effective instrument to combat biopiracy, to regulate the international trade of genetic resources and, consequently, to recognize the value of natural heritage and associated traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities" (Brazil 17 October 2012)

With this scenario, we arrive at the celebration of the COP-11, Hyderabad 2012, where the Brazilian delegation was asking for improving the effective use of financial resources for the conservation of biodiversity (Brazil MMA, 11 October 2012). During the meeting, Brazil urged to greater involvement of private initiatives for helping countries, especially for Brazil, to overcome the challenges for the preservation of biodiversity (Brazil MMA, 15 October 2012). According to Francisco Gaetani, executive secretary of the Ministry of Environment during the meeting:

“When we talk about innovation, we are talking about the private sector. When we talk about flexibility, we are talking about the private sector”⁴⁴ (Brazil MMA 15 October 2012)

In this sense, the Brazilian delegation presented during the meeting the Amazon Protected Areas Program (Arpa in Portuguese), aiming at raising funds through public-private partnerships to ensure their viability by 2050 (Brazil MMA, 17 October 2012). According to Brazil, the Arpa was the biggest program of tropical forest conservation in the world. Its objective was to protect 60 million hectares of Brazilian Amazon (Brazil MMA 2013). According to the Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, the program must ensure a strategic vision of the territory that recognizes the historical occupation and its economic, social, environmental, and political characteristics (Brazil MMA, 17 October 2012). It is important to mention that *Arpa* was rewarded in Washington 2013, with the Environmental Excellence Award as an Investment Model for the GEF.

In 2016, during the celebration of COP-13, in Cancun, Brazil defended a proposal to integrate the protected areas of Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil MMA, 5 December 2016). This project was called *Corredores Ecológicos* (Ecological Corridors), including protected areas occupied by forests, but also degraded areas in need of recovery in Brazil and in Latin America, aiming at aligning conservation unit systems and ensuring sustainability in the region. According to the description of the initiative, it arranges forest and conservation areas on private properties and generates the desired connectivity with public protected areas, in harmony with the agricultural and forestry sector (Brazil MMA, 5 December 2016). The program also enhances the dialogue with neighboring and partner countries around the world.

Furthermore, during this meeting, Brazil also presented the *Livro Vermelho da Fauna Brasileira Ameaçada de Extinção* (Red Book of the Brazilian Fauna under Threat of Extinction). Arguing its status as the most biodiverse country in the world, Brazil stated that this report, including a deep survey of all the endangered species in Brazil, represented the greatest worldwide effort on the subject ever made in a country (Brazil MMA, 09 December 2016).

The analysis of this final phase has proved that Brazil has defended a particular interpretation of the concept of sustainable development in the Amazon. This is a holistic interpretation of the three pillars of the concept. Nevertheless, the hierarchy of these pillars are well-defined by

⁴⁴ Translation proposed by the author for: “*Quando falamos de inovação, estamos falando sobre o setor privado. Quando falamos de flexibilidade, estamos falando sobre o setor privado*” (Brazil MMA 15 October 2012).

Brazil: the first is always the economic development of Brazil, secondly, its social progress, and finally, the environmental protection. In the case of the Amazon, Brazilian delegations have urged for better international cooperation and listening of indigenous communities, that is, a better consideration of the multiplicity of actors that intervene within the idea of sustainable development. Nevertheless, in this case, it is even clearer the defense of CBDR and the sovereignty of Brazil in its natural resources.

V. Conclusion

Aiming at assessing the evolution between international environmental protection and economic and social development of emerging countries this research decided to focus on the case of Brazil because it gathers some highly interesting factors that make of it a very stimulating case study for the research question of this thesis. Brazil is indeed a megadiverse country gathering in its territory one of the biggest and richest biomes of the world, the Amazon. Its economic and social development have pushed the country to be considered as an emergent power. Furthermore, its political role in the national but also in the international scenario, has consolidated the extremely interesting and protagonist role of Brazil in international discussions, negotiations, and meetings.

The review of the literature and the assessment of this thesis have proved the self-consideration of Brazil of a key player in the environmental domain and international discussions about the protection of the environment. The operationalization of the hypotheses has also demonstrated the self-categorization of Brazil as a role model, that could be considered as a step-beyond its self-consideration of a fundamental element. This role model assumption responds to Brazilian defense of having performed an economic development without meaning an increase in GHG emission levels. As verified in the assessment, these elements are combined with an extremely pro-active participation in the different meetings, which is at the same time highly technical. Brazil has proposed multiple initiatives and strategies in the context of halting, adapting, and mitigating the effects of Climate Change and environmental degradation.

By seeking to analyze how Brazil has balanced the tridimensional perspectives of the term of sustainable development in the Amazon rainforest, this work presented different hypotheses. First of all, the hypothesis that the Brazilian position in international environmental negotiations has constructed a different connotation of the concept of sustainable development that differs from the one defended in the mainstream of global environmental governance. This hypothesis is validated in all three phases of the analysis. This hypothesis is at the same time,

highly linked to the concepts elaborated in the theoretical development section of this research of leadership and commitment. Brazilian leadership in GEG is highly validated by the high activity and involvement of the country to this domain, being one of the most active countries in the field. This leadership is also merged with the continuous search of Brazil of creating and strengthening alliances with other Parties sharing its interests. Its climate power is at the same time confirmed because of its high levels of emissions and also because of its mega-diversity condition.

Nevertheless, the main achievement of Brazil when assessing its transformative role to the international consideration of sustainable development is the inclusion of what we could call the international environmental equity connotation of the term. Sustainable development emerged in a context of environmental concern as an urgent response to tackle environmental degradation while developing. The application of the term, according to Brazil, shall never suppose a burden for either developing countries or emerging countries. Brazil changed the priorities of the concept by placing the human element at the top of the hierarchical pyramid accentuating the social dimension of the term and to deepen the holistic approach of the sustainable development. Starting from this point, Brazil has succeeded in rooting to the sustainable development term not only the human aspect, which we will discuss below, but also a case-by-case approach. This is proved by the several Brazilian references arguing that just like responsibilities are not the same for everyone, national situations also differ. Brazil has accomplished that the original definition of the Brundtland Commission about sustainable development, the one of “making development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, 8), implies, first of all, the deep analysis of the situation, context and major aspects of this present generation in each single State, leaving aside the universalistic nuance of the original definition. This point is also present in the Brazilian consideration of sustainable development when referring to the Amazon. Brazil defends the special consideration of the situation of the country regarding the rainforest, but also the role of the forest to the different Amazon regions, but in addition to that, the indigenous communities living in the rainforest and thanks to the resources that the Amazon provides.

Secondly, the international environmental equity connotation of the term sustainable development is also proposed by Brazil when stating that the concept shall have the human pillar as its leading priority. One of the main results of the analysis of this thesis is the one of the Brazilian continuous defenses of the international responsibility to enhance social

development and the eradication of poverty when applying sustainable development. The assessment has also verified the Brazilian success in introducing this logic within the international consideration of the term. Finally, as the significant elements proving this and validating this hypothesis of the transformation of the concept, Brazil has relentlessly defended technological transfers, international financing, and reinvigorated international cooperation as fundamental to apply this international environmental equity nuance of the term. It has been proved that Brazil has succeeded in including this because of the multiple references to these aspects in the international reports and outcomes of the different meetings. Nevertheless, one of the most manifest proofs of this is the inclusion of objective 17 of the SDG, Meanings of Implementation.

The second hypothesis of this research argued that Brazilian diplomacy has instrumentalized the concept of sustainable development to create a tool contesting the leadership of the North. This hypothesis is also validated by the analysis of this research. But also, the analysis has shown how the national initiatives and discourse of Brazil towards the environmental question is the object of a much more demanding logic, asking for further commitments and actions to protect the Amazon and the Brazilian environment. This instrumentalization of the concept to contesting the leading position of the Northern powers is also validated by the multiple references of Brazil accusing Northern powers of harming the environment the most and urging them for further commitments, or the references to the need of breaking with the traditional model led by developed countries. In every single statement pronounced or submitted by Brazil, there are references listed in this framework of blaming and accusing and asking for further commitments of developed countries.

Finally, the last hypothesis of this research was the one arguing that by perpetuating the bargaining tool created from the role and statements in the environmental agenda, it has been provoked a bargaining tendency that has moved away from the essence itself of protecting the environment. This hypothesis is partly validated, because it is true that Brazil has anchored in the continuous petition of further financing, transfers of technology, and common but differentiated responsibilities, slowing down the progression and development of further or even actual protection of the environment. Nevertheless, it is also true that the national actions taken by Brazil and the international initiatives voluntarily launched by the country has moved forward the fight against climate change and hence, the protection of the environment. Furthermore, the statements made by several observers of the international protection of the environment, described in the theoretical development of this research argued that multilateral

negotiations have become ossified or gridlocked (Depledged 2006; Dimitrov 2010, Keohane and Victor 2011) is also verified by the assessment of the research question of this work, as the discussions and negotiations since 1992 to 2018 had turned around the same or very similar questions.

On the other side, Brazil sought in the three conferences to emphasize the issues it considered crucial for its development, such as the defense of renewable energies and biofuels, sectors that highly benefit Brazil. As detailed in the theoretical part of this research, one of the decisive elements to construct an effective and efficient global governance, and hence, a successful international protection of the environment, is the shifting from sovereignty to post-sovereignty in global societies (Viola et al. 2012), where the universal interests are sought and defended. Nevertheless, Brazil has proved in the three scenarios analyzed in this research that its defense of the environment only passes through the protection of its developmental interests. In this sense, this research has shown how Brazil has succeeded in transforming the conservative hegemony that characterized GEG, but, however, the country has substituted this by defending a conservative position of its own priorities, because, as illustrated in the analysis of the three phases, the Brazilian positions defended since 1992 until 2018 has virtually remained the same.

This homogenization of Brazilian statements has been identified, as shown in this research by author such as Friberg (2009), who stated that the main positions of Brazil during these meetings were based on three preeminent lines, the responsibilities based on historical contributions of countries to the problem of climate change, the financing for clean development and the engagement on discussions and the forestry sector. Even though the positions related to historical contributions of countries, financing, and engagement in discussions are confirmed in the analysis of this research, we must highlight that the one of engagement of discussions of the forestry sector is nuanced in the results obtained by the assessment of the three central conferences. Brazil has obtained major success in the forestry domain: at first, it ensured that forests were not considered as carbon sinks, but later, when the term began to be used and applied formally, Brazil got that it was accompanied by the required international financial retribution for countries that correctly applied this term. Furthermore, the country achieved the objective of including not only rainforest when referring to the commitments to respect and protect forests, but also a wide variety of different typologies of forests, affecting thus, developed countries as well. Another shocking result is that in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development there are no references to the Amazon

in the Brazilian statements. It does not refer to the rainforest but only to the domains that highly benefit the country.

Lastly, the original intention of this research was to compare the conclusions drawn from the analysis of official documents with interviews conducted with key actors in Brazil's green diplomacy. The intention of this responded to the acknowledgment of the myriad of different documents, position statements and speeches, but also of the difficulty in assessing the nuances implicit on a text. Nevertheless, the international situation of the coronavirus health crisis led to change and adapt the logic of this work. It would be interesting to conduct these interviews in the future that would confirm or bring in new insights to the hypotheses of this thesis.

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VIII. Appendix I: Map of the Brazilian Amazon and the different regions with levels of deforestation

Map 1: Map depicting location of Amazon Rainforest and areas affected by forest fires



Map 2: Geographical location of Brazilian regions and Brazilian legal Amazon. Retrieved from: Cunha et al.,

2019

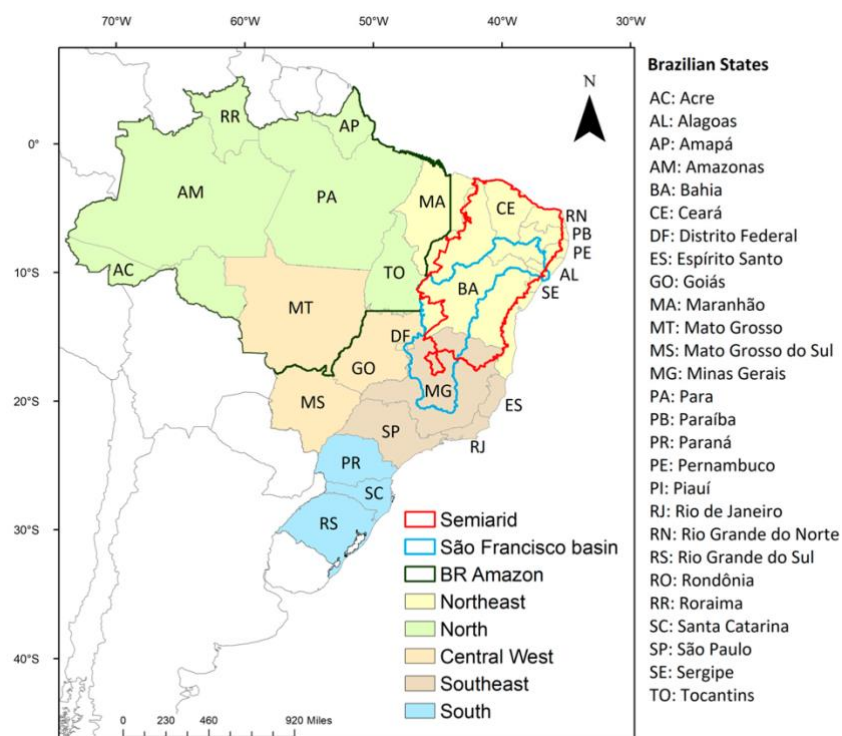
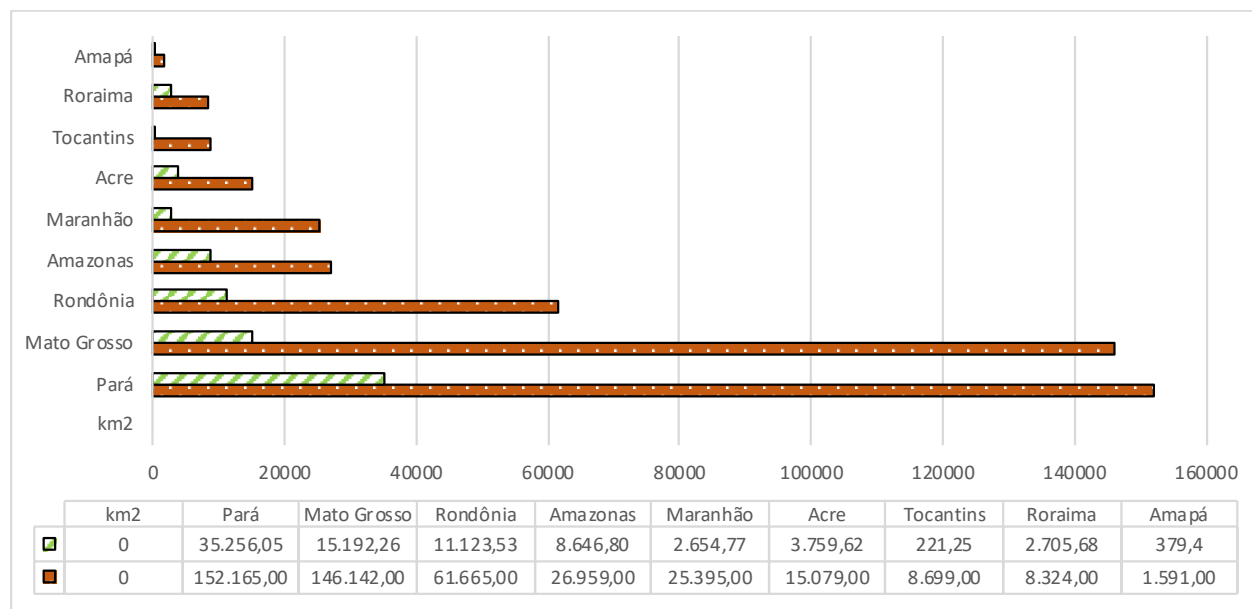


Figure 5: Cumulative deforestation rates in Legal Amazonia and Amazonia in the different regions of the Brazilian Amazonian Rainforest



In spotted orange: Legal Amazon

In striped green: Amazon

All data is in km²

Source: Elaborated by the author using data from PRODES TerraBrasilis

IX. Appendix II: Detailed presentation of the different conference of the parties to the UNFCCC and the CBD

COP UNFCCC	YEAR	LOCATION
COP-1	1995	Berlin, Germany
COP-2	1996	Geneva, Switzerland
COP-3	1997	Kyoto, Japan
COP-4	1998	Buenos Aires, Argentina
COP-5	1999	Bonn, Germany
COP-6	2000	The Hague, Netherlands
COP-7	2001	Marrakech, Morocco
COP-8	2002	New Delhi, India
COP-9	2003	Milan, Italy
COP-10	2004	Buenos Aires, Argentina
COP-11	2005	Montreal, Canada
COP-12	2006	Nairobi, Kenya
COP-13	2007	Bali, Indonesia
COP-14	2008	Poznan, Poland
COP-15	2009	Copenhagen, Denmark
COP-16	2010	Cancun, Mexico
COP-17	2011	Durban, South Africa
COP-18	2012	Doha, Qatar
COP-19	2013	Warsaw, Poland
COP-20	2014	Lima, Peru
COP-21	2015	Paris, France

COP-22	2016	Marrakech, Morocco
COP-23	2017	Bonn, Germany
COP-24	2018	Katowice, Poland
COP-25	2019	Madrid, Spain

COP CBD	YEAR	LOCATION
COP-1	1994	Nassau, Bahamas
COP-2	1995	Jakarta, Indonesia
COP-3	1996	Buenos Aires, Argentina
COP-4	1998	Bratislava, Slovakia
COP-5	2000	Nairobi, Kenya
COP-6	2002	The Hague, Netherlands
COP-7	2004	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
COP-8	2006	Curitiba, Brazil
COP-9	2008	Bonn, Germany
COP-10	2010	Nagoya, Japan
COP-11	2012	Hyderabad, India
COP-12	2014	PyeongChang, Republic of Korea
COP-13	2016	Cancun, Mexico
COP-14	2018	Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt
COP-15	Dates to be confirmed at the moment of the elaboration of this research	Kunming, China

X. Appendix III: *Research's Summary*

— **DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAM** —

Master en Sciences politiques, orientation
relations internationales, Finalité Monde

Master in International Relations, with major
Global Studies

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

The evolution of the balance between international environmental
protection and economic development in emerging countries

The case of the Brazilian protection of the Amazon (1992-2018)

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A. Introduction

The continuous environmental catastrophes, the increase of global temperatures and the usual effects of climate change unfortunately explain in themselves the relevance of a master's Thesis centered on environmental degradation, making of it the core of its research. Environmental concerns are at the forefront of international discussions, where sustainable development has been promoted as one of the remedies to environmental degradation. Nevertheless, the connotations of the term have occasioned very different attitudes towards it depending on the States. Driven by social or international pressure, or by increasing concern for the environmental cause, developing countries have been trying to elaborate their own balance of the three fundamental pillars of the term: the social, the economic and the environmental. Consequently, their role has been key to the development of a definition and connotation of such a tridimensional term as sustainable development is.

This is in fact the baseline of the present work. Starting from the conceptualization of the concept of sustainable development, as the term aiming at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED 1987, 8), this work seeks to analyze the role played by emerging powers in the elaboration and transformation of the term at the international level. More precisely, the central objective of this research is to take the case study of the Brazilian position to protect the Amazon at the international level in order to assess the evolution of the balance between international environmental protection and economic development. By sharpening this objective, the research question of this work is how emerging countries, in this case Brazil, have constructed a different connotation of the term 'sustainable development' in the international scenario that takes into consideration their economic and social circumstances. Therefore, the dependent variable of the research question is the one of the transformation of the concept of sustainable development, while the independent variables are the ones of special and social circumstances of emerging countries.

Framed in this logic, this research assesses three different but highly connected hypotheses. First of all, the hypothesis that the Brazilian position in international environmental negotiations has constructed a conceptualization of sustainable development that differs from the one defended in the mainstream of global environmental governance. Furthermore, the research goes one step further by trying to assess that Brazil's green diplomacy, defined in the context of this work as environmentalist diplomacy, has instrumentalized the concept of sustainable development to create a powerful tool contesting the leadership of the Northern powers, but in the national stage has applied a different connotation of the term. Finally,

following this vein, the research tries to validate the hypothesis arguing that by perpetuating the bargaining tool created from the role of Brazil in the environmental agenda and its involvement in international environmental discussions, it has provoked a bargaining tendency that has moved away from the essence itself of protecting the environment. The indicators to verify or discard these hypotheses are those of the positions and statements made by Brazil during international negotiations on the environment and sustainable development, in order to check whether these statements are different from the original conceptualization of the term or whether they propose changes. Secondly, the final official documents of each of the international meetings are also mobilized as indicators by this work in order to check whether the Brazilian statements manage to permeate the official documents and therefore transform the term into one that better reflects its special circumstances. Finally, in order to verify the hypotheses of instrumentalization and distancing from the true essence of the term, the indicators applied are those of Brazil's arguments on the different occasions and the proposals and actions carried out by the country.

The originality of this research lies on its effort to assess the combination of the environmental commitments of Brazil and its attempts to merge the concept of sustainable development to the economic exploitation of the Amazon, as the country is home to much of the Amazonian rainforest. Brazilian largest source of emissions by far is land-use change and the forestry sector (Carbon Brief 2018), that is why it is highly relevant to assess how the country has managed to merge both realities, the environmental and the developmental one in the international meetings when referring to deforestation or forest management.

The focus on the defense and treatment of the Amazon by Brazil is not new, since several authors have dedicated various works to study this topic assessing the capital importance of the rainforest for Brazil, but also for many global actors, such as companies, other countries sharing the Amazon, NGOs, developed countries, and other developing countries dealing with the same issues as Brazil such as desertification, protection of natural resources, etc. (Drummond 2000). Besides, there have been articles focusing on the national interpretations of sustainable development in the Amazon (Bramant 2019, Carvalho et al. 2010) that have shown how the different understandings of the development of the rainforest often collide with its protection and which cause clashes of interpretations in relation to the application of a more democratized and inclusive vision of the term (Albaladejo y Sartre 2005) or a more economic one. Other articles have chosen to focus on the international dimension of this position towards the Amazon but focusing rather on the description over time of the Brazilian position (De Wit and

De Freitas 2019). However, the concept of sustainable development has never been assessed by analyzing the transformative capacity of Brazil as an emerging country.

Another of the original elements of this work is the use of the constructivist approach of international relations theory in order to evaluate the creation and construction of this Brazilian influence in constructing the term. The constructivist theory argues that States are agents of the social world, and not only actors, as the world is socially built and perceived. They act towards objects, including other actors, based on the meaning that these objects have for them (Wendt 1992, 397). The constructivist approach is also interesting because what really interests this approach is not the analysis of the internal social nor historical construction of States, but the assessment of the social construction of States at the international field and the interstate social networks where States are rooted and that shape their perceptions of the world and the role these agents play in it (Battistella 2009, 328).

B. Brazil as the perfect case study: Theoretical Development.

Brazil is considered, under the logic of this research, as the perfect case study because it gathers very disparate components that are crucial to its environmental action assessment, such as its high share of global carbon emissions, its mega-biodiversity condition, as it is considered as the greatest holder of biological wealth in the world, its vast freshwater resources, large territory, large population, and significant economy. Therefore, there is a broad consensus about Brazilian importance in Global Environmental Governance (GEG), either by its biomes' richness or by its active contributions in international negotiations and meetings (Viola and Gonçalves 2019, de Wit and Freitas 2019, Hurrell and Sengupta 2019). In addition to all of this, it presents a thriving economy in constant growth (de Caria Patrício 2011), which earned it a place among BRICS¹. Being recognized as an emerging power has contributed to perceiving Brazil as a global environmental player (Barros-Platau 2010). Furthermore, choosing Brazil as the case study of this research offers the highly interesting possibility of observing not only its role but also its strategic participation in groups such as the Group of 77 (G-77)² and BASIC³. By combining all of these elements we obtain a highly stimulating case study for the research question of this work and for the political sciences and international relations domain.

¹ The term BRICS refers to the association of emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The term was proposed by the economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 in his paper "Building Better Global Economic BRICS."

² The Group of 77 (G-77) was established during the first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva in 1964. It has remained as the main advocate of developing countries within the UN system. It is considered as one of the most important institutional expression of the interests and views of the "South" in the current international system (Kasa et al. 2008)

³ The term BASIC refers to the countries of Brazil, South Africa, India and China

Regarding the environmental issue, Brazil has applied different strategies depending on the period or the issue at stake. The country has been combining a 'developmentalist' approach (Drummond and Barros-Platau 2006) based on deep and lasting social consensus in favor of economic growth, and an approach showing environmental concerns and actions. Some scholars have categorized this approach as a 'climate myth' (Viola and Gonçalves 2019) trying to sell a self-image to the international community. The term 'climate myth' refers to the distance between the Brazilian self-image in the global environmental governance and its real commitments, power, and leadership (Viola and Gonçalves 2019). The dimension of this 'self-image' of Brazil lies on its preponderance as a major agent in the global carbon cycle and as a fundamental actor in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), especially taking into consideration the defense of a radical interpretation of the common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) principle and the fact that Brazil has taken voluntary commitments to tackle climate change with examples such as the Amazonian deforestation control (2005-2012) or its commitment to reduce 2020 emissions by 36.1–38.9% below what they would otherwise have been (Hochstetler and Viola 2012). All of this is counterbalanced by some empirical facts that show a completely antagonistic image of Brazil, such as a massive destruction of the Amazon rainforest, huge rates of deforestation and Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions. For example, during the period 1989-2004, Brazilian emissions were the most irrational in the world because they produced massive destruction of the Amazonian forest without producing economic growth as a counterpart (Hochstetler and Viola 2012).

The Amazon rainforest is of enormous importance for Brazil, but also for the global environmental equilibrium of the planet. The Amazon takes up 40% of the South American territory and is home to the largest, most diverse forest as well as to 20% of all species of fauna and flora in the world (Itamaraty). Rainforest, such as the Amazon, covers only 8% of the Earth's land surface and may contain more than half of life forms (Drummond 2000). Furthermore, the Amazon basin owns about 20% of the planet's freshwater, counting with a complex system of aquifers and groundwater. The rainforest's richness also lies on its vast natural pharmacopoeia; plant and animal tissues obtained from the rainforest are used in the production of chemicals of known medicinal potency (Sayer 1993). Furthermore, the Amazon

rainforest, because of this importance for the global climate regime, has been called a 'tipping element'⁴ (Lenton et al. 2008).

As explained before, one of the most significant challenges to Brazil and the Amazon is the huge share of the Amazonian deforestation and other land uses in Brazilian GHG emissions (being the worst years 1995 and 2004). The considerations and positions toward the Amazon are complex because there is not only one, but different ones, depending on the actors and on the period constituting contested visions for the region. For some, especially state planners and military leaders, the Amazon is symbolically wrapped up with a nationalist drive for territorial control (Bramant 2019). For others, the globalist vision conceives the Amazon as a critical carbon sink, highlighting its environmental value.

If there are multiple visions of the Amazon at the national level, they are multiplied at the international sphere. This paper focuses on this international stage. In order to have the necessary tools to assess these different contemplations of the Amazon rainforest and the hypotheses of this research, it is necessary to explain some important concepts such as sustainable development, global environmental governance (GEG) and emerging countries.

i. Sustainable Development

The evolution of the concept of sustainable development involves contestations, discussions and alternative definitions that are composed by States' interests and political aims. That is the reason why, the study of the progression of the term by comparing the formal definition with the nuances proposed by emerging countries such as Brazil is highly interesting for International Relations' researchers.

The concept of sustainable development was formerly introduced during the Brundtland Commission in 1987. During this meeting, the former definition of sustainable development perceived it as the ability of humanity to:

"[...] make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 8).

The direct consequences of the Brundtland Commission's definition imply limitations imposed by the state of technology, the social organization on environmental resources, and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities (WCED 1987). Sustainable development was, thereby, not an actual state but a goal to be globally achieved by taking into

⁴ The term 'tipping point' is used to refer to a critical threshold at which a tiny perturbation can qualitatively alter the state or development of a system. Related to this, the term 'tipping elements' to describe large-scale components of the Earth system that may pass a tipping point (Lenton et al. 2008)

account multiple aspects. As a goal to be attained, the definition of the concept entailed different interpretations of what this change should involve. Mainly, this differentiation is more accentuated when considering the distance between Northern and Southern powers. Furthermore, sustainable development is a perennial element in international discourses, but simultaneously, societies and governmental leaders do not fully understand, nor agree about what it means to live within sustainable development as a feature of contemporary times (Bratman 2019). It is precisely at this point where this research frames the justification and pertinence of the central objective of this work, given the fact that the conceptualization of sustainable development, a major environmental discourse, continues to be problematic because of the disparate connotations and the political bargaining behind the concept.

ii. *Global Environmental Governance*

It is widely agreed that one of the major aspects of climate change is its global extent, as being a phenomenon affecting all the States in the world, but in distinct dimensions and gravity. Countries also contribute to climate change in different degrees and manners. Global Environmental Governance (hereafter GEG) is used to coordinate global actions, create spaces of discussion and find a solution to this planetary problem. The term 'global governance' refers to a changing international scenario composed by "more than the formal institutions and organizations through which the management of international affairs is or is not sustained" (Rosenau 1995, 2). Therefore, the aspects that underpin the term global governance are that the international is a changing scenario and this leads to a multilayered structure that causes a high complexity of this process involving multiple scales of political decision-making, fragmented and blurred roles of the state and non-state actors, and a deeply embedded nature of many different processes.

Two of the prime forces tailoring the structure of GEG are the degrees of commitment and leadership. The degree of climate commitment inside this context classifies the different actors of GEG as reformists or conservative (Viola et al. 2012). Regarding international actors, especially the great state powers, the more they commit to the construction of collective mechanisms of climate and economic governance, the less the system becomes conservative (Viola et al. 2012, 13). On the other side, the concept of leadership in GEG is defined as the relationship between actors in a negotiation process (to define the agenda or to implement it), in which one of the actors wants to take the lead in negotiations (aspiration), and is able to act and transform reality in a way that the other actor(s) in the relation follow(s) (Young 1991). Leadership is also complemented by the degree of climate power of the different actors of GEG. Climate power resides in the volume and trajectory of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the

atmosphere; human and technological capital to generate a considerable impact on the transition to a low-carbon economy; and the relation between resources and energy culture (Viola et al. 2012) also called energy behavior.

As we have seen, environmental degradation and its consequences are global, thereby, countries are required to collaborate to modify their status quo and to find long-term solutions to the current dramatic situation. In other words, a state that wants to address climate change should seek formal international cooperation (Hochstetler and Viola 2012).

iii. Emerging Countries

A possible contemplation of what it means to be considered as an emerging power is given by Macfarlane (2006), who defines the notion of emerging powers as presenting the common characteristics of regional preponderance, aspiration to a global role, and the contesting of US hegemony. Special attention is placed on this idea of contestation because labels like ‘South’, ‘third world’, ‘emerging countries’ or ‘developing countries’ insist on their essential similarity: opposition to the developed ‘North’ (Hochstetler 2012). Katzenstein (2005) contributes by arguing that in order to assess a country as emerging, two material indicators should be taken into account: the strategic action and sheer weight (Katzenstein 2005, 21).

The study of GEG and how emerging powers are trying not only to enter but to level this field defending their discourse is highly interesting for the political science and under the international relations’ theoretical lens. We are witnessing how the global scenario is changing as a result not only of globalization, but as well, and inherent to it, of the breaking of the bipolar and then unipolar system, mostly because of the rise of new powers (Boulet et al. 2016). It is not hard to imagine the degree of complexity that these new actors’ statements and incorporation have supposed to GEG and principally to the traditional dynamics of power competition. They provoke that the traditional powers find more difficult to attain international compromises and a global positioning towards the question of the environment. Their economic size and dynamism, their increasing share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and their overall political salience and foreign policy activism have all become more prominent (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). Nevertheless, the extent to which these powers have been able to seize this opportunity is part of the questions this paper seeks to answer.

C. Methodology for the Assessment of the Hypotheses

When developing the operationalization of this work’s hypotheses, we are conscious of the complexity to assess not only the evolution of the concept of sustainable development in the international sphere, but also, the difficulty of assessing the different nuances, intentions and

political power that the Brazilian government has given to the concept. It is for this reason that this work tries to operationalize the hypotheses by performing a deep qualitative research method of the official documents, position statements, and speeches of Brazil in the context of international summits and negotiations from 1992 to 2018. Given the density and large quantity of official documents in GEG and the limitations of this research, we have reduced the assessment to three major international Conventions. First of all, the different Conferences of the Parties (COPs) since 1995 to 2018 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Secondly, this work studies the different sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Finally, the different COPs of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In these summits Brazil has not only played an important role (as it is going to be detailed), but also the Amazon is considered a crucial element. Major attention has been placed on the analysis of the documents submitted and produced in the context of the Earth Summit in 1992, the Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 in Johannesburg, Rio+20, and finally, the Paris Agreement.

The reason behind the choice of assessing the different Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), responds to the fact that the discussions about climate change supposed the beginning of the diversification of domains about environmental protection. Furthermore, given the breadth of topics discussed in these meetings and the large number of Member States to the Convention⁵, the analysis of this COPs offers the perfect opportunity to start outlining the lines of the possible transformation, instrumentalization and distancing from the true essence of the of sustainable development. Even though the first COP was celebrated in Berlin in 1995, this research also assesses the Rio Summit of 1992 because of the location of the summit, Rio de Janeiro, the topics under discussion, and the outcome documents elaborated after this meeting: the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Statement of Forest Principles. The CSD is the subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the mandate to monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. Its functions were defined by the General Assembly in resolution 47/191 and later further detailed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In contrast to the COPs to the UNFCCC that are held every year, the CSD decided, in its Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPOW) to stagger the consideration of specific sustainable development issues in biannual cycles until 2017.

⁵ When referring to the Convention, we are referring to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in New York on 9 May 1992.

The total sharpening of the research question of this work comes the assessment of the different COPs to the CBD, which seeks to analyze how all the aspects identified so far are applied to the Brazilian treatment of the Amazon. The reason why this thesis has chosen to end this assessment by focusing on the CBD instead of a Convention on Forests is because of the impact of the positions of developing countries and mainly of Brazil. These Parties were opposed to the negotiation of such convention. Instead, at the end of the celebration of the Earth Summit, a list of Forest Principles was elaborated, which was the result of great dissonances between Parties. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), signed in Rio de Janeiro, established three very clear objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of these resources. The CBD sets a global institutional and normative framework within which the states should organize their national efforts to protect biodiversity.

D. Main Results from the Operationalization of the Hypotheses

The assessment performed in this research has shown very clearly the self-consideration of Brazil as a significant Party to the different conventions and different meetings. The country has based its leadership not only on its environmental relevance, but also in its political power to form and influence coalitions. The country has been proactive in leading these coalitions, in producing joint documents gathering the common positions of developing and emerging countries and in proposing alternatives for breaking the traditional model and leadership perpetuated by the Northern powers. The assessment has also shown several occasions where Brazil has considered itself as a role model to show how to combine the environmental protection and the economic development.

The operationalization of the hypotheses has also shown how, according to Brazil, its commitment is to be admired because, according to the Brazilian green diplomacy, even without having any responsibility or obligation to commit to protect its environment, they have made great engagements. Another very interesting finding is that Brazil has been a country very active in the international environmental discussions, but also its participation has been very technical in all the occasions. Moreover, Brazil has been able to exert its leadership by elaborating concrete proposals, like programs with respect to monitoring and indicators of biodiversity, control and monitoring of deforestation, programs for financing good practices, etc.

Brazil central positions to the implementation of sustainable development in the long-term suppose the eradication of poverty, greater and more transparent international cooperation and multilateralism, the economic development of the country, the transfer of technology and

capacity-building in order to implement sustainable methods to develop the country, the participation of all the different levels of governance, and the rise of awareness of the population regarding the environmental question. Regarding the Amazon, Brazil considers that sustainable development implies a holistic consideration of not only the necessities of the country, but also of the different regions of the Amazonian rainforest, its indigenous communities and the involvement in the process of the civil society.

Furthermore, Brazilian preeminent position towards the question of forests has been to avoid measures that emphasized the role of forests as CO₂ sinks, or the consideration of the Amazon as a *common good* or “common heritage of mankind” (Brazil Itamaraty 2009, 150). The assessment has also shown how Brazilian statements regarding the application of sustainable development in forests have led to a transformation of this applicability, as shown by the analysis of the treatment to carbon sinks, firstly affecting merely rainforests, but later extending its margin to all kinds of forests and including a reward for good practices.

The operationalization has also shown how Brazil has succeeded in including its appreciations of the concept of sustainable development to the connotation of the term in the official outcome documents of the different meetings. Brazil has succeeded in getting reductions of emissions from deforestation contemplated under the Convention, and therefore making forests eligible for the programs of international financing and transfers of technology and capacity-building. Furthermore, Brazil has brought forward a humanistic vision of sustainable development that passes through the eradication of poverty and a better framework to enhance and boost international cooperation. Very interestingly, these statements have been included to the international conception of sustainable development as social inclusion and poverty eradication are considered as prime elements of the concept of sustainable development and within the discussions about sustainable development. Even more importantly, poverty eradication is considered as the main priority of the concept as shown in the final documents of the Johannesburg Declaration, the Bali Road Map, the Copenhagen Accord, the Paris Agreement, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the report *The Future We Want*.

One of the clearest examples showing not only the inclusion of Brazil’s statements in the final documents produced on each meeting, but also its power to transform the concept of sustainable development, arrives with the inclusion of the element ‘international equality’ into the concept. For Brazil, this term means “treating differently those that are differently situated or in different circumstances and treating equally those that are similarly situated or that are in like circumstances” (Brazil, 25 June 2015). This is not only a position but also a contribution to the international consideration of the concept of sustainable development as we have verified how

this element is present in all of the international decisions, reports, and final treaties analyzed in this research.

Brazil played a relevant role in terms of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and the Nagoya Protocol, which have been considered by the Brazilian diplomacy as the most important issues affecting the Amazon. Initially, as this field was new, Brazil negotiated for clear rules, which were agreed during the UN's Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg Summit in 2002. For Brazil, the Nagoya Protocol and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are fundamental, because the Protocol guarantees that access to genetic resources that exist in the country's territory and the benefits arising from their use are a national right that is internationally recognized. However, this Protocol gains interest in this research because, to date, Brazil has not concluded the process of ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, nor has it renewed the pertinent national legislation in this regard.

Furthermore, in the context of the analysis of the different sessions to the CSD offers a very clear opportunity of assessing this Brazilian power to transform the concept of sustainable development. We are referring to the process of elaboration of the final official report of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the final report presenting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, the assessment has proved how mostly all Brazilian remarks, very similar to the statements that Brazil has been mobilizing since 1992, are included in the final report, thus changing the final connotation of the term towards a more social and less global and universal one in which all countries are considered individually.

Moreover, the hypotheses of instrumentalization and distancing from environmental protection are also validated thanks to this assessment of the hypotheses. Firstly, all Brazilian statements are accompanied by arguments aiming at breaking with the traditional model developed by developed countries. The continuous reiteration of the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and Polluter Pays principles, or even the Brazilian proposition of the term 'relative responsibilities', move away from the real need of protecting the environment because they monopolize almost every discussion in the context of GEG and significantly slows down progress towards true environmental protection. Proof of this is that the discussions analyzed in this paper, despite covering a fairly wide range of time, have dealt with basically the same issues since 1992. The analysis also shows clashes between developed and developing countries when referring to sustainable development, which also confirms the hypothesis of instrumentalization of the concept of sustainable development seeking to contest the power of States. The hypothesis of distancing from the original essence of protecting the environment is

also confirmed because in the whole assessment of Brazilian statements, there have been extremely few mentions of the environmental dimension of the term

E. Conclusion

Aiming at assessing the evolution between international environmental protection and economic and social development of emerging countries this research decided to focus on the case of Brazil because it gathers some highly interesting factors that make of it a very stimulating case study for the research question of this thesis. Brazil is indeed a megadiverse country gathering in its territory one of the biggest and richest biomes of the world, the Amazon. Its economic and social development have pushed the country to be considered as an emergent power. Furthermore, its political role in the national but also in the international scenario, has consolidated the extremely interesting and protagonist role of Brazil in international discussions, negotiations and meetings.

The operationalization of the hypotheses has also demonstrated the self-categorization of Brazil as a role model, that could be considered as a step-beyond its self-consideration of a fundamental element. This role model assumption responds to Brazilian defense of having performed an economic development without meaning an increase in GHG emission levels. As verified in the assessment, these elements are combined with an extremely pro-active participation in the different meetings, which is at the same time highly technical. Brazil has proposed multiple initiatives and strategies in the context of halting, adapting and mitigating the effects of Climate Change and environmental degradation.

By seeking to analyze how Brazil has balanced the tridimensional perspectives of the term of sustainable development in the Amazon rainforest, this work presented different hypotheses:

First of all, the hypothesis that Brazilian position in international environmental negotiations has constructed a different connotation of the concept of sustainable development that differs from the one defended in the mainstream of global environmental governance. This hypothesis is validated. This hypothesis is at the same time highly linked to the concepts elaborated in the theoretical development section of this research of leadership and commitment. Brazilian leadership in GEG is highly validated by the high activity and involvement of the country to this domain, being one of the most active countries in the field. This leadership is also merged with the continuous search of Brazil of creating and strengthening alliances with other Parties sharing its interests. Its climate power is at the same time confirmed because of its high levels of emissions and also because of its mega-diversity condition.

Nevertheless, the main achievement of Brazil when assessing its transformative role to the international consideration of sustainable development is the inclusion of what we could call the international environmental equity connotation of the term. Sustainable development emerged in a context of environmental concern as an urgent response to tackle environmental degradation while developing. The application of the term, according to Brazil, shall never suppose a burden for either developing countries or emerging countries. Brazil changed the priorities of the concept by placing the human element at the top of the hierarchical pyramid accentuating the social dimension of the term and to deepen the holistic approach of the sustainable development. Starting from this point, Brazil has succeeded in rooting to the sustainable development term not only the human aspect, but also a case-by-case approach. This is proved by the several Brazilian references arguing that just like responsibilities are not the same for everyone, national situations also differ. Brazil has accomplished that the original definition of the Brundtland Commission about sustainable development, the one of “making development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, 8), implies, first of all, the deep analysis of the situation, context and central aspects of this present generation in each single State, leaving aside the universalistic nuance of the original definition. This point is also present in the Brazilian consideration of sustainable development when referring to the Amazon. Brazil defends the special consideration of the situation of the country regarding the rainforest, but also the role of the forest to the different Amazon regions, but in addition to that, the indigenous communities living in the rainforest and thanks to the resources that the Amazon provides.

Secondly, the international environmental equity connotation of the term sustainable development is also proposed by Brazil when stating that the concept shall have the human pillar as its leading priority. One of the major results of the analysis of this thesis is the one of the Brazilian continuous defenses of the international responsibility to enhance social development and the eradication of poverty when applying sustainable development. The assessment has also verified the Brazilian success in introducing this logic within the international consideration of the term. Finally, as the pivotal elements proving this and validating this hypothesis of transformation of the concept, Brazil has relentlessly defended technological transfers, international financing and reinvigorated international cooperation as fundamental to apply this international environmental equity nuance of the term. It has been proved that Brazil has succeeded in including this because of the multiple references to these aspects in the international reports and outcomes of the different meetings. Nevertheless, one

of the clearest proofs of this is the inclusion of objective 17 of the SDG, Meanings of Implementation.

Brazil has obtained major successes in the forestry domain: at first it ensured that forests were not considered as carbon sinks, but later, when the term began to be used and applied formally, Brazil got that it was accompanied by the required international financial retribution for countries that correctly applied this term. Furthermore, the country achieved the objective of including not only rainforest when referring to the commitments to respect and protect forests, but also a wide variety of different typologies of forests, affecting thus, developed countries as well.

The second hypothesis of this research argued that Brazilian diplomacy has instrumentalized the concept of sustainable development to create a tool contesting the leadership of the North. This hypothesis is also validated by the analysis of this research. But also, the analysis has shown how the national initiatives and discourse of Brazil towards the environmental question is the object of a much more demanding logic, asking for further commitments and actions to protect the Amazon and the Brazilian environment. This instrumentalization of the concept to contesting the leading position of the Northern powers is also validated by the multiple references of Brazil accusing Northern powers of harming the environment the most and urging them for further commitments, or the references to the need of breaking with the traditional model led by developed countries. In every single statement pronounced or submitted by Brazil there are references listed in this framework of blaming and accusing and asking for further commitments of developed countries.

Finally, the last hypothesis of this research was the one arguing that by perpetuating the bargaining tool created from the role and statements in the environmental agenda, it has been provoked a bargaining tendency that has moved away from the essence itself of protecting the environment. This hypothesis is partly validated, because it is true that Brazil has anchored in the continuous petition of further financing, transfers of technology and common but differentiated responsibilities, slowing down the progression and development of further or even actual protection of the environment. Nevertheless, it is also true that the national actions taken by Brazil and the international initiatives voluntarily launched by the country has moved forward the fight against climate change and hence, the protection of the environment. The assessment has shown how the same topics have been discussed since 1992, which has caused very slow progress. On the other side, Brazil sought in the three conferences to emphasize the issues it considered crucial for its development such as the defense of renewable energies and biofuels, sectors that highly benefit Brazil. Brazil has proved in the three scenarios analyzed in

this research that its defense of the environment only passes through the protection of its developmental interests. In this sense, this research has shown how Brazil has succeeded in transforming the conservative hegemony that characterized GEG, but, however, the country has substituted this by defending a conservative position of its own priorities, because, as illustrated in the analysis of the three phases, the Brazilian positions defended since 1992 until 2018 has virtually remained the same. Another shocking result is that in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development there are no references to the Amazon in the Brazilian statements. It does not refer to the rainforest but only to the domains that highly benefit the country.

Lastly, the original intention of this research was to compare the conclusions drawn from the analysis of official documents with interviews conducted with key actors in Brazil's green diplomacy. The intention of this responded to the acknowledgment of the myriad of different documents, position statements and speeches, but also of the difficulty in assessing the nuances implicit on a text. Nevertheless, the international situation of the coronavirus health crisis led to change and adapt the logic of this work. It would be interesting to conduct these interviews in the future that would confirm or bring in new insights to the hypotheses of this thesis.

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