

A large crowd of people is gathered for a political rally in Brazil. In the foreground, several individuals are walking, some holding flags. A man in a blue suit is prominent in the center. To his left, a person wears a traditional indigenous headdress with a large yellow feather. To his right, a woman in a white jacket and a man in a black cap are visible. The background is filled with a dense crowd of people, many holding flags.

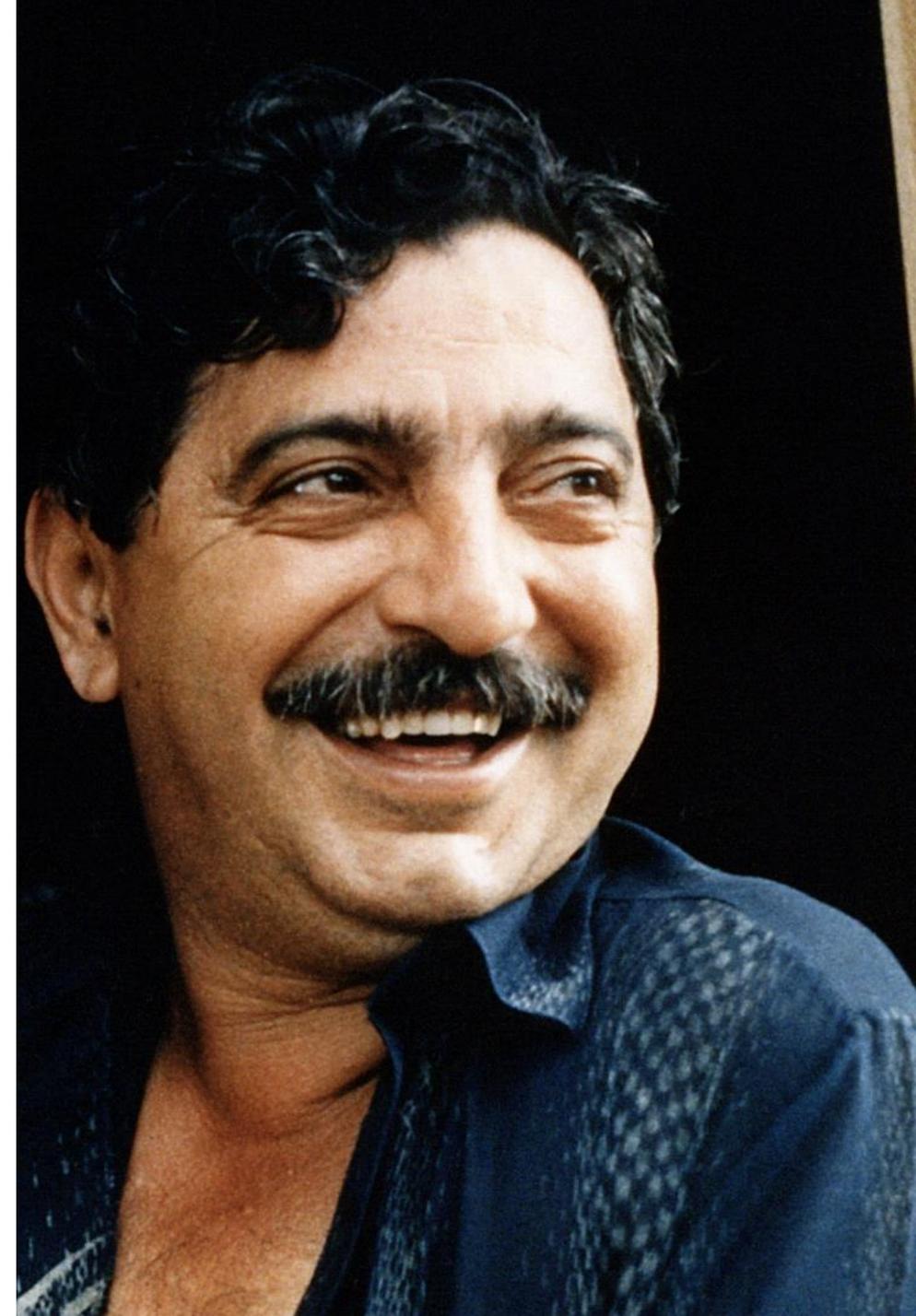
BRAZILIAN PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES OF BOLSONARO TO THE GREEN HOPES OF LULA

BRUNO H. TOLEDO HISAMOTO, PH.D.

FEBRUARY 2023

CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRAZIL BEFORE BOLSONARO

- Military Dictatorship era (1964-1985): environment as an obstacle for economic development
- Amazon, a “green desert” to be occupied
 - Military’s view on the Amazon: Brazil’s last big pool of natural resources
 - Transamazonica and Agrovila Project
 - Persecution against Indigenous Peoples
 - Land conflict (murder of **Chico Mendes** in 1988)
 - Deforestation



UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Rio de Janeiro 3–14 June 1992



CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRAZIL BEFORE BOLSONARO

- Redemocratization brings a new focus: environment protection as a condition for development
 - Creation of the Ministry of Environment and IBAMA
 - Deforestation of the Amazon as a foreign policy issue in Brazil: **ECO-92**
 - Struggle for political and economic stability puts environmental issues in the backseat during the 1990s

CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRAZIL BEFORE BOLSONARO

- 1st Lula government (2003-2011)
 - **Marina Silva** as Minister of Environment highlights a new command-and-control strategy for environmental protection in the Amazon
 - Satellite monitoring and IBAMA “boots on the ground” teams to attack spots of deforestation
 - A more streamlined fine system to punish those who committed environmental crimes
 - Result: fall of +80% in deforestation rate between 2006-2012





CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRAZIL BEFORE BOLSONARO

- Brazil in the 2010s: political and economic instability
 - Once more, economic crisis puts environmental issues in the backseat during Dilma Rousseff's government (2011-2016)
 - Budgetary cuts drain resources for environmental protection
 - Deforestation rises again from 2012 on
 - Dilma government accepts pressure from agribusiness and industry sectors to relax environmental laws (2012 Forest Code) and gives green light to the controversial project of the Belo Monte hydropower station in the Xingu river

CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRAZIL BEFORE BOLSONARO

- **Michel Temer administration:** a “prequel” to Bolsonaro
 - Lack of resources deepens the dismantling of environmental inspection
 - Agribusiness sectors gets political prominence under Temer
 - Federal government starts to use the military to combat deforestation and forest fires (militarization)





RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION: (ANTI)ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER BOLSONARO

- **Bolsonaro phenomena and the environment**
 - Alignment between military, agribusiness, land-grabbers and religious proselytizers
 - Right-wing paranoia meets anti-environment interests of economic players
- A project of environmental destruction in three fronts:
 - Legal and institutional
 - Political
 - Socio-Environmental

RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION: (ANTI)ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER BOLSONARO

- Legal and Institutional Destruction
 - **Ricardo Salles** and “Pushing the whole lot through” (*passar a boiada*): infralegal deregulation bypassing legislative process favoring agribusiness & industry interests
 - Example: “conciliatory audience” phase before the execution of environmental fines (in practice, it freezes all the process and let fines expire)
 - Dismantling of IBAMA: radical budgetary cuts, lack of personnel and equipments, political persecution, militarization
 - Example: Bolsonaro prohibits Ibama from destroying mining machinery legally seized in inspection actions in the middle of the Amazon
 - Denial of deforestation data from INPE, the most prestigious governmental scientific agency in Brazil, with decades of experience in satellite monitoring of the Amazon
 - Bolsonaro attempts to implement a parallel system for deforestation monitoring led by the military to get the “real data”



RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION: (ANTI)ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER BOLSONARO

- Political Destruction
 - “Unholy alliance” between agribusiness, arms industry and evangelicals in Congress (Beef, Bullets and Bible caucuses)
 - Environmental deregulation in Congress: mining in indigenous land, relaxation of health requirements for pesticides, restriction to delimitation of new indigenous land, legalization of the illegal occupation of public lands
 - Use of fake news on social media (the “Hate Office”) to discredit scientific data on deforestation and to defend Bolsonaro from international criticism
 - Example: Leonardo DiCaprio accused of setting fire to a forest area in Alter do Chão, Pará
 - Bolsonaro: “the minority must bow to the majority”
 - International isolation



RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION: (ANTI)ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER BOLSONARO

- Socio-Environmental Destruction
 - Brazil as the world's most lethal country for environmentalists and indigenous rights defenders
 - Global Witness: 342 dead from 2012 to 2021 (1,733 worldwide)
 - Increase in number of cases of violence against indigenous peoples
 - Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI): 176 cases of violent deaths among indigenous peoples, the 2nd worst rate since 2014 (second only to 2020)
 - Lack of interest and omission in the care of indigenous populations: **humanitarian crisis in the Yanomami Nation**

RECIPE FOR DESTRUCTION: (ANTI)ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER BOLSONARO

- Results:
 - Deforestation in the Amazon increased +59,5% between 2019 and 2022 (PRODES/INPE data), with more than 40,000 km² of forest lost in four years
 - Loss of more than US\$ 3.1 billion in environmental fines expired or suspended unilaterally by the government
 - With no inspection or official presence, organized crime flourished in the Amazon (drug and gun trafficking, illegal fishing, gold mining, timber extraction)
 - Murders of **Bruno Pereira** e The Guardian's journalist **Dom Phillips** in the Vale do Javari area in June 2022





RECIPE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: PROMISES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER LULA

- “Another chance”: **Lula** puts environmental protection in the forefront of its government plans
 - A cross-cutting approach to environment issues in the Federal Government structure
 - Creation of the National Climate Authority and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples
 - **Marina Silva** returns to the Ministry of Environment
 - Big promise: to end all deforestation in the Amazon and other biomes until 2030
- The reconstruction must deal with Bolsonaro’s three fronts of destruction
 - Legal and Institutional
 - Political
 - Socio-Environmental

RECIPE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: PROMISES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER LULA

- Legal and Institutional Reconstruction
 - Budget recomposition for IBAMA and other environmental agencies, through the resumption of international funding (i.e., Amazon Fund)
 - Repeal of infralegal reforms to restore integrity to formal environmental legislation
 - Demilitarization of the governmental structure for the environment
 - Resumption and update of the federal plan to combat deforestation in the Amazon





RECIPE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: PROMISES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER LULA

- Political Reconstruction
 - Federal Government as a brake on agribusiness' pretensions of easing environmental laws
 - But agribusiness remains strong in Congress and can make life difficult for the government on other agendas
 - The political protagonism of indigenous groups can be a differential in favor of a green agenda in the Legislative
 - **Resuming relations with Europe, USA and other Western powers, with the environment at the center of the discussion, may help the Lula administration to promote new environmental preservation and climate action projects**

RECIPE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: PROMISES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER LULA

- Socio-Environmental Reconstruction
 - Urgent resumption of demarcation of new indigenous lands and environmental conservation units
 - Yanomami crisis as an opportunity for the government to prioritize the protection of indigenous rights in practice
 - Recovery of social participation within environmental governance,
 - Presence of organized crime in the Amazon is a worrying obstacle





RECIPE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: PROMISES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES UNDER LULA

- What we expect:
 - The path to zero deforestation in 2030 is long and tortuous, but (still) possible
 - Local political and economic elites will be obstacles for environmental action in the Amazon
 - Political struggles ahead in Congress: majority composed by right-wing and/or agribusiness representatives
 - A new and more ambitious NDC to the Paris Agreement – and a possible COP30 in Belém do Pará, in the middle of the Amazon, in 2025
 - Environmental action and the defense of democracy after the **January 8th attempted coup**



THANK YOU!

Contact: brunotol@msn.com