

TWENTY YEARS OF BRAZILIAN NATIONAL ECOLOGICAL CONFLICTS

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Equitable opportunity for social movement participation in environmental decision-making is central to environmental justice, yet it's not enough to claim it, movements must build the right opportunities to achieve it. This study is of Brazil's national political ecology and policy conflicts. It seeks to identify how these conditions were achieved to a degree in the last twenty years in Brazil on some occasions and others not, identifying the institutional factors which feed into the decision-making processes of conceiving, approving and implementing public environmental policies. The constructs of political opportunity structures, mobilization structures, framing processes and social conflicts are applied to five emblematic movement decision-making processes.

Today, despite the Brazilian Government's improved capacity, national conflict negotiation processes have influenced the effectiveness of environmental policies during the run-up to Rio 92, the development and implementation of the Pilot Program to Protect Brazilian Tropical Forests, the public forest management legislation, revisions in the Forest code and the development of payment for environmental services legislation, including REDD+, which could make bioma environmental sustainability compatible with economic development. The analysis of the evidence concentrates on the relationships to the environmental alliance its adversaries and government representatives.

After Chico Mendes gained important allies, enhanced in the 1990s by winning battles and successes, the environmental alliance weakened. Given the numerous Project opportunities, it dispersed towards multiple objectives and put aside forms of collective action, losing mobilization capacity to defend against threats as well as influence government. In contrast, the "pro-development" movement enhanced its influence in government, broadened its spectrum of alliances, including a nationalist frame, with the support of specialist staff, thus managing to defend a neoliberal private property concept contrary to its constitutional social and environmental function. The conclusions are conceived to suggest improvements in social and environmental dialogue.