

## **The military government, nature, and agricultural frontier in the Brazilian Midwest (1964-1979)**

**O governo militar, natureza, e fronteira agrícola no Centro Oeste brasileiro (1964-1979)**

**Gobierno militar, naturaliza y frontera agrícola en el Medio Oeste brasileño (1964-1979)**

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### **Abstract**

The article aims to identify through the analysis of public policies and environmental laws (1964-1979) if the Brazilian State helped the agricultural frontier expansion in the Brazilian Midwest. It was made a narrative review, based in search in the database: Capes Periodical, Capes Theses and Dissertations Catalog, Google Scholar, and Mendeley as a reference manager. Also, there were consulted the sites of the Legislative Panel of the Environment Ministry for environmental laws analysis. And for Public Policies analysis: Database of Foundation Getúlio Vargas, Center for Research and Documentation of Contemporary History of Brazil, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. The results demonstrate that the military government during the period under analysis contributed, through the publication of public policies and environmental laws, for the expansion of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest.

**Keywords:** Economic miracle; Productive deconcentrating; Developmentalism in environmental laws; Cerrado.

### **Resumo**

O artigo tem como objetivo identificar através da análise de políticas públicas e leis ambientais (1964-1979) se o Estado brasileiro influenciou a expansão da fronteira agrícola no Centro-Oeste brasileiro. Foi feita uma revisão narrativa, com base em busca na base de dados: Periódico Capes, Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações Capes, Google Acadêmico e Mendeley como gerenciador de referências. Também foram consultados os sites do Painel Legislativo do Ministério do Meio Ambiente para análise das leis ambientais. E para análise de Políticas Públicas: Banco de Dados da Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Os resultados demonstram que o governo militar no período analisado contribuiu por meio da publicação de políticas públicas e leis ambientais, para a expansão da fronteira agrícola no Centro-Oeste.

**Palavras-chave:** Milagre econômico; Desconcentração produtiva; Desenvolvimentismo nas leis ambientais; Cerrado.

### **Resumen**

El artículo tiene como objetivo identificar a través del análisis de las políticas públicas y leyes ambientales (1964-1979) si el Estado brasileño ayudó a la expansión de la frontera agrícola en el Medio Oeste brasileño. Se realizó una revisión narrativa, basada en la búsqueda en la base de datos: Capes Periódico, Catálogo de Tesis y Disertaciones de Capes, Google Scholar y Mendeley como gestor de referencias. Asimismo, se consultaron los sitios del Panel Legislativo del Ministerio del Medio Ambiente para el análisis de las leyes ambientales. Y para análisis de Políticas Públicas: Base de Datos de la Fundación Getúlio Vargas, Centro de Investigación y Documentación de Historia Contemporánea de Brasil, Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística. Los resultados demuestran que el gobierno militar durante el período bajo análisis contribuyó, a través de la publicación de políticas públicas y leyes ambientales, para la expansión de la frontera agrícola en el Medio Oeste.

**Palabras clave:** Milagro económico; Desconcentración productiva; El desarrollismo en las leyes ambientales; Cerrado.

## 1. Introduction

The 1960s for Brazil was a historic landmark of which two main ones stand out for the analysis: 1) the context of the Green Revolution and 2) the military coup. The two occurrences had consequences for national territory on different scales: political, economic, and environmental, given that the political system was changed to non-democratic, the economy was boosted, and several government projects cooperated to increase it, and finally, concerning the environment, laws contemplated the theme, highlighting the ideology of the current political system, that is, developmentalism.

The focus of this paper is to analyze how the military government during 1964-1979 stimulated the advance of the agricultural frontier in the Cerrado, in the Midwest region, through state programs created by the national development plans and through environmental laws. The Midwest region is composed by the states of Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso, and Distrito Federal (Ibge, 2010):

**Figure 1:** Map of Midwest.



Source: <https://www.embrapa.br/contando-ciencia/regiao-centro-oeste>.

The question problem is: How did the military government during 1964-1979 contribute to the advance of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest?

The results suggest that the military government between 1964-1979 financed the agricultural frontier progress of the Midwest, through state policies, such as the I National Development Plan and II National Development Plan, and sub-policies such as PCI, Prodoeste, Pladescos, Sudeco, Proagro, Polocentro, Prodegran, Prodepan, and Proceder I.

In addition, the results also suggest that the environmental laws enacted in this period (1964-1979) reveal the developmental character in their text, pointing out that nature would only be subject to environmental protection by proving its

usefulness. To this paper, three laws of that period were analyzed: Land Statute (1964), Forest Code (1965), and Indian Statute (1973).

## 2. Methodology

To discuss a research problem, it is necessary to carry out bibliographic research (Bezerra, et al, 2022), since it is essential to know what the State of the Art is studying and producing. Thus, the methodology used in this work was of the narrative review type, which means:

In this type of production, the material collected by the bibliographic survey is organized by origin, that is scientific sources (articles, theses, dissertations) and sources of ideas dissemination (magazines, websites, videos, etc.), and, from their analysis, allows the researcher to prepare essays that favor the contextualization, problematization and first validation of the theoretical framework to be used in the investigation undertaken (Unesp, 2015, p.3).

The narrative review allows the researcher to contact previous productions and bases the construction of theoretical knowledge, as it combines different perspectives and encourages the discussion of a certain theme, which generates the study of the state-of-the-art type, which Vosgerau and Romanowski (2014) suggest that they are those who promote the multiplicity and plurality of approaches, useful for historical problems.

To proceed with the narrative review is necessary to attempt the 6 phases defined by Sousa et al. (2018):

**Table 1:** Research phases.

Phase 1: Definition of the theme	The Military government, nature protection, and promotion of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest.
Phase 2: Search in literature	Included all laws between 1964-1979 in the Environmental Legislative Panel of the Environment Ministry (and added the Indian Statute which was not among the laws available on the Brazilian Environmental Ministry website but is part of the temporal and thematic criterion.)
Phase 3: Sources Selection	Capes Journal, Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations of Capes, Mendeley and Google Scholar.
Phase 4: Cross reading	Reading and selection of the government programs that were analyzed on the paper.
Phase 5: Writing and references	Reading the environmental laws, choosing the ones that would be analyzed in the paper, and reading the articles, dissertations, and theses. And finally, the writing and references of the article.

Source: Authors (2021).

The paper has 3 parts, firstly it presents the developmentalism concept, and how this idea was projected during the military government. The time frame is 1964-1979 because at this time was published the most essential laws about the theme. The spatial frame is the Midwest.

The second part of the article described the main public policies built to foster the agricultural frontier expansion in the Midwest. The choice of the term Midwest instead of Central Upland, or Central Brazil, is because of the official documents which used this term.

Finally, the third part of the paper presents how the environmental laws between 1964 and 1979 dealt with the protection of nature and how they approached the developmental perspective in the normative text, with the prevalence of utilitarianism on the nature protection.

According to Lima (2018), the laws of this period functioned as an instrument of narrative legitimation of the ideals defended by the military regime, functioning in his words as "a legal varnish offered by the jurists most faithful to the regime" (Lima, 2018, p. 80).

The research tried to identify that the military government between 1964 and 1979 promoted the developmental ideal by encouraging the agricultural frontier through public policies (and state programs) and environmental legislation (?). This was the guide question of the research.

The databases consulted were Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations of Capes, Capes Periodicals, Mendeley, and Google Scholar for bibliographic research, regarding the legislative research, was consulted the Environmental Legislative Panel on the website of the Environment Ministry.

After data collection, the discussion and presentation of the work were carried out in scientific article format.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 The military government and the developmental economic model

Developmentalism in this paper is described as an operation mode of the Brazilian State, during the military government (it should be emphasized that not only from this historical moment, but the clipping here is also established because of the theme of this article).

This ideological characteristic concerns the main fact of the country through public policies, state programs, and laws; promote industrialization and internal production, with a strong nationalist bias and the permanence of a modernizing elite that took the direction of the state bureaucratic machine:

A Developmental State is, as an ideal type, one in which a political elite guided by developmental ideals and encouraged by a threatening international context can forge a political alliance to sustain a process of institutional construction and formation of an economic bureaucracy. that is, at the same time, sufficiently cohesive, socially inserted, with autonomy and capacity to formulate and implement an industrialization policy that redefines, in the long term, the economic structure of a country (Perissinoto, 2014, p. 64)

The concept of the developmental state is explained on three main conceptions, which are systematized in Table 2:

**Table 2:** Dimensions of the developmental state concept.

1) Contextual dimension	2) Institutional dimension	3) Volitional dimension
It refers to the conditions outside the state that can foster the emergence of a model like this, such as wars and economic crises. The existence of these factors can produce nationalist behavior, which is to promote policies for the internal development of the nation.	The entire institutional model must be supported by bureaucracy, clientelism, and decisions committed to nationalism and internal development.	It is characteristic of this type of state, the presence of a modernizing elite in management, committed to decision-making that favors them, above what market demands suggest. This modernizing elite is the one who manages the institutional dimension, responding to the contextual dimension.

Source: Authors (2021) based on Perissinoto (2014).

According to the dimensions systematized by Perissinoto (2014), the Brazilian State during the military government was a developmental state. In the same sense, Evans (1993) elucidates that in the case of Brazil, developmentalism was a unique experience, because of the agrarian elites' prevalence in power, the search for industrialization happened, but agrarian productivity was more prominent in the public policies elaboration and decision-making by the State.

According to Cano (2013), what motivated the population support to the military dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s was the apparent success of the developmental economic model. At this moment in Brazilian history (1970), it happens what Cano (2013) calls "regional productive deconcentrating" because there was a shift of investments to promote the federal scope of the Southeast to other regions, especially in the Midwest.

From the 1970s, the Brazilian State began to enjoy the historical moment called the "economic miracle", and this factor aligns with investment in other productive areas, in regions previously underutilized to promote national development (such as the case of the Midwest), which began to be more productive through investments in agrarian productivity and industrialization, which generated income for country and financial movement, due to increased consumption (Cano, 2013).

This choice to invest in other regions and expand the options of the product and consumer market is a characteristic mechanism of Brazilian developmentalism:

for the initial autonomous impulse to give rise to a cumulative process, the growth needed to favor not only the minority that owns capital goods but a broader social group, capable of forming a market for durable goods of appropriate dimensions. Furtado (1972, p. 41)

One of the effects of national developmentalism after 1964 was the increase in income concentration because this model originally favors modernizing elites, who occupy the places of public management. Thus, at that time from 1964 to 1979, the middle and upper classes of the country benefited greatly from state programs to promote national development (Hammoud, 2008).

The developmental model seeks the national economy growth, however, according to Furtado (2007) does not necessarily imply a distribution of income between regions, because this production increase will occur in the localities that have more natural resources available for production, considering that in the Brazilian model, developmentalism prioritized policies that would promote the productive progress of the field.

The Midwest was privileged by the state programs aimed at promoting the agricultural frontier during the period 1964-1979, not only by the extension of available natural resources but especially by the possibility of applying technical-scientific models on the territory: "deforestation, an extension of plantations, the opening of roads, the increase in herds, rural building are all forms of capitalization based on extensive use of labor and natural resources (Furtado, 2007, p. 324)".

The developmental intention that guided state policies and programs during the military dictatorship, in addition to promoting agricultural productivity growth in the Midwest, and encouraging the productive deconcentrating of the Southeast region to others, also aimed to create means of promoting social development tied to the economic, which according to Pereira (2012) was a mode of compensation for freedom rights deprivation revoked by the State, which is consistent with Cano's idea (2013) about the popular support that military dictatorship has gained for so long, being the fruit of developmentalism.

This perspective of linking economic development to the social, explains why during the military government some laws were elaborated such as the Land Statute (1964), Forest Code (1965), and Indian Statute (1973).

Martins (2017) points out that it is somewhat ironic that in Brazil the laws that promoted greater changes in the relationship between humans and nature, such as the Forest Code of 1965 and even the Land Statute of 1964, have been drafted in periods of human rights repression. The same applies to the Indian Statute of 1973.

Therefore, it is necessary to think about the Brazilian dilemma: a) creation of laws aimed at environmental quality and regulation of anthropic action, versus b) during military rule; it is imperative to consider that the developmental model is centered on the presence of nationalist ideology context, the clientelist bureaucratic structure, and maintenance of an agrarian elite in power.

That is, in Brazil at military government, the modernizing agrarian elite had support to legislate on issues that were expensive to them, such as the regulation of the right to property (Land Statute of 1964), limitations of state interference in the environment (Forest Code) and mechanisms for the insertion of indigenous peoples in civil society, with a clear intention of fostering an indigenous peasantry (Martins, 2020).

Thus, the modernizing elite created the programs and public policies that helped them to remain in political power, through the developmental discourse of fostering the national economy growth.

In this process of incorporation of new regions into the national programs of border expansion and industrialization, the Midwest and Amazon were the targets, due to natural resources and the possibility of exploitation through technology (Furtado, 2007).

Becker (1985) teaches that the agricultural frontier was useful to the Brazilian State not only for the production increase, but also served as an extension of the urban to the countryside, promoting territorial control of space and thus, cooperating for the developmental government system maintenance, centered on clientelist bureaucracy, and managed by agents who represented the modernizing elites.

Although, this process of occupation and territorial transformation by agricultural frontier, according to Becker (1985), did not break by itself with the regional isolation that localities experienced. These reveal the character of domination and control of the Brazilian State over these areas.

This economic growth in the Midwest and Amazon during the military regime demonstrates that the developmental model was only based on productive growth. The State structure financed the exploitation of natural resources, without commitment to the issue of environmental conservation itself.

Bearing in mind that when this environmental issue was considered (via state programs or laws) it was linked to the factor of environmental utility. In other words, only the environmental element that proved to be useful for economic development was considered capable of conservation.

Becker (2010) points out that from 1970s to 1985, the Brazilian developmental state sought to control the territory on a regionalization scale, which fragments space and strengthens the central government: "It means that the primacy of the national scale has been destabilized with new escalator hierarchies of the state institutions organization and regulatory activities of the state (Becker, 2010, p. 42).

Thus, it is remarkable that during the military government (1964-1979) there was economic growth, regional development (especially Midwest and Amazon), and elaboration of a state structure that favored the implementation of public policies aimed at the field, based on the technology available at the moment, which is called by Santos (2013, p. 37) as the "scientific-technical" period: "What we are calling a technical-scientific environment is a historical moment when the construction or reconstruction of space will take place with a growing content of science, techniques, and information."

In addition, there was an increase in urbanization due to the productive deconcentrating of the Southeast and industrialization, because the field was transformed by the expansion of the agricultural frontier, the peasants were replaced by rural entrepreneurs, a process that can be characterized as: "decentralization of the productive area" (Santos, 2012, p. 63).

Thus, it is perceived that the developmental economic model was not born in Brazil with the military government, but during this period had some characteristic elements that guide the analysis, being those addressed in this work: public policies focused on the field and environmental laws, which demonstrate the prevalence of this model during the period analyzed.

### 3.2 The expansion of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest

As approached by Perissonoto (2014), the developmental economic model depends on a historical context to structure and justify. In this sense, the 1960s is a milestone for the emergence of government projects based on technology, such as those that would enable the exploitation of the Cerrado, because of the Green Revolution that was happening abroad.

Dutra and Souza (2017) point out that the Green Revolution for the Brazilian context of the late 1960s ahead, functioned as a tool for agriculture modernization, through the possibility of exploiting the technological package imported from other countries, especially the United States of America. This tool available for genetic improvement and production increase was inserted in the government plans developed between 1964 and 1980.

Therefore, areas of The Brazilian territory that would be destined for technological package implementation coming from the Green Revolution were defined, thus the Cerrado was placed as one of the main targets for this production exploitation, to save the Amazon rainforest that in this period (1964-1979) was already the target of international environmental discussions (Porto-Gonçalves, 2004).

This choice for Cerrado territory stemmed from the idea of using the central locality of the country and incorporating it into the rest of the country, especially after the Brasilia construction, and was also important in the choice of the Midwest its physical characteristics such as flat terrain, as well as the well-defined seasons in rain and drought (Pires, 2000).

In the early 1960s, Jica- (Japan International Cooperation Agency) technicians presented a technology application project to increase the Cerrado production. Although this project began in the 1960s, as early as 1964th this plan was vetoed by the Armed Forces during the Government of João Goulart.

Although in 1971, already in the Medici government, an agreement was signed between the Brazilian and Japanese governments that authorized the coming of Japanese technicians to the Cerrado to study them and apply ways to increase agricultural production. Jica was transformed into the company CAMPO: "a powerful company that dictates to Cerrado cooperatives all actions, from the choice of settlers to production and commercialization" (Ibase, 1986, p.97).

Between 1964s and 1966s during the government of Castelo Branco, the Government's Economic Action Plan (PAEG) was created, which sought to boost food production and promote the increase in national exports. Between 1966-1969, in the government of Costa e Silva, the 1966-1969 Plan for Economic and Social Development (PED) was elaborated, which favored rural credit, in addition to implementing the construction of highways and implementing infrastructure to interconnect the national regions (Pires, 2000). And then the Strategic Development Plan between the 1968s-1970s (Freitas et al, 2019).

The advance of the border through the interior of Brazil caused effects of industrialization, modernization of agriculture, and opening of roads, all formulated to favor the production and export of agricultural products. The Brazilian State, especially in the 1970s, focused its government project on creating and strengthening agroindustry complexes through development centers (Silva, 2011)

For this purpose, national development programs were created as the I National Development Plan (IPND), created by Law N°. 5.727 of 1971s, which aimed to place Brazil among developed countries during the period of one generation. For this, the purpose was to double the per capita income of the country until the 1980s accelerating the gross domestic product (GDP) growth until 1974s, with annual fees between 8 and 10% (Abreu, 1996).

In 1971 the Jica project was resumed during the Medici government, under the name of the Basic Agreement for Technical Cooperation Brazil-Japan, the first development plan for the Cerrado was applied in 1972s, under the name of PCI - Integrated Credit Program and Incorporation of the Cerrado, to promote the Cerrado transformation in the state of Minas Gerais by technology. The PCI financed about 230 projects between the 1972s and 1974s, offering loans by the Central Bank to landowners that met production conditions (Santos, 2016).

In this set of public policies, the following programs were born: Prodoeste, Pladesco, and Sudeco. Prodoeste (Central-West Development Program) was created by Decree-Law N°. 1.192 of 11/08/1971, which had criteria for the development of the regions contained in the Midwest: Mato Grosso, Goiás, and the Federal District. The purpose of this program was to:

the immediate construction of a basic, priority road network, conjured to a system of vicinal roads and a network of silos, warehouses, processing plants, and refrigerators, as well as the realization of general sanitation works, the rectification of watercourses, and land recovery (Brazil, 1971, art. 2°)

As for Pladesco, created in 1973 (Economic-Social Development Plan of the Midwest) it was intended: to "reconcile its objectives with the national list of properties related to internal migrations and exports, that is, to incorporate new production areas, develop the urban environment and agroindustry" Gonçalves & Cleps Júnior (2005, p.6394). To this extent, it was necessary to establish priorities for action by the State, which are:

the concentration of efforts in priority areas, with effective potential already defined; 2) orientation of the spatial currents of labor for areas of expansion of the agricultural frontier; 3) reinforcement to the programs for the opening of penetration routes; 4) improvement of the conditions of habitability in large urban centers and the urban agglomerates information; 5) increased the share of regional GDP in national GDP; 6) increase in the average coefficient of use of the regional workforce; 7) increase in regional income and improvement of its distribution (Carvalho, 1998, p. 112-113).

As for Sudeco (Western Midwest Development Superintendence), Duarte (2009) points out that it was the institution responsible for financing several projects whose focus was on the productive increase of the Cerrado, using technology. Among these, are the Polocentro and the Poloamazônia.

Sudeco was created by Law N°. 5.365 of December in the year of 1967, and had as competencies established by law:

- a) conducting programs and research and surveys of the economic potential of the Region, as a basis for the planned action in the short and long term.
- b) definition of economic spaces susceptible to planned development with the fixation of growth centers capable of inducing the development of neighboring areas.
- c) the concentration of resources in selected areas according to their potential and population.
- d) formation of stable population groups, aimed at a process of self-support.
- e) the setting of regional populations, especially concerning border areas:
- f) adoption of immigration policy for the Region, taking advantage of internal population surpluses and selected external quotas.
- g) encouraging and supporting agriculture, livestock, and fish farming for supporting regional populations.
- h) ordering the exploitation of the various species and noble essences native to the Region, including through forestry and increased productivity of the extractive economy, where it cannot be subsidized by a more profitable activity.
- i) expansion of opportunities by training of labor and specialized personnel necessary for the region development.
- j) coordinated implementation of centralized and decentralized administration resources, and contributions from the private sector and external sources.
- k) coordination and concentration of government action in the tasks of research, planning, implementation, and expansion of economic and social infrastructure, reserving to the private sector the agricultural, industrial, market, and profitable basic services activities.
- l) coordination of national, foreign, or international technical and financial assistance programs to organs or entities of the Federal Administration (Brazil, 1967, art. 2).

Sudeco, together with other superintendents created during this period (Sudene, Sudam, Sudesul, Suframa) of the 1960s and 1970s represented the governmental interest in integrating national regions and promoting productive and social development. The government's motto when promoting this integration can be perceived in the slogan of Medici's campaign, about the Amazon: "Integrate for not to deliver" (Souza, 2020).



This project of national regions integration, outlined during the military government was according to Becker & Egler (1998) part of a national geopolitical purpose focused on the country modernization, drawn up under the authoritarian regime, constituting a conservative modernization.

The landmark of this intention of territory domination was the use of technology to control time and national space, based on the discourse of internal development. This time the Brazilian government concentrated its strategy on 3 main points: "1) the implementation of the scientific-technological frontier in the heart of the country, 2) the rapid integration of the entire national territory, implying the definitive incorporation of the Amazon and 3) the projection in the international space" (Becker & Egler, 1998, p. 126).

And it is in this context of the agricultural frontier expansion, regional integration of the Midwest, and projection of domestic production in the international market that the Development Plans emerged in the 1970s (PND I and PND II). Steinberger (2000) points out that the 1970s were marked by the beginning of the Cerrado adaptation process to soybean plantation, having suffered through this productive expansion processes of environmental and social changes that follow for the following decades.

Credit policy became an important tool in this process of state financing to the progress of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest, in 1970 the Agricultural Activity Guarantee Program (PROAGRO) was created, through Law 5,969 of 1973 and implemented in 1975: "this policy favored large producers and export crops, marginalizing small producers who did not have information or real guarantees to offer to fund institutions (Alves, 2012, p. 91). "

Also in the 1970s, the II National Development Plan (IIPND) was launched, through the promulgation of law no. 6,151 of 1974, which gave rise to Polocentro, Prodegran and Prodepan (Barreira & Cavalcanti, 2011). The II PND presented general objectives: 1) modify the industrial structure, 2) strengthen the national industry, 3) deconcentrate regionally the productive activity, and 4) improve the distribution of income (Souza & Pires, 2010).

The Polocentro- Cerrado Development Program was created by Decree Law 75. 320 of 01/29/1975 and presented with the main objective: "to promote the development and modernization of agricultural activities in the Midwest and West of the State of Minas Gerais, through the rational occupation of selected areas, with Cerrado characteristics" (Brazil, 1975, art. 1).

The objective of this was to incorporate in less than 5 years "3.7 million ha of Cerrado, of which 1.8 million ha with crops, 1.2 million ha with livestock and 700,000 ha with reforestation" (Ibase, 1986, p. 6). For this implementation, 12 specific areas were determined and distributed between Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso, and Goiás.

The Prodegran (Special Development Program of the Greater Golden Region) in turn had as its target region the city of Dourados-MS, to favor the production stimulation in this space, presented as objectives: a) expand the agricultural frontier; b) create incentives to increase productivity; (c) use conservation practices d) introduce new crops; (e) modernizing its marketing practices; f) to create and strengthen agroindustry (Sudeco, 1979).

The Prodepan (Pantanal Development Program) was created in 1974 and operated until 1978, constituting a set of measures designed to provide the Pantanal with conditions to increase production to integrate this region into the national economy (Abreu, 2001).

In 1979 the Brazilian government negotiated with the Japanese the Japanese-Brazilian Agricultural Development Program of the Cerrado - PROCEDER I:

The program was implemented in line with the guidelines presented as a strategy for agricultural development in the IIPND, which prioritized the agricultural frontier expansion in the Cerrado, incentives for grain production, mechanization of agricultural production, and increased input for production (fertilizers and agricultural pesticides) (Santos, 2016, p. 394).

This program was very relevant for the agricultural frontier expansion in the Cerrado of the Midwest region during the analyzed period, so much so that later came others PROCEDER (II and III). It was applied by the guidelines established by the IIPND, financing the agriculture modernization, the opening of roads, and the region productive increase. The purpose of this was the application of technology to increase Cerrado's production in consortium with the resources presented by the Japanese.

Although most of the state programs to encourage the agricultural frontier expansion in the Midwest during 1964-1979 are contained in this, there were still other programs that contributed to this purpose, even if not elaborated specifically: 1) Integration Program (PIN), 2) Land Distribution and Agroindustrial Development Program -PROTERRA (1971), 3) Integrated Credit and Cerrado Incorporation Program -PCI (1972), 4) Directed Settlement Program of Alto Parnaíba -PADAP (1973), 5) Amazon Agricultural and Agromineral Poles Program (1974) and 6) National Alcohol Program (PRÓ-ÁLCOOL) (1975).

All these programs developed between 1964 and 1979 led to the mechanization and modernization of agriculture, by encouraging production in the Cerrado of the Midwest region (Cano, 2008).

Considering that the frontier was constituted by the modification process of the ambient and natural environment through the technology implementation, changing the traditional modes of production for inclusion in the capitalist market, it is perceived that the agricultural frontier was very directed by the actions of the Brazilian State by the edition of national development programs and plans during the period of the military dictatorship (Silva, 2011).

The agricultural frontier expansion during this period under analysis had effects such as road openings, soil mechanization, increased agricultural production, and migration to the regions concerned. In addition to the effect of urbanization and growth of cities around the regions explored (Cano, 2008).

### **3.3 Nature protection and developmentalism in environmental legislation**

In the Environmental Legislative Panel available on the Environment Ministry website, temporal filters were selected from 1964 until 1979, which found the number of 86<sup>1</sup> normative acts that addressed nature as a direct or indirect object of the regulation (Brazil, 2021).

Then, each normative act was analyzed, to identify how they approached the nature conservation, and to verify if this was seen as instrumental to the development of the country or not.

Due to the large volume of legislation (87 in total), it would not be appropriate to address each one of them in this work, although in Annex 1 all the legislation found in the research, with their related menus, are available.

In this way, the most relevant legislations to Brazilian Environmental Law were selected, as they had a greater temporal repercussion and changed the environmental normative structure of their time, producing effects until the present day. These are the norms: The 1964 Land Statute, the 1965 Forest Code, and the 1973 Indian Statute.

#### **3.3.1 Law 4.504 of 1964 (Land Statute)**

This law came after the Land Law of 1850, one of the most important for the Brazilian legal system in terms of regulating the right to land ownership, because it brought parameters for its exploration, establishing criteria and penalties for those who violated them.

The main innovation proposed by this legislation is the fact that the right to land ownership is conditional to the fulfillment of the social function of property, which was defined as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> In the environmental legislative panel of the Environment Ministry website, there were only 86 normative acts, but in this work, the Indian Statute was included among these environmental laws for analysis, even though it was not present in the environmental legislative panel of the Environment Ministry.

§ 1 The ownership of land fully performs its social function when simultaneously:

- a) favors the well-being of the owners and workers who work there, as well as their families.
- b) maintains satisfactory levels of productivity.
- c) ensures the natural resources conservation (Brazil, 1964, art. 1).

This legal demand for the fulfillment of the social function of property was an advance in regulating the relations of agrarian production, placing the burden of social function as a mandatory condition for the maintenance of land ownership, under penalty of expropriation, if disrespected.

However, although it is an apparent advance to condition the property right to the fulfillment of the social function of property, it indicates that land ownership should be productive to remain with owner.

It means that nature's conservation provided for in this norm within the social function of property was a mechanism to keep natural resources fit for economic exploitation. According to art. 47 of this:

Art. 47. To encourage rural development policy, the Government will use progressive land taxation, income tax, public and private colonization, assistance, and protection for the rural economy and cooperative and, finally, regulation of the use and temporary land tenure, aiming at:

I - discourage those who exercise the right to property without observing the social and economic function of the land.

II - encourage the rationalization of agricultural activity within the principles of conservation of renewable natural resources (Brazil, 1964, art. 47).

The advance of the legislation compared to the Land Law (1850) is to provide that it would be possible to carry out expropriation so that the property could be handed over to a new owner, instead of expropriation returning the property only to the State.

It implies that the ownership of the land is taken away from those who do not use it for production, that it is environmentally adequate (that is, that does not compromise the environment quality and thus remains useful) and socially beneficial, however, it is reinforced that the focus of legislative protection is to preserve production and not nature itself.

In this sense, the social function of property was just a mechanism to ensure that the property maintained its productive capacity: “the purpose is not to end the land accumulation and promote changes in the agrarian structure, but to guarantee the land productivity” (Marés, 2003, p. 113).

Another problem identified in this legislation is the focus on production to the detriment of nature. It does not promote agrarian reform, which is a paradox, given that the enactment of this law is contemporaneous with the social pressures arising from the movements that emerged in Brazilian history, demanding agrarian reform, such as the Peasant League, the Catholic Church, and the Communist Party of Brazil (Martins, 2000).

Agrarian reform was defined in the Land Statute as “the set of measures aimed to promote a better distribution of land, through changes in the regime of its possession and use, to meet the principles of social justice **and increased productivity**” (Brazil, 1964, article 1, § 1, **emphasis added**).

Agrarian reform was treated as an alternative to unproductivity, according to the standards of the social function of property, and not as a necessary remedy to combat large estates or issues of nature misuse.

This time the latifundium was not considered a problem in the legislation if it fits into the productive standards of the 1964 Land Statute. This allows us to affirm that the problem of the latifundium was not social or environmental injustice, but the unproductivity itself.

According to Martins (1994), the 1964 Land Statute was a product of the political context of the time, as it was the result of “a parliament in which the oligarchies and large landowners were anomalously represented as a result of the

revocation of mandates and political rights of the most progressive parliamentarians committed to the social reforms proposed by Goulart” (Martins, 1994, p. 68).

### 3.3.2 Law 4.771 of 1965 (Forest Code of 1965)

The 1965 Forest Code generated legal effects that still resonate in the Brazilian legal system, the main one being the fact that it created two categories of protected areas: Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs) and Legal Reserves.

These definitions are still used in environmental legislation and serve as a parameter for the law implementation in Brazil: “these definitions creation is considered an important strategy of territorial planning by the State, insofar as they establish limits and restrictions for the use and occupation of space (Thomas & Foletto, 2013, p. 735).

It was defined as a Permanent Preservation Area in the Forest Code of 1965: “protected area covered or not by native vegetation, with the environmental function of preserving water resources, the landscape, geological stability, biodiversity, the gene flow of fauna and flora, protect the soil and ensure the well-being of human populations” (Brazil, 1965, art.1, §2, II).

And as a Legal Reserve, the concept:

is the area located within a rural property or possession, except for permanent preservation, which is necessary for the sustainable use of natural resources, the conservation and rehabilitation of ecological processes, the conservation of biodiversity, and the shelter and protection of native fauna and flora (Brazil, 1965, art.1, §2, III).

The 1965 Forest Code was edited during the government of Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco (1964-1967) and aimed to replace the 1934 Forest Code enacted during the Getúlio Vargas government (1930-1945).

It changed what was previously defined in the 1934 Code as a “protective forest” for a “Permanent Preservation Area” (Rodrigues & Matavelli, 2020) and started to specifically contemplate the Cerrado, as demonstrated in article 15 of this, which dealt with private domain forests, that is, included in private properties:

Art. 15. **Private domain forests**, not subject to the limited use regime and except for permanent preservation, provided for in articles 2 and 3 of this law, are susceptible to exploitation, subject to the following restrictions:

a) in the Southern East, South, and **Central-West regions**, this one in the southern part, the felling of native, primitive, or regenerated forests will only be allowed, provided that, in any case, the minimum limit of 20% of the area of each property with localized tree cover, at the discretion of the competent authority.

b) in the regions mentioned in the previous letter, in the areas already cleared and previously delimited by the competent authority, **the felling of primitive forests is prohibited, when done for the soil occupation with culture and pastures, allowing, in these cases**, only the trees extraction for wood production. In areas that are still uncultivated, subject to forms of clearing, the felling of primitive forests, in the work of installing new agricultural properties, will only be tolerated up to a maximum of 30% of the property's area.

§ 3 The legal reserve of 20% (twenty percent) is applied to Cerrado areas for all legal purposes (Brazil, 1965, art.15, **emphasis added**)

The Forest Code of 1965 provided the nature percentage that should be kept unaltered by human action in the Cerrado, being the equivalent of 20% of Legal Reserve in each property, and this green space should be delimited by the competent authority (at the federal level by IBAMA – Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, at the state level by SISNAMA – National Environment System, and at the municipal level by the responsible of municipal agency).

The Forest Code of 1934, in turn, was the predecessor of the “March to the West” political campaign (1938), which had the Center-West as the main recipient, however, this legal diploma did not specifically address the Cerrado, nor the

Center-West. Dealing comprehensively with national forests, he categorized them into 4 types: “Art. 3rd Forests are classified as: a) protective; b) remainders; c) model; d) income (Brazil, 1934, art. 3)”.

The Forest Code of 1965, on the other hand, did not bring this classification to national forests, as it treated equitably the forms of vegetation that were not considered “forests” until then, such as the Cerrado:

**Art. 1st The forests existing in the national territory and the other forms of vegetation, recognized as useful to the lands they cover, are assets of common interest to all the inhabitants of the Country, exercising property rights, with the limitations that the legislation in general and especially this Law establish (Brazil, 1965, art.1, emphasis added).**

Although the Forest Code has defined that all forests and other forms of vegetation in the country deserve attention and protection by the law, this protection was ensured upon proof of the usefulness for the lands that they occupied: “recognized usefulness to the lands they cover (Brazil, 1965, art.1)”, which demonstrates the utilitarian nature that fell on nature in this legislation. The focus was on ensuring the maintenance of the productive rural property.

Specifically, concerning the Cerrado protection, it is established in article 16:

**Art. 16 Forests and other forms of native vegetation**, except for those located in permanent preservation areas, as well as those not subject to the limited use regime or subject to specific legislation, are susceptible to suppression, provided they are maintained, as a legal reserve, at least:

**I - Eighty percent**, in the rural property located in a forest area located in the Legal Amazon.

**II - Thirty-five percent**, in the rural property located in a Cerrado area located in the Legal Amazon, being at least twenty percent in the property and fifteen percent in the form of compensation in another area, if it is in the same space (Brazil, 1965, art.15, **emphasis added**).

In this law, the Legal Amazon has also defined: “the states of Acre, Pará, Amazonas, Roraima, Rondônia, Amapá, and Mato Grosso and the regions located north of the 13oS parallel, of the States of Tocantins and Goiás, and west of the Meridian of 44oW, of the State of Maranhão” (Brazil, 1965, art.1, §2, VI).

In this way, according to article 16 thereof, 80% of the forests and other forms of native vegetation on the properties located within the Legal Amazon should be maintained, without the possibility of suppressing these forests. And about the Cerrado within the area defined as Legal Amazon, 35% of the native areas should be maintained without replacement by another type of plantation. The other biomes and the Cerrado not included within the Legal Amazon area should be conserved in at least 20% of private properties.

As punishment for those who disrespect the provisions of the Forest Code of 1965, article 26 of this Code provides the possibility of applying a restrictive penalty of freedom from 3 months to 1 year in prison, and the provision of a fine payment that could vary between 1 to 100 minimum wages, the punishments may be applied separately or cumulatively (Brazil, 1965).

In the Forest Code of 1934, the aesthetic character of nature was privileged, in addition to the utilitarian one, as protective forests were considered those that allowed the water resources conservation, avoided erosion, and were useful in borders formation that protected the territory and protected green parts, that deserved to be conserved because of their scenic beauty.

As a remaining forest, the spaces of national, state, and municipal parks were considered, and places where there were species that, due to their biological and aesthetic value, should be preserved.

The model forests were those considered artificial, resulting from the intention of indigenous conservation and exotic species that the public authorities considered necessary in the region. Finally, yield forests were all those that did not fit the previous definitions (Brazil, 1934).

In the 1965 Forest Code, the concern with the scenic beauty of nature was not as focused as on the previous code. There are only 3 nature protection notes based on aesthetic value, namely: “Permanent Preservation Area”, which could be constituted to: “protect sites of exceptional beauty or scientific or historical value (Brazil, 1965, art. .)”; as a reason for the creation of national, state or municipal parks, to ensure the maintenance of natural beauty; and the fact that any tree could be immunized from cutting as a result of “its location, rarity, beauty or seed-bearing condition” (Brazil, 1965, art.7).

It is observed that in the Forest Code of 1965, the general approach was to ensure that private properties obeyed nature conservation criteria, to guarantee the adequate land exploitation. The utilitarian character of nature is notable in this norm, as nature is configured to be able to be conserved by observing its utility for private property.

From the 1960s, in the international context, the environmental movement began to gain prominence, and with it the need to develop laws that would protect nature more effectively (Steckelberg, 2014).

The idea of the inexhaustibility of natural resources in this historical period began to be questioned (1960) and with that, the creation of the Forest Code of 1965 was taken into effect in the national legal system. (Matavelli, 2020). Although environmental conservation in this area is a means to guarantee productivity and consequent maintenance of land ownership rights.

Drummond (1999) argues that in Brazil there was not a legislative environmental concern, specifically focused on nature, but a productivism concern, which used the environmentalist discourse to promote developmentalism.

The 1964 coup and the dictatorial period that followed in the other years was a time when matters relating to basic reforms, such as agrarian reform, were subjugated to a group of conservative politicians, committed to the dictatorial system. And this was the group that legislated on the 1964 Land Statute, which resulted in a law that outlined the acceptable frameworks for maintaining the property right, in effect ensuring its maintenance and not it is questioning.

The 1964 Land Statute, when dealing with the social function of property, allows landowners to align themselves with the productivity and developmental model, implemented by the State in this anti-democratic period.

It was not a law concerned with environmental conservation, nor with the land distribution through agrarian reform, but on the contrary, it reveals the instrumental character of nature in favor of developmentalism (Drummond, 1999).

### **3.3.3 Law 6.001 of 1973 (Indian Statute)**

The 1973 Indian Statute is important in this analysis of the environmental laws of the military period, because despite not having as its focus the protection of an environmental asset, it legislates on this, even if indirectly, in the body of the law.

This law (6.001 of 1973) was the first Brazilian law to deal with indigenous people, and although projects to replace it were discussed later (Law Project 2057/1991), it remains the main specific law dealing with indigenous people to this day.

The main purpose is to address definitions for the legal situation of indigenous people, establishing criteria and principles for the recognition of their identity and therefore, the right to enjoy the right of legal protection for this condition, the Indian Statute also stands out for having created categories of preservation areas.

Indigenous peoples or Indians, as the Indian Statute names them, are separated into 3 categories according to the law: a) isolated: those who do not have a relationship with civil society, b) those who are in the process of integration: those who maintain their traditions, but who are open to the economic models and practices of civil society; and c) the integrated: those who are considered part of civil society, although they maintain their cultural characteristics (Brazil, 1973).

About the indigenous people these laws prescribe: “preserve their culture and integrate them, progressively and harmoniously, into the national community” (Brazil, 1973, art. 1). In other words, the legislative intention is to promote the indigenous people integration into civil society, so that the nature (in the sense of environment) that indigenous people live in, in this law, is considered an asset of the Union, which gives it to indigenous communities only when no integration is demonstrated.

As the indigenous people integrate into civil society, nature becomes part of the current production models, what is the prevalence of the productivism vision under the preservationist one.

In chapter 3 of Law 6.001 of 1973, the "Reserved Areas" are described in 3 categories, namely:

**Table 3:** Categories of Reserved Areas of Law 6.001/1973

<b>Indigenous Reserve:</b>	<b>Indigenous Park</b>	<b>Indigenous agricultural colony</b>
Whose main characteristic is to be occupied by an indigenous group and intended for their subsistence.	It refers to the fact that it is under indigenous ownership, but it is in the process of being integrated into civil society, as they receive assistance from the Union, thus, this space is declared as an area reserved for environmental preservation to “preserve the reserve of flora and the natural beauties of the region” (Brazil, 1973, art. 28, caput).	It refers to the “area destined for agricultural exploitation” (Brazil, 1973, art. 29) with the condition that this exploitation is managed by the indigenous assistance agency, on lands where integrated indigenous people and members of the civil community live.

Source: Own authorship based on Law 6.001/1973

Ribeiro (1979) points out that this legislation contributed to trying to transform indigenous people into peasants. The environmental protection conferred in the figure of the Indigenous Reserve, and Indigenous Park are the only resources for these spaces to become the Indigenous Agricultural Colony, as the indigenous people are introduced in the process of social integration and abandon the original and cultural characteristics to adapt to the civil society.

In the same sense, Oliveira (1998) states that the Indian Statute of 1973, instructing that the indigenous person can retain possession of the land if it becomes productive (arts. 26, 27, 28) causes: “The constitution of the reserve allows the indigenous population gathered there to crystallize certain economic and social peculiarities, favoring the reproduction of a new social type: the indigenous peasantry, with community ownership of the basic means of production, the land (Oliveira, 1998, p. .20).”

Baines (2001) points out that to consider the policy effects of regulating indigenous lands in Brazil, from the 1973 Indian Statute, it is necessary to do so within the political and historical context:

The opening of national economies to speculative foreign capital, policies of reform and dismantling of the state, concentration of income and financial speculation at an international level, and the consequent radical containment of resources for social issues among which the government's indigenous policy is placed accompany concessions of “autonomy” to native populations to justify the radical reduction in the national states participation (Baines, 2001, p. 11).

Such reduction in the national state’s participation refers to the lower responsibility for the native populations, the supposed autonomy guaranteed to the indigenous, would be about the possibility of practicing agricultural activities and acculturation, exempting their lands from the obligation of state protection. Such state protection would only take place in the case of protecting the scenic beauty of nature or guaranteeing the land productivity.

Such analysis demonstrates nature as an instrument to achieve the developmental ideal in this law, and as part of nature, the indigenous person is included who should be integrated into civil society and thus suffer the process of acculturation and loss of their cultural identity, including in what concerns the way of dealing with the environment.

#### 4. Final Considerations

The Midwest region, due to its geographical location since the 1930s, attracts the imagination of national migrations, with the idea of demographic void and potential for economic growth. Although the 1960s were not the beginning of this process of state investment in the region, it constitutes an important landmark in this journey of changing the productive structure.

Both the state programs developed at the national level, the National Development Plans (1 and 2), and the programs created specifically for the Midwest region mentioned in this work, contributed to the agricultural frontier expansion and the territory transformation.

All territorial regulation practices through development programs showed the ideology of the military period, that is, developmentalism. This way of running the State corresponds succinctly to managing it through policies and laws that regulate and increase its economic growth, with a nationalist bias and maintenance of a bureaucracy controlled by a modernizing elite.

Brazilian State (1964-1979) used programs to encourage the development of the Midwest region and provided subsidies for the countryside modernization, mechanization, opening of roads, industrialization, and urbanization of the areas of the region.

In the same way, the laws created during this time (1964-1979) are examples of the state's intention to regulate environmental relations to the extent of the utility configuration of the natural good. The focus is on productivity and developmentalism in line with state public policies.

Although important regulatory laws such as the Land Statute, Forest Code, and Indian Statute have been edited, the nuances of the legal text reveal that the legislator's commitment was not to environmental protection, but above all to the production protection.

This research does not exhaust the theme of how the military government financed the expansion of the agricultural frontier in the Midwest during 1964-1979, but only highlights two ways in which this process took place: 1) through public policies for the countryside and 2) through the environmental laws.

Other research can and need to be carried out to continue this historical and environmental debate, the guiding questions for future studies are suggested: 1) What is the relationship between national and state programs for promotion the agricultural frontier in the Midwest region? 2) What are the environmental effects of this expansion in the Midwest region observed in this period? 3) Which of these programs developed in 1964-1979 still prevail?

As demonstrated, the questions about this topic are still many, in this sense, this article sought a logical path that demonstrates how the developmental ideal was connected with policies for rural progress and environmental laws, not consisting of two antagonistic paths: on the one hand, programs to encourage the expansion of the agricultural frontier and on the other: laws that protect the environment; but, they are two sides of the same political system committed to the developmental ideal, which promoted regionalization and momentary economic growth, without income distribution, which culminated in a financial and political crisis that came after 1979.

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