

## Editorial

# The risk of backtracking on brazilian pesticide regulation

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Day after day we can observe a larger interest regarding the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, in Brazil there were already organized three meetings of information producers to address 2030 Agenda. The last one took place in April 2018. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) introduced the Digital Platform for SDG indicators (Plataforma ODS in Portuguese) that collects the first set of global indicators in Brazil. They should allow to better measure the progress towards these goals thanks to methodological sheets, spreadsheets, maps and graphics.

It is important to mention that the 2030 Agenda represents a great global effort for the building of a more sustainable world and it was set following previous agendas such as the Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals – MDG 2015.

Despite global commitment and national mobilization, there is a deconstruction process of the sustainability responsibility: the continuous development of the agribusiness and of the agrochemical industry.

At the international level, the German multinational Bayer completed its acquisition of the American Monsanto after the approval of the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice of the United States. This action will put Bayer even more in the spotlight of the agribusiness.

Simultaneously, in Europe, while a law project is discussed in France involving agriculture and food, a deputy and ex minister accused a lobby representing Bayer and Monsanto at the Crop Protection Industry Association (UIPP in French) of accessing the amendment on glyphosate prohibition before its publication. The deputy assumed that this could interfere with parliamentary debates<sup>1</sup>.

In Brazil, the first semester of 2018 has also been punctuated with similar facts: the Project of Law (PL in Portuguese) 6.299 of 2002, developed at the time by the actual Minister of Agriculture, Blairo Maggi, is now a topic of debate between supporting entrepreneurs and opposing environmentalists and health institutions.

This PL intends to change productions and use of pesticides in Brazil by modifying approval criteria, risk analysis and also by replacing the name of these products. The terms “pesticides” or “agrochemical” would become “agricultural defensives” or “crop protection agents” for labelling products that contain them. Besides, the project aims to consent temporary permits of registration and to prohibit only substances that represent an “inacceptable risk” after analysis.

Health institutions like the National Cancer Institute (Inca in Portuguese) or the Oswaldo Cruz institute (Fiocruz in Portuguese) have countered this project. One dimension that they are questioning is the

<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.liberation.fr/france/2018/05/24/delphine-batho-il-y-a-une-ingerence-des-lobbys-de-l-agrochimie-au-parlement\\_1652175](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2018/05/24/delphine-batho-il-y-a-une-ingerence-des-lobbys-de-l-agrochimie-au-parlement_1652175). Accessed on 6/8/2018.

possibility of considering “acceptable risks” when it comes to issues of public health and environmental protection. Environmentalist organizations also support the idea that the precautionary principle should prevail, according to the Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development from 1992.

The Federal Public Ministry endorsed the opposing movement to the project and argued that at least six articles from the Federal Constitution would be violated by the approval of this law.

Last May, the Brazilian Association of Collective Health (Abrasco in Portuguese) and the Brazilian Association of Agroecology (Aba in Portuguese) introduced the “Scientific and Technical Dossier against the Poison Package (PL 6299/2002) and in favor of the National Program for the Reduction of Pesticides”. The document composed of 15 technical notes has already been launched against the PL 6299/2002 and it is aimed at offering scientific evidences for the debates around the topic.

However, this situation seems to get worse with the curtailment of the debate and the persecution of scientists that started to intervene. The Advisory Board of the Fiocruz reported this during the meeting that took place on the 1st and 2nd of February 2018. In a published note, the Board strongly accused the censorship and intimidation of researchers and defended the right to produce science in defence of life in the country.

What motivated this new publication was the legal proceeding made by the Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of the State of Ceará (Faec in Portuguese) against the researcher Fernando Carneiro from Fiocruz Ceará. His public hearing, on the 28th of September 2015, was called by the Public Ministry of Fortaleza. He discussed the pesticides and their effects on health and environment. Even though he used data from the National Health Surveillance Report of People Exposed to Pesticides, published under the responsibility of the Department of Environmental and Workers Health Surveillance (DSAST in Portuguese), part of the Health Surveillance Secretary (SVS in Portuguese) within the Ministry of Health, the researcher faced critics and constraints. The Faec sustained that there is no need to assimilate agrochemicals to “poison” but to “agricultural defensives”.

This statement from the Advisory Board of the Fiocruz points out the people’s rights and the duties of the State. It mentions that communication around health is a right for the people and a State duty that must also guarantee basic functions’ execution among public servants. This should comprise research and knowledge dissemination regarding socioenvironmental impacts due to pesticides, in order to preserve life in all its manifestations.

For the Journal *Sustainability in Debate* the role of science in topics related to Sustainable Development goes beyond physiological mechanisms of poisoning from pesticides. It is necessary to scientifically observe and understand the connections and patterns that can link these isolated and geographically distant movements that still match in time. A clue for this investigation has been given in an article from the International Gramsci Journal in 2017. It analyses the underlying intentions to the implementation of the Environmental Licensing System of Rural Property (SLAPR in Portuguese) in the state of Mato Grosso<sup>2</sup>, which has the same objectives as the project of law 6.299/2002 explained above.

In this network, one more fine thread seems to connect to this complex system. The capital plays the role of a spider that weaves its web linked to the agribusiness and to the agroindustry putting aside the idea of a more sustainable world, on the lookout for profitability following the business as usual model. This movement started years ago, and it was barely noticeable. Now, the process evolved, and it gained new dynamics in time. Science is the one that can describe it by reporting the nexus between facts apparently disconnected, thanks to ethics and interdisciplinarity.

*Sustainability in Debate* positions itself as responsible for providing society with knowledge in the hope of altering this regression movement that affects regulations linked to health and environment.

In this second edition of 2018, *SeD* perpetuates the debate of interdisciplinarity and sustainability with ten articles from the section *Varia*. These publications offer research on agribusiness, conservation and degradation of the environment, socioenvironmental conflicts, water resources, energy efficiency of

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2 The article mentioned is: SAITO, C.H.; AZEVEDO, A.A. 2017. Organic Intellectuals: Legitimizing Agribusiness Production in Brazil. International Gramsci Journal, 2(2): 107-132. Available at:<http://ro.uow.edu.au/gramsci/vol2/iss2/8>.

vehicles and sustainable actions developed by education institutions. Below follows a brief presentation of these contents.

The first article, titled *Re-primarization revisited: an analysis of decision-making variables in the Argentine soy agribusiness (1993-2015)*, by authors Felix Malte Dorn and Robert Hafner, aims to introduce a new statistics-based perspective on soybean production in Argentina. Variables such as technological innovation, weather, price, territorial expansion, and the role of the State were analysed. These variables showed the extent of the influence they have on the decision-making process of agribusiness representatives, as well as on the subsequent production and export mechanism of soybean in the country.

Back in Brazil, authors Vanessa Vale et al, in their article titled *Municipal sustainable development and bank financing: an analysis of the "Green cities" Program in the State of Pará*, analyze the interactions between the level of sustainability of the 13 green municipalities in the State of Pará and the bank financing received by those districts during the year of 2010.

The article *Strategies related to environmental conservation in private reserves in southern Mato Grosso, Brazil* by Marta Regina Melo, Celso Correia Souza and Neiva Guedes evaluates the strategies concerned with environmental conservation in the Private Nature Reserves (RPPN in Portuguese) Quinta do Sol and Vale do Bugio. Through qualitative and quantitative studies, the authors identified 12 variables as indicators of environmental sustainability that may be used as references for the expansion of new protected areas.

The next publication focuses on environmental justice and infrastructure projects. *Territorial conflict and environmental (in)justice: the case of the Southern Expressway in Marine Extractive Reserve of Pirajubaé* is a work developed by Juliana Spínola, Cristina Teixeira and José Milton Andrigetto-Filho who analyse the socioenvironmental situation of an Extractive Reserve (RESEX in Portuguese) from the municipality of Florianópolis in the south of Brazil. This Reserve was touched by the construction of an expressway. The methodology used was documentary research and semi-structured interviews with workers from the RESEX and technicians from the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity conservation (ICMBio in Portuguese).

The authors Rita Márcia da Silva Pinto Vieira et al., present the article *Analysis of interactions between climate data and the desertification process in the desertification center of Cabrobó-PE, Brazil*. They assess the changes in land use and land cover in the center of desertification in Cabrobó-PE following an approach that uses spatial and temporal variation of environmental and climate data. They used ArcGis and the Google Earth Engine Platform for detecting those changes, for mapping trends and for quantifying shifts in earth's surface.

The article *The "two sides" of the water crisis: the shortage and the depoliticization of the access to water in the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro* written by Suyá Quintslr questions the discourses on the water crisis from 2014 to 2015. The author analyses the strategies of legitimization and its role in the exclusion from the decision-making process of the inequality issue in access to water.

The authors Jorge Luís Pinto Filho, Raquel Franco de Souza and Reinaldo Antônio Petta assess the water-supply network and its quality for human consumption in the rural communities from the oilfield Canto de Amaro. In Water for human consumption assessment in the rural communities from the oilfield Canto do Amaro-CPCA, RN, Brazil, they use methods of environmental perception and physicochemical analysis of the heavy metals found in the water.

The article *Urban drainage planning in medium-sized cities from the Minas Triangle and High Paranaíba* proposed by Lorraine Campos Martins discusses the changes that the relations between environment and cities suffered in time. In her work the author analyses measures applied to the urban drainage planning in six cities from the Minas Triangle and High Paranaíba.

In the article *Sustainability in the last mile of the urban cargo transport: the role of energetic efficiency of vehicles*, the authors George Vasconcelos Goes et al., identify alternatives found in the literature for the cargo transport as a way of maximizing energetic efficiency. They apply a systematic review to the bibliography and present ways of transforming the delivery service into a sustainable activity.

The closing article of the section *Varia is the Sustainability in the university campuses: a case study of the International Alliance of Research Universities*. The authors Cristiane Pantaleão et al. describe and illustrate the evolution of the main sustainability actions on the Higher Education Institutions' campuses (IES in Portuguese), members of an international alliance. The authors made a research based on qualitative approach using a strategy of documentary research from the Sustainability Reports (RS in Portuguese) published on-line by the IES from the International Alliance of Research Universities.

In the section *Book Reviews (Resenha)*, the author José Edmilson de Souza-Lima presents the work *A Latin American gaze from the borders. The author reviews the book América Latina: sociedade e meio ambiente: teorias, retóricas e conflitos em desenvolvimento*, edited by Dimas Floriani and Antonio Elizalde Hevia.

The section *Gallery (Galeria)* will feature a beautiful photo essay and a rich explanatory text. *The Water and Forest in the Uatumã Sustainable Development Reserve* is a text written by Anne-Elisabeth Laques, Ana Isabel Cabral, Suzy Cristina da Silva, Henrique Pereira and Carlos Saito and it is the result of a scientific expedition to the Uatumã Sustainable Development Reserve (RDS FO Uatumã in Portuguese) that took place in August 2017. The participants were members of the research team engaged in the cooperation project between Brazil and France, (*Système d'Indicateurs de Biodiversité à l'usage des acteurs: Biodiversité terrestre et aquatique* (SINBIOSE).

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

### The Editors