

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

MARCUS VINÍCIUS PEINADO GOMES

**Creating Meanings, Changing Contexts: Contested Sustainability in the Brazilian Beef
Industry**

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Tese apresentada à Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo da Fundação Getúlio Vargas, como requisito para a obtenção do título de Doutor em Administração Pública e Governo.

Linha de Pesquisa: Governo e Sociedade Civil em Contexto Subnacional

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Mário Aquino Alves

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It's A Long Way To The Top (If You Wanna Rock 'N' Roll) – Angus Young, Malcolm Young and Bon Scott, 1975

Ridin' down the highway
Goin' to a show
Stop in all the by-ways
Playin' rock 'n' roll
Gettin' robbed
Gettin' stoned
Gettin' beat up
Broken boned
Gettin' had
Gettin' took
I tell you folks
It's harder than it looks It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll
It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll
If you think it's easy doin' one night stands
Try playin' in a rock roll band
It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll Hotel, motel
Make you wanna cry
Lady do the hard sell
Know the reason why
Gettin' old
Gettin' grey
Gettin' ripped off
Under-paid
Gettin' sold
Second hand
That's how it goes
Playin' in a band It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll
It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll
If you wanna be a star of stage and screen
Look out it's rough and mean
It's a long way to the top
If you wanna rock 'n' roll

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to understand how organisations fashion their environment, through analysing why some practices become known as ‘sustainable’ in the Brazilian beef industry. The research engages with the organisational institutionalism literature by pointing the need to account for politics (i.e. actor’s negotiations) and meanings in order to understand how stability and change take place under a situated context (i.e. a particular time and space). The research concludes that the understandings of what could be considered ‘sustainability’ are the result of actors fashioning their environment through actions and interactions that produce meanings. Following a hegemony approach, such disputes are not only about actors looking for resources’ advantages, but also aimed at protecting or attacking the societal logics that support actors’ dominant position. Moreover, actors exert their agency under the conditions of the present time (i.e. situated context), by drawing on an inherited past in order to produce a future they have envisaged. To analyse such processes, a hegemony approach to actors and societal logics was developed, highlighting the negotiation order, an arena in which actors struggle for hegemony. As an outcome of such negotiations, a focal issue emerges, influencing actors’ discourse and interests, and justifying their initiatives, programmes and technologies developed to address such issue; thus, fashioning consent. Drawing on Critical Realism and Critical Discourse Analysis, the research developed a longitudinal case study supported by public and confidential documents, alongside interviews with experts, in order to examine the sustainability path at the Brazilian beef industry. Three different contexts for agency regarding sustainability were found. In the first one, a silence upon sustainability practices was identified, while the second context emphasised the emergence of Amazon deforestation as a focal issue, due to Greenpeace and MPF agency, forcing the industry to develop a monitoring system to trace its cattle suppliers in order to avoid procurement associated with Amazon deforestation, among other illegal activities. Finally, during the third context, the monitoring system enabled the beef industry to take-over of sustainability, enabling the beef sector to build its legitimacy so as to influence the risks and opportunities associated to the context of sustainability. In terms of societal logics, the Amazon deforestation is denounced as an environmental problem anchored by capitalist logic characteristics, such as risk management, innovation and productivity increase, global supply chain and governance. Although during such attack the profit maximisation rationale is questioned by the imposition of environmental concerns over corporate behaviour, the developed solution draws upon the very same capitalism’s characteristic employed to attack it. As a consequence, a piecemeal change is illustrated by a transformation on the capitalism ‘quantitative efficiency’ – the productivity increase as a result of changing the proportion of resources consumed in the production process in order to avoid Amazon deforestation. However, the capitalism ‘qualitative efficiency’ is being preserved as the ruling dominant groups are still controlling the means of production and their associate resources (i.e. money, power and legitimation). Since such negotiations processes are mediated by the rationale of avoiding businesses risks, profit maximisation, the deep core of capitalist logic, is preserved. Therefore, the ruling groups maintain their hegemony.

Keywords: Sustainability, Hegemony; Amazon deforestation; Critical Realism; Brazilian Beef Industry.

RESUMO

O objetivo desta pesquisa é compreender de que forma as organizações moldam seu ambiente, analisando por que algumas práticas tornam-se reconhecidas como 'sustentáveis' na indústria de carne bovina brasileira. O estudo dialoga com a literatura de institucionalismo organizacional ao apontar a necessidade de considerar a política (i.e. as negociações entre atores) e significados, a fim de entender como a estabilidade e a mudança institucional ocorrem em um contexto situado (i.e. em um tempo e espaço específicos). A pesquisa conclui que os entendimentos sobre o que poderia ser reconhecido como 'sustentabilidade' são o resultado de atores moldando o seu ambiente por meio de ações e interações que produzem significados. Seguindo uma abordagem de hegemonia, essas disputas não são apenas entre os atores que procuram vantagens recursivas, mas também procuram defender ou atacar as lógicas sociais que apoiam a posição dominante dos atores. Além disso, os atores exercem sua agência sobre as condições no presente (i.e. contexto situado), com base em um passado herdado e com o objetivo de produzir um futuro que eles imaginam. Para analisar tais processos uma abordagem de hegemonia entre atores e lógicas sociais foi desenvolvida para destacar a ordem de negociação, uma arena em que os atores lutam pela hegemonia. Como resultado de tais negociações, uma questão focal emerge, influenciando o discurso e interesses dos atores, bem como justificando as iniciativas, programas e tecnologias sobre tal questão; construindo, portanto, o consenso. Baseando-se em Realismo Crítico e Análise Crítica do Discurso, a pesquisa desenvolveu um estudo de caso longitudinal suportado por documentos públicos e confidenciais e entrevistas com especialistas, para examinar o caminho da sustentabilidade na indústria de carne bovina brasileira. Identificou-se três contextos diferentes para agência em relação à sustentabilidade. Enquanto no primeiro verifica-se um silêncio sobre práticas de sustentabilidade, o segundo enfatiza a emergência do desmatamento da Amazônia como uma questão focal, devido à agência do Greenpeace e MPF que força a indústria a desenvolver um sistema de monitoramento que rastreie seus fornecedores de gado de modo a evitar compra de suprimentos associadas ao desmatamento da Amazônia, dentre outras atividades ilegais. Finalmente, durante o terceiro contexto, o sistema de monitoramento permite que indústria de carne bovina se aproprie da sustentabilidade, assim o setor da carne passa a construir a sua legitimidade para influenciar sobre os riscos e oportunidades associadas ao contexto da sustentabilidade. Em termos de lógicas sociais, o desmatamento na Amazônia foi denunciado como um problema ambiental, nesta indústria, ancorado em algumas características da lógica do capitalismo, como a gestão de riscos, inovação e aumento da produtividade, cadeia de fornecimento global e governança. Embora este ataque questione a racionalidade da maximização racional lucro, impondo restrições ambientais para o comportamento das empresas, a solução desenvolvida é também ancorada sobre as mesmas características do capitalismo empregadas para atacá-lo. Como consequência, uma mudança gradual é ilustrada por uma transformação na 'eficiência quantitativa' do capitalismo, o aumento da produtividade devido à mudança da proporção de recursos consumidos para produção e à preocupação em evitar o desmatamento da Amazônia. No entanto, a 'eficiência qualitativa' do capitalismo é preservada uma vez que os grupos dominantes no poder ainda estão controlando os meios de produção e os recursos a eles associados (i.e. dinheiro, poder e legitimidade). Uma vez que estes processos de negociações são mediados pela racionalidade de se evitar risco aos negócios, consequentemente, a maximização do lucro, o núcleo duro da lógica do capitalismo é preservado. Portanto, os grupos dominantes mantêm sua hegemonia.

Palavras-chave: Sustentabilidade; Hegemonia; Desmatamento da Amazônia; Realismo Crítico; Indústria da Carne Brasileira.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABIEC – Associação Brasileira das Indústrias Exportadoras de Carne

ABIOVE – Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Óleos Vegetais

ABPO – Associação Brasileira de Pecuária Orgânica

ABRAS – Associação Brasileira de Supermercados

ACRIMAT – Associação dos Criadores de Mato Grosso

AR4 - IPCC 2007 – Fourth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

BNDES – Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social

BNDESpar – BNDES Participações S.A.

BPA – Boas Práticas Agropecuárias (Embrapa)

CAR – Cadastro Ambiental Rural

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CNPJ – Cadastro Nacional da Pessoa Jurídica

CNPTIA – Embrapa Informática Agropecuária

COP – Conferência das Partes (das Nações Unidas)

CPF – Cadastro de Pessoas Físicas

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

DETER – Sistema de Detecção de Desmatamentos em Tempo Real

EMBRAPA – Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária

ESRS – Environmental and Social Review Summary

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FGV – Fundação Getúlio Vargas

FGV-EAESP – Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo (Fundação Getúlio Vargas)

FMD – Foot and Mouth Disease

GeoID – Geographical Identity Methodology (AgroTools)

GHG – Greenhouse Gas

GRSB – Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

GTA – Guias de Transporte Animal

GTPS – Grupo de Trabalho da Pecuária Sustentável

IBAMA – Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis

IFC – International Finance Corporation

ILPF – Integração Lavoura-Pasto-Floresta

IMAFLORA – Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola

INCRA – Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ISO – International Organization for Standardization

ITM – Integrated Territory Management

IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

MAPA – Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento

MCT – Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia

MDIC – Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria e Comércio Exterior

MMA – Ministério do Meio Ambiente

MPDFT – Ministério Público do Distrito Federal e Territórios

MPF – Ministério Público Federal

MPM – Ministério Público Militar

MPT – Ministério Público do Trabalho

MPU – Ministério Público da União

MTE – Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

PENSA – Centro de Conhecimento em Agronegócios (USP)

Plano ABC – Plano de Agricultura de Baixa Emissão de Carbono

PNMC – Plano Nacional sobre Mudança do Clima

PPCDAM – Plano de Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal

PRODES – Projeto de Monitoramento do Desflorestamento na Amazônia Legal

REL – Rural Environmental License

RER – Rural Environmental Registry

SAE – Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos da Presidência da República

SEL – Single Environmental License

SNA – Sociedade Nacional de Agricultura

SPI – Summary of Proposed Investment

TAC – Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta

TNC – The Nature Conservancy

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

USA – United States of America

USP – Universidade de São Paulo

WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development

WCS – World Conservation Strategy

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature

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1. Introduction

When we discuss sustainability within cattle ranching, what it is clear is that sustainability is about efficiency increase. It is about producing more with fewer natural resources. And this is happening; it is speeding up. So that, nowadays, cattle ranching's area is not growing anymore. Pasture area in Brazil has declined due to being transformed into agriculture. (Fernando Sampaio, Executive Director of ABIEC)

Cattle ranching is an important human activity. Almost every part of the animal – from its meat to its blood and bones – is used as inputs for several industries, such as fashion, automotive, pharmaceuticals and, of course, food (Walker et al. 2013). After merging and acquisition processes, mainly financed by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), the Brazilian slaughterhouse JBS¹ became, in 2009, the world leader in production and commercialisation of beef (Fleury and Fleury 2011). Recently, Marfrig, another Brazilian multinational food processor, has become one of the official sponsors of the 2014 Fifa World Cup, showing the importance and economic power of this industry.

Such developmental effort has paid off. Brazil is the biggest exporter of beef with a livestock production chain generating an average of US\$ 167 billion per year (ABIEC 2013). As consequence, such value chain has become global. Walker and colleagues (2013) have traced the cattle supply chain from the Amazon pasture to the high streets, and the result can be seen in the figure below that illustrates how complex and global is the cattle ranching context:

Figure 1: Overview of Cattle Supply Chain - Leather, Beef, Live Cattle and Co-Products

¹JBS S.A. is a Brazilian multinational and the world leader in production and commercialisation of beef(Fleury and Fleury 2011).



Source: Walker et al. 2013: 452.

Nowadays, cattle ranching is the economic activity that occupies the greater portion of area within Brazil (Schlesinger 2010), supporting a powerful and transnational food processing industry. It is possible to trace back the developed of the Brazilian beef industry and cattle ranching to the Brazilian colonisation period, since this economic activity is closely related to the Brazilian history, especially in the Brazilian territory consolidation (Schlesinger 2010; Silva et al. 2012). During the Portuguese colonisation, cattle ranching was employed as a land occupation strategy, so that Portuguese colonisers could claim the control of huge areas of natural grazing (i.e. Pampas region in the South of Brazil) over the Spanish domains in Latin America.

As centuries go by, cattle ranching (and the charque² industry that supplied food to the colonisation towards Brazil inlands) expanded from Rio Grande do Sul – Southern Brazilian state – to the Southeast – São Paulo and Minas Gerais states. The reasons for such expansion was to supply the Brazilian market – firstly, to supply the inland expansion and, after 1808, the increasing local market and Portuguese royal family, which arrived in Brazil due to the

² Charque is a Brazilian jerky beef.

Napoleonic war, bringing with it a huge flow of inhabitants (Schlesinger 2010; Silva et al. 2012).

In the recent years, the expansion occurred over the Midwest – Mato Grosso – and it is now moving towards the North region of Brazil – mainly Pará – in the Amazon Region (Smeraldi and May 2008; Schlesinger 2010; Silva et al. 2012). Obviously, the reason for this current expansion is different from the colonisation period. It is interesting to note that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the biggest multinational slaughterhouses, mainly North-American, arrived in the Brazilian market, among them Wilson & Company, Armour, Swift, Continental and Anglo (Schlesinger 2010). From 1900 to 1980, such companies have dominated the international market of food processing, and brought an exportation orientation characteristic by targeting the European beef market (Schlesinger 2010). It is possible to say that this exportation path is still present; however, nowadays, the Brazilian multinationals, JBS, Minerva and Marfrig, are the ones controlling international market of beef and food processing.

On its turn, the cattle ranching expansion towards the North region can be traced back to the 1970's, when the Brazilian dictatorship regime fostered such activity in the Amazon region as a strategy to occupy the area and solve land tensions in the Northeast and Southwest of Brazil (Schlesinger 2010).

Moreover, during the 1980's, cattle ranching was considered a secure investment due to high inflation rates at that time. Saving money with investments in cattle would prevent the inflation corrosion without high costs; thus, such investment strategy was employed by several wealth families to secure and increase their fortunes.

Overall, cattle ranching – and beef consumption – is associated to the Brazilian culture; both as the meat consumption feast, illustrated by the *Churrascarias*, which are now being exported throughout the world, and as border activities, associated with the occupation of Brazilian territory.

At the same time, common sense associates cattle ranching with a rural and nature friendly activity, making it difficult to assimilate such activity within a global value chain. However, it is not just the agribusiness context that contrasts with such bucolic image of cattle

ranching; the activity itself is also associated with environmental impacts. Some researchers have shown that this is a high resource-intensive activity, requiring over 43,000 litres of water to produce 1 kilogram of beef (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) 2012), and contributing to a great level of carbon emissions (Steinfeld et al. 2006; Gerber et al. 2013b), among other impacts (Fearnside 2005). In the Brazilian context, cattle ranching is also connected with deforestation, having become the greatest deforestation driver of the Brazilian Amazon Forest (Fearnside 2002; Margulis 2004; Fearnside 2005; Barreto et al. 2008).

Since 2009, Greenpeace, JBS, Marfrig and other companies, and the Brazilian State have been struggling over the idea of ‘sustainability’ and its materialisation into practices within this industry. The disputes started after the release of a Greenpeace report denouncing illegal practices in large Brazilian slaughterhouses, such as deforestation, invasion of indigenous lands and inhumane labour conditions (Greenpeace 2009c; Greenpeace 2011; Greenpeace 2012b). These denounces have triggered a series of responses, such as civil actions, issued by the Federal Prosecutor’s Office (MPF) in Brazil, against the denounced companies, multilateral commitments between Greenpeace and these companies, new organisations emerging from this context, and lawsuits against Greenpeace.

As a consequence of such bad expositions, Brazilian slaughterhouses lost international contracts and suffered pressure from big brands, such as Timberland, Walmart, Nike, among others, to clear the Amazon deforestation stain from their products. Under this scenario, the slaughterhouses developed a ‘monitoring system’, which is capable of tracking and geo-referencing their supply chain in order to avoid the business risk of being involved with Amazon deforestation and other illegal activities.

Even though such denunciation of the involvement of the Brazilian beef industry with Amazon deforestation was turbulent and conflicted, several business opportunities were created – consultancy and auditing firms are being hired to evaluate and monitor the slaughterhouses’ commitments, for example. Furthermore, new technologies and knowledge, such as geo-referencing and traceability, are being developed to track the cattle throughout the entire value chain. One example is given by AgroTools in using the expertise built, within the

context of the Brazilian beef industry, in order to develop tracking systems for McDonald's and Walmart worldwide.

Therefore, we might question: was the denunciation of Amazon deforestation that bad in business terms? Moreover, why was Amazon deforestation the predominant issue to be denounced among several environmental and social impacts of the Brazilian beef industry?

In addition, the 'sustainability' negotiation in the Brazilian beef industry case involves different kinds of organisations (i.e. *Brazilian State* – MPF, Ministry of Environment and BNDES; *social movements and NGOs* – Greenpeace; and, *companies and their organisations* – JBS and other slaughterhouses, GTPS³, ABIEC⁴ and farmers), which contribute to the development of a rich and in-depth study.

In order to deal with such questions, this thesis addresses the following research question: **Why have some practices become known as 'sustainable' in the Brazilian Beef Industry?** In addition, the objective of this research is to engage with the organisational institutionalism literature and discuss **how organisations fashion their environment**.

The process by which organisations can shape the context in which they are embedded was one of the three core areas⁵ that Parsons (1956) attributed to the Theory of Organisation that had just been born (Parsons 1956; Barley 2010). However, this area could be considered as one that has received less attention (Barley 2010). This thesis aims to contribute to this particular subject, by focusing on how the idea of sustainability in the beef industry could be addressed as a result of the influence of different actors.

Ergo, the various events in the sustainability's case regarding the Brazilian beef industry ended up triggering a lot of disputes over the idea of sustainability in this sector, offering many elements for research, and, thus, bringing the opportunity of this particular

³ *Grupo de Trabalho para a Pecuária Sustentável*. In English: Brazilian Roundtable on Sustainable Livestock.

⁴ *Associação Brasileira de Exportadores das Indústrias Exportadoras de Carne* (ABIEC). In English: Association of Brazilian Beef Exporters.

⁵ Parsons (1956) in his seminal work argue that an organisation analysis should focus on: (i) the internal processes and operations of organisations; (ii) how organisations adapt to situations they face and (iii) how organisations influence the socio-cultural context.

moment to more deeply investigate how organisations engage themselves in attempts to shape their environment.

Moreover, during the research process, ‘sustainability’ emerged as a contested matter, which is being negotiated throughout actors’ interactions. Therefore, in this study, ‘sustainability’ is discussed as an issue driven by politics and power, rather than a technical one. Hence, in this context, ‘sustainability’ clarifies actors’ disputes over its meanings. In order to emphasise such disputes, institution is defined as meanings (Selznick 1996; Selznick 2011/1949), recovering the influence and importance of Selznick’s old institutionalism. Consequently, institutionalisation consists of infusing with value that goes further than technical requirement processes – put in another way, when practices and actions acquire values that go beyond the technical requirements at hand (Selznick 1948; Selznick 1996; Selznick 2011/1949).

Concluding, it is possible to argue that the infusion with values (i.e. institutionalisation process) is also the struggle over hegemony, as it will be discussed in chapter three. This implies that ‘sustainability’ is a political matter, and that a research agenda addressing it as such could be fostered: focusing on how different actors (NGOs, National States and their government bodies, social movements, corporations and multilateral organisms) are influencing such debate, which has consequences to resource access. Nevertheless, before further presenting this research, it is important to contextualise the reader with the ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ discussions and background.

1.1. ‘Sustainability’: is it reorganising capitalism?

‘Sustainability’ is a compelling and ubiquitous matter in contemporary society agenda. Despite the lack of clarity in its idea, due to the concept of sustainable development being also vague and imprecise (Lélé 1991; Williams and Millington 2004; Hopwood et al. 2005; Marshall and Toffel 2005), the topic has increasingly captured the attention of businesses and global brands. According to Gro Brundtland, who was responsible for the report *Our Common Future* (also known as the *Brundtland Report*), from the United Nations (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), in which the ‘sustainable

development' term was established (Nobre 2002), the word 'sustainability' was captured by companies: "I think there is an abuse when it comes to sustainability. This word was introduced later, as if it delivered what sustainable development means (...)" (Angelo 2012, free translation).

In our capitalist world, it would be strange to imagine that companies would not join the 'sustainability' trend, using all means in order not to have their brand associated with practices that cause impacts on society and the environment. However, when it comes to 'sustainability' and the big global brands, hearts and minds are often led to a passionate and antagonistic debate. On the one hand, some argue that big global brands are leveraging sustainability to an unprecedented scale. On the other hand, some believe that, because they are the great villains, it would be naive to expect large corporations to place limits and restrictions on their actions in order to save the world from their environmental and social damages.

Either way, both notions point to the importance of understanding and dealing with the market. As Abramovay (2010: 265) states: "the environmentalist discourse will remain precarious until it develops a more refined understanding of what the market is". By claiming that, the author (Abramovay 2010) suggests that one of the reasons why nature has been historically neglected by business studies is due to social sciences and Adam Smith's economy insisting on "explaining the social through the social", in such a manner that transformed the social into a self-sufficient explanation unit. The place of nature has also been covered by Banerjee (2003: 143) when examining the concept of sustainable development, which he claims to be "based on an economic, not ecological, rationality". In the author's view, the rationalised management discourse has transformed 'nature', associated to wild, savage and untamed force, into 'environment', which is more 'manageable' and goal directed.

This may partially be explained by the already elusive condition of the sustainable development definition provided by the *Brundtland Report* – "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) – which framed the discussion over sustainable development in the Rio 92 Earth Summit and, since then, has been widely used almost as an intuitive definition of sustainability (Marshall and Toffel 2005). The

main complaints revolve around it being “difficult or impossible to operationalise and implement”, and also questioning the feasibility of predicting future generations needs and abilities and, finally, reaching a consensus over it (Marshall and Toffel 2005: 673). As a result of this lack of clarity, practicality and consensus, there have been enduring ambiguities within definitional attempts of sustainable development, followed by efforts to put such definitions into practice through metrics, such as quantitative indicators (Parris and Kates 2003).

These efforts have been enacted by the corporate world within the institutionalisation process of the sustainable development movement, which, if on the one hand has placed the environmental concern under the public agenda, it has done so by rejecting the notion that environmental conservation necessary constrains economic development (Lélé 1991; Nobre 2002). In such context, the intentions guiding corporate actors towards characterising and measuring sustainable development were mainly in terms of enabling decision making and management, advocacy, participation and consensus building, and research and analysis, as Parris and Kates (2003: 13.13) suggest:

Thus the major role of indicators is to indicate progress toward or away from some common goals of sustainable development in order to advise the public, decision makers, and managers. This management control also implies the use of various policy responses, and indicators are to be used to identify opportunities for such responses, select priority actions, and evaluate their effectiveness.

Thus, in order to understand how ‘sustainability’ has become an important topic of the public agenda it is necessary to better understand the origins of the ‘sustainable development’ term. As Lélé (1991) explains, such origins date back to 1980 when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) launched the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) with the goal of “achieving sustainable development through the conservation of living resources” (IUCN 1980). At that time, previous to Rio 92, Lélé (1991) aimed at highlighting the original influences on the ‘sustainability’ concept, due to its emergence within the context of renewable resources (e.g. related to forests or fisheries), before becoming a broad slogan adopted by the environmental movement and, later, by the corporate world.

Even earlier to that, *The Limits to Growth*⁶ by Meadows et al. (1973) had already called the attention to the finitude of natural resources, popularising the concern with environmental issues in an unprecedented way. The book, however, was not only about the environmental dimension – it had problematized the economic dimension as well, by introducing finitude to the economic discussion on endless growth (Nobre 2002). In pushing forward such new perspective, this work provided a combination of five fundamental variables to address the limits regarding the environment and the economy. While two of these variables dealt with environmental threats (i.e. endangered non-renewable natural resources and deterioration of the environment), three others tackled economic and social processes (i.e. increasing industrialisation, rapidly growing population and expanding poor nutrition) (Nobre 2002).

Given this origin and the predominance of environmental concerns, Lélé (1991: 608) termed this early phase of sustainability as ‘ecological sustainability’ and sustainable development as “a process of change that has (ecological) sustainability added to its list of objectives”. For that reason, the areas of ecology and physical sciences were more represented in such early period (Lélé 1991). Later on, other fields (e.g. geography, law and business) joined the scene and contributed for what Franklin and Blyton (2011: 5) called “a noticeable shift in thinking from a primarily environmental conception of sustainability to a more tripartite prioritization of environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainability”. In this following phase, the early contributions of natural sciences were complemented by the need to explore the impact of social and economic systems, as well as their practices and behaviours (Franklin and Blyton 2011). As result, the field of ‘sustainability’ suffered a significant expansion in terms of its research scope, and also inherited the modelling and measuring techniques and mind-set from its natural sciences background (Franklin and Blyton 2011).

This process derives from the formation of the sustainable development idea and the relationships surrounding its establishment, such as the normative relation of the concept with the logic of scientific development and technology in capitalism, and, specifically concerning

⁶ The book was commissioned by the Club of Rome, a global think tank, based on Switzerland, focused on international political issues. In a large extent, this work guided the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm (Nobre 2002).

the environmental matter, the underlying relation between economic development and environment (Nobre 2002). The complexity of such relations and interactions highlights the importance of approaching the subject of sustainable development in its different scientific and political dimensions, thus avoiding the temptation of pushing artificial divisions (Nobre 2002). Therefore, the vague and confusing first impression of sustainable development should not prevent scholars from exploring the different orientations and political interests behind the positions advocated by a diversity of groups (Nobre 2002).

In this sense, it could be suggested that ‘sustainable development’ was more successful in “raising environmental issues to the forefront of the international political agenda”, than other attempts by the environmental movements since the 1970s until then (Nobre 2002: 25). The Rio 92 conference was the culminating point of such efforts (Nobre 2002). Although recognising the vagueness and contradictions inherent to the concept of sustainable development, Nobre (2002) suggests that precisely the imprecision of the concept is responsible for its strength, and that the time to explore contradictions has already passed, without bringing much contribution. This research challenges such statement by claiming that tensions within the sustainable development concept have not really been solved, thus recalling Lélé’s (1991: 607) assumption that questions over the contradictions between environmental concerns and development have been put aside in favour of the supremacy of the concern over “how sustainable development can be achieved?”.

Nobre (2002) himself has criticised Lelé (1991) for mistaking ‘sustainable development’ by addressing both as concepts – ‘sustainability’ and ‘development’. He points such mistake by arguing that, in this combination, ‘development’ is a noun, while ‘sustainable’ is an adjective, therefore the latter aims at qualifying the former and not contrasting with it. Conversely, this research takes this semantic dimension into consideration to extent that it reinforces the inherent tensions within the sustainable development concept, not between two different concepts, but in the process of qualifying what is ‘sustainable’. In other words, ‘sustainable’ – the adjective – is the focus of analysis and not ‘sustainability’ – the noun; in the sense that ‘sustainable’ is defined *in relation to* something else. Hence, this research engages in such context in order to explore what is claimed to be ‘sustainable’, by highlighting the scientific and political disputes surrounding this matter, as well as its

consequences in the material realm (e.g. organising of value chains, access to resources and development of new technologies).

As its origins are tied to the criticism of the finitude of environmental resources, the expression ‘sustainable development’ has the great contribution of qualifying ‘development’, by establishing the consensus that capitalism development might not lead to an environmental devastation, and, thus, accommodating severe criticisms on capitalism (Lélé 1991; Nobre 2002).

Following such argument, by qualifying ‘development’ and offering the innovation and productivity increase as a way to maintain the primacy of economic growth, capitalist logic is preserved, because the questioning of modes of production and consumption are left aside (Nobre 2002). In this sense, at the same time that ‘sustainable development’ was successful in establishing the environmental concern in the public agenda, it has bounded its criticism by preserving the assumption of economic growth as a need and an imperative. Moreover, by addressing such debate through an analysis of the relations between inputs and outputs in the production processes (Nobre 2002), which this study will latter term as capitalist ‘quantitative efficiency’, such process opens an exit to avoid more ‘qualitative’ criticisms to capitalism.

Therefore, the establishment of the sustainable development notion has transformed the political debate in terms of how theoretical, scientific and political diagnoses will create answers for what is ‘sustainable’ (Nobre 2002).

Under this perspective, Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister (2013) have analysed the engagement of big brands with sustainability, through what they have called “eco-business”, in their book, *Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover of Sustainability*. In this sense, the authors scape a potential reductionism by bringing the discussion about the role of big brands, with regard to sustainability, for the context of capitalism in the twenty-first century; thus, embedding the ‘sustainabilities’ negotiations within the characteristics of contemporary capitalism.

On the matter of capitalism and its influences on the development of sustainability, it is important to frame what we understand by capitalism in the twenty-first century. A growing

financialisation of economy, shifting national and local value chains into complex chains of transnational production, creates interconnected organisational spaces to organise such chains (Kristensen and Morgan 2012). This process is supported by the emergence of different transnational governance mechanisms (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006) – usually from non-state actors and market-based oriented (Cashore 2002) – which bring to the twenty-first century capitalism a transnational dimension, not only regarding the flow of capital and labour, but mainly through the creation of those interconnected organizational spaces (Kristensen and Morgan 2012), arranged in such a global scale that inevitably produces consequences to the literature of sustainability and its public arena.

In this context, Dauvergne and Lister (2013) show how large corporations – and their big brands – turn sustainability into a business, through the management of their supply chains and transnational businesses. Even though social movements and States play an important role in the advances regarding the reduction of environmental impacts, the authors stress that the characteristics of contemporary capitalism are the very drivers enabling big brands to transform sustainability into a business tool. One example of this is the eco-business approach that, in Dauvergne and Lister's (2013) view, help large corporations to have greater efficiency and control of their supply chains, through the implementation of new techniques for tracking and auditing, in order to ensure the soundness of their products' origins, reduce the use of natural resources, increase transparency, control, and, especially, the management of risk (e.g. brand damage) in the global value chain.

The operation of such business tool also enables corporations to exert a political role in the transnational arena. This role could be understood as the result of the social relations developed to convince the actors involved in the transnational governance and regulation arena, where rules, soft regulation mechanisms, goals, monitoring systems, and mainly ideas are debated and negotiated (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Kristensen and Morgan 2012). In this process, the politicisation of sustainability is, thus, materialised into initiatives, programmes and technologies.

1.2. Overview of the thesis

The following chapter, *Politics and Meanings in Organisational Institutionalism: Actors Jockeying and Their Impact on Institutions*, has the objective of assessing the organisational institutionalism regarding the silence about political processes (i.e. the constant jockeying among actors) and the importance of meanings. Both of them will be discussed in terms of their relevance to the comprehension of stability and change in institutions. The chapter maps organisational institutionalism's main approaches and its historical development, emphasising the recent contribution of *institutional entrepreneur*, *institutional work*, *institutional logics* and *inhabited institution* to shed light on the matter of stability and change. In conducting such examination, the chapter advocates for a relational approach to understand these matters.

Hegemony: Towards a Relational Approach to Actors and Societal Logics, the third chapter engages with the theoretical discussion of the previous chapter by providing definitions and developing a theoretical framework to assess how actors are fashioning their environment through attacking or protecting the societal logics that supports their position. Thus, it is argued that institutions (e.g. meanings) could be understood as the result of political processes that have societal consequences. Such foci sustain that conflicts and relationships (i.e. actions and interactions) among actors could be understood as struggles for hegemony with an impact on the structural level, since hegemony concerns the actors' conflicts over the symbolic system.

Actors can influence their environment under a specific time and space, which provide them with a context for agency that can be shaped (reproduced or transformed) by their engagement in an arena to negotiate a particular issue. Rather than analysing a field, the **negotiation order** focuses the analysis on an issue of actors' interest emerging throughout their actions and interactions. Consequently, it emphasises their constant interplay, avoiding the trap of fieldcentrism that separates the moment institutional transformation from the reproduction one.

As actors' negotiations are carried out through discourses that aim at influencing each other, it is possible to argue that such discourses are pervaded by interests. Therefore, there are numerous meanings concerning what is at stake in those actors' perspective. Among these

several meanings under negotiation, one might become hegemonic, emerging as a **focal issue** that will influence discourses and actors' interests. These processes create a **negotiation order** that provides actors with the required legitimacy to develop their initiatives, programmes and technologies, which will assure their economic dominance (e.g. accesses to resources such as funding, market share, donations, among others to ensure the organisation's survival). Thus, it is possible to highlight the actors' interplay, in terms of how they are creating meanings (i.e. institutionalisation process) and, through such activity, they are able to change contexts (i.e. their environment).

Both the context for agency and the negotiation order are pervaded by societal logics that actors draw upon to sustain their discourses and practices. A **focal issue** will be the result of this inherited past based on which actors' can exert their agency under a situated context, thus aiming to fashion it in order to achieve the future they envisage. These negotiations provide evidence of how actors are protecting or attacking such societal logics and the result could be stability or a piecemeal change. Whether the ruling elites will maintain their dominance or new dominant groups will rise should vary according to the time and space in question.

The fourth chapter is the *Methodology*, which presents the researcher's point of view and personal choices, such as writing in English. Moreover, the chapter presents and explains the decisions regarding the research question and objectives, justifying the study both in ontological and epistemological terms. At the end, the data collection and analysis' procedures are discussed.

While the fifth chapter has the objective to provide the longitudinal case study on the negotiations around 'sustainability', the sixth chapter assesses how such negotiations might impact on the societal order by examining the extra-discursive elements that enable to comprehend why Amazon deforestation became a hegemonic meaning, instead of other environmental and social impacts.

Therefore, the chapter *Creating Meaning, Changing Contexts: Deforestation and the Brazilian Beef Industry*, examines how actors' constant jockeying changes the context for agency regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. Such actions and interactions represent the hegemonic struggles over the creation of meanings for sustainability, bringing

consequences to both the situated context of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field and the societal logics that enables such interactions. While the discussion carried in this chapter supports that societal logics, actions and meanings are interrelated, it also identifies that actors are using characteristics of the twenty-first century capitalism in order to promote changes in the very societal logic employed to make sense of their context.

The sixth chapter, *Repertoires, Negotiation Order and Capitalism*, reveals that an actors' interest alignment regarding the importance of Amazon deforestation facilitated its emergence as a focal issue – revealing both the historical conditions that actors have inherited and how MPF and Greenpeace employed the capitalist logic (i.e. governance and risk management) to define deforestation as an environmental concern under this situated context. Additionally, it demonstrates how capitalist societal logic's characteristics are being protected or attacked by actors while they employ their actions' repertoire. Thus, this chapter has the goal of discussing the negotiation order and its interactions with the capitalist logic.

By exploring how discourses are being used to sustain or attack the hidden processes and structures that support capitalism, the chapter achieves both: the Critical Discourse Analysis' objective (Fairclough 2010) and enhances a hegemony approach (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002; Delbridge 2007) by showing how actors construct consensus (i.e. the emergence of the focal issue). Underpinning such analysis is the examination of whether a piecemeal change may impact on the societal order, due to the stratified nature of society. However, it is possible to conclude that a change within stability is taking place, since it is argued that a piecemeal change is illustrated in the imposition of environmental concerns to the beef industry, which takes it over by the notion of 'sustainability'. Therefore, it could be considered that, on the one hand, a transformation in the capitalist 'quantitative efficiency' (Gordon 1976) – an increase in productivity by transforming the proportion of resources consumed during production – occurred; while, on the other hand, the capitalist 'qualitative efficiency' (Gordon 1976) remained intact, as the ruling dominant groups are still controlling the means of production and its associated resources (i.e. money, power and legitimation).

The final chapter is the **Conclusion** that provides a summary of the analysis developed throughout the previous chapters. By adopting Joseph (2000; 2002) and Delbridge (2007) accounts on hegemony and capitalism reproduction, it was possible to provide an alternative

perspective, under organisational institutionalism, for the importance of the local and historical contexts in which actors negotiate both the meanings and actions coming from various societal logics. Additionally, this study demonstrates the focal issue of these negotiations and the context focused by them, thus evidencing the dialectical relation between actors' agency and their historical background.

Why Amazon deforestation has become a focal issue? Back in time, it is possible to argue that it was produced through actors' actions drawing upon societal logics. In doing so, actors created a context for agency at a particular time, emphasising the relational approach towards societal order and the local context. The focal issue addressed is the outcome of a political project supported by a consent construction, which provides social cohesion and consensus, thus describing how the dominant groups maintain their position.

How actors shape their environment? By using – and influencing – societal logics in order to emerge a hegemony meaning that supports actors material advantages, in this process actors may aim (even unconsciously) at transforming or protecting the societal logics, producing gradual changes on their environment.

At the same time, a hegemony approach allows to understand the local negotiations reproducing the focal issue. Once the focal issue represents how a consensus is forged, its emergence is hegemony being exerted in a negotiation local context: the production of what is being contested is how the environment is fashioned.

Moreover, the negotiation order, under which such disputes take place, are embedded in the societal level of reproduction of dominant groups. By absorbing its criticism and producing a piecemeal change under the 'quantitative efficiency' of capitalism, the dominant groups preserve the social relations that secure their advantages – avoiding challenging the capitalist logic under its 'qualitative efficiency'. Ergo, hegemony and the negotiation order enable to examine how, actors are not only struggling for meanings of 'sustainability', but protecting or attacking societal logic (as hidden structures) that sustains their position.

Accordingly, this research has provided, under an organisational institutionalism framework, an alternative understanding of how actors fashion their environment, accounting for the importance of a historically situated agency. As far as 'sustainability' is concerned it

has been enabling a gradual change by absorbing the environmental impact criticism of capitalism through fostering a transformation on 'quantitative efficiency' of capitalism, supported by the innovation and productivity increase rationale. Likewise, as 'sustainability' is the outcome of political negotiation, it is a contested conception, which is the result of a hegemony struggle under a situated context, in which actors exert their agency (i.e. changing context) while they fight for meanings (creating meaning). As a consequence the dominant group are being able to preserve the 'qualitative efficiency' of capitalism, the social relations that support their control over the means of production and its resources remain preserved.

2. Politics and Meanings in Organisational Institutionalism: Actors Jockeying and Their Impact on Institutions

*... Institutionalization is product of the political efforts of actors to accomplish their ends and that the success of an institutionalization project and the form that the **resulting institutions takes depend on the relative power of the actors who support, oppose, or otherwise strive to influence it.** [...] Central to this line of argument is an apparent paradox rooted in the two senses in which the term institutionalization is used. Institutionalization as an outcome places organizational structures and practices beyond the reach of interest and politics. By contrast, institutionalization as a process is profoundly political and reflects the relative power of organized interests and the actors who mobilise around them. (DiMaggio 1988: 13, bold added)*

This chapter addresses two gaps of organisational institutionalism, the silence about political processes (i.e. the constant jockeying among actors) and the importance of meanings. Both of them will be discussed in terms of their relevance to the comprehension of stability and change in institutions. It argues that institutions (e.g. meanings) must be understood as the result of political processes that have societal consequences. Such foci sustain that conflicts and relationships (i.e. actions and interactions) among actors could be seen as struggles for hegemony with an impact on the structural level, since hegemony concerns the actors' conflicts over the symbolic system.

Under this purpose, the recent discussions on organisational institutionalism (institutional entrepreneurship, institutional work, institutional logics and inhabited institutions) will be examined in terms of how they approach issues of politics within the dynamics of institutional stability and change. Therefore, this chapter argues that organisational new institutionalism has seen a shift from emphasising stability (in its first generation) towards explaining institutional change (in the second generation), which has brought agency into the institutional process. Such movement has also shifted from an exogenous explanation of change to an endogenous one. However, to bring agency into the organisational institutionalism framework it is necessary to reassess the paradox of embedded agency, which has become the focus of the second generation.

In this context, this chapter advocates that, in order to reassess the paradox of embedded agency, two discussions need to be made. The first one concerns the players' involvement in the 'institutionalisation and institutional change' process and the necessary moderation of the notion of entrepreneur as an agent of change. Underneath this discussion is also examined the process of institutional reproduction, elaboration and transformation as a result of a constant interplay among actors. The second discussion addresses the need for a dialectical account of actors and structures and will be further elaborated in the next chapter, when analysing the impact of hegemonic struggles.

Thus, the chapter is divided as follows: (i) first, the importance of politics and meanings to understand the institutional process will be pointed out; then (ii) the four concepts developed to bring agency into organisational institutionalism, such as *institutional entrepreneur*, *institutional work* and *institutional logics and inhabited institutions*, will be assessed in their relationship with the silence of politics and social power; (iii) finally, a relational approach will be suggested in order to account for the on-going processes that constitute the social life, this discussion will emphasise the relevance of hegemony into organisational institutionalism.

2.1. Mapping Organisational Institutionalism: main elements and approaches

Organisational Institutionalism is considered to be a dominant paradigm in organisation studies (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010). Such predominance, however, is not followed by a consensus of its main concepts and ideas (Greenwood et al. 2008; Scott 2008; Suddaby 2010; Djelic 2010), a condition that has contributed to the production of several works⁷ evaluating and systematising its historical development and proposing some directions for future research. In the recent years, new

⁷ Just to give some examples of evaluations and historical analysis: Scott's book *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interest*, first published in 2001; Greenwood and colleagues' *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, published in 2008; or Morgan and colleagues' *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Institutional Analysis*, published in 2010. Also several journal special issues have been dedicated to the discussion of institutional theory gaps, such as the volume 53, issue 6 of *Academy of Management Journal* (2010) or volume 28, issue 1 of *Journal of Business Venturing* (2013).

concepts such as institutional entrepreneurship, institutional work, institutional logics and inhabited institutions were developed as attempts of the ‘second generation’ of new institutionalism to account for institutional stability and change (Morgan et al. forth coming). Despite the recent contribution towards bringing agency into scene, organisational institutionalism is still struggling to combine micro and macro levels of analysis in order to avoid both structural determinism and agency voluntarism (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2013).

At the same time that agency and structural determinism become a challenge to organisational institutionalism, some gaps, such as the silence upon politics and social power (Greenwood et al. 2008), or the revival of the importance of meanings (Suddaby 2010), are also identified as needing attention of future research. This thesis engages in such debate by advocating a political view of the process by which organisational practices and processes acquire meanings, which go beyond their technical goals⁸; it will be shown that such processes could be seen as a political project that also has consequences for the societal order. Analysing how actors’ negotiations (i.e. politics) affect - and are affect by - the institutional process (i.e. meanings), could be an opportunity to bring micro and macro levels together. In this process, it is possible to emphasise the actors’ (i.e. micro level) conflicts and disputes over dominance, through fashioning consent over a symbolic system (i.e. macro level). In other words, the thesis advocates a hegemony approach to understand institutional stability and change – to examine that at the same time that actors’ actions and interactions shape a situated context, they are protecting and challenging the structural elements that support the social order.

Differently from its predecessors, the second generation of new institutionalism is more concerned with institutional change (Morgan et al. forth coming). Underpinning such concern is the intention of answering the criticism that institutional theory is rather focused on institutional conformity and, therefore, not able to understand the origins, processes and implications of change. In response to that, several approaches were developed to deal with the matter of change: institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio 1988; Battilana et al. 2009),

⁸ In this thesis, sustainability is discussed as an issue driven by politics and power, rather than a technical one. Thus, it shows that despite other several environmental impacts (technical argument) related to cattle ranching, it is the deforestation of the Amazon Forest that became the focal issue within actors’ conflicts.

institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Thornton et al. 2012), institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011) and inhabited institutions (Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Binder 2007; Hallett 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013). Even though each of these factions of research have their own particularities to engage with institutional theory issues, it is possible to suggest that, in general, such approaches were developed as an attempt to overcome what Seo and Creed (2002) defined as the paradox of embedded agency. The paradox is an inheritance of institutional theory (Seo and Creed 2002; Battilana 2006) and reflects upon how actors are able to engage in the process of changing institutions when their actions and rationality are embedded in their institutional environment.

The mapping of institutional theory (Battilana 2006; Greenwood et al. 2008; Scott 2008; Battilana et al. 2009) places the roots of such problems in the development and appropriation of the ‘new institutionalism’ during the 1980’s (Greenwood et al. 2008; Scott 2008; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010), when Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983), drawing on the Weberian analysis of the rationalisation of the world, criticised resource dependence theory and how it portrays organisations as agentic actors that seek to maximise their interests by responding to environmental circumstances through a technical rationality way (Scott 2008). This new institutionalism perspective revealed a taken-for-granted characteristic in some social processes that acquire a rule-like status (Meyer and Rowan 1977), thus suggesting that organisations are not so agentic since they suffer some constraints from institutions. In this process, they might rather seek legitimacy and survival, and not necessarily efficiency; therefore, organisation action is based on the cognition process of institutions and not particularly on seeking self-interest (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Greenwood et al. 2008; Scott 2008). Such influence of structures upon the action brings the origins of what was later labelled as structural determinism. This relates to the development of the new institutionalism and the predominance of the structural elements in explaining the organisational world, which left little space to an agentic actor (Battilana 2006; Battilana and D’Aunno 2010)⁹, since the focus was on the isomorphism and decoupling processes (Greenwood et al. 2008; Scott 2008).

⁹ It is noteworthy that the organisational literature creates a division between the new institutionalism, which origins lies on the work of authors like Meyer and Rowan, DiMaggio and Powell, Zucker and Scott, and the old

On the other hand, agency voluntarism happens when agency is overstressed, rendering the actors the capacity of ‘disembedding’ themselves from their context and acting as they please in order to initiate an institutional change, in which the entrepreneur assumes a *hero perspective* (Battilana 2006; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Levy and Scully 2007; Battilana et al. 2009; Clegg 2010; Battilana and D’Aunno 2010; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011). At the same time, while in some periods of the organisational institutionalism development the focus was on structures over agency, in others there was a primacy of agency, as it will be discussed further. Such pendulum movement does not help to advance the dichotomy of agency and structure and asks for a different focus that, instead of targeting particular actors that promote change, **emphasises the process of examining stability and change** (Hardy and Maguire 2008), thus moderating the emphasis on the actor that promotes change (i.e. institutional entrepreneur) and focusing on the process that results in stability and change.

Despite the recent discussions on agency, organisational institutionalism is still struggling to bring micro and macro levels of analysis together (Tracey et al. 2011) and some authors (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Battilana and D’Aunno 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) advocate that this is an ontological issue, as it will be examined in the methodological chapter. Nevertheless, the discussions on agency brought two different reflections for organisational institutionalism: i) throughout the evaluation and mapping of the area, “new directions” for research started to be framed; and ii) questions on whether the organisational institutionalism has gone too far from its core purposes (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010; Djelic 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010).

Regarding the “new directions”, the need to examine power and the role of politics in the evolution and change of institutional settings (Clegg 2002; Greenwood et al. 2008; Clegg

institutionalism, which roots are on Selznick, Gouldner and Blau, among others. Sometimes, such division put them as different theoretical corpuses, with different objectives, legacy and influences (Greenwood and Hinings 1996; Selznick 1996). Our objective in using the label “new institutionalism” or “neo institutionalism”, rather than engaging on such discussion or reinforcing a schism, is to refer to the theory development that points out some historical contexts and characteristics that have influenced the organisational institutionalism development. However, it is important to mention that some authors have suggested the need to come back to the early institutionalism and reflect upon its contributions to the understanding of agency in an institutional context (e.g. (Battilana et al. 2009; Battilana and D’Aunno 2010; Kraatz 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010; Slager et al. 2012)), few works have really engaged in considering the contributions of the old institutionalism to overcome the paradox of embedded agency, an exception is Kraatz’s (2010) discussion of Selznick’s notion of leadership and its contribution for institutional work approach.

2010; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010), as well as the importance of meaning as a manifested content of institutional change (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Maguire and Hardy 2009; Suddaby 2010; Hardy and Maguire 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010; Jennings et al. 2013) have been pointed out. While the latter was well received in the organisational institutionalism field, due to bringing the memory of the old institutionalism (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010) – where institutionalisation was understood as the process of acquiring meaning (Selznick 1948; Selznick 1996; Selznick 2011/1949) – the former is embraced with scepticism, accused of have to stretched the organisational institutionalism too far (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010), which leads to the second reflection.

2.1.1. Political Struggles: the matter of self-interest and the paradox of embedded action

Such scepticism relies partially on the process of questioning whether organisational institutionalism has gone beyond its core objectives as political struggles, under this literature, reassembles the belief that actors are self-interested motivated (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010), which is one of the first arguments that new institutionalism has fought against.

One worry about the attention given to political struggles is that the institutional dimension sometimes recedes into the background. A critical contribution of institutional analysis is its recognition that actors are not motivated solely by self-interest. Yet, at times, studies that analyze the strategies used by actors/entrepreneurs to achieve institutional change often ignore how and why institutional forces shape the strategies accepted as appropriate and the choice of strategies made by particular actors. Unless political processes are explicitly couched within an institutional context, the resultant story becomes promised upon actors behaving quasi-rationally and knowingly pursuing their interests. For us, this would be a political or resource dependence account, not an institutional one. (Greenwood et al. 2008: 19-20).

Sustaining such argument is the assumption that politics has its place in a different space than the one of institutional pressures, as if political struggles does not affect - or are

affected by - the institutional setting. Regarding these aspects, it seems appropriate to bring DiMaggio's (1988) argument on whether interest and agency should be taken into account in institutional theory. He does so by pointing out two different senses for institutionalisation, the outcome of the actor's political struggles, and the process in itself. Therefore, actors' dynamics should have their space within an institutional framework (DiMaggio 1988). Thus it is possible to envisage an arena in which actors' actions and interactions impact on both a situated context and an institutional setting – the argument of this thesis.

Hence, if DiMaggio (1988) searched for a space to interests in organisational institutionalism and considering that the paradox of embedded action is an inheritance of institutional theory (Seo and Creed 2002; Battilana 2006; Hargrave and Van de Ven 2010), the matter of self-interest is also an inheritance. In other words, they are different sides of the same coin. As Leblebici et al. (1991: 360, bold added) affirm, when analysing 'institutional change' in the North American radio broadcasting field: "Though they [institutional changes] are products of practical consciousness, institutions produce unintended consequences that define the ends and shape the means by which future economic and political interests are determined and pursued. **This is the duality of all institutional practices.**" Therefore, both issues are challenges that should be tackled by institutional theory, rather than a rationale for avoiding political struggles' analysis. When facing such dilemmas, the matter of self interest and the paradox of embedded action, two alternative approaches in institutional theory have been chosen: the notion of praxis and bringing political struggles into institutional framework.

Regarding the first point, it is possible to go back to a dialectic tradition of understanding about agency and structure. According to Child (1997), there is an imbalance in organisation theory that should be faced by embracing the tension between agency and structure, debating simultaneously the role of agency and the nature of the organisational context. To do so, Child (1997) elaborates the 'strategic choice' perspective drawing attention to the process by which organisations could influence on the structures they are embedded in. For him, such process is "essentially [a] political process" (Child 1997):

"A contemporary contribution of strategic choice analysis derives from its potential to integrate some of the different perspectives in organization studies. This integrative potential derives from the fact that strategic choice articulates a political process, which brings agency and structure into tension and locates them within a significant

context. It regards both the relation of agency to structure and to environment as dynamic in nature. In so doing, the strategic choice approach not only bridges a number of competing perspectives but also adopts a non-deterministic and potentially evolutionary position. Strategic choice, when considered as a process, points to the possibility of a continuing adaptive learning cycle, but within a theoretical framework that locates 'organizational learning' within the context of organizations as socio-political systems. Strategic choice is thus consistent with a model of organizations in which organizational learning and adaptation proceed towards not wholly predictable outcomes within the shifting forces of organizational politics." (Child 1997: 44).

Child (1997) argues that actors become aware of what they are doing and the consequences of it, while they are doing. He argues that there is a constant dynamic between information (gathering information about what is happening in a particular context), evaluation (evaluating such information), learning, choosing, acting, outcomes (the consequences of such action) and feedback of information. In this sense, the matter is less about self-interest but how the relations among organisations shape such dynamic.

Although Child (1997) does not portray this as a dialectic process of understanding agency and structures, his argumentation reassemble the notion of praxis¹⁰. As Seo and Creed (2002) and Benson (1977) point out, praxis is an important principle to guide and examine the relations among actors and institutions, because praxis, as a principle of dialectic analysis, is the conscious production and the unconscious reproductions of structures (Benson 1977; Joseph 2002; Seo and Creed 2002; Dean et al. 2006; Roberts 2006; Fairclough 2010), as will be further discussed in the methodological chapter.

Concerning political struggles, if organisational institutionalism aims to explain how institutions evolve and how actors can influence such process (Barley 2010), it is necessary to embrace the actors' relationships and how they impact on institutions. As Hallett and Ventresca (Hallett and Ventresca 2006: 215) remember, institutions carry meanings that are taken for granted and organise social activity, but they are also the results of social interactions:

¹⁰ Praxis and a dialectical analysis of organisation will be discussed on the following chapter.

“Although institutions penetrate organizations, it is through social interaction that institutions are interpreted and modified as people coordinate the activities that propel institutions forward. Second, though institutional logics carry meaning, it is also true that meaning arises through social interaction. These interactions are the beating heart of institutions. Institutions are not inert containers of meaning; rather they are “inhabited” by people and their doings”.

While organisational institutionalism remains silent about politics (Greenwood et al. 2008), social movement literature has been paying attention to such process (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Just to highlight some examples, this literature has been analysing how social movements acting as extra-institutional actors (King and Soule 2007) could engage in a contentions process (Soule 2009; Soule 2012)¹¹ that leads to institutional change due to impacting on organisational fields (Fligstein 2001), creating new forms of organisations and markets (Rao et al. 2000; Lounsbury et al. 2003; Zald et al. 2005; Weber et al. 2008), impacting on public policies (Gomes, 2009) and, thus, acting as a social actor (King et al. 2010).

As Fligstein and McAdam (2012) argue, social movement and organisational theory have been in an intensive dialogue. However, scholars from both fields tend to analyse either social movement or organisations, reifying these categories and obscuring what Fligstein and McAdam termed as “collective strategic action”; e.g. how the constant jockeying of collective actors impacts on stability and change in fields.¹²

2.1.2. Institutional change and stability: endogenous and exogenous forces

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) argue that different traditions of thought – social movements theory, organisation theory, economic sociology and political science – are interested in explaining how organisations impact on their environments. Drawing from these

¹¹ There are several works that combine organisational theory and social movement and it is not on the scope of this thesis to evaluate them. For those who are interested in such literature, would be worth to check the *Blackwell companion to Social Movements* (Snow et al. 2004) and *Social Movements and Organizational Theory* (Davis et al. 2005).

¹² A discussion of the field level of analysis, the contributions and the limitations of Fligstein and McAdam(2012) approach will be conducted both in the methodological chapter and in the next chapter, especially in the section 3.1.3.

approaches, the authors elaborate a theory of fields to analyse institutional change and stability. For them (Fligstein and McAdam 2012), there are two different sources of change and stability, an exogenous one resulted from the connections between fields (e.g. a crises in a particular field could spread to proximate fields occasioning a change), and an endogenous one that is the outcome of the actors' constant jockeying for advantages. The authors examine such relations to the lenses of incumbents and challengers' perspectives; while the first ones are trying to keep their advantages, the other aim at a better condition in the field.

In this sense, these two different sources of change and stability account for different kinds of politics; while the exogenous explanation focuses on how fields impact each other, the endogenous one highlights how actors perceive a field and employ their social skill, for their own benefit, in trying to convince others (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Nonetheless, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) claim that actors make sense of what is happening in a particular field due to a 'shared meanings and collective identities' (i.e. frames) based on the field characteristics, thus, avoiding any kind of institutional taken-for-grantedness.¹³

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) are not alone in analysing how the actors' relations impact on stability and change in fields. For example, Leblebici et al. (1991) have shown that endogenous forces (i.e. actors' relationships) are responsible for the historical evolution of a particular field (i.e. 'institutional change'). "The cycles of transformations in the conventions, organisation and institutionalised practices in broadcasting show that institutional change is the product of endogenous forces that are associated with the historical evolution of the field itself." (Leblebici et al. 1991: 360). To do so, Leblecici et al. (1991) have discussed how less privileged actors, from the fringes of the field, fostered internal contradictions that led to an endogenous change.

Mahoney and Thelen (2010), drawing from the historical institutionalism perspective, have also been concerned about the endogenous forces that lead to institutional transformations. They have elaborated a model to deal with a common criticism of the institutional theory, the focus on stability and the exiguous shocks as sources of change. For

¹³ Although this approach opens more space for actors politics and their agency is difficult to differentiate changes in a particular field or in the societal order (Goldstone and Useem 2012; Morgan et al. forth coming) this could reduce the understanding of change and stability to the field level, creating a different kind of fieldcentrism(Morgan et al. forth coming), such discussion will be conducted in the hegemony chapter.

them, a major source of change and stability of institutions are the on-going players' struggles; such conflicts and relations among actors can produce small adjustments in the institutional setting, and these gradual changes may lead to huge consequences as sources of other kinds of outcome over time. Moreover, they (2010)¹⁴ have argued that institutional stability and change is a political problem (i.e. it is the outcome of a continued political mobilisation). In such context, the source of change would lie on different interpretations of rules and different enforcements that, as a result, enable different implementations of existing rules according to the actors' interests and objectives.

On the other hand, Barley (2010) is interested on how organisations, especially corporations, can shape the broad social system in which they are embedded. He has also framed this as a political process arguing that it is an area of organisation studies that is still underdeveloped. Barley (2010) has shown how business corporations, both intentionally and unintentionally, were able to institutionalise an organisational field, which symbolically sustained their business interests, by shaping the North American public policies. In a previous work also analysing how organisations shape their environment, Barley (2007) has concluded that corporations, wielding an excessive political power, could hamper democracy and the public good in at least three different ways: i) by fostering legislation that benefits their interests at the cost of citizens (the case of the bankruptcy act of 2005); ii) by capturing regulatory agencies (the case of the prescription drug fee act) and iii) by privatising activities that were mandatory of governments (the analysis of the outsourcing of military). In all these three cases, Bartley (2007) has analysed how organisations exert their political power through their relations.

Stern and Barley (1996) also stress the importance of studying how organisations impact on the broad social system they are embedded in. The authors analyse how the research agenda on the role of organisations in modern life experiences a thematic shift due to the migration of organisational theorists to the business school, where the focus on broad social questions was discouraged. Such shift was followed by a higher concern with the for-profit organisations, rather than government agencies tackled by the early organisational

¹⁴ Although is not the objective of this chapter to assess Mahoney and Thelen(2010) model, it is important to highlight that they have elaborated five different types of piecemeal change - displacement, layering, drift, conversion, and exhaustion - based on different actors' relations and interests.

scholars, which led to an increase of concern on how organisation theory would be relevant for the manager career - inside the business world. This has changed the focus of the organisation theory research agenda towards addressing efficiency and effectiveness, instead of the organisations' effects on society.

Drawing on Stern and Barley (1996), Hinings and Greenwood (2002) have argued that to overcome this shift from a sociological focus of studying organisations – concerned with who controls and the consequences of that control – to a managerial focus – interested in understanding and designing efficient and effective organisations – it is necessary to reassess the organisational institutionalism research agendas and, thus, they have pointed three future agendas. The first one proposes some areas that organisational scholars should pay attention to, such as new organisational forms, globalisation, gender and diversity, and organisations and the environment¹⁵ (Hinings and Greenwood 2002: 418). The second point relies on the policy directions of researches, since it considers that organisation theory has a role as a “policy science” (Hinings and Greenwood 2002: 419) and, thus, researchers should be asked to reflect upon the policy implications of their research findings. Finally, they have advocated a shift in the focus of analysis from organisations (i.e. the individual organisation, or population of organisations, or organisational field) to institutional processes, as they explain: “Perhaps by moving the focus of **attention from organizations *per se* to sequences of organizations within institutional systems**, the questions of power and consequences would become more salient” (Hinings and Greenwood 2002: 419, bold added).

Hence, it is clear that political processes constitute an important part of the comprehension of institutions and should not be regarded separately from it. Even though it carries a dilemma for institutional theory – as discussed on section 2.1.1 –it is necessary to embrace and face it (Clemens and Cook 1999). In such spirit, Clemens and Cook (1999) have analysed how political processes could be discussed within an institutional framework. They have argued that, in order to account for institutional change rather than focus on the institutional durability, it is necessary to decompose it into processes of reproduction,

¹⁵ Here understood as the natural world.

disruption and response to disruption; to do so, institutions could be dissociated into schemas and resources exposing the complexity of institutions that constitute the social world¹⁶.

2.1.3. Politics and the Exercise of Power: a hegemony approach

Following the discussion of change and stability under the organisational institutionalism, it is possible to note a piecemeal change in the lexicon of the recent work on “institutional change”. Curiously, the majority of the recent work use “stability and change” or “formation, reproduction and transformation” of institutions to indicate this process that once was simply termed as “institutional change”. Although, as it will be discussed, even recognising institutional change as a process where actors’ interactions play an important role, a remembrance of methodological individualism could be noted due to the attribution to the individual (or group of individuals) the ability of ‘producing change’, which forgets that the relations among actors is one of the elements that characterises institutional stability and change as a process by focusing the analysis on the field level, creating a fieldcentrism.

However, politics, as a human activity of convincing others and, thus, an on-going relation among actors, is deeply related to the exercise of power, and cannot be understood separately from it (Bobbio et al. 1983; Clegg and Haugaard 2009). In this sense, organisational achievements are intrinsically related to the use of power, as actors cannot achieve their objectives without exerting it (Clegg and Haugaard 2009), and the exercise of power is in the realm of politics (Bobbio et al. 1983). Therefore, to understand how an institutional framework evolves, it is necessary to analyse how organisations exert their power towards each other, shaping the social structures.

There are different approaches to power in social science, and is not surprising that, within organisation studies, there is also a diversity of perspectives.¹⁷ For example, some

¹⁶ In order to argue in favour of such point, Clemens and Cook(1999b) draw upon the idea of institutional logics from Friedland and Alford (1991), that will sustain the institutional logics approach, as will be discussed further on in this chapter.

¹⁷ It is not the objective of this chapter to discuss the different perspective of power. For those interested in this variety of approaches two books bring an overview of them: *The Sage handbook of Power* (Clegg and Haugaard 2009a) and the first chapter of *Power and Organizations* (Clegg et al. 2006).

works focus on the role of power elites (Zald and Lounsbury 2010) and how they impact on governance regimes (Reed 2012), while others analyse how the dynamics among power and resistance produce political changes (Fleming and Spicer 2008).

Instead of contrasting these different perspectives and trying to find the perfect approach, it is believed that each of them has its own values and contributions; thus, the choices between them rely not only on personal taste, but also on which aspects of social life one intends to highlight. As Clegg and Haugard (2009b: 22 – 23) affirm:

In the conclusion the editors reflect, in conversation, on the diversity of power perspectives and their relevance to power research. Overall, they acknowledge that the Handbook is premised upon the idea that there is no single correct interpretation of power; thus, they do not seek to impose one. Power is a conceptual tool not a single essence that is eternally contested. A screwdriver can double as a chisel but it is not as fit for the purpose as a specifically designed and appropriate tool. So it is with power.

Once the purpose of this thesis is to address the silence of politics and social power and engage with the importance of meanings in organisational institutionalism, the choice of a hegemony approach seems adequate, as hegemony concerns conflict over the symbolic helm, thus bringing politics and meanings into the discussion. On the one hand, following Gramsci as the theorist of domination by consent (Gruppi 1978; Haugaard 2009), hegemony stresses the symbolic interaction among actors towards fashioning a consent that will have material consequences. This approach seems to be fruitful due to highlighting, through hegemony, the interweave of material, discursive and organisational dimensions, issues that underpin the field level of analysis (Levy and Scully 2007; Clegg 2010).

Furthermore, political struggles and institutions are closely related, since institutions could be understood as the result of a political process that has consequences in terms of legitimation and access to resources. Thus, political considerations could expand the reflection over how the cognitive schemes that support the definitions of interests, frames and strategies are embedded in actors' interactions. This offers the possibility to analyse meanings as the result of a political process (i.e. actors trying to influence and act upon one another). In order to engage with Suddaby and colleagues' request for "[understand] how and why organizations attend, and attach meaning to some elements of their institutional environments

and not others” (Suddaby 2010: 15)¹⁸, it is necessary to recognise this process as a political endeavour, otherwise the research will only go half way through the micro and macro interactions, and lose itself in the matter of self-interest.

Concluding, this section has portrayed the importance of politics and meanings for organisational institutionalism. Moreover, it has been stressed that this work will develop an approach in order to account for actors’ negotiations, its impact on a situated context and the relations to the societal order. It is in such context that the four concepts developed in organisational institutionalism as an attempt to bring agency back in – institutional entrepreneur, institutional work, institutional logics and inhabited institutions – will be assessed.

2.2. Institutional Entrepreneurship

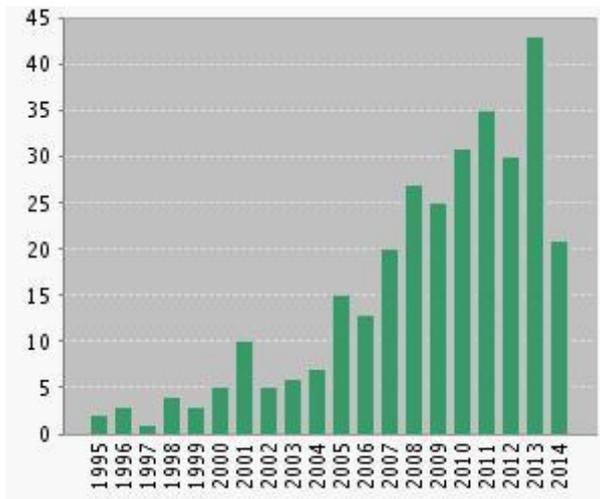
The idea of institutional entrepreneur was initially developed by DiMaggio (1988b) in trying to understand the role of interest and agency within institutional theory, acknowledging such literature as an appropriate theory to explain those situations when behaviours are consequences of taken-for-granted patterns. Therefore, he argues, institutional theory is well equipped for understanding the diffusion and reproduction of some successful “institutionalised organisational forms and practices”. However, it has a limited scope to explain where institutions come from, why some practices are diffused while others are not recognised as legitimate and are, consequently, forgotten and so forth.

Such idea has become a popular stream of research as it aims at discussing institutional change (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009), which is an important matter for the current debate in organisational institutionalism. In such scenario, it is possible to argue that “institutional entrepreneur” is often used as a synonym for the protagonist of change, the actor who deliberately employs strategies in order to produce change in a particular organisational field (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009).

¹⁸ Or as this thesis research question: why some practices become known as “sustainable”?

The “entrepreneurship literature” (Jennings et al. 2013) has already produced at least two reviews of its developments, the first one is the book chapter *Institutional Entrepreneurship* produced by Hardy and Maguire (2008) and the second one is the paper *How Actors Change Institutions: Towards a Theory of Institutional Entrepreneurship* by Battilana, Leca and Boxenbaum’s (Battilana et al. 2009). A quick search in the ISI Web of Knowledge¹⁹ shows that this is a relatively popular topic when compared with the other two that are being assessed in this chapter. While institutional logics accounts for 213 papers and institutional work for 58 papers, institutional entrepreneur was identified in 316 papers. It is also interesting to note that, although the number of items published has slightly decreased, the citations in each year have not experienced a decrease yet, which may indicate that this is still a “hot topic”. Below are both graphs presenting the number of papers published by year and the number of citations by year.

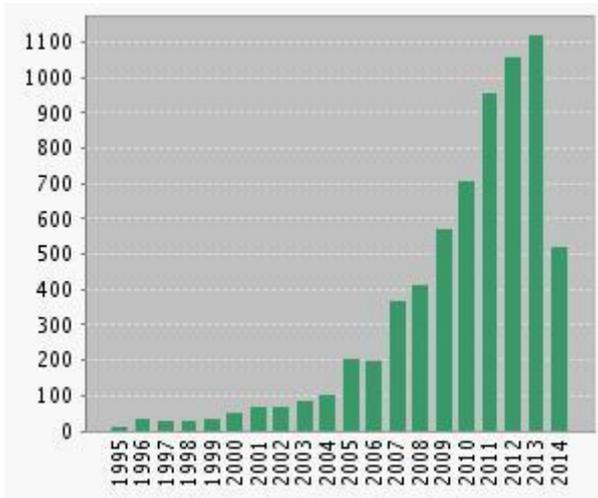
Graph 1: ‘Institutional Entrepreneur’ Publications by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

¹⁹ The search looked for “institutional entrepreneur” in topic - which includes title, key words and abstract - in the following databases: business, management and political science in all years covered by the databases. The search was conducted in June of 2014.

Graph 2 'Institutional Entrepreneur' Citations by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Regarding the institutional entrepreneur approach, the main criticism lies on the characterisation of institutional entrepreneur as a *hero*, a *hyper muscular* or a *hyper rational* actor (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Levy and Scully 2007; Lounsbury and Crumley 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2008; Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009; Clegg 2010; Battilana and D'Aunno 2010; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011). These images may reflect two consequences of an actor-centric perspective (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009), such as the neglected scrutiny of the role of different actors (Delbridge and Edwards 2008) in the highly political process of institutionalisation and institutional change (Seo and Creed 2002), as well as a disregard of the paradox of embedded agency (Battilana 2006; Battilana et al. 2009; Battilana and D'Aunno 2010).

An interpretation of DiMaggio's 1988 chapter could bring one possible reason for such development being focused on the character of the institutional entrepreneur. Going back to his (DiMaggio 1988) work, it is possible to note the decision to search for those moments "when (...) interest and agency [must] be taken into account" since he acknowledges that there are aspects of organisational life that cannot be explained without examining the role of interest and group conflicts. In this pursue, DiMaggio (1988) identifies two different senses (or moments) of 'institutionalisation'²⁰ that were not examined in the institutional theory

²⁰ Such distinction were mentioned in the previously section of this chapter.

development, one accounting for an achieved condition, and another reflecting an unfinished process. It is in latest that the matters of group conflict, agency and interest should be located, as he argues:

(...) Institutionalization is product of the political efforts of actors to accomplish their ends and that the success of an institutionalization project and the form that the resulting institutions takes depend on the relative power of the actors who support, oppose, or otherwise strive to influence it. [...] Central to this line of argument is an apparent paradox rooted in the two senses in which the term **institutionalization** is used. Institutionalization as an **outcome** places organizational structures and practices beyond the reach of interest and politics. By contrast, institutionalization as a **process** is profoundly political and reflects the relative power of organized interests and the actors who mobilise around them. (1988: 13, bold added)

Hence, agency and interest should be placed within this second perspective of institutionalisation, since it is a “highly expensive process”, in terms of “interest and resources”. Institutional entrepreneurs are the actors responsible for this process and, thus, should be powered with “sufficient resources” in order to “realise interests that they value highly” (DiMaggio 1988: 14). When analysing the literature development, specially in terms of how the institutional entrepreneur is defined and emphasised, it seems that the focus of research was given to this special actor (i.e. the institutional entrepreneur (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009)), rather than to the process of ‘institutionalisation’ (DiMaggio 1988). In the literature, the institutional entrepreneur is normally described as that actor who engages with the processes of changing the existent institutions or building new ones (Dacin et al. 2002; Garud et al. 2007; Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009; Mendonça et al. 2010), “whether or not they initially intended to change their institutional environment, initiate, and actively participate in the implementation of, changes that diverge from existing institutions” (Battilana et al. 2009: 70).

Furthermore, when bringing two different moments (or spaces) within institutionalisation, DiMaggio (1988) creates a ‘secure bubble’ where agency and interests within an institutional framework could be deployed. Consequently, agency and interests should be deployed in the process of institutional change and not in the other aspects of institutional life. Although, this ‘apparent paradox’ (DiMaggio 1988: 13) has not received

much criticism, it could be argued that the creation of such ‘bubble’ guided the development of the organisational institutionalism’s focus on the analysis of institutional change (e.g. the moments when change happens), creating the sensation that stability and change are different processes, and possibly explaining the reasons for why the actors’ relationships (i.e. politics) have not received much attention in this literature. Also, by classifying an actor as an institutional entrepreneur, the researcher recalls the ‘bubble’ where agency is allowed within the institutional framework and, thus, overemphasised in detriment of the context in which the institutional entrepreneur is embedded.

Such criticisms are echoed in the recent contributions of the institutional theory field (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Lawrence et al. 2010; Fligstein and McAdam 2012) that suggest that stability and change are part of the same process due to resources, energy and interests being also deployed in reproducing institutional patterns. It is possible to go further in such critique, arguing that most of the contemporary contributions from the organisational institutionalism field focus on the actor’s institutional work towards change, since the institutional entrepreneur is the actor who implements a divergent change (Battilana et al. 2009), rather than the institutional work that is necessary to maintain the institutional setting.

As a consequence, a piecemeal change that still guarantees power and control for the dominant actors (Mahoney and Thelen 2010) is left aside – it is possible to argue the same regarding Selznick’s (2011) notion of co-optation, which Selznick has developed to understand change within stability. However, to understand the processes through which actors keep their dominant position, despite some institutional changes, or how they engage in protecting such condition, are important for the comprehension of the reproduction of inequalities, which is an important task for a Critical Theory that is committed not only to explaining the consequences of capitalism, but also to engaging on changing it. In this process, identifying the interests and taken-for-grantedness that sustain the reproduction of inequalities is an important task.

Summarising the argument, such emphasis on defining and creating conditions that must be fulfilled in order to classify an actor as an institutional entrepreneur²¹ has been receiving much more attention than the politics that is necessary to create, maintain, transform or disrupt institutional settings. By supporting such view, Hardy and Maguire (2008: 211) argue that it is possible to identify two different narratives on institutional entrepreneurship, one that is actor-centric, focused on the deliberate strategies of a particular actor, and another that is more process-centric, analysing the struggles that prevails the institutional entrepreneurship project, which has received little attention (Lounsbury and Crumley 2007; Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009).

Under this second type of research there are works that characterise institutional change as a complex and political process (Seo and Creed 2002) where less powerful actors, from the field borders, initiate the change process, and are followed by the powerful and dominant actors. Also, due to becoming very costly to maintain institutional patterns, such change does not imply that the powerless actor will achieve a dominant position in the field (Leblebici et al. 1991). On the other hand, Levy and Scully (2007) highlight the interaction of discursive and material aspects within fields to understand actor's political actions in order to change the field's structures.

Moreover, the emphasis on the institutional entrepreneur brings another consequence besides losing track of actors' relationships: the agency voluntarism (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009), which stresses the agency and forgets the constrains that the context imposes on actors (Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2008; Battilana et al. 2009; Battilana and D'Aunno 2010):

(...) there are dangers in the recent groundswell of interest in institutional entrepreneurship. While it response to the recognised need for institutional theorists to move beyond the constraining effects of institutions and to put agency back into institutional analysis of organizations, there is a risk that the pendulum while swing to far in the other direction - celebrating heroic 'entrepreneurs' and great 'leaders' who bring about intentionally, strategically and creatively - and, in so doing, **reify fields, actors and the process of change itself.**

²¹ Battilana et al. (2009: 68) drawing from the institutional entrepreneur literature argue that actors must fulfil two conditions to be seen as institutional entrepreneurs - they must start a "divergent change" and be active in the process of implementing it.

Instead, we need research that interrogates critically and in more depth the phenomena that interest us, and we believe the way to do so is to **keep matters of power and process central to the study of institutional change** (Hardy and Maguire 2008: 213, bold added).

Once the analysis foci is on the moment when agency and interest play their role within institutional theory, which is argued to be an inheritance from DiMaggio (1988), a series of activities from a wider perspective of actors with varying levels of resources are put aside, contributing to reinforce the ‘hyper muscular’ image of the institutional entrepreneur. In this process, as such wider array of activities is forgotten, the agency becomes highlighted (Lounsbury and Crumley 2007).

Furthermore, drawing on Lounsbury and Crumley (2007), Delbridge and Edwards (2008) have shown the importance of other kind of actors besides the individual institutional entrepreneur, such as actors who may not have vested interests in a particular field but whose actions create opportunities for new practices to emerge in that field. Moreover, they foster a relational approach (Emirbayer 1997; Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) in order to avoid the agency voluntarism, suggesting that, although agency is important, actors’ interests are embedded in a wider social and historical context that provides conditions for actions:

The diffusion of ideas was not just reliant on the social skills of the entrepreneur, although these remained important, rather the acceptance of this oppositional ideology was informed by shifts in the market based on the growth of the world economy and increasing diversity of the world’s wealthy, technological developments in terms of products and manufacturing processes and a growing interest in the value of these ideas promoted by favourable media coverage and regulatory acceptance. (...) Furthermore, in adopting a relational approach to understanding institutional change, we have shown the value of locating actions in structural and historical contexts. This provides further impetus to overcoming the recent tendency in the institutional literature to focus on individual entrepreneurs and within limited time frames of analysis.(Delbridge and Edwards 2008: 322 – 323).

Ergo, the analysis of the political process (i.e. actors’ constant jockeying) to understand institutional stability and change is yet an underdeveloped issue under the umbrella of institutional entrepreneurship literature (Hardy and Maguire 2008; Battilana et al. 2009).

This section has highlighted the importance to overcome the inheritance of the institutional entrepreneur approach, which creates specific moments when interest and agency could be deployed and, consequently, swings the pendulum towards the agency side.

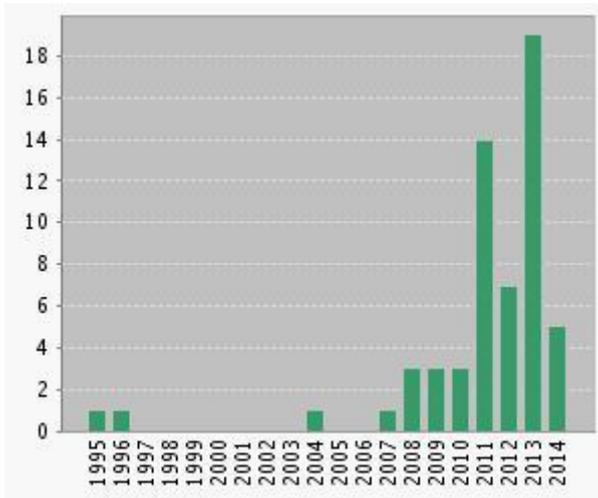
2.3. Institutional Work

The notion of institutional work is more recent than institutional entrepreneurship and institutional logics; its roots were first presented in Lawrence and Suddaby's 2006 book chapter (2006): *Institutional work*. Despite of its temporal proximity, it has already influenced other contributions – an edited book (Lawrence et al. 2010) *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organization* has been published and a special issue of *Journal of Management Inquiry* (vol. 20 issue 1) debates it.

Notwithstanding such recent development, a search on the ISI Web of Knowledge²² database has shown that 58 papers were published under this approach. By analysing the graphs below, it is possible to note an increase in the number of citations per year; since 2007, the number of citations has been increasing consistently, which might indicate that institutional work is being discussed by the academic community. One of the reasons that might explain the peak of items published in 2011 could be the *Journal of Management Inquiry*'s special issue published in that year.

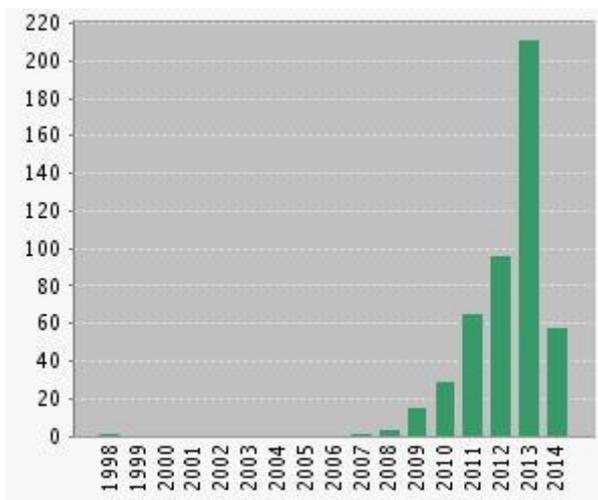
²² The search looked for “institutional work” in topic - which includes title, key words and abstract - in the following databases: business, management and political science in all years å. The search was conducted in June of 2014.

Graph 3: 'Institutional Work' Publications by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Graph 4: 'Institutional Work' Citations by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) explain that the idea of an “institutional work” is not necessarily a “new” one, but they claim to have provided connections over different topics, bringing new debates and ideas to discussion. Willmott (2011) argues that the idea of individuals working – establishing and maintaining – institutions throughout everyday practices comes from Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) *Social Construction of Reality*. Furthermore, DiMaggio (1988: 15, bold added) has used the “institutional work” expression when discussing the role of the institutional entrepreneur in creating institutions, as a reference to the highly costly activity of convincing others in the process of

institutionalisation: “In other words, the institutionalisation of an organisational form requires **institutional work** to justify that form’s public theory: legitimating accounts that organisational entrepreneurs advance about labor markets, consumer markets, expertise, and distinctive products or services.”

Thus, the notion of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006) has stressed that the work necessary to maintain and disrupt institutional forms is as important as the work employed to create new ones. By doing so, they highlight the importance of a micro-level (individual) in the processes of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions (Battilana and D’Aunno 2010) and, therefore, expand DiMaggio’s (1988) discussion. However, the discussion under an institutional framework is not limited to the individual work *per se*, but how such work interacts with the institutional setting. Consequently, the notion of institutional work evokes the work required by actors in order to impact on the institutional setting (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011). As Lawrence and colleagues explains:

We neither deny nor ignore the effect of institutions on action, and indeed those effects are crucial to understanding the nature of institutional work, but our analytical focus in the study of institutional work, unlike most institutional studies of organization, is on how action and actors affect institutions. (Lawrence et al. 2010: 7)

It is claimed that, by doing so, the actors’ skill, reflexivity and awareness of their context will be emphasised, at the same time that institutions will be the result of a more or less conscious action and will emphasise action, no matter whether such action is the result of consciousness or the consequence of institutionalised patterns. In this context, institutional work aims at bringing the individual actor and its agency – manifested through its practices – to the process of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutional settings into new institutionalism (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011).

Therefore, the institutional work approach is following the debate initiated by institutional entrepreneur in bringing agency into the new institutionalism (Kaghan and Lounsbury 2011). This is clear in Lawrence and Suddaby’s 2006 book chapter’s definition: “(...) we view institutional work as intelligent, situated institutional action. A practice perspective on institutional work is made clearer in its contrast with a process perspective on

institutions (...) **the work of actors as they attempt to shape those processes, as they work to create, maintain and disrupt institutions.**” (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006: 219, bold added).

There are some interesting words in this definition that indicate the authors’ perception about institutional process. While “intelligent” evokes a notion of rationality and intentionality to the action, “situated institutional” suggests the notion that action is embedded in a particular institutional context (Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011). Therefore, action is highlighted at the same time that it shows its entanglement with institutional elements (Battilana and D’Aunno 2010; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011):

(...) institutions as products of human action and reaction, motivated by both idiosyncratic personal interests and agendas for institutional change or preservation. The aspiration of the concept of institutional work is that, through detailed analyses of these complex motivations, interests, and efforts, institutional research will be able to better understand the broad patterns of intent and capacity to create, maintain, and alter institutions. (Lawrence et al. 2010: 6).

It is not a surprise that institutional work has been criticised for not avoiding the agency voluntarism and, thus, questioned about how it differs from institutional entrepreneurship (Kaghan and Lounsbury 2011; Kraatz 2011; Willmott 2011). Kaghan and Lounsbury (2011: 73) also state that: “[institutional work] is open to interpretations that support research that is a bit too ‘agent centered’ for our tastes”, suggesting that such agentic actor could be discussed within an institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Thornton et al. 2012) framework in order to avoid the *hyper rational* actor.

In answering such criticisms, some authors argue that the interaction between institutions and action is a dialectical one (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006; Lawrence et al. 2010; Lawrence et al. 2011). In this sense, agency is at the same time an effect of the actor’s embeddedness and the actor’s reflection about it, enabling a deliberately action in a particular field. In Lawrence et al.’s (2011a: 55) words:

The concept of institutional work insists on the need to consider the permanent recursive and dialectical interaction between agency and institutions. This invites researchers to not only account for the institutional embeddedness of actors but also for their capacity to reflect on this embeddedness, relate to their own self, and develop

conscious intentionality. Agency is neither just an effect of the actors' institutional embeddedness nor isolated from this embeddedness. It is an ongoing activity whereby actors reflect on and strategically operate within the institutional context where they are embedded.

While examining such relations, Willmott (2011) argues that such dualism could be a flip-flop between agency and structure, like a switch that changes its position as the researcher pleases. Although important, this critique could also relate to how the researcher embraces the contradictions of a dialectical approach (Benson 1977; Seo and Creed 2002; Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006) and expresses it during the research.

The predominance of the individual actor that could generate the flip-flop effect (Willmott 2011) or the pendulum movement (Hardy and Maguire 2008) somehow also reverberates in the institutional work approach. For example, the process of trying to identify different forms of institutional work within each process of creating, maintaining and disrupting²³ could lead to a focus on a particular situation, leaving aside a broader structural and historical context that underpins such situation (Delbridge and Edwards 2008). Moreover, even the effort of creating three broad categories of institutional work (i.e. creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions) could lead to the focus of an individual actor's point of view of a process that involves a wider array of actors. For example, while some players may be aiming at creating an institution, others might be interested in disrupting the existing ones and even other actors from a different field, with no vested interest in the field of study, may create the opportunity for stability or change (Lounsbury and Crumley 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2008; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). As already discussed, institutional stability and change is a complex process and focusing on the political aspects (i.e. actors' actions and interactions) seems to be a central part of it in order to avoid the actor centrism.

Under the institutional work literature there are at least two works (Maguire and Hardy 2009; Currie et al. 2012) that deal with political analysis of some kind. While Currie et al. (2012) uses the notion of institutional work to explain how an elite of medical

²³ Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) examine different forms of institutional work in each of the following process: i) creating institutions: advocacy, defining, vesting, constructing identities, changing normative associations, constructing normative networks, mimicry, theorising, educating; ii) maintaining institutions: enabling work, policing, deterring valorising and demonising, mythologizing, embedding and routinising; iii) disrupting institutions: disconnecting sanctions, disassociating moral foundations, undermining assumptions and beliefs.

professionals succeed in maintaining an institutional pattern that benefits them. The authors have done so by analysing how these actors employed different types of institutional work, such as defining, theorising, education embedding and policing. Their conclusion indicates how such elite engages in different types of institutional work:

Consequently, we show how types of institutional work to maintain professional elite status is likely to encompass a wider variety of institutional work than that categorized by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) as aimed at maintaining institutions; i.e. we observe types of institutional work for maintenance that Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) associated with creating institutions. (Currie et al. 2012: 958)

This conclusion corroborates with the argument, presented above, about focusing on the classification of the different types of institutional work by analysing how such powerful actors respond to an external threat to their status. In this context, the notion of politics within the paper is related to how the resources that sustain institutional work are distributed and controlled (Currie et al. 2012), rather than encompassing the actors' relationship and conflicts.

In Maguire and Hardy's (2009) work, the abandonment of DDT is analysed as a deinstitutionalisation process. The authors highlight how such process involves different actors using different discursive technics, thus stressing the impact that the actors' relationships had on the discourses and meanings surrounding the DDT use.

Concluding this section, although institutional work brings contributions, such as expanding the interest in agency to beyond institutional creation and bringing a dialectical account for the actors-structure dilemma, it also carries the risk of pushing the pendulum too far towards agency. Moreover, similar to the institutional entrepreneur approach, the actors' relationship and conflicts could easily be left aside, specially when focusing an actor's perspective and the different types of institutional work it may deploy.

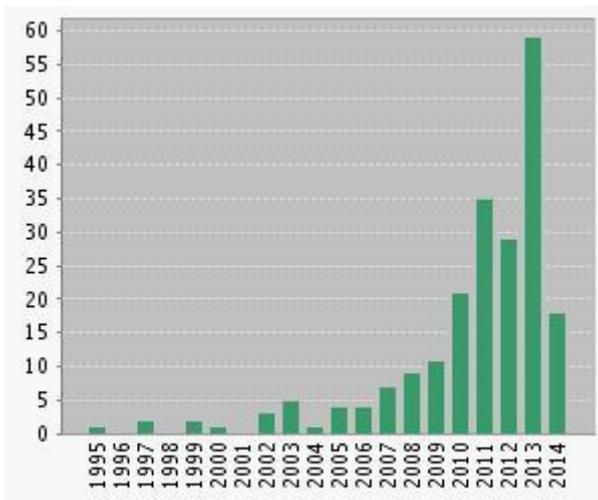
2.4. Institutional Logics and Inhabited Institutions

The institutional logics perspective has its origins in Friedland and Alford's (1991) book chapter *Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions* that was further developed by Thornton and Ocasio (Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton

2002; Thornton and Ocasio 2008) who, alongside with Lounsbury (2012), recently published the book *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure, and Process*, which attempts to consolidate the debate around the idea of logics and propose new directions for research (Morgan et al. forth coming).

An ISI Web of Knowledge²⁴ search for papers published under the institutional logics stream was performed and 213 papers were found. Most of them are from 2009 onwards, similar to institutional work, and there is a pick of publications in 2013, year with the highest number of items published. The graphs below show the published items by year and their citations in each year.

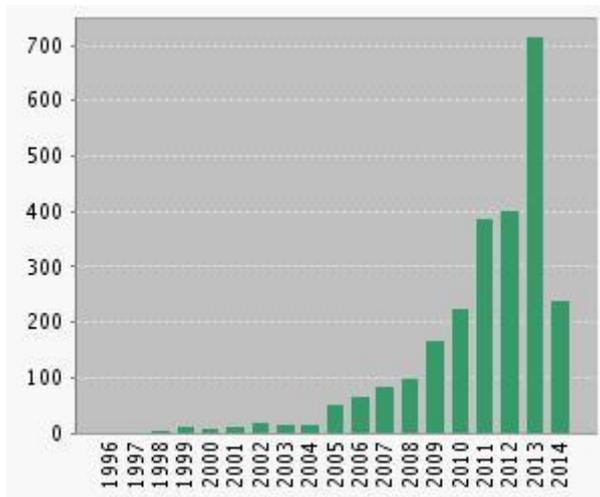
Graph 5: 'Institutional Logics' Publications by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

²⁴ The search looked for “institutional logic” in topic - which includes title, key words and abstract - in the following databases: business, management and political science in all years covered by the databases. The search was conducted in June of 2014.

Graph 6: 'Institutional Logics' Citations by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Friedland and Alford (1991) have also engaged in the debate about change within institutional theory. Although agreeing with DiMaggio (1988) that institutional change is the outcome of the actors' political actions, Friedland and Alford have identified the problem in the definition of institution, rather than in locating a moment where agency should be deployed. Thus, the authors have stated that a definition of institution should be non-functional and non-determinist so as to comprehend change. To do so, institution's definition should account, at the same time, for the symbolic system that individuals use to understand their activities in society, infusing it with meaning, and for the material life in a particular time and space ordered by such symbolic system. In their words:

[...] institutions must be reconceptualised as simultaneously material and ideal, systems of signs and symbols, rational and transrational. Institutions are supraorganizational patterns of human activity by which individuals and organisations produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space. They are also symbolic systems, ways of ordering reality, and thereby rendering experience of time and space meaningful. (1991: 243)

Under such approach, the authors have identified central institutions of the western societies (i.e. capitalist market, democracy, bureaucratic state, nuclear family and christian religion) and how the contradictions within them provide multiple logics that shape individuals' interests and behaviour. It is in exploring such contradictions that individuals change the institutional relations.

This is an important assumption of the institutional logics' perspective. Logics are both exterior to individuals, shaping their interests, forms of reasoning and goals. Societal logics are also manifested in the material realm – practices and resources' distribution (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton 2002; Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Thornton et al. 2012). As a consequence, when seeking power, legitimacy and economic advantages, actors are, at the same time, enabled and constrained by the existing institutional logics (Thornton et al. 2012).

Drawing on Friedland and Alford's (1991), Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury further elaborate institutional logics as:

(...) the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences. [...] institutional logics represent frames of reference that condition actors' choices for sense-making, the vocabulary they use to motivate action, and their sense of self and identity. The principles, practices, and symbols of each institutional order differentially shape how reasoning takes place and how rationality is perceived and experienced. (Thornton et al. 2012: 2).

Thornton et al. (2012) have also further elaborated on the original logics presented by Friedland and Alford (1991)²⁵ by proposing seven different logics: family, community, religion, state, market, profession and corporation. At the same time, they have disassembled the logics into nine categorical elements, such as root metaphor, sources of legitimacy, sources of authority, sources of identity, basis of norms, basis of attention, basis of strategy, informal control mechanism and economic system. Such disassembly creates a matrix of ideal types of the inter-institutional system (Thornton et al. 2012: 73). Consequently, the source of change does not only lies on the competing logics that enables creative action (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton 2002), as in the early institutional logics studies (Cloutier and Langley 2013), but on how actors manipulate these categorical elements strategically by combining elements from different logics and promoting change (Thornton et al. 2012).

²⁵ In a previous work, Thornton(2002) had already added the corporation logic.

Although it is through their agency that actors manipulate practices according to such categorical elements, such disassembly gives a minor importance to it, as the focus is on the categories themselves rather than in the role of the actor (Morgan et al. forthcoming). Friedland (2012: 588) has also criticised this disassembly, arguing that the more decomposable logics are, the less they exist, since the categorical element should gain primacy: “There is a conundrum: Institutional logics are specific constellations of practices, identities and objects. The more decomposable they are, the less they can be argued to exist.” Besides that, if the focus of change should be on the actor’s strategic combination of such categories, it is possible to question the source of importance given to the actors’ dynamics and interplay.

Regarding the actors’ point of view, at least two issues should arise. While the first one is concerned with how actors’ struggles over legitimacy impact on institutional logics (Cloutier and Langley 2013), the second issue lies on how and why actors recognise a particular logic and, therefore, endorse it within a field level activity (Delbridge and Edwards 2013).

Such actors’ struggles and dynamics could emphasise multiple logics coexisting in a particular context. It is argued (Greenwood et al. 2011) that little attention has been given to how actors cope with institutional complexity in and within fields (i.e. when they face a ‘multiplexity’ of pressures from competing logics). Therefore, it is also possible to question whether different actors, experiencing pressures from different logics, struggle among each other and how such relationship impacts on the prevailing logics.

If the source of change lies on how actors experience competing logics, producing practices that lead to change, an important question is whether actors are aware of and recognise the logics into their actions (Delbridge and Edwards 2013). Such matter is under the reflection of what has been labelled as inhabited institutions (Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Binder 2007; Hallett 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), suggesting that actors neither enact the logics – institutional logics are not “out there” (Binder 2007: 551) – nor fully rationalise their actions: “rather, they combine and generate practices that are intended to satisfy multiple demands, and they do so in interaction with others” (Binder 2007: 549). This is the reason

why although institutional logics produces and reproduces meanings, it does so by a situated interaction among actors.

As Hallett and Ventresca (2006: 213) state, “institutions are not inert categories of meaning; rather they are populated with people whose social interactions suffuse institutions with local force and significance.” Therefore, it is possible to affirm that inhabited institutions understand the importance of actors’ relationships to the dynamics of stability and change. In this context, Hallett (2010) also advocates that meanings constitute the battleground of micro-politics (i.e. disputes over resources and conflicts of interests). Furthermore, when stressing that actors are at the same time rationalising their practices and reproducing the institutional contents, such argument recalls a reflection upon praxis.

Ergo, institutional logics, especially under the inhabited institutions’ perspective, highlights the importance of meanings as the bridge between actors’ practices and logics, and actors’ interactions as the “beating heart of institutions” (Hallett and Ventresca 2006), once is such interaction that produce and reproduce institutions. Even though these arguments emphasise the importance of the actors’ constant jockeying, which has been discussed throughout this chapter, it is important to reflect whether such interactions are neutral or not, in the sense that these relationships could be seen as actors’ attempts to influence each other in order to achieve what they believe is a better condition for them. Thus, these could be seen as interactions where power plays an important role.

2.5. Towards a Relational Approach: Hegemony

Throughout this chapter, the importance of actors’ constant jockeying to the comprehension of institutional stability and change has been addressed. To do so, first the silence over politics and social power was discussed under the organisational institutionalism, and their contribution to understand how institutions evolve was examined. It has also been suggested that institutions, and the meanings in which they are embedded, could be the result of the actors’ political endeavour.

While the exogenous explanation for institutional change was slowly getting less attention, the primacy of an endogenous one was gaining relevance (Clemens and Cook 1999; Delbridge and Edwards 2008; Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Such switch was consistent with organisational institutionalism being criticised for not embracing actors' agency. However, in such process, political and power issues have not been considered (Greenwood et al. 2008).

Under this context, the four different approaches developed to account for agency inside an organisational institutionalism framework were assessed. It has been argued that the institutional entrepreneur approach brought the discussion into scene. Although the institutionalisation process was conceived as a political one, it has created a sealed space where agency, interests and politics could be employed, therefore not embracing it properly. One consequence was the over stress of agency and the imaginary of a heroic institutional entrepreneur, due to its capacity of desembedding and for receiving the focus of the analysis. Regarding institutional work, it has been emphasised the importance of agency within the process of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions, as well as a dialectical account for the agency-structure dilemma. Nevertheless, actors' constant jockeying received a second order importance as few works analyse them. Finally, it has been suggested that institutional logics advocate that change could be explained by the competing logics enabling a creative agency, but it has also been noticed the need to question whether actors are aware of these logics and how they reflect upon them. This brings the risk of framing an 'a-social' micro-level due to the risk of losing the actors' social interaction, which can be understood as the engine of institutions' evolvement (Hallett and Ventresca 2006). Although inhabited institutions emphasise such interactions, it is necessary to reflect upon the role of power and political struggles in these interactions.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that these four concepts emphasise power and politics – in different degrees of importance – and although conceptualising the institutional stability and change as a process, they do not truly embrace stability and change as an on-going activity. Such questioning could be raised due to the emphasis on a particular actor (or group of actors) as a focus of analysis instead of the process itself. Besides the fact that institutional theory rejects a rational choice approach and, therefore, its methodological individualism, the focus on individual actors, instead of processes, is a remembrance of it (Emirbayer 1997).

A possible explanation for the importance given to particular actors could rest on the movement of organisational scholars to business schools (Stern and Barley 1996; Hinings and Greenwood 2002), which has promoted a shift on the focus of analysis to organisations *per se* in order to answer questions of efficiency and effectiveness (Hinings and Greenwood 2002), as previously mentioned. Therefore, by engaging with the provocation of Hinings and Greenwood (2002) for embracing organisation theory as a “policy science” and focusing the analysis on the process of institutionalisation (Hinings and Greenwood 2002; Hardy and Maguire 2008) rather than on the individual actor, a relational approach (Emirbayer 1997; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) will be adopted in this thesis.

Emirbayer (1997a) in his essay *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology* has argued that contemporary sociology key questions are not answering dualisms, like ‘agency *versus* structure’ or ‘material *versus* ideal’, but how such dilemmas are approached. He has presented two different approaches to such question. The first one, and more preferred one, is a substantialist approach, understanding that those dualisms should be analysed by static ‘things’, based on models and variables of analysis, following ‘individuals’, ‘structures’, ‘cultures’ and so forth. Although implying a process among them, they appear as self-acting entities that carry life by their own and are segregated from social interactions. The problem with such perspective is the risk of losing an on-going and flux characteristic of the social life.

The second approach is a relational one, focused on the dynamics and interactions among ‘elements’:

In this point of view, which I shall also label ‘relational’, the very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction. The latter, seen as a dynamic, unfolding process, becomes the primary unit of analysis rather than the constituent elements themselves. (...) Relational theorists reject the notion that one can posit discrete, pre-given units such as the individual or society as ultimate starting points of sociological analysis (as in the self-actional perspective). Individual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded (...) (Emirbayer 1997: 287)

A relational approach seems to be fruitful when aiming to bring politics into organisational institutionalism, especially because it appears to be assumed as taken for granted, thus an entity and not an endless process among individuals.

Some recent works in organisation studies have been asking for a relational approach of organisations and field (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) as an strategy to avoid field centrism²⁶. They argue that an important contribution of adopting a relational approach would be to theorise about organisation as situated processes, not entities. As situated processes, the attention during the analyses should lie on the social context and on recognising that actors and structures are in a constant dynamic, in order to avoid both structural determinism and the agency voluntarism.

Therefore, a relational approach could enhance an analysis of the institutional processes rather than claiming that institutions are a political process and keep treating it as an entity, such as the institutional entrepreneur when analysing the conditions needed to be fulfilled in order to be considered an agent of change, the different types of institutional work or the disassembly of logics into categories. Moreover, emphasising entities also reifies fields, as they become another variable or the ultimate explanation of stability and change (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Hardy and Maguire 2008; Morgan et al. forthcoming).

Therefore, a relational approach within organisational institutionalism (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) asks for a process perspective in order to analyse how the actors' interactions impact on the institutional setting. At the same time, such interactions are situated because they are embedded in a socio and historical context, which ultimately asks for an interaction between agency and structure. Such conditions are satisfied by a hegemony approach, once hegemony is about actors' conflicts for the symbolic system (e.g. institutions), but such conflict is held in conditions inherited from the past and, therefore, it characterises a situated interaction. A hegemony approach in organisational institutionalism will be discussed in the following chapter.

²⁶ Fieldcentrism will be further discussed on section 3.1.3.

3. Hegemony: Towards a Relational Approach to Actors and Societal Logics

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past ('The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' –Marx 1972/1852: 1).

The previous chapter has indicated a theoretical gap in the organisational institutionalism literature, showing the need to address actors' actions and interactions (i.e. politics) and the importance of meanings in comprehending the relationship between structures (i.e. societal logics) and actors' actions towards impacting the structural realm (i.e. agency).

It was discussed that stability and change of institutions have received different approaches and attention throughout the development of organisation studies. A swift look in the organisation studies literature reveals that during the early stages of the new institutionalism approach, the emphasis rested on the stability of institutions and their reproduction (Battilana 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Scott 2008; Battilana et al. 2009; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Particularly after DiMaggio's (1988) work on institutional entrepreneurship, the question of agency began to be deeply analysed (Battilana 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Scott 2008; Battilana et al. 2009; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Thus, stability and change have become a trend topic within the field of organisational studies in the last few years; and at least three recent books been published focusing on how institutions might be changed or reproduced through action (Lawrence et al. 2010; Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Thornton et al. 2012).

Thus, to address the gaps pointed out during the previous chapter (i.e. actors constant jockeying and the importance of meanings), a hegemony approach to actors and societal logics will be developed, affirming that actors' disputes not only concern about material distribution but also the structural elements that support such particular distribution. Such dialectical perspective could be examined by a hegemony perspective to highlight actors' actions and interactions and will be discussed in both this chapter – as an analytical

framework – and in the methodological one – throughout the ontological perspective adopted in this study.

Although hegemony is a concept associated with Gramsci's work, the possibilities of a dialectical relationship between actions and the structural realm was already present in the opening statement of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in which he described the latter's *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past (Marx 1972/1852: 1).

In this work Marx delineated an ontological and political assumption about causality and agency: at the same time that he stated the preponderant role of human agency, he also rejected the liberal assumption that singular actors are the immediate and sole cause of historical political events²⁷. He recounted and analysed the several insurgencies, counterinsurgencies, class alliances, plots and narratives that culminated with the *coup d'état*, highlighting how individuals and collective actors enacted relations that produced historical significant actions. Therefore, it is possible to argue that he developed an analysis of actors' actions and interactions (i.e. negotiations) that produce effects on history. So, it is possible to assume that, in this analytical essay, avoiding the traps of romantic liberalism and mechanical descriptions of events and based in a dialectical ontology, Marx (1972) has developed a relational approach to actors' and institutions' interactions.

However, in his following works, Marx did not develop a similar analysis, preferring to understand how the material conditions – infrastructure – created the historical and social circumstances that enabled and restrained political action, revolutions, and change. The materialistic character of Marx's approach emphasised infrastructure (i.e. economic resources and the organisation of production) as a primary determinant structure (i.e. kinship, political

²⁷ In the "Preface" of the second edition of the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1869), Marx made this point clear, when he critically compared his account to other two essays on the same subject: Pierre Proudhon's *Coup d'État*, which created an objectivistic account of the events, and Victor Hugo's *Napoleon le Petit*, which saw the event as a violent act of a single individual.

constitution) and superstructure (i.e. religion, right, ideology, culture). Thus, the reasons and motives for cultural change might be found in the infrastructural level (Adler 2009).

Gramsci developed a different explanation for the failure of the proletariat revolution in Italy. Even though the revolution has transformed the bourgeoisie world, the ruling groups (i.e. elites) remained in power, whereas the revolution was being defeated (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978; Bobbio 1982; Semeraro 2001/1999). Explaining such developments was one of Gramsci's motivations to write the *Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci 1971); he was aiming to develop a 'proletariat political science' that could account for the mechanisms of achieving hegemony and consequently influencing the superstructure that will be impacted on the infrastructures (Semeraro 2001/1999). Therefore Gramsci's perspective remembers Marx's account for Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état*, in which a dialectical interplay between infrastructural level and the superstructure level (Bobbio 1982).

Using a contemporary organisational lexicon, it is possible to say that, rather than focusing on field's structuration (thus accounting for the material resources' disputes, such as market share), organisational action is also directed to those taken-for-granted values (or societal logics) that support such resource distribution. Thus, a hegemony approach could bring an account of agency into the institutional realm. As Joseph (2000) sustains, hegemony represents an agential intervention into societal structures rather than a domination relationship between actors.

Hegemony focuses on the conflict between actors for power, legitimacy and resources (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978; Haugaard 2009). Through that, it will be possible to understand that actors do not act in an uninterested manner, guided only by their institutional constraints. However, they are not *heroes* or *hyper-rational actors* who can leave their structural ties behind; they are acting upon a historical background that they inherited, exerting their agency in a situated context which can impact the societal logics.

Nevertheless, as a dialectical interaction, it is possible to affirm that action is also an agency guided by the structure in order to produce hegemony. As Delbridge points out, "actors may create hegemony through their actions but not in conditions of their own making" (Delbridge 2007: 1354). This highlights that actors do not interact only with each other, but also with structures (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002). Action does not take place under the societal

logics that actors have chosen. As Marx (1972) pointed out in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, such structures are the result of a historical context; and to achieve (or maintain) advantages, actors need to struggle for transforming it (or for its reproduction). To become hegemonic, and collect its benefits, it is necessary for actors to not only get “involved in relations with each other, but in relations with such structures.” (Joseph 2000: 181).

This chapter is divided as follows. Firstly, advancing the discussion from the previous chapter, the dialectics of institutional stability and change under organisational institutionalism will be examined, when some concepts and definitions will be expressed. Secondly, hegemony will be discussed, not with the objective of reassessing or bringing Gramsci to the present, but to develop an analytical framework to support an analysis of actors’ actions and interactions that could produce hegemony (i.e. dominance thought consent), which is achieved via shaping a situated context.

3.1. The Dialectics of Stability and Change: A relational approach and concepts definition

Before discussing hegemony under an organisational institutionalism perspective, it is important to define some concepts and their relations, in order to face the challenges that such literature requires, as noted in the first chapter. Drawing from a stratified ontology from critical realism (Sayer 1992; Bhaskar 1998/1979; Reed 2005b; Reed 2005; Leca and Naccache 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) and on a relational approach (Emirbayer 1997; Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), the analytical framework proposed in this thesis provides a historically situated agency and a dialectical relation among agents and the social order.

A dialectical perspective asserts that such properties – as structure and agency – only exist in relation with other properties (Benson 1977; Emirbayer 1997; Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Agency and structures are not fixed entities; on the contrary they are always in a state of becoming (Benson 1977; Emirbayer 1997) and therefore should be analysed in relation to each other (Emirbayer 1997; Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Fairclough

2010). Thus, a relational approach denies the dualism ‘structure versus agency’ in order to focus on the process that they are mutually constituted. As Emirbayer (1997a: 287) states:

Relational theorists reject the notion that one can posit discrete, pre-given units such as the individual or society as ultimate starting points of sociological analysis (as in the self-actional perspective). Individual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded.

Implicit in a dialectical approach is a contradiction among the production and reproduction of social formations that is realised throughout *praxis* (Benson 1977; Bhaskar 1998/1979). It is while acting that individuals make sense of the world; such relations with society are based on a conscious production and an unconscious reproduction of the means of production. Bhaskar (1998: 34-5) explains:

Society is both the ever-present *condition* (material cause) and the continually reproduced *outcome* of human agency. And *praxis* is both work, that is, conscious *production*, and (normally unconscious) *reproduction* of the conditions of production, that is society. One could refer to the former as the *duality of structure*, and the latter as the *duality of praxis*.

Consequently, there is a temporal nature of the human experience that should be taken into account regarding human agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Conceiving an agency that is historically situated, as the interpretation of the social world is based on characteristics inherited from the past (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002; Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Delbridge 2007; Fairclough 2010)²⁸. This is important to avoid the swinging between structure determinism and agency voluntarism; since agency is now historically situated, it is not apart from the structure influence. As a consequence, **the study of the time and space (i.e. context) in which actors transform the structures into scripts, rules, norms and meanings is indispensable for explaining agency** (Emirbayer and Mische 1998).

Some researchers (Benson 1977; Suddaby and Greenwood 2009) argue that the study of stability and change is enhanced when a dialectical methodology is employed, because such approach assumes as its principal goal to expose the hidden interests that inform and

²⁸ Such agency historically situated is important for building and hegemonic account for stability and change, as will be further discussed.

sustain institutions and to reveal forms of domination and inequalities that have been reproduced²⁹ (Benson 1977; Suddaby and Greenwood 2009). In order to succeed in such goals, it is important to analyse the contradictions that arise during institutionalisation processes exposing conflicts that become embedded in interests (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009).

3.1.1. Agency and Structures

Even though agency-structure and institutions are often brought together when the subject is social change in many social science disciplines, this not imply a common understanding among them; there is some confusion about what these terms mean (Fleetwood 2008). It is not the objective of this study to provide a full account of their different conceptions and roles in social life. Yet, further research needs to be done in order to understand the relations among such concepts and their impact on stability and change under organisational institutionalism literature; some definitions should be presented in order to separate analytically agency and structure.

Drawing upon a critical realist framing of organisational institutionalism, structures are located on the domain of real and they correspond to institutional logics (2006). As discussed in the first theoretical chapter, logics are patterns of human activity through which actors produce and reproduce material conditions, provide principles of organisation and legitimacy, organising time and space (Friedland and Alford 1991). Therefore, societal logics are exogenous to actors and analytically apart from the struggles over meaning and resources (Leca and Naccache 2006; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013). However, since a relational perspective has been adopted, societal logics can only be examined in contrast to meanings and the material conditions they support.

Society is, thus, conceived as inter-institutional system of competing logics and is such contradictions that open space for change (Friedland and Alford 1991). Although

²⁹ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a dialectical methodology (Fairclough 2010) and was adopted in this research. Hence, providing and alignment between the theoretical perspective and the epistemology and ontology approaches adopted.

societal logics are in contradiction and interdependent, the context for agency is also provided by the process of actors competing and negotiating, engaging in conflict and coordination (Friedland and Alford 1991; Delbridge and Edwards 2013).

Relying on Emirbayer's relational sociology (1997a) and Delbridge and Edwards' (2013) discussion on institutional complexity and change, actors and structures - both units of analysis - are in continuous processes of negotiation and realisation of structures under the domain of actual. Such time and space condition is a temporal constructed engagement that reproduces and transforms societal logics under a historical situation.

This agency definition implies that neither institutional reproduction nor change are certain or expected. Change or stability relies on an agentic orientation towards past, present and future. As Emirbayer and Mische argue:

Actors are always living simultaneously in the past, future, and present, and adjusting the various temporalities of their empirical existence to one another (and to their empirical circumstances) in more or less imaginative or reflective ways. They continuously engage patterns and repertoires from the past, project hypothetical pathways forward in time, and adjust their actions to the exigencies of emerging situations. (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 1012).

Given the temporal aspect of agency, it is possible to identify different ways that actors involve with structures. Delbridge and Edwards (2013) develop a refinement to understand agency under organisational institutionalism; based on Archer's (2003) reflexivity, they analyse the potential outcome from the different agency and structure relationship, arguing that actors' agentic orientation towards the past might have taken-for-granted continuity as a potential outcome. Actors' agentic orientation towards the present might result in negotiated continuity and/or change. While actors' agentic orientation towards the future might result in change.

Such refinement discusses how actors might access societal logics and act given a particular time and space, providing causal explanations of what enables and/or constrains actors' agency. Furthermore, it is possible to identify three analytical moments: "(i) the structural conditioning of institutional logics; (ii) the interplay of such logics at the level of

actual; and (iii) the empirical outcome of such interplay.”(Delbridge and Edwards 2013: 942 – 943).

Ergo, the issue has now moved from agency and structure definition and their relation to the context for agency: how actors negotiate, compete and coordinate conflict in a situated context. As will be discussed in the methodological chapter, such struggles take place in the domain of actual (Leca and Naccache 2006; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013).

Concluding, context refers to the specific time and space that provides actors with an arena in which to dispute (exert their influence among each other throughout actions and interactions) specific matters. In this thesis the context for agency regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field is analysed. In other words, how actors negotiate the meanings of sustainability. The careful reader might be wondering the difference between field, a usual level of analysis in organisational institutionalism, and situated context definition. While the latter focuses on how actors act and interact aiming to influence each other under a historical context, the former focuses on organisations that constitute an area of ‘institutional life’, such as suppliers, producers, consumers, government bodies, among others; an inter-organisational network in which actors share a common understanding of institutions and shares interactions (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Such an approach to field can produce a fieldcentrism (Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007) that could hamper the examination of actors’ negotiations.

Therefore, even though a field analysis is employed in this research it does not have the objective of defining and circumscribing ‘fields’. On the contrary, the research aims at providing an historical account for actors’ actions and interactions (i.e. a context for agency) that has consequences for such field. Thus, by focusing the process of interactions it is being analysed how fields are connected, stressing its role as an analytical category as will be further discussed in this chapter.

3.1.2 Institutions and Institutionalisation

Alongside with agency and structure, institution is a common term in management and social sciences, have been examining ‘institutions’ and consequently its significance might vary from discipline to discipline (Fleetwood 2008; Scott 2008), which may generate confusion between the different definitions and impacts on social life (Scott 2008). Even under institutionalism there is no single definition for institutions (Scott 2008).

W. Richard Scott (2008a) elaborates a comprehensive review of the different approaches and origins of institutional studies, even drawing attention to relations among institutions and organizational sociology under the management field. Scott formulated a broad definition of the idea of institutions:

Institutions are comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life. (Scott 2008: 48)

From this explanation, institutions are rules, norms, values, cognitive processes and symbols that guide and provide meaning for social actions and also guarantee the stability of social systems (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 2008). Therefore, regardless of the theoretical approaches, it is possible to point out three pillars of institutions – the regulative, the normative and the cognitive (Scott 2008). The regulative pillar refers to the rules, focusing on the regulator role of the institutions, and their importance as constraints (sanctions or rewards) to actions. On the other hand, the normative one emphasises norms and shared values, or what is desirable, correct and morally accepted. Finally, the cognitive pillar encompasses the elements that produce meanings and culture (Scott 2008).

Based on the idea that reality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1967), new institutionalism opened the way to the cognitive elements and the understanding of meaning which pervades the institutions: the cognitive pillar is now emphasised. The cultural and cognitive processes that impact on organizational behaviour were overly highlighted in the initial works of new institutionalism, in which the study of agency was left aside, being described as simply a reaction to institutional pressures (e.g. decoupling and ceremonial behaviour) (Battilana 2006; Scott 2008; Lawrence et al. 2011).

The initial interests of *new institutionalism* were to clarify the structures and organizational practices that could not be explained by competitiveness and efficiency terms (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer 2008; Scott 2008; Lawrence et al. 2011). Organizations appeared as an entanglement of rationalized beliefs, since they were expressed in a way that they could be perceived as objective processes seeking efficiency (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Scott 2008). At the same time, institutional isomorphism helped to explain the diffusion of some processes and structures throughout an organizational field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 2008).

Therefore, aiming at emphasising actors' actions and interactions, but still preserving the cognitive relevance of institutions, this research draws upon *early institutionalism*, when actors' negotiations played a major role, rather than organisational homogeneity in which actors assume an active role. Hence, *institution* is defined as meanings (Selznick 1996; Selznick 2011/1949), recovering the influence and importance of Selznick' old institutionalism. And, consequently, *institutionalisation* is the infusion with value, put another way, when practices and actions acquire values that go beyond their technical requirements (Selznick 1996; Selznick 2011/1949).

Such definition was not arbitrarily chosen, just to satisfy an underdevelopment aspect of organisational institutionalism (Greenwood et al. 2008; Suddaby 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010). On the contrary, as Leca and Naccache (2006) and Fairclough (2010) have pointed out, institutions correspond to the domain of actual, the realm where different struggles over the social world interpretations and events take place.

As discussed in the previous chapter, several researchers (Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Binder 2007; Hallett 2010) have shown the importance of meanings for individual actions. Such meanings are produced by social interaction, therefore, societal logics are not 'out there'; they are inhabited by social interaction that produces meanings.

By focusing on meanings, it is possible to emphasise how actors' interactions produce conditions for stability or change; in other words, attention is drawn to the context for agency, either negotiated stability or change. As practices and actions are legitimatised by meanings, actors will engage in relationships to convince others of their argument, therefore the contextual conditions that enable causal power to produce effect and events are demarcated.

These social interactions that produce meanings are the actors' constant jockeying for advantages or political processes. Fligstein and McAdam (2012) have already highlighted the importance of meaning production to understand stability and change. However, they are not able to identify processes that might impact on societal order from those that will be restricted in particular fields, as they lack some analytical structure that cuts across different fields while connecting actors' constant jockeying (Goldstone and Useem 2012; Morgan et al. forthcoming).

3.1.3. The mesolevel of social action and stability and change

A field level of analysis has been used to understand the change and stability in organization studies (Delbridge and Edwards 2007). As Delbridge and Edwards (2007) and Scott (2008a) argue, field evokes the idea of a group of organisations, a sector or a network of organisations that brings an impact to the social life, a level of analysis for studying institutional processes (DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 2008).

The concept of field is attached to the idea that a particular group of organisations shares a set of meanings and values, which legitimise the actions in this field; at the same time, these actions impact the shared meanings and values (DiMaggio 1991; Scott 2008; Dacin et al. 2002). By doing so, the notion of field could indicate an arena of disputes, where there is a potential for constant conflict for the values that guide action (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 2008; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Some authors (Fligstein and McAdam 2012), drawing from Social Movement theory, describe such conflicts as challengers *versus* incumbents. While incumbents are those who possess resources and legitimation; the challengers are perceived as those who do not have access to resources nor legitimation and are dominated in the field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

Recently, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) attempted to elaborate a 'general' theory of fields by integrating the development of organizational, institutional and social movement theories towards explaining change and stability in fields. Their book – *A Theory of Fields* – could be seen as an important reference for comprehending change and stability, since its objective is “(...) is to explicate an integrated theory that explains how stability and change

are achieved by social actors in circumscribed social arenas.” (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 3).

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) aim to explain, with the notion of fields, the processes of stability and change, how social life is structured, informing what, when and how action takes place. They deem ‘field’ to be a ‘strategic action field’, the mesolevel of social orders, a social constructed arena, where actors seek to build advantages (hence the ‘strategic action’). In their own words: “We see strategic action fields as socially constructed arenas within which actors with varying resource endowments vie for advantage.” (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 3). Strategic action fields would be the building block of society; they build up organisations and states and regulate human action at economic, civil society and state realms (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Upon doing so, any field is embedded in a broader context of an infinite number of fields, building a web of fields. Therefore, as fields articulate with other fields, their relation can be proximate or distal field and this relationship among fields is an important source of change within a particular field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

One important critique of their theory of fields points to the absence of take-for-granted elements, i.e. the rule framework that operates in different layers of society. As Goldstone and Useem argue (2012: 41):

By omitting consideration of how institutional frameworks do or do not span fractal spaces in societies, Fligstein and McAdam also cannot distinguish between routine competition among SAFs [strategic action fields] for power and position and true crises involving efforts to change the institutions and rule frameworks that provide the structure for vast numbers and levels of SAFs across an entire society.

The capacity of looking at social structures as inter-relational and multi-layered in different levels of analysis is an important development toward a relational approach (Delbridge and Edwards 2007). As Delbridge and Edwards (2007: 199) state:

A relational approach provides the means to assess the relationship and connections between organizations and their environment and the development of these over periods of time. Although ‘fields’ represent a way to frame such investigations, the issue, as already argued, is in the way fields are treated—they have frequently been specified as one or more ‘variables’, rather than as the context and outcome of social relations.

Even though the notion of *field* could be understood as a mesolevel of social action that could avoid structural determinism and agency voluntarism since it gives access to micro and macro level of analysis (Martin 2003; Fligstein and McAdam 2012), the predominance of such level of analysis could develop ‘fieldcentric’ studies in which focuses on the internal dynamics of the actors in a particular field, giving less space for analysing the interconnections of fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

Although it is possible to argue that, in Fligstein and McAdam’s (2012) *Theory of Fields*, fields are perceived as the outcomes of social relations, connecting organisations and their environments, it is also possible to advocate that fields are ‘variables’ as well. While doing so, a different fieldcentrism is endorsed and produces a fragmented understanding of societal order (Morgan et al. forth coming).

Hence, it is possible to argue that fieldcentrism carries the duality of institutionalisation as identified by DiMaggio (1988)³⁰, *institutionalisation as an outcome* (i.e. organisational structures, practise, interest and meanings) and *institutionalisation as a process* (i.e. the highly political processes). Consequently, the persistence of such duality has concealed actors’ negotiations to a specific moment within fields, emphasising the structuration of fields (DiMaggio 1991), the moment when the shared meanings, rules, norms, access to resources and legitimation are defined. Thus, rather than enabling a relational approach between macro and micro level of analysis, such fieldcentrism produces a variable of analysis in which the process – actors’ negotiation – is separate from its outcome – institutions and the social order arrangement. Moreover, field becomes a research tool in order to define the investigation scope, the object of study. Again, field becomes a variable instead of a context, or arena, and the outcome of social relations (Delbridge and Edwards 2007).

In order to avoid to avoid fieldcentrism, and following the argument that stability and change are the outcome of actors’ negotiation over a situated context, a specific time and space, as discussed in section 3.1.1, this research defines actors’ environment as a situated context that actors envisage to shape for their survival (Meyer and Rowan 1991). Such

³⁰ As discussed on previous chapter, during section 2.2.

situated context provides actors with a **negotiation order**, an arena in which actors dispute specific matters, exerting their influence among each other throughout actions and interactions, while they are simultaneously enabled to shape its environment. Hence, instead of producing a variable to explain stability and change, the negotiation order aims at focusing actors' negotiations (i.e. politics) over a particular issue.

Since such situated context is embedded with historical background, in which it is possible to identify societal logics impacting on actors resources and understanding, actors' disputes could be framed as hegemonic struggles, since when a meaning becomes hegemonic (i.e. dominant), it will impact the material conditions available for actors, consequently enabling or constraining actions. Thus, hegemony could provide a relational approach to understand how actors shape and fashion their environment that produces outcomes for the societal order. This thesis examines the negotiation order over sustainability in the Brazilian Beef Industry. Rather than a field, it analyses actors' interactions that produce understandings of what is 'sustainability' in this situated context. Thus, it is possible to identify the emergence of a hegemonic meaning that has impacts over actors' resources while actors attack or protect the societal logics that support such resources. As a consequence a piecemeal change over the societal logic might be in operation. This hegemony approach will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Hegemony and a Relational Approach

After decades of the persistence of this version of Marxism, Antonio Gramsci brought a new perspective to the debate on the relationship between action and structure with his developments on *hegemony*. According to Bobbio (1982), hegemony brought a different understanding of the conditions in which revolution and change might be possible. To achieve power and realise it into material conditions, it would be necessary to have support at the superstructure level, which is not the justification of power relations that relies only upon the material conditions. On the contrary, the superstructure level would be the force of the historical moment. The superstructure would change at the same time that the infrastructure would be consolidated (Bobbio 1982).

The word *hegemony* has its origin associated with the Greek terms *egemon* and *eghestai*, meaning *conduct, guide, leader*, and was used to express the political predominance of a city-state over another. *Egheмония* is another variation of the ancient Greek, which was a military term used to denote the highest post of an army (Gruppi 1978; Williams 1985). Certainly, these military and command characters in the etymology of hegemony are still present in this concept. The word suggests predominance, leadership and authority (Gruppi 1978; Williams 1985; Haugaard 2009).

Despite having been developed by other authors, hegemony as a concept gained importance with Gramsci's works, in particular within the Marxist tradition³¹ (Gruppi 1978; Williams 1985; Laclau and Mouffe 2001/1985; Joseph 2002).

It was Gramsci who insisted on using the hegemony concept to comprehend the way by which the bourgeoisie domination was sustained, going beyond the economic, military and coercion means (Gruppi 1978; Williams 1985; Laclau and Mouffe 2001/1985; Haugaard 2009). Thus, hegemony became a concept for realising the prevalence of a group under a specific social order. In this sense, Gramsci developed a complex concept, relating social groups and society structures in a dialectical way (Gruppi 1978; Coutinho 1981; Bobbio 1982; Haugaard 2009). In addition to this complexity, Gramsci had never written any kind of work dedicated solely to the concept of hegemony, which was present in different works, mainly the *Prison Notebooks* (Coutinho 1981; Williams 1985; Santucci and Buttigieg 2010).

Hegemony is the capacity of building and conquering alliances, forming a support group to take control of the State (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978). This sovereignty is not only built on controlling the economic or the operationalization of politics – controlling the State and thus its means of coercion –, but also controlling the ways of perceiving and understanding the world, over ideological orientations (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978).

Such dominance is achieved by gaining influence over the ways of understanding and perceiving the social world that will be realised at the State; this struggle over dominance occurs through Civil Society (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978). Under Gramsci's (1971)

³¹ If interested in hegemony's genealogy, its origins and implications, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's 1985 book (2001), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, especially chapter 1.

framework, State and Civil Society are understood as superstructure, that influences and determines the infrastructures – i.e. the material conditions and their access to resources as well as the means of production. Therefore, Civil Society is an arena in which groups struggle for hegemony (Semeraro 2001/1999; Alves 2004), in which meanings are produced and shared; it encompasses the State along with other organisations such as associations, political parties, social movements and unions, that engage themselves in disputes over symbolic and cultural elements.

Civil Society and Political Society form a *continuum*, which means that they are interconnected and mostly overlap. Political Society is the realm of coercion and Civil Society is the realm of consent, where hegemony is achieved influencing the material conditions and the means of production (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978; Semeraro 2001/1999; Alves 2004). Under this perspective Gramsci (1971) presents two interesting insights.

Firstly, Gramsci affirms that the struggles for hegemony (for him the class struggle) impact on superstructures. If the conflict could be solely resumed to economic relations, and its means of production, there would be no space for political initiative, and domination and coercion would be already established and legitimised. However, this necessity of justifying and legitimising such economic relations and its underpinning means of production is the reason why it is necessary to influence the symbolic realm (Gruppi 1978; Vianna 1978; Joseph 2000; Semeraro 2001/1999).

Secondly, to achieve a material predominance under the means of production, it is important to achieve a hegemony position under Civil Society that will be realised in the State (Gruppi 1978; Vianna 1978; Semeraro 2001/1999; Alves 2004; Haugaard 2009). To do so, the ‘organic intellectuals’ assume an important role in analysing social relations and thus linking both levels (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978). Hence, in order to obtain control of the means of production, the working class needs first to realise their hegemony over civil society, then they will be able to control the State and finally to obtain dominance over the means of production (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978).

In this sense, hegemony is trench warfare for symbolic positions over “(...) a system of dominant ideas that receive consent from the relatively powerless or subaltern groups” (Haugaard 2009: 239). Since such consent is historically constructed, returning to the Marxist

notion present in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (Marx 1972/1852), men act on the historically inherited condition, but have the capacity to change it through the struggle for hegemony. Such symbolic struggle, which influences the social order and consequently, the way the world is perceived, is dialectically realised (i.e. the conscious and the unconscious production of structures (Benson 1977; Seo and Creed 2002)).

In Gramsci's words:

The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci 1971: 12).

Thus, the historically inherited conditions reflect the time and space conditions under which action could happen. Gramsci termed such historical background as the *historical bloc* (Gramsci 1971), which is the dialectical outcome of the structures – kinship, political constitution – and the superstructures – religion, right, ideology, culture – that guarantee the success of the dominant group. Once again Gramsci is helpful:

Structures and superstructures form an "historical bloc". That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production. (Gramsci 1971: 366)

Thus hegemony illustrates the relationship of the material world (i.e. as the organisation of production and resource access) and the symbolic world (i.e. how the world is understood) and such relation represents the intervention of the ruling group in the structural reproductions (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002).

Thus hegemony is a useful notion to shed light on capitalism reproduction throughout actors' agency under a situated context (Joseph 2002; Delbridge 2007). Joseph (2000; 2002) states that hegemony analysis, under a critical realist approach, provides a link between agency and the structure; hegemony is created by individual's actions but they do so under conditions that they have not chosen (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002; Delbridge 2007).

On our realist interpretation of Gramsci, the material conditions for hegemonic projects are to be found in the structure of society. Agents are involved, not only in relations with each other, but in relations with such structures. A hegemonic project should therefore be seen as an articulated attempt to preserve or transform such structural conditions. (Joseph 2000: 181).

Following Joseph's (2000) and Delbridge's (2007) argument, it is possible to bring such hegemony approach into organisational institutionalism in order to understand how actors negotiate, compete and coordinate their conflict in a situated context, emphasising actors' relations amid their agency and the societal logics (structural level). Therefore it is possible to understand how dominant groups can fashion their environment, through their actions and interactions, constructing consent over meanings that provide evidence of how actors are protecting or attacking the societal logics that supports their economic domination (i.e. access to resources and legitimacy).

Hegemony, therefore, does not mean that there is only one actor who has control. Instead, such notion helps to analyse the process of construction of such dominance. In other words: how actors interact among each other. Hegemony must reveal the negotiations surrounding the competing actors that battle over meanings (i.e. how issues are comprehended). Thus, hegemony has no beginning, middle or end; it is a continuous process that encompasses a dialectical account for social logics (structures) and actors' actions (Gramsci 1971; Gruppi 1978).

3.2.1. Translating a hegemony approach to organisational institutionalism perspective: The analytical framework in action

To the extent that an analysis of hegemonic processes could help to understand the role of action in the development of a situated context, it can shed light over a relatively unexplored question over the organisational studies literature: how organisations shape their environment (Barley 2010).

As pointed out by Motta (Motta 1992), organisations, as a set of initiatives and programmes, perform a role under the social system: the production and reproduction of

certain social relations that ensure the maintenance and expansion of the economic system, or capitalism. Moreover, their practices and discourses represent attempts to influence certain social positions, in order to maintain its dominant position in the existing social system, ensuring their survival.

Following such argument, organisational outcomes such as technologies, programmes, initiatives practices and discourses are not only rational products, but can be seen as pervaded interests and worldviews (ideologies) that seek the stability or transformation of the means of production (Motta 1979; Motta 1992). In other words, organisations (their practices and discourses) are not neutral; they have interests that serve the production and reproduction of the social system (Motta 1979; Motta 1992) and, consequently, also influence their environment (Barley 2010). As a result, such influence cannot be perceived as neutral and disengaged, even if deemed as unconscious and embedded action.

In this sense, Motta (1979b) states that companies have a role in reproducing ideology and it is possible to extend this argument to different kinds of organisations, such as social movement organisations and NGOs, for example. As Haugaard (2009b) argues, some organisations have legitimacy (and therefore power) to steer (and therefore influence) some discussions, thus a **negotiation order** could be created surrounding some issues.

Following the notion of hegemony, it is possible to argue that actors will envisage constructing consent over specific issues, producing meanings that will fashion their environment, since it is possible to understand how hegemonic meaning is constructed throughout negotiations. Hegemonic meaning does not imply the existence of only one meaning; on the contrary: although there are several meanings being negotiated, one will gain predominance. Such **focal issue** will impact on discourses, actors' interests (i.e. how they understand the world and their objectives) and their practices over a situated context.

Supporting this argument, Motta argues that the symbolic dominance could be reversed to the material basis, with ideology and economic realm going hand in hand:

Correspondence of social consciousness or ideology to the material basis is essential to the stability of a mode of production. The development of one without the other can be evidence of a new means of production (Motta 1992: 41, our translation).

Hence, it would be possible to argue that actors' actions are not only related to competition with other actors in a situated context – in terms of resources or greater market share disputes –, but seeking to shape such environment throughout negotiating institutionalised values (e.g. senses and meanings) thus ensuring legitimacy for their practices, and hence, survival. Furthermore, as actors draw upon societal logics, such negotiations envisage to protect or to attack such logics. As Joseph (2000) points out, hegemony illustrates more than domination between actors, but an agentic intervention in the social structures, aiming to protect or attack them.

Consequently, hegemony enhances a relational approach within organizational studies in the sense that it addresses organisational agency as a result of actors' accounts of the environment in which they are embedded. Moreover, hegemony avoids fieldcentrism since it can emphasise how actors' disputes over a particular meaning could impact on a situated context, illustrating how they are using societal logics aiming to enhance their resources.

Such developed framework analytically separates agency and structure and provides a historically situated agency. Emphasising the political processes of convincing others avoids the risk of reducing change or stability to actors' wishes.

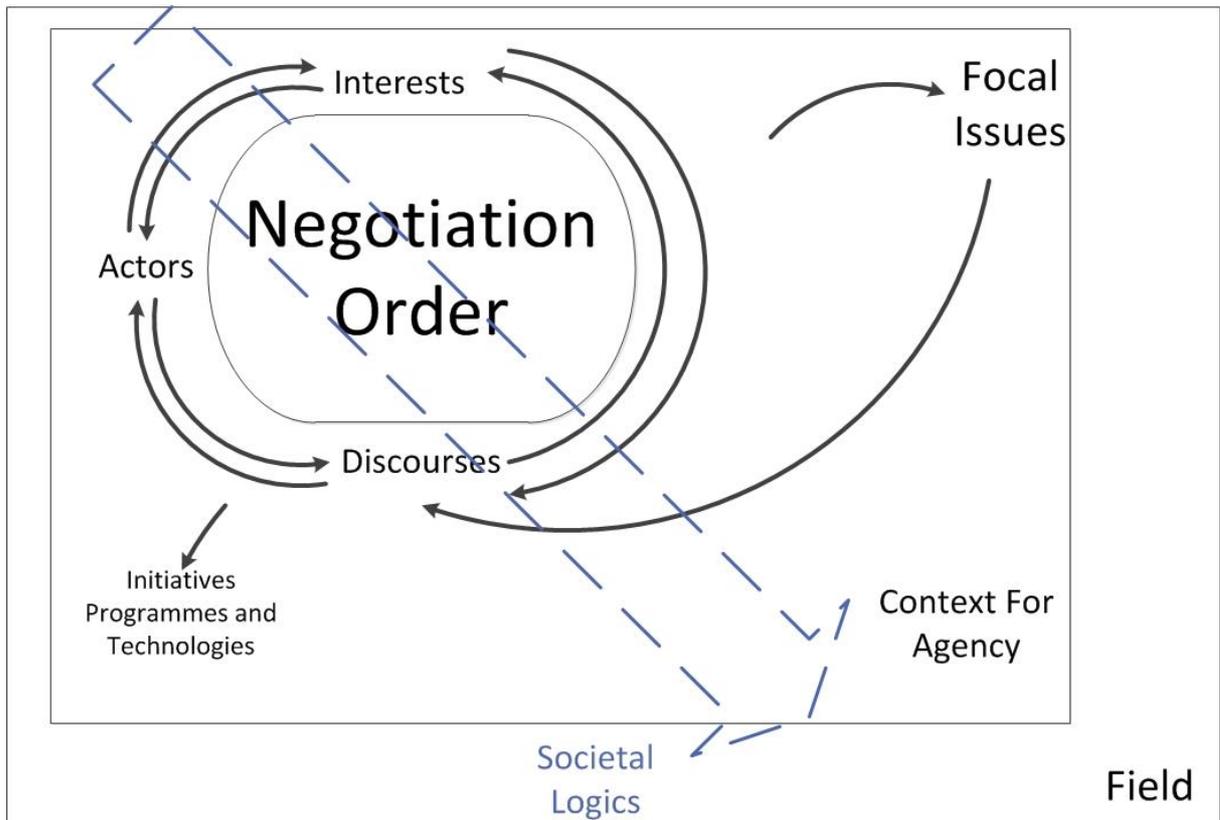
Practices are legitimatised by institutions (i.e. meanings) that are not just influenced by structures (i.e. societal logics) but the result of actors' constant jockeying (i.e. context). Actors may engage with others aiming at convincing others of what is at stake and what are the possible actions available. In this sense, as Fairclough (2010) argues discourses are not neutral; they are pervaded by interests and are politically orientated as they attempt at convincing others.

While focusing on politics, the conditions in which agency could take place are also highlighted; actors need to negotiate, coordinate and fight for achieving better conditions, and to do so, they need to legitimise their practices by convincing others. Therefore, this framework permits analysing the space and time conditions (i.e. situated context) that enables structural causal power to produce effects and events that may or not may not be experienced by actors.

Such emphasis on struggles that occur at the domain of actual allows comprehension of the historical and social conditions (past) in which agency was enabled or constrained, impacting on practices and technologies developed (present) while actors are engaging in considering what future might reserve for them.

The analytical framework proposed could be represented as follows:

Figure 2: Hegemony Approach to Actors and Societal Logics



Elaborated by the author.

Actors can influence their environment under a specific time and space that provides them with a context for agency that could be shaped (reproduced or transformed) by their engagement in an arena to negotiate a particular issue. Rather than analysing a field, the **negotiation order** focuses the analyses on an issue of actors' interest that emerges throughout their actions and interactions; consequently it emphasises their constant interplay, avoiding the trap of fieldcentrism that separates the moment of transformation from the moment reproduction.

As actors' negotiations are carried out through discourses that aim at influencing each other, it is possible to argue that such discourses are pervaded by interests. Therefore there are numerous meanings concerning what is at stake under those actors' perspective. Among these several meanings being negotiated, one will become hegemonic, emerging as a **focal issue** that will influence discourses and actors' interests. These processes create a **negotiation order** that provides actors with the required legitimacy to develop their initiatives, programmes and technologies that will assure their economic dominance (e.g. accesses to resources such as funding, market share, donations, among others which will ensure the organisations' survival). Thus it is possible to highlight actors' interplay, how they are creating meanings (i.e. institutionalisation process) and how such activity is able to change contexts (i.e. their environment).

Both the context for agency and the negotiation order are pervaded by societal logics that actors draw upon to sustain their discourses and practices, such societal logics are the pre-existence structures that condition action. A **focal issue** will be the result of this inherited past in which actors can exert their agency under this situated context, aiming to fashion it in order to achieve the future they envisage. These negotiations provide evidence of how actors are protecting or attacking such societal logics and the result could be stability or a piecemeal change. Whether the ruling elites will remain with their dominance or new dominant groups will rise should vary according to the time and space in question.

4. Methodology

I accept of course that all extra-discursive realities are constituted within discursive practice, from the point of view of their intelligibility. But that is not to say that they are constituted in discursive practice from the point of view of their causal impact. We can assume that global warming went on long before we had the concept of it, and this is true. We come to the concept of most diseases long after they have their causal impact. (Bhaskar and Laclau 2012: 91).

This chapter is dedicated to discuss the methodological procedures of this study, clarifying the ontological and epistemological approaches, as well as how the data was collected and analysed. The chapter's main goal is to ensure transparency of the choices made in this research. The chapter starts with the *Initial Research Considerations*, in which the author assumes his position regarding choosing 'sustainability' as a research topic. The following section emphasises the *Research Question and Objectives*, justifying the research design in light of the adopted theoretical framework. The third part focuses on *Critical Realism in Management Studies*, in which the ontological aspects are addressed. The fourth section discusses the *Methodological Implications* of such ontological orientations, emphasising how this orientation deals with the methodological challenges inherited from the chosen theory. Additionally, this section presents Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a method and methodology. The fifth section, *Events and time: following sustainability's path*, focuses on how change and stability could be understood in light of the ontological and epistemological choices. Finally, the sixth section addresses the *Data Collection Procedures*, by examining the procedures of data collection, as well as the active nature of interviews.

4.1. Initial Research Considerations

In this section, I discuss some of the influences that drove me, as a researcher, to choose the standpoint I have assumed in this work. First of all, as my academic background lies on the Frankfurt School, I am committed with a Critical Theory of emancipation (Horkheimer and Adorno 1985). Ergo, I envisage a study as a form of political engagement that aims to understand how and why capitalism promotes or hampers human well-being.

Such believe asks for a clarification of my research theme. This is particularly important to me due to my involvement with the topic of racial inequality, a theme that I have studied during the Master's dissertation. My dissertation has shown the importance of the historical conditions that created the contemporary meanings of racial inequality. However, while engaging with academic and political discussions, the main concern regarding this topic was the development of affirmative action in the Brazilian context. Such discussion has been polarised by those in favour and against affirmative action, creating a *schmittian* context that hinders the study of how the social conditions are still institutionally supporting racial inequality. Due to this depletion, I have decided to look for a different topic to develop my theoretical interests.

Therefore, changing from racial inequality to sustainability is not a fortuitous choice; it is supported by better conditions to study my theoretical interests. At the same time, focusing on sustainability does not mean that I have left my involvement with racial inequality – I am still academic and politically engaged (i.e. journal articles, courses, researches and personal relations developed with the Brazilian Black Movement) with this matter. My interest in sustainability came in the process of my PhD course, when I realised how highly political this issue is, enabling me to study how actors engage with each other and how such relations impact on the institutional setting.

As already mentioned, this thesis is a consequence of my academic path. Even though I have changed my research theme, I am still aiming at understanding how meanings are interpreted by people and how such meanings impact on and are impacted by the social world, ultimately transforming it. Therefore, while in the Master's dissertation I have focused on the Brazilian black movement and State's relations that produce meanings of racial inequalities institutionalised into public policies, this doctoral research focuses on how sustainability in the Brazilian Beef Industry is negotiated among different actors.

When approaching sustainability, it is easy to notice that it is a vague and contested matter, which creates an interesting context for studying the political engagement of actors. Consequently, it helps to observe how discussions regarding the human impact in the environment, which have been conducted by States, corporations and social movements, are far from being only technical ones; actors have been trying to influence their institutional

setting through the disputes on what sustainability's meanings are. So, this political action could be framed in such a way that helped me to address a theoretical gap on organisational institutionalism: how organisations shape their environment. This is the objective of this thesis and will be further discussed.

4.1.1. Why writing in English?

As the reader might know, I am Brazilian, both working and studying in a Brazilian School, researching a Brazilian topic within the Brazilian context and most of the data are in Portuguese. So, why am I writing in English? This is not an easy question to answer.

In various ways, writing in English gave the thesis a different time. It took me longer to write and express my thoughts and arguments, and such slower pace brought more stress and anxiety. At the same time, this slower pace gave me more time to digest my thoughts and expresses myself directly and clearly, although this might not always have been accomplished.

The challenge of writing in English could qualify myself to an international career, not just in terms of publications, but also in seeking job positions abroad. It also makes my work available to a bigger audience. During the development of the thesis, I was able to discuss it with leading scholars and this has strengthened my arguments. Such pragmatic and ordinary argument lies on the assumption that English represents a global language, *lingua franca* (Merilainen et al. 2008; Rosa and Alves 2011; Alves and Pozzebon 2013).

However, as a politically engaged researcher, I am aware of the hegemony of the English language in the management field and how it reproduces certain types of knowledge, theories and researchable themes (Merilainen et al. 2008; Rosa and Alves 2011; Alves and Pozzebon 2013). While acknowledging that writing in English might reinforce such hegemony, I have still decided to do so. Although discussing the dominance of Anglophonic language in the production of knowledge on management is not the objective of this thesis, language is at the core of such matter. Additionally, the translation of data into English also implies decontextualisation, so it may not solve the issue.

Conversely, this argument reinforces the daily practices that sustain such hegemonic relations, as some might frame the matter as “opting in or opting out”. Either you develop a career inside the ‘periphery’, publishing on local journals and building networks that reinforce such academic insertion. Or ‘sell your soul’ by accepting the ‘North’ research agenda and endeavouring yourself to master the English language, while aiming an international career (Merilainen et al. 2008; Rosa and Alves 2011; Alves and Pozzebon 2013).

I have decided upon a third option, which is to produce knowledge from Brazil, discussing the Brazilian context and its relations with a globalised world, and, at the same time, making it available for those who want to engage with it. Hopefully, pieces of this work will travel around the world, both in Portuguese and English.

4.2. Research Question and Objectives

The thesis’ objective is to understand **how organisations fashion their environment**. To fulfil this goal the following research question is addressed: **Why have some practices become known as ‘sustainable’ in the Brazilian Beef Industry?**

The process by which organisations could shape the context in which they are embedded was one of the three core areas³² that Parsons (1956) had attributed to the Theory of Organisation that had just been born (Parsons 1956; Barley 2010). However, this area could be considered as one that has received less attention (Barley 2010). This thesis aims to contribute to this particular subject, by focusing on how the idea of sustainability in the beef industry could be addressed as a result of the influence of different actors.

The thesis’ discussion focus is on understanding how actors engage with each other through building social relations in interconnected spaces of governance on sustainability that, ultimately, impacts on the meanings of sustainability in such field. In this process, material

³² Parsons(1956) in his seminal work argue that an organisation analysis should focus on: (i) the internal processes and operations of organisations; (ii) how organisations adapt to situations they face and (iii) how organisations influence the socio-cultural context.

aspects are shared and new practices and technologies are created – the generation of these outcomes is also addressed by this thesis.

Underneath this process, is possible to identify how contemporary capitalism is being constructed by our societies in such a way that it creates interconnected organisational spaces which impact on corporate practices, public policies and social movements actions and campaigns. This governance mechanism is an important research area for public management scholars, because it shows that even if its transnational characteristic could put aside the importance of the national government, it is rather becoming clear that acting in this transnational context and organisational spaces of contemporary capitalism is tied to a country's development strategic.

As the thesis aims at shedding light on how organisations shape their environment, its theoretical discussion was chosen in order to show that sustainability is a negotiated and contested matter rather than a technical one. The scientific knowledge on the human impact on the environment is part of the social world, consequently meanings are being used and constructed alongside the development of capitalist societies, and sustainability is part of such history. This study will consider the sustainability path in the Brazilian beef industry not in its chronological dimension, but regarding how sustainability, as a conception, is being constructed. By conceptual construction, it is meant the process of meaning creation.

Under this context, it is assumed that organisations will dispute over the meaning of sustainability because its definition has an impact on the context they are embedded in; doing so, they will try to advocate a definition of sustainability that better suits their interests. For example, the slaughterhouses will try to avoid a definition of 'sustainability' that requires some practices that they cannot delivery, or are costly. Social movements, on the other hand, might try to address sustainability's meanings that not only avoid harm to the environment but that can also improve their capacity of attracting financial resources.

Regarding the case selection, the environmental impacts by the Brazilian beef industry and cattle ranching are an interesting opportunity to study how organisations can fashion their context. First, a series of disputes around the idea of sustainability in the beef industry has been occurring over the last years, emphasising the tactics and strategies that actors have been using to influence this field. Second, the idea of sustainability is, itself, pervaded by disputes.

In terms of the organisations involved in such disputes, it is possible to find different types of organisations, from public and private sectors (i.e. *Brazilian State* – MPF, MMA, BNDES and EMBRAPA –, *social movements and NGOs* – Greenpeace and Proforest –, *companies* – JBS, Minerva, Marfrig and AgroTools –, *associations* – GTPS and ABIEC – and *farmers*), contributing to build a rich and in-depth study. So far, the actors' relations might be related to civil actions led by Federal Prosecutor (MPF), multilateral commitments, lawsuits, formal constitution of organisations (i.e. GTPS) to tackle sustainability in the livestock sector.

It is important to mention that although sustainability has definitely entered the agenda of slaughterhouses in 2009 because of a campaign started by Greenpeace, the tension is far from being stopped. Disputes, arrangements, negotiations are yet going on. In this sense, this study is not being conducted over a social phenomenon that has already finished; on the contrary, some events assume a 'live broadcasting' characteristic, bringing richness to the study. Such characteristic might emphasise the actor's agency. However, it also brings difficulties, such as restricting the access to the organisations, and dealing with the political role of the interviewers (Alvesson 2003), which has become a prominent factor as will be further discussed.

Looking at the idea of sustainability it is possible to affirm that it is pervaded with controversy. Initially, this follows the perception that sustainability is vague and imprecise (Lélé 1991; Shrivastava 1995; Hopwood et al. 2005; Milne et al. 2006; Valente 2012), which opens it to contestations and queries.

Notwithstanding, sustainability and environmental issues are becoming more important in the organisational and business contexts (Shrivastava 1995; Banerjee 2001; Rothenberg 2007; Orsato 2009; Valente 2012), where such issues are generally addressed under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) umbrella, and, doing so, could be recognised as a result of stakeholders' pressures (Shrivastava 1995; Banerjee 2001; Campbell 2007; Rothenberg 2007; Bartley 2007; Banerjee 2008; Orsato 2009; Valente 2012; King and McDonnell 2012). Furthermore, companies are not just responding to the pressures from the context, they are also trying to achieve economic advantages of being green (Brady 2005; Hawkins 2006; Orsato 2009; Dauvergne and Lister 2013).

Hence, sustainability could be acknowledged as a matter of disputes and influences *per se* (i.e. disputes and the notion of influencing others are constituents of it) – a vague and uncertain topic absorbed into the management context as a result of pressures suffered by companies, and also an element by which firms could make money and achieve competitive advantages.

Finally, in the case studied in this thesis is possible to comprehend how the local context of sustainable development is tied to an international context setting (i.e. transnational content) that influence, in the local context, the disputes about meanings of ‘sustainability’. This fosters particular local disputes and arrangements that build knowledge, technologies, initiatives and programmes that enable actors, with new capacities, to act and influence these transnational disputes (e.g. the international arena of sustainability or the development of competitive advantages for competing globally, both for companies and NGOs).

Given that, the thesis attempts to understand how some practices receive the adjective of ‘sustainable’, approaching this as a process of influence on the organisational context. Therefore, the following secondary questions arise:

1. Why are some environmental impacts of cattle ranching activities receiving more attention than others?
2. Does the evidence suggest that sustainability is a political matter?
3. How are meanings impacting on the development of new technologies and practices, both in public (i.e. state and NGOs) and private realms?
4. How is the local context setting of sustainability linked to an international setting?

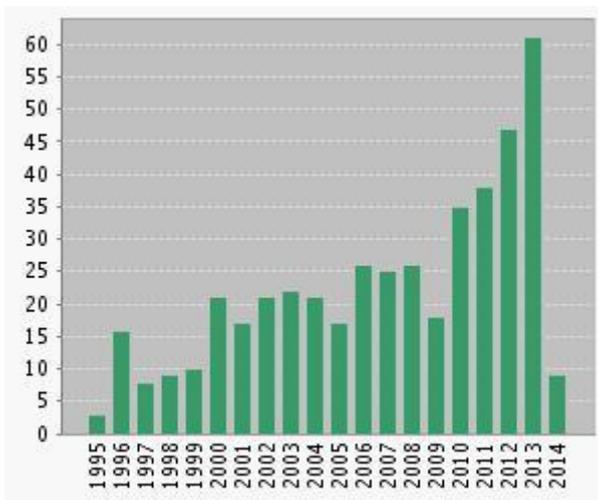
These questions are concerned with the actors’ relations in different levels of analysis, an important issue when analysing institutional change (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009). The meanings of sustainability are the institutional element, while the disputes over it are the organisational agency at the micro level, constituting practices, technologies and knowledge; such frame helps to build a relational approach.

4.3. Critical Realism and Management Studies

It is being argued for a ‘Critical Realist turn’ on management studies (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Reed 2005b). Although criticised (Contu and Willmott 2005; Al-Amoudi and Willmott 2011) Critical Realism has already been the subject of two books within management studies, both edited by Stephen Ackroyd and Steve Fleetwood. The first one *Realist Perspectives on Management and Organisations* (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000a) was published in 2000, while the second, *Critical Realist Applications in Organisation and Management Studies* (Fleetwood and Ackroyd 2004), was released in 2004. Regardless the discussion of whether there is really a ‘turn on the orientations of management studies orientations’, there has been an increasing number of work discussing Critical Realism.

A quick search in the ISI Web of Knowledge³³ illustrates such increase. A total of 478 papers and more than 5.400 citations was found. Below are both graphs presenting, by year, the number of published papers and citations.

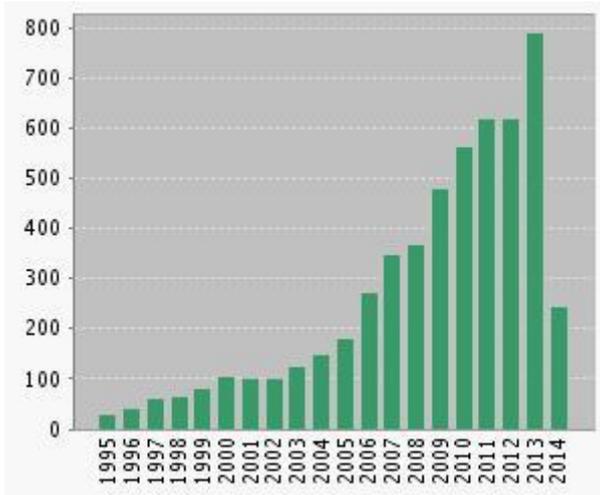
Graph 7: 'Critical Realism' Publications by Year



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Graph 8: 'Critical Realism' Citations by Year

³³ The search looked for ‘critical realism’ in topic - which includes title, key words and abstract - in the following databases: business, management, political science, social issues and public management in all years covered by the databases. The search was conducted in June of 2014.



Source: ISI Web of Knowledge.

Moreover, there has been an increasing a polarisation within the Management Studies field among *critical realists*, on the one side, and *postmodernists and constructionists*, on the other side. Although this research does not have the objective of assessing or comparing such ontological perspectives, it welcomes the academic debate and believes that a field of study is as strong as it is able to accept and flourish within a diversity of theoretical, ontological and methodological positions. Nevertheless, it rejects any *schmittian* approach to this debate and, in order to accomplish that, it has assumed its ontological position, contributing to such debate.

Critical Realism combines two distinctive models that are often understood as conflicting: human beings as ‘agents’ – able of changing social reality through their agency – and human beings as ‘meaning makers’ – individuals that interpret the world in various ways (Sayer 1992; Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Danermark et al. 2002; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b; Reed 2009). This is due to the stratified ontology that makes the distinction between the three domains (i.e. real, actual and empirical), so that, for critical realists, the world exists independently from how it is explained and experienced. Such stratification enables an analytical division between structures and agency, while providing different interpretations of the social world (Sayer 1992; Bhaskar 1998/1979; Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005a; Reed 2005b; Leca and Naccache 2006; Delbridge 2007; Reed 2009; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), what could be labelled as ‘epistemological relativism’.

On the one hand, the unobservable structures on the domain of real have causal power and liabilities in latent form, which can only be activated under certain situations and their

effects will depend on the context (Sayer 1992; Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b; Reed 2009; Fairclough 2010). Although structures have a causal power that impacts on how individuals make sense of the world, they are analytically apart from the active struggles over meanings, discourses (domain of actual), resources, practices and technologies (domain of empirical). Consequently, it is possible to analyse the structures and their impacts on how individuals produce several interpretations of the social world as well as their actions towards changing them (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002).

Furthermore, rather than a regular conjunction of events, what produces changes is the causation (the activation of causal powers) that is reflected at the domain of actual. In Fairclough's words:

(...) critical realists argue that reason can operate as causes, that is, can be responsible for producing a change. Indeed, when someone tries to persuade us that we are wrong to make this argument by giving us reasons, they in turn presuppose that offering reasons can be causative in at least some circumstances. This applies irrespective of whether there are regularities for us to record, for the general absence of regularities between giving or recognising reasons and subsequent behaviour is not fatal to causal explanation. (Fairclough 2010: 205)

Sustained by such argumentation, finding events that cause changes is not the goal of the Critical Realist research. Rather, the objective is to reveal how actors are employing these contradictory interpretations of the world (Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b), providing a particular explanation of the 'structuration of structures' (Reed 2005b).

In this sense, individuals act based on what they read and interpret of the social world. Although such interpretation is influenced by the structures (domain of real), it is also the result of how individuals transform these structures on scripts, rules, norms and meanings within a particular context (domain of actual) (Sayer 1992; Leca and Naccache 2006; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013). This process implies a dialectical relationship between structures and agency (Leca and Naccache 2006; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013). Consequently, a Critical Realist ontology is relational and depends on the interaction between structural constraints and agency in a specific socio-historical context.

Hence, it is possible to affirm that the political process – the human activity of convincing others – should be focused as a continuous relationship among actors that impact on how individuals would create conditions for change or stability under a particular context. Emphasising these relations could avoid a remembrance of methodological individualism³⁴. In order to accomplish this methodological challenge, a longitudinal case study was developed, enabling to follow the sustainability path through actors' interactions, as latter examined in this chapter (section 4.5).

Moreover, due to the stratified model of nature, Critical Realism requires a denial of deterministic and reductionist forms of explanation (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2009). Therefore, it seeks to provide:

(...) explanations [that] will have to be based on forms of social research that deftly **combine historical, structural and discursive analysis** to identify and explain the specific causal mechanisms that shape the emergence, elaboration and transformation of different organizational forms and practices. (Reed 2005b: 1633, bold added).

This implies that this research does not have the goal of enumerating the 'sustainable' practices, nor to seek the specific events that have triggered the negotiations reading the environmental impact of the beef industry. On the contrary, the objective is to provide a historical account for understanding how the qualification 'sustainable' has chosen the path of the impacts of actors' actions on the development of initiatives, programmes and technologies and, therefore, explaining actors' access to resources and dominant position.

In this sense, Critical Realism could be seen as a meta-theoretical ontology (Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b), since it relies on a theory-driven explanation of the social world – the various interpretations and accounts for the domain of real that will produce the world as it is known. As Reed (2005b: 1623) points out, "Critical Realism will be regarded as a meta-theoretical paradigm focused on explanations of the underlying 'generative mechanisms or structures' that shape corporate agency and the social relations that it reproduces and transforms".

³⁴ Further on this chapter, the data collection and analysis procedures will be assessed. Although Greenpeace was the main informant, the analysis was built in terms of how actors' relations were being constructed and their impact on sustainability meanings in the Brazilian beef industry field.

In other words, Critical Realism (re)focuses the researcher attention on ontology (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b; Reed 2009), once it assumes that although epistemology provides explanation for the nature of our world, “regulating what is to be known and how it can be known” (Reed 2005b: 1623), such knowledge has limits, and, besides what is known (i.e. the domain of actual), there could be more existing entities, independently of the investigations and knowledge regarding it (Bhaskar 1998/1979; Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b; Bhaskar and Laclau 2012).

This is the central divergence between constructionists and postmodernists, on the one side, and critical realists (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b), on the other side. While Critical Realism avoids the positivist assumption that the world is objectively and empirically observable; it departs from the postmodernist notion that what is known is purely the product of discourses (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b). Accordingly, the subject of *discourse* is central to this debate – as well as to this research – and will be further assessed during the section 4.3.1.

Besides that, most of the criticism on Critical Realism lays on the argument that it is being employed to support the positivist claims for objectivity, once several Critical Realist researches assume a deterministic perspective of the structural level, neglecting the contradictory understanding about it and, therefore, using the domain of real to dictate predictions about the social world (Contu and Willmott 2005; Al-Amoudi and Willmott 2011). While Reed (2005a; 2009) recalls the different varieties of realism and the assumption that Critical Realism encompasses different interpretations of the world (i.e. the domain of actual), Al-Amoudi and Willmott (2011) argue that such epistemological relativism, although fundamental for Critical Realism, has not been fully embraced by critical realists’ work in the management studies field, due to the an “enthusiasm for making authoritative claims about the ‘real’ and its generative mechanisms” (Al-Amoudi and Willmott 2011: 41).

Conversely, Al-Amoudi and Willmott (2011) encourage the consideration upon epistemological relativism and offer both, a sceptic and an optimistic path to tackle such criticism. In order to address this issue, it is important to remember that it is assumed that the domain of actual encompasses such variety of explanation and theories, that attempts to represents or stands for reality, what appear to be the extra-discursive world (Ackroyd and

Fleetwood 2000b; Fleetwood 2004; Bhaskar and Laclau 2012). As Fleetwood (2004: 29) argues:

Let me state the following for the record: critical realism is not synonymous with discourses such as naive realism, empirical realism, positivism, scientism or other associated empiricist paraphernalia: in fact, it is antithetical to these discourses. Those who continue to make them synonymous, at least without offering an argument, have failed to understand critical realism.

Moreover, by adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2010) it is embraced a critical realist perspective, by assuming that the real world is socially constructed through discourse but allows different accounts of it, assuming a distinction between discourse and reality (Fleetwood 2004; Reed 2005b; Fairclough 2010). Thus, any explanation provided by organisational discourses follows the underneath structures (i.e. societal logics) and strategies (i.e. organisation repertoires) by which they were drawn and exerted, consequently there are ideologically and politically alternative discourses on dispute (Curry 2002; Fairclough et al. 2002; Fairclough 2010).

Furthermore, in order to avoid a misconception of the domain of real, the analysis have aimed at providing the characteristics of the societal logics; in other words, analysing how actors are describing and drawing upon it in various ways. However, such logics' characteristics should not be assimilated as the decomposable elements of logics as Thornton et al. (2012) have argued, since the more decomposable societal logics are, the lower their explanatory power is (Friedland 2012). Societal logics are neither enacted nor fully rationalised; it is a **situated interaction** among actors that produces the necessary conditions for stability and change.

To conclude, it is not the objective of this thesis to examine whether Gramsci is a critical realist. Such claim is not being made. However, this study has followed a critical realist reading of hegemony (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002) aiming at bringing a historical and political framework under organisational institutionalism analysis (Delbridge 2007), thus engaging with such literature gaps, as pointed out in chapter two. Hence, hegemony is studied to account for actors' historically situated actions and interactions, emphasising how consensus is forged, securing (or conquering) the dominant position of particular groups.

4.3.1. Critical Realism and Discourse

As discussed in the last section, there has been an increasing polarisation between *constructionists* and *critical realists* within management studies, and central to this debate is the understanding regarding discourse and the ‘existent world’. Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in ‘hegemony’ under management studies (Spicer and Böhm 2007; Howarth 2010; van Bommel and Spicer 2011; Bohm et al. 2012; Dellagnelo et al. 2014) that follows the perspective of Political Discourse Theory (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000). Thus, examining the ontological distinctions between such studies on discourse and hegemony and the hegemony framework (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002; Delbridge 2007) developed in this research is crucial.

Political Discourse Theory has been influenced by Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) 1985 book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. The main concern, from a critical realist perspective, is that, due to not assuming a stratified model of nature, discourse analysts under such perspective, analytically conflate discourse and human comprehension about the social world with the structures that produces such discourse (Curry 2002): the result is that everything could be resumed to discourse.

Howarth (2000) argues that, even though Political Discourse Theory provides a distinction between the ‘existent world’ and discourse, thus not reducing ‘everything to discourse’, it is contradictory to attempt to conceptualised this world from an extra-discursive perspective. As Howarth (2000: 3) explains:

The *discursive* can be defined as theoretical horizon with which the being of objects is constituted. In other words, *all* objects are objects of discourse, as their meaning depends upon a socially constructed system of rules and significant differences. This idea of the discursive as a horizon of meaningful practices and significant differences does no reduce everything to discourse or entail scepticism about the existence of the world. On the contrary, it circumvents scepticism and idealism by arguing that we are always internal to a world of signifying practices and objects. It thus views as logically self-contradictory all attempts to escape and conceptualise this world from an extra-discursive perspective.

As a consequence, it is not possible to make sense of evidence a part from discourse, all the empirical data reveals only discourses: “In other words, empirical data are viewed as sets of signifying practices that constitute a ‘discourse’ and its ‘reality’, thus providing the conditions which enable subjects to experience the world of objects, words and practices.” (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000: 4).

Curry (2002) criticises such argument by pointing that, under such post-Marxism discourse perspective, it is not possible to make sense of any object *a priori* of discourse, because it is only through discourse that an object acquires meaning. This follows that:

The object and discourse are therefore coterminous with one another and the moment at which the object has any sort of meaning resides within discursivity, such that what we think is external is actually internal. The 'limit' between the external and the internal is never fixed for all time but is inherent to the object and discursive configuration. The moment where meaning is formed is not after the object is complete (descriptivism/anti-descriptivism) it actually constitutes the object and is prior to the descriptivist/anti-descriptivist dispute. (Curry 2002: 124).

Consequently, the Political Discourse Theory assumes that material relations, power and ‘structures’ are limited to discourse and are only effected by other discourses, reducing society to the activities of groups through discourse, ignoring the material conditions of being (Joseph 2000; Curry 2002; Fairclough et al. 2002; Joseph 2002; Fairclough 2010). Seem interesting to recall once more Curry (2002: 126), before bringing Bhaskar and Laclau to such debate:

I have hopefully demonstrated why I think Laclau has prematurely ruled out the idea that when a discourse runs up against its limits it may be possible that there is more than just another discourse affecting it. This is because of the limited notion of the object he adopts. The production of knowledge constructs objects, but in doing so it by no means exhausts the objects into its construction. Yet it is also at the same moment also reconstructed by its encounter with the object. This processual encounter never takes place outside the objects but is a constitutive moment in the ongoing formation of these objects, so one could say that the objects are never given in any unmediated sense, but always in a process of being constantly reconstructed and never exhausted in the encounter. However, this also poses serious problems for Bhaskar, especially with regard to maintaining the distinction he develops between the transitive and

intransitive dimensions. It is precisely on this matter that Bhaskar has made an important contribution (...)

Bhaskar and Laclau have engaged on a debate regarding such matter. An edited version of such debate was first published in the philosophy journal *Alethia*, in 1998, and latter as the book chapter *Critical Realism and Discourse Theory: Debate with Ernesto Laclau* (Bhaskar and Laclau 2012).

Using the same argument as Curry (2002), Bhaskar (2012) has argued that even though human beings has no knowledge about something, it can be discursively construct, thus it does not imply that it has not causal interaction on reason and extra-discursive realities. In his words:

I would just like to re-emphasise, first, that we need to know something about the general character of the world, we need to have a philosophical ontology, and the character of that ontology is crucially important for social practice as well as social theory. Secondly, where exactly do Ernesto and discourse analysis stand in relation to the causal interactions between discursive practices or reasons and extra-discursive realities? **I accept of course that all extra-discursive realities are constituted within discursive practice, from the point of view of their intelligibility. But that is not to say that they are constituted in discursive practice from the point of view of their causal impact. We can assume that global warming went on long before we had the concept of it, and this is true. We come to the concept of most diseases long after they have their causal impact.** (Bhaskar and Laclau 2012: 91, bold added).

Moreover, following such stratified model of nature, it is possible to account for extra-discursive elements that impact on material conditions and also on discourses. Under this research, the monitoring system enabled the slaughterhouses to change their discourse regarding ‘sustainability’, by embedding such matter in the development of this system. In doing so, slaughterhouses were able to deal with actors’ associations of business risk regarding Amazon Deforestation, which is a characteristic of the capitalist societal logic. Furthermore, it was the promise of such technology that secured slaughterhouses’ financial resources.

It is possible to argue the same regarding Greenpeace, when it realised that targeting the global supply chain – another feature of capitalist logic – would more quickly promote the

transformation they envisaged. This research clearly shows that Greenpeace was learning how capitalism expansion was promoting Amazon deforestation. At the same time, by impacting on the organisation of such value chain, Greenpeace is also demonstrating its relevance in preserving nature, in this case Amazon Forest, which increased its appeal in receiving donations and guaranteeing its economic survival.

Corroborating with such analysis Curry (2002) and Joseph (2000; Joseph 2002) argue that the problem of assuming discourse as the only 'political device' is that there is no justification regarding why one discourse is more powerful than another. Thus, by excluding such extra-discursiveness, it not possible to explain the material impacts of Amazon deforestation and, moreover, how it supports the ruling groups' dominance. As Joseph explains:

For critical realists, hegemony retains its functional role as a factor of social cohesion and its strategic role as an articulator of action within the context of the preservation or transformation of social structures. The discursive is important in terms of the role of ideology, the mediation of language and the transitive conditions of knowledge, but these can only be properly understood by reference to the material conditions within which they are set. Why one discourse is more powerful than another is an extra-discursive question. Deconstruction may help us analyse the social and the political in discourse, but we also need a theory capable of analysing the place of discourse in the wider socio-political world. (Joseph 2002: 104).

So, as this research discusses, Amazon deforestation becomes the focal issue not only due to the discourses and meanings, but also because of the material consequences it brings, as discussed in chapter six, thus supporting the examination of a change within stability under the capitalist logic.

Concluding, a discourse analysis under a Critical Realist ontology should account for such relational and contradictory approaches between structures and discourses, as will be argued in the following sections.

4.4 Ontological and Epistemological Implications to Research Development

Having discussed the ontological background adopted in this study throughout the previous sections of this chapter, it is clear a denial of a positivist approach. Therefore, theory and method are not conceived as two different entities of the research process, but interdependent ones (Sayer 1992; Danermark et al. 2002; Fairclough 2010). Since methodology is a theory-driven process, rather than an application of pre-established methods (Silverman 1993; Fairclough 2010), a theoretical framework is required to construct the research's object and problem (Silverman 1993; Fairclough 2010). Hence, it is necessary to recall the methodological challenges inherent from the theory chosen and, thus, elaborate an analytical framework that, at the same time, faces such challenges and guides the analysis of the empirical findings. The development of such reasoning is the goal of this section.

Although sustainability (and the understandings of the human impacts on the nature) is a relevant 'problem' for contemporary societies, it cannot generate a researchable topic by itself. It asks for a theory to frame such issue and, thus, create a research problem (Silverman 1993; Bourdieu et al. 2004; Fairclough 2010)³⁵.

It was during the second chapter, when discussing the theoretical gaps of organisational institutionalism (i.e. the requirement to account for politics and the importance of meanings), that a research problem was generated to face such gaps (i.e. how actors can fashion their environment). This theoretical discussion also enabled conquering sustainability as a researchable topic, presented in the following research question: Why some practices become known as 'sustainable' in the Brazilian Beef Industry?

Thus, the research question represents the conquering of the problem of study (i.e. how actors fashion their environment) by a theoretical framework, following the style of reasoning that a research informed by Critical Realism should engage with (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000b; Ackroyd 2009; Reed 2009). As Ackroyd (2000b: 14, bold added) argued, a

³⁵ This is one of the reasons why this chapter has started presenting the researcher and its interests on theory development, explaining the choices made in order to formulate a research problem and an object of study that could provide satisfactory conditions for the research development.

stratified ontology requires investigations over the particular conditions that make something possible, under a socio-historical context:

Operating with a stratified and transformational ontology, the emphasis of investigation necessarily switches from the domains of the empirical and actual and the ensuing event patterns observed to the domain of the deep and the mechanisms that govern these events. **Investigation switches from the consequences, that is from the outcomes or results (in the form of events and their patterns) of some particular human action, to the conditions that make that action possible.**

Therefore, the research seeks to explain how the adjective ‘sustainable’ is understood as a consequence of contested conceptions that express actors’ agency aiming at shape meanings under a situated context. Such process, impacts on how actors access resources and developed initiatives, programmes and technologies. Such analysis aims at highlighting the hidden structures of capitalism that create the conditions for actors to exert their agency.

Regarding to the logic of discovery, an abductive logic was chosen, supported by a Critical Discourse Analysis methodology. Such choice is in accordance with a Critical Realist research (Danermark et al. 2002; Ackroyd 2009).

The abductive logic of inference is the association of data descriptions seeking to provide plausible explanations for the data in order to explicate the basic processes or mechanisms that produced such phenomenon. Such process of discovery fosters the theory development by combining the data and the description of the generative process (Danermark et al. 2002; Ackroyd 2009), as Danermark et al. (2002: 90 – 91) explains:

When we apply abductive inference in social science and interpret a phenomenon in the light of a frame of interpretation (rule), the frame of interpretation constitutes one of several possible frames and the interpretation of the phenomenon one of several possible interpretations. What is common for all abductive inference, however, is that the conclusion provides new insight as an outcome of our interpreting or explaining something with the help of what Peirce calls the rule (Danermark et al. 2002: 90).

Thus, the abductive logic of inference aims at guiding the research to analyse in which extent the assumptions formulated by the theory explain the findings of the research or allow different assumptions (Ackroyd 2009). To achieve such goal it is crucial to interpret the data

from a conceptual framework standpoint, which was developed in chapters two and three of this thesis. Once more, Danermark et al. (2002: 91, bold added) is helpful:

Abduction is to move from a conception of something to a different, possibly more developed or deeper conception of it. This happens through our placing and interpreting the original ideas about the phenomenon in the frame of a new set of ideas. **What was called rule in the formalization above, is precisely this set of ideas, which we apply to be able to understand and interpret something in a different way. In scientific work this set of ideas may have the form of a conceptual framework or a theory.**

In this sense, the hegemony approach was employed to this research in order to interpret how actors are creating meanings and changing contexts, which provides a plausible, but by no means absolute, interpretation of a ‘sustainability’ path. As a consequence, the empirical chapters are not purely empirical; they are rather one plausible interpretation of the collected data in light of a given theory. In the process of performing such interpretation, theory and data are in constant dialogue, thus explaining the findings and assessing different pathways, avoiding the predominance of one over another. Out of such interchange, the theoretical contributions emerge.

This reasoning is in accordance with the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology – as will be discussed in the next section – once CDA is theory-driven and relational, aimed at analysing the interrelations among the hidden structures (i.e. real) and discourses (i.e. actual).

Under this context, the use of logic’s characteristics is a way to avoid the objectification of social structures (i.e. real), as it could be understood as how actors are making sense, through discursive, of the extra-discourse features of the social world. Although they were discursively elaborated, they clearly have extra-discourses’ impacts, as will be discussed in the next chapters.

Hence, by adopting the stratified model of institutional analysis (Leca and Naccache 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), it was possible to identify the following:

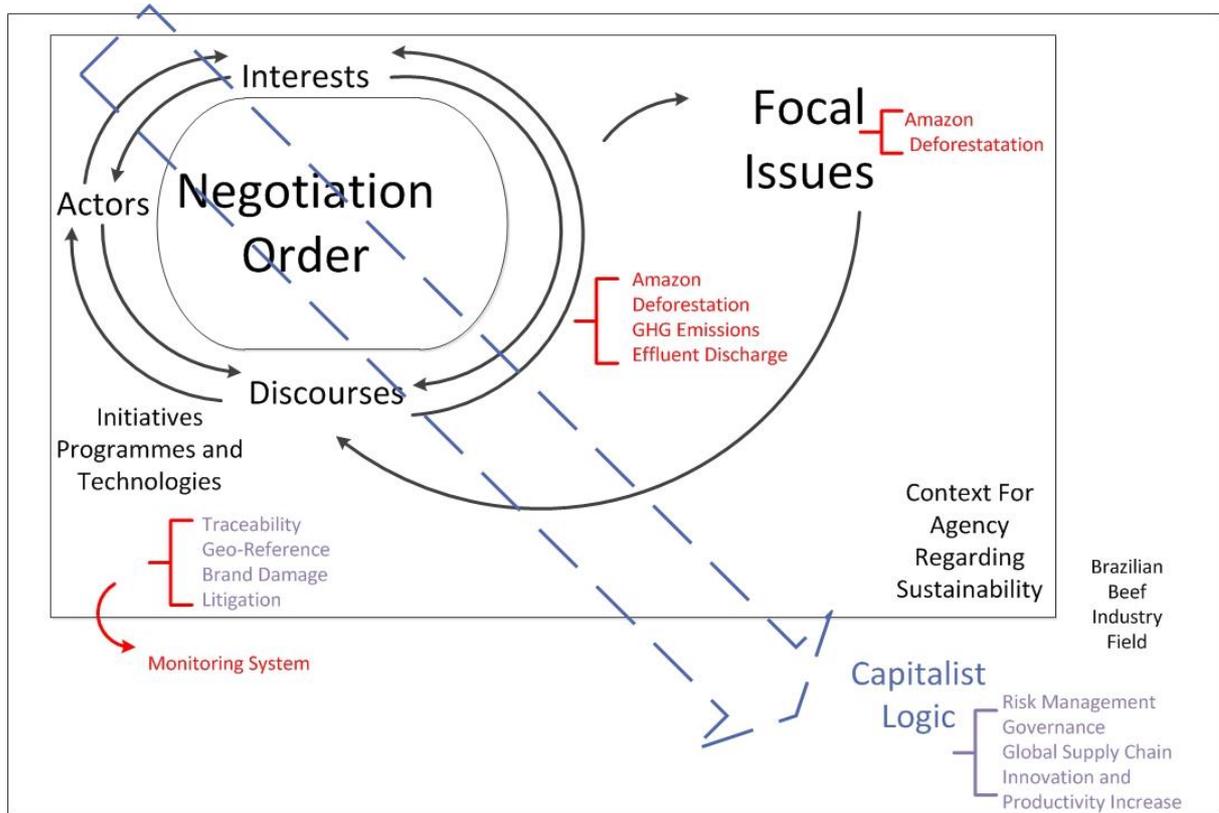
Figure 3: Stratified model of institutional analysis for this research

Domains	Identified
Real (logic's characteristics)	Risk management
	Governance
	Innovation and Productivity Increase
	Global Supply Chain
Actual (meanings of sustainability)	Amazon Deforestation
	Cattle GHG emissions
	Effluents Discharge
Empirical (actors using meanings)	Traceability
	Geo-referencing
	Brand Damage and Brand Protection
	Litigation (Regulatory Framework)

Elaborated by the author.

When combining such stratified model of institutional analysis for this research (Figure 3 above) with the hegemony approach to actors and societal logics (Figure 2 in the previous chapter), it was possible to illustrate, in Figure 4 below, the different domains and how they were examined in this research. Figure 4 indicates that the negotiation order is an arena under the mesolevel of analysis, encompassing actors' struggles over meanings in the domain of actual. As a mesolevel, such arena is pervaded by characteristics of capitalist logic (the domain of real). Finally, the figure illustrates how actors are using meanings (in the domain of empirical) to sustain and develop programmes, initiatives and technologies.

Figure 4: Negotiation Order of Sustainability under the Brazilian Beef Industry



Elaborated by the author.

4.4.1. Methodological Challenges

Alongside this theoretical appropriation of sustainability by an organisational institutionalism perspective, some methodological challenges were brought into scene. Thus, before presenting the analytical framework, the methodological challenges will be reconsidered and the analytical framework to tackle them will be presented.

As this thesis' objective is to understand the process of formation, reproduction and transformation of institutions, one methodological challenge regards the interaction between macro and micro level of analysis, avoiding both structure determinism and agency voluntarism. Such issue is especially important for organisational institutionalism because, over the years, it has been giving more importance to structures and their role in the reproduction of social life, than to the actors' capacity of changing it (Leca and Naccache 2006; Greenwood et al. 2008; Delbridge and Edwards 2013).

Moreover, Schneiberg and Clemens (2006: 196) state that, when studying organisational change, the challenge is not only about combining different levels of analysis, but in adjusting between “institutions as constrains on action and institutions as culturally constitutive of actors” – what some researchers labelled as the *cognitive dilemma* (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009) or *paradox of embedded agency* (Seo and Creed 2002; Dorado 2005; Battilana et al. 2009). Such *paradox* deals with the matter of how institutional change might be possible if actors’ actions and rationality are being influenced by the very institutions they envy to change. Although this might be seen as a problem of definition – how institutions are defined –, it is an inherent methodological challenge of organisational institutionalism, since it conflates agency and structures (Leca and Naccache 2006).

Both actors and researches operate under the cognitive framework that provides the worldviews and understandings for actions. Consequently, it is not easy to understand how institutions constrain the actions and, at the same time, are the sources for the cognitive perceptions (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009).

In order to deal with such matter, Suddaby and Greenwood (2009) suggest four epistemologies to address institutional change (multivariate, interpretive, historical and dialectical). It is not necessary to discuss each of these epistemological categories of institutional research, as the discussion in this research will be based only on the dialectical perspective, which is more suitable to the research interests and ontological orientation. Moreover, since this is a theory-driven research, assuming institutional change as a contested process, the use of dialectical methods is more appropriate for this study.

Dialectical methods are the ones that emphasise the relational process of actors and institutions underlying its conflicts and contradictions (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009), such as CDA. They assume that:

(...) Manifestations of power relations in society. In the process of institutionalization, structures of power and conflicts between powerful actors become incorporated into taken-for-granted routines, practices, and norms of social relations. (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009: 186).

As a consequence, dialectical methods throw light in the hegemonic process that transforms and naturalises the forms of power into everyday practices and legitimised shared values (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009).

The authors point out that this kind of method could provide some solutions to the cognitive dilemma. Firstly, because there are moments of disruption in the institutional framework that, when highlighting the conflicts and contradictions, can reveal the contradictions and the hegemonic power of societal structures (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009). Secondly, the effects of the sedimentations of institutionalisation – the hidden power structures – can be examined through language, as the changes in institutions and language do not occur at the same time (Suddaby and Greenwood 2009; Fairclough 2010).

Besides that, as examined in both theoretical chapters, although contemporary discussion on organisational institutionalism (i.e. institutional entrepreneurship, institutional work, institutional logics and inhabited institutions) has conceptualised institutional stability and change as a process, they do not truly embrace it as an on-going process, since most of the research focuses on individual actors (or groups of actors) rather than the process itself. Such characteristic could be seen as a remembrance of the methodological individualism (Emirbayer 1997). Consequently organisational institutionalism analysis is not emphasising the relations among actors, which are central for understanding stability and change as a continuous process. Hence, while the importance of politics is recognised, it is not deeply examined.

The following figure summarises the methodological challenges that were tackled by the analytical framework in order to guide the research’s examination and interpretation.

Figure 5: Methodological Challenges and Approach Developed

Methodological challenge	Developed Approach
Swinging between structure determinism and agency voluntarism	Hegemony: a relational approach and historically situated agency
Methodological individualism	Focus on process (i.e. actors’ actions and interactions)
Paradox of embedded agency	Critical realist stratified ontology

Elaborated by the author.

Concluding, a Critical Discourse Analysis was developed, anchored on actors' accounts of events and time. In this process, the focus on actors' actions and interactions was assured, thus avoiding the methodological individualism, by emphasising the different contexts for agency that will be examined in the following chapter.

4.4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Although there are several types of discourse analysis³⁶ (Phillips and Oswick 2012), this research has neither the objective of comparing nor examining their differences. The objective of this section is to present Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodology chosen to this study. However, it is important to contrast CDA as a discourse analysis.

Regardless the variety of discourse analyses, in a broad sense, they could be understood as the investigation of the relationship between 'discourse' and 'reality'. They explore how texts are produced and how they carry meanings through social processes, contributing to the constitution of social reality and establishing meaning to the human action (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000; Alves, 2002; Fairclough et al. 2002; Fairclough 2005; Phillips et al. 2008; Maguire and Hardy 2009; Fairclough 2010; Hardy and Maguire 2010; Phillips and Oswick 2012).

It is exactly because of such broad variety that discourse analyses receive most of its criticism (Phillips and Oswick 2012). Since there is a great difference among discourse analyses, the researches often encompass loose, vague and undefined concepts, producing analyses that prioritise the language itself rather than the context in which discourses are embedded. Thus, the objective of this section is to avoid such criticism.

Following this chapter's ontological and epistemological discussions, a dialectical account of structures and agency is required, and, at the same time, to account for the

³⁶ For those interested in the varieties of Discourse Analysis it is recommended, besides Phillips and Oswick (2012) review for *The Academy of Management Annals*, David Grant, Tom Keenoy and Cliff Oswick's (1998) edited book *Discourse and Organization*, Stefan Titscher, Michael Meyer, Ruth Wodak and Eva Vetter's (2000) book *Methodos of Text and Discourse Analysis* and finally *Discourse as Social Interaction* edited by Teun A. van Dijk (1997).

emergence of different discourses. Hence, this research has chosen the Critical Discourse Analysis as formulated by Fairclough (2010)³⁷.

CDA has three basic properties (Fairclough 2010). Firstly, it is *relational*, which means that its primary focus is on social relations, not on entities or individuals. Although discourses might be seen as an ‘object’ or ‘entity’, by other types of discourse analyses, under CDA, discourses are elements of social processes and social events, which are also relatively durable social practices that could not be reducible to discourse as text or a communicate activity (Fairclough 2010: 357), it encompass the relations among discourse and extra-discursive elements (Fairclough 2010).

From this derives its second property: CDA is *dialectical*, because discourse cannot be defined as a separate ‘object’ from the non-discursive elements, even though there are different elements of the social world both in ontologically and epistemologically terms – drawing from critical realism stratified ontology. Dialectical means that they are not discrete and should be analysed through such relation (Fairclough 2010). This is important to understand how social world changes by discourses influencing the extra-discursive elements, such as access to resources, an organisation of a supply chain or technologies. In other words, stability or change is the realised through *praxis*, as discussed in chapter three.

Moreover, Fairclough (2005; 2010) argues that discourse connects the process of organise (organising) and the actor (organisation). This separation is a product of the ontological disruption between structures and discourses (the communication act). Fairclough (2005; 2010) and Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer (2002) affirm that the structures also have a linguistic and semiotic character, as social practices mediate the relation between organising and organisation. This is particular interesting for management studies since it provides an epistemological account to actors and the organising process, that embrace discursive and extra-discursive elements. Ergo, Fairclough (2010: 4, bold from the original) affirms: “[CDA] is **not** analysis of discourse ‘in itself’ as one might take it to be, but analysis of dialectical relations **between discourse** and other objects (...)”.

³⁷ This research has adopted the second edition of Fairclough’s book *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language*. As this new version has some new chapters that were written with Fairclough’s co-authors and published before this second edition, it was assumed that when referencing to these collaborative work the first version will be quoted.

Finally, the third property is that the objects of research should be *transdisciplinary*, allowing different points of entry for the discourse analyst, thus accounting for various elements or aspects of the object of research (Fairclough 2010). As will be discussed in the data collection procedures, further on this chapter, several documents' sources were consulted in order to provide different perspectives of the Amazon deforestation and other environmental impacts of livestock, even though they were not quoted.

Additionally to such properties, CDA should have the following characteristics: (i) it is more than an analysis of discourse (as concrete texts); (ii) it is not just general explanation on discourse; (iii) it is not descriptive, it is also normative, since "it addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them." (Fairclough 2010: 11).

For this reason, CDA is labelled as *critical*, which means that it systematically explores the hidden structures of causality and determination among discourse and wider social structures, relations and processes (Fairclough 2010). In other words, CDA investigates how discourses are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, being a source for securing power and hegemony. As Fairclough (2010: 11)³⁸ states:

I have presented CDA above as a form of critical research which seeks to understand how contemporary capitalism in some respects enables but in other respects prevents or limits human well-being and flourishing, with a view to overcoming or mitigating these obstacles and limits.

As already mentioned, CDA – following Fairclough (Fairclough et al. 2002; 2010) – is a critical realist ontology. This implies that there is a real world that exists independently of the knowledge about it, thus it rejects the collapse between reality and discourse³⁹, even though assuming that the real world is socially and discursively constructed. In other words, transformations of meanings (the domain of actual), as consequences of political debates (e.g. should corporate actions consider their environmental impact?; should abortion be legalised?), may change the nature of objects (the domain of empirical), such as the access to resources or the development of new technologies. By bringing such extra-discursive elements, it is

³⁸ For those interested in hegemony and CDA, check Fairclough (2010a: 93/ 301-340).

³⁹ As examined in section 4.3.1 in this chapter.

possible to examine why a particular discourse gains predominance over others. As Fairclough argues:

In our understanding, CDA differs from other critical (e.g. Foucaultian, ‘postmodern’, ‘post-structural’, ‘social constructivist’ etc.) approaches to discourse in its view of spoken, written and multidimediated texts. CDA views texts as moment in the *material* production and reproduction of social life, and analyses the social ‘work’ done in texts as significant focus of materialist social critique. (Fairclough 2010: 304).

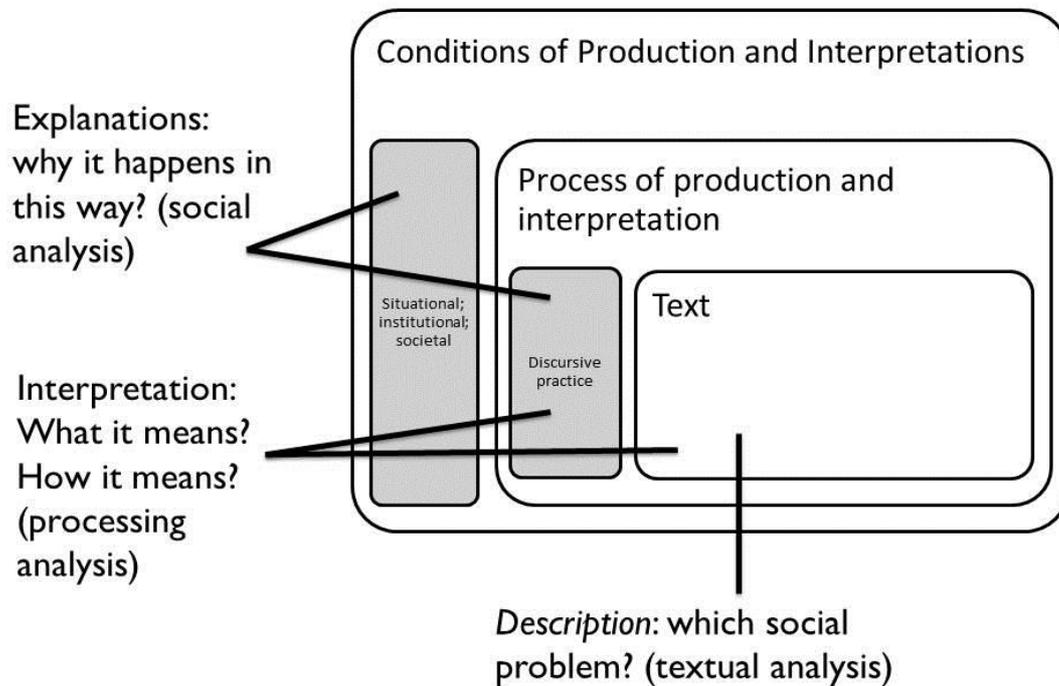
Likewise, discourses legitimise and are the outcomes of material productions. This is the reason why it is possible to analyse how dominant groups remain in power by forging consensus that secure their material advantages, as will be examined in chapters five and six.

In this sense, discourse ‘exists’, it materialises itself through guiding human action that evokes and makes behaviours possible and, thus, constitutes ‘reality’, ultimately influencing the material distributions that produce or reproduce dominance. Consequently, this notion of discourse follows a ‘discourse and materiality’ approach to understand the “discursive process through which particular institutional arrangements are made sensible, meaningful, and legitimate” (Phillips and Oswick 2012: 448). However, as already discussed, it is not possible to separate discourses from the structures – in this study they are understood as the societal logics – that create conditions for discourse production (Fairclough 2010). For this reason, it is possible to consider that discourses are protecting or attacking the societal logics that support the dominance of some groups, as discussed in chapter three.

The figure⁴⁰ below illustrates this approach:

⁴⁰ I should thank Mário Aquino Alves for the insight and initial drawing of the figure.

Figure 6: Dimension of discourse analysis under CDA



Source: Fairclough 2010: 133.

In this context, how CDA could be seen as a method in social science research? Such ontological and epistemological discussion supports an analysis of how discourses are produced (in a particular context) and consumed (as interactions among actors), being influenced by and influencing the extra-discursive realm. The analytical framework for CDA is designed in 5 stages, as Fairclough (2001: 125) presents:

- 1) Focus upon a social problem which has a semiotic aspect.
- 2) Identify obstacles to it being tackled, through analysis of
 - a. the network of practices it is located within
 - b. the relationship of semiosis to other elements within the particular practice(s) concerned
 - c. the discourse (the semiosis itself)
 - structural analysis: the order of discourse
 - interactional analysis
 - interdiscursive analysis

- linguistic and semiotic analysis.
- 3) Consider whether the social order (network of practices) in a sense ‘needs’ the problem.
 - 4) Identify possible ways past the obstacles.
 - 5) Reflect critically on the analysis (1 - 4).

Due to the dialectical and relational proprieties of CDA, these stages do not occur isolated, but as continuous processes, since explanations and interpretations are interrelated.

Thus, it is possible to find these stages embedded in the CDA approach throughout chapter five, six and seven. For example, the *description* process is exemplified when the tone of Greenpeace’s reports is analysed. The *interpretation* is achieved when the text and its surrounding context – in which the discourse was produced – are examined and analysed in terms of how actors negotiate and account for what such discourse means. Finally, *explanation* focuses on why it happened in this particular way, examining the relations among discourse and capitalist societal logic, and providing an explanation of an alignment about what is at stake regarding Amazon deforestation that is crucial for actors maintain their dominance, explaining one reason why it has become the hegemonic meaning rather than others – showing the extra-discursive elements. Such layered analyses allow comprehending how actors are drawing on societal structures to produce their discourse (which may attack or protect them) and also to examine its influence on the development of technologies and their access to resources (i.e. money; power and legitimacy).

4.5. Events and time: following sustainability’s path

The data that informed this research consists of different actors accounting for stories, versions, events and actions that happened over a period time (Langley 1999) regarding ‘sustainability’ in the Brazilian beef industry. As Langley (1999) argues, the data could be shapeless, thus asking for diverse techniques and procedures in order to be analysed. Such process requires a theoretical positioning to transform such hairy data into an understandable analysis.

In order to accomplish this research objective, actors' discourses are used, based on interviews and documents, to create a narrative of the events that can emphasise how actors are aiming at influencing their environment, while attacking or protecting societal capitalist logic. Consequently, the process of creating this story involves making sense of the data while theorising over its richness and complexity (Langley 1999), thus making it difficult for the reader to follow the disputes and negotiations, and their consequences.

Different approaches could be employed in order to understand what 'sustainability' means in a situated context. Since this study's objective is to examine the context for agency, it brings the importance of following the sustainability path by actors' negations and interactions, revealing how particular issues have come to scene and which practices were developed to deal with them. Until 2013, there were already at least three studies focusing sustainable practices in the Brazilian beef industry (Drigo, 2013; Alves-Pinto et al. 2013; Walker et al. 2013) – each of them analysed 'sustainability' in a different perspective.

While Drigo (2013), using a field approach (Fligstein and McAdam 2012), analysed how the contestation of the livestock's socio-environmental impacts forced producers, slaughterhouses and retailers to negotiate and change their practices, thus focusing on the mechanisms in which such changes were being implemented; Walker et al. (2013) examined the Brazilian beef supply chain by tracking beef and other cattle co-products from the Amazon to the international consumer market (Brazilian exportation). Finally, Alves-Pinto et al. (2013), mapped 26 different interventions from civil society organisations, government and private sector that have direct or indirectly impacted the development of 'sustainability' of the cattle supply chain in Brazil.

The three studies (Drigo, 2013; Alves-Pinto et al. 2013; Walker et al. 2013) adopted different perspectives in their research. Drigo (2013) uses a time approach in order to track the emergence of new practices, emphasising the certification schemes; whereas Walker et al. (2013) employ a value chain perspective in order to examine the development of actions that reduce Amazon deforestation, linking such actions to the proportion of the cattle industry that is liable to market pressure. Alves-Pinto et al. (2013) used both previous researches, focusing on the impacts of the development of certification mechanisms, in order to identify interventions that could foster such paradigm in the beef industry.

Therefore, those previous researches were not focusing on the negotiations that enable to identify a given practice as sustainable. Although all three studies analysed programmes that tackle Amazon deforestation, none of them examined the process by which deforestation has risen as a meaning for sustainability, acquiring value and, thus, playing a role on change and continuity in this field. In order to accomplish such objective, this research employs a longitudinal approach.

Although change and continuity are a matter of time (Pettigrew 1990) – therefore placing events on a timescale is important to understand how actors are making sense of social interactions –, it was not the objective of this study to develop a chronological approach through a memory of events' sequences. As Pettigrew (1990: 273) affirms, “time is not just ‘out there’ as neutral chronology, it is ‘in here’ as a social construction”. Consequently, actions are not seen as ordered and sequential events, in which actors' objectives are rationally explained. On the contrary, contradictory actions can emerge, events can be reportedly differently, or not even be mentioned, and actors' account of such events might alter over time.

This longitudinal approach suggests that the processes by which actors fashion their environment are simultaneously relational (i.e. can only be discussed in terms of societal and local levels at the same time) and processual (i.e. an ongoing negotiation activity). For these reasons they cannot be simply chronologically followed, once contradictions and negotiations constitute a non-linear history.

Furthermore, as negotiations and conflicts are interactive and complex, this research has decided to focus on the actors' negotiations regarding ‘sustainability’, by emphasising both how deforestation emerges as a prominent topic in this field.

In order to accomplish such task, three main periods are analysed, not as a chronological sequence, but as contexts in which it is possible to identify temporal patterns, causes and movements, explaining the present in relation to its past and the coming future (Pettigrew 1990). These contexts are, thus, embedded in a negotiation order, an arena of actors' actions and interactions that enable analysing the meanings of sustainability. Therefore, the choice of such periods was not arbitrary; it has followed the research design in order to examine how, during such moments, meanings were discursively being created and,

in each of the periods examined, producing a different and particular context for agency. Hence, this approach emphasises how actors fashion their environment and support the development of new practices.

The three different contexts will be examined in chapter five – *Creating Meanings, Changing Context: Deforestation and the Brazilian Beef Industry*. They were labelled as: (i) *voices on environmental impact: void of practices*; (ii) *creating meanings for sustainability: the rise of deforestation*; (iii) *Anticipating risk: Nothing is so bad that you cannot take something good out of it*.

4.6. Data Collection Procedures

The main sources of data are documents – such as reports, legislation, media coverage – and interviews with actors involved in the negotiation of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry.

The data collection had three distinct moments. The first step focused on analysing public documents (Spink 2000; May 2004) and it had the objective of elaborating a historical account of ‘sustainability’ in the Brazilian beef industry, providing the broader scripts of the story being told in the study. During this first moment, the documents selected aimed at shedding light on the main events, their consequences and actors’ reactions (at least the public statements). At the same time, they also provided an account of the main conflicts and negotiations, emphasising sensible topics. The next section explicates this data collection.

The second moment consists of interviews. Based on the document analysis conducted in the first step, it was possible to select the relevant actors to be interviewed, and to elaborate a specific interview schedule to each interviewee, in order to capture their perspectives and interactions. The interviewees and the interview schedule will be further discussed in this chapter.

Finally, the third step focused on a final round of document collection and analysis. These documents were either searched after the interview, in order to gather more information about a topic raised during the interview, or they were delivered by the interviewees – in this

case, they could be both public documents or internal reports and presentations. These final document analyses were crucial for comprehending interviewees' perspective, confirming that interviews were not neutral and have a political action orientation (Alvesson 2011).

The data collection procedures can be summarised as follows:

Figure 7: Data Collection Steps and Objectives

Data collection rounds	Data source	Objective
First	Document analysis	Aiming at understanding what is at stake in this particular context, both in general terms and under specific actors' perspective, and informing the interview schedule
Second	Interviews	Interviews were conducted focusing on how different actors engaged with issues related to 'sustainability'. Each interview follows a particular interview schedule, based on the actor's specificities.
Third	Document analysis	A final round of document collection and analysis was conducted aiming at throwing light into interviewees' opinions, statements and beliefs

It is not a new strategy to combine documents and interviews, as Rubin and Rubin (2012: 27) argue: "Documents are most useful when combined with in-depth interviews that allow you to discuss with their creators what they contain and how they were prepared". Such combination enabled that a rich and in-depth interview schedule, specific to each interviewee, could be elaborated, were vested interests and silences – what was not being said in the documents – could be explored. Combining two different types of qualitative data also strengthens and enriches the data analysis (Rubin and Rubin 2012).

Furthermore, the strategy of collecting data in three different moments also corroborates the research's validity and liability, since data were being collected and information were being checked with different sources. Additionally, it creates the opportunity for inspiration while reflecting upon the path that the study was taking, enabling different accounts and interpretations, which were not initially considered, to emerge. Such process supports that data collection and their interpretations towards theory development were occurring at the same time (Langley 1999; Denzin 2002).

Such data collection strategy informed a longitudinal case study (Pettigrew 1990), in which it is possible to understand and interpret the processes of social interactions and their historical context. Particularly in this study, it was possible to follow the path of ‘sustainability’ (i.e. how meanings are shared and negotiated during actors’ interaction) in this context, in order to explain why some practices become known as ‘sustainable’.

Moreover, such strategy of data collection was built aiming at enabling to account for time and space conditions (i.e. actors’ interactions in the domain of actual) in which agency takes place, providing the researcher with the necessary tools to associate the effects produced by causal power and events such causal power produce. Thus, actors’ interactions created the necessary conditions for the causal power to consolidate a hegemonic meaning of sustainability.

Regarding the study of ‘sustainability’, it often requires a cross disciplinary approach, which stresses the division between natural and human sciences (Franklin and Blyton 2011). While natural sciences might focus on developing techniques that could model, measure and predict the environmental sustainability and the human impacts on the nature (Franklin and Blyton 2011), human sciences might focus on the social phenomena, crossing different fields such as sociology, economic, anthropology and management, that must ultimately be practised (i.e. sustainable practice, whatever they might be, must be practised by individuals) (Evans 2011). Therefore, such interaction of different data at different moments was an important feature that enabled the researcher to understand sustainability and its different definitions across academic fields – since new perspectives and issues were raised – reassessing the research development and data interpretation (Denzin 2002; Denzin 2011).

Furthermore, while studying sustainability, the interaction between natural and human sciences is an important characteristic, mostly because the justification for the development of ‘sustainable’ practices – both among Nation policies and organisations or individual practices – is anchored on (and legitimatised by) *hard science* studies. It would be naive to assume though that the hard science world does not have its own politics and struggles that impact on the development of the knowledge of the interaction among humans and nature. Abranches (2010) shows how the politics of the climate science impacted on the development of the 15th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP-15). However, such interaction between nature

and human sciences and the inherent politics and conflicts that pervade both and their interactions are not the focus of this study; they are an important matter to be aware of and a promising further research development, focusing on how international politics and science are interrelated in the definition of sustainable practices⁴¹.

Concerning the study of sustainability, as already mentioned, there is an array of definitions that vary from issue to issue and from discipline to discipline (Marshall and Toffel 2005; Evans 2011), corroborating to an understanding that sustainability is a vague and imprecise idea (Lélé 1991; Shrivastava 1995; Hopwood et al. 2005; Milne et al. 2006; Valente 2012). As Valente (2012) has shown, the process in which sustainability principles are adopted is complex and dependent on the interaction between corporations and their stakeholders while negotiating what ‘sustainability’ is and which practices relate to it in a particular context. In this sense, it is important to construct a data collection strategy that accounts for how actors seek legitimacy for their action (Barley 2010). Therefore, building an interaction among different sources of data (documents and interviews) from different types of actors is an interesting way of approaching a highly political matter, such as the meanings of ‘sustainability’.

Additionally, the researcher attended two events related to sustainability on livestock. The first event was *VI Sustainable Livestock in Practice*⁴² workshop held in São Paulo and organised by GTPS on the 27th of November of 2013, when it was presented: (i) pilot projects aiming at enhancing sustainability on livestock from different actors of the beef value chain; (ii) last year accomplishment of GTPS’ committees and their future steps; and (iii) the Cooperation Agreement between GTPS and SAE, which was signed in the event, releasing the program *Intensifica Pecuária*⁴³.

⁴¹ An example of such consequences will be briefly discussed on this study when analyzing how FAO studies on GHG emissions of the livestock sector are being contested by Brazilian actors (EMBRAPA and GTPS) aiming at influencing the development of knowledge within this field.

⁴² In Portuguese: *VI Seminário Pecuária Sustentável na Prática*. More information in Portuguese available at: <http://www.pecuariasustentavel.org.br/palestras-disponiveis-para-download-vi-seminario-do-gtps-pecuaria-sustentavel-na-pratica/>

⁴³ In a free translation: Livestock Intensification. It is a line of credit for farmers that implement sustainable practices on their livestock management. The interest rate varies according to a rank of good sustainable practices on cattle ranching – the better sustainable practices the farmer implements, the better is the interest rate. Such project will be further discussed on the thesis.

The second event was the webinar *Livestock life cycle analysis and climate change mitigation*, promoted by FAO on the 22th of October of 2013, when their last report on livestock GHG emissions⁴⁴ was released. This webinar was an online meeting joined by people around the world to discuss the report and its impacts.

Such engagement on these events could be seen as action-research strategy (Spink 1979) and they were important sources of information and networking, allowing the researcher to interchange different points of view, to evaluate how Amazon deforestation was being discussed and which environmental impacts from livestock the scientific community was engaging with.

The next subsection has the objective of presenting the data collection and analysis' procedures while describing the challenges faced during the study, as well as explaining the choices aiming at bring transparency to the research development. The section is divided into two subsections *documents* and *interviews*. Each of these sections examines the main data sources. The interviews' section is organised as following: (i) *the active nature of interview*, where the political content of the interview is discussed and how examine and share it ethically; (ii) *interview procedures*, which discusses how the interview was conducted and how sensitive situations were dealt with; (iii) *interview schedule*; and (iv) *interviewees*, where the organisations and the interviewees are presented.

4.6.1. Documents

As May (2004) argues, documents are a remarkable source of data because they can be analysed by what they leave out their pages as well as by what they contain. In this sense, they are not merely describing events and facts; on the contrary, documents are taking part on constructing different interpretations of them. As this research aims at highlighting how actors negotiate, compete and coordinate conflict, they are an important source of data, since it is through them that it is possible to identify actors' views and interests, and also inform a rich interview schedule while preparing the researcher to conduct the interview.

⁴⁴ The report's title is: *Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock: a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities*. It is available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3437e/i3437e.pdf>

As already mentioned, most documents used in this study are public ones (Spink 2000), such as reports, pieces of legislations, press articles, scientific papers, among others. Other documents were accessed during the interviews, some of which are confidential while others are public. In total, 162 documents were consulted, being 43 from State-related actors, 50 from Civil Society organisations, 40 from Corporations, 6 are media coverage, and 23 are academic productions.

The criteria for selecting the documents were: (i) a public statement, like a report or a letter to its shareholders, from an organisation actively engaged with the issue of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry; (ii) a scientific document that discusses environmental or technical issues related to livestock; (iii) UN's documents that discuss livestock environmental impact or UN Conferences statements. Thus, among them are listed Greenpeace's reports on deforestation of the Amazon caused by livestock, the companies response to the report, but also legislations that were created aiming at dealing with sustainability in this industry as well as scientific and United Nation documents related to the impact of livestock on nature.

The selection of such documents does not fulfil all organisations that were taking part of these negotiations and conflicts, but they capture most of the interviewees' organisations and positions.

All documents are listed on the appendices A, B, C, D and E⁴⁵ and, even though they might not be quoted and therefore not cited as the references of this research, they were important in conquering and informing the research object (Bourdieu et al. 2004) and helping the researcher to make senses of actors' interaction, ideas and discourses.

⁴⁵ The documents are divided as State-related actors, Civil Society organisations, Corporations, Media and Academia. The titles were kept in their original language and, whenever an English version was available, it was preferred.

4.6.2. Interviews

As discussed before, documents are an important source of data, and their combination with interviews is a worthy strategy to interpret historical contexts (Godoi, Christiane Kleinübing and de Mattos 2006; Godoy, Arlinda Schmidt 2006; Rubin and Rubin 2012) and it is relevant for understanding actors' agency. Aiming at understanding the actors' different perspectives and how they make sense of the social interactions over the issue of sustainability in the context of the Brazilian beef industry, in-depth semi-structure interviews were chosen (Godoi, Christiane Kleinübing and de Mattos 2006; Godoy, Arlinda Schmidt 2006; Rubin and Rubin 2012).

In-depth interviews can provide rich and detailed information, enabling the interviewees to share their experiences, points of view and, more important, enable capturing stories and narratives (Godoi, Christiane Kleinübing and de Mattos 2006; Rubin and Rubin 2012) about sustainability.

Moreover, the issue of sustainability under this industry in Brazil is very sensitive for several reasons, such as: (i) legal disputes between Greenpeace and slaughterhouses; (ii) the Greenpeace report accusing slaughterhouses of fostering the Amazon deforestation created a scandal that impacted the slaughterhouses' business and access to funds, increasing the market competition among the companies, and (iii) between 2008 and 2013, several merges and acquisition among the slaughterhouses also increased their competition. Therefore, in-depth interviews in which the interviewees could express their opinion, their different views about sensitive and, in many cases, confidential matters are recommended (Godoy, Arlinda Schmidt 2006; Rubin and Rubin 2012).

Hence, as sustainability is an extremely contentious and litigious matter in the Brazilian beef industry, interviewees were nervous to freely discuss the matter. It would be naïve to believe that interviews would be a neutral data, especially under these circumstances (Alvesson 2011). Thus, the interviews were embedded in a political context, where actors' interests, fears, expectations and objectives to convince the interviewer were clear. In order to face such challenge, the metaphor of interview as a political action (Alvesson 2011) was adopted and will be further discussed.

4.6.2.1. The active nature of interview: Its political content and sharing results ethically

Although interviews are a common source of data in organisational research, there are several types and perspectives of interviews (Cassell 2009; Alvesson 2011). Some positivist researcher may comprehend interviews as a neutral tool for collecting data. Others may argue that interview is not an appropriate tool for collecting data, as there is the human element of the interviewee that could not cooperate as the interviewer wishes and, therefore, would question the validity and legitimacy of interviews' data as a researchable data (Cassell 2009; Alvesson 2011).

This study adopted a different perspective. It has assumed that interview is a non-neutral process sustained by the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Cassell 2009; Obelene 2009; Alvesson 2011). Nothing less could be expected from a study aimed at understanding the political processes that impact on institutional settings.

Different adjectives might be used to express such active nature of the interview. Some researchers focus on the process of bargaining a study (Obelene 2009), others prefer to highlight interviews as an arena where both interview and interviewee are actively constructing, interpreting and sharing meanings (Cassell 2009), a third group elaborates different metaphors to account for the beliefs, interactions and perspectives expected from the interview (Alvesson 2011).

Although adopting different adjectives and perspectives in understanding the interview process, it is possible to assume interviews as a political arena that starts by convincing the interviewee to participate in the study. During such process, the researcher and interviewer interaction constructs meanings, and both sides have their own expectations and objectives.

This was particularly evident when researching a sensitive topic, pervaded by disputes (including lawsuits) among actors. Some examples, while conducting this research, some actors were sensitive by mention the words 'Greenpeace' or 'disputes', others refused to

collaborate with the study and many were concerned with the recording and the future usage of the material. In all these situations, the researcher needed to bargain with the interviewee.

Such bargain process could be expanded to the interview process itself. As an arena – a site for struggles – where interpretations of social reality are being negotiated (Cassell 2009; Alvesson 2011), interviews are biased by both interviewee and interviewer interests (Cassell 2009; Alvesson 2011). Often neglected, the interviewer interests are mostly concerned about safeguarding his or her research. The interviewer needs to convince and to establish a relationship with the interviewee in order to accomplish the objective of getting the information for conducting the study. It is not an exception when such relationship is stressed for different reasons. In order to deal with the researcher interests and to account for such relationship, field notes were taken after each interview. Such procedure will be further discussed. Additionally, the interview's length could be an indicator of such interaction, when conducting an in-depth interview; shorter interviews are often related to some problem in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

Thus, the interviewees should not be considered interest-free and eager-to-contribute with science, as they might use the interview for their own political purposes. As Alvesson addresses:

“The interviewee is then assumed to act in the interests of him or herself and/or the social group with which the interviewee identifies. Interviewees are then not just as eager to save or improve their egos or their organization's or social group's reputation and legitimacy through more or less routinized and unreflective self-promoting (or profession- or organization-promoting) statements, but as *politically aware and politically motivated actors*. (...) They may very well tell the (partial) truth as they know it, but in – for them – favourable ways and choose not to disclose truths anticipated to negative toward them and the group they fell loyal to.” (Alvesson 2011: 92-3).

As already mentioned, to deal with such political account, field notes were taken detailing the interactions. Besides that, given the sensitivity of the topic and the researched context, it was decided that all interviews would be mentioned. In this sense, the interviewees could negotiate whether to allow recording or direct quotes from the conversation, but they were aware that they would be listed as contributors – such procedure will be further discussed.

Such transparency about the interviewees is also related to the small population that constituted this field. Likewise, it is public that Greenpeace's campaign accused the slaughterhouses and the beef's value supply of deforesting the Amazon, and, after such event, several conflicts and practices were developed in response. Furthermore, some interviewees contacted each other and discussed the interview process and its addressed topic, so several actors on this context were aware of the research and what was being discussed, prior to the researcher contact. Such behaviour reinforces the political orientation of the interview. Some might argue that this political perspective could impact the data collected, however it is the activity of convincing others and, therefore, fashioning their environment that is under study in this research.

Another issue related to the interviewee's political account is the matter of whether or not recording the conversation. The recorder as an object that impacts on the interview deserves a research by its own. Both interviewee and interviewer have their attention focused on such object. On the one hand, the interviewer is worried about not losing data and important insights. On the other hand, the interviewee is nervous about what will be the usage of such recording and whether she/he is exposing her/himself.

Due to the active nature of the interview, during the social interaction the interviewer might have access to confidential insights or disclosure of information that could bring personal consequences for the interviewee (Cassell 2009; Obelene 2009), especially discussing a sensitive issue such as sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry context. This reflects the "dilemma of the researcher who has a commitment to protect the study from harm and simultaneously owes a duty to protect the research subject [the interviewee] from harm." (Obelene 2009: 184). Such ethical concern is increased by the fact that, during the interview analysis and the consequently quotation of these interactions, the interviewee is powerless (Cassell 2009), both in deciding how to interpret it – although the interviewee could have had an influence during the interview – and how to use it.

If on the one hand, recording might prevent the interviewee by exposing her/himself, on the other, might prevent some information and process to rise. However, while conducting this research's interviews, fairly often after stopping the recording a new conversation started,

when confidential and background information was discussed⁴⁶. Although most of these confidential information was the interviewee's interpretation of an event, a more controversial opinion or some comments of a public event or information, all these information received the same treatment – when relevant and impactful to the researcher's interpretation, they were analysed in the field notes, as will be further discussed. It is noteworthy that this information was written as spoken language and does not contain names. On the contrary, the field notes regarding such confidential issues contains only the researcher's analysis and accounts of the interview.

Such ethical considerations raise the matter of how the data will be interpreted and shared. Obviously the data interpretation and analysis have other influence factors that probably cannot be controlled by the interviewee, such as the research's epistemological and theoretical framework. However, interview analysis involves this interpretation process in which the researcher claims specific findings based on these interpretations (Cassell 2009). Based on the assumption that interviews are a social encounter (Cassell 2009; Obelene 2009; Alvesson 2011), it would be naïve to consider that such 'off-record' conversation did not impact on the researcher's interpretations and analysis and, in this sense, the field notes were crucial.

Moreover, the interpretation process leads to the researcher making claims about their findings sustained by such interpretations, thus it is a political activity (Denzin 2002; Cassell 2009; Alvesson 2011; Denzin 2011) that is always unfinished (Denzin 2002). During such process, the researcher express her/him beliefs based on the epistemological and theoretical background. It is assumed that transparency on the research procedures are crucial to deal with such ethical and interpretational issues.

Hence, during analysis and while sharing the results, the researcher assumes its voices and share her/his logical interpretation of the phenomenon studied, balancing its explanations and quotations from interviews and documents that make the findings plausible (Rubin and Rubin 2012). Moreover, by adopting a CDA perspective, long interview quotations were

⁴⁶ It is important to mention that the length of this 'off-record' conversation is not considered in the interviewees' figure.

preferred in order to explicit the researcher's interpretations, therefore bringing transparency to the study.

Finally, regarding sharing the study results, since there were data in two different languages, both Portuguese and English, when quoting data in Portuguese they were translated and presented in English. However, names of projects and documents will be presented in their original language and English translations will be available in footnotes.

4.6.2.2. Interview procedures

This section aims at clarifying the procedures adopted while conducting the interviews.

All interviewees have signed a consent form included in appendix F – in Portuguese. The consent form affirms the academic purpose of the interview and states the disclosure and recording procedures. As some interviewees have requested not to record the interview and/or not to directly quote them, the consent form was adapted in order to accomplish such demands. These specifications are not in the appendix.

The interviewees received an invitation letter in which the research objective and the importance of the interview were presented. After confirming and scheduling the interview, the interviewee received the consent form, when she/he could read it, ask for authorisation in their organisation, when applied, and therefore request changes and adaptations if necessary. All these information were resumed before the interview started.

Regarding the interview venue, most of them were performed in person in a location chosen by the interviewee. When it was not possible to conduct a face-to-face conversation, due to budget constrains, the interview was conducted via *skype*. After all interviews, independently of whether it was in person or not, voice memos were recorded and field notes were taken. The researcher is not allowed to disclosure the field notes, as it was not explicit in the consent form and it may contain personal or confidential information (both from the interviewee and interviewer). The field notes will be kept in a safe environment and the researcher is the only one that has access to it.

Field notes were focused on:

- Interaction between interviewee and interviewer, focusing on how they got along, and whether there were some disputes or conflicts – obviously, such notes are from the interviewer perspective;
- The interviewer personal experience on conducting the interview;
- Where the interview was made, how was the interaction, what happened during the interview: physical action, such as external interruptions and the moments that the interviewee observed the recorder;
- Political issues: matters that were avoided, and how sensitive issues were addressed;
- Main contribution of the interview;
- What was the novelty of the interview;
- What was emphasised in the interview and how this relates to previous interviews;
- Some confidential information was written when it was relevant for the analysis and had impact on how the researcher was analysing and making sense of what was happening, when this happened, the usage of names was avoided;
- Reflexions on the interview: how it has contributed to the study; how it has impacted on the analysis and interpretation, and what should be the research pathway.

4.6.2.3. Interview schedule

As already mentioned, the interview schedule was informed by the first document analysis and it was refined as the interviews were occurring. The interview schedule is in appendix G, in Portuguese.

The interview schedule functioned as a guideline for the interviews, giving the interviewer flexibility in addressing the issues, both in terms as how to approach it and when to approach it (Godoi, Christiane Kleinübing and de Mattos 2006; Rubin and Rubin 2012).

The questions written down in the interview schedule worked as a topic guideline in order to help the researcher during the conduction of the interview. Besides that, the interviewees were not questioned under specific answer categories, such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’; on the contrary, interviewees were requested to express their opinion regarding an event, action or issue. Consequently, they could conduct their response as they pleased, elaborating their answers and even rising new issues or questions to the interviewer.

In the end of every interview, an open space was given to the interviewees where they could comment whatever they wished, even enquiring the researcher. This strategy has proven to be an interesting way of empowering the interviewee – when controlling such space they usually felt more confident to express their vested interests and fears regarding the possible usage of the interview. Frequently, the interviewees highlighted beliefs, repeated what they wanted to be emphasised on the researcher’s thoughts and often questioned the researcher, requesting opinions, insights or inquiring about the research findings.

Furthermore, the interview schedule focused on actors’ relations and perceptions of what was happening in the field. Therefore, depending on who the interviewee was, the schedule was rearranged and specific issues were raised. The objective was to highlight actors’ interpretation of their context and how they informed their action. Due to the length of all adapted interviews schedules when compiled, only the general interview schedule is attached at the appendix. If requested, it was possible to provide the specific interview schedule to each of the interviewees, in which it the specific issues discussed can be accessed.

As the research objective is to understand what is considered to be ‘sustainable’ in the Brazilian beef chain, this was an important question addressed to all interviewees. The interviewee’s opinions regarding some important events, such as the impact of the first Greenpeace’s report, were also asked to all interviewees.

As already mentioned, after each interview, field notes were taken and, during this process, new insights and different perceptions were rising. Such process led to the maturation of the schedule that was being improved as the interviews went by. An example is the explicit question regarding sustainability as risk management; such ‘idea’ was strongly latent and thus added to the schedule.

4.6.2.4. Interviewees

The interviews have the purpose of following the steps of sustainability, thus the criterion of selecting the interviewees was their engagement with the issue of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. The starting point for unveiling such pathway was Greenpeace, the reason was the researcher engagement with Social Movement literature and it was the first connection made. Besides that, it was easier to reach an NGO that conducted a campaign in the sector, than contacting the companies accused of collaborating with deforestation. Therefore, the initial focus was on the conflicts started by Greenpeace's campaign and, as the research developed, new forms of interactions were emerging, leading to new interviewees and documents.

Although Greenpeace could be labelled as the main informant, the interview schedule focuses the relationship among the different actors and how they engage, collaborate, or fight. Choosing a main informant to start the interviews have shown to be an interesting strategy as it allowed comprehending the pathways that 'sustainability' created in such environment and how meanings were arising from actors' interactions.

Additionally, as already discussed, the interaction between documents and interviews enriches the analysis of how actors frame events, creating meanings that legitimate their practices. Focusing on these interactions, enables to analyse how actors' negotiation, competition and coordination create conditions for structural causal powers to emerge.

The interviewees' scope was broad and most of the main relevant actors were interviewed. In the end of each interview, suggestions of other important contacts to be interviewed were asked. Such resemblance of a snowball methodology created a non-probabilistic sample based on actors' interactions and relations – as the interviewees were opening their contacts and guiding the future interviews –, it was possible to map how they understood such context and whom they believed it was a relevant player. Just a few actors that were pointed as relevant interviewees were not interviewed; the reasons vary from research's time and cost restrains to lack of reply.

Some interviewees were strategically chosen even though they were not mentioned in any interviews. The reason for that was to capture different relations and perspectives of such field. Some examples are:

- Elanco Animal Health: is a company from the beef chain of value, however it is not a slaughterhouse and has not suffered Greenpeace or MPF pressures. They have an important role in GTPS Dissemination committee that is now focusing on GHG emissions from the Brazilian livestock. Understanding how they were engaging with the notion of deforestation under this context could show how hegemonic such meanings were.
- The Proforest Initiative: is an NGO that is helping GTPS to organise its structure and plan of actions.
- EMBRAPA Cattle Division: EMBRAPA's division focused on creating and disseminating expertise for increasing cattle farming productivity. As they are focused on productivity and sharing their knowledge with farmers, they are relevant. Besides that, as they are concerned with innovation and productivity their perspective on issues related to environmental sustainability were interesting, as well as how they were permeable regarding deforestation as an important meaning of sustainability in such value chain.
- EMBRAPA Agricultural Informatics: EMBRAPA's division responsible for measuring GHG emissions from Brazilian agricultural activities. They were actively engaged on discussing livestock GHG emissions, identified as one of the next trend topics in the beef value chain.
- Academia: During the research development, it was identified that an opinion from an actor that was not daily involved with environmental matters of livestock would be valid. Besides that, it was an important moment to discuss, after the interview, the research findings and paths.

As a criterion for consistence among the interviewees and to finalise data collection through interviews was the enhancement of the analytical understanding of the research field (Godoi, Christiane Kleinübing and de Mattos 2006). As information started to be redundant, the data collection has stopped and the third moment of data collection was intensified.

Regarding the interviewees scoped, the figure below lists all interviewees and their main role within the organisation⁴⁷, the date of the interview and its length. Although all interviewees have agreed to give the interview and allowed being listed as an interviewee for this research, some of them have not allowed recording and/or direct quotations of the conversation. This is the reason why, in the interviewees' figure, it is not shown whether or not the interview was recorded.

Figure 8: Interviewees, Organisations, Length and Data of the Interview

	Interviewee	Organisation	Length (min.)	Date
1	Ana Toni	Board of Directors – Greenpeace International	65	11/07/2013
2	Marcelo Estraviz	Board of Greenpeace Brazil	83	15/10/2013
3	Marcelo Marquesini	Greenpeace Brazil	78	18/10/2013
4	Carlos Klink	Secretary for Climate Change and Environmental Quality – MMA	58	21/10/2013
5	Paulo Guilherme	Secretary for Extractive Industry and Sustainable Rural Development – MMA	93	22/10/2013
6	Marcelo Furtado	Former Director of Greenpeace Brazil	68	25/10/2013
7	Márcio Nappo	JBS Corporate Director of Sustainability	104	29/10/2013
8	Márcio Astrini	Greenpeace Brazil	152	30/10/2013
9	Eduardo Bastos	President of GTPS and Government Affairs of Dow Brasil	95	01/11/2013
10	André Muggiati	Greenpeace Brazil	98	05/11/2013
11	Fernando Rossetti	Director of Greenpeace Brazil	53	05/11/2013
12	Pedro Arraes	SAE and ex-president of EMBRAPA	54	12/11/2013
13	Fernando Sampaio	Executive Director of ABIEC	66	19/11/2013
14	Mathias	Marfrig Sustainability Manager	42	22/11/2013
15	Mauro Lúcio	Rural Paragominas Union President and Executive Director of Pecuária Verde Project	40	27/11/2013
16	Márcio Macedo Costa	BNDES Chief of the Environment Department	57	27/11/2013
17	Taciano Custodio	Minerva Sustainability Manager	65	06/12/2013
18	Daniel Avelino	MPF-PA	34	09/12/2013
19	Kleper Euclides Filho	EMBRAPA - Gado de Corte	37	11/12/2013
20	Elvison Nunes Ramos	Plano ABC - MAPA	70	11/12/2013
21	Márcio Caparroz	Elanco Animal Health Brazil Corporate Affairs & Market Access Manager	55	19/12/2013
22	Eduardo Assad Delgado	EMBRAPA - Agricultural Informatics CNPTIA and former Secretary for Climate Change and Environmental Quality - MMA	81	07/01/2014

⁴⁷ Some of the interviewees have moved to different jobs and positions, however their role, when they were engaging with 'sustainability' in such field, was kept. Other interviewees worked in important organisations for such matter and, therefore, their former role, when discussed during the interview, was informed in the interviewees' figure.

	Interviewee	Organisation	Length (min.)	Date
23	Isabella Freire Vitali	Proforest Initiative Brazil Manager and Latin America Coordinator	55	09/01/2014
24	Sheila Guebara	Executive Director GTPS	84	13/01/2014
25	Isabel Drigo	Academic	115	13/01/2014
26	Sergio Rocha	Founder and President of AgroTools	120	14/01/2014
27	Camila Valverde	Walmart Brazil Director of Sustainability	33	12/02/2014
28	Daniel Boer	McDonald's Director for Latin America Proteins Worldwide Supply Chain Management	54	20/02/2014

Although the interviews captured a wider coverage of different actors engaged with this context, it was possible to identify some limitations such as: (i) more cattle producers could have been focused and different stages of cattle farming could have been covered, such as breeding and fattening farmers; (ii) the Brazilian Retailers Association (ABRAS) and other big Brazilian retailers, such as Pão de Açúcar and Carrefour, have an important role in the engagement with sustainable practices in the Brazilian beef industry, however it was only possible to interview Walmart's perspective.

A total of 28 interviews were conducted, totalling 2009 minutes, more than 33 hours, an average of 71 minutes per interview. The interviews were held between 11th of July of 2013 and 20th of February of 2014.

Chapter six will provide the reader with the historical background of the two main organisations – MPF and Greenpeace – that have promoted the transformations regarding the understandings of environmental impacts within the Brazilian beef industry, thus exploring the possible repertoire of actions that they could have employed due to the organisational institutional framework.

5. Creating Meanings, Changing Contexts: Deforestation and the Brazilian Beef Industry

Interviewer: What can we understand for sustainability in this company?

Interviewee: Business Strategy. Our business is totally dependent on natural resources. Thus, our approach needs to go in this way, otherwise we will compromise the sustainability of the business in the long term, including the financial one. Also, besides that, there is a trade issue involved, right? Besides the sustainability of the business, there is a trade issue. So, if we are not engaged in this type of action, we have a very big constraint with customers both domestically and in the major importing markets, the ones that practice the higher prices, which are, basically, the European and American markets. (An anonymous interviewee)

As discussed on the previous chapters, analysing the context for actors' agency in a situated context is crucial to understand how actors shape and fashion their environment. Therefore, this chapter aims at bringing an account of actors' contexts for agency regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field, by emphasising how, at the same time that Amazon deforestation emerges as a focal issue, actors are fashioning their contexts, through constraining and enabling actions. Furthermore, it examines how actors are using different characteristics of contemporary capitalism to create meanings of sustainability and put them into action.

Concerning the research development, this chapter assesses how actors' constant jockeying changes the context for agency regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. Such actions and interactions create the meanings of sustainability and represent hegemonic struggles for such meanings, with consequences on both the situated context of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field and the societal logics that enables such interactions.

While the discussion carried on this chapter supports that societal logics, actions and meanings are interrelated, it was identified that actors are using characteristics of the twenty-first century capitalism to promote changes on the very societal logic employed to make sense of their context. The next chapter will reveal that i) the Amazon deforestation became a

prominent topic due to an alignment among different actors' interests; and ii) how capitalistic societal logic's characteristics are being protected or attacked by actors' developing approaches to examine what is happening in their contexts.

However, to inform this discussion between micro and societal levels of analysis, it is first necessary to focus on the rise of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry and its negotiation order where a focal issue emerges and impacts the actors' agency.

The story told by this research focuses on the negotiation order surrounding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. Since the 2000s, actors such as Greenpeace, MPF, EMBRAPA, JBS and other companies, and the Brazilian State have been struggling over the idea of sustainability and its materialisation into programmes and initiatives that tackle the environmental impacts denounced by such idea. Although some of these environmental impacts have been acknowledged for a long time, it was only in 2009 that a confrontation process emerged generating disputes over what would be considered a 'sustainable' practice. Even though such disputes are still happening in the Brazilian beef industry while this thesis is being written, they took the form of a monitoring system through which it is possible to **trace** the cattle supply along the beef **value chain**⁴⁸, by geo-referencing ranchers in order to determine their **risk** of being involved in deforestation, among other illegal activities.

Such monitoring system has become the embodiment of 'sustainability' in the Brazilian beef industry, in this particular time and space. Thus, the story of sustainability, elaborated in this chapter, does not focus on the different programmes and initiatives developed by this industry, such as certification and rating mechanisms, but on how actors are

⁴⁸ In this research the terms 'supply chain' and 'value chain' are considered interchangeable. Although there is vast literature that associates supply chain management and its environmental and social impacts (for more information, check *Gestão Sustentável de Cadeias de Suprimento: análise da indução e implementação de práticas socioambientais por uma empresa brasileira do setor de cosméticos* (Carvalho, 2011)), the purpose of this research is not to assess such literature or to analyse the management of activities regarding sourcing, procurement and logistics under the beef industry's production arrangements in terms of their environmental impacts. This research recognises the existence and importance of such literature but it engages with the organisational institutionalism in order to analyse how the meanings of 'sustainability' are being constructed and their impact on a situated context. The idea of supply chain is understood as a characteristic of the twenty-first century capitalism that is shaping individuals' interests and behaviours in the situated context of sustainability under the Brazilian beef industry. Finally, it is important to remember that the interviews and documents analysed were equally unconcerned in defining these ideas and deemed supply chain and value chain interchangeable. Thus, such interchangeability is an element of the discourses under this context.

using meanings in order to justify and explain their actions, through different characteristics of contemporary capitalism – risk management, innovation and productivity increase, global supply chain and governance – of which the development of this monitoring system is consequence.

As already mentioned, it is possible to argue that the narrative of ‘sustainability’ under the Brazilian beef industry started on the early 2000s, when a vast array of researches identified that cattle ranching, especially in the Amazon biome, was delivering several environmental impacts. Besides such warnings, no significant programme or initiative regarding ‘sustainability’ was developed by the industry. It was only in 2009, with the Federal Prosecutors Office (MPF) and Greenpeace’s actions, that Amazon deforestation raised as a hegemonic meaning. By becoming a focal issue, Amazon deforestation started to justify actions from companies, social movements and the Brazilian government. During such process, a litigation and brand damage strategy was being employed in order to associate Amazon deforestation to a relevant risk for such industry. While these actions and interactions were being carried out, the idea of a monitoring system to trace the beef supply chain was under development, aiming at disassociating Amazon deforestation from cattle products. Finally, after 2012, the Brazilian beef industry, assisted by such monitoring system, started to transform the risks into opportunities, within the context of sustainability.

In analysing such negotiations, it was possible to identify three different contexts for agency: (i) *voices on environmental impact: void of practices*; (ii) *creating meanings for sustainability: the rise of deforestation*; (iii) *anticipating risk: nothing is so bad that you cannot take something good out of it*. These contexts were elaborated in the process of making sense of actors’ social interactions through the theoretical lenses adopted by this study (Langley 1999)⁴⁹. Moreover, they constitute a longitudinal case study in which the actors’ explanations for the events’ sequences are more significant than the reconstitution of a chronological linearity (Pettigrew 1990), thus, following the methodological perspective employed in this study.

⁴⁹ Therefore, this is not only an empirical chapter. Once a theoretical framework was used to make sense of the data, the chapter combines descriptive and analytical characteristics.

Before detailing such contexts, it is important to present the main occurrences regarding ‘sustainability’ in the Brazilian beef industry in order to provide the reader with a temporal coverage. However, as already discussed, this timeline is not intended to be exhaustive and account for every event and action in such contexts. In this sense, the timeline provides more than a chronological perspective as it assists the comprehension of the actors’ interactions, actions and responses, since it is a result of the actors’ interpretation and remembrance of such occurrences.

In order to help the reader, due to the number of interviewees and documents investigated, some interactions are emphasised by colours, so making it easier to analyse synchronicity and responses: United Nations’ Conferences are written in blue, Greenpeace’ reports in green, MPF’s actions in red and purple for industrial sector’s response. The shaded events are those in which actors’ negotiations, competitions and coordination of conflicts are emphasised, resuming somehow the main characteristics of the periods further examined. The same colour pattern was adopted when quoting interviews and documents’ names during this study. If necessary, the reader can check the methodological chapter, especially the section 4.6.2.4, for a list of the interviewees and their organisations.

Figure 9: Sustainability on Brazilian Beef Industry: A Timeline

Date	Occurrences
2005	Brazilian Herd: 207.156.696 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (55,1%); Semi-manufactured (13,5%); Commodities (29,3%) Amazon Deforestation: 19.014 km ² BNDES started to expressively stimulate the Brazilian beef sector
2006	Brazilian Herd: 205.886.244 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (54,4%); Semi-manufactured (14,2%); Commodities (29,2%) Amazon Deforestation: 14.286 km ² Greenpeace decided to focus industrial impact on deforestation instead of illegal logging FAO published <i>Livestock's long shadow: environmental issues and options</i> Embrapa published <i>Boas Práticas Agropecuárias: Bovinos de Corte (Best Livestock Practices: Beef Cattle)</i>
19 of May	Greenpeace published <i>Cargill - Eating up the Amazon</i>
6 to 17 of November	12 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 12) in Nairobi, Kenya
2007	Brazilian Herd: 199.752.014 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (52,3%); Semi-manufactured (13,6%); Commodities (32,1%) Amazon Deforestation: 11.651 km ² Beef industry became the main sector of agribusiness supported by BNDES Greenpeace started to investigate the beef value chain MPF started to investigate the beef value chain GTPS is created (late 2007)
08 of March	IFC announced approval by its board of a loan to Bertin, aiming at setting new benchmarks for environmental and social standards in cattle ranching and meat processing in the Amazon

Date	Occurrences
3 to 14 of December	13 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 13) in Bali, Indonesia
2008	Brazilian Herd: 202.306.731 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (46,8%); Semi-manufactured (13,7%); Commodities (36,9%) Amazon Deforestation: 12.911 km ² BNDESpar started the financial operations that transformed the loans to major slaughterhouses into stock options
September	The paper, <i>As Preocupações de um Player Global (The Concerns of a Global Player)</i> , claiming the importance of a global player on beef production for the Brazilian development is published on <i>BNDES Setorial</i> , a journal held by BNDES in which economic sectorial analysis are discussed
December	Imazon published its research: <i>A Pecuária e o Desmatamento na Amazônia na era das Mudanças Climáticas (Livestock and Amazon Deforestation in the era of Climate Change)</i>
1 to 12 of December	14 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 14) in Poznan, Poland
2009	Brazilian Herd: 205.307.954 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (44,0%); Semi-manufactured (13,4%); Commodities (40,5%) Amazon Deforestation: 7.464 km ²
29 of January	Greenpeace published 3 maps showing the expansion of cattle ranching in the Amazon Forest MPF filed a lawsuit on environmental damages in the State of Pará against slaughterhouses
June	Pão de Açúcar, Carrefour e Walmart (the three biggest retailers in Brazilian market) have suspended their purchases from 11 slaughterhouses, accused by MPF, with activity in Pará (only for 40 days) IFC has withdrawn a \$90 million loan to Bertin
01 of June	Greenpeace published <i>Slaughtering the Amazon</i>
30 of June	GTPS, which was created in 2007, is now formally constituted
5 of October	JBS, Marfrig, Bertin and Minerva signed the Greenpeace's Zero Deforestation Commitment
29 of October	JBS and Bertin announced their merger
November	Bill 12097 is sanctioned, defining traceability under the beef value chain. BNDES expanded the socio-environmental obligations for operation under this sector, defining new policies for activities involving livestock - <i>Resolução 1854</i>
7 to 18 of December	15 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 15) in Copenhagen, Denmark
2010	Brazilian herd: 209.541.109 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (39,4%); Semi-manufactured (14,0%); Commodities (44,6%) Brazilian Deforestation: 7.000 km ² JBS published its first Sustainability Annual Report, based on GRI methodology
11 of May	MPF forced the slaughterhouses to join a TAC towards legal beef
October	JBS and Bertin's merger became official
29 of November to 10 of December	16 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 16) in Cancun, Mexico
2011	Brazilian herd: 212.815.311 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (36,1%); Semi-manufactured (14,1%); Commodities (47,8%) Amazon Deforestation: 6.418 km ² Greenpeace published <i>The Broken Promises</i>
19 of October	Greenpeace published <i>The Broken Promises</i>
17 of October	JBS is notified by MPF due to not complying the Term of Adjustment of Conduct
28 of November to 9 of December	17 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 17) in Durban, South Africa
2012	Brazilian herd: 211.279.082 Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (37,4%); Semi-manufactured (13,6%); Commodities (46,8%) Amazon Deforestation: 4.571 km ²
6 of June	Greenpeace published <i>JBS Scorecard</i>
6 of June	JBS published a note to their stakeholders claiming that Greenpeace report is based on false accusations and JBS will, thus, take legal action to protect its interests
20 to 22 of June	Rio +20 UN Conference in Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
July	JBS sued Greenpeace Brazil, which is now forbidden to mention the company's name. Greenpeace reaffirmed their statements and removed the reports from its Brazilian quarter's website. However, the reports are still available on Greenpeace International webpage.
October	Márcio Nappo becomes the Director of Sustainability. JBS changed their organisational design, giving more importance for sustainability matters

Date	Occurrences
26 of November to 7 of December	18 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 18) in Doha, Qatar
19 of December	Greenpeace and JBS resumed the Public Commitment to Zero Deforestation
2013	Brazilian Trade Balance by categories of Exports: Manufactured (38,4%); Semi-manufactured (12,6%); Commodities (46,7%) Amazon Deforestation: 5.843 km ² FAO published <i>Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock: A Global Assessment of Emissions and Mitigation Opportunities</i>
25 of March	MPF and ABRAS signed a Cooperation Commitment for Sustainable Livestock
18 of June	GTPS attended the 38 th FAO Conference, where GTPS' experiences were discussed in the session: Multi-stakeholder Action for Sustainable Livestock
10 of September	IFC invested BRL 184.6 million in Minerva, including a loan and an acquisition of 2,93% of the company's shares
October	GTPS elaborated a white paper: <i>Mechanisms for Control and Mitigation of Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon Biome</i> to be presented at COP 19
11 to 22 November	19 th Convention on Climate Change (COP 19) in Warsaw, Poland. For the first time, GTPS has attended the Convention
2014	
01 of April	The three major slaughterhouses (JBS, Marfrig and Minerva), following the workplan committed with Greenpeace, published the third party audit report on their website, informing that they had accomplished the criteria for environmental monitoring in the Amazon Biome
02 of April	Greenpeace Brazil published on their website the following news: <i>Compromisso Público: Dando Nome aos Bois (Public Commitment: Given Cattle Names)</i> , affirming that the three major slaughterhouses (JBS, Marfrig and Minerva) strengthened their transparency and efforts to foster the Zero Deforestation commitment in their supply chain, although there are still some areas for improvement
15 of April	GTPS published the following news on their website: <i>Indústria da Carne bovina demonstra controle sobre a procedência de sua matéria-prima (Brazilian Beef Industry shows evidence of control over the origins of their raw material)</i> , stating that Greenpeace had published on their website that JBS, Marfrig and Minerva have accomplished their public commitment to Zero Deforestation with Greenpeace

Elaborated by the author.

Under this time frame, it was possible to identify that the negotiation order of sustainability covers the three contexts, as mentioned. While, in the first period, denounces regarding the environmental impacts of cattle ranching – both in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation – were being made, since at least the beginning of the XXI century, no significant practices had been implemented to tackle such matter. That is the reason why this study has termed such period as *voices on environmental impact: void of practices*.

The second context analysed has been called *creating meanings for sustainability: the rise of deforestation*. During this second period, Greenpeace launched its campaign against the slaughterhouses, alongside MPF's actions, which forced the assimilation of deforestation into the beef industry. It was during this period that deforestation became a hegemonic topic for such industry and the main strategies and solutions regarding 'sustainability' were developed: traceability, geo-referencing, litigation and brand damage.

Finally, the last period was labelled as *anticipating risk: nothing is so bad that you cannot take something good out of it*, and it shows how the industry learned with such experience and started anticipating future risk, by exerting their agency, based on what is expected for the future.

It is important to remember that it is not the objective of this study to determine whether a practice is ‘sustainable’, neither it is to elaborate any remark about the environmental impacts of the beef industry’s practices. On the contrary, the research’s goal is to comprehend why some practices become known as ‘sustainable’ in this situated context, and, thus, understand the qualification of being sustainable. In order to tackle this goal, the research focuses on the meanings negotiated by actors, through their actions and interactions, and on how such process enables actors to shape and fashion their environment.

5.1. Voices on environmental impact: Void of practices

The first analysed period encompasses the context for agency regarding ‘sustainability’ in the Brazilian beef industry field from the early 2000’s to 2009. During this period, it is worth emphasising that although several environmental impacts of cattle ranching (e.g. deforestation, GHG emissions, acid rain, among others) were already known, there were not relevant practices addressing them. Furthermore, the market competition among the main players of this industry, alongside a timid pressure from government and civil society, collaborated to enable a context in which the development of ‘sustainable’ practices was not required.

5.1.1. Cattle ranching and environmental impacts in the Brazilian Beef Industry

Nowadays, Brazilian beef and other cattle’s co-products, such as leather, are associated with the Amazon deforestation (The Economist 2010) and 2009 Greenpeace’s campaign frequently takes the credit of internationally exposing such environmental impact. However, cattle ranching has been identified as having a strong correlation with deforestation since the early 2000s (Fearnside 2002; Margulis 2004; Fearnside 2005; Barreto et al. 2008;

Amigos da Terra 2009; Walker et al. 2009; Rivero et al. 2009). Although, at that time, as Fearnside (2002a: 309) points out, “understanding the causes of Amazonian deforestation was [is] still in an embryonic state”, therefore, the debate whether cattle ranching itself, or other activities such as land grabbing or timber extraction that drove the Amazon deforestation, was unclear (Fearnside 2002; Vosti et al. 2003; Junior et al. 2008).

Those who advocates for the intensification of cattle ranching in the Amazon region would claim that deforestation is essentially an issue of land tenure, regardless of the economic activity that supports it (Junior et al. 2008)⁵⁰. Moreover, pasture management⁵¹ was considered crucial to increase cattle ranching productivity and, therefore, hinder deforestation (Junior et al. 2008), since producing more cattle in the same area would reduce the economic incentive for transforming forest into pasture. Such debate would only acquire a different perspective when the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), the government enterprise to generate and transfer agribusiness knowledge and technology, published the *Terraclass*⁵² study in 2010 (Embrapa and INPE 2010; Embrapa and INPE 2011). Using satellite images to examine the land usage of deforested areas in the Amazon, *Terraclass* has shown that 66% of the total deforested area, until 2009, was transformed into pasture⁵³.

Hence, there was strong evidence that *cleared land* was being transformed into pasture and, consequently, livestock should also be focalised by policies dealing with deforestation (Fearnside 2002; Vosti et al. 2003). Fearnside (2002a) and Vosti et al.’s (2003) studies argued against the Brazilian government subsidising pasture intensification in the Amazon region as a strategy to slow down deforestation. Fearnside (2002a: 310) is incisive in his conclusion: “Subsidizing pasture intensification is not recommended as a strategy to slow deforestation. [the author stresses the following sentence] Subsidizing the intensification of pasture

⁵⁰ Junior et al. study, entitled as *As preocupações de um player global* – in a free English translation: *The concerns of a Global player* -, is an important study in this scenario as it was published at *BNDES Setorial*, a journal held by BNDES to publish economic sectorial analysis that will support or explain its investments. The paper argues for the importance of a global player in beef production for the Brazilian development.

⁵¹ Managing pasture can easily increase the productivity – not just growing more cattle, but also growing it healthier and producing more meat per animal (Junior et al. 2008; Embrapa 2011/2006). To do so, several activities are necessary, such as rotation among pasture areas and crop farming ones, and focus on the development of grass species that could provide enough energy and food supply for cattle (Embrapa 2011/2006).

⁵² In a free English translation: Land classes.

⁵³ The data accounts for pasture with forest regeneration, clean pasture and dirty pasture.

management in Brazilian Amazonia is not likely to result in the reductions in deforestation rates foreseen by proponents.”

Nevertheless, the most significant alert of cattle ranching impact on deforestation during the early 2000s came from a World Bank research conducted by Sergio Margulis, the *Causes of deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon* (Margulis 2004). His study has shown that the Amazon deforestation is mainly associated with cattle ranching activity as a consequence of the technological and managerial adaptation of such activity to the Amazonian geo-ecological conditions, thus allowing productivity gains and cost reductions. Once the link between deforestation and livestock is strong, Margulis advises that even though cattle ranching might be economically viable from the private perspective, such viability should be contrasted with the activity’s – environmental and social costs. The following passage resumes his argument: “The financial viability of cattle ranching does not mean that public policies should support it. For such support, a social and environmental analysis of the costs and benefits of cattle ranching and deforestation should be carried out” (Margulis 2004: XIX).

Another relevant contestation was held by an Imazon’s report⁵⁴ (Barreto et al. 2008), showing that the rate of 80% of illegal logging in the Amazon forest, in 2008, was a consequence of the increase in cattle’s pasture. The study also concluded that the foot and mouth disease (FMD)⁵⁵ control in the Amazon region promoted the Brazilian beef exportation, thus showing a positive correlation between the Amazon deforestation, the price of cattle in the previous year and the beef exportation in the given year⁵⁶.

Deforestation, however, is not the only environmental impact of cattle ranching. In 2006, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published an extensive report on several environmental impacts of livestock, varying from land usage, biodiversity losses, water pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Steinfeld et al. 2006).

⁵⁴ Imazon is a Research Institute for the Amazon’s sustainable development. Their activities focus on information of socioeconomic usage of the Amazon region, ultimately supporting public policies. It is an important NGO working to foster the Amazon protection. Its recognition comes from studies using satellite and geo-referenced data on the Amazon deforestation.

⁵⁵ In Portuguese: *febre aftosa*.

⁵⁶ The analysis conducted covered the years between 1995 and 2007.

FAO's report has shown that livestock uses 26% of the terrestrial surface, occupying 70% of all agricultural land. Furthermore, it's the major driver of water use and pollution, being also an important activity in terms of loss of species, not only due to pasture expansion over forests, but also to the usage of pesticides on crop production and pasture management and, more impacting, the cattle natural emissions of ammonia that causes acid rain (Steinfeld et al. 2006).

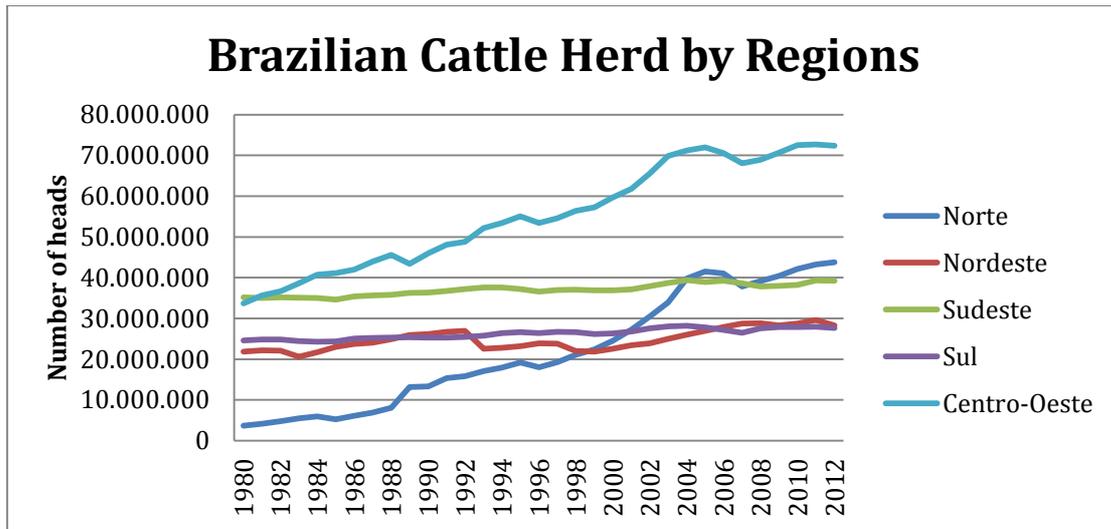
Regarding GHG emissions, the report is even more alarming. Livestock is globally responsible for 37% of methane emissions, 65% of nitrous oxide emissions and 9% of carbon dioxide emissions (Steinfeld et al. 2006). As a consequence, cattle ranching is more harmful, in terms of climate change, than the worldwide transportation sector – cattle ranching's single contribution to global warming effect accounts for 18% (Steinfeld et al. 2006). The main reason for that is due to the enteric fermentation – cattle's natural digestive process that results in the emission of methane into the atmosphere.

FAO's conclusion is that the business as usual perspective is leading to a significant increase of environmental problems and, if such perspective does not change, the scenario will be catastrophic:

In the absence of major corrective measures, the environmental impact of livestock production will worsen dramatically. Viewed very simply, if production doubles, without any reduction in environmental measures per unit of production, then environmental damage will double (Steinfeld et al. 2006: 275).

Despite such strong warnings, it is possible to identify that cattle ranching has been marching towards the North region of Brazil, since the late 1970s. The graph below shows the development of the Brazilian herd, in which it is possible to notice over the decades the concentration of the herd in the Central-West and North regions of Brazil, where the Amazon Biome is located.

Graph 9: Brazilian Cattle Herd by Regions



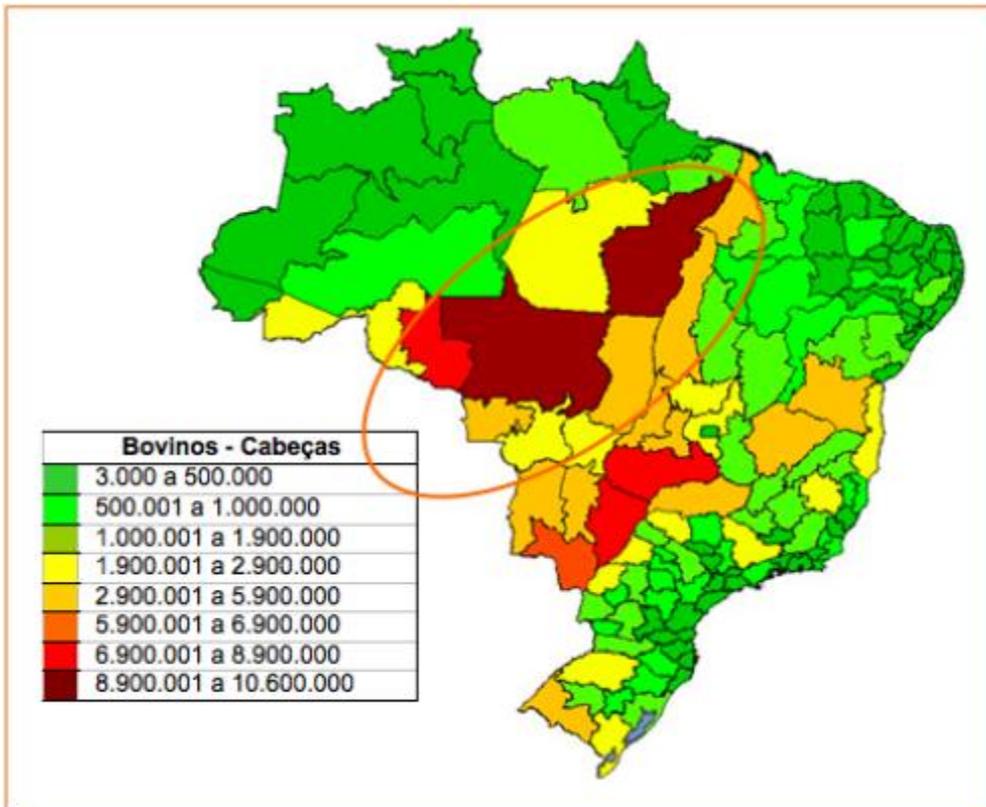
Source: IBGE 2012.

Elaborated by the author.

Moreover, another NGO, Amigos da Terra – Amazônia Brasileira, published in the report *A hora da conta*⁵⁷ (Amigos da Terra 2009) an extensive study regarding the livestock frontier's expansion towards the Amazon biome, which emphasises the association of the beef industry to deforestation in the region. The report presents the map below, highlighting the cattle herd concentration on the frontier of the Amazon forest, thus increasing the pressure for deforestation:

⁵⁷ In English: *The time to pay the bill.*

Figure 10: Cattle Herd Concentration on the Legal Amazon



Source: Amigos da Terra 2009: 15.

Even though there were studies warning otherwise (Fearnside 2002; Margulis 2004; Barreto et al. 2008), cattle ranching actually expanded towards the Amazon biome. Although it is possible to argue that productivity increased between 1970 and 2006 – the ratio of cattle/hectare grew at 1,97%/year (Millen et al. 2011) – there were evidence of strong correlation between cattle ranching and Amazon deforestation, a matter that was not considered in the early strategies to stop deforestation. Moreover, it is clear that during this period there was already sufficient scientific knowledge regarding cattle ranching and its environmental impacts.

5.1.2. Context for agency: The industry should thrive

Despite several warnings encompassing a wide range of environmental impacts of cattle ranching, either from Brazilian and international organisms' studies and researchers, there was a void concerning practices towards 'sustainability', with the exception of non-

expressive certification mechanisms in the Brazilian market that reached a small number of producers (Drigo, 2013). A reason for this silence could be the competition among the major players of such industry.

While the environmental impacts were being denounced, the Brazilian beef industry was thriving, meat exportations were increasing, Brazil became the biggest meat producer (Fleury and Fleury 2011), and the slaughterhouses were accessing crucial investments from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's financial arm, to support the sector's modernisation and internationalisation in order to compete globally (Junior et al. 2008).

Since 2005, as Junior et al. (2008) pointed, BNDES was systematically increasing its investments in the beef industry, becoming the main industrial sector supported by the bank. Amigos da Terra's report (2009) shows that the beef industry received, in 2009, R\$ 5,865 billion, 49,1% of all BNDES's investment in the industrial sector that year – from such amount, R\$ 4,7 billion was destined to the four biggest slaughterhouses at that time (Bertin, JBS, Marfrig and Independência). Miriam Leitão⁵⁸ (2012) claimed that between 2005 and 2012, R\$ 12 billion was invested in JBS, Marfrig and BRF, the three biggest Brazilian slaughterhouses in 2012. As mentioned, the Brazilian government was not the only one financing the beef industry. IFC approved a \$90 million dollar loan to Bertin in March 2007 (IFC 2007). Due to such expansion, market competition was getting tougher as well.

Such market context fostered a furious competition among the slaughterhouses, driving their efforts to the increase of their market share and, obviously, fighting for BNDES's preference, once the bank was investing in the market consolidation in order to support a global player (Junior et al. 2008). Hence, it is possible to say that companies were fighting each other to be chosen as BNDES' national champion.

⁵⁸ Miriam Leitão is an influent economic journalist, although she has not disclosed the source of data used, her reflections upon the BNDES' support to the Brazilian beef industry shows the symbolic significance that such funding was acquiring. Furthermore, even that her data is not correct, it is clear that the beef industry was considered as an strategic sector to be invested as Junior et al. (2008) and Amigos da terra report (Amigos da Terra 2009) has shown.

Such competitive background had consequences in terms of ‘sustainability’. Conversely, the *Grupo de Trabalho para a Pecuária Sustentável*⁵⁹ (GTPS) was created as an informal group in 2007, but, due to market competition, the industry could not agree on what actions should be taken to protect the sector against such environmental accusations. Even though the sector should be aware that, at some time, they would face such contestation, as it will be further discussed, Greenpeace’s campaign (Greenpeace 2009c) against deforestation caused by soya crop was already a success and MPF had already started its investigation linking livestock and Amazon deforestation. Nevertheless, the competition was so strong that the industry actors could not agree on what actions should be adopted to fashion their environment in aiming their protection. As [Eduardo Bastos](#), GTPS’ president comments:

Practically, we have spent two years, from 2007 to 2009, in order to be formally constituted. There was two years of an intensive discussion. A polarisation of the discussion. It was tendentious in the sense of ‘I’m doing everything right... You do all wrong.’ ‘You are deforesting everything.’ ‘No. I’m not deforesting anything’. This conflicted relationship took practically two years, from 2007 to 2009. We joke that this was a calving phase. As we use the livestock term of calving and fattening, this was really the calving phase. I mean, a phase... Today it is easy to look back and say ‘Oh, this was a joint growth and so on’. At the time, this was a serious conflict. But it helped to build this sense of partnership and mutual respect. By the end of day, you start thinking ‘You know what? Part of what we are talking about means the same thing’. (...)

Interviewer: And was there any sensitive issue? What was the focus of this dispute?

Oh. Deforestation has always been a sensitive issue. We took almost three years to agree on the statement of ‘We are committed to zero deforestation as long as there is a compensation for that’.

The void of practices regarding sustainability does not mean that actors were not fashioning their environment. On the contrary, such silence could be understood as a strategy to avoid sustainability’s entrance into the sector’s agenda, it is a political action. It is also possible to conclude that the slaughterhouses were focusing their efforts on creating a better environment for their economic development, therefore their priority was market competition, both in terms of market share and funding access.

⁵⁹ In English: Brazilian Roundtable on Sustainable Livestock

Moreover, the slaughterhouses were eager to fashion the ‘sustainability’ context of their industry – supporting such argument is GTPS’ informal creation in 2007. A governance body, independent from the organisations at stake could be an efficient strategy to protect the industry’s interests, as Barley (2010) has shown on previous studies. Moreover, a roundtable to discuss sustainability could be an interesting organisation, not only to protect the sector but also to influence sustainability’s discussions under this context. Therefore it is not surprising that IFC fostered the establishment of a roundtable to discuss sustainability on livestock. Unfortunately, the market competition was so strong that they could not even agree on how they could do so. It was necessary an external shock (Fligstein and McAdam 2012) to transform such context.

Hence, there was a particular context for agency regarding ‘sustainability’ issues, in which livestock environmental impacts were not in the sector’s agenda. Two aspects that characterise such context were driving the actors’ attention away from environmental concerns: (i) a timid pressure of these denunciations, and (ii) the tough market competition. Consequently, ‘sustainability’ was not being associated to a great **risk** by the sector, which explains the absence of actions regarding ‘sustainability’ during such period in this industry, despite deforestation being already a topic of concern. Such context only changed after the combination of Greenpeace and MPF’s actions, pushing the sector forward and increasing the industry’s **risk** of not tackling deforestation.

5.2. Creating meanings for sustainability: The rise of deforestation

During this second period, from 2009 to 2012, the rise of deforestation as a hegemonic meaning will be examined. It will discuss that, from the several environmental impacts related to livestock, Amazon deforestation was the one that aligned the actors’ interests, becoming a focal issue, and, thus, supporting the development of initiatives and programmes related to ‘sustainability’. While MPF and Greenpeace’s actions transformed the context regarding livestock environmental impacts, IFC’s loan withdrawal represented the crisis peak, due to increasing the **risk** of not addressing ‘sustainable’ issues on cattle ranching, and forcing the industry to change its priorities and start addressing such matter. Hence, it was during this period that actors negotiated the main elements and arguments to understand what ‘sustainability’ in this industry is. Therefore, although there were other discourses about

environmental impacts in the Brazilian beef industry, sustainability meant **Amazon deforestation**.

In this context, any practice that aims at being labelled as sustainable needs to tackle Amazon deforestation. This meaning became institutionalised, transforming Amazon deforestation into a value, which brings material consequences to the industry, such as access to resources, development of new business, the organisation of the supply chain, initiatives and programmes. It is not a coincidence that all three studies (Drigo, 2013; Alves-Pinto et al. 2013; Walker et al. 2013) that analysed sustainability in this field have focused on initiatives dealing with Amazon deforestation. For example, Alves-Pinto et al. (2013) mapped 26 different interventions from civil society organisations, government and private sector that might produce an impact on the development of sustainability within the cattle supply chain in Brazil. Although the study identified programmes that did not emerge from the beef industry context⁶⁰ – since the research goal was to identify programmes that could lead to certification schemes – all interventions were related to reducing the Amazon deforestation.

However, from where has deforestation emerged in this field? Such question needs to be examined in order to understand whether actors are fashioning their context.

Although scientific development changes over time, leading to improved comprehension of environmental impacts, in the early 2000s there was already sufficient evidence that the beef industry had environmental implications, as previously discussed. Even though deforestation was an issue of concern, such environmental impacts were being neglected or, at least, not being tackled. Considering all the different scopes of environmental impacts (e.g. water pollution and consumption, enteric GHG emissions, among others) deforestation was the one that rose as a predominant topic to such industry, and MPF and Greenpeace's actions played a crucial role in such process.

In order to understand the rise of deforestation as a focal issue in this field, it is necessary to shed light on some previous events that enabled Greenpeace and MPF's agency.

⁶⁰ Among others, the authors have mapped the Brazilian Forest Code, created in 1934 and reorganised on 2012. Even though this Federal legislation plays an important role in the development of the deforestation of the Amazon forest and therefore impacts on the Brazilian beef industry, it has not emerged from the negotiations around what is sustainability in such field.

There were at least three elements providing evidence that sooner or later the beef industry would be attacked: (i) the vast array of reported researches linking cattle ranching to the Amazon deforestation – discussed in the previous section –, (ii) MPF’s investigation on cattle ranching, and (iii) the 2006 Greenpeace’s campaign against deforestation caused by soya. These two latter evidence explore how both organisations – Greenpeace and MPF – have shaped this context, and will be discussed in the next sections.

Furthermore, the IFC was concerned with the repercussion of a \$90 million dollar loan approval to Bertin in March 2007 (IFC 2007), since it had suffered pressure from Brazilian civil society due to a similar investment in Bertin, in 2004 (Drigo, 2013). Under the environmental context and the banking sector, it is important to remember that IFC had an important role in developing the Equator Principles, launched in 2003, which guides principles in project finance for assessing the risk associated with socio-environmental impacts (Magalhães, 2010).

Hence, it is possible to consider that players of the Brazilian beef industry were aware that an eminent crisis regarding deforestation could emerge. Corroborating with such view, Prosecutor **Daniel Avelino** mentioned:

I think so, they were aware. I think that there were sufficient studies and public statements for the sector be aware that some measures’ changes were necessary.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine such evidence while comprehending how MPF and Greenpeace are shaping this context.

5.2.1. Evidence that deforestation would emerge: MPF and Greenpeace’s investigations background

Both Greenpeace and MPF were investigating the association between the Amazon deforestation and the beef value chain. Such investigations started in 2007 and several notifications and information disclosure procedures were taken by MPF to conduct its investigation, thus, it was not a covert investigation. Meanwhile, Greenpeace had initiated its covert investigation for the *Slaughtering the Amazon* report (Greenpeace 2009c). Although both investigations started in the same year and employed a supply chain approach,

Greenpeace and MPF were not collaborating and the motives for their investigations also differed. While MPF was focusing on the criminal and illegal aspects of economic activities in the Amazon region, Greenpeace was tracking the Amazon deforestation stain on products commercialised in the European consumer market.

Before examining the consequences of these investigations and how they transformed the context for agency, it is necessary to further discuss the motives and backgrounds upon which the investigations were being conducted in order to identify historical patterns that were brought into the scene. Moreover, Greenpeace's campaign on soya plantation had an important influence in such context as it provided Greenpeace with the necessary skills to attack (i.e. via **brand damage** approach) a complex **supply chain** such as the beef one. Alongside that, MPF Pará's headquarters widespread a **litigation** approach to the beef industry, through the document *Projeto Cadeia da Pecuária: modelo de atuação*⁶¹ (MPF 2009), an approach that was followed by other MPF headquarters such as Rondônia, Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Acre⁶² (Dióz forth coming).

5.2.1.1 MPF's investigation: developing a litigation approach

As already discussed, deforestation was an emerging concern in the Brazilian beef industry and besides no directly relevant practice to tackle it was being implemented (Drigo, 2013), there was sufficient evidence to sustain an action against such industry. At that time Pará was (and still is) the Northern Brazilian State with the biggest herd and the scenario of deforestation was shocking: Pará alone accounted for 57% of the Amazon deforestation, in 2012 the figure dropped to 36% (MPF d).

Supported by such evidence⁶³, Pará's⁶⁴ headquarters of the Federal Prosecutors Office (MPF) decided to start an investigation to examine cattle ranching's participation in the Amazon deforestation. As the Prosecutor **Daniel Avelino** comments:

⁶¹ In an English free translation: *Beef value chain Project: Model of Action*.

⁶² These are different subnational states from the Center-West and North regions of Brazil, all of which are located inside the Amazon Biome.

⁶³ Also discussed during the first period examined.

⁶⁴ Pará is a state of Brazil, localised on the north region its capital is Belém and it is inside the Amazon Biome.

It came out of the Federal Prosecutors Office itself based on the widespread information accusing livestock to be the main deforestation driver in the Amazon. We already had some concrete measures to timber, undergoing measures to soya beans, INCRA settlements. But, until then, livestock had no regulation.

Starting in October 2007, the investigation ended in June of 2009 with MPF filing lawsuits on environmental damages against different actors of the beef value chain. The investigation itself demanded an incredible amount of work, mainly due to the characteristics of the Brazilian federal system, requiring collaboration from different Brazilian State actors, such as IBAMA⁶⁵, INCRA⁶⁶ and Receita Federal⁶⁷ to build up the information necessary (MPF 2009; MPF d).

MPF's investigation into the beef value chain involved three phases. The first phase were identifying ranchers with environmental liability - MPF focused into the analysis of *Guias de Transporte Animal (GTA)*⁶⁸, which is the document required every time that a cattle is transported, either between farms or to the slaughterhouses, it contains the information of each cattle, regarding its hygiene and vaccination, its origin and destination. Such phase was the most difficult and labour intensive, because there was no GTA's electronic copy, all guides were analysed by paper of photocopies, more than 100.000 GTAs were searched. These data were crossed, among other sources, with land tenured files at INCRA and IBAMA's list of properties without environmental conformities. As a result, MPF developed a list of ranchers with environmental liabilities (MPF 2009).

The second phase lays on identifying slaughterhouses and tanneries with commercial relations with those ranchers identified on the first phase. Finally, the investigation focused on identifying industries and retailers, both nationally and internationally, that had trade with

⁶⁵ *Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (IBAMA)*, in an English translation: *Brazilian Institute for Environment and Renewable Natural Resources*. IBAMA is subordinated to the Ministry of Environment and is responsible for preserving the Brazilian natural environment, conducting investigations and charging for those who do not follow the Brazilian Environmental legislation.

⁶⁶ *Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA)*, in a free translation the *National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform*, is a federal government organisation responsible for land reform issues and land rural certification.

⁶⁷ Federal Revenue Bureau of Brazil, it is subordinated to the Ministry of Finance and its responsible for It is responsible for administration of the taxes that fall under Federal Government jurisdiction.

⁶⁸ *Animal Transportation Guide*.

those slaughterhouses and tanneries that had bought cattle from framers with environmental liabilities (MPF 2009).

After this information was consolidated it was possible to identify all beef supply chain links with environmental liabilities, therefore they are able to be prosecuted.

Such investigation provided the MPF Pará's headquarters with expertise to elaborate a guide to others MPF's headquarters, as already mentioned the report *Projeto Cadeia da Pecuária: modelo de atuação* (MPF 2009). The document not only contains all the phases and process undertaken during the investigation, but also, after explaining each investigations phase, the report provides suggestions of action to be taken in order to move the investigation forward. Likewise, the report includes, among others, models of Notification, Official Notices, Civil Public Actions, and Adjustment of Conduct Terms (TAC)⁶⁹ (MPF 2009). **The figure below shows the investigation's flowchart:**

⁶⁹ In English: *Term of Adjustment of Conduct* is a piece of the Brazilian legal system in which a company recognises its socio and environmental damage and commits to change its practices according to an action plan. This legal piece is normally used when the applied fines could cause huge economic and social consequences due to the business collapse. It became the main MPF strategy to foster a regulation regarding livestock on the beef value chain. Several kinds of organisations, such as Municipalities, slaughterhouses, tanneries, ranchers, have signed TACs on different Brazilian States, being extremely difficult to map all TAC in force. However, due to the Pará's MPF headquarters leadership in elaborating a guide (MPF 2009) for this investigation and providing model of action, the TAC's terms are similar regardless of where they were elaborated. Thus, the report *Projeto Cadeia da Pecuária: modelo de atuação* (MPF 2009) is a good source for analysing and understanding the TAC's objective and content.

Figure 11: MPF' Investigation Flowchart



Source: MPF 2009: 15.

It is noteworthy, that the lawsuits, notifications and Adjustment of Conduct Term emphasises not only Amazon deforestation, but also ranchers that have had invaded indigenous land, Conservation Units⁷⁰ - probably involved on land grabbing and/or land conflicts – and modern slavery work types. However, the investigation model developed does not further elaborated on how to investigate into modern slavery on cattle ranching. Similar situation happens with Greenpeace’s reports (Greenpeace 2009c; Greenpeace 2011; Greenpeace 2012b). Although Greenpeace’s first report (Greenpeace 2009c) tackles the current slavery problem (so that it is a criterion of the Zero Deforestation Commitment (Greenpeace 2009a)), such issue is fading out as the second and third reports are published

⁷⁰ Conservation Units are one type of public protected areas in Brazil, alongside Indigenous Lands. They are classified into specific categories, according to their use and purpose, which are defined by law. There are two umbrella categories, with several subcategories under them, named: Units of Sustainable Use and Full-protection Units. While the latter's main goal is to preserve nature, the former's one is to "conciliate the conservation of nature with the sustainable use of part of its natural resources", therefore some economic activities are allowed in these areas (Brazilian Forest Service 2009).

(Greenpeace 2011; Greenpeace 2012b). There are many explanation for this situation, however it could be evidence that deforestation is becoming the prominent meaning in such field, as it acquires value it started to be institutionalised and being recognised as more relevant than other issues.

After two years of investigation, in June of 2009, MPF filed twenty lawsuits on environmental damages in the state of Pará against producers and slaughterhouses, such as Bertin and JBS, asking for R\$ 2 billions⁷¹ of indemnity due to social and environmental impacts in the Brazilian society, this was the rise of **litigation** as an approach. Furthermore, sixty-nine companies – including the three biggest retailers in the Brazilian market – Carrefour, Pão de Açúcar and Wal-Mart – were notified as they were buying beef and/or cattle co-products from illegal deforestation areas. After such notification, the retailers were obliged to suspend purchasing from the notified slaughterhouses, otherwise they would be liable as co-responsible to illegal deforestation (MPF c; MPF d), so as a consequence the retailers suspended for 40 day all their purchases from the eleven slaughterhouses with activity on Pará that were accused by MPF (MPF c; MPF d).

By analysing the beef **value chain**, MPF was able to **track** the crime path on the whole value chain, increasing the pressure for change. Prosecutor **Daniel Avelino** comments:

We wanted to focus on the value chain as, in the timber case, we already had some type of control in the timber chain of custody based on the document of forest origin. But this didn't happen with the cattle case. The transactions were completely free and the following agent in the chain had no environmental responsibility. We, then, decided to focus on the market transactions. Through the investigation of public documents, testimonials, on-site inspections in the farms listed in IBAMA's records, we managed to document the track of illegal cattle using a sample. But this was a very significant sample that enabled us to reach the whole chain, including the retailers.

Such lawsuit filed by Pará's MPF sustained the *Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta* (TAC) with slaughterhouses – such as JBS, Marfrig and Independência – ranchers, tanneries – e.g (MPF 2009; MPF 2010a; MPF 2010b; MPF 2010c), which will be further discussed, and, as mentioned, it reinforces the **litigation** as a strategy of increasing the business **risk**

⁷¹ More than US\$ 1 billion at that time.

regarding Amazon deforestation, invasion of indigenous land and Conservation Units. Additionally, as the investigation relies on an analysis of the supply chain it brings the importance of **traceability** (to track the cattle throughout the whole value chain) and **geo-referencing** (to place a particular cattle on a specific geographic area).

Finally, it is interesting to note that the lawsuit was filed in June of 2009, the same month that Greenpeace published its first report on beef (Greenpeace 2009c), the retailers suspended their beef purchases from slaughterhouses from Pará, IFC withdraw its loan to Bertin and GTPS, which was created in 2007 as an informal group, became formally constituted.

June of 2009 was an agitated month.

5.2.1.2. Shaping your context while you get ready: Greenpeace's soya campaign

MPF's investigation had an important role on the negotiation order of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry and so did Greenpeace's campaign on beef and Amazon deforestation. Nonetheless, underneath these initial negotiations around sustainability in the beef industry it is possible to identify the 2006's Greenpeace campaign building a different context for agency. Such campaign was so successful that it not only enabled Greenpeace with knowhow and expertise on conducting a forest campaign in Brazil – that draws attention to the correlation between an industry global value chain and deforestation –, enabling Greenpeace to conduct a campaign targeting an industry with a more complex value chain, such as the beef one. But the soya campaign also highlights how Greenpeace shaped its environment creating the necessary context condition for developing the beef campaign.

Moreover, it is important to remember, as discussed, that GTPS was created as an informal group in 2007 under the context of Greenpeace's soya campaign. Another evidence of the importance of this campaign is that, in 2012, JBS hired Márcio Nappo as its new sustainability director while the company was redesigning its **organisational structure** that

gave sustainability a prominent position. Márcio Nappo was one of ABIOVE's⁷² coordinators during Greenpeace's campaign on soya and deforestation.

Greenpeace decision to focus soya and its link with deforestation was a strategic one. As already discussed, besides several researches that have shown the strong correlation between the Amazon deforestation and cattle ranching (Fearnside 2002; Vosti et al. 2003; Margulis 2004; Barreto et al. 2008; Rivero et al. 2009), Greenpeace decision was to focus on soya rather than the beef industry, starting its investigation in 2004. There were at least two reasons for such decision.

First, at that time, soya plantation was intensely reaching the Amazon region with the association of international capital, bringing strong investments on infrastructure, such as river ports, roads and siles. Such investment was encouraged by FMD contamination in Europe and USA, pushing forward the external demand for the Brazilian soya. **André Muggiati**, Greenpeace coordinator of both campaigns – soya and beef – comments:

*It was crucial that Greenpeace worked on the issue of forests' greenhouse gas emissions. We succeeded in introducing this topic in the organisation's agenda as a priority and, after that, the soya campaign came as a test. By this time, we considered **practically impossible to think on any type of control to the livestock expansion**. But we believed that soya had a big destructive potential and, thus, it could be the target of a successful campaign. It ended up being so. (bold added)*

Second, this was the first Greenpeace campaign associating companies to deforestation. When Greenpeace opened its Brazilian headquarters in 1992 during the Eco-92 UN Conference, its main campaign was on illegal logging, first targeting furniture industry on Europe and its use of hardwood timber (i.e. mahogany), latter focusing on the internal consumption and the role of Brazilian States and municipalities on controlling illegal logging. It was also during the beginning of the 2000s that Greenpeace started to attack the private sector on its campaigns (Magalhães, 2010), so the organisation was learning and developing strategies and practices to accomplish its objectives.

⁷² Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Óleos Vegetais, translating into English: Brazilian Vegetable Oils Industry Association

Under this context, contrasting the Brazilian soya and the cattle value chain, it is possible to note that the first was, and still is, concentrated in a restricted number of multinational companies, while the second was pulverised on a considerable number of slaughterhouses and an even bigger number of ranchers, industries and retailers. Consequently, it was preferable to focus soya value chain, since the organisation was learning and testing new approaches while it was aiming at changing companies (i.e. the structures they use to make sense of the companies' sustainability field and market). Such experimentation could provide Greenpeace with the necessary knowledge and technologies to attack the beef industry. [Marcelo Marquesini](#), Greenpeace coordinator of the investigation into beef campaign remarks:

Although it wasn't the main driver, the scenario that was set in the work with soya made a lot of sense. (...) The soya case involved the large soya traders. There were only five companies buying the whole soya production. Then, it was different. It was much easier.

By focusing on the soya value chain Greenpeace was able to link the Amazon deforestation to the consumption of soya products in the European market (Greenpeace 2006). However, its success was not restricted in reaching and communicating to Greenpeace's main donation market. The symbolic victory act was conquered when the major soya traders – ADM, Bunge and Cargill – signed the 'Soya Moratorium' agreeing that none of these companies would buy soya from farmers involved in deforestation activities⁷³.

This remarkable success gave Greenpeace legitimation, power and more important resources (i.e. knowledge and technologies) to pursue others supply chains as well as was showing that it could change companies' behaviour by exposing their environmental consequences, especially regarding the Amazon forest. By doing so, Greenpeace fashioned the international environmental arena as it shows what can be pragmatically (i.e. empirically) done in terms of moving an environmental agenda forward – what is an important demonstration to its donors –, as well as increase the importance of preserving the Amazon forest. As a consequence its legitimation and power to attack others value chains increases.

⁷³ This agreement was renewed for six times, ending in January of 2014.

Moreover, Greenpeace deliberately fashioned a particular market when it fostered the Soya Moratorium in 2006, transforming the companies' programmes and initiatives regarding sustainability. On the other hand, Greenpeace campaign on soya links the sustainability concerns of soya and beef value chains, once both could be associated with deforestation. By doing so, the campaign strengthened the Amazon deforestation as a topic when discussing sustainability in the beef value chain, shaping the beef industry field by enabling a campaign on deforestation under such context, as André Muggiati's remark remembers that, at time, was impossible to consider any kind of control on the beef industry regarding deforestation.

Such context reinforces the evidence that GTPS creation, as an informal group in 2007, was not a disinterested action, it can be seen as a beef industry's defensive movement because Greenpeace was attacking soya, warning that the beef industry could be the next target, since it was already know that cattle ranching was the main driver of the Amazon deforestation (Fearnside 2002; Vosti et al. 2003; Margulis 2004; Barreto et al. 2008; Rivero et al. 2009). However, as discussed while examining the previous period, GTPS creation was not successful in terms protecting such industry by accusations of fostering Amazon deforestation due to the context for agency during its creation, as the industry was focusing the market expansion and consolidation.

Since it is now clear how Greenpeace has shaped the context for its agency, this research moves forward into analysing Greenpeace's campaign of deforestation and the beef industry.

5.2.2. Slaughtering the Amazon: Greenpeace's beef campaign

Under Greenpeace's perspective, the beef campaign was an important achievement. While conducting the soya campaign, Greenpeace was developing expertise and technologies on how to conduct a campaign on Amazon deforestation. The campaign success not only enabled the organisation to pursue higher goals, but also prepared the context for their agency on the beef industry field.

Even though Greenpeace had developed an innovative approach on the Amazon campaigns, tested on soya, the beef campaign also had its own obstacles. The beef value chain is very different from the soya one, not only in terms of size and number of links, but also on complexity. [Márcio Astrini](#) explains such difficulty:

In the case of livestock, it is a food processing chain that presents some difficulties to work. First, it has a low degree of professionalism, since it is still in formation. Therefore, it is an informal chain. The cattle walks. So, it is complicated to affirm that cattle in that specific farm, in that specific moment, caused a particular deforestation 10 months ago. It is complicated.

The beef value chain required a specific target in order to track the chain links and asked for a more detailed geo-referencing system as it was important to associate a cattle and a deforested area during a precise point in time, as [Márcio Astrini](#) explained. Even though, the beef industry has a great number of abattoirs – varying from different sizes and degrees of technology employed –, an even bigger number of ranchers, retailers, consumers and transformation industries it was strategic to focus the campaign on them since the slaughterhouses are less numbered and it is through them that is possible to associate big brands and the deforestation. [Marcelo Marquesini](#), Greenpeace coordinator of the investigation into beef and deforestation explain such analysis:

*If you make a draw of the problem, you can easily imagine a funnel. In the narrowest part of it, there are the slaughterhouses. As for the producers, they are many, thousands actually, from the small to the big ones. Even if selecting only the big ones, there are around forty thousand. So, who should be attacked **to make the machine work, change?** The **intention** in our analysis was: **"We will shape the trajectory of livestock in the Amazon. It is moving towards one side and we will do this.** [showing with his hand a direction change movement] **We will give it a push. It is moving towards barbarism, deforestation etc. So, we will push it to the other side. No more deforestation."** When will this be achieved? I don't know. **But we can changed the trend, and this is the goal of the campaign. To change. Therefore, we need to target the big ones, as they have a larger capacity, not only regarding adaptation and change, but also regarding influence, due to their importance in the sector. Like it or not, 50% of the slaughter of cattle is done by them. (bold added)***

[Marcelo Marquesini](#) explanation reinforces that once Greenpeace has decided to targeted deforestation it was easy to support a campaign on beef. The decision of focusing on

the slaughterhouse not on ranchers was also a strategic one aiming at fashioning this environment. By attacking the slaughterhouses, Greenpeace can link the whole beef value chain, associating different *blue chip* companies with deforestation, increasing the pressure for changes, in other words, Greenpeace increased the **risk** of being associated with deforestation. Furthermore, it can link product being sold globally and the Amazon deforestation, what can also intensify its appeal for donations.

Likewise, Greenpeace has understood that under some situations, attacking the private sector could lead to changes faster than attacking the National States. However, it does not mean that States do not have responsibilities, but it is possible to argue that Greenpeace has realised the importance of global companies under the contemporary capitalism, as will be further examined. Hence, campaigning on companies' environmental impact could lead to changes they envisage. **Marcelo Marquesini**'s remarks are evidence that the choice of focusing on the slaughterhouses were conscious and rationally perceived:

*(...) Their [slaughterhouses] role in this game. In fact, the State also has a role. But knowing, as we already know, the lack of State governance in the Amazon, the State was not the main actor to get exposed. And we have to work from the point of view of the campaign. The State has its role, as it has showed in the sequence [e.g. with the MPF's actions after the Greenpeace's denunciations], but it was already in the game. So, the main actors that could change the dynamics in place were the slaughterhouses. **In a scenario analysis, this was it.** They (the slaughterhouses) had a crucial role. (bold added)*

Adopting this framework, Greenpeace carried out its investigation in order to comprehend the markets relations and how its dynamics worked out *laundering* the deforestation (Greenpeace 2009c) stain on products. **Marcelo Marquesini** explained that the investigation **tracked** deforestation from ranchers to products - such as leather and processed beef. **Supply chain**, in which the slaughterhouses have an important role:

*We needed to know and understand. Understand the market. Understand the field dynamics, where the people were. So, a two-year research was carried out, in order to **map the cattle farms** and their dynamics, in terms of **where they were, when they deforest and how.** (...) In the market side, we wanted to understand how it operated. Who bought the cattle? By identifying the meat (buyers), we could get to the leather (buyers). Indeed, everything from the cattle is harnessed,*

*isn't it? And the leather had a huge market. So, we started building **the tracking and the tracking spreadsheets** were this big. They were wonderful. (bold added)*

Using similar approach (i.e. **geo-referencing** and **traceability**) than MPF, as previously examined, Greenpeace was able to elaborate a dense and extensive report on cattle and its co-products and the Amazon deforestation, exposing several companies that directly or indirectly fostered such harm.

Greenpeace published the *Slaughtering the Amazon* report (Greenpeace 2009c) on the 1st of June 2009, accusing the biggest beef slaughterhouses, JBS, Bertin, Independência and Minerva,⁷⁴ of being the main drivers of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon forest, through buying cattle from farms practicing illegal logging, invading indigenous land and implemented slavery-like forms of work, as the passage below exemplify:

Greenpeace undercover investigations have unpicked the complex global trade in beef products from part-Brazilian-government-owned corporations - Bertin, JBS and Marfrig. Greenpeace has identified hundreds of ranches within the amazon rainforest supplying cattle to slaughterhouses in the amazon region belonging to these companies. Where Greenpeace was able to obtain **mapped boundaries for ranches, satellite analysis** reveals that significant supplies of cattle come from ranches active in recent and illegal deforestation. Trade data also reveal trade with ranches using modern-day slavery. Additionally, one Bertin slaughterhouse receives supplies of cattle from an illegal ranch occupying Indian lands. These slaughterhouses in the amazon region then ship beef or hides to company facilities thousands of kilometres away in the south for further processing before export. In a number of cases, additional processing takes place in import countries **before the final product reaches the market**. In effect, criminal or 'dirty' supplies of cattle are 'laundered' through the supply chain to an unwitting global market. (Greenpeace 2009c: 34-5, bold added).

By **tracking** the beef chain, Greenpeace was able to identify beef or cattle co-products being shipped to China, United States of America, United Kingdom and Italy, associating deforestation with big brands such as Nike, Adidas, Unilever, Kraft, Toyota, Audi, Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Tesco, Timberland, among others (Greenpeace 2009c). As a consequence, Greenpeace not only pressured the Brazilian slaughterhouses, but several important

⁷⁴ When the report was published, JBS and Bertin had not merged yet.

multinationals and was, thus, able to create a direct link between deforestation and consumption in Europe, an incredible achievement for an organisation that has its main source of revenue donations from European countries.

Attacking *blue chip* companies, Greenpeace placed big brands in the middle of Amazon deforestation (Greenpeace 2009c). Such strategy exposed their brands, showing how they were inefficient on tracking the sources of their raw material:

While the Blue Chip companies behind reputable global brands appear to believe that Amazon sources are excluded from their products, Greenpeace investigations expose for the first time how their blind consumption of raw materials fuels deforestation and climate change. (Greenpeace 2009c: 32).

The tone gets stronger:

Greenpeace investigations expose consumer companies trading with facilities that process beef, leather and other cattle products from slaughterhouses whose suppliers include ranches involved in recent and illegal deforestation or slavery. Some consumer companies identified by Greenpeace claim to have full **traceability** for their individual supply chains and that these supply chains exclude Amazon products. Others have provided no evidence whatever of the supply chain for their cattle products. All companies named by Greenpeace trade with cattle processors that **profit from Amazon destruction and that are ‘laundering’ this to the global market**. Many companies also demonstrate a woeful ignorance of the true nature of beef or leather processing in Brazil - their claims to a **‘clean’ supply chain relying on the distance between the biome and processing facilities**. (Greenpeace 2009c: 35, bold added).

By using a **brand damage** perspective, Greenpeace was able to fashion their environment creating a favourable context for their actions, while shaping the context for agency it opened space for practices that tacked the Amazon deforestation emerged, creating the opportunity for the market changes that Greenpeace envisage.

The impact of Greenpeace report, especially in connecting different parts of the globe can be seen on Timberland’s CEO, Jeff Swartz, testimonial on how he managed the *Slaughtering the Amazon* report’s repercussion (the long quotation is relevant for a depth understanding):

You can tell a lot about how your day is going to unfold by the number of e-mails that are waiting for you. I'm a pretty early riser - 4 AM most days - so I typically start out ahead of the game when it comes to e-mails. But on June 1, 2009, they kept coming, and coming, and coming.

The first one accused Timberland of supporting slave labor, destroying Amazon rain forests, and exacerbating global warming — all in the first sentence. The second was a repeat of the first, as was the next, and the next. I had a funny feeling it was going to be a long day.

The fan mail was from Greenpeace supporters reacting to a newly released Greenpeace report about deforestation in the Amazon. The gist of the report was (a) Brazilian cattle farmers are illegally clear-cutting Amazon rain forests to create pastures, and (b) the leather from their cows might be winding up in shoes - including Timberland's. (A) plus (b) equals (c): New Hampshire-based bootmakers are desecrating the environment. Take them to task. And take us to task they did. **The senders didn't threaten a boycott but said they were 'concerned'** and urged us to work with Greenpeace to find a "permanent global solution" **to both deforestation and climate change.**

As a CEO, I'm used to getting angry e-mails—most of them along the lines of "You support something I oppose; therefore you're an idiot." But these were different. Even though their text was a form letter pulled off the Greenpeace website, it was well written and informed. **And it was coming from a potent activist organization**, suggesting a problem I wasn't intimately familiar with. Even in my early-morning haze, I knew that was a bad combination. Throw away the Monday morning to-do list - we've got us an issue here. (...)

Next on the agenda was figuring out how to respond - not just to Greenpeace's allegations, but to the **angry senders, who totaled 65,000 over the next few weeks.** I figured if that many people were taking the time to send an e-mail, there must be at least half a million not sending e-mails who were also pissed off. That's a big number. **Our brand's reputation was at stake.** (Swartz 2010: 1, bold added).

Greenpeace's approach of **tracking** the environmental impact throughout a **value chain**, alongside with **geo-referencing** it, enabled the organisation to put an Amazon deforestation's stain on big brands products and consequently exposing it employing a **brand damage** approach. By doing so, Greenpeace was able to escalate the international pressure under the Brazilian beef industry, the association of big brands with Amazon deforestation was crucial for changing the context for agency. Such importance is evident when **three**

interviewees whom were linked to the beef sector and asked for anonymity when stated in a very similar way that:

Greenpeace has changed the sector

Once it is clear the framework behind Greenpeace's agency, it is necessary to analyse the report's discourse in order to realise the emergence of deforestation as a focal issue.

5.2.2.1. *The Slaughtering the Amazon's report tone*

The report's tone is a consequence of Greenpeace's objective: to change the path of Amazon deforestation. Such objective has been the same since 1992 when it has opened its Brazilian headquarters and the organisation's strategy of achieving it has been being the same since the soya campaign in 2006. It has never been a campaign against a particular industry or a way of consumption (i.e. it was not a campaign claiming that people should stop eating beef or using leather products).

Likewise, *Slaughtering the Amazon* is evidence that Greenpeace understood how the contemporary capitalism works and used such knowledge to fashion its own field of action. This way of acting could lead to transformation on the social order since capitalism characteristic can seem as societal logics, structures that cut across several field and contexts.

Hence analysing the *Slaughtering the Amazon* report could provide insights of how Greenpeace was able to shape such context. [Márcio Astrini](#) details Greenpeace's focus of transforming a particular *reality* (i.e. a specify context):

*Any campaign from Greenpeace has some points already defined, some parameters that are well set. The first is: when attacking a problem or an on-going circumstance, **what is the expected result?** Will this result make any difference to the main goal, **which is ending deforestation?** So, there is no campaign or request coming from Greenpeace that is not designed towards this goal. We have an internal exercise that is the following: "What do we want from this campaign?", "We what that". **Alright, if we succeed on everything we want, what will change in the end?** These are the answers we need to have. The analysis of whether we will build a campaign on this or that issue, in fact doesn't come from us. **It comes from the world that is***

outside of Greenpeace. We go to the forest to see what's going on. We will check what the drivers of deforestation are and how we can attack them. We will investigate what problems they are bringing and what could be a solution to these problems. Finally, what would be the best way, and the most efficient way to work on the transformation of this reality. (bold added)

Moreover, it is not surprisingly that the report emphasise the Amazon deforestation, since it is one of the organisations' target. There are several reasons that could explain this choice and it is not this research objective to examine such question. However the widespread understanding that Amazon deforestation is something evil is crucial and symbolic. Amazon deforestation has been being exposed and scientifically discussed for decades, especially on United Nations forums. It has already being acknowledged its importance in terms of biodiversity and climate change (IPCC 2007; Solomon et al. 2007).

Hence, it is possible to argue that the rise of deforestation as a focal issue is also explained by its symbolism, however actors' agency was fundamental in creating the negotiation order around it and the *Slaughtering the Amazon* report tone played a role in this process.

While land-use change (i.e. deforestation) has being acknowledged for a long time as an important contribution to the climate change (IPCC 2007; Solomon et al. 2007). The cattle enteric emissions and livestock impacts on climate change has recently being pointed out as a significant environmental impact, but, as already discussed, it has not yet become a prominent issue and therefore being used as a meaning to justify actors initiatives. Enteric emissions are a growing concern (SNA 2014) and might trigger a new crisis on the Brazilian beef industry sustainability field, as will be discussed on the finals sections of this chapter. [Márcio Astrini's](#) interview, once more is enlightening, as he explains the Amazon deforestation symbolic importance, contrasting with enteric emissions:

Livestock's GHG emissions are a relatively new thing. It was discovered alongside the broader picture of GHG emissions. So, it brings an impact. Deforestation comes from a longer time and debate. I can't tell. I would bet that this sensation over deforestation being a bad thing has been rather built over decades and decades of campaign against deforestation than spontaneously born in people's minds. The picture of a forest in flames and a carbonised monkey in the middle of the forest due to a production that didn't need to be there

(...). It sensitises people. If you didn't have a campaign, you wouldn't have this picture, this registry... and people would probably be less sensitised.

Consequently, the report gives a stronger emphasis on deforestation, attributing other damages of beef industry a second level of importance. An example is the association of modern slavery and cattle ranching. Such problem is only discussed on the report's last section: *A slave to fashion* (Greenpeace 2009c: 87), associating the fashion industry and the leather originated from cattle from ranchers accused of employing modern slavery.

Marcelo Furtado, Greenpeace Brazil director during the campaign, used these arguments to explain why modern slavery was not as prominent as deforestation. He also explained that this investigation was carried out by another Brazilian NGO, Reporter Brasil:

*Well, first of all, because the campaign decided to target deforestation instead the slaughterhouses. So, there was already a matter of focus. Slaughterhouses were used as inductors of deforestation. That's why the campaign is built around the deforestation issue. It was not, it is not, and it will never be a campaign against this or that company. In the second place, when you are an organisation with limited resources, you need to make strategic decisions of focus. And our focus is that: deforestation. If there are other partner organisations associated to some parallel cause, we can work together. In the case of the 'Slaughtering the Amazon', all the work on slave labour was made by Repórter Brasil, **with whom we strategically partnered**. So, we gathered information and documents and wherever the journalist went, he also covered this issue. Why have we worked very closely? Because this is an organisation with competence to do that. They have an expertise that we don't have, and it was very clear that an issue was associated with the other. Then, it is not the case that we are not doing anything outside of our expertise. It is rather the decision to focus more on a matter that has a much stronger connexion with what we are willing to plead.*

Regarding the predominance of deforestation throughout the report and the ways of using the slaughterhouses as inducers of deforestation, employing a word frequency analysis could be helpful - even though simplistic - in addressing the CDA's objective of examining the hidden structures.

It was very funny because Bertin was the most organised one, and also the one that took more thwack and, then, disappeared. Bertin had a control system with the existing tools of that time, which was greater than anyone else's. Still, it was the company who suffered the most and ended up vanishing due to the IFC problem and so on.

The reason of concentrating the attack on Bertin was not its efforts of avoiding deforestation. At that time, Bertin was the biggest slaughterhouse and received financial support from IFC to develop a benchmark industry in environmental terms (IFC 2006a; IFC 2006b; IFC 2007). Additionally it was also the company that received the largest amount in BNDES' funding (Amigos da Terra 2009). Hence, the lights of the environmental development on industries operating at the Amazon biome were pointed at Bertin. Finally, as already mentioned, the slaughterhouses were fiercely competing for market share and BNDES' preference to be the national champion, ascribing the biggest company not only a symbolic characteristic, but positioning it differently in terms of possibilities of empirical transformation of this market.

Márcio Astrini explained the importance of emphasising the attack on Bertin, not only in symbolic terms, but as a crucial player that could promote the changes that Greenpeace wanted:

For example, when you check our report, what we have at the time of the launch of the campaign was that Bertin is a slaughterhouse incorporated by JBS. But, when you open the Slaughtering the Amazon report, Bertin is highlighted in it. Bertin was emphasised because it had a higher probability of taking actions towards the direction we envisaged. Why? Because they contracts with BNDES and the World Bank [IFC], which already foresaw the starting of the pathway we wanted to work with them.

Moreover, it is clear that Greenpeace is aiming at transforming the Amazon deforestation path and its understanding was that the beef value chain was fostering such deforestation. Therefore, in order to change *this reality*, as Márcio Astrini stressed, it was necessary to attack companies in which there were higher potential for spreading the changes envisage. Additionally, the high frequency of words such as global, international, world, trade, company, industry, processing, IFC and BNDES, is also evidence that Greenpeace has understood some of the capitalism characteristics and is using them to promote transformation, advancing a business environmental concern. By doing so, Greenpeace is

aiming at fashioning not only the beef value chain context but also the structures of capitalism. Enabling to question whether such attack can transform the very deep structures that support elites' power and resources constituting a societal order.

It is noteworthy that after this attack, Bertin suffered from financial problems and merged with JBS (Câmara dos Deputados 2010) creating the world largest animal protein producer. As the sustainability's negotiation continued, Greenpeace has adopted the same strategy and focused its attack at JBS. Both, the second Greenpeace's report *The Broken promises: How the cattle industry in the Amazon is still connected to deforestation, slave labour and invasion of indigenous land* (Greenpeace 2011) and the third report *JBS Scorecard: how the biggest meat company on the planet is still slaughtering the Amazon* (Greenpeace 2012b) focused on JBS.

In this sense, Greenpeace's report is a manner to comprehend how Greenpeace is fashioning its own environment. The report has stressed an issue to be discussed, how it should be discussed and, more important, how initiatives and programmes to tackle it then should be developed.

Thus, Greenpeace's report and MPF's litigations were crucial in fostering deforestation as a focal issue. These actors' actions transformed the context for agency and promoted a new negotiation order in which Amazon deforestation is the meaning to be discursively used and consequently supporting what initiatives should be promoted to address such meaning.

Finally, it is still necessary to examine the consequences of MPF and Greenpeace's actions and how the Brazilian beef industry reacted to such attacks, transforming the context for agency regarding sustainability.

5.2.3. The crisis has arrived: consequences for addressing sustainability

MPF and Greenpeace attacks transformed the context for agency regarding sustainability. Even though the environmental and social impacts of the meat productive chain was previously known it was after these attacks that the risk of not addressing deforestations

increased, threatening the businesses and profitability of this value chain. As Drigo (2013) pointed out the contestation has started due to MPF and Greenpeace attacks. Sustainability has arrived under this context by the use of force, as [Fernando Sampaio](#), executive director of Association of Brazilian Beef Exporters (ABIEC)⁷⁷ remarks:

How has sustainability arrived in the slaughterhouses? It came down on the use of force. Because of that, I was hired here in 2009. In June 2009, Greenpeace developed a report, Slaughtering the Amazon, denouncing Nike, Tesco, Ikea and many other international brands that were buying meat (or cattle products) from deforested areas in the Amazon. That was a kick in their feet, which is Greenpeace's role anyway. Then, they have started to create this correlation, especially in Europe, between the large meat exportation (from Brazil) and deforestation (in the Amazon).

The main consequences of these attacks were: i) IFC withdraw its loan to Bertin; ii) the widespread of commitments and resolutions (i.e. TAC, Zero Deforestation Commitment and BNDES' 1854 resolution) and iii) GTPS being formally constituted.

As already discussed, MPF filed several lawsuits on environmental damages against producers and slaughterhouses giving legal support to notify the biggest Brazilian retailers, such as Carrefour, Pão de Açúcar and Wal-Mart. Under the **risk** of being co-responsible for illegal deforestation, the retailers suspended for 40 days all their purchases from the slaughterhouses accused by MPF (MPF c; MPF d). Nevertheless, this was the first consequence of these attacks, an international repercussion helped in increasing the pressure for changes since the attacks were published at several international newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, the *Telegraph* and *The Economist* (Greenpeace 2009b; The Economist 2010; MPF c; MPF d).

While MPF litigations increased the business risk under the national environment, Greenpeace report attacking blue chip companies' image, threatened the value chain's business and increasing the pressure for changes from international actors. The Timberland example, already discussed, is emblematic. Some interviewees also believed that the international repercussion of Greenpeace's report was crucial for changing the context regarding sustainability, as the [anonymous' statement](#) explains:

⁷⁷ In Portuguese: Associação Brasileira de Exportadores das Indústrias Exportadoras de Carne (ABIEC)

(...) So, that fell as a bomb (the Slaughtering the Amazon report). Until today, I have the report with me. It has 99 pages and fell just like that... "boom"! And the first impact is to check what they are saying and then: "Oh my God, let's check the size of this mess". So, for the Brazilian meat chain, from my point of view, the repercussion came in a larger scale from outside of Brazil than inside it. I don't know whether the Brazilian consumer was much worried at that time. But they certainly were outside. And, so, the pressure came from outside in.

It is difficult to define whether the biggest pressure came from outside Brazil or internally, nevertheless it is clear to identify Greenpeace acting as a bridge between the national and international fields of sustainability, as will be further examined. However, the crisis peak was reached when IFC has decided to withdraw its US\$ 90 million loan to Bertin. This event hit the cattle value chain as an earthquake once it illustrates the businesses consequences of ignoring the Amazon deforestation.

5.2.3.1. Crisis peak: IFC withdrawal of Bertin's loan and the rise of a giant

Bertin was the biggest slaughterhouse in 2009 and has received several loans in order to expand (nationally and internationally) its operations. Only from BNDES, Bertin has received R\$ 2499 million until 2009 (Amigos da Terra 2009). However, it was IFC the first bank to make a movement regarding environmental impact. On 15 of June of 2009 IFC has decided to withdraw the 2007's US\$ 90 million loan to Bertin (Mongabay 2009; Inacio and Freitas 2009; Drigo, 2013).

Even though it was not possible to find any IFC's official statement explaining its withdrawal decision, it seems be a strange coincidence that in the same month that Greenpeace and MPF has accused the beef industry of environmental crimes, IFC decided to withdraw the 2007's loan. It is worth to mention that, as already discussed, Greenpeace's report emphasised its attack at Bertin.

Furthermore, the IFC 2007's financial operation was subject to an environmental improvement in Bertin's operations, as IFC released when announcing the loan in 2007:

The \$90 million loan will support Bertin's corporate investment program to expand and modernize its operations across the country and help it develop a system, the first of its kind in Brazil, to ensure that Bertin's cattle is sourced from ranchers that use sustainable practices and do not contribute to increased deforestation of the Amazon. The project will adhere to IFC's environmental and social performance standards (IFC 2007).

IFC has already being criticised by the environmental movement due to its previous loan to Bertin in 2004 (Drigo, 2013). The environmental movement claimed that US\$ 100 million financial operation would increase the pressure for deforesting the Amazon forest (Drigo, 2013). Hence, it seems that IFC aimed at creating an environmental benchmark regarding environmental standards in operation at the Amazon (IFC 2007).

Analysing the 2007's loan Summary of Proposed Investment (SPI), it is clear that the project has clear environmental concerns that even expand the bank's environmental and social standards:

The purpose of the project is to:

- increase Bertin's beef product range to supply growing demand for in-natura and special cuts meats from the EU, Middle East and other countries in South America;
- increase production by attending new markets such as China for its leather division; and
- expand its domestic sales of its personal protective equipment and cleaning products.

Each of the project components includes investments to achieve compliance with World Bank/IFC environmental and social standards. **Also, Bertin will enhance its traceability programs to ensure that all animals and hides originate from ranching operations that have environmental land use permits and do not impact sensitive land areas.** (IFC 2006b, bold added).

The SPI (IFC 2006b) is supported by the ESRS - Environmental & Social Review Summary (IFC 2006a), which addresses the key environmental and social issues of the operation and their mitigation actions. Among the performance standards (PS) figures concerns of: labour and working conditions (PS 2); land acquisition and involuntary resettlement (PS 5); biodiversity conservation and natural resources management (PS 6) and

indigenous peoples (PS 7). Furthermore, the ESRS is clear in addressing the rationale adopted while examining the environmental and social impacts:

As a result of Bertin's purchase of its slaughterhouse in Marabá, in the state of Pará (within the Legal Amazon as described by Brazilian legislation), it was found that the potential impacts of Bertin's cattle suppliers could be significant, and **unprecedented in terms of IFC finance in the Amazon region**. Issues include an increase of waste due to the expansion of slaughterhouse capacity, and potential issues associated with Bertin's suppliers in Marabá, including **deforestation, slave labor, land title fraud and rural violence**. (IFC 2006a, bold added)

Consequently, based on the SPI and ESRS and Greenpeace's emphasis at attacking Bertin, it is possible to say that IFC's withdrawal was related to the accusations against Bertin. Moreover, alongside with IFC's withdrawal, the bank promoted the formal constitution of GTPS, occupying the first presidency (Drigo, 2013), both actions happened on the same month.

Additionally, if the SPI and ESRS were both produced during 2006 and clear mention the importance of addressing deforestation among other environmental and societal impacts and at that time there were a void of practices regarding such concerns, it reinforces that the context during that period was deliberately shaped by the some actors that were focusing its attention at market expansion and attracting resources to such expansions rather 'sustainability' – as analysed on the first period examined *voices on environmental impact: void of practices*.

Until 2009 the slaughterhouses used public data to decide from whom to buy cattle in order to avoid being co-responsible of illegal activities, checking whether the supplier was listed on the Employment Ministry *dirty list*⁷⁸ or IBAMA *embargoed areas*⁷⁹. However, SPI

⁷⁸ The "Dirty List" was created by the Brazilian Ministry of Labour and Employment (MTE), in 2003, aimed at giving transparency to the public sector actions towards fighting slave labour. The list presents employers who were found to be using slave labour and who had the opportunity to defend themselves before the denunciations were confirmed. As of December 2013, the list had 579 names of employers who were found to subject workers to slave-like labour conditions. From this total, the majority of the employers were in the State of Pará, in the Amazon region. The list can be fully accessed in MTE's website, who is responsible for maintaining and updating the list. (MTE 2013; Repórter Brasil forthcoming).

⁷⁹ The list of areas embargoed by IBAMA due to sheltering illegal activities against the environment, such as non-authorized deforestation in the Amazon, was made available by IBAMA, in 2008, in its website for open

and ESRS was already requiring a **traceability program** which is the basis for the monitoring system created by the industries after this crises and is the same strategy used by Greenpeace and MPF to expose the environmental problems of this value chain.

Under this background, the IFC's decision increased the tension in an already stressed context. Still in 2014, this was an extremely sensitive issue. It has shown the industry that not developing initiatives or programmes to tackle deforestation could be a great **risk** that impacts on different aspects of their businesses, the companies' images, losses on contract – both nationally and internationally –, fines due to being co-responsible with crimes and their financial sources of expansion.

Such crisis might have created a context in which the companies were willing to escape from those attacks, encouraging them to assume several commitments to avoid their association with deforestation⁸⁰ and showing that they were prepared to improve their management over the supply chain. An **anonymous**' statement clarifies:

*The slaughterhouses were signing a blank piece of paper; with half a dozen things. The industry came out undertaking commitments, panicking. They were signing these papers, without any preparation, **without any risk management** previous planned. It was all in the heat of the moment, so that they (industry) came out undertaking commitments with everyone, without even checking whether these commitments were manageable. I'm not saying that this was simply a question of complying or not. If you commit with someone to comply until December and with another one to comply by March (...).(bold added).*

These commitments enabled to push forward the development of initiatives and programmes regarding deforestation as several links of the value chain were obliged to improve their sustainability practices or they might be either sued or have their brands exposed once more. Underneath such process is, once more, a **risk assessment** perspective regarding sustainability.

consultation. The list includes areas that were embargoed since January 2007, during some IBAMA operations under the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of the Legal Amazon Deforestation (PPCDAM) and other inspection actions from different regions of the country. The areas cannot be used until their recovery and whoever buy agricultural and forest products from them may also account for environmental crime. (IBAMA 2008).

⁸⁰ As will be discussed on the next section.

Conversely, one of the first consequences of IFC's withdrawal was not the development of environmental programmes by the slaughterhouses. Bertin has entered in a delicate financial situation and BNDES, following its strategy of fostering a global player (Junior et al. 2008; Câmara dos Deputados 2010; Além and Giambiagi 2010), supported the merge between Bertin and JBS on 16th of September 2009 (Câmara dos Deputados 2010), which was announced on 27th of October 2009 (Drigo, 2013). This operation created a worldwide giant. Since then, JBS became the world leader in production and commercialisation of animal protein (Fleury and Fleury 2011).

Marfrig was also considered to merge with Bertin. However it was JBS that succeeded in this negotiation. It is possible to argue during this merge the national champion was now chosen: JBS. Consequently, since this choice was clear, the market competition would decrease and under the context of being attacked, the beef value chain would open space for sustainability's initiatives and programmes finally thrive. Besides JBS has kept and expanded the monitoring system employed by Bertin, significant results would only be shown by the industry after 2012, when GTPS assumed a more active role and the monitoring system developed by the slaughterhouses showed less than 1% of non-conformity with the criterion committed by the industries⁸¹ (Ambrósio and Bauer 2014a; Ambrósio and Bauer 2014b; Baines 2014), being also recognised by Greenpeace in 2014 (Greenpeace 2014).

However, the pressure from Greenpeace and MPF had transformed the global beef value chain by fostering the creation of a giant due to IFC's loan withdrawn that threatened Bertin's financial health. It was such actions that definitely establish deforestation as a focal issue. Such predominance was even declared by the permanent Agriculture Commission of the Brazilian Deputy Chamber⁸², which was in charge to evaluate whether BNDES decision of supporting Bertin and JBS's merge was appropriate. The report stated, when stressing the Bertin sensitive situation: "Last year, the Federal Prosecutors imposed a veto to Bertin's beef. Environmental Groups denounced the company for **forest devastation**. The group was accused of buying cattle from 14 of the 21 ranchers denounced for **illegal deforestation** by MPF" (Câmara dos Deputados 2010: 14, our translation).

⁸¹ Mainly the different TACs and the Zero deforestation Commitment assumed by the slaughterhouses.

⁸² Câmara dos Deputados

Besides, deforestation has entered the agenda of the beef value chain as a high priority issue, the industry have not yet developed significant initiatives and programmes, however they could not remain silent anymore. Deforestation is now being used to justify the development of meetings and conferences to discuss it, new technologies such as GEO ID by AgroTools (AgroTools 2013)⁸³ are being developed, consultancy and auditing contracts were focusing on such matter and news trades patterns and businesses were being created. The next sections, explores how the deforestation as a meaning is being discursively used in order to support this new enterprises.

Concluding, the sections above have shown that rather than a technical and objective issue, ‘sustainability’ is symbolic shaped by actors’ discourses. The definition of what is ‘sustainability’ has impacts on the resources distributions, can foster new technologies and businesses and it is influenced by a negotiation order created surrounding it. Underneath such processes it is possible to identify actors’ interests and their risk perception associated with ‘sustainability’ in a particular industry.

5.2.3.2. TAC: Adjustment of Conduct Term’s widespread

In addition to the Bertin and JBS’ merge, the attack to the beef industry developed by MPF and Greenpeace has created the opportunity to capture this industry in commitments that could be used to increase their business risk and push them forward in addressing and implementing sustainable practices – i.e. initiatives and programmes that avoid deforestation.

The widespread of TACs being signed by different actors from the beef value chain, Greenpeace’s Zero deforestation commitment and BNDES developing the 1854 resolution, which addresses the sustainability standards for financial operations with the beef value chain, are consequence of this context. Although they are different documents and therefore they would have different legal consequences, all of them increase the risk of remaining silent regarding deforestation.

⁸³ It is a monitoring tool that can geo-reference the ranchers’ shape and determine the risk of a particular rancher being involve in the illegal activities monitored (AgroTools 2013).

This section will examine the widespread of TAC. *Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta*⁸⁴ is a piece of the Brazilian legal system in which a company recognises its socio and environmental damage and commits to change its practices according to an action plan. TAC has become the main MPF's strategy to foster a regulation regarding livestock on the beef value chain. Several kinds of organisations, such as Municipalities, slaughterhouses, tanneries, ranchers, have signed TACs on different Brazilian States, being extremely difficult to map all TAC in force.

However, due to the Pará's MPF headquarters leadership in elaborating a guide (MPF 2009) for investigating deforestation under the beef value chain, the TAC's terms are similar regardless of where they were elaborated. Thus, the report *Projeto Cadeia da Pecuária: modelo de atuação* (MPF 2009) is a good source for analysing and understanding the TAC's objective and core content.

The TAC's objective is to force a particular actor of this value chain to create measures of avoiding buying illegal cattle, i.e. ranchers that are involved in modern slavery, invading Conservation Units and indigenous land and illegal deforestation. To do so, TAC developed a work plan agreed between MPF and the signatory in which the latter will developed a traceability programme or a monitoring system in which it will be able to evaluate whether its supplier (or itself) is involved in those crimes. The document uses the Brazilian Constitution and several laws in order to typifying those activities as crimes and the clear state the co-responsibility of those involved in trading with actors that have committed environmental crime.

Following such strategy of increasing the barrier for illegal beef, MPF and ABRAS has signed a Cooperation term for sustainable livestock (ABRAS 2013; MPF 2013a; MPF 2013b) in which both organisations, among other topics: i) agree on develop action for enhance the awareness of the importance of the sustainable beef for the Brazilian consumer; ii) exclude from the beef value chain modern slavery and Amazon deforestation and; iii) foster the intensification of livestock production on areas already deforested.

⁸⁴ In English: Adjustment of Conduct Term.

Although such Cooperation term is not a TAC, it operates on the same way of increasing the pressure on the slaughterhouses – the retailer’s suppliers – in avoiding trade associations with illegal activities. An anonymous interviewee explained that the biggest source of pressure that fostered the slaughterhouse’s commitment in clearing their value chain of cattle from deforested areas came from the retailers:

Interviewer: Ok, a pressure coming from the consumers...

Interviewee: No, no and no. Not the consumer. The pressure comes from the retailers.

Interviewer: The retailers? How do they operate such pressure?

Interviewee: Our client builds pressure because Greenpeace is pressuring it or because the Federal Public Attorney is pressuring it.

Whereas MPF is promoting the adoption of TAC throughout the beef value chain it is creating a barrier a market barrier for those ranchers that have committed environmental crime while managing their livestock. As a consequence the market for those criminals would restrain, development a control over the Amazon deforestation caused by cattle ranching.

The Federal Prosecutor **Daniel Avelino** explains TAC’s importance:

TAC is the baseline of all this process. It gives directions for everyone to work. It brings the minimum of environmental compliance and it operates in a progressive way. So, it has deadlines that start with six months and end with five or more. This process can give everyone time to be prepared and move forward the governance necessary. Now, we haven't been reduced to it. It was necessary to look for other initiatives and partnerships with the industry, retailers and everyone else to strengthen TAC. But TAC gives stability because it offers goals, actions, deadlines and people who will be in charge. And all of that is the baseline for the whole process.

TAC is the embodiment of the **litigation** approach, not only because it is a legal document, but it also brings the dimension of judicial processes as a tool of framing and controlling industrial activities regarding its environmental impact. It does not matter the content of the qualification ‘sustainable’ as long as it does not impact the businesses’ development, when it does it would be treat as legal matter regarding the **risk** assessment of the possibility of being sued, paying fines, loosing contracts and having the company’s brand

exposed increases. MPF's has understood such rationale and promoted the litigation approach aiming at increasing the economic costs of not following a particular legislation.

Fernando Sampaio's, ABIEC's executive director, observation explain such underneath process of the litigation approach:

When Greenpeace developed that report that ended up in the TAC in Pará, led by Daniel, slaughterhouses were held accountable on the livestock issue. So, many people saw slaughterhouses as a tool to regularise the ranchers, in terms of environmental, labour and land tenure scopes. Then, it was not the case that (we) producers wanted to escape from our responsibilities. It was rather because we had had no instrument to do it before.

Such process reinforces 'sustainability' as a value not a technical requirement, since it is associated with the risk perceived by actors. Therefore the negotiation order is crucial for attaching meaning at sustainability. In the beef value chain deforestation was the meaning that emerged, as this chapter has already shown. The Federal Prosecutor Daniel Avelino's remark, when asked what sustainability under the beef value chain is, strengthens this argument:

*Actually, we have no precise definition for sustainability in any value chain. We could define, instead, levels of sustainability. Today, we are still fighting **against illegal deforestation**. We had a small increase of deforestation in the Amazon, in the last year. The same happened with slave labour. We should be able to guarantee that no part of our production, the smallest it is, is related to illegal deforestation in the Amazon, or in other biomes, and neither to slave labour. Starting from there, we could create several levels of sustainability, such as the matter of the geographical limits that properties should comply with, in order to respect permanent protection areas and legal reserves, or properties that provide a good treatment to their animals, or bringing no suffering in the slaughtering and previous to that. In sum, the issue of the animals' wellbeing. Besides that, there is the matter of the services, the management of the water supply in the properties' areas and so. These are already taken into consideration in Europe and in the US, where such matters are more advanced. So, we still have a long way to improve. (bold added).*

It is important to remember that the focal topic being discussed, illegal Amazon deforestation is a crime. It enhances the argument that is through increasing the risk due to not complying with the environmental legislation that the companies behaviour could change, therefore the litigation approach has a significant role.

The litigation approach has also unintended consequence as [Fernando Sampaio](#) explains:

(...) First, we are working with so many others that have already signed the TAC without knowing from where to begin. And they don't have the capacity develop a satellite monitoring system as JBS, Minerva or Marfrig have. So, we have to find another way for them to comply with what they are signing.

If in the one's hand the adoption of TAC, and the strengthening of the litigation approach, as a promotion of 'sustainability' has unintended consequences, once not all TAC's signatories has the necessary resources to fulfil the obligations they have commitment. A black market of cattle might be being created, [Fernando Sampaio's](#) comments elucidates:

*Our fight with the Federal Public Attorney [MPF] is due to the fact that it has created a cruel system. Today, we work by exclusion. So, first, it is very expensive to build this monitoring system. Only the largest producers can afford that nowadays, such as JBS, Minerva and BRF (which were working on this system). Secondly, we work by exclusion because if the rancher is operating in an indigenous land, I won't buy from it. If the rancher is involved with deforestation, I won't buy from it. If the rancher is in any "dirty" list, I won't buy from. **In other words, we work by expelling all of these guys from the supply chain. And the problem remains there. This guy remains with its cattle there and needing income. So, I decide not to buy his cattle, however the cattle is heading somewhere. Instead of making it better, you end up building a parallel supply chain.** Then, it is not a system that favours inclusion; that helps to bring these people to regularise their situation. You end up throwing them away. And, then, the company that is trying to work right suffers a double competition from the slaughterhouse that is not operating the monitoring system. First, during the cattle procurement, because he cannot buy cattle as he used to do. Secondly, in the selling moment, because the meat that he is selling is competing with the guy who bought the illegal cattle and is selling the meat in the same place that he is.*

On the good side of such approaches, is the development of new technologies for such monitoring system and the new businesses that are being generated surrounding such system. Even though they might not reach all the value chain, it is promoting businesses, which is a good achievement for capitalism and the Brazilian economic development. Under this sense the **litigation** approach, and the **risk** perception associated to it, are both moving forward the environmental concerns on this value chain, however it might not be promoting a

transformation on the societal order since: i) it does not affect how business are being done and, ii) it might not be promoting a change on accesses to resources, those actors whom already accesses it will have the enough resources to control their supply chain. Underneath is the perception that elites will remain elites.

Furthermore, such remarks emphasise how ‘sustainability’ is a result of the negotiation order developed under this context and how it is being supported by the meaning attached to it. There is no need to evaluate whether TAC is helping to solve Amazon deforestation issue – and it certainly is –, as long as deforestation is being discussed and supporting initiatives and programmes that tackle it – does not matter its efficiency – actors will keep using it discursively, reinforcing deforestation as a meaning.

5.2.3.3. *Zero Deforestation Commitment*

Another consequence of the MPF and Greenpeace’s attacks was the *Minimum Criteria for Industrial Scale Cattle Operations in The Brazilian Amazon Biome* (Greenpeace 2009a), also known as the Zero Deforestation Commitment, Beef Embargo or Beef Moratorium. On the 5th of October 2009 the biggest slaughterhouses, Bertin, JBS⁸⁵, Marfrig and Minerva signed the Zero Deforestation Commitment at FGV-EAESP’s auditorium on a public event with significant press coverage.

Zero Deforestation Commitment has five criteria: i) zero deforestation in the supply chain – the slaughterhouses’ signatory cannot buy cattle from farm that have deforested after the 4th of October 200; ii) rejection of invasion of indigenous lands and protected areas; iii) rejection of slavery work; iv) rejection of land grabbing and land conflicts; iv) a monitorable, verifiable and reportable tracking system.

In terms of content, the Zero Deforestation Commitment is very similar with TAC, since both pieces pointed the same activities that must be avoided by the industry, although Greenpeace’s document asks for a higher level of commitment in terms of deforestation, since

⁸⁵ Bertin and JBS were not formally merge yet.

it defines that the slaughterhouses cannot buy from areas with new deforestation - after 4th of October 2009.

Likewise, both documents require a monitoring system that could **trace** the cattle throughout the supply chain and is due to this pressure that the industry developed a robust system with data from its suppliers that is now being called the *Geo (R)evolution* of the Brazilian livestock. All slaughterhouses developed their own system that can be claimed as the embodiment of ‘sustainable’ practices in the Brazilian beef industry - as will be further discussed – once it uses **geo-referencing** data from ranchers and crosses the information with the public data available to determine the **risk** of buying cattle from a particular supplier, providing a **traceability** on this value chain.

Marcelo Marquesini’s statement explains the Zero commitment criteria and while doing so, emphasise the importance of the monitoring system:

*Everything that the campaign was asking for was addressed, right? **Create a tracking system to attest the origin (of the cattle)**. Not to buy from deforested areas from that moment on. Not to buy from farms that are deforesting. Not to buy from indigenous lands and conservation units. I mean: the basic stuff. What is in the law and something else that is not the law, for example, not to buy from whoever is now deforesting. Not to buy from embargoed areas. (bold added)*

TAC and the Zero Deforestation Commitment complement each other on increasing the **risks** of deforestation and fostering the developing of such system. While the first uses the legal pressure, the second focuses on the **brand damage** exposition. Such rationale is explained by **Márcio Astrini**:

*(...) When you implement a commitment like this and it reduces the volume of slaughtered, you end up hindering the achievement of profits of that company. Therefore, when this company refuses to operate this kind of control, **it should suffer a brand damage that is bigger than the risk of decreasing the slaughtering volume inside the plant**. This is why it is such an interesting commitment, because it deals directly with the core business of the slaughterhouse, which is to disassemble the cattle to sell its pieces. (bold added)*

Hence, it is possible to question why the industry has signed such committed that could expose their brands and businesses even further? It is important to remember that the

Brazilian beef industry was facing a great threat, they have already lost contracts and revenues and an important source of funds for their expansion, since IFC have withdrawn Bertin's loan. As already discussed, in this context the industry was eager to stop such attacks and show they were willing in changing their practices. Therefore, signing the Zero Deforestation Commitment could provide the industry with time to analyse the context. Nevertheless it is possible to argue that they were not aware of the difficulties such commitment could bring as [Márcio Astrini](#) reinforces:

*(...)It was the most effective way to bind that with commitment de facto. The difficulty we were expecting from, let's put like this, the signature, in accordance with the commitment, came exactly after the accordance. **That's because the saw no problem in signing the commitment, but they had no idea of what they were signing, or only a partial idea of that.**(bold added)*

The problem lies on the difficulties of developing such monitoring system, which started to demonstrate its benefits only in April 2014 when Greenpeace recognised the improvement made by the industry (Ambrósio and Bauer 2014a; Ambrósio and Bauer 2014b; Baines 2014; Greenpeace 2014).

Nonetheless, the commitment was a result of a negotiation process between Greenpeace and the slaughterhouses, as [Márcio Astrini](#) explains:

*(...) We had not much hope that, in less than 6 months [of campaign], the slaughterhouses would sign the commitment due to the size of the problem and the way of organising it. What we were asking was so distant from their reality that we thought it need more time for pressure and awareness. Some time later, less than a month I think, we received a call from Bertin's CEO at the time, called Fernando Falco. We spent - if I'm not mistaken - 16 hours in a meeting with them, between two days (9 to 10 hours in the first day and the same in the following one). **We were drawing, shaping what we called the minimum criteria for slaughterhouses' operation in the Amazon.** We decided on the minimum criteria for control and procurement. From whom they buy, from who they don't buy. What do they need to do, but don't have the capacity yet. So, there is a series of criteria. Then, after them, we had Marfrig and Bertin. Bertin was still independent from JBS. Some months later, we had Marfrig, JBS and Minerva almost*

*simultaneously. It was here at FGV⁸⁶. It was not a contract, but criteria, **a public commitment, not legally binding**. (bold added).*

Such negotiation process brought Greenpeace inside the companies' practices and procedures regarding their operation on the Amazon biome, which is a not a common work pattern for Greenpeace. It is possible to say that Greenpeace was working like a consultancy firm, analysing these companies' procedures and workflow, giving orientation on how to solve such problem in order to fulfil the Zero Deforestation Commitment. However, not everyone inside those companies would appreciate such relationship, as Isabel Drigo (2013) pointed out, J. O'Callaghan, JBS' investor relations director, considers Greenpeace and MPF as JBS' interventionists.

It is not relevant whether Greenpeace could engage all the companies' high board or not, such statement reveals how Greenpeace was influencing the development of the **tracking system** and therefore, how it was employing its agency. As a consequence, Greenpeace's campaign strategies needed to take a different path. The organisation needed to work the **brand attack** and, at the same time, a negotiation process, since it was inside those companies and aware of the difficulties and problems they were facing. On the other side, Greenpeace was in a powerful and resourceful position of steering the process and also conscious of whether the companies were really committed on moving forward the Zero Deforestation Commitment. Under this sensible situation, Greenpeace could evaluated the context and decide whether conduct another attack by publishing another report.

Marcelo Marquesini clarifies such strategy:

The TAC contributes to that. "You have signed a commitment at this date with these obligations". "You have not implemented them. We are not in the negotiation anymore. So, we are back to ground zero". Then, they think you are a crazy person, from the very pragmatic point of view of the campaign.

⁸⁶ FGV has not any involvement, whatsoever, in the elaboration of the Zero Deforestation Commitment. FGV-EAESP auditorium was chosen as a venue for such launching the public commitment due to FGV's recognition as a relevant think thank and therefore a neutral venue.

Thus, this is what happened. On 19th of October 2011, Greenpeace publish another report (Greenpeace 2011): *The Broken promises: How the cattle industry in the Amazon is still connected to deforestation, slave labour and invasion of indigenous land*.

The report centred its attack at the fact that the industry was breaking their promises. Similar to what happened with the first report, the second one focused at attacking the biggest company of the beef industry, which was JBS.

The [report](#)'s first paragraphs show its tone:

Following a three-year investigation, Greenpeace published a report in 2009 that revealed the cattle sector's role as the key driver of deforestation in the Brazilian amazon. `Slaughtering the amazon` shows how national and international companies unwittingly participate in this destruction. The three largest companies processing meat and tanned leather in Brazil - JBS/Friboi, Minerva and Marfrig - **signed a public agreement in October 2009** committing to no longer purchase cattle from ranches that have recently deforested or that are located on indigenous lands.

Just two years later, Greenpeace analyzed government trade data from the Amazonian state of Mato Grosso and found that **the supply chain** of the largest of these companies, despite its commitments, still has connections to illegal deforestation, slave labour and invasion of indigenous land.

(...) This discovery **demonstrates weaknesses in the supply chain** for responsible leather and meat products. Consumers buying products originating from **JBS' supply chain cannot be assured their products are responsibly sourced, meaning not contributing to deforestation and slave labour**. (Greenpeace 2011: 3, bold added).

The passage above illustrates Greenpeace's **brand damage** strategy. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of controlling **their supply chain** what reinforces the claims for the monitoring system. While accusing that JBS cannot assure that its supply chain are not associated with deforestation, Greenpeace is saying to the value chain that it still possible to find deforestation stain on such products, and accused other companies that bought from JBS. By doing so, it increases the pressure on such actors for change, as Márcio Astrini and Marcelo Marquesini have explained.

[Mathias](#), sustainable manager at Marfrig, explains from the industry perspective:

That's because TAC does not operate alone. It needs support from the demand side. It is important to have both TAC and Greenpeace putting pressure. Greenpeace has no strength against a small slaughterhouse. The small slaughterhouse will come and say "Oh! What is Greenpeace? I don't care!". However, if Greenpeace wants to attack us because we sell to McDonald's, it's complicated. What are we going to say to McDonald's? Here in Brazil, for example, we have no business with McDonald's anymore. This business is with Seara. Our business with McDonald's is in the US, Europe and Asia. But we cannot have problems with Greenpeace here. (...). If we have any problem here with Greenpeace, we will suffer in our other business. They will start to create trouble.

Hence it is clear how Greenpeace has understood the characteristic of contemporary capitalism and is using it to promote transformations of industries behaviour. Greenpeace and MPF's attacks created a negotiation order centred on playing with actors' perception of their businesses risk. However, by using these characteristics to understand the market relations and shaping this environment, an unintended consequence might happen. The actors that are not involved on a global supply chain may not have their context transformed.

Once MPF and Greenpeace are both aiming at bringing environmental concerns in the way businesses are done, it is possible to argue they are willing to transform the societal logic that supports such businesses rationale. Nonetheless, they are using the very same societal logics they envisage to transform in order to promote changes on the Brazilian beef industry.

Consequently, a piecemeal change on such societal logics might be in operation, since changes on several fields and contexts are being informed (i.e. the growing concern about environmental impact of businesses). However, the resources distribution – money, power and legitimation – are still being preserved, supporting elites with material conditions to flourish. Hence, the changes on fields and contexts are being fashioned by actors aiming at protecting the core of the capitalist logics that guarantee their accesses to resources. In other words, preserving the societal order, while transforming it.

5.2.3.4. BNDES and the Socio-environmental Guidelines for livestock

The careful reader might be wondering what were BNDES actions, and consequently the Brazilian government position, under such context. It has already being demonstrated that BNDES has an active role in fostering this industry development, even though there were considerable warnings regarding its social and environmental impacts (Fearnside 2002; Margulis 2004; Fearnside 2005; Barreto et al. 2008; Walker et al. 2009; Rivero et al. 2009). The bank has identified that the meat industry was important for the Brazilian economic development and therefore Brazil would benefit from supporting a global player (Paula and Faveret Filho 2001; Junior et al. 2008; Além and Giambiagi 2010). Although controversial, such national champion policy has already supported several multinationals throughout the world.

Since 2005, BNDES has been actively funding the sector expansion (Junior et al. 2008) and it was shareholder of the three biggest players, including Bertin, at the time that MPF and Greenpeace attacked the industry. Thus, BNDES was watching closely the attack to the Brazilian beef industry. Furthermore, the IFC's withdrawal decision directed the attentions to BNDES' actions, due to its support to such industry. As [Marcelo Macedo](#), BNDES' Chief of the Environment Department, explained:

*(...) We were following it... As we were dealing with the slaughterhouses, we also followed what Greenpeace was doing to them, on the same basis that we followed the Federal Public Attorney [MPF]. Did you get it? We were following them, discussing their requirements regarding Greenpeace's zero deforestation campaign. They always called us to discuss .It was a kind of follow-up, to change ideas. But we didn't have a direct relationship. It was more of a common interest in the slaughterhouse field, given the fact that they [Greenpeace] were dealing with the slaughterhouses and so were we. (...) Greenpeace went there to discuss with us. And so did the Federal Public Attorney [MPF], what I have already told you. They went there in 2009, during the crisis, to discuss with us. We said: "We have already done this in shareholding, but it is starting now"[put a pressure on the slaughterhouses to change their behaviour]. So, we told them: "We are also going to create a policy". And we did it. Nowadays, the BNDES policy is recognised as an audacious policy. It has its problems, but it has delivered results. We are going to produce a review of the policy now, and it will go on. **BNDES will remain as an instrument of criteria improvement, requirements and also***

funding. We bring the requirements, but also the funding, understand. Did you get it? (...) (bold added)

It is already known that BNDES supported the merge between Bertin and JBS, creating a giant that could either promote this industry transformation towards a ‘sustainable’ one or stop such process. Funnily enough, JBS and Bertin merge was announced on October 27th, twenty-two days after the companies has signed the Zero Deforestation Commitment on October the 5th.

Likewise the Brazilian biggest retailers, Nike, Ikea, Timberland, Clarks, Tesco among other multinationals have also suspended their contracts with the Brazilian slaughterhouses. Furthermore, some of these companies have announced that they will only buy leather or other cattle co-products unless it was possible to guarantee that they are not involved on cattle expansion towards the Amazon.

Greenpeace strategy of attacking a **global value chain** appears as a successful one, it has transformed the field of the beef industry which is now requiring new environmental standards. Similarly, has the context for action regarding sustainability on the Brazilian beef industry; it not possible to remain silent regarding deforestation, under the penalty of losing the global competitiveness. Consequently, BNDES needed to act in order keeping its investments profitable. BNDES needed to shape such context and Marcelo Macedo’s statement indicates such analysis. Hence, the Bank was aiming to be an instrument of environmental standards’ improvement, therefore it was required to fashion such context in a direction that it could remain the Brazilian value chain competitive.

On October of 2009, some days after the announcement of Bertin and JBS’ merge, BNDES has published the environmental standards: *Diretrizes socioambientais para a pecuária bovina*⁸⁷. The popular know as 1854 resolution created new and specific socio-environmental guidelines for operations concerning cattle livestock. BNDES was aiming at improving the sector competitiveness by guaranteeing excellence on socio-environmental standards and the resolution is an attempted to fashion this context in this direction. Once more, [Marcelo Macedo](#)’s explanation is helpful:

⁸⁷ In English: Socio-environmental Guidelines for Cattle Livestock.

*October 2009. The first aspect is related to the supply chain. It involves all the talk we saw in GTPS' event today, towards turning the slaughterhouse into a change tool of the rancher and the landowner's behaviour regarding compliance with the law, in a first place. The second aspect is the improvement of cattle ranching practices in order to increase productivity. **The main goal was to turn slaughterhouses into instruments that would enable such improvements in the supply chain.** (bold added)*

Since BNDES was the main financial actor of the beef industry, it has a great influence on the arrangement of this value chain inside Brazil and the slaughterhouses were crucial actors in order to foster a competitive industry. Such choice is not arbitrary or only due to its financial interests on such industry, as explained. But, BNDES has realised the importance of the environmental standards to remain globally competitive in such field and it have chosen the slaughterhouses to align the value chain as a competitive industry. Besides, by publishing the resolution, BNDES also dodges from the pressure for remaining on silence, although not being directly attacked by MPF or Greenpeace, BNDES connections with the slaughterhouses was clear.

The resolution focus on the necessity of cleaning all the illegal activities already mentioned by Greenpeace and MPF – modern slavery, illegal Amazon deforestation, invasion of indigenous land and Conservation Units. Similarly, BNDES also obliged the slaughterhouses in creating a monitoring system that could trace the cattle supply chain, from the calving ranchers to the slaughterhouses. [Márcio Macedo](#) explained such system while associating it with sustainability under this value chain:

*The slaughterhouse must have this registration and a system of cattle procurement that identifies the suppliers in terms of their criteria. **Obviously, the situation in the Amazon was much below the legal and the productivity parameters, ones.** It was a difficult situation where we selected a sector and this was our goal - to rescue a whole sector that was bellow socio-environmental compliance and elevate this sector to increasing levels of sustainability. The perception over the policy was primary evolutionary. We knew it wouldn't happen from night to day. It's a long way to go, in terms of convincing the slaughterhouses to adopt management systems, such as the livestock procurement system [the monitoring system]. And I can surely say that there was a big resistance from slaughterhouses in the beginning. It was very difficult in the beginning. We would say: "You must have a register of suppliers. And the register must have geo-referenced spots". Slaughterhouses thought that was impossible to achieve. And*

this happened between 2009 and 2010. We are now in 2013 and, now, this is trivial. Today, we talk about polygons and not about geo-referenced spots. That was an initial difficulty, and, with time, was revealed as something that could be done. Besides the monitoring system, the policy required that the slaughterhouses promoted a suppliers' development plan. (bold added).

Furthermore, such statement illustrated that the slaughterhouses were not passive accepting the attacks. As already discussed, GTPS creation as an informal group was a frustrated attempt to fashion this context, as the signature of TACs and the Zero Deforestation Commitment was efforts of finding a way out of the crises. As discussed on the previous section, the monitoring system required by these three documents – TAC, Zero Deforestation Commitment and BNDES' 1854 resolution – involved complex and expensive technologies, the discussions started with the possibility of geo-referencing a ranchers' point in 2009-2010 and improved to the possibilities of moving from the point to the ranchers shape in 2013-2014.

Besides the technological development required, such monitoring system could expose the slaughterhouses if they could not accomplished the task of transforming both, the ranchers' and its behaviour. The next chapter will discuss how the slaughterhouses were also aiming at shaping their context and preserving the societal logic that supports their privileged position in the beef industry field.

BNDES' intentions of shaping this field in order to remain it competitive was also evident when the bank included in its guidelines the abattoirs' effluents discharges and obliging the industry in getting international certification standards (i.e. ISO certification) as [Marcelo Macedo](#) commented:

*In practice, we are talking about the supplier chain. But, in our resolution, we targeted something else that is a sustainability component, such as the slaughterhouses' industrial plants. **No NGO discusses that. The Federal Public Attorney [MPF] does not discuss that.** Therefore, BNDES has established a strategy, a creative one and the first of its kind. BNDES created specially to this sector. Regarding the industrial plants, slaughterhouses were required to present to BNDES an investment plan covering three great areas. First, the improvement of socio-environmental indicators such as water, energy and effluents. Second, the implementation of an environment management system. And the search for environmental and social*

certifications. We haven't spoken like this: "Look, in our policy now, we only offer funding to the ones that have ISO 14001 certification". We haven't done that. We did the following: "Slaughterhouse, please present me an investment plan with value, investments per industrial plant, goals, and implementation deadlines. I will evaluate that. It must be a satisfactory plan to BNDES". And that was done, with a lot of interactions, but it was done. Slaughterhouses made investments in their industrial plants and we could say, today, that although this is an ongoing process, due to industrial plants needing to improve mainly the issue of effluents discharges, which is a very serious issue regarding water resources to the population surrounding the slaughterhouses. (bold added).

However, this statement not only emphasised the way that BNDES was shaping the Brazilian beef field, but how deforestation was a focal issue once it was hidden in Marcelo Macedo's statement when stressing how other environmental impacts were not being discussed by MPF and Greenpeace, implying that they were focusing at deforestation.

The environmental context for agency during this period was focused at deforestation and BNDES cannot escape from it. The bank acts in the say way as the other actors, even though other meanings might be present – modern slavery, invasion of indigenous land and Conservation Units, adding effluents discharges – it is deforestation the prominent meaning. Besides Marcelo Macedo's comment above, it is evident when BNDES announced that a new resolution was about to be published:

In order to avoid that the advance of the agricultural frontier causes increased deforestation in the Amazon, BNDES has decided to broaden the requirements for funding in the sector. The aim is to guarantee that the Brazilian livestock meets **standards of socio-environmental excellence**, thus increasing productivity in parallel with the **maintenance of biodiversity** and, consequently, **expand its competitiveness**. (BNDES 2009a, our translation; bold added)

Even though the new guidelines are concerned with modern slavery, invasion of indigenous land and also with the abattoirs' effluents discharges, BNDES is promoting such policy in order to avoid the advance of livestock frontier towards the Amazon, what might support its deforestation.

Finally, BNDES' action shed lights on how it was trying to shape this context by creating a restrictive resolution regarding the beef industry's environmental impacts.

Underneath, the bank has realised that there were an increasing **risk** regarding deforestation that threatened the actors resources and their position on the global beef industry and in order to preserve their resources BNDES published such resolution aiming at promoting the industry modernisation towards a global competitive standards. The **resolution** states:

The challenge now is to combine the supply to the increasing demand for meat with a production model that guarantees the preservation of natural resources and the respect to workers and communities, in which the fixation of socio-environmental safeguards is a way of stimulating the modernisation and gains in competitiveness under sustainable basis. (BNDES 2009b, our translation)

It is the actors' **risk** assessment regarding their competitiveness that fostered the development of programmes and initiatives about deforestation. Furthermore, although the negotiation order surrounds the meanings of sustainability, this context for agency shows how actors are protecting or attacking the societal logics that supports their resources. If in the one's hand Greenpeace and MPF were using the **brand damage** and **litigation** in order to transform the business rationale at the Amazon region. BNDES was using such **risk** perception in order to protect its investments. Sustainability is being absorbed as an element of capitalist logic through the **risk** management perspective. Although such piecemeal change might be happening it is still preserving the elites' positions.

5.2.3.5. GTPS formal constitution

As deforestation has risen as an issue to be negotiated, the constitution of a formal organisation, independent from the industries, can be examined as a strategy of fashioning this environment. This strategy has already been examined by organisational institutional (Barley 2010; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Under the threat of having their access to funding shrank, the industry realised that they need an independent organisation that could join different links of the beef value chain and align their discourse, protecting the industry development. Therefore, GTPS can be examined as such.

As previously mentioned, GTPS was formally constituted in June 2009, just after Greenpeace and MPF's attacks to the beef industry. Although it was already an informal group since 2007, GTPS has not developed any initiatives or programmes during this period. It was only after the 2009's crisis that the slaughterhouses had an incentive to put their

differences aside and promoted an organisation focused on influencing such negotiation. While discussing the first context for agency, it was shown how GTPS was facing internal conflicts due to the characteristics of this context. Eduardo Bastos', GTPS president, remarks is once more relevant:

Practically, we have spent two years, from 2007 to 2009, in order to be formally constituted. There was two years of an intensive discussion. A polarisation of the discussion. It was tendentious in the sense of 'I'm doing everything right... You do all wrong.' 'You are deforesting everything.' 'No. I'm not deforesting anything'. This conflicted relationship took practically two years, from 2007 to 2009.

GTPS' development is related with the transformations of the context for agency and consequently it is also possible to divide it into three periods. The first one covers from 2007 and 2009, period in which the industry was focused on market dispute and due to such conflicts no consensus regarding what is 'sustainability' was reached. The second phase ranges from 2009 and 2012, when a crisis hit the Brazilian beef industry field and the void regarding the livestock environmental impacts could not remain. Finally, from 2012 onwards, GTPS assumed an active role in influencing the discussion regarding sustainability in such industry.

Currently GTPS's work plan (GTPS 2012b: 1) reflects upon such maturation process:

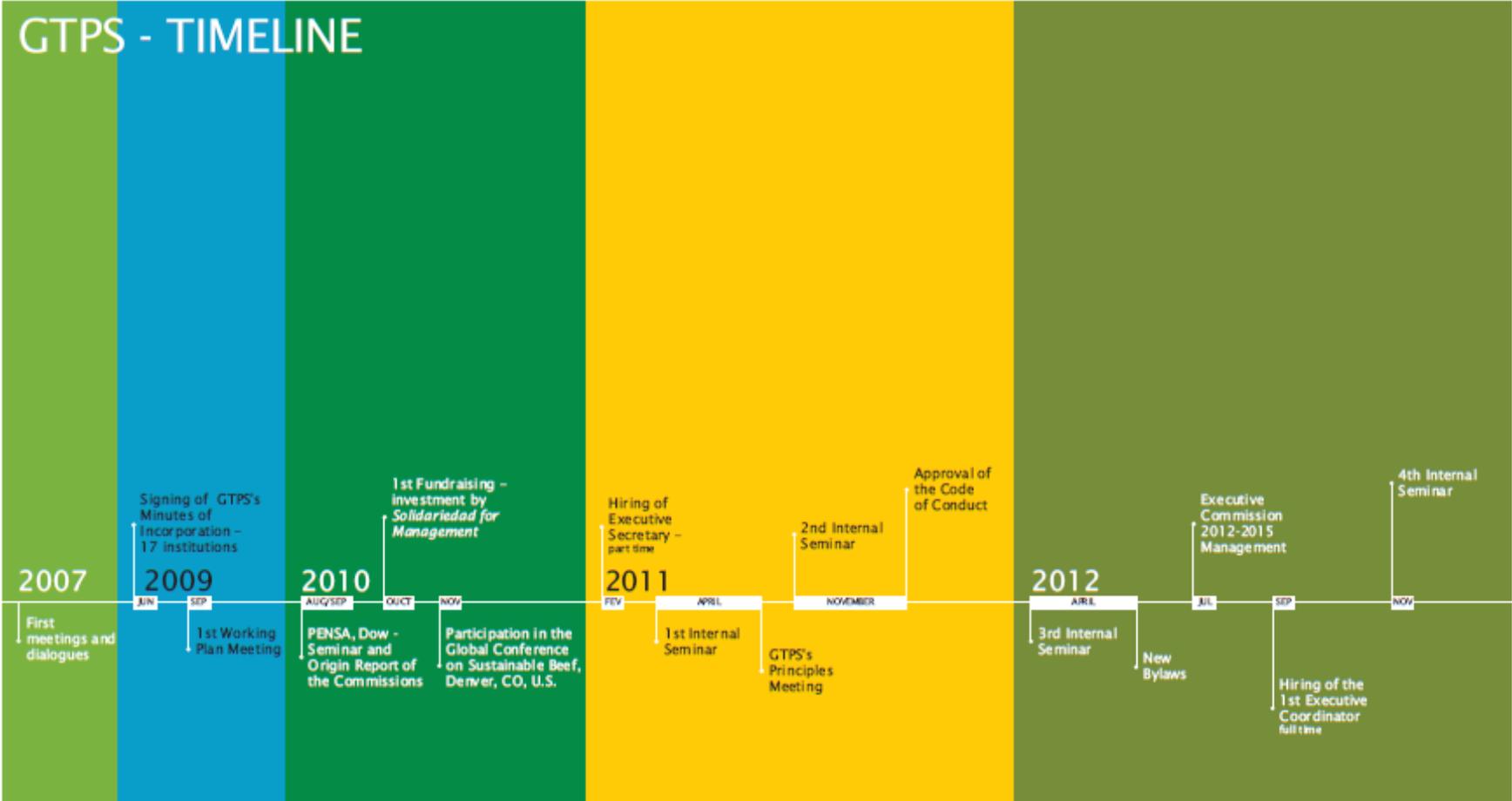
We have gone through several phases: from 2007 to 2009, the participation and courage of the pioneers; from 2010 to 2012, consensus to validate common goals, **through the ups and downs that are typical of soft commodity roundtables**; and now we are moving into the 2013 to 2015 phase, with constant revalidation and execution of actions, always guided by our four principles - continuous improvement, transparency and ethics, good agricultural practices and legal compliance.

The figure 12 below illustrates GTPS timeline and its phases.

This second phase is the focus of this section. While the first phase was previously examined when discussing the first context for agency, the third phase will be discussed on the next section.

It is not a coincidence that GTPS' phases are similar to the three contexts for agency identified in this study. GTPS was developing itself as an organisation focused at influencing the context for agency regarding sustainability. This is an evidence that actors are making sense of their environment while they are acting, therefore the processes of fashioning the environment is an on-going activity that emphasise the dialectic relations between how actors are using meanings and the societal logics that supports them.

Figure 13: GTPS' Timeline



Source: GTPS 2012b: 2.

On the 30th of June 2009, GTPS was formally constituted becoming an autonomous organisation; no longer being an informal working group. Such formal constitution transformed GTPS into an association with seventeen founders' members: ABPO⁸⁸, ACRIMAT⁸⁹, Aliança da Terra, All Flex, Aspranor, Bertin, Carrefour, Frigol, IFC, Independência, Marfrig, NWF, Rabobank, Santander, TNC, WalMart and WWF (GTPS 2012b). Nowadays, GTPS has over 60 members⁹⁰, constituted by *producers* – such as ABPO and ACRIMAT –, *industry* – as ABIEC, JBS, Marfrig, Minerva –, *commerce and service* – Elanco, Pão de Açúcar, WalMart, McDonald's Corporation –, *finance institution*, such as IFC, Santander and Rabobank Brasil –, *civil society organisations* – Aliança da Terra, WWF Brasil, IMAFLORA⁹¹ and GRBSB⁹² – and *collaborative members*, as SAE⁹³ and MMA⁹⁴.

By September 23th, GTPS published its work plan (GTPS 2009) which states:

The cattle ranching sector has been facing great challenges, and many social and environmental policies initiatives are being adopted by producers, industries, banks, retail companies and also by federal and state governments. The initiatives that bring about positive results to both society and environment will be effectively supported by the Sustainable Cattle Ranching Working Group [GTPS]. For these policies to be effective and long-lasting it is necessary that the various actions be guided by common principles and criteria and those they have the recognition of all **value chain segments** and of the civil society.

For this purpose, the Sustainable Cattle Ranching Working Group presents its work plan for the next three years, having **as focal points: the monitoring of deforestation cause by cattle ranching activities; the definition of socio-environmental principles and criteria for the production and trade of cattle ranching products; the development of a traceability system; and the dissemination of best practices.** (GTPS 2009: 1, bold added).

⁸⁸ Associação Brasileira de Pecuária Orgânica, in English: *Brazilian Association for Organic Livestock*.

⁸⁹ Associação dos Criadores de Mato Grosso, in English: *Mato Grosso Ranchers' Association*.

⁹⁰ This is not a full members list neither is focused on the founders' members. For such information see at: www.pecuariasustentavel.org.br.

⁹¹ Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola, in English: *Forest Management and Agricultural Certification Institute*.

⁹² Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef.

⁹³ Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos da Presidência da República, in English: *Presidential Special Secretariat for Strategic Affairs*.

⁹⁴ Ministério do Meio Ambiente. In English: *Ministry of Environment*.

This statement emphasise the importance of the **value chain** engagement on fighting deforestation through the development of a traceability system. The importance of both, developing such system in order to tackle deforestation, is also stressed at the **GTPS commitment**:

Commitment

The Sustainable Cattle Ranching Working Group and all of its members make a commitment of no-deforestation, with the creation of conditions and ways of compensation to make it viable.

To fulfill this commitment, the Sustainable Cattle Ranching Working Group commits itself to the development of tools and mechanisms for the monitoring, traceability, production, purchase and financing criteria, and economic incentives for the promotion of sustainability in cattle ranching. (GTPS 2009: 1).

To achieve such commitment, the work plan, also defines the first GTPS' organisational design, consisted by four Technical Commissions: (i) monitoring of deforestation; (ii) socio-environmental criteria; (iii) traceability; (iv) financial mechanisms (GTPS 2009).

The organisation is engaging on the negotiation order and its focal issue: deforestation. GTPS' work plan emphasises and strengthens deforestation as defining it as its only commitment. Moreover it was responding to Greenpeace, MPF and BNDES' request of the monitoring system development as the practice to tackle such problem. Even though GTPS had a reactive response, it is strengthening the monitoring system as essential of tackling deforestation. Both issues, deforestation and the monitoring system, are even been reflected on its organisational design.

Once more, actors are using the meanings of sustainability (i.e. deforestation) through the contemporary capitalism characteristics, mainly the traceability of the value chain to justify the monitoring system.

Besides GTPS has designed itself to deliver results regarding the traceability on the value chain, it did not develop any relevant programme or initiative until 2012, when a fulltime executive commission was hired and it has changed its organisational designed once more. During this period, ABIEC has assumed the leading position in terms of the traceability

system's development until the slaughterhouses decided to develop each own and independent system, as will be examined on the next period examine – it is interesting to analyse that the exporters association was in charge of the monitoring system.

Therefore, GTPS has spent three years aligning the value chain discourse, as its members were deciding what issues they could develop together. During this period, precisely in July 2010, GTPS hired the *Centro de Conhecimento em Agronegócios*⁹⁵ (PENSA) to elaborate a research about the main issues regarding the promotion of a sustainable livestock. PENSA carried out two GTPS members' roundtable that happened in two meetings, the first one in 24th of August and the second on 13th of September and the result is commonly referred as the *PENSA's report* (PENSA 2010).

Such report enabled GTPS to transform itself and become more proactive since it pointed out the main points that need to be addressed in order to align the value chain discourse and foster the development of programmes and initiatives regarding sustainability. In 2012 a new Executive Commission was elected for the term 2012 - 2015, Eduardo Bastos became the president and hired a fulltime Executive Coordination.

Since a new Executive Commission started its term, a new work plan was published - *Pathways for Sustainable Beef* (GTPS 2012b), in which the zero-deforestation commitment is reaffirmed as well as the importance of the monitoring system. In addition, it clarifies its goals:

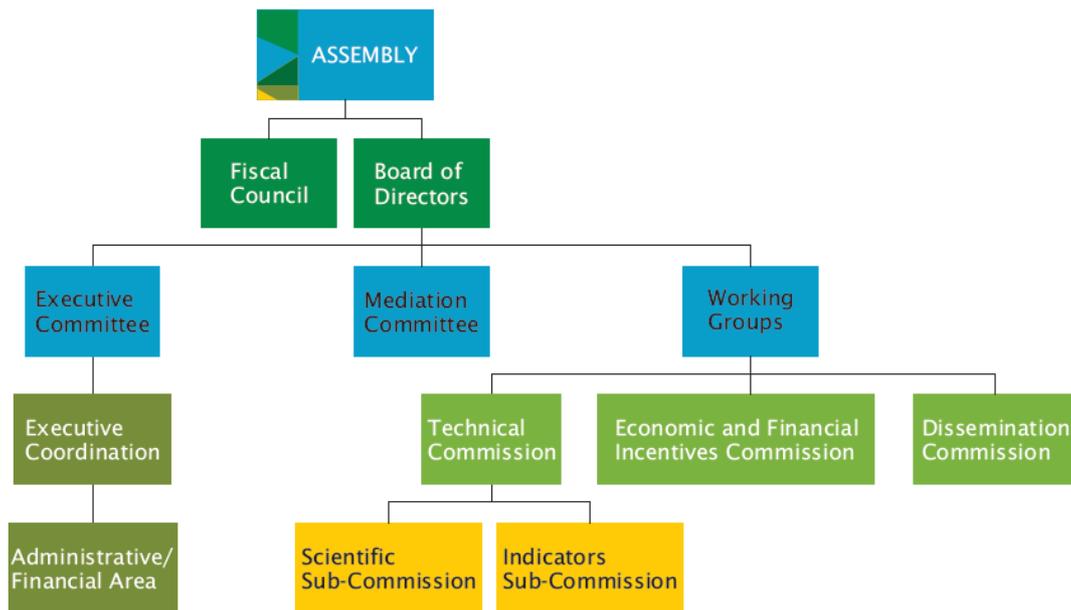
We have debated and formulated, in a transparent fashion, common principles, standards and practices to be adopted by the industry. Our **goal is to contribute to the development of sustainable, socially just, environmentally responsible and economically viable livestock production.**

The involvement of the segments that compose the value chain and of civil society is fundamental for GTPS. **We aim to adopt a proactive approach in facing these challenges**, helping to establish dialogue and develop agreements towards sustainable beef, aware of the social and environmental responsibility of all those involved. (GTPS 2012b: 2, bold added)

⁹⁵ In English: *Agribusiness Intelligence Center*. PENSA is a research centre associated with University of São Paulo (USP).

This new work plan (GTPS 2012b) was supported by the PENZA's report (PENSA 2010) and it emphasises how GTPS is focused at fashioning the beef industry sustainability field, clearly stating that its goal is to adopt a proactive approach. Likewise, PENZA's report supported the new GTPS' organisational design, which also reflects this intention of shaping this context. The figure below represents GTPS' organisational chart:

Figure 14: GTPS' Organisational Structure



Source: GTPS 2012b: 5.

During its maturing process, GTPS realised that it is important to influence such negotiation order and for the second time it was adapting itself to do so. When it was formally constituted its organisational design was reflecting the field's requirements (i.e. to tackle deforestation via the monitoring system). However, its new **organisational design** is proactive in the sense that it is focused at shaping the environment. GTPS has materialised such desire in its organisational structure. Eduardo Bastos explains the organisational design's rationale:

During the Pensa workshop we have arrived at three big issues. We agreed that: 'Well, in the end we are discussing three big pillars - Technical and Scientific Knowledge; this Knowledge Dissemination, and Economic and Financial Incentives to make this happen'. (...) Since the end of 2010 GTPS assumed such objectives. GTPS has incorporated these three pillars that were transformed into the three

commissions that GTPS has today: Technical, Economic and Financial, and Dissemination Commissions.

The Technical Commission throughout the Scientific Sub-Commission aims at examining the scientific knowledge of livestock environmental impact and consequently not only understanding such impact, but also being aware of possible future attacks to the value chain. Furthermore, using the idea of technical and scientific knowledge associate GTPS' actions with the neutrality since they are justified by the scientific knowledge rather than the industry interests. Alongside is the Indicators Sub-Commission which can monitor and develop evidence that 'sustainability' is being addressed.

In its hands, the Economic and Financial Incentives Commission stresses the importance of creating conditions and compensation for developing sustainable practices (i.e. since deforestation is not anymore a practice for increasing the ranchers' income). Such statement was already present at GTPS 2009's work plan (GTPS 2009) and it emphasises how sustainability can be perceived as hampering the value chain profitability, therefore such commission could be seen as strategy for protecting the societal logics being attacked. Finally, the Dissemination Commission is responsible for publicising GTPS and its members' developments, stressing how communicating and discussing is crucial, since without doing so it is difficult to shape an environment.

So, this process emphasises how GTPS has transformed from a reactive posture to a proactive one. Strengthening such argument is The Mediation Committee which was created due to the third Greenpeace's report (Greenpeace 2012b) accusing JBS of still breaking its promises, after this report, JBS sued Greenpeace and will be examined during the next context' period.

Eduardo Bastos explained such rationale when asked how GTPS acted regarding the knowledge dissemination, especially on its role on international beef market:

[Regarding engaging on international discussions of livestock sustainability] There is a lot of GTPS' model of working in the expanded value chain. What we have done is to use our members for to take this discussion to other countries, like international fairs. In October [2013] there was the Anuga fair, which is the world's leading food fair. ABIEC was there and they were distributing on their stand the book Brazilian Livestock (ABIEC 2013), which is the other side of

the Brazilian livestock, giving numbers. So, the telling: “Do you know that Brazil is the third country in the world in terms of preservation? We have more than 62% of preserved land. In Europe the average is 2%. Wait a moment! You can say that you do not buy my beef because I’m deforesting, while I’ve preserved 62% and you 2%? So you should not eat your own beef.”

Obviously that you do not say like this, because this is not the way the international market works. But it has a little of: “Look, you want to know, you want to tell a story, but let’s tell the whole story.”

I really like the motto of the city of São Paulo: “Non ducor, duco.” “I am not led, I lead.” We have taken this decision. We will keep continuing in a supportive role or will we be protagonist of this scenario? If we want to be the world largest animal protein exporter, mainly beef, and we also want to be a dairy exporter. We are the biggest leather exporter. I need to share this story to people who matter. (bold added)

GTPS formal constitution was purposely positioned as the last section of the second period examined because its constitution sheds light on the processes of shaping the environment and illustrates the emergence of deforestation as a focal issue.

The organisational institutionalism literature has already examined the process of creating an independent organisation in order to influence an institutional field. Whereas Barley (2010) has discussed how corporations fostered the development of independent organisations in order to build an institutional field to influence the government decisions. Fligstein and McAdam (2012: 14) would classify such organisations as *internal governance units* that are responsible for guaranteeing the “overall smooth functioning and reproduction” of the field by assuring actors’ resources access and protecting a particular field from exogenous shocks.

Both studies (Barley 2010; Fligstein and McAdam 2012) have identified the importance of such organisation to the establishment of fields, highlighting how organisations could shape their environment. Building from such contribution it is possible to identify the importance of examining the context for agency. GTPS creation as an informal group was not able to influence on the Brazilian beef industry field due to the context for agency during that period. However, the strategy was unsuccessful GTPS reflected the context it was embedded. To understand such process was necessary to move the analysis from the Brazilian beef field

and focused actors' context for agency. Furthermore, by avoiding the fieldcentrism and focusing on the dialectic relation among the field's characteristic (e.g. context for agency) and the structures that cut across fields (i.e. societal logics) it is possible to find evidence that GTPS was also aiming at protecting the societal logics that support the industry resources and legitimation.

By focusing on such relations it is possible conclude that as important as the field itself, the context for agency allows a deeper analysis of how organisations' actions and interactions (i.e. negotiation order) are associating meanings at a field level and embedding them on societal logics in order to fashion this environment. Thus, such process associates actors' agency and the transformation and reproduction of social order.

5.2.4. Context for agency: The rise of deforestation

This long period, from 2009 until 2012, encompasses several attempts of shaping sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field. Greenpeace and MPF were able to change the context for agency and created meanings of sustainability. Unlike the first period discussed, the beef sector urged on presenting more active responses. Just after MPF and Greenpeace's attacks, Pão de Açúcar, Carrefour e Walmart have suspended for forty days their purchases from eleven slaughterhouses accused by MPF. Moreover, on the 5th of October, JBS, Marfrig, Bertin and Minerva signed the Greenpeace's Zero Deforestation Commitment (Greenpeace 2009a). Additionally, GTPS, which was created in 2007 as an informal organisation, became formally constituted on the 30th of June. Even BNDES published the resolution 1854 expanding the socio-environmental obligations for operations under the beef sector, defining new policies for activities involving livestock (BNDES 2009b).

Whereas the context for agency on the first period examined would not encourage the development of 'sustainability' practices, MPF and Greenpeace's actions have transformed such configuration. By emerging as key actors, both organisations impacted on how actors would foresee their future and, therefore, their possibilities for agency altered. There was no more space for continuity.

Deforestation has become the hegemonic meaning for sustainability in Brazilian beef value chain. Being the hegemonic meaning does not imply that it was the only one, on the contrary, it has also been identified GHG emissions and effluents discharge as well. However, deforestation is the one that gained predominance and created a negotiation order surrounding it starting to require the development of practices such as the monitoring system in order to trace the cattle throughout this value chain.

Similarly, as Greenpeace, MPF and BNDES, GTPS is building its discourse using deforestation as a central meaning to support its positioning. Furthermore, deforestation is being used to justify the materialisation of sustainability in this value chain (i.e. how to developed a sustainably practice). In addition, there is evidence of the presence of structural elements. The capitalistic logic is underpinning the identification of deforestation as an environmental problem and also in how to engage the slaughterhouses to tackle it.

Although it is possible to argue that the Amazon deforestation was already attached with meanings, being symbolic identified as evil – due to its impact on biodiversity and climate change – it was the actors' agency that shaped the Brazilian beef industry field, transforming Amazon deforestation from a globally important issue to a meaning crucial in this field. Amazon deforestation acquired valued and became institutionalised in this field. But how Greenpeace and MPF have shaped this environment?

Both MPF and Greenpeace used the twenty-first capitalism features (Kristensen and Morgan 2012) to promote such impacts, as they focus on the **value chain** rather than on a particular actor. This is evident in both: the Greenpeace's attack - since it is focusing a global supply chain, **tracking** inputs produced in Brazil throughout the value chain until their consumption in the European market; and GTPS' responses, which since its formal constitution produces its reports in Portuguese and English, aiming at an international audience. Additionally, Greenpeace and MPF aim at drawing companies' attentions to a sensitive matter like 'sustainability' by adding it to the business **risks** and, therefore, costs. Whereas Greenpeace accomplished that by using a **brand damage** approach, MPF used a **litigation** one.

While the **value chain traceability** is being used to identify the companies involved in such environmental impact, it is the importance of companies' **brand image** that increased

the **risk** of not developing programmes and initiatives to avoid deforestation. A global value chain, the importance of brand value and risk management are all characteristics of the twenty-first capitalism, they are present at the rationale of such societal logic and they are guiding how actors understand this context both in its present and in its foreseen future.

It is possible to argue that neither MPF nor Greenpeace are revolutionary organisations, they are reformists though. Thus, both are aiming in transforming how business are done, and therefore need to attack the social relations within the capitalism.

Therefore, deforestation became the focal issue of the negotiation order regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry field due to the dialectical relations between meanings in this situated context and the societal logics that cut across it. Alongside with the disputes of the meanings of sustainability, actors are also protecting and attacking the structural elements existing in this field and its context for agency. It is being identified that the negotiation order has an important role in both of this disputes, since it is on this arena that actors bridges the elements of this field level (and the micro level consequences such as practices) and the macro-level.

The reason why, in this context, the monitoring system in order to tackle deforestation is the embodiment of sustainability is that it illustrates the relationship between meanings (i.e. deforestation) and capitalist logic (i.e. mainly global value chain and risk management). It is sustained by the need of cleaning the value chain of the deforestation stain, enabling the slaughterhouses to protect their business and also foster their role on keeping the Amazon Forest preserved – what could be seen as brand protection. Furthermore it promotes the control of the value chain, not only organising it but also managing its risk of being involved on deforestation. Hence, the monitoring system enabled the slaughterhouses to manage the beef value chain, increasing their profitability. However, to develop such system is necessary technological development as well as new contracts and businesses, especially on auditing and consulting.

Tackling Amazon deforestation is not as bad as the slaughterhouses first imagined. Such crisis promoted the value chain alignment and created a new standard for business. Nothing is so bad that you cannot take something good out of it.

5.3. Anticipating risk: Nothing is so bad that you cannot take something good out of it

This context covers the recent negotiations regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef value chain, covering from 2012, when JBS and Greenpeace resumed their conflict after a new Greenpeace' report (Greenpeace 2012b), until 2014, when Greenpeace recognised the slaughterhouses' improvement regarding the monitoring of the value chain (Greenpeace 2014). Likewise the previous context, the development of sustainable practices is still encouraged – especially preventing deforestation. However, the beef industry have more conditions of being proactive in fashioning this environment as they pleased, as happened during the first period examined.

Therefore, the section will examine the last period identified, analysing how the beef industry has learned during this contentious process and started to act proactively in order to influence on such negotiation. While being more proactive, the slaughterhouses were able to slowly transform the context for agency. Although deforestation still remains as a focal issue, the beef industry has fashioned the necessary conditions for using the Amazon deforestation crisis in its favour.

Such conditions are illustrated by the opportunities of using the monitoring system in order to promote and protect the beef value chain. To achieve such degree of development, new technologies, business and negotiations are being developed. The beef industry is gathering knowledge, expertise and technologies in order to promote themselves as a 'sustainable businesses value chain' (i.e. beef and cattle co-products not only involved in deforestation but able to recover cleared areas).

Furthermore, the beef industry has developed an apparatus of protection to its resources; built from the success embedded on the monitoring system they are empowered to fashion their environment in order to defend the value chain from a possible future attack due to livestock environmental impacts. The beef industry is anticipating risk and has actively engaged on the discussion about GHG emissions from cattle ranching.

During the negotiation processes regarding Amazon deforestation, the Brazilian beef value chain were able to take something good out of this crisis in a way that they could not foresee in 2009. While they were making sense of this new context, they were able to fashion it and create conditions for protecting and expanding their businesses and brands. As previous mentioned “Greenpeace has changed the sector”.

The first context for agency analysed has emphasised how the beef industry was focused at the market competition and not on the development of ‘sustainable’ practices. In this third context, the industry has learned how to use ‘sustainability’ in order to promote their businesses. However to do so, it was necessary to developed not only new technologies but new communication competences. And the development of the monitoring system was essential in this process. **Márcio Astrini** commented the importance and improvements of such system:

(...) So, the slaughterhouses, for example today in our commitment, have created a system for monitoring deforestation over the registered suppliers, which goes far beyond what the Brazilian government does to monitor these farms.

Due to the time frame covered in this context, this analysis assumes a live broadcast perspective, since the actions and interactions are still happening while this thesis is being written. If on the one hand, it makes this context extremely interesting in theoretical terms, enriching this research. On the other hand, it limits the accuracy of the analysis carried out, since actions and interactions (i.e. negotiation) are not over yet. Actors are still making sense of this context while they are acting, what could change this context’s characteristics. Equally, this period involves confidential and sensitive information and therefore some details given by the interviewees will no be exposed.

5.3.1. Bargaining the Litigation

MPF’s strategy of increasing the slaughterhouses’ risk by using a litigation approach has impacted the industry. As discussed, the adoption of TAC puts the Amazon deforestation under the industry’s radar due to the increase of the probability of being sued and paying fines related to such damage. Under this circumstances the risk assessed is whether complying or not the Brazilian environmental legislation.

Although co-responsible for the environmental damage caused by its supplier chain, when signing the TAC, the slaughterhouses were forced to analyse its suppliers and avoid buying from those who increase its risk of being involved in deforestation. Such industry was obliged to raise the bar.

Furthermore, the industry believed that such system does not encourage the ranchers to adopt new ways of increasing their productivity rather than expanding their pasture through deforestation. On the contrary, these cattle are still being commercialised, even though the big slaughterhouses are not buying it. Therefore, the slaughterhouses argued that they were exerting the Brazilian State role, since they were controlling who was involved in illegal activities.

Using such arguments, the beef industry engaged in a negotiation with MPF. They have proposed the adoption of a ranchers' *rating system* rather than the use of TAC in order to avoid ranchers involved with such illegal activities. [Fernando Sampaio](#), ABIEC executive director explains such negotiation with MPF:

Our clash with the Federal Prosecutors Office [MPF] is that we ended up creating a system that is cruel. Today, we work by exclusion. So, first, to create all this control is very expensive. Today, those who can afford it are the major companies: Marfrig, JBS, Minerva and BRF are doing it. Secondly, we work by exclusion because we don't buy from the guy who works on indigenous land. Neither from the one involved with deforestation, nor the one listed in any kind of list. I mean, you start taking a lot of people out of a normal market chain. And the problem is still there. This guy is still there with cattle and needing income. I mean, even though I'm not buying, this cattle is still going somewhere. Instead of improving it, you end up creating a parallel market chain. So, it's not a system that fosters inclusion, in terms of bringing these people to regularisation. You are throwing them out. And then the guy trying to work right, the slaughterhouse doing this monitoring, has a dual competition. First, in the buying process, since he cannot buy as he used to do. Secondly, in the moment of sale, since the meat that he is selling is competing with the one from another guy who bought illegal cattle and is selling it in the same place as him. So, this is what we are trying to make the Federal Prosecutors Office realise. While, we don't create a system that is different, inclusive – and we have proposed this to the Federal Prosecutors Office and they refused – you will not solve the problem, it will get worse. What had we proposed to them? Take my supplier here. First, I'll check the lists. Then, I'll check deforestation,

indigenous land and Conservation Unit. Finally, I'll check if he has the CAR registry⁹⁶. Whether he has it or not, it will gather a lot of information here and I'll create a ranking that goes from top to, you know, bottom. The guy who is top here is out of indigenous land. He has no deforestation. He has nothing. This guy here should have to have a differentiated rate of interest at the time of borrowing money from ABC⁹⁷. He should have a better price when selling his cattle. All slaughterhouses would want to buy from him. And this other guy here (on the bottom), it does not help throwing him out. I have to create instruments in order for him to get there (towards the top) someday. The idea is to make this rating of suppliers and start creating incentives for producers, themselves, start evolving in the information they give you and in regularization. This idea came from the coffee sector, actually. When they created the seal of purity for the guys to improve every year, until everyone reached a given horizon and worked under the same criteria. The idea is roughly this. The slaughterhouse, depending on his delivery, receives a score. And he would have to keep improving it every year.

Fernando Sampaio clarifies that MPF has not accepted such proposal, because MPF believed that they were dealing with illegal activities:

Interviewee: And why the Federal Prosecutors Office has declined it?

Fernando: First, he [Federal Prosecutor Daniel] thinks it has to be through TAC. It could not be a volunteer program from us. He thinks so... Their theory is that we are illegal because we buy illegal product. As if we were receivers of stolen radio.

MPF rationale was already discussed. By focusing on the least numbered link of the Brazilian beef value chain, it was possible to have some effect on the Amazon deforestation that the Brazilian State could not do otherwise. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the supply chain is responsible for the any environmental damage caused, otherwise the slaughterhouses would not have signed TAC nor the biggest Brazilian retailers would have stopped buying cattle from the Amazon region.

⁹⁶ CAR is a Brazilian policy aimed at promote the environmental regularisation of rural proprieties. It will be discussed further.

⁹⁷ Plano ABC, the *ABC Plan*, is a Brazilian public policy focusing at promoting a Low Carbon Emissions Agriculture and will be discussed further.

Even though it was not possible to precisely determine when this negotiation happened – whether during of just after TAC’s subscription or during 2012⁹⁸, this bargaining process shows how a **litigation approach** is being used to make sense of the agency context regarding sustainability. Additionally it exposes how the beef industry aims at detaching the litigation content from the meaning of sustainability.

Nevertheless, such proposal was addressed by Fernando Sampaio at the IV GTPS’ seminar in 2012 and published in its report: *Pathways for Sustainable beef* (GTPS 2012b), what gives support to believe that the negotiation was still happening in 2012.

Under this publication the proposal was labelled as **Geo (R)evolution of Brazilian Livestock Production – Rating Proposal**. The long quotation bellows seems to be relevant for examining the litigation and the risk approach and how actors are using such approaches to fashion this environment:

For many decades, successive Brazilian governments tried to bring the population to the vast desert empty of people of the Brazilian hinterland. The cattle went ahead, as usual, opening frontiers for agriculture and livestock farming. However, throughout this time, this process has needed to be orderly to enjoy progress.

Attractive real estate business, uncontrolled deforestation and burns have caused environmental problems for which these activities are now held responsible. At the same time, there is lack of governance and territorial management, and livestock farming has been subject to accusations. **We have an idea which may be helpful**, but, before we use it, we need to know what has already been done.

The Legal Amazon Region is huge. It stretches over 5.2 million km²; and 25 million people and 80 million head of cattle occupy it. Through the arch of deforestation, we can see the agriculture and livestock farming border advance into the forest. Meatpacking plants and suppliers appear. When we cross the maps of the conservation units with those of the deforestation areas, we can see that the meatpacking plants have to deal with problems related to the public indigenous, conservation and deforestation areas.

⁹⁸ This negotiations was very sensible, even though it was being discussed during the interviews, it was impossible to give it a chronological perspective.

Now we have to make sure whether these problems really do exist or if the information available is of poor quality. In any event, these suppliers are forbidden to sell animals to meatpacking plants. **Today, industries are obliged to play the roles of supervisor, police and judge for rural producers. It is not up to them to perform these activities.** Excluding producers from a normal trade chain does not solve the problem. As a matter of fact, it may worsen the situation.

We have formulated a proposal to be developed with consensus, not from upside downwards, with the involvement of the entire production chain, based on continuous improvement, which generates governance and inclusion. The mechanism is based on the conception of an indicator, rating, and grade, where improvement brings general benefits, and which includes geographical information, documents, presence in lists and good practices. Based on this information, the system issues a certificate and indicates a grade.

The grade means risk. The lower the risk, the more business can be attracted, the less the public power has to act, and the more production chain links (meatpacking plants, banks, insurance companies, inputs and retail) can be created. Instead of carrying out investigations, it will provide services. The criteria will be defined through shared participation in a platform that gathers structural information from the technical and economic points of view.

Thus, the chain begins to converge to a continuous evolution. If one aspect improves, all others do, too. **System users pay for the information**, and the information can be freely accessed by all chain links in the Geospatial Livestock Platform, which aggregates additional information (animal concentration, land use, conditions of grazing lands, infrastructure, health conditions (monitoring of occurrences of disease and chemical waste), settlements; RERs, SELs, RELs, and socioeconomic and production indicators. (GTPS 2012b: 33-4, bold added).

While arguing for the rating system it is being strengthened that the slaughterhouses are not directly involved in deforestation, furthermore, the cattle ranching cannot be blamed alone by deforestation and it also has an importance role on the Brazilian development. Although all these arguments have been present since the first period, they are now being carried out to foster the adoption of the rating system.

The rating system dilutes the business' risk with other actors; additionally it includes the Brazilian State's responsibilities on such process. As a consequence, the risk of facing legal battles and being exclusively associated with the Amazon deforestation diminished (i.e.

brand damage). Therefore, this attempt of shaping this context was addressed at the litigation processes conducted by MPF, as the industry uses the same approach to make sense of ‘sustainability’, it was necessary to reduce the exposure of contents that could provide evidence for a legal battle. Additionally, as mentioned, lower the risk, bigger is the possibility of businesses being generated, there is nothing to lose in such attempt.

Concluding, while negotiating, the industry was aiming at fashioning this environment in order to promote a system that diminishes the possibilities of exposing the Brazilian beef industry environmental impacts, as the monitoring system⁹⁹ could.

5.3.2. Third round: Greenpeace *versus* JBS

In the 6th of June 2012, Greenpeace has published a new report concerning the beef supply chain and Amazon Deforestation: *JBS Scorecard: How the biggest meat company on the planet is still slaughtering the Amazon (Greenpeace 2012b)*. However, the context for agency regarding sustainability was changing and the industry was slowing transforming it by making discursive use of the monitoring system, deforestation was still a hegemonic meaning.

The report, which was published fourteen days before the Rio +20, the UN Conference in Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro between 20 to 22 of June, focused at three accusations: (i) JBS was failing in complying with the Zero Deforestation Commitment; (ii) the monitoring system adopted by the company was using a single point geo-reference, which was not enough to capture deforestation that was made after 2009¹⁰⁰, and (iii) JBS was not being able to trace its indirect suppliers, the calving ranchers that supply cattle to the fattening rancher, from which JBS bought cattle, therefore, JBS was not able to affirm whether the calving ranchers was involved in deforestation (Greenpeace 2012b).

Similarly to what was done when analysing the 2009 report, a word count is helpful to examine the report’s focus. *The figure below* illustrates this counting in a word cloud.

⁹⁹ A monitoring system was being required by MPF, BNDES and Greenpeace and will be examined on the section 5.3.3.

¹⁰⁰ The monitoring system will be discussed on the next section, when its procurements regarding geo-referencing will be examined.

Under this sense, Zero Deforestation commitment gave Greenpeace a new weapon to deploy its usual strategies: focuses at the value chain to increase the pressure for change and brand damage concentrated on the biggest player. The passage bellow illustrates:

Consumers buying cattle products from JBS cannot be sure that these products have not contributed to deforestation. For this reason, Greenpeace is calling on responsible companies not to buy cattle products from JBS until it has demonstrated compliance with the Cattle Agreement in a transparent and auditable manner. (Greenpeace 2012b: 3).

Hence, Greenpeace elaborated a 'scorecard' analysing the Zero Deforestation Commitment's criteria and whether JBS has passed or failed. The scorecard can be seen on the [figure below](#):

Figure 16: JBS Scorecard on the Cattle Agreement

WHAT JBS SIGNED	PASS/FAIL	CURRENT STATUS
<p>1. ZERO DEFORESTATION IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN:</p> <p>No new deforestation for cattle ranching will be accepted after 4 October 2009.</p> <p>DIRECT SUPPLY</p> <p>To be implemented by 4 April 2010, subsequently extended until 4 October 2010</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS has failed to do even the bare minimum to ensure that deforestation does not enter its supply chain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal deforestation: Greenpeace has found that JBS purchased animals from 2 farms¹¹ accused of illegal deforestation by the federal environmental agency, IBAMA, (see figure 1 and table 2) between June and December 2011. This continues the trend of illegal purchases that was exposed by Greenpeace International¹² in Mato Grosso between January and May 2011. • Absence of effort against all deforestation: JBS is only communicating to other companies and the public on the issue of illegal deforestation. In March 2012, JBS told its clients that its objective is to "source all our livestock from suppliers that have not been involved in illegal deforestation".¹³
<p>CLAUSE 1.b. INDIRECT SUPPLY</p> <p>To be implemented by October 2011</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS is not monitoring its indirect suppliers. Table 3 and figure 2 demonstrate how the web of indirect supply leads back to JBS. Clause 1.b. in the agreement sought to close this precise loophole – where farms are essentially "laundering" their dirty supply via a third party which then sells produce on to JBS.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 1.c. REASSESSMENT OF INDIRECT SUPPLY TIMELINE</p>	FAILED	<p>Indirect supply was never reassessed or renegotiated</p> <p>For direct supply the deadline was extended by an additional six months. One and a half years after the extension deadline, commitments remain unfulfilled.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 1.d. RESTITUTION</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS has not made any claim or provided evidence to show compliance with this commitment.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 2. REJECTION OF INVASION OF INDIGENOUS LANDS AND PROTECTED AREAS</p>	FAILED	<p>Every time Greenpeace investigates, JBS is caught buying cattle from farms inside indigenous land. In fact, research from Greenpeace International shows that the purchase of cattle reared illegally in indigenous lands is ingrained within the JBS supply chain. Between June and September 2011, JBS purchased hundreds of animals from farms¹⁴ located within the limits of the Marãwatsede indigenous land (table 4 and figure 3). In early 2011, the JBS unit in Tucuma, Para purchased animals from Pantera farm¹⁵ located within the Apyterewa indigenous land¹⁶.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 3. REJECTION OF SLAVERY WORK</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS is indirectly purchasing animals from farms accused of slave labour (figure 4). Greenpeace International has already exposed a case of direct supply to JBS from a farm involved in slave labour in February last year¹⁷.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 4. REJECTION OF LAND GRABBING AND LAND CONFLICTS</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS has not made any claim or provided evidence to show compliance with this commitment.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 5. A MONITORABLE, VERIFIABLE AND REPORTABLE TRACKING SYSTEM</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS claims to have conducted third party audits but has not so far made any audit reports available for analysis. Neither is any information that can be monitored, verified and reported available on their systems, as required by the agreement:</p> <p>a. JBS has not provided the geo-referenced polygons for the boundaries of all of its supply farms. In recent communications¹⁸, JBS refers only to the single GPS coordinate from each supplier in its monitoring system. Ensuring farms did not deforest after 2009 requires all boundary information so that cleared areas can be compared over time. One coordinate gives no certainty that JBS knows what its suppliers are doing with their forested land.</p> <p>b. JBS has not presented evidence that all its suppliers are registered with the relevant state environmental secretaries. When registered, data on farm boundaries and ownership are available online, which enables a transparent monitoring system.</p>
<p>CLAUSE 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN COMMITMENTS</p>	FAILED	<p>JBS has not worked collaboratively with other companies, and left the group set up to work on the Cattle Agreement at the end of 2009. Instead, it hired its own consultancy company, Apolo, to implement the Cattle Agreement commitments.</p>

> The full text of MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR INDUSTRIAL SCALE CATTLE OPERATIONS IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON BIOME can be accessed at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/International/Global/International/planet-2/report/2009/10/minimum-criteria-for-industria.pdf>

Source: Greenpeace 2012b: 4.

As already discussed the Zero Deforestation commitment (Greenpeace 2009a) inputs obligations that go further than the Brazilian legislations, once it requires that no deforestation should happen after the 4th of October 2009. It is such requirement that enhanced the development of the monitoring system, as will be discussed on the next section.

Conversely, the context for agency regarding sustainability was changing and despite deforestation still was a focal issue, the industry was not reactive anymore and JBS has decided to start a new legal battle. As Drigo (2013) has shown, while Marfrig adopting a strategy of anticipating possible contestability, by signing TAC before receiving a notification from MPF and engaged on developing monitoring system not only for suppliers from Para's, therefore aiming at avoiding **risks** associated with sustainability (i.e. Amazon deforestation); JBS was adopting a contestation strategy and leading this interactions by a litigation perspective.

Moreover, considering that, since 2009, Greenpeace was working closely to the slaughterhouses in developing the monitoring system and the organisation has decided to only attack JBS in this third report (Greenpeace 2012b)¹⁰³, even stating that JBS' progress concerning the implementation of the commitment was unacceptably slow. Thus, it seems that JBS has decided to raise the tone and engage on a legal dispute.

On 15th of March 2012, **JBS published a letter to its clients** affirming that the company is concerned about the deforestation in the Amazon biome and also claiming to put such concern into practice, developing a monitoring system:

I order to put words into practice, we at JBS developed a proprietary monitoring system for livestock purchase, unique in the animal protein production sector. Our system involves a series of procedures and data analysis which allow us – in real time – to identify all our suppliers and to interrogate their sustainability status. This allows us to ensure we do not purchase animals from offenders. After just two years of operating this system, our efficiency index is very close to 100% today. We invite you, our clients, to get to know this system more deeply whenever you wish. (JBS 2012b)

Such statement is supported by the hegemonic meaning and shows how this focal issue is being used to sustain that 'sustainable' practices are being developed. Furthermore, this letter appears to have increased Greenpeace's reasons to attack JBS. **In a report published on June 26th, Greenpeace explains:**

¹⁰³ Whereas in Greenpeace's(2011) second report, *The broken promises*, the attack emphasised JBS, but it was also directed to all major slaughterhouses: JBS, Marfrig and Minerva.

Evidence from the investigation contradicted a statement made by JBS to the market on March 15, 2012. In it, a JBS representative said that ‘after two years of system operation, our level of efficiency is now much closer to 100%.’ He boasted: ‘the last audit indicates that not a single (Greenpeace emphasis) purchase was made from farms that have any sort of environmental or labour related issues pending.’

Three months later, JBS changed its mind. A letter was sent to Greenpeace Brazil on June 5, which corroborated the findings of the investigation by Greenpeace International. In sharp contrast to the statement to the market, JBS says ‘... We have faced greater difficulties than originally estimated, which affected the implementation period of a few items...’ Shortly after, on June 6, Greenpeace International released its scorecard. JBS reacted by calling a press conference saying the scorecard had “serious errors” and claiming it would take legal action. (Greenpeace 2012c: 1-2).

As already mentioned JBS has decided to attack in order to defend itself from Greenpeace’s accusations.

On the same day that Greenpeace published the *JBS scorecard* report (Greenpeace 2012b), JBS published a notice to the stakeholders: *JBS Repudiates False Accusations in Greenpeace Report Company Will Take Legal Action to Protect its Interests* (JBS 2012c). This notice accuses Greenpeace of being

JBS SA communicates to its shareholders and to the market in general that it was taken by surprise today with the disclosure of a report by the Non Government Organization (NGO) Greenpeace wherein the Company is being accused of collaborating with deforestation and of not complying with previous agreements. The information regarding JBS in the report is false, misleading, incorrect and induces the public to draw erroneous conclusions regarding the reality of the facts. Due to this, the **Company will legally challenge Greenpeace and will use all available legal channels to repair the material damage caused to the image of the Company through the disclosure of this incorrect information.**

JBS receives the disclosure of this **defamatory public report** from the ONG with shock since the Company has demonstrated to its clients and to society at large that it has the most advanced and sophisticated systems in the area of sustainability in the beef sector in Brazil. (JBS 2012c, bold added).

The company followed its words. JBS sued Greenpeace, which was obliged to take the reports from its Brazilian website and forbidden to mention the company name (i.e. JBS) (Greenpeace 2012c; Greenpeace 2012a). Greenpeace has decided to keep the reports on the Greenpeace International website and published a statement about this legal dispute (Greenpeace 2012c).

However, it was not only JBS that has decided to influence on such context more actively. As mentioned on section 5.2.3.6, GTPS has created a Mediation Committee to analyse Greenpeace's report and JBS actions in order to accomplish the several agreements that the company is signatory. [Eduardo Bastos](#) explains the reasons and procedures of such Commission:

(...) What happened here is that when Greenpeace published its report... We know how Greenpeace's model of action is, without any criticism. It is their role. But Greenpeace's model is to criticise. They don't want to build anything together; they don't want to do anything together. They simply want to criticise, raise the subject and says 'Good you solve and I'll keep criticizing... 'The beef industry said: 'Look, GTPS has to position against Greenpeace, against Greenpeace's report.'

At that moment we considered, 'Wow. We do not have to stand against it. I do not know if what they are claiming is right or wrong.' The slaughterhouses resented about this decision. We said: 'Wait a moment. If I don't know the truth I run the risk of being unfair to one or the other.' That goes for everything in life. And we said that we will create a Mediation Committee. In fact we created and it is still in our structure. It was voted in the General Assembly and everything. The Mediation Committee is temporary; it only works when there is a crisis. The Committee is formed with member from all the sectors, on from the Civil Society, slaughterhouses, retailers, services and bank sectors. Five members in total.

We will study the matter and we have one month to analyse and give a positioning. The Committee visited the slaughterhouse, talked to IBAMA. And after we analysed everything we said: 'Uau! Greenpeace is not correct.' (...) Greenpeace said that the slaughterhouse was buying from deforested areas: 'No, it wasn't' All the producers weren't listed on the moment of the purchased. Some were listed before, others after, but in the moment of the purchase, they were not in the list. (...)

Doing like this you create a huge fuss. None of the producers were illegal. None. And after that last report... Tesco, for example, stopped buying Brazilian meat. This means that we have lost hundreds of thousand millions of dollars in exportation because of an untrue critic made by a third part. (...)

So, after a month we solved the question, we published it on our website. It is there until today. Obviously that Greenpeace didn't like it. Every year will probably have something and we will analyse whether that is true or not. We will work. But this has also helped to strengthen the GTPS. Today we have this strong feeling of belonging and even if an attack is not addressed to a company's sector they will consider as it was, it would say: 'Wait a moment, this company is a GTPS' member. Show me what is going wrong. Show me if there is anyone doing something better.' There isn't. And that is the nice part; we were strengthening this discussion throughout time.

The **Mediation Committee** concluded that JBS' monitoring system is fulfilling TAC requirements, stating that the just minor problems:

There is a fully operational system designed to prevent the purchase of animals from prohibited areas in accordance with the commitments entered into by the company with the MPF. It was clear that errors may occur, many of them due to shortcomings in the official information. The company's commitment regarding the system and the continuous improvement of its processes, wherever there is always room for it, was evident. (GTPS 2012a)

Conversely, JBS changed its strategy. In October JBS has changed its organisational structure, creating a new position to conduct the sustainability issues on the organisational level, taking such issue from the legal department and managerial level and taking it into the strategic levels of the organisation. Márcio Nappo was hired to occupy such position: Sustainability Director. **Márcio** explained the importance of this new position:

(...)How has the proper maturing of the company around this matter [sustainability]. For example, today the area of sustainability has a corporate board. What this means? Once more the question of leadership. When all this started who was conducting the matter of sustainability was the operational itself. And there was a clear conflict of interest. And the managerial management solved it. Not today. It is at the level of corporate management.

Interviewer: When this change happened?

Márcio: In August 2012. When this new position was created and I was hired. This is the right governance design, because I can discuss equally with the CEO of meat unit. If I was subordinated to him, obviously I would have some restrictions... I would have less flexibility; less space to action. Today is different. My mission is very clear, I'm the guardian of these three letters [referring to the company's name: JBS]. I have to analyse the whole company and not analysing only a single business unit or supplier; an isolated matter. I have to analyse in a cold and objective way the whole company in order to safeguard it; whoever it hurts. This is true governance, having a corporate director linked to institutional affairs. It is completely apart from the operational. I do not need to report to JBS' CEO. I need to report to the holding director, this makes all the difference. In a clear Portuguese: No one from the operational can fire me. This gives me much more space to act. (...)

Again I think that JBS is leading. When I examined the other companies o four sector, they are focusing the sustainability matter under the legal department which is the old way of dealing with sustainability. Sustainability as a contentious [in a legal sense] problem. For God's sake, it isn't that! Today, when JBS is going to discuss something with the Federal Prosecutors Office [MPF] is obvious that I will have my legal advisory. But the negotiation, strategy and decision making is from the sustainability area. The legal department is a support. But when I look at other companies, they are still making the decision under the legal department. This is a serious deficiency, nothing against lawyers. But a lawyer will always look at this matter [sustainability] as a litigious issue and probably will conclude that the best way of dealing with this is going to the court. This is the worse option. Why do I say so? Because, even if you discuss with the Federal Prosecutor Office [MPF]. For me personally, the most irrelevant question is the legal issue that you may even have good arguments and good chance to discuss a legal matter with Prosecutors and win. But as long as this process the Federal Prosecutor Office [MPF] is going on it will strangle your business market as it did this year. MPF have just sent a notification letter to all retailers, even to Giraffes [Brazilian fast-food chain]; even for fast-foods, with lists of ranchers and slaughterhouses that were buying from these ranchers involved illegal deforestation, advising to not buy from these suppliers: Finished. There were slaughterhouses that had not sold a kilo of meat for 15 days.

This is the huge power that the Federal Prosecutors Office has nowadays, it learned that is not the legal dispute or law or fine. It is the capability of influencing your market and if necessary to strangle you commercially, forcing you to sign a document or something similar. It is not just a legal action. That is the importance of dialogue and to understand the new game's rule.

Márcio Nappo was one of ABIOVE's¹⁰⁴ coordinators during Greenpeace's campaign on soya and deforestation, as examined in sections 5.2 and 5.2.1.2. In December, two months after Nappo's recruitment, JBS and Greenpeace resumed the Zero Deforestation Commitment and JBS withdrawn the legal (JBS 2012a). This organisational design transformation coincides with GTPS' organisational structure changes and reinforces how the beef industry has realised the importance of shaping this environment in order to promote their expansion.

These negotiations (i.e. actors' actions and interactions) suggest that actors are aiming at influencing this context for agency and it is throughout them that meanings are being created, supporting new technologies. At the same time, actors are targeting to fashion the societal logic of capitalism by using brand damage and protection, and litigation to impact on the resource distributions, since it is being made clear that such approaches impact on the material and symbolic resources. Moreover, it reinforce that actors are making sense of their actions while they act.

Finally, it shows that the beef industry has started to change its actions and become more active in influencing this context in order to transform risks into opportunities in the context of sustainability. As José Augusto de Carvalho Júnior, JBS' CEO for Mercosul, stated after resuming JBS's commitment with Zero Deforestation Commitment: "While reassuming this public commitment a new chapter started, we reinforce our objective of conciliating production and forest preservation." (JBS 2012a). As will be discussed on the next section, the monitoring system has a fundamental role in this process.

5.3.3. The rise of the Monitoring System

Throughout this chapter, the importance of the monitoring system for addressing sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry has become clear. Such system has been already explained and intensively mentioned. However it is important to examine actor's actions and

¹⁰⁴ *Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Óleos Vegetais*, translating into English: Brazilian Vegetable Oils Industry Association

interactions underneath its adoption, which endorsed the argument that the monitoring system is the embodiment of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry.

There is no doubt that the monitoring system required a technological advance, as already mentioned. Nevertheless, it is how actors are making use of this advance that enabled to transform something that was bad for the slaughterhouses into something that could, not only foster new businesses, but promote the ‘world biggest animal protein monitoring programme’.

Although nowadays it is widely adopted by the biggest slaughterhouses, helping the industry in managing its logistics and their suppliers as a business intelligence tool, the slaughterhouses resisted fiercely to the adoption of the monitoring system. As [Márcio Macedo](#) has explained:

(...) It's a long way to go, in terms of convincing the slaughterhouses to adopt management systems, such as the livestock procurement system [the monitoring system]. And I can surely say that there was a big resistance from slaughterhouses in the beginning. It was very difficult in the beginning. (...)

The reason for such resistance was not only due to the fact that Greenpeace, MPF and BNDES were forcing the slaughterhouses to develop such monitoring system, transforming it into a mandatory requirement. [Breno Felix](#), partner-director of AgroTools, mentioned at GTPS’ report:

The application of ITM [Integrated Territory Management] has become essential in the meat production chain, due to the protocols, the requirements, and the commitments made by the Industry (TAC; “Beef moratorium”), the policies of BNDES (res. 1854/2009), the keenest eyes of the Central Bank (public notice 41/2012), in addition to the inclusion of Brazil in the accounting norms of IFRS (Law nº 11.638). It has been in this scenario that, since 2009, the AgroTools methodology, named Geographical Identity (GeoID), has been tested, used and improved by the beef sector, very successfully. (GTPS 2012b: 32).

Moreover, as an anonymous interviewee has mentioned, the monitoring system illustrates a huge mentality change of the slaughterhouses, both in terms of how they used to think and act. The monitoring system is the result of – and also employs – the same

technologies used by Greenpeace and MPF (i.e. focus on the **value chain** to **trace** the Amazon deforestation stain) to expose the industry's risk in the context of sustainability.

How the procurement processes worked before the monitoring system and why it could represent a threat for the industry at the point of creating resistance in adopting it?

Fernando Sampaio explained how it the industry used to work:

And what the companies did in 2009? The guy wanted to buy cattle... Well, he looked at the list of slave labour from the Ministry of Labour, and the IBAMA list of embargoed areas that are, theoretically, areas with illegal deforestation. Because these are public information sources that slaughterhouses have access. He does not know if the guy is there or not [in that geographic point linked to deforestation and slave labour]. And, then, he decides whether to buy or not.

The decision whether to buy cattle from a rancher was made by a manager at the abattoir. The manager would check the MTE's *dirty list* and IBAMA's embargoed areas list and if the producer was not on such lists he or she would be considered clean and, thus, apt for the purchase. The problem was that the both lists were not updated very often. Furthermore, due to the land grabbing and land tenure problems when a producer entered in such lists, he or she probably would create a new company to explore the same area, therefore, this new company would not be listed.

Thus, the main difficult resides in associating an enterprise that has committed an illegal activity and the specify position on the earth which produces cattle. There was no efficient way of evaluating the risk of a particular purchase in the Amazon biome regarding its involvement with deforestation and probably the only person who knew where that rancher was located was the truck driver that went to corral to collect the cattle.

As already discussed, Greenpeace and MPF conducted an investigation to **trace** the **supply chain** in order to determine whether a particular cattle came from a rancher that has deforested in a particular point in time. After this discovery they kept tracking the value chain from the abattoir until they reached several different and companies, such as Nike, Timberland, Tesco, among others. In possession of such information, Greenpeace used a **brand damage approach** to attack the slaughterhouses while MPF used the **litigation** one.

Consequently, Greenpeace, MPF and BNDES were requiring that the slaughterhouses developed a monitorable, verifiable and reportable tracking system that allows an audit to the procurement processes. The system should **trace** the slaughterhouses **supply chain** and prove that their procurement processes were able to avoid being associated with the Amazon deforestation. If on the one hand, the slaughterhouses could respond to the international pressure for proving that they were not any deforestation stain on their products. On the other, with such system would be easy to identify whether they were being able or not to avoid such environmental damage, what could be used against them in terms of brand **damage** or **litigation** strategies.

The monitoring system rationale, and its association with the supply chain, is explained by JBS' sustainability director, [Márcio Nappo](#):

*(...) the idea is that, for each JBS product, we know exactly the origin of the raw materials, which is symbolized by this little ox holding its own birth certificate [pointing at the computer]. Naturally, the discussion within the value chain assumes that you have a **traceability of your raw material guaranteeing sustainability from end to end**. Since the origin of the raw materials to the product placed on the consumer's table. And from the point of view of livestock, from the point of view of Brazil, from the point of view of JBS, our great challenge is making sure that the sustainability team from JBS in São Paulo, at the company headquarters, is able to know what are the conditions of production of each of its suppliers, considering that thousands of them are located in that sensitive region of the Amazon rainforest, in an online way before making a decision to buy or not cattle from each of these suppliers. (...) (bold added).*

Before examining the technological innovation on such system, it is important to analyse the context for its development. Besides, GTPS was formally constituted in 2009 and had the attribution of dealing with such monitoring system, as discussed on section 5.2.3.5, the monitoring system started to being built at ABIEC. As [Fernando Sampaio](#) explained:

We have created a monitoring system. I don't know whether Márcio [Nappo from JBS] showed it to you. So, that started in ABIEC. We brought the companies that worked with geo-technology to start monitoring indigenous land, Conservation Units and deforestation.

It is quite interesting to realise that the beef exporters' association was leading this process. Such lead emphasise the importance of cleaning the deforestation stain due to the international pressure the Brazilian beef industry was suffering. As already discussed, the slaughterhouses have lost significant sources of revenue due to Greenpeace accusations and they were being pressed for proving that they were not fostering the Amazon deforestation. As important as the internal pressure exerted by MPF and the retailers, is the pressure exerted by the external links of this value chain, in transforming how the Brazilian beef was understanding sustainability. Both pressures transformed how the industry's players foreseen their future, what required agency to change such future.

Moreover, locating such issue at ABIEC is evidence that sustainability was being understood as prejudicial for the business development, especially in losing export market share. Sustainability was analysed under a **risk** management perspective. According to this context, Amazon deforestation was the hegemonic meaning of sustainability and thus, deforestation has become the focal issue supporting actors' discourses that enabled the development of technologies, programmes and initiatives regarding such problem.

The monitoring system was initially designed to be a collective solution, a single solution adopted by the whole beef sector – obviously adopted by the slaughterhouses that have signed TAC and the Zero Deforestation Commitment. ABIEC get in touch with geo-referencing companies in order to design such solution and AgroTools was selected to develop it.

AgroTools has created the *Metodologia Identidade Geográfica*¹⁰⁵ (GeoID) (AgroTools 2013). The methodology was based on an algorithm, generated through a single geo-referenced point (the corral point), which indicated the risk of a particular rancher being involved with illegal deforestation, and/or invasion of indigenous lands or Conservation Units. The algorithm adds information to the corral point, using public information (e.g. the municipality in which the corral point was located, the proximate size of ranchers in that region, the distance to focus of deforestation and IBAMA's embargoed areas, among others)

¹⁰⁵ In English: Geographic Identity Methodology. Such system started only with one level of classification, being further developed into six different levels regarding the accuracy of geographic information.

to create a moving radius that varied according to such public information delimiting an area. In case any spot of illegal activity was found inside that area, the correspondent producer would be considered inapt for the procurement process. Once this was a collective solution, a shield methodology was developed in order to prevent slaughterhouses from accessing strategic information from each other.

However, this collective monitoring system was never implemented. In the final stages of its implementation, one of the largest slaughterhouses decided it was so huge that they should develop their own system. Such withdrawal has rendered the collective monitoring system impossible and each slaughterhouse ended up developing its own system.

Nowadays, all slaughterhouses have adopted similar systems to geo-reference its suppliers. The biggest slaughterhouses have developed a sophisticated monitoring system in order to be able to fulfil Greenpeace's Zero Deforestation Commitment. According to TAC and BNDES' resolution, the slaughterhouses need to cross three sorts of data: the geo-referenced area of a particular rancher (the Cadastro Ambiental Rural - CAR¹⁰⁶), the MTE dirty list and IBAMA's embargoed areas. Even though CAR is now obliged to every farmer – Law 12.651, de 25 de maio de 2012 (Brasil 2012) –, it is not yet fully implemented, and, thus, TAC and BNDES's resolution decided the checking of both public lists would be enough. Furthermore, the Zero Deforestation Commitment required slaughterhouses' suppliers not be involved with illegal deforestation, especially the ones dating from the 4th of October of 2009 on (Greenpeace 2009a). In order to accomplish such requirement, the system should check this geo-referenced area with DETER and PRODES¹⁰⁷ data.

All monitoring systems adopted by slaughterhouses operate under the same process; first, it is necessary to link all the information from a particular procurement to a territory, through a geo-referenced point or area. Then, the monitoring system should delimitate an area of influence from that geo-referenced point, the more information available from that

¹⁰⁶ In English: *Rural Environmental Register*. CAR is a document being adopted by the Brazilian Government in order to promote the environmental regularisation of rural proprieties. It consists on the geo-referencing of the propriety informing the usage of its space (areas of conservation among others)(MMA 2013).

¹⁰⁷ While the *Sistema de Detecção de Desmatamento em tempo Real* (DETER) – *Real-time Deforestation Monitoring System* – monthly analyses the Amazon Deforestation in a 250m scale. The *Monitoramento da Floresta Amazônica Brasileira por Satélite* (PRODES) – *Satellite Monitoring of the Brazilian Amazon* – monitors the annual deforestation area and rate. Both systems are publicly available.

location, the bigger is the accuracy – while AgroTools has developed its GeoID methodology into six levels of accuracy¹⁰⁸, others use only the corral point and determine a 10km radius from that point. Finally, it is necessary to examine whether the area determined on the previous step has intersections with Conservation Units, indigenous land or any deforested area dating from the 4th of October of 2009 on, and whether the producers are listed on the dirty list or IBAMA's embargoed areas. This is the step when the information produced by the slaughterhouses is crossed with public information.

After embedding such process in a web-platform, not only the abattoir manager will be able to decide whether a particular procurement process is apt or not, but anyone would have access in real-time from the slaughterhouses' headquarters. Hence, a monitorable, verifiable and reportable tracking system that allows an audit was developed, accomplishing BNDES, Greenpeace and MPF's requirements.

Márcio Nappo, JBS sustainability director described such system:

(...) So let's understand a bit of what is this commitment that JBS has on responsible procurement of raw materials. As I said, in relation to the commitments, we expect all our cattle suppliers to respect and meet our environmental criteria, and, for that, this system developed since 2010 examines, on a daily basis, almost 70,000 suppliers throughout the Brazil, of which 37,000 are located in the Amazon region. This is the size of our problem. So, I always say, without being arrogant, that I challenge to find any other company in the world that has a problem of such scale and complexity, involving a daily monitoring with a set of socio-environmental criteria in an universe of 70,000 suppliers. It is a complex job. For that, we have developed a monitoring system that is an integrated system operating, in its analytical part, with public information from IBAMA and the Ministry of Labour, and that also develops private geographic information of its suppliers. So let's quickly see how this works. Regarding the pillar of one of these monitoring systems, which is the use of public information for us to make sure that JBS is not generating raw material from farms involved with illegal deforestation and slave labour, we download everyday the list of embargoed areas by IBAMA that have daily updates and this forces us to also daily update our system with such information. We put this in an Excel spread sheet and, following that, we download the data from the Ministry of

¹⁰⁸ Starting from the N0 level, when there is no geo-referenced point available or the municipality is the only information accessible, until the N5, when the rancher shape is available(AgroTools 2013).

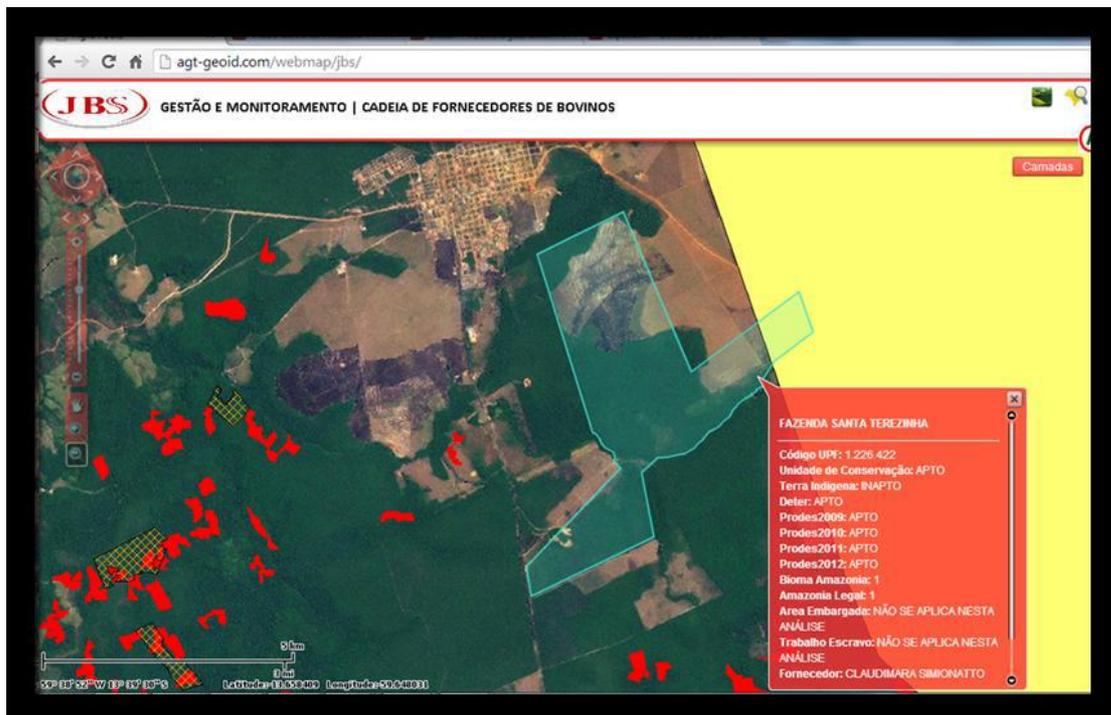
*Labour, the list of slave labour. We put all the information from the list of suppliers involved with embargoed areas and slave labour, and confront it with the CPF and CNPJ of our 70,000 suppliers in Brazil. And, whenever we find suppliers of JBS that are present in these lists, they will be locked in our procurement system through automatic lock process that I will explain later. So, as I said, this goes for 100% of our suppliers. **But here comes the most complex part, which is the production - the development of geographic information from our suppliers, produced privately, that is meant to protect us against the purchase of raw materials from areas of zero deforestation. This is the commitment with Greenpeace. We cannot buy from producers, suppliers and farms that cleared land after October 2009.** So, they have set a specific date and from that date must have not been deforestation done legally or illegally. (...) This part of the geographical analysis is done for all of our suppliers within the Legal Amazon, which are approximately 37,000. So here we have some real pictures of the operating system. This red line is called Legal Amazon, 74 % of the national territory. The yellow dots are the JBS slaughterhouses inside the biome. And the light green areas are the sum of the areas of supplier farms of JBS, always surrounding the slaughterhouses, totalling 87 million hectares – two and a half times the size of France and three and a half times the size of UK. (...)*

These are the sum of the areas of farms, okay? This other slide gives the exact dimension of the complexity of the problem. Here (showing in the map) is an area in the State of Pará where you have a bit of everything. You have indigenous land; on the opposite side, you have the Conservation Unit area; the outbreaks of deforestation are here; in the middle, you have native forest in dark green; in pink are the areas of the farms. These are digital maps of the JBS' supplier farms and the dots in red are the deforestation areas. How are we going to know, on a daily basis, from a total of 37,000 suppliers, which farms are occupying indigenous lands, Conservation Units, or have deforestation outbreaks? (...) Of course, these analyses are not made visually, in visual analysis. But there is a software operated by a third party company, called AgroTools, that does this for us and automatically overlay all these geographic information: all official maps of indigenous land, the official maps of the national Conservation Units, the deforestation data from PRODES and DETER (released by INPE). Plus, until now, I have spoken of public information. And, finally, they overlap this with private information, which are the geo-referenced digital maps of JBS' supplier farms. And then you have the result, right? From farm to farm. Although the criterion of deforestation is one, we now operate five different databases to this, which are: PRODES 2009-2012 (the consolidated annual deforestation data, the official data on deforestation in Brazil, which is an annual data. But for us not to be exposed to the risk of having, during an year, this database out of date, we also use the

DETER data that is monthly data on deforestation. So, it brings much more accuracy and updating to our analysis on deforestation. (bold added)

While Márcio Nappo's explained how the monitoring systems works he also stressed that Greenpeace pressure was crucial for its development, not only in terms of the technological advance itself, but how deforestation was central in such analyses. In the figures below it is possible to see some samples of the monitoring system:

Figure 17: JBS' Monitoring System Sample 1



Source: Nappo 2013.

Figure 18: JBS' Monitoring System Sample 2

MENTO COMPRA DE GADO

STATUS	COD_FORNS	COD_FAZ
INAPTO	1065340	1065341
APTO	16844	33006
APTO	10264	42154
APTO	286383	286385
APTO	1743502	1792351
APTO	58265	58266
INAPTO	75701	75702
INAPTO	15688	1037323
APTO	1692186	1712377
APTO	44421	156022
INAPTO	216309	216310
INAPTO	1065340	1079348
APTO	64225	1764228
APTO	9826	1698827
APTO	8938	208940

APTO

INAPTO

Source: Nappo 2013.

Consequently, it is clear that ‘sustainability’ is associated with deforestation and the importance of controlling the supply chain concerning the involvement with such risk. It is important to remember that Greenpeace was in a constant negotiation with the industry, analysing what should be addressed. Therefore, it has an important influence in the development of what this system can address in terms of providing information for examining the environmental impact.

The monitoring system consolidation is an important achievement in the transformation of this third context for agency, enabling the industry to use it to shape how the beef industry is associated with the Amazon deforestation, not only in providing evidence that the supply chain is clean in terms of deforestation stain.

5.3.3.1 Geo-traceability for cleaning the deforestation stain

It has been shown that the monitoring system was designed to evaluate whether the slaughterhouses' **supply chain** are involved on deforestation, assessing whether a producer was 'sustainable' or not. By such analysis it is possible to evaluate and affirm that this production chain is not involved with Amazon deforestation, [Márcio Nappo](#) has stressed such rationale:

Since 2010, on the basis of the public agreements it generated from 2009 to today, both with Greenpeace for zero deforestation, as agreements with the Federal Prosecutor Office, we have been working to develop a socio-environmental system of suppliers massively using technology that enables JBS, among its thousands suppliers, to know which are sustainable and which are not. So, here we have basically the four main criteria that we follow every day in the analysis of suppliers, which materialise the agreements made by JBS. Thus, under no circumstance JBS generates raw material from farms involved, first with deforestation or any practice of slave labour, or farms that have invaded indigenous lands or Conservation Units. So, this is our bible. These are the four criteria that we follow to be able to analyse and classify our suppliers and say: 'Look, this supplier of ours is okay'. (bold added)

In this sense, the monitoring system fulfil the requirement of assessing the slaughterhouses' **supply chain** generating information that avoids **legal actions** (i.e. litigation approach), but can also be used to **protect their brands** and foster their business, once the monitoring systems can be used for communication with the international audiences, mainly the next links of this value chain, that their products does not carry the deforestation stain.

Differently than initially expected, the monitoring system could transform the context for agency concerning sustainability. While the beef industry was acting (i.e. developing the monitoring system) they were realising the possibilities of changing this unfavourable environment. At the crisis peak, in 2009, no one could expect that the monitoring system could, one day, bring competitive advantage for this industry. Once more [Fernando Sampaio](#) clarifies this transformation:

Look, what this has provoked is that, for the first time, the industries are having a greater notion and control of the supply chain than they had before. Because, before, the one who actually knew where the farm supplying the slaughterhouse was located was the truck

driver that went there to get the order. Today, the company has an accurate idea of where their suppliers are. They have risk management at the time of purchase. So it is a positive thing that this has happened. (Bold added)

Enabled by the information generated by the monitoring system, the Brazilian beef industry can improve their business strategies. The monitoring system could be employed beyond the optimization of their risk assessment; it can be used as a business intelligence tool in order to obtain logical gains (i.e. from knowing where their suppliers are located), optimising their procurement processes, and analysing their geographic expansion, among other benefits.

Nevertheless, the monitoring system also provides information to shape this beef industry field, once it can be used as a tool for expanding their market, either by strengthening their brands or to show that the Brazilian beef industry is not only avoiding Amazon deforestation but helping to preserve it. However, in order to promote such positive transformations, the monitoring system required an endorsement from Greenpeace, which came only in April 2014.

On the 2nd of April 2014, the slaughterhouses (i.e. JBS, Marfrig and Minerva), following the work plan concerted, published an independent audit report (Ambrósio and Bauer 2014a; Ambrósio and Bauer 2014b; Baines 2014). According to these reports, all the three companies have shown a low level of non-conformity – less than 1% – in all criteria of the Zero Deforestation Commitment (Ambrósio and Bauer 2014a; Ambrósio and Bauer 2014b; Baines 2014).

On the same day, **Greenpeace published** in its Brazilian website the following:

The three largest slaughterhouses in the country – JBS, Marfrig and Minerva – took an important step to increase transparency in meat production in Brazil. For the first time, the industry giants have made public their efforts to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains, and have released the audit results of its control systems for buying cattle from the Amazon.

(...) ‘In implementing control mechanisms for deforestation on supply farms located in the Amazon, the slaughterhouses assumed their responsibility to concretely stop buying meat from those who destroy the forests’, says Adriana Charoux, a Greenpeace activist. ‘And, by

making this information public, these companies take an important step to increase transparency and provide greater social control to the meat production chain', she added (...).

'The livestock giants assumed responsibility to remove deforestation from their supply chain. Now, it is necessary that other slaughterhouses, direct buyers and large supermarket chains join the public commitment over cattle [referring to the Zero Deforestation Commitment]. The government must also fulfil its share by accelerating the implementation of the registry of properties (CAR), with courage, and without surrendering to pressure from the big ones that, once again, will seek to maneuver and prevail – over the small ones and all Brazilians', Adriana concludes (Greenpeace 2014, our translation).

This is a symbolic statement that recognises the advances and challenges faced by the Brazilian beef industry. It also shows that Greenpeace is not attacking companies as they pleased; it was engaged on the negotiations that sustained the development of this monitoring system. Hence, Greenpeace should recognise the advances made by the industry otherwise it may lose its legitimacy what could affect its resources in engaging in others campaigns. If Greenpeace has done otherwise, the companies that will engage in negotiations with it in the future might consider that its goal is only in promote brand damage, this could impact Greenpeace strategy of fostering the societal transformation it envisage.

Concerning the context for agency in the Brazilian beef industry, Greenpeace' statement supports in transforming the sensible situation the beef industry was positioned and shows how the industry has acted in order to shape this environment.

In this sense, Greenpeace's declaration shows how this context is being transformed once more. Now, the beef industry has the elements required to promote a discourse change in this negotiation order and it has the necessary conditions to do it. The Brazilian beef industry is again actively shaping its environment. In this sense, the monitoring system could add another layer to the risk management perspective, enabling the beef industry to takeover sustainability. Whether these actions will lead to the development of certifications schemes or other traditional transnational governance mechanisms (i.e. soft law) it is hard to affirm. Actually, Isabel Drigo (2013) has shown that the institutional framework is not favourable for such development, therefore it is still unlikely to happen.

It is important to note that, neither Greenpeace's statement (2014) nor this research is advocating that the Brazilian beef industry is environmental friendly; this study has not the objective of analysing what is 'sustainability', but to shed light on how 'sustainability' is being understood.

Thus, this chapter has been examining how actor's negotiations impacts on the understanding of what is 'sustainability' in a situated context, showing that rather than a technical issue, 'sustainability' is the result of a negotiation order in which actors use their discourses to shape their environment. Furthermore, it is possible to find, not only, evidence of actors' interests, but how the societal logics are impacting these actions and interactions that sustain the development of programmes and initiatives that promote whatever is 'sustainability'.

5.3.4. Cattle ranching GHG emissions: Between political and technical arguments

At least since IPCC report's (Solomon et al. 2007) there is a discussion regarding the impact of livestock on climate change and FAO's report, *Livestock's long shadow: environmental issues and options*, (Steinfeld et al. 2006) was responsible for bringing this matter to the beef industry, as discussed on the first period analysed – section 5.1. Even though, the context for agency regarding sustainability at that time hindered the development of initiatives and programmes for addressing such question, cattle's GHG emissions has always been a issue of concern, although it has never been much explored. However, in 2013 FAO published a new report – *Tackling climate change through livestock: A global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities*, which provides a new assessment of contributions and effects of livestock on climate change (Gerber et al. 2013b).

Thus, it is possible to question what would be its impact on the new context being experienced by these actors? Especially when 'sustainability' is no longer a silence on this context, once actors' expertise in dealing with 'sustainability' has transformed and, additionally, there is an increasing global concern about the impacts of climate change on mankind.

But why cattle GHG emissions are relevant? Mainly, there are three sources of GHG emissions under this perspective. The first one is the enteric fermentation, the natural digestive process during which cattle produces methane that is twenty-three times more pollutant than carbon dioxide – according FAO’s report, enteric fermentation accounts for 42,6% of the global emissions beef supply chain (Gerber et al. 2013b). The second source is the feed production, considering both the feed crops production and fertilisers for improving pasture – cattle feed on crops produces more methane than the one feed on grass (Gerber et al. 2013a; Gerber et al. 2013b). Finally, the methodology adopted also estimates the emissions from land transformations by estimating the pasture expansion into forested areas, what affects the Latin American impact on climate change (Gerber et al. 2013a; Gerber et al. 2013b).

Concerning land usage, deforestation is already being tackled by the beef industry. As discussed, deforestation is the focal issue in the Brazilian beef industry field and enabled by the monitoring system, the Brazilian beef industry can engage in this negotiation in a different perspective, by associating the achievements on controlling deforestation ‘promoted by the industry’ and its contribution for reducing climate change. Evidence was GTPS attendance at COP 19, held in 2013 at Warsaw, when they promoted side events and published a white paper – *Mechanisms for control and mitigation of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon Biome* (GTPS 2013) -, in which is addressed the beef industry contribution for reducing the climate change pressure. Additionally, [Márcio Nappo](#)’s interview to the Sociedade Nacional de Agricultura (SNA)¹⁰⁹ shows how the industry has transformed its discourse aiming at shaping this discussion:

The Europe, he [Márcio Nappo] explained, has worked hard on this issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as investing heavily in changing its energy matrix, through an increased use of bioenergy, biofuels and energy efficiency. Brazil, he highlighted, ‘with this significant reduction of deforestation, has saved more carbon thrown into the atmosphere than the European continent as a whole’. (SNA 2014, our translation).

In its turn, the enteric fermentation and the feed production are still facing a long technical debate regarding its methodological measurements. It is been argued that FAO

¹⁰⁹ In English: Agriculture National Society.

should consider in its methodology the whole livestock system, since the cattle is produced under a grazing system, it not only will present a lower emission rate, but the pasture will contribute to the carbon sequestration and this sequestration should be considerate. Furthermore, the emission rate should not be considerate *per capita*, since it distorted the countries' contribution. Eduardo Assad, from EMBRAPA clarifies some of these technical issues at FAO's report (Gerber et al. 2013b):

*No. We strongly contest that report. EMBRAPA has an officially challenging position on that report. It must be at EMBRAPA's website, where we state that those calculations are skewed and that is the Brazilian position of EMBRAPA, but not only a Brazilian position. (...) And they have made something that was not honest. They divided the emissions on a per capita metric. So, they get two billion Chinese people and use it to divide by the [country's] emissions. China is one of the biggest emitters in the world. And when you pick Brazil, with a smaller population, it appears as a huge emitter. This is a terrible, sloppy and dishonest move. It has been said that several times **that one cannot do the math that way. And all they do is to be able to lighten a bit of that? The carbon footprint of the American, Chinese and European's products. So, we produced a document to contesting that**¹¹⁰. (bold added).*

Eduardo Assad's comment reveals that underneath the technical procurements of estimating GHG there is a highly political content that is embedded on the international trade relations strengthening the argument that sustainability discussion is embedded into capitalism social relations, in which the land usage and the enteric emissions are playing an important role.

Although the Brazilian beef industry has not suffered any strong enough pressure, as it has experienced from Greenpeace and MPF, cattle GHG emissions has being a present meaning of sustainability, for example during GTPS' workshop on 2012, Henning Steinfeld, FAO's head of the livestock sector analysis and policy branch, was one of the conference keynote speakers (GTPS 2012b). Such issue has increasing its importance not only because it could be used in a new attack to the Brazilian industry, but also due to the strategic relevant it is assuming in the Brazilian economic development.

¹¹⁰ While this thesis was being written this EMBRAPA's positioning report was not yet made public.

Firstly it is important to consider that Brazil has one of the world's biggest cattle herd, therefore, enteric fermentation has a significant contribution to the Brazilian emissions (MCT 2010) and could it is associated with the beef industry expansion. Secondly, Brazil has assumed a public commitment of reducing its emissions and set the target of reducing the Amazon deforestation rate by 80% until 2020. Under this scenario, the argument of increasing the productivity of the Brazilian beef industry by improving cattle ranching productivity is getting stronger.

The Brazilian government has realised the importance of cattle ranching in order to achieve its 'sustainable' commitments and also foster economic development. Within *Plano Nacional sobre Mudança do Clima*¹¹¹ (Brasil 2008), it has been fostering the *Plano ABC*¹¹² policy, which aims at promoting low carbon emissions agriculture. Regarding cattle ranching, *Plano ABC* has the objective of funding cattle ranching activities that promote EMBRAPA's BPA (Embrapa 2011/2006), mainly through pasture quality improvement under the *Integração Lavoura-Pasto-Floresta*¹¹³ (ILPF) system, which enables the recovery of degraded pastures by supporting a diversification and rotation of productive activities throughout the year, ultimately optimising land use (Embrapa 2011/2006; MAPA 2012).

Similarly to what happened during the first context for agency – when several technical debates regarding cattle ranching's environmental impacts (i.e. relating cattle ranching to the deforestation of the Amazon) were being used to promote the different interests of actors – cattle GHG emissions' technical debate, in this third context, has also been pervaded by interests, which helps to increase its importance for the Brazilian beef industry. Once more, [Márcio Nappo](#)'s interview to SNA is enlightening:

Nappo recalled that livestock is one of the major focus of discussion within the global warming chapter, whether due to the issue of forest conversion, the famous land use, deforestation, or due to the cattle's issue of enteric conversion (the cattle that eats grass and produces methane from their digestion process). But, in his opinion, it is an

¹¹¹ In English: *National Plan for Climate Change* (PMNC).

¹¹² In English: *ABC Plan*, which stands for *Plano Setorial de Mitigação e de Adaptação às Mudanças Climáticas para a Consolidação de uma Economia de Baixa Emissão de Carbono na Agricultura* (in English, *Sectorial Plan for Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change for the Consolidation of a Low Carbon Emissions Economy on Agriculture*).

¹¹³ In English: *Crop-Pasture-Forest Integration* (ILPF).

interesting discussion, because at the same time that Brazil has reduced deforestation within livestock, the greatest emphasis is given to the emission issue and not the [carbon] sequestration.

‘Several studies showing, for example, that *Brachiaria*, the most used grass specie in Brazil for pasture, is a kind of long-root plant that, when well managed, is a tremendous converter of carbon dioxide into organic material inside the soil. Few people know that there is three times more carbon absorbed into the soil than in the atmosphere. This is the edge of the discussion’, he exemplified.

According to the executive, the main debate on carbon emissions will not be in the transportation and deforestation areas, but in the management of soil in agriculture. ‘This is the topic that has not yet emerged and which, again, Brazil has leadership on the processes of tillage and on what should be the next silent revolution of Brazilian agriculture, which is the Crop-Pasture-Forest Integration, with which we will produce seeds and meat on the same property, making the most of the land use under a highly productive way and fulfilling the goals of the Forest Code’, he advocated (SNA 2014, our translation).

Therefore, cattle GHG emissions have assumed an important position in the context of ‘sustainability’. Although embedded by technical arguments, its impacts in terms of promoting ‘sustainable’ programmes have been intrinsic related with the actors’ negotiations. Whether cattle GHG emissions will create a negotiation order it is hard to affirm, but the Brazilian beef industry and the Brazilian Government have already realised its strategic importance.

Furthermore, GTPS’ attendance at COP 19 and Nappo’s statements show that the beef industry has learned with the 2009’s crisis. Certainly, cattle GHG emissions are an element of their foreseen agency.

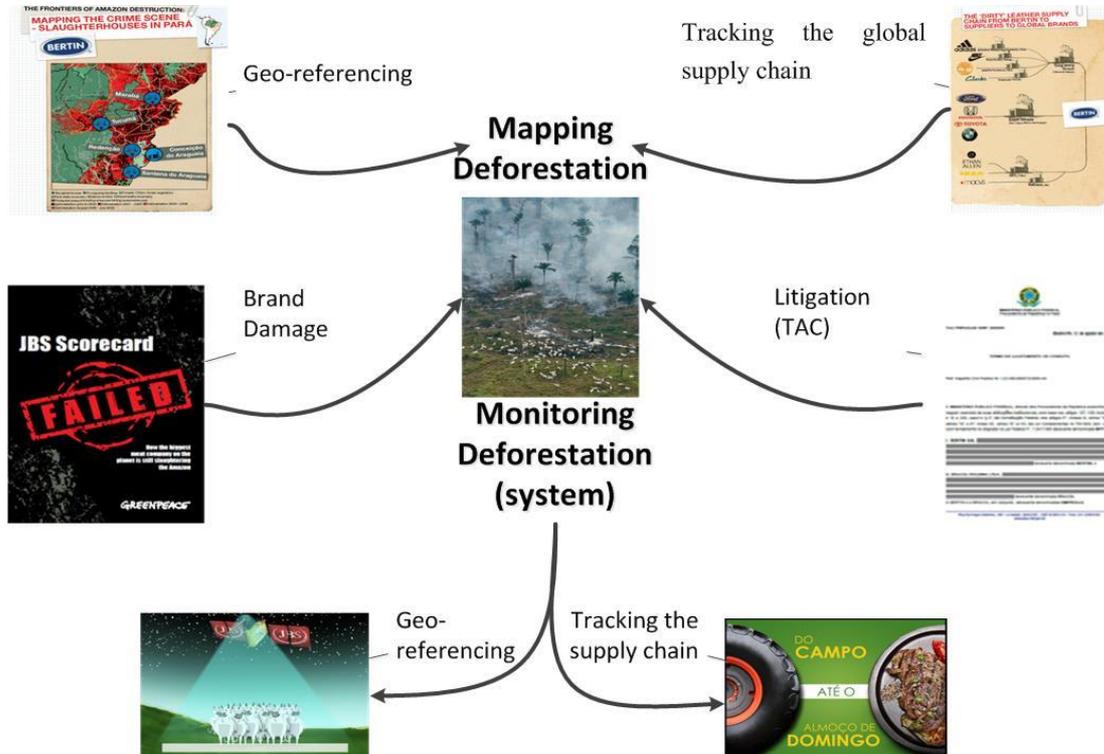
5.3.5. Context for agency: Transforming something bad into good

Although this context for agency encompasses a short period of time it has shown how the negotiation order surrounding Amazon deforestation has enabled the Brazilian beef industry to transform the 2009’s crisis into opportunities for new businesses. It has been show that such negotiation order has supported the development of new practices and the focal issue (i.e. deforestation) are still supporting actors’ discourses.

Throughout this section, the importance of the monitoring system for addressing sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry has been emphasised. Such system enabled the Brazilian beef industry to actively transform the context for agency. If between 2009 and 2012 this industry was facing the risk of being associated with Amazon deforestation, between 2012 and 2014 they were possible to transform such risk into advantages.

The monitoring system can be considered the embodiment of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. If in one's hand, the **litigation** and **brand damage** approaches were guiding Greenpeace and MPF's actions in order to employed **traceability** technologies to examined the deforestation stain in the beef **supply chain**. In the other's hand, the Brazilian beef industry has employed these same technologies to develop the monitoring system. While doing so, they were learning how to protect themselves, using the very same approaches employed by Greenpeace and MPF. Consequently, actors' (i.e. Greenpeace, MPF and the slaughterhouses) negotiations have changed the context for agency regarding sustainability. The figure below illustrates this process:

Figure 19: Illustration of Monitoring System



Elaborated by the author.

Finally, the monitoring system promoted the control of the value chain, managing its risk of being involved on deforestation of the Amazon. Hence, the monitoring system enabled the slaughterhouses change the context for agency. Even though Amazon deforestation is still a hegemonic meaning, it does not represent the same **risk** it used to be. ‘Sustainability’ is being promoted since deforestation is being avoided. This context shows that the experience of being attacked has changed the way the beef industry engage with sustainability. They have learned that better than waiting something happen, is to actively engage on this discussion and shape it environment, anticipating risks.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has shown the story of actors’ contradictions and negotiations regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. It was emphasised that actors’ constant jockeying was responsible for institutional reproduction, elaboration and transformation. Actors’ actions and interactions created a negotiation order surrounding the matter of sustainability in which is possible to identify the emergence of meanings, impacting on the context for agency and the organisation of the beef supply chain. Ergo, the chapter concludes that it is through negotiation (i.e. actions and interactions) that actors fashion their environment (i.e. situated context), such processes could be labelled as hegemonic struggles because they represent actors’ disputes for dominance in this situated context that have consequences for the societal order as well.

By creating meanings for ‘sustainability’ – qualifying this idea –, actors were able to change the context for agency and therefore fashion and shape this situated context. The struggles for hegemony produced meanings of sustainability that influenced actors’ agency. Such processes are supported by the relational characteristic of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Delbridge and Edwards 2013): by analysing their past experience, adjusted to negotiations and situations on the present, actors can engage in patterns and repertoires (i.e. strategies, technologies, programmes and initiatives) aiming at transforming or maintaining the context characteristics, projecting a foreseen future. It is by aiming to achieve the future they have envisaged that actors dispute meanings. Therefore, ‘sustainability’ is not only a technical matter, but also the result of actors’ negotiations that attach meanings to it and, thus, institutionalise such meanings.

Institutionalisation consists in infusing with value that goes further than technical requirements processes (Selznick 1948; Selznick 1996). Under the Brazilian beef industry field, Amazon deforestation was institutionalised as a meaning for sustainability due to actors' agency and thus became a focal issue impacting on the context itself and the development of practices. This chapter has examined that among several environmental impacts of such industry, it was the Amazon deforestation that gained predominance. Furthermore, analysis of the three contexts for agency has shown that meaning creation is a contested process pervaded by disputes that exceed the technical arguments at hand and could be perceived as a relational process between a situated context and the societal level that impacts on the possible solutions designed to address the perceived environmental impact, thus enabling and constraining actions. Recalling the three contexts for agency examined seems important to such argument.

During first context examined – section 5.1 –, although there was already scientific knowledge about cattle ranching environmental impacts, these were not being perceived as a business risk under this situated context. Hence, while the development of sustainable practices was constrained, such void enabled to foster the industry's economic development (i.e. ensuring financial resources for industry expansion and keeping the focus on market share disputes). This outcome was produced by beef industry actors' agency.

On the other hand, the second context for agency – section 5.2 – was marked by Greenpeace's and MPF's agency that transformed how actors were making sense of this context. Actors' constant jockeying supported the rise of Amazon deforestation as a hegemonic meaning; it was such agency that transformed this issue into a focal issue under this situated context. As a consequence, the development of initiatives and programmes to tackle deforestation were enabled while initiatives and programmes to address other cattle ranching's environmental impacts were constrained. At the same time, by the use of capitalist logic characteristic, Greenpeace and MPF were able to increase the business risk regarding Amazon deforestation and required a monitoring system to avoid it.

Finally, the third context – section 5.3 – shows how the monitoring system enabled the beef industry to slowly challenge the 'sustainability' association as a risk, transforming once more this situated context; by doing so, the industry took over 'sustainability' and as a

consequence the brand damage strategy associated with deforestation was, for a while, constrained. Moreover, based on past experiences, the Brazilian beef industry's actors realised that it is better to influence on other 'sustainability' meanings as a strategy to avoid future crisis.

As a result of these negotiations, Amazon deforestation became a value that can be used to attack actors (for example using a brand damage strategy) or to protect resources (e.g. by developing a monitoring system that dissociates actors from such negative value).

Under these circumstances it is possible to argue that meanings for sustainability are contested; they are the result of hegemonic struggles in which actors draw upon a situated context and societal logics' characteristics. Hence, following the organisational institutionalism literature and the theoretical framework proposed, actors' negotiation over 'sustainability' (i.e. this thesis' object) is both processual (i.e. an on-going dispute among actors) and relational (i.e. developed thought interactions among a situated context – micro – and a societal – macro – level). Therefore actors' disputes go beyond the struggle for meanings and impact the structural level of societal order.

Thus, adopting the stratified model of institutional analysis (Leca and Naccache 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), it was possible to identify the following features:

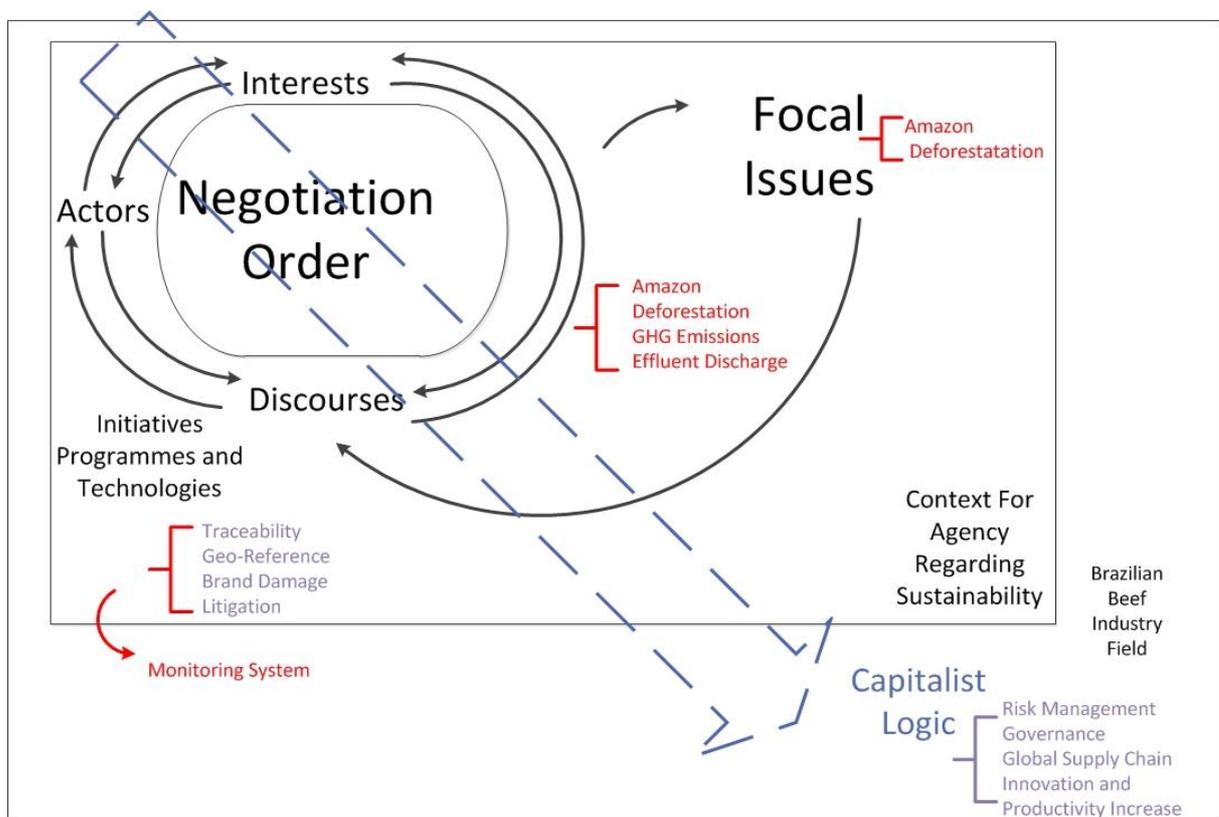
Figure 20: Stratified Model of Institutional Analysis for this Research

Domains	Features Identified
Real (logic's characteristic)	Risk management
	Governance
	Innovation and Productivity Increase
	Global Supply Chain
Actual (meanings of sustainability)	Amazon Deforestation
	Cattle GHG emissions
	Effluents Discharge
Empirical (actors using meanings)	Traceability
	Geo-referencing
	Brand Damage and Brand Protection
	Litigation (Regulatory Framework)

Elaborated by the author.

As discussed in the methodological chapter, Figure 20 below conflates the stratified model of institutional analysis for this research (Figure 19) with the hegemony approach to actors and societal logics (Figure 2 on chapter three). It is possible to note that the negotiation order is an arena under the mesolevel of analysis, encompassing actors' struggles over meanings in the domain of actual. As a mesolevel, such arena is pervaded by characteristics of capitalist logic (the domain of real). Finally, the figure illustrate how actors are using meanings (on the domain of empirical) to sustain and develop programmes, initiatives and technologies.

Figure 21: Negotiation Order of Sustainability under the Brazilian Beef Industry



Elaborated by the author.

As discussed on chapter two, logic's characteristic is not being argued for the decomposable elements of logics (Thornton et al. 2012) – since the more decomposable logics are, the less they exist (Friedland 2012) – but for the underlying structures and mechanisms – i.e. hidden structures (Fairclough 2010) – that are deeply embedded in social relations. Such logic's characteristic (real) is perceived by the evidence that actors are using them to sustain disputes for the understanding of environmental impacts. Logics are neither enacted nor fully rationalised; it is a situated interaction among actors that produces the necessary conditions

for stability and change. Moreover, this study has highlighted the characteristics of a particular period of capitalism, such features have been changing throughout time due to social interaction and will certainly change in the future. Thus, this research has shown that actors are using such features to shape their environment, which enables them to challenge and protect such characteristics of real.

According to Figure 19, this chapter has revealed the following meanings for environmental impact under the Brazilian beef value chain and thus what would be required for practices to be considered as 'sustainable': (i) Amazon deforestation, which is a hegemonic meaning; (ii) cattle GHG emissions; (iii) effluents discharge.

Actors use these meanings by employing a set of strategies and repertoires: (i) traceability: to discover the cattle's origins and its path throughout the supply chain; (ii) geo-referencing: to position a cattle in a specific area on earth that can be contrasted with deforestation data; (iii) brand damage and brand protection: to expose blue chip companies to a reputational risk or to protect a brand of being associated with an environmental impact; (iv) litigation via a regulatory framework: use the regulatory framework – either a legislation or a norm – in order to induce organisational behaviour. All of these strategies and repertoires were employed by different actors (e.g. Greenpeace, MPF, JBS, Marfrig, BNDES, GTPS among others actors) in different moments to put these meanings into action and justify the development of technologies, programmes and initiatives.

Underneath was identified some capitalist logic's characteristics that are being used to denounce the environmental impacts produced by the very capitalist logic that actors envisage transforming. The following twenty-first capitalism characteristics were identified: (i) risk management: the notion of minimising unfortunate events that could hamper organisational survival; (ii) innovation and productivity increase: although not always explicitly mentioned, the idea of producing more and consuming less resources is always present underneath these negotiations, either as the argument to avoid deforestation or supporting the monitoring system as a control mechanism for improving slaughterhouse productivity; (iii) governance: the change from an idea of government control to governance (exerted by several actors) controlling environmental impacts; (iv) global supply chain: the different links between

organisations and its suppliers in manufacturing products or services that are spread throughout the world¹¹⁴.

Although the emergence of a focal issue (e.g. deforestation in the Brazilian beef industry) lies on a negotiated order where meanings and discourses are being created while actors shape this situated context, such process has also consequences on the pre-existent structures that condition action (i.e. societal logics). In this sense, the chapter has emphasised that as actors discuss the meanings and understandings under a situated context, a deeper process is also happening: actors are trying to influence (protect or transform) the very structures (societal logics) that shape the social order. Hence, the research findings presented so far make it possible to question whether change and stability in a particular field – and its hegemonic struggles – are linked to the reproduction or transformation of the societal order and its material conditions that support elites.

Consequently, a piecemeal change on such societal logics might be in operation, since there is a growing concern about the environmental impact of businesses. However, the distribution of resources – money, power and legitimation – is still being preserved, supporting the ruling groups with material conditions to flourish. Hence, the changes on fields and contexts are being fashioned by actors aiming at protecting the core of the capitalist logics that guarantee their accesses to resources. In other words, preserving the societal order, while transforming it (change within stability).

Following such discussion, it is possible to reflect whether the challenges of sustainability under the context of the Brazilian beef industry are delivering changes in this situated context and whether such sectorial discussions are challenging the prevailing social order. It is undeniable that the adoption of any ‘sustainable’ practices enhances the concern of human impacts on environment. This is evident in the Brazilian beef industry, since the sector negotiates and discusses the socio-environmental impacts of the beef supply chain in the Amazon Biome, an arena to reflect on and create new practices is open (that resulted in

¹¹⁴ It is important to remember that this thesis does not have the objective of engaging with academic areas of supply chain, governance, risk management nor innovation. Under this study, they are discussed as the interviews and documents collected have allowed. Furthermore, they are perceived as characteristics of the XXI capitalism, hidden structures that are producing effect under the social relations, explaining how and why capitalism promotes or hampers the human well-being. Therefore, this thesis does not engage with such literatures under the management studies.

changes in such field). However, are these practices evidence of – or could promote – a transformation of the ‘business as usual’ perspective, in which business profitability is more important than the activity’s socio-environmental impacts? Or are such initiatives just answers to a particular context and therefore their practices are simply an adaption of the social order?

It is probably too early to deliver an answer, mainly because such practices are still in an experimental phase. Furthermore, actors are in constant jockeying and negotiations hindering predictions that go beyond such field. However, it is possible to notice that actors’ engagement in these challenges is supporting their practices in the characteristics of XXI century capitalism (Kristensen and Morgan 2012). However it creates a piecemeal change in the logic, in which different elements might be concerned, but the running elites remain the same.

In order to deeper examine such questions the following chapter will discuss the negotiation order and its interactions with capitalist logic.

6. Repertoires, negotiation order and Capitalism

*Greenpeace will not expel the [beef] sector [from the Amazon]. We do not work to expel any industry from the [Amazon] region. Neither do we work to shut an industry down. We envisage **reforming** this industry in order to enable it to operate without causing further deforestation. (Márcio Astrini, Greenpeace Brazil Amazon Campaign Coordinator, bold added)*

The previous chapter discussed how actors create meanings and, thus, change the context for agency regarding sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry. It concluded that Amazon deforestation emerged as a hegemonic meaning for sustainability in this industry due to the agency of actors – since actors’ actions and interactions, under a negotiation order, are responsible for shaping the context for agency regarding sustainability, which enabled or constrained the development of initiatives, programmes and technologies to address ‘sustainability’. By putting such meaning into action, actors used different repertoires (i.e. traceability, geo-referencing, brand damage and brand protection, and litigation via a regulatory framework), thus inhabiting institutions.

It also highlighted how actors were drawing upon different features of contemporary capitalism (i.e. risk management, governance, innovation and productivity increase, and global supply chain) in order to create such meanings, which were used to justify their actions. Moreover, it is because different actors rely on a capitalist logic that it is possible to question whether the transformation experienced in this context is also evidence of change in the profit maximisation capitalist rationale (i.e. *business as usual*), since environmental impacts started to influence corporate actions.

Therefore, while the preceding chapter supported that societal logics, actions and meanings are interrelated, this chapter reveals that: (i) an alignment of actors’ interests regarding the importance of Amazon deforestation facilitated its emergence as a focal issue – revealing both the historical conditions that actors have inherited and how MPF and Greenpeace employed a capitalist logic (i.e. governance and risk management) to place deforestation as an environmental concern under this situated context, and; (ii) how capitalist societal logic’s characteristics are being protected or attacked by actors, while they employ their actions’ repertoire. Thus, this chapter has the goal of discussing the negotiation order and its interactions with the capitalist logic.

Furthermore, in exploring how discourses are being used to sustain or attack the hidden processes and structures that support capitalism, this chapter achieves CDA's objective (Fairclough 2010), as well as enhances a hegemony approach (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002; Delbridge 2007) by showing how actors construct consensus (i.e. the emergence of the focal issue). Underpinning such analysis is the examination of whether a piecemeal change may impact the societal order, due to the stratified nature of society. So, it is possible to conclude that a change within stability is taking place, since it is argued that a piecemeal change is illustrated in the imposition of environmental concerns to the beef industry, which takes it over by the notion of 'sustainability'. Moreover, it could be considered that, while on the one hand a transformation in the capitalist 'quantitative efficiency' occurred, – an increase in productivity by transforming the proportion of consumption of resources during production (Gordon 1976) –, on the other hand the capitalist 'qualitative efficiency' remained intact, as the ruling dominant groups are still controlling the means of production and its associate resources (i.e. money, power and legitimation) (Gordon 1976).

In order to support such analysis, this chapter explores how some hidden features of capitalist logic that were not fully explored in the previous chapter (i.e. governance, innovation and productivity increase) are playing their role in producing a piecemeal change that supports the ruling dominant groups' control of means of production. To do so, and following a theoretical driven process, it was necessary to assemble a complex puzzle of interwoven discourses and arguments related to the Amazon deforestation, which was not always explicit, revealing the contradictions and connections among actors' discourses, as discussed in the methodological chapter.

This chapter is structured as follows; firstly, it will examine the historical context that provides an alignment of what is at stake when discussing the Amazon deforestation, especially from the Brazilian government's perspective, since such issue has become crucial for the developmental political project in operation. While discussing this historical background, it will argue that, although not explicitly mentioned by actors, the innovation and productivity rationale is embedded in the studied negotiation order. Secondly, it will demonstrate that, through Greenpeace and MPF's repertoire of actions (i.e. brand damage and litigation), governance is exerted by political action, since no new legislation has been developed, neither certifications schemes have been widely adopted. The conclusion of the

chapter reflects whether the changes under the Brazilian beef industry's situated context could promote a transformation of societal order, by pointing that, although the growing concern on environmental impacts is being assimilated through the transformation of productivity, it has not been fostering a qualitative transformation of social relations in contemporary capitalism.

6.1. Silence on innovation and productivity increase: Alignment of what is at stake regarding Amazon deforestation

This section aims at bringing a brief historical background about what is at stake regarding sustainability, based on different perspectives. It argues that 'Amazon deforestation' appears as an important issue to the Brazilian government, Greenpeace and the beef industry, and that such alignment facilitated its emergence as a focal issue, thus revealing how actors' actions have been pervaded by a capitalist logic.

In this process, this section discusses how Amazon deforestation agglutinates strategic questions concerning the political project in operation for Brazilian development. Even though not being explicitly mentioned in the analysed reports and interviews, this political project was a constant silence that appears as a hidden content, thus exploring how such issue increases the comprehension about what is at stake when Amazon deforestation is being negotiated and why it has become a sensitive matter under the Brazilian context.

6.1.1. Brazilian government and the importance of controlling Amazon deforestation

Discussions over the Amazon deforestation are often associated with the environmental problem it causes, both in terms of biodiversity loss and climate change, as it will be contemplated latter in section 6.2.2.1.b. However, from the Brazilian State perspective, there is more at stake. Amazon deforestation has become a sensitive matter for the political project on the country's development and its international trade, adding a new layer to Amazon deforestation besides the environmental one: Brazilian transnational

relations and diplomacy. The reason for that is supported by: (i) Brazilian carbon emissions reduction pledge, and (ii) the developmental political project on commodity exportation, which can be resumed by the Brazilian desire to become the world's barn.

Although not always explicitly mentioned, both matters were a latent silence in most actors' understandings of their interactions. They also enabled an alignment regarding what is at stake to different actors by summarising the unquestioned belief that sustainability is realised throughout innovation and productivity increase. Such feature of capitalism assists in maintaining the hegemony of the ruling groups, since it does not question the social relations upon the means of production.

It is important to mention that, when discussing the Brazilian government, the state is not considered to be a monolithic actor; on the contrary, the different agencies and organisms that constitute the Brazilian State are pervaded by contradictions and internal conflict. This research, however, does not have the objective of exploring such matter. The objective is rather to shed light on how this particular historical moment fostered an alignment of vested interests surrounding Amazon deforestation, thus enabling further examinations of the relations between actors' agency and the capitalist logic under the negotiation order in question, which could be summarised by both, the *Brazilian carbon emissions reduction pledge* and the *developmental political project on commodity exportation*.

6.1.1.1. Brazil carbon emissions reduction pledge

During the 2009's COP conference in Copenhagen, the acting Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva announced a carbon reduction pledge of at least 36% by 2020, regarding the Brazilian GHG emissions (Duffy 2009). Although Brazil being one of the biggest GHG world's emitters, it presents a peculiar emissions' profile, especially when contrasted to developed countries, which has on fossil fuel combustion for energy production its main source of GHG emissions (MCT 2010).

There are several reasons that could explain the Brazilian GHG emissions profile. Among them, three national circumstances certainly need to be highlighted. Firstly, the fact

that energy generation in Brazil is based on hydroelectric power and, therefore, does not push carbon emissions in the energy sector. Secondly, the Amazon Forest is considered a carbon stock, therefore deforestation, due to land-use change, is an important source of carbon emissions. Thirdly, a developmental political project on commodity exports is sustained by agribusiness, which major emissions are the enteric fermentation – the main CH₄ emitter – and soil fertilizer – the principal N₂O emitter. Both methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are related to climate change and are also more pollutant than CO₂ (MCT 2010).

Under the Brazilian context, the most relevant sources of GHG emissions have always been land-use change, forestry and agriculture (MCT 2010). Consequently, the agribusiness expansion over the Amazon Forest, specially cattle ranching and soya plantation, are priorities to be tackled in order to hinder Brazilian GHG emissions. Thus, it is not a coincidence that Greenpeace has chosen both sectors – soya and beef – to target in its campaigns¹¹⁵, and it is not a surprise that Embrapa and GTPS' have engaged on the debate of technical procedures to measure GHG emissions from livestock¹¹⁶.

To accomplish its carbon emissions reduction pledge, the Brazilian government has developed the *Plano Nacional de Mudanças Climáticas* (PMNC), which tackles Brazilian main sources of emissions and aims at fostering a low-carbon economy (Brasil 2008). PMNC has eight main goals summarised as follows:

- 1) To identify, plan and coordinate actions to mitigate GHG emissions generated in Brazil, as well as actions necessary for Brazilian society adaptation to the impacts caused by climate change;
- 2) To foster efficiency increase in the performance of economic sectors and the constant pursuit of best practices;**
- 3) To aim at maintaining a high share of renewable energy in the energy matrix, preserving the prominent position that Brazil has always occupied in the international scenario;
- 4) To foster a constant increase in biofuels participation in the national transportation system and also develop actions in order to structure an international market for sustainable biofuels;

¹¹⁵ As it was discussed in the previous chapter and will be further examined in section 6.2.2.

¹¹⁶ As it was examined in section 5.3.4 in the previous chapter.

5) To achieve a continuous reduction of deforestation ration – considering a five-year average – in all Brazilian biomes, until it reaches zero illegal deforestation;

6) To eliminate the net loss of forest-covered area in Brazil until 2015;

7) To strengthen inter-sectorial actions aimed at reducing communities' vulnerabilities;

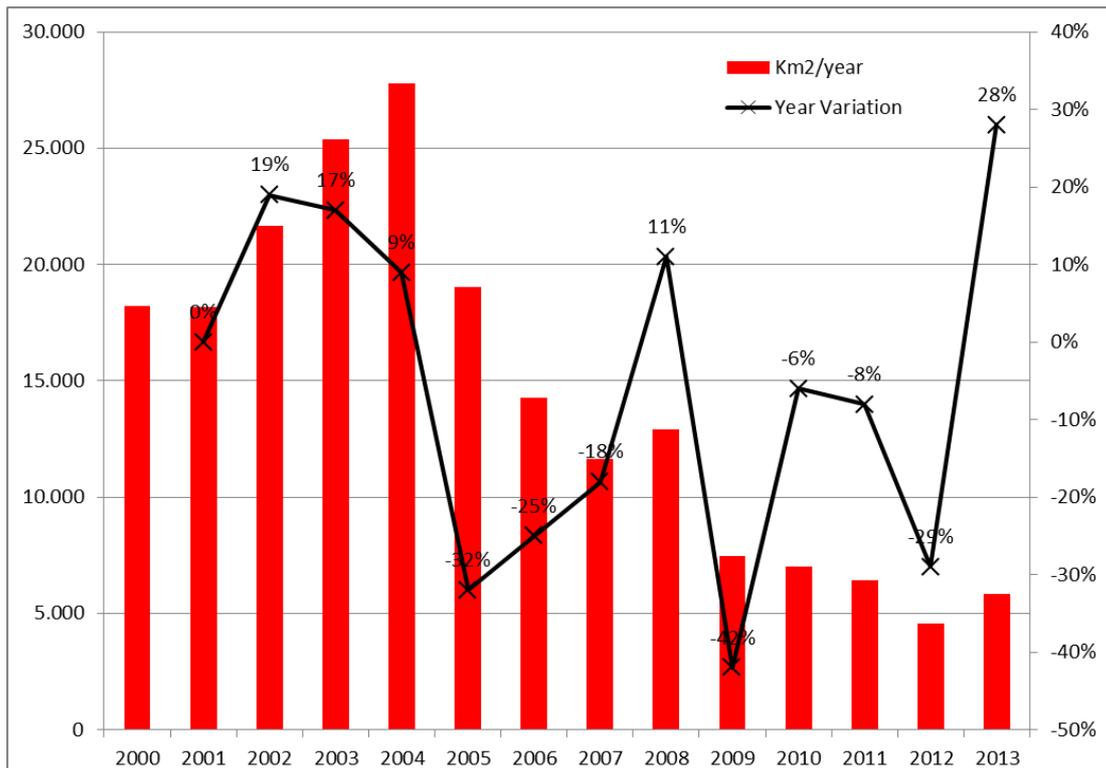
8) To seek to identify the environmental impacts of climate change and promote the development of scientific research, so that Brazil can design a strategy to minimise socio-economic costs of climate change adaption. (Brasil 2008: 7-14, bold added).

Among the targets set to accomplish such goals it is important to highlight: (i) to reduce the annual Amazon deforestation ration by 80% until 2020, and (ii) to double the planted forest area to 11 million hectares by 2020, among which 2 million of hectares should use native species (Brasil 2008).

Under this context, it is clear that the Amazon deforestation issue aligns vested interests of different economic sectors and is crucial for achieving Brazilian government's carbon emissions reduction pledge. At the same time, innovation and productivity increase appear as a hidden rationale to achieve such goal.

In terms of Amazon deforestation, the graph below demonstrates the decrease in deforested area.

Graph 10: Brazilian Amazon Deforestation



Source: Prodes forth coming.
Elaborated by the author.

As discussed in the previous chapter¹¹⁷, Amazon deforestation, agribusiness and cattle ranching are associated under the context of climate change – three major sources of carbon emissions in close association with each other (i.e. in order to increase agribusiness and cattle ranching, it is necessary to clear the forest). However, the argument of increasing cattle ranching productivity as a strategy for hindering Amazon deforestation needs to be transformed if it is going to build a dialogue with the new environmental agenda on climate change, such as it has been set by PNMC (2008), which reinforces strategies to: (i) diminish Amazon deforestation; (ii) promote a low-carbon livestock, and; (iii) tackle environmental liabilities, mainly increasing forest coverage.

As discussed in section 5.3.4, under the PMNC framework, livestock is being addressed by *Plano ABC (MAPA 2012)*. By promoting low-carbon emissions cattle ranching, *Plano ABC* also brings the productivity rationale as a strategy for convincing the rancher to adopt a different production system in its property. Elvison Nunes, *Plano ABC* coordinator, explains the sustainability under cattle ranching activity in its relation to *Plano ABC*:

¹¹⁷ Particularly section 5.1, when discussing the first context for agency regarding sustainability.

(...) *But with the traditional system of continuous soil development, drop of the physical infrastructure and loss of soil's chemical quality, this is really a system that has no support, no sustainability throughout the process and throughout the years. So the integration of systems that actually enable bringing back both physical and chemical soil quality are the main points for us to convince the producer that the old system, which his great-grandfather, grandfather and father used to work with, is really a system that needs to be replaced by another that brings not only benefits related to the improvement of the farmers' income, but also secondary benefits, such the improvement of soil's physical and chemical quality, which brings reduction to the production cost. There are also benefits in relation to soil biodiversity, water quality improvement, which may even frame such system as a potential water producer in the future. Today, we are realising that there is slight change in the way we see the Brazilian livestock; not only by the agricultural production sector, but the environmental area as well, which is realising that only command and control are not [motivating] enough for the greatest conservationist of natural resources – the farmer – to really engage as a partner in this process of natural resources conservation, which operates as the [real] stimulus. Of course, command and control will go on... but if we have a stimulus in this process, the farmer won't go back [to the old practices] because he sees the benefits. Today we have clearly experienced, through studies and work, that agricultural diversification and rotation, that such integration are beneficial, not only for the producer – since it increases its productivity – but it reduces the production area and increases the productivity. Moreover, the producer can bring physical and chemical qualities to the soil that will result in reduced production costs; and, in doing so, it will also enable recovering soils, improving the water infiltration issue, reducing erosion. In summary, all that framework of knowledge that agronomy always wanted to put ahead its projects and had not yet found a way to do this. And now we have a clear path with established, validated and proven technologies in Brazil that besides being sustainable in the three aspects – economic, social and environmental – they also bring with them this ability to reduce greenhouse gases emissions. I think, then, that Brazilian agriculture is the moment to take one of its big leaps. We had the green revolution; we had a very important point in the adaptation of soybean to the Brazilian Cerrado; some key points within this process of sustainable development that enabled the Brazilian agriculture to actually become what it is today: a background activity of the Brazilian economy that really brings a big support to economy as a whole. In my point of view, what I see today in relation to sustainability of livestock is that it will become increasingly strong and present throughout all the Brazilian production process. (bold added)*

Although *Plano ABC* represents an innovation, sustained by scientific development, in terms of developing low-carbon agriculture, it has been facing difficulties to reach ranchers, such as Prado Junior () has demonstrated. By considering the importance of increasing the productivity of the livestock sector, *Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos da Presidência da República* (SAE) has developed a study to implement a new line of credit aimed at complementing (or competing with) *Plano ABC: Intensifica Pecuária*¹¹⁸.

Intensifica Pecuária, led by Pedro Arraes, former Embrapa president, has the objective of increasing the productivity of cattle ranching by fostering the adoption of Embrapa BPA's technologies. It is not the objective of this study to analyse such policy, nevertheless it is important to explore how the policy is related to productivity increase:

The line of credit "INTENSIFICA PECUÁRIA" holds the premise of aligning the livestock production model with specific techniques and procedures, which contribute to a greater sustainability and development of the activity.

Micro and macroeconomic unfavourable conditions to the beef cattle industry requires rural business to be conducted differently from the "green revolution" patters of the 70s. The deterioration of the exchange relationship with some of the main inputs, as well as the international crisis dragging in recent years, reflect in the farm accounting through higher costs and lower prices.

In addition, there is a growing trend of social control over the activity: conscious consumers demand not only a source of animal protein, but also a safe product, with good quality, and respect to the environment and the dignity of the field workers. It is also not insignificant the trend of rising costs resulting from pecuniary penalty, which derives from the increased intelligence and structure of governmental monitoring powers in the environmental, agricultural, tax and labour areas.

The proposed protocol encompasses a set of technologies and management mechanisms that involve the participants' links in the beef production chain and consolidate the social, economic and environmental sustainability tripod in rural areas. **The document leads to the adequacy of rural properties to the improvement of production processes in order to ensure better meat quality,**

¹¹⁸ In English: *Intensifying Cattle Ranching*. Although SAE has considered such policy a priority – and it was also received with great enthusiasm by the beef industry – the policy was not yet implemented.

reduce production costs and provide safer food from viable production systems.

The traditional, extractive, low productivity, without planning and financial management livestock has shown indications of its economic infeasibility by assigning areas to the agricultural sector or even contributing to several million hectares in degradation process in Brazil. In the same vein, market requirements, competition with agriculture, land valuation, cattle depreciation and increase in production costs push beef cattle industry towards a more professional production model production, focused on technology and management, such as the model proposed by this document. (Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos 2013: 1, our translation with bold added).

Thus, innovation and productivity increase appears as a latent silence – although such rationale has influenced actors' actions, it is not always explicit. Moreover, it is possible to argue that this rationale has been assimilated by the context of 'sustainability'. However, it is no longer simply associated with an argument of avoiding Amazon deforestation, as it has occurred during the first context for agency analysed in the previous chapter. Rather, it has become embedded in the transnational context of GHG emissions and maintains the agribusiness expansion, which supports the developmental political project on commodity exportation. The link between such political project and the objective of reducing Brazilian GHG emissions is demonstrated in the first pages of the Second Brazilian inventory of GHG emissions, which states:

Brazil is a developing country with a complex and dynamic economy, which is ranked eighth in the world. It is an urban-industrial country, **with food exports as its main connection to global capitalism.** Brazil is the main exporter of several agricultural products: sugarcane, beef, chicken, coffee, orange juice, tobacco, and alcohol. Also, it comes second in soy bean and corn exports, and is ranked as the fourth largest exporter of pork. However, **it is not the biggest food exporter in the world, as is widely believed.** (MCT 2010: 11, bold added).

6.1.1.2. Brazil – the world's barn: Developmental political project on commodity exportation

Commodity exportation represents an important connection between Brazil and the world's economy. Hence, the rise of Amazon deforestation as a focal issue, under the

Brazilian beef industry, is also embedded in this transnational context. The Brazilian political project of becoming the world's barn is even mentioned in the Brazilian GHG emissions inventory – as shown in the earlier section –, which strengthens the argument that the way environmental impacts are conceived is directly related to contemporary capitalism's features.

Therefore, Amazon deforestation is not perceived strictly as an environmental problem. It is rather at the centre of the Brazilian development debate, thus agglutinating strategic questions for the maintenance of this political project.

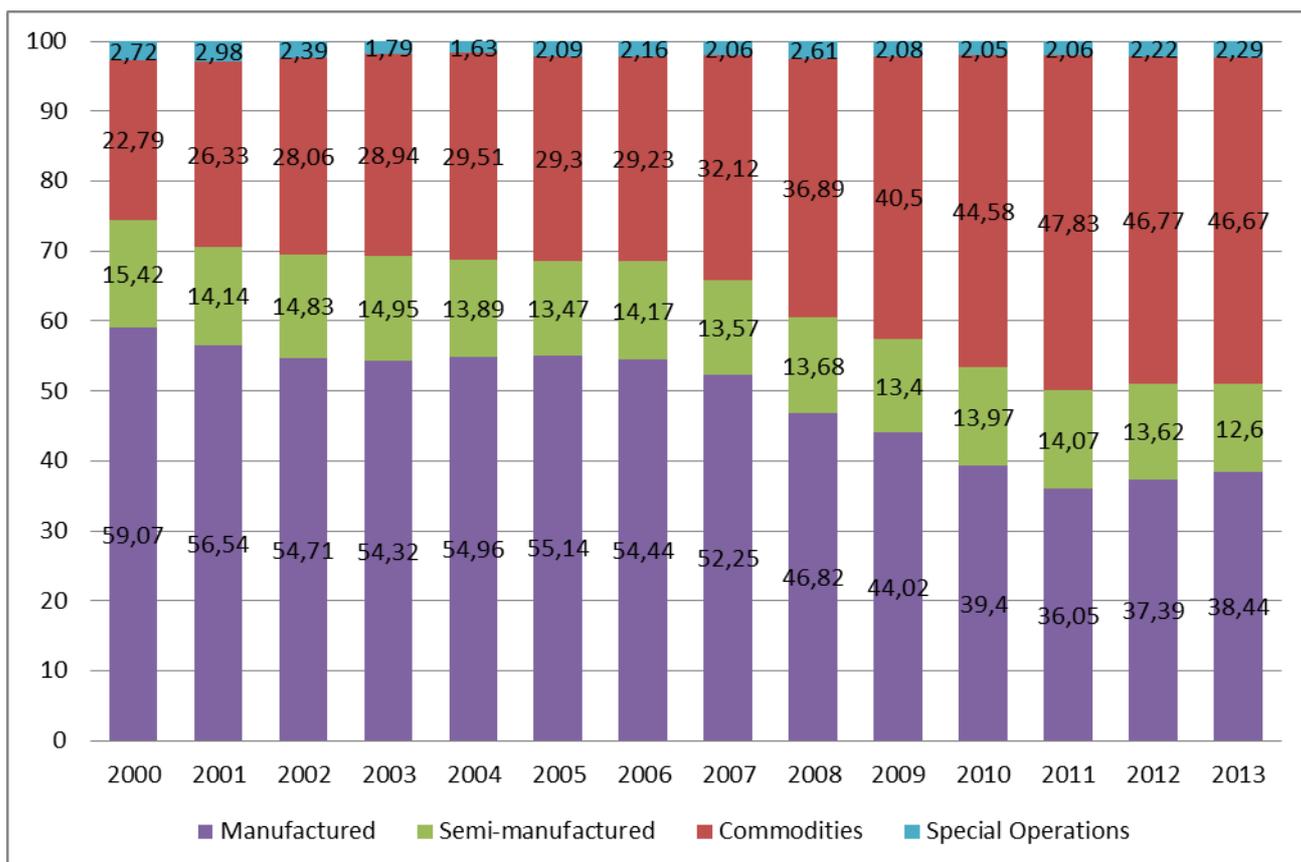
It is not the objective of this chapter to account for an economic analysis of such development project, neither to examine its origins¹¹⁹. The objective is to bring evidence of how innovation and productivity are being assimilated, as a hidden content, into the negotiation order of sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry.

Following Delgado's explanation (2010; 2013), since the 2000's Brazil has been relying on commodities exportation as an answer to the external economic disequilibrium. Such answer was favoured by an increase in commodities' price and a low competitiveness in the service and manufacture's sector. Therefore, the commodities exportation has been supporting the Brazilian global trade inclusion. This argument could be used to explain BNDES' support to the beef industry, highlighting the importance of fostering a national champion on global food trade, which reinforces the previous chapter's examination on the void of practices regarding sustainability, since it had been associated as a constrain for economic development.

Without any economy assumption, the graph below illustrates the increase of commodities exportation in the Brazilian products' exportation profile:

Graph 11: Products Categories Exports

¹¹⁹ For those interested in this debate, Guilherme Costa Delgado (2010; 2013) details the economic origins of the commodities exportation development model under the Brazilian context.



Source: Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria e Comércio 2014.
 Elaborated by the author.

The careful reader might ask: How does this discussion dialogue with the Brazilian beef industry? Although such developmental political project is not evident, it has consequences for the internal political arrangements and, therefore, to how actors' interact, influencing on the development of negotiation order within different situated contexts. Moreover, due to the recent pressure for cleaning deforestation emerging from the beef supply chain and the Brazilian carbon emissions reduction pledge, innovation and productivity increase in cattle ranching become crucial for maintaining such political project.

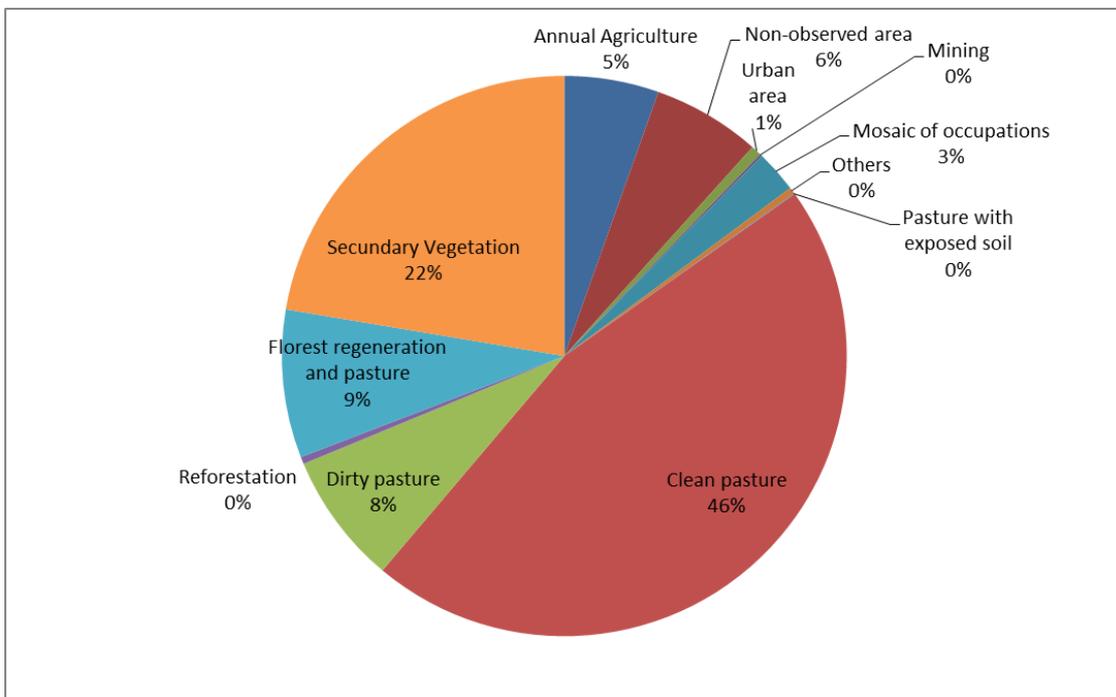
Pedro Arraes, when commenting the transformations on the understandings of sustainability within cattle ranching, explained:

Beef production, in our livestock case, took a little longer to enter this intensification process. Today, livestock is like a large reservoir of land for us; that is the reason why we are developing the policy called 'Intensifica Pecuária', which is a line of credit. The average [cattle ranching's productivity] today is 1.1 units per acre, right? This is the national average and, obviously, there are large producers, as well as

medium and small ones. By increasing the national average from 1.1 to 1.7, more than 40 million acres of land would be released, which could meet, let's say, part of our energy needs, part of our demand for grains – not only ours, but the world's. Brazil will have to produce 40% more food to reach the world's demand by 2050. Also, it would release areas to be, shall we say, aligned to the issue of the Forest Code. So, today, livestock is a strategic issue for Brazil. If you work on a process to accelerate public policies that can accelerate the intensification and generate even more sustainability. Obviously, all have to follow the technology adapted to each region and biome, in a general way. You could also release lands to compensate for environmental liabilities that have possibly been made over the years. (...) (bold added)

Pedro Arraes' explanation summarises the importance of cattle ranching for food production. If cattle ranching could be intensified by innovation and technologies, it could increase productivity and also encompass the environmental liabilities. As a consequence, cattle ranching can release land for different usage, thus it is strategic for Brazilian political developmental project. Such argument is reinforced when realising that pasture – in its different management degrees – has covered more than 60% of all Amazon deforested areas until 2010 (Embrapa and INPE 2010). The graph below indicates such land usage:

Graph 12: 2010's Terraclass: Amazon Deforested Areas - Land Usage



Source: Embrapa and INPE 2010.
Elaborated by the author.

In this sense, cattle ranching could be seen as a ‘land bank’ offering land to other economic activities, such as crop plantations. In other words, under such context, innovation and productivity of cattle ranching could give land to other types of production and reduce the environmental impact of cattle ranching, mainly associated with deforestation (Focus 2010).

Concluding, under this context, innovation and productivity increase of Brazilian cattle ranching are essential for the maintenance of such developmental political project and, therefore, crucial for understanding the Amazon deforestation within the sustainability negotiation order.

6.2. Governance and Risk Management: Combination of MPF and Greenpeace repertoires

This section further explores Greenpeace and MPF’s agency in transforming the agency context regarding sustainability. It does so by analysing these actors’ ability to explore the influence of contemporary capitalism features over companies’ behaviour and use such knowledge to increase the business risk of being associated with Amazon deforestation, thus transforming a situated context. Additionally, this section examines the possible repertoires that both organisations could have employed due to their historical background and institutional limitations. Furthermore, it argues that Greenpeace and MPF’s combination of actions has developed governance (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006) via political action.

6.2.1. MPF and its repertoires

The Federal Prosecutors Office (MPF) in Brazil is placed under the Prosecution Service of the Union (MPU), alongside the Military Prosecution Service (MPM), the Labour Prosecution Service (MPT), and the Prosecution Service of the Federal District and Territories (MDPFT). Such Prosecution Services, distributed throughout all states, and the MPU, which coordinates them, constitute the Brazilian Prosecution Service (MPF e). As for

April 2014, MPF had more than 200 decentralised units spread all over the 27 Brazilian States (MPF b).

It is worth noting that, according to the Brazilian Constitution, MPU's jurisdiction is totally independent from the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches, which means that its function cannot be transferred to different public agencies and neither terminated for any reason. The reason why MPF is subordinated to MPU's authority is only administrative, since MPF members hold autonomy to act, on an individual basis "according to their conscience and convictions under the law", which means that they are not subject to authorities from any higher levels of MPF's hierarchy or any other public agency, and are, thus, free to exercise their functions independently (MPF e).

The role of MPF is to ensure compliance with the Brazilian laws in force, as well as with international agreements involving the Brazilian government. Moreover, federal matters defined in the Constitution and federal laws with public interests involved are also under the responsibility of MPF. Thus, MPF's scope of action includes (i) *civil protection cases*, (ii) *custos legis*, and (iii) *criminal cases*. Over such scope of action is MPF's mission "to promote justice for the good of society and in defence of the democratic rule of law" (MPF e).

Within *civil protection cases*, MPF is expected to defend *diffuse interests* (i.e. interests shared by society as a whole and not related to a specific group or person), *collective interests* (i.e. interests involving a group of people that are bound together or to an opposite group by a legal relationship), and *homogeneous individual interests* (i.e. interests that emerge from a common origin and have implications on individuals simultaneously, but cannot be regarded as individual rights). In such cases, MPF can bring *public civil actions*, *collective civil actions* or *administrative impropriety actions*. Before submitting one of these cases to the Judiciary, MPF should carry out some administrative tasks, such as a *public civil inquiry* or a *civil investigation*, in order to collect evidence of the case and examine the occurrence or not of irregularities (MPF e).

As for *custos legis*, MPF is expected to act as an "inspector of the law" whenever facing a public interest issue, about which it can express its opinion even if it is not directly connected to the specific issue. Finally, regarding *criminal cases*, MPF can bring a *public criminal action* related to issues, such as crimes against interests, services and assets of the

Union, or any of its public companies and independent agencies, as long as the trial happens before a Federal Justice court. Such crimes may include federal tax dodging, money laundering, banking frauds, cartels' formation, slave labour, international drug trafficking, environmental crimes, among others. On these cases, federal prosecutors may undertake MPF's *investigative criminal procedure* to examine the crime in question, and may also follow up on the Federal Police investigations, as well as monitoring police activities (MPF e).

The internal governance of MPF operates through its Chambers for Coordination and Revision, which are sectorial bodies that coordinate, integrate and review the functional exercise of MPF members, the Federal Prosecutors and Subprosecutors, and are organised by function or topic. As for April 2014, there were six chambers under MPF's structure dedicated to the following themes: constitution, crime, consumer and economy, environment and cultural heritage, social and public heritage, indigenous population and traditional communities. The responsibilities of chambers are defined by law (MPF a).

Among MPF's legal pieces, as already discussed, is the Term of Adjustment of Conduct (TAC), a document signed by parties that commit, before the prosecutors, to undertake some conditions in order to solve the on-going problems or compensate for damages already caused. In this sense, TACs anticipate the resolution of problems in a much faster and more effective way than if the case went to court. In some cases, if the defendant does not meet the combined, MPF will be required to take the case to court. Its difference to the court is that these agreements are signed along the course of the already proposed judicial action, and, therefore, must be approved by the Federal Judge presiding the trial in which the cause is being judged. However, both TAC and court settlement have the same goal: to shorten the process through the signing of a commitment made by the defendant agreeing with what is being proposed by the prosecutor. If that party disrespects the agreement by not complying with its obligations, the prosecutor may bring a request for enforcement to compel compliance (MPF f).

Thus, MPF can only act via **litigation**, using the existent **regulatory framework**. MPF must conduct an investigation in order to prove that some legislation was not followed.

Hence, MPF's role, under the idea of governance, is to oversight and enforce actors' compliance to hard laws in operation.

Although acting through the idea of governance, MPF combined such characteristic to the supply chain feature of contemporary capitalism – instead of focusing its litigious approach to particular actors, it has confronted several links of the Brazilian beef supply chain. By forcing the big slaughterhouses, big retailers, tanneries, municipalities and ranchers, MPF has built a barrier aiming at blocking illegal beef.

Federal Prosecutor Daniel Avelino explains such governance rationale:

The work needs to be impersonal. It needs to be about governance. If you have a timely action with someone that violates the law, you can even get the accountability of that producer, but the problem will continue. So our idea of global reach was to bring governance to the sector. We were not seeking punitive measures there. What we wanted was a commitment of everyone who was involved in the sector – the subnational government, the federal government, supermarkets, producers, industry, civil society - regarding the development of a more suitable production under a more appropriate legislation. For that, we needed to involve everyone. (bold added).

It is possible to argue that the combination of MPF (via litigation) and Greenpeace's (via brand damage) actions – as examined in the previous chapter – plus the alignment of what is at stake for Brazilian government concerning Amazon deforestation fostered the positive effects of MPF's governance approach. However, the combination of such issues precluded big companies in questions to adopt the strategy of taking litigation until the last level, resolving it in court. On the contrary, slaughterhouses did not postpone their actions to tackle the Amazon deforestation issue until a court decision. The combination of brand damage with the widespread of litigation focusing the value chain have created a context in which, under companies' **risk assessment**, it was better to assume the problems and act upon them, rather than wait until the case reached the courts. Ergo, the development of such barrier was crucial to increase the pressure upon slaughterhouses.

In other words, MPF has realised that focusing the supply chain organisation of contemporary capitalist mode of production could produce a positive effect on the

environmental (and social) impacts¹²⁰ produced by capitalism within the local level; therefore, its actions attacked the capitalist logic. By employing strategies following its institutional framework, which combined two characteristics of capitalism (i.e. **governance** and **supply chain**), MPF was able to exert its agency and transform the Brazilian beef industry. Moreover, this is the reason why MPF and Greenpeace created an interesting arrangement – while MPF focused the national context of beef supply chain, Greenpeace developed a brand damage approach at the same time that it connected the national Brazilian context and the transnational one, as it will be further detailed in the next section.

6.2.2 Greenpeace and its repertoires

Under the contestation of ‘sustainability’ in the Brazilian beef industry, Greenpeace assumed an important role by bridging the situated context of the Brazilian beef industry and a transnational audience. Such bridging process occurs through both ways: (i) linking the beef industry and international consumer market, especially the European one, and (ii) connecting the local environmental impacts with the UN framework. Such strategy was crucial for increasing slaughterhouses’ risk of not addressing Amazon deforestation.

Greenpeace is a leading non-governmental environmental organisation with a transnational approach, holding offices in over forty countries and with an international coordinating body, the Greenpeace International, located in Amsterdam. Both in its website and in its last annual report, Greenpeace defines itself as “an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment, and to promote peace” (Greenpeace International 2012: 56). In 1971, the organization started as a committee in Vancouver aimed at protesting against nuclear weapons testing in Alaska by the United States. After that, some Greenpeace groups spread to other countries and engaged in environmental campaigns, covering issues such as toxic waste and commercial whaling. A few years later, in 1979, Greenpeace International was founded to oversee these groups, their goals and operations under a single worldwide organisation. Thus, it is possible to argue that Greenpeace, although not considered a revolutionary organisation,

¹²⁰ In the analysed case, disrespecting the Brazilian legislation.

is a transnational organisation eager to question the environmental impacts produced by global economy, which could be a threat to the capitalist logic. [Márcio Astrini's interview](#) highlighted this reformist characteristic:

*Greenpeace will not expel the [beef] sector [from the Amazon]. We do not work to expel any industry from the [Amazon] region. Neither do we work to shut an industry down. We envisage **reforming** this industry in order to enable it to operate without causing further deforestation.*

The organisation's fundraising strategy is based on donations from individual supporters, independent trust and foundation grants, and claims not to accept donations from corporations, governments or political parties. In 2012, Greenpeace had achieved a subscriber base of 24 million people worldwide, which reflected a gross income of 265 million euros, an increase of 12% in comparison to the previous year (Greenpeace International 2012: 41 - 44). The Global North concentrated the top donor countries in 2012 (e.g. Germany, the United States, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries and the UK), but an increase in income and supporters was also seen in East Asian countries, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and in the Mediterranean.

In order to pursue its goals and respond to the global economic crisis, Greenpeace has a long-term global programme in which climate and forest aims are on the top of its priorities, both on the basis of their urgency and potential impacts (Greenpeace International 2012: 9). This includes campaigns on topics such as renewable energy and energy efficiency, zero deforestation, marine diversity, sustainable agriculture, and the end of the release of toxics into water resources.

In terms of its campaign actions, Greenpeace is known as a 'fighter organisation'. It aims at creating conflicts and combats in order to draw attention to its claims. Greenpeace's denounce strategy are based on internal researches that seek to provide evidence of the respective environmental impacts denounced, as it can be seen in the Brazilian cattle campaign. Timberland's CEO, Swartz, exemplifies such strategy:

For Greenpeace, guerrilla tactics are supremely effective - something I was naive about when all this began. There's no question the organization cares about saving rain forests, but it also cares about recruiting new members and collecting membership fees. Making

headlines by attacking companies helps it do that. (...) But phone calls and press conferences aren't as sexy as an attack campaign and wouldn't have riled up Greenpeace's member base, which is part of what drives its revenue. (Swartz 2010: 3).

Regarding Greenpeace Brazil headquarters, it was created in 1992, the same year of the UN Rio 92 Conference. Its foundation was marked by a protest against the Angra nuclear power plant, in Rio de Janeiro sub-national state, through an action that symbolised the number of deaths in the Chernobyl accident. Already in its first year, it started looking at the Brazilian Amazon forest and concentrating its efforts to fight illegal timber, especially Mahogany, which was commercialised in Europe in the furniture industry. In its first expedition to the forest, illegal timber trade was denounced and the Brazilian Navy expelled the Greenpeace ship with its whole crew. However, due to pressures from civil society and the legal community, the decision was revoked and this is considered to be the emblematic moment through which Greenpeace Brazil is finally recognised as a Brazilian organisation (Greenpeace 2010).

Throughout time, Greenpeace has been criticised for becoming a professional-run organisation, accused of having transformed its actions into 'protest business', by exposing brands and their environmental impact, but not taking part in the solution. Regardless of such criticism, Greenpeace is an organisation willing to survive. To do so, it has been relying on donations and legitimacy, both in terms of presenting itself as an organisation that changes practices – thus, attracting more donors – and an organisation that has credibility to discuss environmental impacts – increasing its power to promote changes. Moreover, in the process of becoming a global organisation, its actions were getting embedded in a transnational content.

6.2.2.1. Greenpeace: a Social Movement bridging transnational contents

As already discussed – in section 5.2.2.1 – the importance of Amazon deforestation in the international community has been addressed for a long time and the UN framework holds an important role in such process, since it aims at aligning the scientific knowledge about environmental impacts and the political context to tackle it.

Two different ‘bridging processes’ exerted by Greenpeace were identified. The first one relates business environmental impacts to international consumer market, especially the European consumer market, by focusing on industries’ global supply chain. The second one connects local environmental impacts and the UN conferences framework. Thus, connections associate the situated context of Brazilian beef industry with its transnational content.

6.2.2.1.a. Global supply chain: the way of bridging industries’ environmental impacts and consumer market

This section aims at exploring Greenpeace’s increasing interest in targeting companies through its brand damage strategy. Moreover, it shows how Greenpeace uses the global supply chain feature of contemporary capitalism in order to frame environmental impacts produced by companies, thus attacking the capitalist logic.

Reginaldo Magalhães (2010), using Greenpeace’s archive of its victorious campaigns (Greenpeace International forth coming), analysed the main campaign targets and issues. The author has discovered that it was during the 2000’s that the campaigns against the private sector have become more predominant.

Examining Greenpeace’s systematic record (Greenpeace International forth coming), Magalhães (2010) found out that during the 1970’s, Greenpeace had few victories, its targets were exclusively national States, and its campaigns focused on nuclear energy and wales fishing. On the following decade, Greenpeace continued to focus on national States, mainly on industrialised countries, and began to focus and influence the multilateral organisms’ agreements (Magalhães, 2010).

Magalhães (2010) argued that it was during the 1990’s that an important transformation in the environmental agenda occurred – issues such as climate change, depletion of ozone, toxic waste and forest protection were brought into the environmental agenda. Besides such topics being essentially transnational, the absence of an intergovernmental regulation encouraged Greenpeace to continue campaigning and targeting multilateral organisms and national States (Magalhães, 2010).

It was during the 2000's that Greenpeace's campaigns started to focus the private sector – the victorious campaigns against companies more than tripled when compared to the previous decade (Magalhães, 2010). Such change was not only due to the transnational characteristic of the new international environmental agenda, but, after the Rio 92 conference, there was a strong feeling among the environmental movement regarding national States not having enough power to promote the desired changes. As to the private sector, it was not only responsible for environmental impacts, but any changes related to the human impact on the environment should inevitably dialog with such sector.

The increasing power of private sector was as important as the transnational feature of the 'becoming environmental agenda' in encouraging Greenpeace to target private companies in its campaigns. It was this strategic choice of focusing on multinational companies that made Greenpeace's campaigns so successful, increasing substantially its power and reputation. The reason why is that Greenpeace, as an organisation, realised that using the global and complex supply chains of the twenty-first century capitalism (Kristensen and Morgan 2012) could connect an environmental impact in a specific location around the globe to the European consumer market. By taking advantage of the fact that, at that time, most companies did not have a complete control of its supply chain – being unable to **track** all the inputs used in their production – Greenpeace uses other important features of the twenty-first century capitalism, the companies' image and reputation, in order to increase pressure on the companies' environmental impacts. While building its campaign on supply chain traceability and brand damage, Greenpeace is reading the capitalist logic and employing it against the logic itself.

When discussing transnational characteristics of social movements, some researchers state that the globalisation process is a key factor in producing transnational claims that bring together supports of activists from different localities (Tarrow 2005; Ghimire 2011). Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that what connect different localities are global supply chains, which support the development of transnational claims.

While operating through features of capitalism, Greenpeace is floating around transnational issues and exerting governance. Corroborating with such argument, [Fernando Rossetti, Greenpeace Brazil Executive Director](#), comments about this transnational element in

Greenpeace's action and strategy when discussing how the organisation chooses between different issues to build its campaigns:

*The supranational means that the issue is transnational. Am I able to mobilise someone in France, US or Japan based in what is happening here? There are products such as mahogany, soya or beef which are produced in Brazil and depending how it is produced it may foster deforestation. By the time these products are exported throughout the world, we start dealing with the **potential of mobilisation around deforestation, now as a global cause**. This, in turn, also reflects on the local, by **increasing our power to act locally**. Thus, one part of our strategy is to identify **production chains that can deliver a wide impact, both locally and globally, when you control them**. And you now have supranational mechanisms to exert social control. So, the more global is an economic activity, the easier it is to mobilise people around the world against this economic activity. Thus, you need to identify activities that are associated to the global economy because it enables you to mobilise the world towards it. (bold added)*

This transition seems to be a learning curve. It was while Greenpeace was campaigning that it realised the potential of focusing on big multinational companies and their supply chains. In its 2007 annual report, Greenpeace International recognises that “soya and other agricultural products have traditionally been key drivers for deforestation” (Greenpeace International 2007: 11). This statement is made after the Brazilian *Soya Moratorium* in 2006. As discussed in the previous chapter, a landmark during this period was the ‘Zero Deforestation’ campaign, launched by Greenpeace, together with other non-governmental organisations, aiming at firming a national agreement to end deforestation in the Amazon. In this report, Greenpeace International also denounces the impact of other **global commodity products** to forest protection globally, such as palm oil traders in Indonesia. This seems to operate in a learning curve attempt that builds on previous experiences, such as soya in the Brazilian Amazon, to make it possible to tackle upcoming issues, such as palm oil. The quote below illustrates this dynamic:

Greenpeace will continue to highlight the important role forests play for our climate, and will continue to campaign for Zero Deforestation – reflecting our work with soya traders in the Amazon, we begin by focussing on palm oil traders in Indonesia – with the aim of stopping deforestation for palm oil (Greenpeace International 2007: 11).

Nonetheless, such process was not an easy one. Even though some Brazilian campaigners had already realised such features of capitalism and how Greenpeace could benefit from them, it was still necessary to convince the organisation to implement such distinctive campaign. This was one of the reasons why the soya campaign in Brazil was ‘an experiment’ – while campaigning (acting), Greenpeace was also developing the necessary knowledge for targeting more complex supply chains, such as the beef one. Regarding this transition to examine supply chains, **André Muggiati** commented:

*When I started working at Greenpeace [2004] there was an internal debate, within the Amazon campaign and Greenpeace itself, on the forest environmental issue and Greenpeace’s mode of action. Greenpeace was an organisation completely focused on predatory and illegal logging. Meanwhile, the deforestation rate was escalating and we started to examine that the forest was being burned even when there were still timber to be explored. **We realised that they were burning down the forest to convert it on pasture and at that time our attention was drawn to the soya plantation which was intensively arriving at the Amazon region. (...)***

*Thus, Greenpeace changed its campaign. **The organisation didn’t understand. Many people within the organisation thought it wasn’t possible to explain the relation between soya beans and deforestation to international audiences.** Because soya beans, especially at markets in which Greenpeace is stronger, in Europe mainly, almost no one eats soya beans. Soya is a product exported to Europe to become source of animal feed and then people eat the animal. **Eating nuggets at McDonald’s and the forest burning down in Brazil wasn’t perceived in a direct relation.** Thus, the organisation considered that **to represent such relation on a banner was a huge step, for example, on a direct action.** We had this intensive work of convincing the organisation that this was important. (bold added)*

Such passage is interesting as it exposes some hidden elements. The processes of comprehending the direct link between an economic activity and deforestation, while convincing the organisation that it is a worth path to follow, and then adapting it to the organisational tactics, reveals that Greenpeace was learning **while acting** in the Brazilian national context. Furthermore, it has identified that the causes of an environmental problem could be framed differently from the initial European way of comprehending it.

It is also important to remember that Greenpeace launched its first office in Brazil during the Rio 92’s window of opportunity, and its main campaign was on illegal Amazon

timber, specially Mahogany that used to be heavily exported to the European market. Thus, its initial Brazilian campaign focus on timber legality was formulated by a Eurocentric understanding of the Amazon deforestation at that time. [Marcelo Furtado](#)'s observations seem to be appropriate to illustrate this:

Obviously that the process had... The organisational root is Eurocentric, isn't it? Therefore, the biggest journey we had was to be able to leave such Eurocentric perspective and build a global organisation. This is an act of courage! (...)

There were certainly processes at the beginning of our work that you could relate to a Eurocentric perspective. The first target was to denounce the illegal timber being exported to the European market, why so? We were established in Europe, where we had the resources to mobilise and denounce. (...).

Such European perspective does not mean that Greenpeace was defending international interests in Brazil. On the contrary, this was the organisational understanding of the relations among capitalism and nature at that period. Greenpeace was – and still is – aiming at protecting the forests and, to do so, its actions are supported by a particular logic that guides such relations. Moreover, as Tarrow (2005) points out, even though transnational social movements fashion transnational claims, activists draw upon resources, networks and opportunities of the societies they live in and, by doing so, connect the local and the global. It is in this process that Greenpeace establishes the bridge between environmental impacts in Brazil and the European consumer market, once Greenpeace's main source of revenue was – and still is – donations from Europe (Greenpeace International 2012). Conversely, the success of such bridge is sustained by the transnational characteristic of contemporary supply chains in capitalism. Regarding this, [Marcelo Marquesini](#)'s comment on the justifications for focusing multinationals and their supply chains is valuable:

Each campaign has its main actor, a point that we could label as 'Achilles' heel' – that point of intervention where the cost benefit ratio is more favourable. Can you try to combat illegal livestock from the government's perspective? Sure you can, it is natural. But, what is the effect of such campaign in comparison to attacking, for example, the slaughterhouses? Much smaller... (...)

Concluding, by targeting blue chip companies and exposing their global supply chains, Greenpeace builds an interesting strategy of bridging environmental problems and its

donors' market. Moreover, Greenpeace has learned that targeting companies would be a faster way to produce the future they envisage. Although Greenpeace is not a revolutionary organisation it is threatening the capitalist logic by forcing the environmental concern, which could bring a limitation to the profit maximisation rationale, and it has decided to do so by exploring capitalism features.

6.2.2.1.b. United Nations Conferences and Greenpeace's campaigns: seeking legitimacy

This section will emphasise how Greenpeace framed the environmental impacts of soya and beef industries and some of the UN conferences, which could be seen as an international arena of sustainability. As described in the timeline presented in Figure 8 in the previous chapter, Greenpeace published the *Eating up* report (Greenpeace 2006) on the 19th of May 2006, while the UN's 12th Convention on Climate Change (COP 12), held in Nairobi, Kenya, happened in November of the same year. Furthermore, the *Slaughtering the Amazon* was published on the 1st of June 2009, and on December of the same year in Copenhagen, Denmark, the 15th Convention on Climate Change (COP 15) took place. Such synchronicity between Greenpeace's main reports and those UN conferences is more than merely a coincidence – such process bridged an international arena of sustainability and industries at the local level.

Both Greenpeace reports pointed out that deforestation was the main reason for Brazil being the fourth world largest producer of GHG emissions and highlighted agricultural production and the clearance and burning practices of the beef industry as key drivers of deforestation (Greenpeace 2006; Greenpeace 2009c). Since the report on soya, cattle ranchers were already identified, together with soya farmers, as being responsible for a big proportion of deforestation and, thus, presenting threats to biodiversity and climate stability in a global scale (Greenpeace 2006). The reference to cattle ranching in the *Eating up* report, as an important cause of deforestation, was not a surprise; as already discussed, there were strong evidence of such correlation since the beginning of the 2000's (Fearnside 2002; Vosti et al. 2003; Margulis 2004). Furthermore, as it has been shown in a previous chapter, Greenpeace was aware of such correlation and had chosen to focus on soya production for strategic reasons.

By this time, even though the climate issue had already entered Greenpeace's agenda, the focus of its soya report – *Eating Up the Amazon* – was still on biodiversity (Greenpeace 2006). In other words, the loss of biodiversity was still pictured as the highlight within the deforestation impacts in the Amazon. As the report suggests, in the context of deforestation after plantations such as soya, “the devastation to biodiversity is irreversible, and a sustainable resource of unimaginable richness is lost forever” (Greenpeace 2006: 9).

In Brazil, as discussed, this also reflects a moment of an intense inflow of North-American investments in the Brazilian Amazon destined to the expansion of the soya industry in the Amazon (Greenpeace 2006). The *Eating Up* report brings evidence on the relationship between North-American multinationals and deforestation, as well as land grabbing and slavery in the Amazon (Greenpeace 2006). US companies, such as Archer Daniels, Midland (ADM), Bunge and Cargill, which are leading players in the European market, are considered to be also leading deforestation in the Amazon, as explained below:

World trade in and processing of soya is concentrated in the hands of a small number of global commodity traders who also often control other aspects of the food chain: ADM, Bunge and Cargill. In Brazil, this cartel assumes the role of the banks in providing resources to farmers. Instead of offering loans they provide farmers with seed, fertiliser and chemicals in return for soya at harvest (...) (Greenpeace 2006: 17)

Therefore, as an international strategy, Greenpeace developed its emphasis on forest protection by focusing on the impact of the production of forest and agricultural commodities to the deforestation of tropical forests. While this focus on forests started as a concern over the impact on biodiversity, habitats and indigenous peoples, it further added another important reason: GHG emissions due to land transformation. As a consequence, *forest clearance* became recognised by the scientific community as a great responsible for climate change. As Greenpeace (2007: 10) highlights:

For decades, concern over the fate of the world's forests has focused upon the loss of vital habitats, biodiversity and the impact on indigenous peoples. As if that wasn't enough, there is yet another reason to protect the forests – their destruction is responsible for around one-fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions.

As the international agenda evolves towards the issue of climate change, Greenpeace also starts putting more emphasis on this, especially in its subsequent campaign to soya, which targets the Brazilian cattle industry's participation in the Amazon deforestation, as discussed. The landmark of this period, in the international environmental agenda, is the Fourth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (AR4 - IPCC 2007), a scientific intergovernmental body aimed at assessing technical, scientific and socio-economic data regarding climate change, as well as its potential effects, and alternatives for mitigation and adaptation. This report's edition represented a watershed due to exploring the correlation between the increase in global temperatures and the rise in GHG's concentration in the atmosphere, as the report suggests:

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level (...)

Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations. (Solomon et al. 2007, p. 5 - 10).

Such evidence and claims made by the IPCC on global warming were rapidly spread in the international agenda. Even a synthesis report was issued to make it more palatable to a policymaker audience and also intended to frame the discussions in the following Conference of the Parties in the same year, the 13th COP held at Bali. The conference was even postponed to December in order to allow the release of the IPCC Synthesis Report (IPCC 2007).

As a result, the Bali conference marks the first time that the decision of "reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries" is made in such conferences and, thus, opens the UN agenda to stimulate actions to tackle climate change related to deforestation (UNFCCC 2008; Barreto et al. 2008). In this context of developing countries, the role of forests is enhanced after their contribution to a great percentage of GHG emissions in the atmosphere due to persisting deforestation practices. According to Rayner et al. (2010: 11-12), the IPCC report "contributed to shifting political attention and the international forest agenda toward the notion that forests will play a key role in any cost-effective climate change mitigation arrangement".

IPCC reports also evidence that the scientific knowledge evolves during time and some of the environmental impacts that human kind was not aware of (or did not have enough knowledge about) are a crucial issue for understanding the negotiations' context at different levels.

Hence, as the IPCC report is rapidly incorporated in the international agenda, and the 13th COP at Bali emphasised the connection between deforestation and climate change, Greenpeace also connects its own agenda with it. At the beginning of the *Slaughtering the Amazon*, this issue is presented in a straightforward manner:

(...) [cattle ranching] is the single largest driver of global deforestation (...) [and, at the same time, the need to end deforestation in the region is defined as] an essential part of a global strategy to tackle climate change and to preserve biodiversity. (Greenpeace 2009c: 3).

Through these connections, the Amazon beef production is considered to play an important role in the Brazilian Amazon deforestation and also in the global context of climate change and biodiversity loss, due to its participation in the world's annual deforestation. The report is, thus, clear about proposing that "efforts to halt global deforestation emissions must tackle the Brazilian cattle sector in the Amazon" (Greenpeace 2009c: 3). [Marcelo Furtado, Greenpeace Brazil Executive Director](#) during both reports' publications comments on the link between Greenpeace actions and UN conferences:

*I would say, especially about the conference on climate change, because that was a period in which those conferences were followed by thousands of journalists. There were already and understanding that deforestation meant GHG emissions. And we were very luck of being able to surf on such wave. These haven't change. It is still this way. Even though at that time, the media coverage about such issues were bigger. Since these conferences had a lot of press, so it was worthwhile using such spaces. In addition, we took part in the conferences because we were prepared to do a lot there. **It was a symbiosis.** (bold added)*

It is interesting to notice that climate change is mostly connected to the deforestation related to pasture expansion, rather than the enteric fermentation, which, according to 2006's FAO report, is responsible for a great amount of global GHG emissions (Steinfeld et al. 2006). As already discussed, the absence of a bridge between the alarming conclusions of

Livestock's long shadow (Steinfeld et al. 2006) and the Brazilian context, could be one explanation for the lack of practices to tackle such problem. Under Greenpeace institutional framework, [Marcelo Furtado](#) explains that Greenpeace focus is on deforestation, not enteric fermentation:

In first place the campaign is against deforestation, not against the slaughterhouses. It is a matter of focus. The slaughterhouses were used as deforestation inductors. That is why it is a deforestation campaign. (...) Secondly, when your organisation has limited resources you have to make strategic decisions of focus. And this [deforestation] is our focus.

Surfing on the IPCC's wave, Imazon suggests that “reducing deforestation will be essential to reduce Brazilian GHG emissions” (Barreto et al. 2008: 11) and also that “understanding how farmers have increased the herd in the Amazon is essential to assess the potential to reduce deforestation in the region” (Barreto et al. 2008: 20).

In regard to this, Greenpeace report harshly criticises the Brazilian government for its role in funding the expansion of the cattle sector in the Amazon (e.g. credit lines) and also for its lack of governance, which is considered to be “the largest economic incentive” for the growth of cattle herd in the Amazon (Greenpeace 2009c: 4). Furthermore, the fact that the government part-owns the global beef and leather corporations in the Amazon, through BNDES, again puts it in debt for its participation in this sector's expansion. Therefore, at the same time that the government is seen as part of the problem, it is also promoted as part of the solution as long as it engages with strategies to fund forest protection (Greenpeace 2009c).

Therefore, in the transnational arena, the synchronicity between Greenpeace reports and UN conferences is not a coincidence. Such synchronicity supports Greenpeace to increase its power, not just in terms of drawing worldwide attention to its claims and campaigns, but also while attacking big brands, as already mentioned by Swartz – Timberland's CEO (Swartz 2010), and while gaining more exposure to media coverage, what might increase its influence and legitimacy to discuss ‘sustainability’. Although Greenpeace has not always adopted this strategy, a different timing starts after a new campaign is launched. This timing is related to Greenpeace's negotiations with companies and other actors, making it difficult to pursue such synchronicity. Once more, [Marcelo Furtado's](#) comments are helpful:

Well, to begging with the reports timing are more related to the timeframe negotiated at the meetings. We usually ask to the company: 'How long do you need to accomplish this?' ... 'Six months'. They we would say 'OK, Six months'. However, after six months and they haven't done anything, you began to distrust, they are starting to deserve a repression. If, again he doesn't accomplish anything, then you will choose an opportunity with high visibility to make your denounce. And for us, is very common to use such important international events to denounce important information. I would say that it is a normal strategic behaviour of any organization. (...)

More important than Greenpeace's visibility it is the increase of the visibility on the denunciation that Greenpeace is doing. And if it is a well conducted denounce, it also will increase our negotiation power. (...)

Concluding, it is clear that Greenpeace acts through bridging an international arena of sustainability and those local environmental impacts. While doing so, Greenpeace is creating an organisational space for negotiation in which the contents are also framed according to the international arena's dynamics. In this process, as Greenpeace builds the bridge, it can also shape it according to its own interests. Another consequence is that Greenpeace increases its legitimacy for accusing companies of impacting the nature, which consequently increases the power of its brand damage repertoire, thus producing the transformation it envisages.

6.2.3. Brand damage and litigation: Governance through political action

Even though this thesis is not about governance, the rationale of governance is an important element influencing the negotiation order of sustainability, as discussed in this section and in the previous chapter. The idea of governance could be related to the development of contemporary capitalism in the sense that it has become global not only due to the increase of international flows of commercial trade, labour and capital, but also due to the variety of actors and interconnected spaces that exert control, influencing actors' interactions (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Kristensen and Morgan 2012). Furthermore, besides the fact that control is still associated with an objective and neutralised process embedded in scientific and expertise arguments (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006), regulation has being exerted by a variety of organisations through a process in which social and environmental issues are being negotiated. Thus, governance has become an important

notion in twenty-first century capitalism rationale (Djelic and Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Kristensen and Morgan 2012).

Such rationale is present in the negotiation order of sustainability within the Brazilian beef industry field. Although Marfrig has adopted some certifications, the overall argument of such industry is that neither ranchers nor slaughterhouses advocate the adoption of certification schemes, as Drigo (2013) concludes. Still, it is possible to argue that governance is taking place in such context, even though, so far, no new legislation was developed (i.e. hard law) nor certifications schemes (i.e. soft law) have been widely adopted.

MPF and Greenpeace have realised how capitalism's features are influencing corporate behaviour and used such knowledge to foster changes within this context. While doing so, they have enacted governance over sustainability in the Brazilian beef industry via political action – i.e. the negotiation around the understandings of such industry's environmental impacts that have informed business risk, which became associated with Amazon deforestation.

However, governance is not the only characteristic of capitalism that actors have been relying on. As Kristensen and Morgan (2012) argued, global value chain is another feature of twenty-first century capitalism:

The new world of consumption which is the outcome of these processes has also proliferated and become more differentiated, making simple divisions between manufacturing and service no longer relevant to many phenomena which are combinations of both, whether we think of personal consumption items such as mobile phones and computers, or of the corporate purchase of huge capital investment projects such as airplanes, power stations, etc. Large firms in such a context are loose international coalitions of functionally differentiated units, some of which are owned, some under semi-permanent subcontracting relationships, some under arm's length contracts, and others temporary project alliances. **Global value chains integrated within firms or coordinated by large firms across organizations of different scales, are an increasingly predominant feature.** (Kristensen and Morgan 2012: 16, bold added).

As discussed, it was such capitalism's feature that MPF and Greenpeace have engaged in to set Amazon deforestation as an environmental problem. Once Amazon deforestation was identified, through the adoption of traceability and geo-referencing, MPF employed its

repertoire of litigation, within Brazilian borders, in order to develop a barrier against illegal beef, while Greenpeace used its transnational insertion to associate sustainability risk with corporate image. The connections between both features of capitalism are explained by [Camila Valverde, Walmart Brazil Director of Sustainability](#):

*And the goal of this platform [that Walmart is developing] is to ensure that the meat that Walmart sells is not involved with deforestation. This is a goal by 2015. By 2015, we have to ensure that a 100% of the volume that Walmart offers to the consumer has nothing [to do with deforestation], zero contribution to deforestation. 'Oh, by 2015 we will be solving.' Not even the slaughterhouses that buy direct [from producers] can have [such commitment with zero deforestation], imagine us placed at one link ahead on the supply chain. Through this challenge, we began drawing [some ideas] and studying a lot which strategy we could have to achieve this overall goal. Of having a product [not involved with deforestation]... [And the reason why is] Firstly, because we really believe we should not be contributing to deforestation, since this is also our responsibility. Secondly, because we... you have already talked to all the players and know how the market is tense about this matter. **The reputation, [and] the company's image are at stake when you cannot guarantee where you are buying from** [attest the origin of the product]. (bold added)*

On the one hand, MPF's litigation approach impacted the operational risk of such business, since its production flow within the Brazilian market was impacted as well. On the other hand, Greenpeace's brand damage approach also had a detrimental effect on the international production flow, but as important, it has impacted on corporate reputation – such impact could hamper other areas of the beef industry business that are not even associated with Amazon deforestation, as it was explained by [Mathias, Marfrig Sustainability Manager](#), in section 5.2.3.3.

While **value chain traceability** has been used to identify companies involved in such environmental impact, it was the threat to companies' **brand image** that increased the **business risk** of not developing programmes and initiatives to avoid deforestation. Such combination of operational and reputational risks has been crucial for MPF and Greenpeace to successfully exert their agency and, consequently, transform the situated context analysed.

However, the very same process through which an environmental problem was informed, by exploring capitalist logic's features, happens to enable the assimilation of the

threat (i.e. business risk) protecting such capitalist logic. In other words, it is by exploring the risk management rationale – in order to foster the development of environmental concerns on corporate initiatives, programs and technologies – that conditions are created for companies to influence the negotiation order regarding the matter of their environmental impacts. Therefore, by adopting the same rationale employed to denounce their environmental impacts, companies are able to take-over sustainability. As a consequence, capitalist logic is being protected even though ‘sustainability’ is promoted through a better use of resources through innovations and productivity increase.

When explaining the reasons why Greenpeace employed a brand damage repertoire to increase Amazon deforestation’s association with business risk, [Márcio Astrini](#) warned that such approach could create the conditions for companies to adopt the same rationale and explore business opportunities.

This is about a more modern image matter for the company, which is the image in itself, and is also more important than the image of the product, since these companies [the slaughterhouses] minimise the same costs. In the future – of course that this issue is not part of our [Greenpeace] conversation with the slaughterhouses – but I imagine, and so do they, that all of this effort brings a reward.

Firstly, the work of Greenpeace does not target the livestock, soy, cotton or corn sectors. My work is with who causes deforestation. For me, the product doesn’t matter. So, if this livestock sector has today 4 slaughterhouses within a commitment, which is a difficult commitment to be achieved, and these 4 slaughterhouses do not solve the whole problem of deforestation in the Amazon, they know that the work with the slaughterhouses will not stop just with them. It will be extended for the rest of the chain. Their differential is that they have already gone ahead [pioneers] in the chain. They have already become role models, with an expertise of what to do and how... and then, they will have an advantage, maybe even a commercial one in the long term.

*The second thing is that when you manage to put inside your company such a difficult operation, which often supplements information, data, and activities that should be generated by the State, you're demonstrating that your company is solid in such a volume that it can beat difficulties despite the fragility of important organisation [such as the State]. Within the Brazilian State, regardless of whether this process operates, in a “x” or “y” region with a major or minor governance factor, **that company has a success case to demonstrate that it could overcome a problem that could generate risk. And this,***

I think, is very important even for that issue of brand image, thus, not only related to the product but to the brand. You can even say, 'My business is strong, it is solid, it can transform realities'. Therefore, it enables observing and transforming realities or acting on them to preserve the brand or the action in which money are being invested. (bold added)

Such argument is corroborated by a McKinsey & Company (Bonini and Görner 2011) report on *The business of sustainability*¹²¹ that explores how companies could take advantage of a risk management perspective to appropriate the debate on 'sustainability' in order to create value by integrating 'sustainability' into their strategies. The authors conclude:

'Risk management'

Better management of risks that arise from sustainability issues begins with detecting key risks of operational disruptions from climate change, resource scarcity, or community issues (such as boycotts or delays in getting permits for manufacturing). Faced with **potential supply constraints**, Nestlé, for example, launched a plan in 2009 that coordinates activities to promote sustainable cocoa: producing 12 million stronger and more productive plants over the next ten years, **teaching local farmers efficient and sustainable methods, purchasing beans from farms that use sustainable practices, and working with organizations to help tackle issues like child labor and poor access to health care and education**. The mining giant BHP Billiton managed its exposure to emerging regulations by systematically reducing its emissions.

The choice for companies today is not if, but how, they should manage their sustainability activities. Companies can choose to see this agenda as a necessary evil—a matter of compliance or a risk to be managed while they get on with the business of business—or they can think of it as a novel way to open up new business opportunities while creating value for society. (Bonini and Görner 2011: 13 – 14, bold added).

Although Greenpeace and MPF have achieved their objective to increase Amazon Forest protection, it is possible to question what would happen to other biomes or environmental impacts that were not able to agglutinate such contemporary capitalism's characteristics and actors' vested interests as the Amazon deforestation issue was able to do.

¹²¹ The report is based on a global survey with executives aiming at comprehending how companies are (or could) actively integrating sustainability to their business activities.

Concluding, it is important to reflect whether the piecemeal changes experienced in this situated context – for example, illustrated by the development of a monitoring system to trace cattle involved with Amazon deforestation among other illegal activities – are likely to be reflected on societal order.

6.3. Conclusion: Capitalism ‘qualitative efficiency’ and Hegemony

This chapter and the previous one have demonstrated that it is through actions and interactions, which produce meanings, that actors fashion their environment. By focusing on negotiations regarding the environmental impacts of the Brazilian beef industry, it highlighted that such negotiations are pervaded by characteristics of capitalist logic.

When Greenpeace and MPF have targeted the environmental impacts of the Brazilian beef industry, it was not expected that their actions could foster the development of initiatives, programmes and technologies aiming at addressing Amazon illegal deforestation. However, the context fashioned by Greenpeace and MPF enabled the Brazilian beef industry to achieve important advantages in a global capitalist economy. As an [anonymous interviewee](#) associated to the beef industry stated:

It is hard to say that the report was good. The report wasn't good for anybody... [pause] Well, I'm not sure. For a certain point of view it manage to organised the Brazilian beef industry (...)

*On a first moment it [Greenpeace's report] had a negative impact because it scared the Brazilian meat. But, in a medium and long term this report was great, because there were a problem. It is hard to deny that there was a problem and the report brought such problem into scene in an aggressive way. There would be other manner of denouncing it. Probably yes, **however the report brought created a discomfort, forcing the companies to response quickly.** And analysing it today, the Brazilian deforestation monitoring system and the beef origins traceability are, without any doubt one of the best around the world, even not being the only one of its kind. (bold added)*

MPF and Greenpeace have exerted their agency under the historical background (i.e. Brazilian developmental political project, Brazilian carbon emissions reduction pledge, and the transnational environmental importance of the Amazon Forest) they have inherited.

Drawing on features of capitalist logic (i.e. innovation and productivity increase, governance, global supply chains and risk management) they were able to explore the conditions of this inherited past in order to shape the situated context of the Brazilian beef industry, regarding sustainability, as they have envisaged: the Amazon Forest protection.

However, as this contested meaning of Amazon deforestation constrained the productivity increase via Amazon deforestation and enabled the development of ‘sustainable’ initiatives, programmes and technologies, it has produced piecemeal changes in this situated context, which are the imposition of environmental impact constraints to corporate actions. Even though this piecemeal change was produced by exploring the capitalist logic, it also represented a threat to this same societal logic, once it brings reflections to the expansion of capital by profit maximisation.

According to the theoretical framework adopted, such actors’ interactions created a negotiation order – an arena for actors’ constant jockeying – in which actors are disputing meanings and justifying their actions, by drawing on a situated context and societal logics, thus inhabiting institutions. However, these actions and interactions have consequences to the situated context and to the societal logics. Once actors are not only reproducing logic, they are challenging or protecting the societal logic that supports their resources. Such struggle for hegemony provides a dialectical account between agency (i.e. how actors are shaping the situated context) and structures (i.e. how, during such process, actors are challenging or protecting the societal logics). Moreover, by providing a historical background for actors’ agency, hegemony sheds light on capitalism reproduction through actors’ agency within a situated context.

Thus, it is possible to affirm that MPF and Greenpeace have apprehended how capitalist logic is supporting an environmental impact and have used this very same logic to expose such harm and to enable possible solutions. Furthermore, through their agency, MPF and Greenpeace have threatened capitalist logic by exploring its own characteristics. Ergo, it is possible to question whether such transformation is also being experienced by the enduring characteristics of capitalist logic.

6.3.1. Capitalist ‘quantitative efficiency’ and ‘qualitative efficiency’

In order to examine this question, which has emerged from the transformation experienced in the context of the Brazilian beef industry, it seems interesting to follow Delbridge’s (2007) suggestion of bringing together Gordon’s (1976) ‘capitalist efficiency’ and hegemony (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002) in order to enhance the comprehension of capitalism reproduction. It is argued, in this thesis, that such combination could shed light on a transformation within stability.

In aiming to understand capitalist development, Gordon (1976) offered an alternative account to the analysis of the production process itself (i.e. the materialistic perspective) and the social relations that support such mode of production. By avoiding a materialistic determinism, Gordon (1976: 22) suggests that:

(...) a mode of production can continue to dominate if and only if prevalent production processes reproduce the class relations defined by (the logic of) that mode of production. This requires a growth in the forces of production which is consistent with a particular pattern of class domination. It requires a set of social relations of production which reproduce ruling class power.

In other words, Gordon (1976) is arguing that, in order to economic relations of society to thrive, they should be supported by social relations. Thus, he provides the concepts of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ capitalist efficiency to examine the capitalist development. While ‘quantitative efficiency’ focuses on productivity, the ration between inputs and outputs during production process; ‘qualitative efficiency’ examines the social relations that support a mode of production (Gordon 1976).

Gordon’s (1976) approach suggests that a given process does not need to be the most ‘quantitatively’ efficient one if it is ‘qualitatively’ efficient, once it provides the dominant groups with control over means of production and its associated resources, whatever in physical, economic or symbolic terms.

Thus, ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ efficiency could be useful to explore the capitalist development in a very precise sense, as Gordon (1976: 26) argues: “production processes embody capitalist efficiency if they best reproduce capitalist control over the

production process and minimize proletarian resistance to that control”. This implies that, even though ‘quantitative’ efficiency is transformed, the dominant groups will still be ruling until a challenge to ‘qualitative’ efficiency is achieved.

By exploring ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ efficiency, it is possible to understand the contradictions and collaborations of the development of capitalism. Moreover, it strengthens the hegemony argument (Joseph 2000; Joseph 2002) that actors are not only aiming to achieve dominance over other actors but they are challenging or protecting the societal logics that supports their condition.

Furthermore, as hegemony is the investigation over the reproduction of social relations in capitalism, ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ efficiency could be used to explain the piecemeal transformations of the ‘quantitative’ aspects, while the ‘qualitative’ ones secure the dominant groups’ predominance. Concluding, fashioning consent under a particular situated context could provide the ruling coalitions with enough social security to reproduce the societal order.

6.3.2. Hegemony: the dominance through consent

Returning to the empirical evidence, when analysing the transformations experienced under the context for agency in the Brazilian beef industry, although it is possible to identify an increasing concern over the industry’s environmental impacts, ‘sustainability’ is expressed by the amount of resources consumed. This ‘quantitative efficiency’ is conveyed by the innovation and productivity increase rationale, which is discursively present since the first context for agency – *voices on environmental impact: void of practices* examined on section 5.1. When it was associated with the subsidising pasture intensification in the Amazon region, claiming that cattle ranching productivity increase could diminish ranchers’ incentives to deforest, thus leading them to avoid Amazon deforestation.

After the emergence of Amazon deforestation as a focal issue, innovation and productivity increase appears as a solution for agribusiness economic growth, since it is becoming more difficult to intensify production through pasture expansion over the Amazon

forest. Underpinning this is the threat to slaughterhouses' business risk associated to deforestation, forcing the industry to improve mechanisms to control deforestation: the monitoring system. The development of technologies embedded in the monitoring system represents the opportunity for slaughterhouses to control their supply chain and increase their productivity. Consequently, 'as a happy coincidence', the monitoring system supports both: controlling the Amazon deforestation and productivity increase, and enabling the 'sustainability' take-over.

However, the beef industry was not the only group that preserved its control over the means of production and their associated resources (i.e. money, power and legitimacy). Following the *qualitative efficiency* concept, other ruling groups were benefited with the emergence of Amazon deforestation as a hegemonic meaning. The consensus surrounding the focal issue under a situated context is related to the hegemony struggle within societal order.

Embrapa has also benefited from such conjuncture, since it has amplified the audience to its technologies for increasing cattle ranching productivity in the Brazilian climate, expressed by BPA (Embrapa 2011/2006), which are being fostered by the Brazilian government via *Plano ABC* and *Intensifica Pecuária*. Moreover, Embrapa has also strengthened in its internationalisation, especially to Africa, which has regions with a similar climate to Brazil and will probably demand technologies for developing their agriculture system.

Furthermore, as demonstrated, the productivity of cattle ranching represents a crucial aspect for the Brazilian developmental political project, since pasture could operate as a 'land bank', releasing areas for crop plantations.

Under the transnational context, the Brazilian government has been increasing its legitimacy and power over the diplomatic negotiations of climate change, by developing policies to control Amazon deforestation and fostering a low-carbon agriculture, the two Brazilian main sources of GHG emissions. Moreover, such control opened up room for increasing other sources of GHG emissions, such as exploring the pre-salt petroleum reserves. In doing so, Brazil is exerting a soft power on a global scale and developing competitive advantages for competing in the XXI century.

It was not only the Brazilian developmental political project and Brazilian beef industry that were able to remain as dominants. Greenpeace has remained as a dominant and powerful group as well. By exposing Amazon deforestation and assuming an important role in the control of such environmental impact, Greenpeace has not only achieved one of its objectives, but it has also demonstrated its power in changing ‘realities’, which increases its appeal to attract donations, as well as its power and legitimacy to attack other companies.

It is important to mention that there is nothing wrong or something to be shamed about such organisations strategies. Organisations seek their survival, using the repertoire they have at hand to produce the future they envisage.

Furthermore, the consensus regarding the importance of Amazon deforestation provides actors with enough justifications to reproduce their dominance. By transforming the ‘quantitative efficiency’, actors respond to the challenges to capitalist logic. Besides that, the monitoring system, at the same time that supports such innovation and productivity increase, it also provides the social justification for reproducing the ‘qualitative’ efficiency, since it avoids questioning the social relations that produce such environmental impact, arguing that Amazon deforestation is already being tackled by such ‘quantitative’ efficiency transformation. Likewise, such achievement hinders the challenge over capitalist logic as it provides evidence of the dominant groups’ effectiveness and technical capacity, thus supporting its control over resources.

Concluding, ‘sustainability’ has not transformed capitalist ‘qualitative efficiency’, since the social relations that support capitalism remain ruling, as well as the dominant groups’ access to resources, either symbolic or material. Although there is a growing concern on environmental impacts, as this concern is assimilated through the transformation on productivity, it is not fostering a qualitative transformation of social relations on capitalism. Hegemony is, thus, achieved by preserving the social relations of capitalist means of production. Finally, it is possible to conclude that sustainability offers a piecemeal transformation: a change within stability.

7. Conclusion



7.1. Summary and key analyses

As discussed throughout this work, the objective of this research is to understand how organisations fashion their environment. In order to accomplish that, the study engages with organisational institutionalism's literature, under a Critical Realist perspective (Sayer 1992; Bhaskar 1998/1979; Reed 2005b; Reed 2005; Leca and Naccache 2006; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013), so as to develop a relational approach (Emirbayer 1997; Mutch et al. 2006; Delbridge and Edwards 2007; Fairclough 2010; Delbridge and Edwards 2013) between actors and societal logics. Therefore, the hegemony framework developed enhances the importance of relations among local and historical contexts in which actors act and interact, aiming at achieving the future they envisage. Thus, stability and reproduction is the outcome of such actors' constant jockeying.

This implies that the empirical analysis evokes a theory-driven process, since the analytical framework was being developed while the data was being analysed. Such theory-driven process has the Critical goal of shedding light on how capitalism promotes or hampers the human well-being.

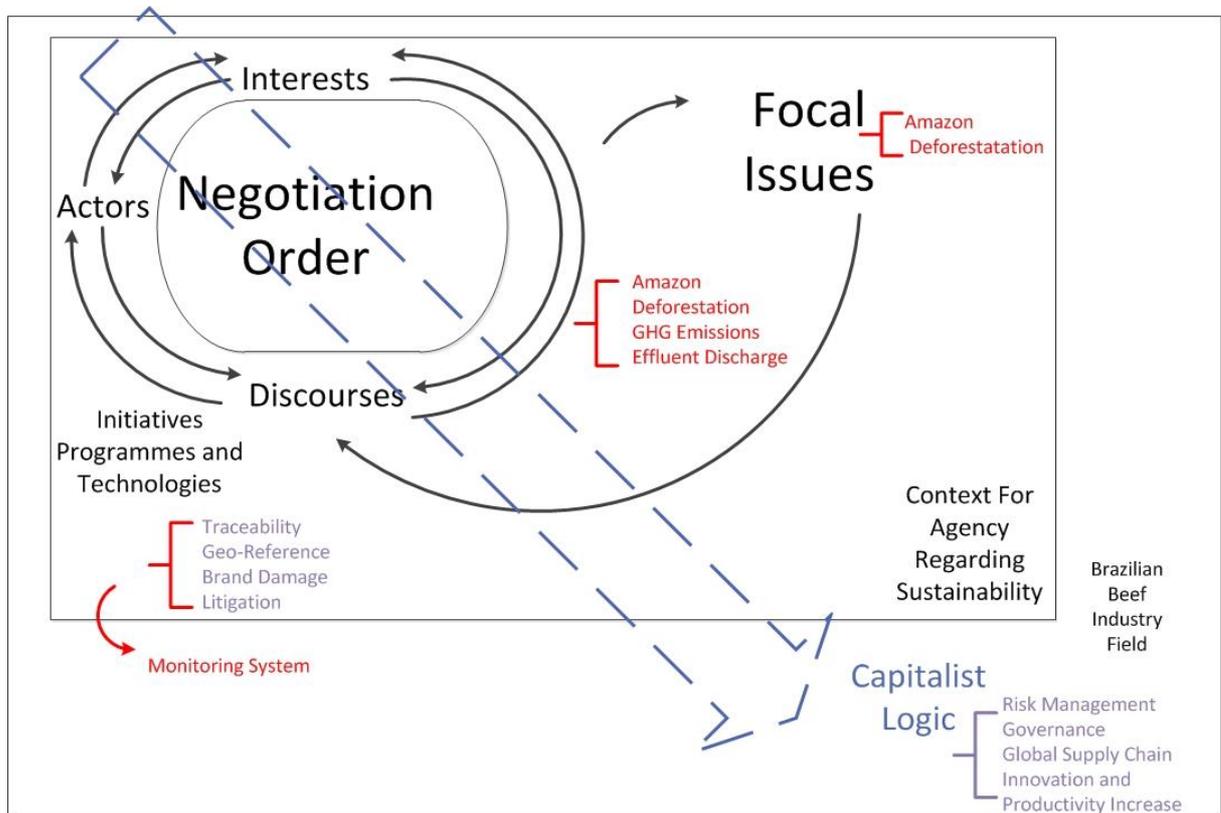
Discussions were held on how actors have exerted their agency, consequently influencing their environment, creating meanings for sustainability and impacting on how actors foresee their future. Moreover, the study demonstrated how a negotiation order was created surrounding the issue of sustainability, and how such sustainability arena has been pervaded by the capitalist logic's impact on actors' discourses and interests. This process has

ultimately been enabling and constraining the development of initiatives, programmes and technologies.

Among several environmental impacts of cattle ranching, one of them has become a hegemonic meaning. Such focal issue has reinforced actors' discourses and their accesses to resources (i.e. legitimacy, power, money) and thus survival, generating a cycle of actions and interactions among actors that influences on stability and change.

Resuming the path of 'sustainability' examined in chapter five and embedding it in the analytical framework elaborated throughout chapter three, the following figure offers a synthesis of actors' negotiations within the context for agency regarding 'sustainability':

Figure 22: Negotiation Order of Sustainability under the Brazilian Beef Industry



Elaborated by the author.

The figure illustrates how the negotiation order of 'sustainability' encompasses several meanings (i.e. Amazon deforestation; GHG emissions; effluent discharge) regarding the environmental impacts of cattle ranching, which supported the development of initiatives, programmes and technologies to address them. Such meanings were being created during

(and as a result of) actors' actions and interactions, which were constantly trying to influence each other through discourse.

However, actors exerted their agency according to the context for agency, regarding sustainability, within a particular time and space. During the first examined context, although there were voices on environmental impacts, there was void of practices concerning 'sustainability', since the beef industry had been exerting its agency towards protecting the industry's economic development and avoiding to address its environmental impact. This context changed in 2009, when MPF and Greenpeace, by exploring capitalist logic's features, increased the risk of not developing technologies in order to address Amazon deforestation. MPF and Greenpeace used such meaning (i.e. Amazon deforestation) through a repertoire (i.e. litigation, brand damage, traceability and geo-referencing) that associated deforestation as a risk for beef industry businesses. During such process, Amazon deforestation gained predominance amid other environmental impacts of cattle ranching, thus emerging as a focal issue.

Although Amazon deforestation has value, it was institutionalised under this situated context due to actors' agency. Consequently, deforestation has become embedded in actors' discourses and interests, impacting on how they envisage their future. By relying on the same repertoire adopted by Greenpeace and MPF to denounce Amazon deforestation, the beef industry was able to develop a monitoring system, which became the embodiment of 'sustainability' in this sector, since it incarnated the capitalist logics' characteristics (i.e. risk management; innovation and productivity increase; global supply chains and governance) that support such repertoire and address the claim for 'sustainability' (i.e. the control of Amazon deforestation).

Therefore, Amazon deforestation as a focal issue influenced the negotiation order and associated discourses, interests and initiatives, programmes and technologies. Furthermore, enabled by the monitoring system, the beef industry took over 'sustainability' and transformed the context for agency, in which sustainability was associated as a risk, into opportunity.

While organising the beef value chain, MPF and Greenpeace have also created business opportunities – consultancy and auditing firms are being contracted to evaluate and

monitor the slaughterhouses' commitments. Moreover, new technologies and knowledge, such as geo-referencing and traceability technologies, are being developed for tracking cattle throughout the entire value chain. One example is given by AgroTools in using the expertise built within the context of the Brazilian beef industry in order to develop tracking systems for McDonald's and Walmart worldwide.

Due to the negotiations surrounding 'sustainability' within the Brazilian beef industry, the transformation of the context for agency has experienced a growing concern over the environmental impacts of the industry's activities. Such transformation illustrates an attack to capitalist logic, enabling to question whether it is likely to spread throughout societal order.

Under this situated context, 'sustainability' – and its embodiment: the monitoring system – characterises an unquestionable development in protecting the Amazon Forest and any innovation, programs and technology that face such huge task should be encouraged.

After this brief summary, it is possible to reflect upon the secondary objectives of this research, as follows:

Does the evidence presented in this study suggest that sustainability is a political matter? The qualification 'sustainable' is an outcome of actors' negotiations. In this sense, 'sustainability' could be understood as an issue driven by politics and power, rather than a technical one. Thus, it shows that amid other several environmental impacts (technical argument) related to cattle ranching, it is the deforestation of the Amazon Forest that has become the focal issue within actors' negotiations.

However, as far as 'sustainability' is concerned, it has been enabling a gradual change by absorbing the environmental impacts' criticism of capitalism through fostering a transformation in the 'quantitative efficiency' of capitalism, supported by the innovation and productivity increase rationale. Likewise, as 'sustainability' is the outcome of political negotiation, it is a contested conception that results from a hegemony struggle under a situated context, in which actors exert their agency (i.e. changing context) while they fight for

meanings (i.e. creating meaning)¹²². As a consequence, the dominant groups are being able to preserve the ‘qualitative efficiency’ of capitalism – the social relations that support their control over means of production and its resources remain preserved.

The monitoring system symbolises an improvement of ‘quantitative efficiency’ in the production process, as it brings more control over the supply chain and enhances a productivity increase, both for slaughterhouses’ production and cattle ranching. However, as ‘sustainability’ is a contested conception that is being explored through a brand damage and litigation repertoires, drawing on a risk management rationale, the monitoring system enables the ‘sustainability’ take-over, as it absorbs the environmental criticism and provides the industry with competitive advantages.

Why are some environmental impacts of cattle ranching activities receiving more attention than others? It is possible to recall two reasons that explain the predominance of Amazon deforestation. Firstly, the study has shown actors exerting their agency to transform their context and, during this process, Amazon deforestation became a focal issue. In other words, Amazon deforestation receives more attention due to actors’ agency. Secondly, it is important to evoke the importance of the historical conditions that actors have inherited, which enabled an alignment of actors’ interest regarding what is at stake concerning Amazon deforestation. Such alignment illustrates the extra-discursive elements that support actors’ resource and material conditions.

Therefore, it is possible to affirm that Amazon deforestation is the outcome of a hegemony struggle and such meaning gained predominance due to both the historical condition and the actors’ agency under this inherited context. The reason why it has become a more powerful meaning than others can be found in extra-discourse features, such as the alignment about what is at stake regarding Amazon deforestation, the scientific development of its world-wide impact on climate change and biodiversity, and its impact on the organising of global value chains.

¹²² As further emphasised when discussing the secondary objective of how meanings are impacting on the development of new technologies and practices, both in public (i.e. state and NGOs) and private realms.

Hence, it is not a surprise the silence regarding other environmental impacts of cattle ranching, such as Cerrado deforestation, the high consumption of natural resources to produce beef or even the environmental impact due to consumption increase under capitalism.

How is the local context of sustainability linked to an international setting?

According to the case studied, Greenpeace has bridged the local and international discussions regarding environmental impacts. While doing so, Greenpeace spread understandings of what an environmental impact is and how it should be addressed. Moreover, assuming its role as a transnational social movement, Greenpeace uses the global supply chain rationale to frame the environmental problem and be able to connect different fields. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the two different ‘bridging processes’ exerted by Greenpeace (i.e. linking the beef industry and the international consumer market, and connecting the local environmental impacts and UN framework) are evidence of how ‘fields’ are fluid and should be understood as an analytical category, otherwise it would not be possible to determine the political processes by which Greenpeace connects the local and international settings.

Regarding these two different ‘bridging processes’ exerted by Greenpeace, the first one relates business environmental impacts to the international consumer market, especially the European consumer market, by focusing on industries’ global supply chains; while the second one connects local environmental impacts and the UN conferences’ framework. Therefore, such connections associate the situated context of the Brazilian beef industry with its transnational content.

How are meanings impacting on the development of new technologies and practices, both in public (i.e. state and NGOs) and private realms? Actors are using meanings to influence their context. The struggle over meanings is closely related to the hegemony battles. Hence, the development of practices, programmes, initiatives and technologies are consequences of the meaning making processes, and they secure actors’ dominant positions. The development of the monitoring system is an example of these processes, once it was supported by the emergence of Amazon deforestation as a hegemonic meaning.

Although this study does not believe in the possibility of predicting the future, the negotiation order model and the knowledge acquired during conducting fieldwork, enables to

speculate that cattle ranching and GHG emissions, under the context of climate change might become the a hegemonic meaning in the near future, especially in terms of international settings – as section 5.3 had discussed. Under the Brazilian context, cattle ranching and indigenous land issues might increase its importance, it it possible that its associations with business risk change, supporting the development of new practices and technologies. Furhtermore, the Brazilian beef issue is most likely to use the health secutiry discourse, by framing how meat can provide a balanced diet and be used against hunger.

7.2. Theoretical Contributions

Although hegemony has been drawing attention within organisation studies literature (Spicer and Böhm 2007; Howarth 2010; van Bommel and Spicer 2011; Bohm et al. 2012; Dellagnelo et al. 2014), this is the first study adopting a Critical Realist perspective on hegemony. As such, it has extrapolated a discursive articulation through hegemonic projects (Curry 2002; Joseph 2002), by exploring the impacts on social relations under the beef value chain, as well as access to resources. In this process, the discourse on cattle ranching's environmental impacts was embedded in the very material conditions of their making (i.e. the organisation of this value chain, actors' repertoires, international commerce trade, and the technologies linked to the monitoring system).

Moreover, by adopting a Critical Realist perspective, the developed hegemony framework brought into discussion a wider socio-political realm, such as the transnational arena related to Amazon deforestation, the Brazilian developmental political project, and the characteristics of capitalist logic. Even though more theoretical development is needed, it was possible to examine the extra-discursive reasons that enabled a particular meaning (i.e. Amazon deforestation) to become more powerful than others, thus emerging as a focal issue.

Adopting Joseph (2000; 2002) and Delbridge's (2007) account for hegemony and capitalism reproduction, it was possible to provide an alternative perspective, under organisational institutionalism, for the importance of the local and historical contexts from which actors both negotiate the meanings and actions that could come from various societal logics. Additionally, this study has also demonstrated the focal issue of these negotiations and the context it will be focused on, thus evidencing the dialectical relation between actors'

agency and their historical background. While doing so it was possible to avoid fieldcentrism traps, firstly because the research does reduce social interaction to a particular field, secondly the relational approach avoid assuming field as variables to explain the social transformation, bringing institutional features (e.g. features of capitalist logic) into actors interplay and constant jockeying.

Why Amazon deforestation has become a focal issue? Backing in time, it is possible to argue that this was produced through actors' actions drawing upon societal logics. In doing so, actors shaped a context for agency in a particular point in time, emphasising the relational approach towards societal order and the local context. A focal issue is the outcome of a political project supported by the construction of consent, which provides social cohesion and consensus, and describes how dominant groups maintain their position.

How actors shape their environment? By using – and influencing – societal logics in order to raise a hegemonic meaning that supports their material advantages. In this process, actors may aim (even unconsciously) at transforming or protecting societal logics, and producing a gradual change in their environment.

At the same time, a hegemony approach allows the understanding of the local negotiations that reproduce the focal issue. Once the focal issue represents how a consensus is forged, its emergence is hegemony being exerted in a situated context: the production of what is being contested is how the environment is fashioned.

Moreover, the negotiation order, under which such disputes take place, are embedded in the societal level and could reproduce the dominant groups. By absorbing its criticism and producing a piecemeal change in the 'quantitative efficiency' of capitalism, dominant groups preserve the social relations that secure their advantages – avoiding challenging the capitalist logic within its 'qualitative efficiency'. Ergo, hegemony and the negotiation order enable to examine how actors are not only struggling for meanings of 'sustainability', but also protecting or attacking the societal logic (as hidden structures) that sustains their position. Thus, this research has contributed by shedding light on the importance of piecemeal changes.

Under this perspective, ‘sustainability’ has been enabling the corporate realm to take-over the environmental impact criticism on the expansion of capitalism, and reduce it to the relationship between inputs and outputs in production. Through such gradual change, big corporations are gaining legitimacy to politically engage on the dispute over ‘sustainability’ and therefore influence its outcomes, finally protecting their vested interests of profit maximisation.

Concluding, ‘sustainability’ represents an indisputable advance. Any improvements on reducing environmental impacts of business are welcome and should be promoted. However, such improvement resembles Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1985) conclusion in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: myth is already enlightenment and enlightenment become mythology. At the same time that ‘sustainability’ embodies an improvement it also evades the criticism in which it is embedded.

7.2.1. Methodological contributions

In methodological terms, the longitudinal case strategy proved to be an interesting approach to address actors’ actions and interactions, rather than following the traps of fieldcentrism, as discussed on section 3.1.3. By focusing on the interpretation of time, the study has brought into scene the actors’ negotiations and, thus, field was employed as an analytical category to understand actors’ context for agency, not as a variable to explain institutional change or stability.

Additionally, the data collection procedure based on three steps enabled a critical reflection of the analysis carried out, which avoided falling into a naïve interpretation of the interviewees’ discourses. Furthermore, the combination of field notes and the third round of document analysis were useful to identify the active nature of interviews and their political content.

Although this research has neither adopted, nor discussed, the incumbent and challenger definitions, these are commonly adopted as actors’ classifications to understand changing processes within social movement literature. While incumbents refer to the

dominant and powerful groups, challengers stand for those organisations that do not have enough resources to be dominant, but are constantly challenging the *status quo*. The struggles between these two types of actors are one source of transformation (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). However, this research has shown that such classification proved not to be helpful to understand such process. MPF and Greenpeace are examples of powerful and dominant organisations that could not be classified as incumbents (since they challenged the societal logics) or challengers (because they are not powerless actors). Thus, by avoiding such classification, different paths in terms of how conducting a research on stability and change could be embraced.

7.3. Limitations of the research

It is possible to question whether the silence regarding other social movement organisations, rather than Greenpeace, was a consequence of the research design or evidence of Greenpeace's dominant position. Although it is possible to argue that it was influenced by data collection's procedures, since Greenpeace was considered the main informant, it is quite surprising that no interviewees have mentioned or explored other social movement organisations – given the fact that there are movements such as *Plataforma BNDES*¹²³, which also question the institutionalised meanings. Even though reports from other social movement organisation, such as Imazon and Amigos da Terra-Amazônia Brasileira, were analysed, more interviews with these organisation members could have strengthened this study.

Hence, it is important to reflect upon the vocalisation and actions of alternative organisations (both in terms of their internal structure and repertoires employed) that do not explore capitalist logic's own characteristics to attack it, such as Greenpeace, but might offer a qualitative question about the social relations embedded in capitalism.

¹²³ *Plataforma BNDES* is pool of organisations that have united seeking in increasing the BNDES democracy and transparency, which is considered ad the main instrument for fostering the Brazilian development. More information at: <http://www.plataformabndes.org.br/site/>.

Likewise, although some reports encompass the ranchers' perspective, the study would benefit from hearing their voices. Unfortunately, few producers were interviewed due to schedule and funding constraints.

Underneath such limitations is the fact that this study has focused on organisations that have assumed a defiant (or defensive) relation regarding the environmental impacts of the Brazilian beef industry. Thus, it is possible to find actors that were exerting a critical position, but not assuming a defiant approach, such as WWF. This kind of organisations could have an important role in implementing the outcomes of the negotiation and, probably, play a significant position in the negotiations surrounding 'sustainability'. However, it is important to state that they were not mentioned during the interviews.

Finally, although this research has assumed organisations as actors, it is also possible to reflect upon their internal political disputes and coalitions, such as Fligstein and McAdam (2012) have suggested. Such coalitions and disputes should not be neglected. However there is not enough room in this study to examine their implications.

7.4. Future research

This study has focused on capitalism's reproduction, thus exploring how capitalist logic was used by actors in order to, although allowing transformation, secure stability. Even though the literature suggests that the clash between societal logics is a source of change (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Thornton et al. 2012), this study has focused on how dominant groups and the fragmented nature of social groups, within contemporary capitalism, produce stability and change. Thus, an interesting further study could explore how different societal logics have been influencing the negotiation regarding human environmental impacts. In this sense, questioning how it is possible to address and promote change over environmental impacts and social inequalities beyond the solutions provided by features of capitalist logic seems to be relevant.

As far as the scientific knowledge on the environmental impacts caused by human activities is concerned, this study has shown that, even though such knowledge assumes

objective and neutral arguments, they are embedded in commercial and diplomatic disputes. Thus, further exploring how such disputes are influencing the advance of such knowledge seems important. Following such path, to examine the UN framework in advancing national public policies and corporate guidelines to address environmental impacts, could shed light on environmental impacts that are not receiving enough attention due to lack of business interests.

Concerning public policies, more studies could be done in order to understand how focal issue are being used to promote or hinder the development of public policies.

Furthermore, as discussed, there were identified two different types of silence and their distinctions should be further examined. On the one hand, the silence on practices (explored in chapter five) is a political action manifested at the domain of actual, since actors were consciously acting in order to promote the economic development of the beef industry. Thus, such silence is a void that was politically constituted. On the other hand, the silence on governance, innovation and productivity increase, could be seen as the exercise of praxis since it illustrates the conscious production and unconscious reproductions of social logics – even when they were not expressed, they were present as a latent element and it is manifested in the domain of real.

Hence, following Alves (2002), silence is an important feature of discourse and Critical Realism could help improving the comprehension of its different impacts on actors' dominant positions, as well as the stability and change under an organisational institutionalism framework.

Additionally, this research has shown the importance and limitations of 'fields'. Although it has not the objective of defining fields' boundaries, it is has adopted a mesolevel of analysis that brings evidence of fields' fluidity. Even though Fligstein and McAdam (2012) have brought interesting development in how to understand and move forward a field approach, it is still likely to fall into the fieldcentrism trap, as discussed. Thus, more studies need to be done in order to explore how actors 'bridge' these different contents, such as the bridging role that Greenpeace has played.

Following Greenpeace's actions, it was possible to identify the political governance exerted by NGOs, regulating markets. Consequently, it seems interesting to shed light on how governance spaces are being created by actors that could be labelled as neither market nor state actors. Furthermore, it is also important to understand the different implications between NGOs' repertoires. This research has focused Greenpeace and its 'guerrilla' like approach, but what is the difference from such repertoire and NGOs that follow a 'consultancy' like approach, such as WWF, or a 'research' like approach, such as Imazon? Such matter has increased in importance since several corporations are seeking for advice (and, thus, contracting NGOs or their consultancy arm) on how to proceed with their environmental and social impacts. This is particularly important because the literature, both under social movement and organisational institutionalism one, tend to consider NGOs as a homogeneous group of actors that might share the same characteristics, interests, repertoires and strategies. However, this study has shown that such believe should be further analysed.

Greenpeace, WWF, Imazon and Proforest – just to mention the main NGOs explored during this research – have adopted different strategies and repertoires while engaging in the negotiation order of sustainability. As a well as the companies, NGOs are also engaging the sustainability game whitin capitalist logic, however these organisations adopt different currencies to mediate their interactions, which also should be further examined.

Finally, as this research has analysed a transformation within stability, it would be interesting to examine whether sequences of gradual changes are likely to produce a significant change over time. Hence, it is important to foster a research agenda focused on the role and implications of these quantitative changes to capitalism and their consequences for the promotion of emancipation.

8. References

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Appendices

Appendix A – Documents: Media

Organisation	Document Title	Year
The Guardian Sustainable Business	Talking revolution: Business and government can make swift changes when they want... or are forced to	2010
Valor Setorial: Carne Bovina	Demanda Consistente: consumo interno e vendas externas sustentam preços	2012
	Pecuária de Corte: rumo à sustentabilidade	2013
Agro Analysis - FGV	Pecuária Sustentável: Soluções Tecnológicas para a Agropecuária (Eduardo Bastos, Agroanalysis)	2013
	O recente aumento do desmatamento não vem do agronegócio	2014
BeefPoint	Exportação de carne bovina in natura brasileira para os EUA: análise completa da Abiec, JBS e Minerva	2014

Appendix B – Documents: Academia

Authors - Institution	Livestock	Year
Filho, P. and Paula, S. - BNDES	Cadeia da Carne Bovina: O Novo Ambiente Competitivo (Paulo Filho e Sérgio de Paula, BNDES)	1997
Filho, N. And Filho, P. - BNDES	O Sistema Agroindustrial de Carnes: Competitividade e Estruturas de Governança (Nelson Filho e Paulo Filho, BNDES)	1998
Fearnside, P. - INPA	Can pasture intensification discourage deforestation in the Amazon and Pantanal regions of Brazil? (Philip Fearnside, INPA)	2002
Kaimowitz, D.; Mertens, B.; Wunder, S. and Pacheco, P. - CIFOR	Hamburger Connection Fuels Amazon Destruction (David Kaimowitz, Benoit Mertens, Sven Wunder e Pablo Pacheco, CIFOR)	2004
Schlesinger, S. - FASE and Food and Water Watch	O Gado Bovino no Brasil (Sérgio Schlesinger, Fase and Food and Water Watch)	2009
Economist Intelligence Unit, Accenture	O Poder Global do Agribusiness Brasileiro (Economist Intelligence Unit, Accenture)	2010
Drigo, I. and Abramovay, R. - FEA-USP/NESA	Rumo à Carne Sustentável e Certificada? (Isabel Drigo e Ricardo Abramovay, FEA-USP e NESA)	2013
Alves-Pinto, H.N.; Newton, P. - CGIAR/CCAFS	Certifying sustainability: opportunities and challenges for the cattle supply chain in Brazil (Helena Alves-Pinto, Peter Newton e Luís Pinto, CGIAR-CCAFS)	2013

Authors - Institution	Soybeans	Year
Rudorff, B. et al. - INPE	The Soy Moratorium in the Amazon Biome Monitored by Remote Sensing Images (Bernardo Rudorff et al., INPE)	2011

Authors - Institution	Greenhouse Gases	Year
Fearnside, P. - INPA	Greenhouse Gases from Deforestation in Brazilian Amazonia: Net Committed Emissions (Philip Fearnside, INPA)	1997
Fearnside, P. and Laurence, W. - Ecological Applications	Tropical Deforestation and GHG Emissions (P. Fearnside and W. Laurence, Ecological Applications)	2004
Cerri et al., C. - USP-ESALQ	Brazilian Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The Importance of Agriculture and Livestock (Carlos Cerri et al., USP-ESALQ)	2009
Garnett, T. - Food Climate Research Network	Livestock-related greenhouse gas emissions: impacts and options for policy makers (Tara Garnett, Food Climate Research Network)	2009
Moutinho, P. - IPAM	Desmatamento na Amazônia: Desafios para Reduzir as Emissões de Gases de Efeito Estufa do Brasil (Paulo Moutinho, IPAM)	2009
Moutinho, P. - IPAM	Desmatamento na Amazônia: desafios para reduzir as emissões de gases de efeito estufa do Brasil (Paulo Moutinho, IPAM)	2009

Pinjuv, G. - Carbon War Room	Gigaton Analysis of the Livestock Industry: The Case for Adoption of a Moderate Intensification Model (Guy Pinjuv, Carbon War Room)	2011
Herrero et al. - Animal Feed Science and Technology	Livestock and greenhouse gas emissions: The importance of getting the numbers right (Herrero et al., Animal Feed Science and Technology)	2011
O'Mara, F. P. - Teagasc	The Significance of Livestock as a Contributor to Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions Today and in the Near Future (F.P. O'Mara, Teagasc)	2011
CGEE, IPAM and SAE	REDD no Brasil: Um Enfoque Amazônico (CGEE, IPAM and SAE)	2012
CDP Global Forests Report	The Commodity Crunch: Value at Risk from Deforestation (CDP Global Forests Report)	2013
IPCC WGI AR5	Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis Summary for Policymakers (IPCC WGI AR5)	2013
Nepstad, D. - IPAM	Responding to climate change and the global land crisis: REDD+, market transformation and low-emissions rural development (Daniel Nepstad, IPAM)	2013

Authors - Institution	Agriculture	Year
Climate Policy Initiative	Production and Protection: A First Look at Key Challenges in Brazil (Climate Policy Initiative)	2013

Appendix C – Documents: State Related Actors

Organisation	Document Title	Year
Federal Legislation	Plano Nacional sobre Mudança do Clima	2008
	National Plan on Climate Change (Summary)	2008
	Lei No. 12.097 (conception and application of traceability under cattle and buffalo supply chain)	2009
BNDES (Brazilian Bank of Development)	Exportações de Carne Bovina: Desempenho e Perspectivas	2001
	Resolução No. 1854/2009	2009
	Diretrizes Socioambientais e Instrumentos de Apoio Financeiro para a Cadeia Produtiva da Pecuária Bovina	2009
	Circular No. 14/2010	2010
	Projeto Empresas Agro - Exportações 2010	2010
	Demonstrações Financeiras BNDESPAR 2012	2012
	Projeto Empresas Agro - Agropecuária e Inclusão Social 2012	2012
São Paulo State Government	Casa da Agricultura: Bovinocultura de Corte	2011
EMBRAPA (Brazilian Enterprise for Agricultural Research)	Levantamento de Informações de Uso e Cobertura da terra na Amazônia (TerraClass)	2008
	Levantamento de Informações de Uso e Cobertura da terra na Amazônia (TerraClass)	2010
	Manual de Boas Práticas Agropecuárias: Bovinos de Corte	2011
	Levantamento de Informações de Uso e Cobertura da terra na Amazônia (TerraClass)	2011
IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)	Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Sustentável	2002
	Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Sustentável	2004
	Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Sustentável	2008
	Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Sustentável	2012
MAPA (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply)	Agenda Estratégica: Carne Bovina 2010-2015	2011
	Implementação do Plano ABC: Ações e Expectativas	2012
	Apresentação Plano ABC	2012
	Plano Setorial de Mitigação e de Adaptação às Mudanças Climáticas para a Consolidação de uma Economia de Baixa Emissão de Carbono na Agricultura	2012
	Second National Communication of Brazil to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: Executive Summary	2010
MDIC (Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade)	Principais Empresas Exportadoras 2012	2012
	Principais Produtos por Fator Agregado: acumulado (US\$ e kg)	2012
	Exportação por Valor Agregado: 1994-2013	2013
MPF (Federal Public Attorney) in its different representations	Projeto Cadeia da Pecuária: Modelo de Atuação	2009
	Ações contra Fazendas de Gado acusadas de Desmatamento	2009
	Compradores de Gado de Desmatamento	2009

	Bois do Desmatamento: Repercussão do caso (Press Release) - 01/06 a 15/08 de 2009	2009
	2 anos de Carne Legal: avanços e desafios do esforço de regularizar a pecuária no Pará	2011
	Da Carne Legal para os Municípios Verdes	2011
	Notificação MPF à JBS sobre Carne Ilegal	2011
	Carne Legal é eleita a melhor campanha pela sustentabilidade (Press Release)	2011
	MPF e grandes varejistas vão ter cooperação técnica pela pecuária sustentável (Press Release)	2012
	Carne ilegal: MPF notifica maior frigorífico do mundo por descumprir acordo pela pecuária sustentável	2012
	Ofício de Recomendação ao BNDES sobre aplicação da Resolução No. 1854	2013
	Notícia: Termo de Cooperação pela Pecuária Sustentável entre MPF e ABRAS	2013
	Tabela de Dados: Notificação da JBS em Mato Grosso	-
	Histórico de Atuação pela Pecuária Sustentável	-
	Bois do Desmatamento: Pronunciamentos do MPF (Press Release) - 01/06/2009 a 02/02/2010	-
SAE (Secretariat of Strategic Affairs)	Nota Técnica sobre Viabilidade de Implementação da Linha de Crédito "Intensifica Pecuária"	2013

Appendix D – Documents: Civil Society Organisations

Organisation	Document Title	Year
GTPS (Brazilian Roundtable on Sustainable Livestock)	Plano de Trabalho do GTPS	2009
	GTPS' Work Plan	2009
	Comunicado II: Posicionamento da Comissão de Estudo e Trabalho do Caso JBS	2011
	Caminhos para a Sustentabilidade na Pecuária	2012
	Nota: Mecanismos de Controle e Redução do Desmatamento no Bioma Amazônia Brasileiro	2013
	White Paper: Mechanisms for Control and Mitigation of Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon Biome	2013
	Apresentação do GTPS	-
ABIEC (Association of Brazilian Beef Exporters)	Perfil da Produção Bovina no Brasil	2009
	Exportações Brasileiras de Carne Bovina	2011
	Estatuto Social da ABIEC	2011
	A Geo (R)evolução da Pecuária Brasileira	2012
	Status Mercado Mundial de Carne Bovina (2005-2011)	2012
	Pecuária do Brasil: Perfil / Brazilian Livestock: Profile	2013
ABIOVE (Brazilian Vegetable Oil Industries Association)	Relatório da Moratória da Soja: Ano 1	2007
	Relatório da Moratória da Soja: Ano 2	2008
	Relatório da Moratória da Soja: Ano 3	2009
ABRAS (Brazilian Association of Supermarkets)	Termo de Cooperação Técnica pela Pecuária Sustentável: MPF e ABRAS	2013
Carbon Disclosure Project	CDP Global Forests Report 2013	2013
Climate Policy Initiative	Deforestation Slowdown in the Legal Amazon: Prices or Policies?	2012
	Does Credit Affect Deforestation? Evidence from a Rural Credit Policy in the Brazilian Amazon	2013
	Produção e Proteção: Importantes Desafios para o Brasil	2013
	Production and Protection: A First Look at Key Challenges in Brazil	2013
Greenpeace	Relatório Soja: Comendo a Amazônia	2006
	Annual Report 2007	2007
	Annual Report 2008	2008
	Slaughtering the Amazon	2009
	Annual Report 2009	2009
	Annual Report 2010	2010
	Annual Report 2011	2011
	Broken Promises	2011
	Annual Report 2012	2012
	Greenwash Plus 20	2012
JBS Scorecard Summary Update	2012	

	Greenpeace International Briefing: JBS still involved in Amazon destruction	2012
	JBS Scorecard: Failed	2012
IIEB (International Education Institute of Brazil)	Sociedade, Florestas e Sustentabilidade	2013
Imazon (Amazon Institute for Mankind and the Environment)	Pecuária na Amazônia: Tendências e Implicações para a Conservação Ambiental	2005
	A Pecuária e o Desmatamento na Amazônia na Era das Mudanças Climáticas	2008
	Municípios Verdes: Caminhos para a Sustentabilidade	2011
	Como Desenvolver a Economia Rural sem Desmatar a Amazônia	2013
Observatório Plano ABC (Observatory of the Low-Carbon Agriculture Plan)	Agricultura de Baixa Emissão de Carbono: Financiando a transição	2013
	Agricultura de Baixa Emissão de Carbono: Quem cumpre as decisões?	2013
Pacto Floresta (Zero Deforestation Pact)	Pacto pela Valorização da Floresta e pelo Fim do Desmatamento na Amazônia	2007
FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)	Livestock's Long Shadow: environmental issues and options	2006
	Mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Livestock Production: a review of technical options for non-CO2 emissions	2013
	Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock: a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities	2013
GreenBiz	Exclusive: Inside McDonald's quest for sustainable beef (Part 1)	2014
	How a Big Mac becomes sustainable (Part 2)	2014
	Can the beef industry collaborate its way to sustainability? (Part 3)	2014
	State of GreenBusiness Report	2014
PENSA (PENSA Agribusiness Knowledge Center/USP)	Relatório da Mesa Redonda sobre Pecuária Sustentável: relatório dos encontros (24 de agosto e 13 de setembro de 2010)	2010

Appendix E – Documents: Corporations

Organisation	Document Title	Year
AgroTools	Riscos e Oportunidades do Agronegócio Moderno	2013
	Metodologia Identidade Geográfica (GeoID) e seu componente GeoCadastro	2013
	Formulário Prêmio IBEF de Sustentabilidade	2013
	Best of Sustainable Supply: beef cattle geo-monitoring program in the Amazon	2013
JBS	Boas Práticas Agropecuárias: Bovinos de Corte	2007
	Relatório Anual 2007	2007
	Relatório Anual 2008	2008
	Annual Report 2009	2009
	Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2010	2010
	TAC pela Carne Legal	2010
	Relatório Anual e de Sustentabilidade 2011	2011
	Announcement IV: Conclusion of JBS Case Study Commission	2012
	Carta ao Cliente (em inglês)	2012
	Notice to our Stakeholders: JBS repudiates false accusations in Greenpeace report	2012
	Relatório Anual e de Sustentabilidade 2012	2012
	Resposta JBS ao Relatório Greenpeace Scorecard	2012
	Sustentabilidade e Governança Corporativa	2013
	JBS in Leather Magazine	2013
	Case "Do Campo a Mesa: o grande problema que a solução AgroTools transformou em oportunidade"	-
	Third Party Audit Report to meet 'Undertaking to Adopt Minimum Criteria for Industrial-Scale Operations with Cattle and Beef Products in the Amazon Biome'	2014
	Independência	TAC pela Carne Legal
Marfrig	Relatório Anual 2007	2007
	Relatório Anual 2008	2008
	Relatório Anual 2009	2009
	Extrato de Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta	2010
	Relatório Anual 2010	2010
	TAC pela Carne Legal	2010
	Carbon Disclosure Project: resposta base 2011	2011
	Relatório Anual 2011	2011
	Relatório Anual 2012	2012
	Apresentação sobre Sustentabilidade	-
	Assessment report of "Greenpeace: Minimum Criteria for Industrial Scale Cattle Operations in the Brazilian Amazon Biome"	2014

	Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2011	2011
	Relatório de Sustentabilidade 2012	2012
	Termo de Compromisso com Greenpeace	2013
Minerva	News: IFC Supports Minerva's Sustainable Expansion in South America	2013
	News: IFC to Invest in Minerva	2013
	Relatório de Auditoria de Terceira Parte para Atendimento ao “Compromisso de Adoção dos Critérios Mínimos para Operações com Gado e Produtos Bovinos em Escala Industrial no Bioma Amazônia”	2014
Walmart	Sustainability Report: Year 2012	2013

Appendix F – Consent Form: Portuguese

Formulário de Consentimento: Entrevista

Making Meanings, Creating Context: Contested Conceptions of Sustainability in the Amazon Rain Forest

Marcus Vinícius Peinado Gomes
FGV-EAESP

Sou Marcus Vinícius P. Gomes, estudante de doutorado em Administração Pública e Governo na FGV-EAESP. Como parte de minha tese, sob orientação do prof.º Dr. Mário Aquino Alves, estou lhe convidando para fazer parte do meu estudo. O objetivo de minha tese é entender como algumas práticas se tornam reconhecidas como “sustentáveis” na indústria da carne brasileira. Para tanto, estou analisando os conflitos entre o Greenpeace e os frigoríficos no que diz respeito aos impactos ambientais e sociais da produção de carne brasileira.

Sua participação é totalmente voluntária. Você pode ser excluído do estudo a qualquer momento sem nenhuma penalidade. Abaixo estão listados os procedimentos relativos à confidencialidade e anonimato.

1. Confidencialidade:

Esta entrevista tem como objetivo coletar informações para esta pesquisa e portanto possui objetivo estritamente acadêmico. Qualquer comentário, opinião ou avaliações que você fizer serão tratados com confidencialidade e analisados apenas para os interesses desta pesquisa.

2. Permissão para citação:

Eu gostaria de poder citar diretamente trechos de nossa conversa nos relatórios e publicações oriundas desta pesquisa. Caso deseje manter seu anonimato, por favor manifeste sua preferência antes do início da entrevista.

3. Participação:

Sua participação nesta pesquisa é voluntário e você não receberá nenhum pagamento para tal. Você pode decidir a qualquer momento, por qualquer razão, em não mais fazer parte desta pesquisa. Em caso de dúvidas ou esclarecimentos, você pode fazer perguntas a mim em

qualquer momento.

3. Gravação:

Gostaria de pedir sua permissão para gravar nossa entrevista com o único propósito de facilitar o processo de pesquisa. Se você não concorda com a gravação, por favor manifeste sua preferência antes do início da entrevista.

Assinatura do Entrevistado _____

Data: _____

Assinatura do Pesquisador: _____



Data: _____

Caso tenha alguma dúvida sobre o estudo, por favor contate com Marcus Gomes, marcus.gomes@fgv.br ou Dr. Mário Aquino Alves mario.alves@fgv.br.

Appendix G – Interview Schedule: Portuguese

Agenda Entrevista

A entrevista versará sobre os impactos ambientais e sociais da cadeia da carne, com o objetivo de compreender a construção dos sentidos de sustentabilidade neste campo a partir da visão do Secretário. Paralelamente, procurar-se-á salientar as diferentes influências sobre a definição dos sentidos e lógicas que as sustentam, dando destaque para as mudanças climáticas. Os seguintes tópicos serão abordados: i) histórico do entrevistado e a agenda de sustentabilidade; ii) Os sentidos de sustentabilidade na cadeia da carne; iii) As políticas públicas voltadas para os impactos ambientais da cadeia da carne; iv) atuação do Estado ao mesmo tempo criando políticas para o desenvolvimento sustentável da Amazônia e também criando políticas que aumentam a pressão para o desmatamento.

Introdução

- ⇒ Você tem grande experiência na área florestal, a partir de sua trajetória profissional você poderia comentar o que acha que mudou neste campo sobre a sustentabilidade? (Temas que estão e foram abordados e a maneira pela qual estes temas foram discutidos e as soluções apresentadas)
- ⇒ Você poderia retomar um pouco sobre como a temática florestal entra na agenda internacional de sustentabilidade?
- ⇒ Quais são os principais impactos ambientais da pecuária?
- ⇒ O desmatamento parece ser um tema chave ao se discutir desenvolvimento rural sustentável e também para a redução das emissões brasileiras. Você poderia comentar as razões para a sua importância tema?
 - E como isto dialoga ou não com a criação de gado? (Pensando na emissão intrínseca de metano e outros problemas ambientais ligados à esta atividade)

Os sentidos de Sustentabilidade na cadeia da carne

- ⇒ O que podemos entender por sustentabilidade na cadeia da carne? (Compreender os sentidos da sustentabilidade neste campo a partir do olhar do Greenpeace)
- ⇒ Quais as políticas são desenvolvidas para enfrentá-los?
- ⇒ Você concorda com a afirmação de que sustentabilidade envolve gestão de riscos? (Possibilidade de perda de contratos devido a campanhas de movimentos sociais, abalo na reputação e multas por impactos ambientais)
- ⇒ Como e quando pode se passar desta gestão de risco para a gestão de oportunidade?

(Fazer com que a sustentabilidade comece a gerar negócios)

- ⇒ Podemos entender a sustentabilidade como uma forma de comunicação?
- ⇒ A criação de gado é uma atividade que causa diversos impactos ambientais e sociais, como a compactação do solo, o grande consumo de água (para se produzir 1kg de carne são necessário 45.000l de água), além da grande emissão de GEE por conta da fermentação intestinal dos ruminantes e durante a produção de rações. Desta maneira, por que o desmatamento da Amazônia ganha destaque?
 - O senhor poderia comentar um pouco sobre estes outros impactos ambientais e sociais?
- ⇒ Recentemente a FAO publicou um relatório destacando o impacto da pecuária para as mudanças climáticas. Neste relatório ela aponta que a pecuária é responsável por 7,1 gigatoneladas de CO₂ equivalentes por ano, sendo 45% provenientes da produção de rações e 39% da fermentação natural dos ruminantes. Embora não se apresente dados por país, o Brasil, por possuir um grande rebanho bovino, também tem um grande impacto nas mudanças climáticas por conta da pecuária. O senhor poderia comentar um pouco sobre o papel da pecuária nas mudanças climáticas e as ações do governo brasileiro sobre esta questão?
 - Tendo também a emissão da pecuária um considerável impacto nas emissões do país, por que esta questão é muitas vezes deixada de lado, focando o impacto do desmatamento? (**É inclusive difícil de se achar dados específicos sobre os países**)
- ⇒ Qual a importância de se olhar para a cadeia como um todo ao invés de se analisar um ator em específico?
- ⇒ As discussões no que podemos chamar de arena internacional da sustentabilidade – sistema ONU, OMC, entre outros – impacta nas visões e práticas de sustentabilidade? Como? Podemos pensar que há uma influência destes espaços de discussão e o que se discute sobre a sustentabilidade na cadeia da carne?

As políticas públicas voltadas para os impactos ambientais da cadeia da carne

- ⇒ Acredito que duas políticas ganham destaque nesta questão, o Plano Setorial de Mitigação e de Adaptação às Mudanças Climáticas para a Consolidação de uma Economia de Baixa Emissão de Carbono na Agricultura, o Plano ABC, e o Cadastro Ambiental Rural (CAR). O senhor poderia comentar um pouco sobre elas e como a Secretaria se relaciona com estas políticas?
- ⇒ Quais outras ações poderiam ser tomadas quando o assunto é o impacto ambiental da cadeia

da carne?

Aparente contradição das ações do Estado

- ⇒ O Estado brasileiro vem adotando uma política de “campeã nacional”, algumas empresas recebendo grandes investimentos do BNDES para se tornarem grandes players internacionais, a JBS foi claramente uma destas empresas. O que o senhor acha a respeito desta política?
- ⇒ Ao mesmo tempo em que o governo assume uma postura desenvolvimentista que cria uma pressão ao desmatamento da Amazônia e aumenta a emissão em outros setores, diversas políticas públicas de cunho sustentável tem sido criadas, uma evidência é a queda do desmatamento e conseqüentemente das emissões brasileiras. Qual sua opinião sobre esta dualidade do estado brasileiro?
 - O que explica esta dualidade? (**Quais são suas origens**)
 - Como estas lógicas distintas coexistem?
- ⇒ Você acha que a JBS por ser considerada uma “campeã nacional”, recebendo grandes investimentos do BNDES (e conseqüentemente do governo brasileiro), influenciou tanto a escolha da empresa como alvo da campanha, como também as respostas da organização às acusações.

Finalizando

- ⇒ O senhor acha que eu deveria entrevistar alguém em específico?
- ⇒ Tem alguma pergunta que você acha que eu deveria ter feito?
- ⇒ Gostaria de acrescentar mais alguma coisa? (Deixo um espaço livre para você falar o que desejar.)