

Nature Conservation in Brazil in the 20th Century

A large, stylized, light gray graphic of a tree with a thick trunk and several branches, positioned on the right side of the page. The tree is composed of simple geometric shapes and lines, giving it a modern, abstract appearance.

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ABSTRACT

The text explores actors and institutions involved in the conservation of nature in Brazil during the 20th century. It seeks to understand their ideas, themes and proposals while also focusing on their activism. It deals with convergences and divergences between activists and organizations considering the political contexts in which they operated. We conclude that the continuity among actors was difficult but highly important and that it led to the development of integrated public policies that conserve biodiversity and promote the controlled and equitable use of natural resources. We also identified the relevance of ecocentric environmental ethics, focused on the notion that all species have an intrinsic value.

Keywords: nature conservation; nature protection; biodiversity; NGOs; protected areas.

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This article examines the emergence and development of 20th century concerns about the natural world in Brazil. These concerns took different forms, were based on different perspectives, and evolved along with new concepts and theories emerging in natural and social sciences which seek to explain the relationships between humans and nature. The text offers an overview of the wide set of ideas, social practices and non-governmental organizations related to the protection of Brazilian natural landscapes and biodiversity.

We emphasize that there were three overlapping "generations" of authors and organizations: (i) the generation of the 1920s-1940s, which related the protection of nature to the construction of a Brazilian national identity; (ii) the generation of the 1950s-1980s, linked mainly to the *Fundação Brasileira de Conservação da Natureza* – FBCN (Brazilian Foundation for the Conservation of Nature) and its role in the creation of protected areas and in the protection of endangered species and ecosystems; and (iii) the generation that emerged in the 1990s, influenced by the scientific knowledge about biodiversity evolving in the field of conservation biology and by criticism to unbridled economic growth. We discuss convergences and divergences between authors and organizations inside and across the different generations and consider the political contexts in which they operated.

PROTECTION OF NATURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Richard Grove analyzed environmental concerns in texts written by European colonial administrators, dating back to the 1700s.³ Warren Dean and José Augusto Pádua (2002) noted the same concerns among Portuguese and Brazilian officials, travelers and scientists visiting or residing in Brazil in the late 18th and 19th centuries.⁴ We do not deal with them here, but they can be considered "pioneers" of the type of reflection that we examine. In other texts we studied the ideas and actions of a small group of scientists employed in several Brazilian institutions during Brazil's so-called First

³ Richard H. Grove. *Green imperialism: colonial expansion, tropical islands edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴ Warren Dean. *With broadax and firebrand: the destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); José Augusto Pádua. *Um sopro de destruição: pensamento político e crítica ambiental no Brasil escravista (1786-1888)* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2002).

Republic (1889–1930).⁵ We also examined how Alberto Torres (1865–1917), an essayist and politician from Rio de Janeiro who associated the idea of a strong government with the imperative of safeguarding the country’s natural resources.

Even before the First Republic, the *Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro* – MNRJ (National Museum of Rio de Janeiro), Brazil’s oldest scientific institution, had a long history of studying the natural world. Many members of an early 20th century generation concerned with Brazilian fauna, flora and natural resources worked there. They helped build a mindset aimed at protecting nature. We can mention Cândido de Mello Leitão (1886–1948), Edgar Roquette-Pinto (1884–1954) and his son Paulo Roquette-Pinto (1909–1974), Bertha Lutz (1894–1976), Heloísa Alberto Torres (1895–1977), Armando Magalhães Corrêa (1889–1944) and Alberto José Sampaio (1881–1946). There was also Frederico Carlos Hoehne (1882–1959), who started his career at the MNRJ but blossomed professionally in the state of São Paulo as a researcher of Brazil’s flora.⁶

This generation worked basically from the 1920s to the 1940s. It achieved relative success and influenced the development of Brazil’s first laws and policies aimed at protecting nature – such as the Forest Code, the Water and Mines Code, the Hunting and Fishing Code (all from 1934) and the Inspection of Artistic and Scientific Expeditions Code (1933). Several government agencies were created or renewed to enforce these regulations – among them were the National Department of Mineral Production, the National Department of Water and Electricity and the Federal Forest Service. Furthermore, the 1934 Constitution required central and state governments to protect “natural beauties” and “monuments of historical or artistic value”. A few years later, Brazil created its first national parks: Itatiaia, in 1937, Serra dos Órgãos and Iguaçu, both in 1939.⁷

⁵ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366.

⁶ Warren Dean. *With broadax and firebrand: the destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366.

⁷ Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros. *Parques nacionais do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Agricultura, 1952); Warren Dean. *With broadax and firebrand: the destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); José Augusto Drummond; Ana Flávia Barros-Platiau. “Brazilian environmental laws and policies, 1934–2002: a critical overview,” *Law & Policy*, 28, 1 (January 2006): p. 83-108; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009).

This first generation of nature protectors was influenced by ideas put forward in the First Republic. The Brazilian political-intellectual scenario in the early 1920s through the 1940s was one of intense nationalism and nation building efforts, allied with a desire to modernize society and public institutions. Several topics were intensely debated: labor, industry, public education, public health, the legal-institutional framework, cultural manifestations, the historical heritage, and nature protection.⁸

In the matter of nature protection, this generation of scientists, intellectuals and civil servants managed to influence relevant policies. This happened because they connected their concerns about nature protection to the ideas of nation building and a renewed national identity. They joined arguments based on scientific knowledge of the natural world with the idea that the natural world should be conserved for economic and aesthetic reasons.⁹

The First Brazilian Conference on Nature Protection, the first event of its kind in Brazil, occurred between April 8 and 15, 1934, in Rio de Janeiro. It revealed that a concern and a mode of thinking about nature protection was growing in civil society organizations and public institutions. The meeting was organized by the *Sociedade dos Amigos das Árvores* (Brazilian Arbor Society), with strong support from the MNRJ. Participating institutions and groups included The Brazilian Association for Education, the Brazilian Federation for Feminine Progress, the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene, the Brazilian Association of Pharmacists, the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, the Historical Institute of Ouro Preto, Brazil's Historical and Geographical Institute, the Society of the Friends of Alberto Torres, the Tijuca Tennis-Club, the National Music Institute, the Rio de Janeiro Association of Commerce Employees, and the Fluminense Society of Surgical Medicine. The meeting was sponsored by the president Getúlio Vargas.¹⁰

The event showed that nature protection had gained visibility in public opinion. It revealed the existence of pressure in favor of effective government policies.

⁸ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009).

⁹ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009).

¹⁰ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009);

Participants praised the aforementioned new codes. Two major arguments in favor of protecting nature appeared in conference papers and debates: (i) the natural world was valued as a set of economic resources to be used rationally; and ii) it was also an object worthy of respect and aesthetic enjoyment. These arguments converged and combined into an unwritten project based on nationalist, esthetic and scientific values (FRANCO and DRUMMOND, 2009; DUARTE, 2010).¹¹

Concerns about the natural world were recorded in many countries. Brazilians who worried about nature protection and defended the wise use of resources followed as much as they could what was happening in other countries in the early decades of the 20th century. These Brazilians learned about concepts such as conservation, preservation and protection but used them interchangeably, to express different concerns with nature. In the United States of America (USA), for example, these concepts followed their own trajectories. The concept of conservation took hold near the end of the 19th century and became common during the 20th century. Initially it was linked to concerns with both the rational use of natural resources and the strict preservation of wild nature (wilderness). In Europe, during the 19th century and until the mid-20th century, the concept of conservation was related more to the rational use of natural resources, while concerns with wild flora and fauna appeared under the guise of protection or preservation of nature.¹²

In the USA, after several developments, there was a rift between the strictest concepts of conservation, focused on preserving wild nature, and a looser and more pragmatic concept open to the rational use of natural resources. The North American concept of national parks, for example, dear to those who advocated stricter conservation, spread widely around the world. The creation of Yellowstone National Park is a widely considered a milestone for the creation of modern protected areas. It resulted from the ideas and activism of writers and defenders of “wild” areas, such as

¹¹ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); Regina Horta Duarte. *A biologia militante: o Museu Nacional, especialização científica, divulgação do conhecimento e práticas políticas no Brasil, 1926 – 1945* (Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2010).

¹² Juliana Capra Maia; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. *O homem, a mata e o beija-flor: Augusto Ruschi e a conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: Instituto Nacional da Mata Atlântica / Comunicação Impressa, 2021); Nathália Kneipp Sena. *Conservação da natureza em interface com a atuação da UICN (1947-2016)* (Universidade de Brasília. Ph. D. dissertation, 2018); Roderick Frazier Nash. *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Curt Meine. *Aldo Leopold: his life and work* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Donald Worster. *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Donald Worster. *A passion for nature: the life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Donald Worster. *Shrinking the Earth: the rise and decline of American abundance* (London: Oxford University Press, 2016); John McCormick. *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991).

George Catlin (1796–1872), Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) and George Perkins Marsh (1801–1882), motivated by both discoveries in biology and philosophical and esthetic arguments taken from Romantic ideals. They defended the park based on the need to protect its monumental features from private control and to guarantee public visitation and enjoyment of these features by the general population. Parks were conceived as public areas closed to colonization and productive activities. This was an anthropocentric point of view, distinct from the notion of nature or wilderness areas having intrinsic value. This notion of intrinsic value was later spread mainly by John Muir (1838–1914) and the movement he helped build during the struggle that led to the creation of Yosemite National Park. Encouraged by this success, Muir helped found, in 1892, the Sierra Club, a pioneering civil organization rooted in California which created branches in other states and gathered substantial numbers of card-carrying members.¹³

A quite different strand of North American conservationists defended the rational exploitation of resources, mainly soils, forests, minerals and water. Their famous champion was Gifford Pinchot (1865–1946), who studied forestry in France and pioneered forest management in public lands in the USA. He coined his own version of the word conservation and stated its goals in three basic principles: a) development based on the efficient use of natural resources by the present generation; b) waste prevention, to guarantee the fulfillment of the needs of future generations; and c) use of resources for the benefit of the general population. He summarized these principles in his famous own words: “Conservation is the fore-sighted utilization, preservation and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands and minerals, for the greatest good for the greatest numbers of people for the longest time”.¹⁴

Although Muir and Pinchot established bonds of friendship and worked together on selected conservation issues, the relationship between them was shaken by the controversy over the construction of the dam that flooded the Hetch Hetchy valley, inside Yosemite National Park. The dam, built to supply water to the city of San

¹³ Roderick Frazier Nash. *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Curt Meine. *Aldo Leopold: his life and work* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Donald Worster. *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Donald Worster. *A passion for nature: the life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); John McCormick. *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Gifford Pinchot. *The Fight for conservation* (New York: Doubleday, 1910), p. 48.

Francisco, split the US nature conservation movement. Muir and his followers were adamantly against the dam and suggested alternative sites for it, while Pinchot supported it. He understood that human needs should prevail over Muir's arguments in favor of the esthetics of nature.¹⁵

Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), US president between 1901 and 1909, admired the utilitarianism of Pinchot, head of the US Forest Service and his direct adviser, and followed his guidelines. He created many national forests for timber production, grazing, mining and other productive activities. But Roosevelt sympathized also with Muir. He added land to the Yosemite National Park and created numerous forest reserves, national monuments, and national parks which were not subject to Pinchot's utilitarian principles.¹⁶

Brazilians concerned with protecting nature were familiar with North American practices and ideas related to national parks and forestry. Preservation of wild areas and the rational use of natural resources were discussed in the aforementioned 1934 conference. In the following years, contrary to what happened in the USA, preservation and conservation merged into a single vision. Conference participants criticized the destruction of nature and cited international meetings and protection laws as examples of attempts to avoid such destruction. However, the ideas of nature protection expressed in the event joined the preservation of natural beauty with the wise use of natural resources.

As mentioned earlier, the 1920–1940 generation used the concepts of protection, conservation and preservation interchangeably, indicating that they thought nature should be protected as (i) a set of resources to be rationally exploited in the interests of present and future generations and as (ii) a biological endowment to

¹⁵ Juliana Capra Maia; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. *O homem, a mata e o beija-flor: Augusto Ruschi e a conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: Instituto Nacional da Mata Atlântica / Comunicação Impressa, 2021); Roderick Frazier Nash. *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Curt Meine. *Aldo Leopold: his life and work* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Donald Worster. *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Donald Worster. *A passion for nature: the life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Donald Worster. *Shrinking the Earth: the rise and decline of American abundance* (London: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁶ Roderick Frazier Nash. *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Curt Meine. *Aldo Leopold: his life and work* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010); Donald Worster. *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Donald Worster. *A passion for nature: the life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Donald Worster. *Shrinking the Earth: the rise and decline of American abundance* (London: Oxford University Press, 2016) John McCormick. *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991); John D. Leshy *Our Common ground – a history of America's public lands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

be researched and contemplated. Utilitarian arguments coexisted in harmony with aesthetic ones, and they helped build a larger project that linked nature to the construction of Brazil's national identity.¹⁷

Four characters stood out in this generation of Brazilian defenders of nature. Alberto José Sampaio, a botanist, professor at the MNRJ, was one of Brazil's most important botanists. He devoted himself to the studies of taxonomy and phytogeography. He was a member of the committee that drafted the 1934 Forest Code, representing the MNRJ. He defended the creation of the Federal Forest Service (SFF), in charge of research, control and implementation of productive forests and responsible for the creation of parks and reserves. He also wrote a landmark description and mapping of all Brazilian floral formations, identifying their relationships with different configurations of climate and soil and discussing the different manners of human encroachment in these formations. He formulated a broad nation building project, motivated by scientific, aesthetic, economic and social objectives. This project sought to integrate humans with the natural world, through education focused on the rational use of natural resources, and to stimulate ethical values, respect and love for nature. He understood that science had the role of supporting the protection of nature.¹⁸

Armando Magalhães Corrêa was a sculptor, graphic artist, and writer, as well as a self-taught naturalist. His knowledge of natural history and the ability to produce images of plants, animals and landscapes marked his scientific work at the MNRJ and his role in teaching art at the *Escola de Belas Artes do Rio de Janeiro* (ENBA), Brazil's major art school. At the MNRJ he became celebrated as a scientific illustrator of reports and articles. Corrêa's perspective on nature protection appears in his unique book, published in the 1930s, entitled *O Sertão Carioca* (loosely translated as "The Backlands of Rio"). He wished to draw attention to the lack of public policies in favor of the people

¹⁷ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366.

¹⁸ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366.

living in Brazil's backlands. Counterintuitively, though, he chose to study a "backland" located right on the outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the national capital and Brazil's largest city at the time. Based on detailed fieldwork, Corrêa described the natural environment and the toil of its poorest inhabitants (fishermen, hunters, gatherers, small farmers, artisans, lumberjacks, charcoal producers, mule troopers etc.) of this unsuspected backland. Corrêa maintained that their ill-advised uses of natural resources threatened their very way of life and sustained that these unwise uses were caused by the lack of public policies focused on rural dwellers. He advocated regulations that would guarantee the survival of Brazilian nature, that he considered to be the richest on the planet. For him, national parks should protect nature that supported people and were a source of scientific knowledge, aesthetic appreciation, and national pride and identity. He argued that Brazilian identity should be based on an original political project that considered the specificities of the country's natural endowment and gave proper value to all Brazilians, especially the *sertanejos* (inhabitants of the backlands), who lived in direct contact with nature.¹⁹

The zoologist Cândido de Mello Leitão was a professor at the MNRJ. He studied ecology, arachnids, and the geographical distribution of animals. He wrote a rich history of biology in Brazil, linking the country's history to its natural features and endowment. He defended investments in science, the appreciation of nature and its relation to the country's national identity. He extolled the diversity of life forms. He was very sensitive to the aesthetic aspects of his activity. He argued that biology should understand how nature works in order for people to make better use of it but held that science could also teach us to admire nature's charms and harmonies. He criticized the pragmatism and immediacy of prevailing behaviors, which encouraged the destruction of the natural heritage. Leitão called for a change in habits, to which the authorities should contribute by educating, investing in scientific research, and guiding economic production. He had a remarkable participation in the drafting of the 1933 Hunting and Fishing Code. He was in tune with scientific findings in zoology and with international movements for the protection of nature. In the same year he died, 1948, he represented

¹⁹José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366.

the Brazilian government at the founding conference of the International Union for the Protection of Nature (UIPN).²⁰

Frederico Carlos Hoehne was a self-taught botanist, biogeographer and ecologist. He toured all Brazilian regions and collected a wealth of materials for herbariums and collections. His scientific output achieved national and international recognition as a leading authority on orchids and bromeliads. He wrote *Flora Brasílica*, an extensive inventory of the Brazilian flora. Hoehne had a short appointment at the MNRJ, but moved to São Paulo, where he built a career linked to a modest state botany office that, through his efforts, evolved into the state's powerful Botanical Institute and its Botanical Garden. He was concerned with the preservation of species and their diversity and wrote on many topics: forest reserves and experimental biological stations; tree planting in streets, urban parks, and roads; reforestation with native species; and protection of fauna and flora. He advocated for the wise use of natural resources, as well as for aesthetic enjoyment and scientific research on nature. In his long field trips, he identified places that should be used for agriculture and others that should be preserved. He suggested ways to make progress less destructive. His perception of the natural world was based on a moral feeling that articulated utility and aesthetics.²¹

These four men linked specific concerns with nature to a broader concept of nature as the base of Brazil's identity. They achieved a degree of support and political influence, despite the fact that all of them had a partially Romantic appreciation of nature, particularly Hoehne. The closest that original Brazilian defenders of nature got to Muir's stricter concept of nature protection came from Henrique Luís Roessler (1896-1963), although his influence was mostly regional (Southern Brazil). He criticized predatory hunting and fishing, deforestation and destructive uses of water resources and dedicated himself to educating rural people about the value of nature. However, in the

²⁰ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333-366; Regina Horta Duarte. *A biologia militante: o Museu Nacional, especialização científica, divulgação do conhecimento e práticas políticas no Brasil, 1926 - 1945* (Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2010).

²¹ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - Anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *história ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333-366; Warren Dean. *With broadax and firebrand: the destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

broader context of Brazilian society, the “religion” of developmentalism prevailed, prioritizing economic growth as all costs, even if the cost was the destruction of nature. These original thinkers learned hard lessons: Science was not easily considered in the process of “reorganizing” Brazil and nature was scantily valued as a potential component of “national identity”.²²

THE BRAZILIAN FOUNDATION FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

The Brazilian Foundation for the Conservation of Nature (FBCN), created in 1958, in Rio de Janeiro, was an NGO that became the meeting point of a new generation of defenders of nature. This new generation had connections with Hoehne, Mello Leitão, Sampaio and Corrêa, by studying and working with them. As those four all died in the 1940s, the newcomers distinguished themselves by creating and acting through an influential and long lasting non-governmental organization. Until its disbandment in the early 1990s, this civil organization consolidated and disseminated conservation concerns in Brazil. It defined concepts that were translated into actions and policies aimed at the preservation of natural areas, the protection of faunal and floral species and the wise use of natural resources.²³

To be true, since the 1930s there had been a series of environmental NGOs in Brazil, such as the Brazilian Arbor Society, founded in 1931 by Sampaio; the Society of Friends of Flora Brasílica, founded in 1939 by Hoehne; the São Paulo Fauna and Flora Defense Association (ADEFLORA), founded in 1956 by Paulo Nogueira-Neto (1922-2019), Lauro Pereira Travassos Filho (1918-1989) and José Carlos Reis de Magalhães (1921-2002), which later changed its name to the São Paulo Environmental Defense Association (ADEMASP); the Union for the Protection of Nature (UPN), founded in 1955 in the state of Rio Grande do Sul by Henrique Luís Roessler (1896-1963), who articulated

²² José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - Anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333-366; Warren Dean. *With broadax and firebrand: the destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Regina Horta Duarte. *A biologia militante: o Museu Nacional, especialização científica, divulgação do conhecimento e práticas políticas no Brasil, 1926 - 1945* (Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2010); Elenita Malta Pereira. *Roessler - o homem que amava a natureza* (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Oikos, 2013).

²³ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña - HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): História das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil. In: Ayelen Dichdji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205.

a movement initiated by Father Balduino Rambo (1906–1961).²⁴ The soil scientist, land surveyor, lawyer, and researcher Augusto Ruschi (1915–1986) created, in 1954, the Brazilian Society for the Protection of Nature (SBPN), modeled on the UIPN. Ruschi allowed the FBCN to adopt SBPN statutes and thus Ruschi's original organization blended with FBCN.²⁵

The founders of the FBCN had many backgrounds – politicians, scientists, journalists, writers, soil scientists, biologists etc.. They lived and worked mostly in Rio de Janeiro. The group included Luiz Hermann Filho (1882–1977), Eurico de Oliveira Santos (1883–1968), Artur de Miranda Bastos (1900–1968), Luiz Simões Lopes (1901–1994), Heitor Grillo (1902–1971), Jerônimo Coimbra Bueno (1910–1996), Victor Abdennur Farah (1905–1967), Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros (1916–1997), David de Azambuja (1917–2007), Harold Edgard Strang (1921–2007), Fernando Segadas Vianna (1928–2010), Rosalvo de Magalhães (1930–2005), Fuad Atala (1933–2019), Rossini Pinto (1937–1985), Francisco Carlos Iglésias de Lima; Álvaro Silveira Filho; Bertha Lutz (1894–1976), Augusto Ruschi and Antenor Rangel Filho.

Later, others joined the NGO and had important roles in the organization – José Piquet Carneiro (1912–1974), José Cândido de Melo Carvalho (1914–1994), Luiz Emygdio de Mello Filho (1914–2002), Helmut Sick (1910–1991), Álvaro Coutinho Aguirre (1899–1987), Ademar Coimbra-Filho (1924–2016), Alceo Magnanini (1925–2022), Fernando Dias de Ávila Pires (1933–), José de Paula de Lanna Sobrinho, Carlos Manes Bandeira (---- - 1993), Paulo Nogueira-Neto, José Luiz Belart (1906–1980), Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara (1924–2014) and Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua (1943–).²⁶

²⁴ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil - anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2009); Teresa Urban. *Missão (quase) impossível - Aventuras e desventuras do movimento ambientalista no Brasil* (São Paulo: Peirópolis, 2001); Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - relembando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil (1998)* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2011); Paulo Nogueira Neto. *Uma trajetória ambientalista: diário de Paulo Nogueira-Neto* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 2010); Daniel Porciuncula Prado. *A figueira e o machado: uma história das raízes do ambientalismo no Sul do Brasil e a crítica ambiental de Henrique Roessler* (Rio Grande: FURG, 2011); Elenita Malta Pereira. *Roessler: O homem que amava a natureza* (São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2013).

²⁵ Alyne dos Santos Gonçalves. *A militância ambiental de Augusto Ruschi: práticas científicas e estratégias políticas para a conservação da natureza no Brasil (1937-1986)* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: INMA / Comunicação Impressa, 2021); Juliana Capra Maia; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. *O homem, a mata e o beija-flor: Augusto Ruschi e a conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: INMA / Comunicação Impressa, 2021); John McCormick. *Reclaiming paradise* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991); Nathália Kneipp Sena. *Conservação da natureza em interface com a atuação da UICN (1947-2016)*. (Universidade de Brasília. Ph. D. dissertation, 2018).

²⁶ FBCN. *Boletim FBCN*, Vol. 1, 1966; *Correio da Manhã*, September 10, de 1958; *Correio da Manhã*. May 31 1959a; *Correio da Manhã*. July, 1959b; *Correio da Manhã*, September 10, 1959c; Cristina Xavier de Almeida Borges. *Por trás do verde: discurso e prática de uma ONG - o caso da Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza*. Master's Thesis (Universidade Federal de Viçosa, 1995); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - relembando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Curitiba:

The FBCN had a regularly published newsletter (*Boletim FBCN*), a novelty for Brazilian environmental NGOs. Its first issue, in 1966, explained that the organization was created “by a group of idealists determined to face the growing challenge that the uncontrolled use of natural resources posed to the planning and execution capability of our people”. Its aim was “to promote national action in favor of natural resources conservation and of the setting aside of areas for nature protection”. The goals were to create parks, reserves, monuments and such, with attention given to rare or endangered species; to promote cooperation between governments and national, foreign, and international organizations interested in the conservation of nature and natural resources; to carry out studies about conservation; to disseminate conservationist knowledge (FBCN, 1966, p. 2). The FBCN intended specifically to challenge the strong developmentalist goals of the government of president Juscelino Kubitschek (whose term covered the period 1956-1961). Its founders were concerned with Kubitschek’s economic priorities of producing and exporting as much as possible, a goal that would undermine all efforts to move towards the rational use of natural resources.²⁷

The FBCN was not very active in the political arena during its first years. Its first president, from 1958 to 1960, was Luiz Hernanny Filho, followed by Jerônimo Coimbra Bueno (a Senator), from 1960 to 1966. Even so, the FBCN made its mark in some decisions. Bueno, for example, was close to President Kubitschek, while Abdennur Farah was a personal friend of Jânio Quadros, who succeeded Kubitschek as president in 1961. These two FBCN founders are credited with spurring both presidents to create 11 national parks between 1959 and 1961 (Aparados da Serra, Araguaia, Ubajara, Brasília, Caparaó, Chapada dos Veadeiros, Emas, Monte Pascoal, São Joaquim, Sete Cidades and Tijuca) and a national forest (Caxiuanã). Additionally, the 1965 law that instituted the

Editora UFPR, 2011); Alyne dos Santos Gonçalves. *A militância ambiental de Augusto Ruschi: práticas científicas e estratégias políticas para a conservação da natureza no Brasil (1937-1986)* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: INMA / Comunicação Impressa, 2021); Juliana Capra Maia; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. *O homem, a mata e o beija-flor: Augusto Ruschi e a conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Santa Teresa, Espírito Santo: INMA / Comunicação Impressa, 2021).

²⁷ Cristina Xavier de Almeida Borges. *Por trás do verde: discurso e prática de uma ONG - o caso da Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza*. Master's Thesis (Universidade Federal de Viçosa, 1995); Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - relembando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil (1998)* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2011); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): história das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil, In: Ayelen Dichji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205.

new Forest Code (Law nº 4.771, 09/15/1965) included contributions by FBCN members, specially concerning protected areas. Farah, as president of the Federal Forestry Council, participated in several rounds of the drafting the bill; Bertha Lutz and Alceo Magnanini also worked on particulars of the code.²⁸

Between 1966 and 1969, during the tenure of José Cândido de Melo Carvalho, a MNRJ scientist trained in entomology, the FBCN revised its organization and became more active. It started to engage in projects and publish its newsletter. In 1968, the Symposium on Conservation of Nature and Restoration of the Natural Environment took place in Rio de Janeiro, organized by the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, with the support of the FBCN and the newly created Brazilian Institute for Forest Development (IBDF). It was the first national conservation meeting held in Brazil since the aforementioned 1934 conference. It marked the beginning of a long collaboration between the FBCN and the IBDF, which had inherited the scanty conservation mandates spread across various offices of the Ministry of Agriculture. Mainly as a result of this partnership with the IBDF, the FBCN gained access to resources that allowed it to engage in several conservation projects and to achieve an enduring influence over federal environmental policies.²⁹ We found no detailed or consolidated information about how much money the IBDF transferred to the FBCN over the following years. However, by participating in the drafting of IBDF's new protected area policy and in the drafting of many of the first park management plans, it is fair to assume that no other Brazilian NGO received more funds from the federal government than the FBCN in the 1970s and 1980s.

This 1968 meeting addressed global environmental issues, such as protecting endangered species, wildlife censuses in tropical regions, environmental legislation and its enforcement, restoration of rural landscapes, urban pollution, national parks and

²⁸ Cristina Xavier de Almeida Borges. *Por trás do verde: discurso e prática de uma ONG - o caso da Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza*. Master's Thesis (Universidade Federal de Viçosa, 1995); Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - Relembrando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2011); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature Protection: the FBCN and Conservation Initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; Marcia Helena Lopes; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. O Parque Nacional do Araguaia: dilemas entre o desenvolvimento regional e a conservação da natureza. *Revista de História Regional*, 25, 2 (2020), p. 357–382, 2020; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): história das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil. In: Ayelen Dichdji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205; Filipe Oliveira da Silva. O Conselho Florestal Federal: um parecer de sua configuração institucional (1934-1967). *HALAC – Historia Ambiental, Latinoamericana y Caribeña*, 7, 2 (2017), p. 101-129.

²⁹ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367.

reserves, captive breeding of Brazilian faunal species, the role of zoos in preserving endangered species, conservation education, natural resource management, tropical forests and wetlands, neotropical primates, public land uses, and human impacts on nature. Carvalho used his position as FBCN president to propose the concept of conservation as the preservation of the living world, of humans' natural environment and of renewable natural resources. He also defended natural beauty as a source of inspiration for spiritual life.³⁰

During Carvalho's tenure, the FBCN adopted an organizational structure similar to the IUCN's - a Managing Council and five Technical Committees working under it (Education; Ecology; National Parks and Reserves; Rare or Endangered Species; and Legislation). Although it held on to its goal of defending the rational use of natural resources and their renewal for future generations, the FBCN ended up focusing on the creation of protected areas and the preservation of endangered species.³¹

Some FBCN members held important governmental posts. Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua and Paulo Nogueira-Neto, for example, held strong positions in the federal government and participated in international forums on nature conservation. Pádua headed the IBDF's National Parks and Reserves Department from 1968 to 1982 and returned to the agency in 1985 as its executive director. In 1992, she became president of the Brazilian Institute for the Environment (IBAMA), the successor agency of the IBDF. Nogueira-Neto headed the high-echelon agency called Special Secretariat for the Environment (SEMA) from 1974 to 1986, answering directly to the office of the president of Brazil. The two participated in IUCN commissions. In 1982 they both received the J. Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize, granted by the WWF to outstanding conservation activists. Magnanini was a high-ranking staff of the Ministry of Agriculture.³²

³⁰ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña* – HALAC, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): História das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil In: Ayelen Dichdji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205.

³¹ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña* – HALAC, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367.

³² José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña* – HALAC, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; Paulo Nogueira Neto. *Uma trajetória ambientalista: diário de Paulo Nogueira-Neto* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 2010).

The FBCN worked regularly with both the IBDF and SEMA. This guaranteed the continuity and expansion of its operations. It also had a partnership with the CNPq (Brazil's National Research Council). In addition, the assistance of international NGOs, such as the WWF and The Nature Conservancy, helped the FBCN execute important projects, such as the one that saved the golden lion tamarin from extinction, led by FBCN member Ademar Coimbra-Filho, a world-renowned primatologist.³³

The FBCN had its most prolific run during the 23 years between 1966 and 1989. It had around 4,000 card-carrying and dues-paying members. It conducted projects for the conservation of rare or endangered species, for the creation of several types of protected areas, and for environmental education. We have not found records showing that FBCN's high-ranking members or rank-and-file supporters engaged systematically in public outreach programs, although many of its publications probably informed many such programs, given the scarcity of conservation texts published in Portuguese at the time. The FBCN managed the fieldwork and the drafting of the first management plans for Brazilian protected areas and organized a small but specialized library focused on conservation. The plans came out of the FBCN's participation in a major overhaul of Brazilian protected areas policy which started in 1979 and greatly expanded the country's protected acreage.³⁴

The FBCN put out a fair amount of publications, such as educational materials, booklets, posters and reports. The most important was the FBCN Newsletter (*Boletim Informativo FBCN*), published annually between 1966 and 1989. In 1978 it changed its title to *Boletim FBCN*. It was more than a newsletter, as it contained research articles, reviews, opinion pieces, summaries of project reports, editorials, interviews and news. It came close to being the first Brazilian scientific journal focused on nature conservation. In 1977 the NGO started to publish a spin-off publication entitled *Informativo FBCN*, a bi-monthly or quarterly production, more akin to a newsletter. It

³³ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature Protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Brazilian wildlife: history, threats, and opportunities. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Latin American History*, p. 1–31, 2019; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): história das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil. In: Ayelen Dichjji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205.
³⁴ José Augusto Drummond. From randomness to planning – the 1979 plan for Brazilian national parks. In: Adrian Howkins; Jared Orsi; Mark Fiege (Org.). *National parks beyond the nation: global perspectives on "America's Best Idea"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), p. 210-234.

contained mostly news, short notes, internal FBCN reports and quick editorial comments.

The FBCN stimulated the creation of at least eleven conservation groups in several states. Some evolved into independent NGOs, such as the Gaúcha Association for the Protection of the Natural Environment (Agapan), founded in 1971 by Augusto Carneiro (1922-2014), Hilda Zimmermann (1923-2012), Alfredo Gui Ferreira and José Lutzemberger (1926-2012); Biodiversitas, founded in 1989, in Belo Horizonte, by Ângelo Machado (1934-), Célio Vale (1933-), Ilmar Bastos (1956-2012), Hugo Werneck (1919-2008), Ibsen Gusmão Câmara, Gustavo Fonseca (1956-2022) and Anthony Rylands (1950-); and Funatura, founded in 1986 by Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua, in Brasília.³⁵

When ECO-92 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) was held in Rio de Janeiro, in June of 1992, FBCN tried to take the lead of Brazilian environmental NGOs participating in the event. However, at this point its leadership was weakening. One of its problems was lack of funding. With the serious economic crisis experienced by Brazil in the second half of the 1980s, the federal government withdrew support and FBCN activities dwindled. A funding agreement signed in 1988 with the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro and the IBDF proved to be fatal for the FBCN. It inadvertently assumed responsibility for workers' benefits in one of its last projects and plunged into a crisis when employees sued it in labor courts. It still managed to engage in joint activities with IBAMA, with a major electricity utility (*Centrais Elétricas de Furnas*), with international NGOs and with some municipalities of the state of Rio de Janeiro, but the fines imposed by labor courts undercut its dynamism. The FBCN lost its headquarters, office equipment and even its prized library. Shortly after 1992 it disbanded.³⁶

³⁵ José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature Protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Brazilian wildlife: history, threats, and opportunities. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Latin American History*, p. 1-31, 2019; José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): história das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil. In: Ayelen Dichdji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205; Elenita Malta Pereira. Naturismo, ética e ecologia na proteção à natureza: A fundação da AGAPAN (1971). In: José Augusto Drummond; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Vivian da Silva Braz (Org.). *História ambiental 3: Natureza, sociedade, fronteira* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2020), p. 279-303; Gabriel Schunk Pereira. *Ciência, política e biodiversidade: o Livro Vermelho das espécies ameaçadas de extinção da fauna de Minas Gerais (1989-1998)* (Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), 2021.

³⁶ Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - relembrando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2011); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature Protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367.

The emergence of new environmental NGOs in the mid and late 1980s changed the context in which the FBCN had been a leader for two decades. FBCN members considered the appearance of these organizations in a positive light, as they added voices and power to the demands for nature conservation. However, there was the downside of intensified competition for scarce resources. At the same time, some conservation NGOs gained autonomy in relation to the FBCN (including some of the ones that the FBCN itself had spawned) and adopted a professionalized status, such as the aforementioned Biodiversitas and Funatura. They were able to raise their own funding and engaged in new partnerships. Another new development was the presence of foreign NGOs, such as the WWF, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International and Greenpeace, all of which opened offices in Brazil and used their experience to fund and execute their own projects. The FBCN still held a seat in the powerful CONAMA (National Council for the Environment).³⁷ However, its activities became increasingly local and regional.³⁸

In addition to the increasing competition of other conservationist NGOs, the FBCN suffered with the emergence in the mid-1980s of socioenvironmental organizations and movements. They added a new, more politicized and ideological meaning to environmental issues. The FBCN had to deal with accusations of being conservative, focused on ecological and preservation issues. Conflicts over concepts and projects created tensions and divisions in the expanding and increasingly diversified Brazilian environmental movement. It will be very difficult for any single environmental NGO to achieve the primacy that the FBCN had for about two decades.

THE DEBATE BETWEEN CONSERVATIONISTS AND SOCIOENVIRONMENTALISTS

In the late 1980s the Brazilian environmental movement experienced a serious split. On the one hand, there were conservationist groups, of which the FBCN was a player and a leader. On the other hand, a host of socioenvironmental groups emerged.

³⁷ This national council, created in the mid-1980s, had top-level responsibility for deciding over a wide range of environmental policy matters. It was formed by several dozen representatives of public agencies, NGOs, citizens' groups, businesses, media and scientists. Over the years it issued hundreds of compelling ordinances that created rulings or clarified matters of law.

³⁸ Teresa Urban. *Saudade do Matão - relebrando a história da conservação da natureza no Brasil* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2011); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature Protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña* – HALAC, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367.

Tensions between the two groups became clear in the preparations for and in the events of ECO-92, but they intensified during the lengthy process (1990 to 2000) of what became the National Law of the Conservation Units System - SNUC (Law N° 9,985, July 18, 2000), which redefined the entire policy of protected areas.

The split was caused by a quite controversial issue - the presence of human populations within protected areas. The issue was not born in Brazil, and it remains today as a matter of enduring divisions among environmentalists all over the world. After a decade of congressional and public opinion debates, the law reached a compromise that seemed to put an end to the divide. It created two distinct groups of protected areas: (i) those that, like national parks and biological reserves, were defined as “fully protected”, which excluded resident or transient human populations and productive activities; and (ii) those slated for “sustainable use”, like national forests and extractive reserves, which admitted human residents and their productive activities. However, conservationists and socioenvironmentalists continued to clash about the specifics of protected area policies and about other environmental policies.³⁹

However, the deeper explanation for this split is that socioenvironmentalist groups, despite internal differences among them, defend concepts taken from the fields of sustainable development, social justice and even ecosocialism. In general, they sustain that conservationists care less about the social conditions of people affected by environmental policies and more about saving natural components for the sake of scientific research, suggesting that conservationists care exclusively about landscapes, animals and plants - a quite unfair depiction. The concerns of socioenvironmentalists with sustainability, indigenous peoples and traditional populations lead to demands for policies that go beyond conserving nature - such demands border on encompassing social reforms that lay outside the scope of environmental issues. They argue that environmental policies should be subordinated to such reforms. This stance fails to admit that the conservation of nature has its own reformist implications in social

³⁹ Mauricio Mercadante. Uma década de debate e negociação: a história da elaboração da Lei do SNUC. In: Antônio Herman Benjamin (Org.). *Direito ambiental das áreas protegidas* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense, 2001); José Augusto Drummond; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; Daniela de Oliveira. Uma análise sobre a história e a situação das unidades de conservação no Brasil. In: Roseli Senna Ganem (Org.). *Conservação da biodiversidade: legislação e políticas públicas*. (Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2010); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña - HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; Kathryn Hochstetler; Margaret E. Keck. *Greening Brazil: environmental activism in state and society* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007).

behavior and political structure. Socioenvironmentalists also devalue a crucial and innovative point of modern conservation, i. e., the protection of biodiversity for its intrinsic value, which implies a broader ethical perspective.⁴⁰

The protracted debate about the SNUC bill occupied the entire decade of the 1990s and ignited the differences among conservationists and socioenvironmentalists. The effort to define criteria for creating and managing distinct categories of protected areas had begun more than a decade earlier, with the 1979 Plan for the Protected Areas in Brazil System. This was the title of an all important IBDF internal working document. It was led by Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua and her team at the IBDF, with a strong FBCN participation. Once put into effect, in 1979, it immediately affected Brazil's protected areas policy – it dramatically increased the numbers of protected lands and the area placed under protection; most of these new units were of the types that the SNUC law would later consider “fully protected”, an important detail that socioenvironmentalists would pick up on during the 1990s in their quest for socially targeted protected areas. However, the 1979 plan had strong points – it created protected areas in all regions and biomes, modernized the criteria for their creation and location, supported the drafting of their first management plans, made progress in the chronic problem of securing their status of publicly owned lands and laid the foundations for their comprehensive management.

As mentioned above, the last version of the SNUC law struck a balance between the goals of the two environmental camps, by defining two distinct sets of protected areas – fully protected (to appease conservationists) and sustainable use (to appease socioenvironmentalists). This reflected the clash of the two camps. Since the early 1980s, some leftist activists had expanded their concern beyond the strictly social. They founded a Green Party, developed a political ecology viewpoint and endorsed a “brown” agenda (pollution, contamination, workers' health etc.) combined with social justice requirements. They gained strength in the national political scene. They sustained that

⁴⁰ José Augusto Drummond; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; Daniela de Oliveira. Uma análise sobre a história e a situação das unidades de conservação no Brasil. In: Roseli Senna Ganem (Org.). *Conservação da biodiversidade: legislação e políticas públicas*. (Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2010); José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992. *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338-367; Kathryn Hochstetler; Margaret E. Keck. *Greening Brazil: environmental activism in state and society* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007); José Luiz de Andrade Franco. A Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN): história das áreas protegidas e das espécies ameaçadas de extinção no Brasil. In: Ayelen Dichji; Elenita Malta Pereira (Org.). *Protección de la naturaleza: narrativas y discursos* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021), p. 169-205;

nature conservation should give priority to the roles and needs of social groups who lived “close” to nature, such as indigenous peoples and extractive communities. Socioenvironmentalists downgraded the importance of issues such as biodiversity protection and care for endangered species, i.e., the core of FBCN concerns and goals.

The SNUC law included an innovation that appealed to both camps - the possibility of creating “mosaics” of protected areas, allowing the joint management of neighboring protected areas from both groups. Mosaics also have several technical components: (i) core areas, in which the preservation of biodiversity is of paramount importance; (ii) biological corridors, to maintain ecosystem and gene flows by connecting nuclear areas to each other; (iii) buffer zones, to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and protect against external threats; and (iv) policies aimed at equity and social justice.

Kenton Miller (1939-2011) introduced the strategy of “bioregional management” before the 2000 SNUC law was approved. But the law adopted this strategy, derived from biosphere reserves. Miller argued that there still were opportunities to carry out approaches with a broad regional scope in Brazil, due to the large expanses of biologically rich wild areas and to the need to integrate nature conservation with social development, especially in agricultural frontier areas.⁴¹ This strategy appealed to both conservationists and socioenvironmentalists

The compromise embedded in the SNUC law produced further positive effects. In 2006 indigenous homelands and *quilombola* (maroon) community lands were officially included in the ranks of protected areas and were thus apt to be included in ecosystemic and bioregional environmental policies, including mosaics. This approach had been predicted by Decision V of the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the CBD, held in The Hague, Netherlands, in 2002, based on Miller's aforementioned concept of bioregional management.⁴²

⁴¹ Kenton Miller. *Balancing the scales – guidelines for increasing biodiversity's chances through bioregional management* (Washington D.C.: World Resources Institute, 1996).

⁴² José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Da proteção à natureza à conservação da biodiversidade. In: José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond; Sandro Dutra e Silva; Giovana Galvão Tavares (Org.). *História ambiental: fronteiras, recursos naturais e conservação da natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2012), p. 333–366; José Augusto Drummond; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; Daniela de Oliveira. Uma análise sobre a história e a situação das unidades de conservação no Brasil. In: Roseli Senna Ganem (Org.). *Conservação da biodiversidade: legislação e políticas públicas*. (Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, 2010).

Many scientists, based on findings of the natural sciences, have drawn attention to the ongoing process of mass extinction of species, on a planetary scale. They emphasize that at least five other mass extinction episodes have occurred over the last 400 million years. The last and best known was the one that extinguished dinosaurs and a huge set of species, genera and families, 66 million years ago. The five episodes had natural causes. The current process is different, though, as it derives from the expansion of human populations and activities. Although not caused by cosmic violence, the destructive potential of the current process is proving to be comparable to previous cataclysms. Habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, the shuffling of invasive species and direct pressures (extraction, hunting, fishing, mining, large-scale agriculture and animal husbandry, infrastructure building) seriously threaten biodiversity on a planetary scale. These activities result from human domination of the planet.⁴³

Advances in the natural sciences (ecology, zoology, botany, conservation biology, biogeography, geology, climatology) allow us to understand the fundamentals of biodiversity. The concept is still young, as it emerged in the mid-1980s. It was this understanding that led to the launching, during ECO 92, of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Together with the Climate Convention, also launched at ECO 92, the CBD recognized the need to restrict the intensity and scope of human activities. This position, admittedly difficult to accept by most humans, has been defended by both conservationists and by many socioenvironmentalists, although their strategies do not always converge. For conservationists, what matters most is ensuring the survival of biodiversity by means of protected areas that restrict human uses, such as parks and reserves. This “old school” strategy has proven to be effective in containing the destruction and fragmentation of habitats. On the other hand, socioenvironmentalists place their belief in activities, technologies and modes of territorial occupation characteristic of indigenous societies and selected rural populations. They hold that

⁴³ Edward O. Wilson (Org.). *Biodiversity* (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1988); Elizabeth Kolbert. *The Sixth extinction – an unnatural story* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014); José Luiz de Andrade Franco. O conceito de biodiversidade e a história da biologia da conservação: da preservação da *wilderness* à conservação da biodiversidade. *História*, 32, 2, p. 21–48. 2013.

biodiversity is best protected by traditional ways of using natural resources, which allegedly manage biodiversity sustainably and even create and enrich biodiversity.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that the views of the two groups are not always so discrepant. A good example of the convergence between them is found in the actions of the *Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas* (IPÊ), an NGO created in 1992 by the forester Cláudio Pádua and the educator Suzana Pádua. IPÊ combines the principles of environmental education and conservation biology in projects aimed primarily at the conservation of species and ecosystems. At the same time, IPÊ projects strive to create sustainable production options that lead to the social inclusion of poor rural communities.⁴⁵

Another example comes from the more conservationist approach of the *Fundação Grupo O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza* (FGBPN), founded in 1990 by the businessman Miguel Kringsner and the forester Miguel Milano. It became famous for its ability to fund and/or execute hundreds of biodiversity conservation projects. For 30 years the FGBPN has been funding or directly executing projects aimed at environmental conservation. Over 1,600 initiatives have benefitted more than 500 protected areas and neighboring communities.⁴⁶

Among socioenvironmentalists, the *Instituto Socioambiental* (ISA), created in 1994, has engaged in the mapping of Brazilian sociocultural diversity and its relations with biodiversity. It defends indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* (maroon) communities and traditional populations, seeking to collect and spread their knowledge about the management of natural resources.⁴⁷

Numerous Brazilian NGOs committed to the defense of biodiversity emerged from the 1980s onwards, in the wake of the political democratization that followed the end of the military dictatorship. It is relevant to mention some of them. The *Fundação*

⁴⁴ José Luiz de Andrade Franco. O conceito de biodiversidade e a história da biologia da conservação: da preservação da *wilderness* à conservação da biodiversidade. *História*, 32, 2, p. 21–48. 2013; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; José Augusto Drummond. Nature protection: the FBCN and conservation initiatives in Brazil, 1958–1992". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña – HALAC*, 2, 2 (marzo-agosto 2013): p. 338–367; José Luiz de Andrade Franco; Gilberto Menezes Schittini; Vivian da Silva Braz. História da conservação da natureza e das áreas protegidas: panorama geral. *Historiæ*, 6, 2. p. 233–270. 2015.

⁴⁵ Marcos Sá Corrêa; Manoel Francisco Brito. *Água mole em pedra dura: dez histórias da luta pelo meio ambiente* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2006); Marcos Sá Corrêa; Haroldo Palo Jr. *Sinais da vida: algumas histórias de quem cuida da natureza no Brasil* (São Paulo: Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza, 2005); Gabriela Cabral Resende. *Mico-leão-preto: a história de sucesso na conservação de uma espécie ameaçada* (São Paulo: Matrix, 2014).

⁴⁶ FGBPN. <http://www.fundacaogrupoboticario.org.br/pt/conservacao-biodiversidade/Paginas/Apoio-a-projetos.aspx> (accessed on January 2, 2022).

⁴⁷ ISA. *Almanaque Brasil Socioambiental – 2008* (São Paulo: ISA, 2007).

SOS Mata Atlântica - 1986; the *Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem e Educação Ambiental* (SPVS) - 1984; the SOS Amazônia - 1988; the *Instituto do Homem e Meio Ambiente da Amazônia* (IMAIZON) - 1990; the *Fundação Vitória Amazônica* (FVA) - 1990; and the *Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia* (IPAM) - 1995. These NGOs seek to conserve biodiversity at local, regional, and national levels. They engage in partnerships with international organizations and governments, mainly for management and research in protected areas. Another trend was the creation of NGO networks, such as the *Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico*, the *Rede Mata Atlântica*, the *Rede Nacional Pró-UCs* and the *Rede Cerrado*. Together with non-Brazilian NGOs, these networks adopted new organizational structures, depending less on public funding and engaging in aggressive fund-raising practices. They also assumed socioenvironmental goals, although without letting go of the protection of biodiversity.⁴⁸ Younger and international NGOs, together with networks, adapted to new times, something that the FBCN was unable to do.

Conclusion

During the 20th century, different motivations fueled actions, debates and social practices of scientists, intellectuals, managers and activists involved in the conservation of biodiversity, in Brazil and in the world. The protection of wild landscapes, the preservation of species of fauna and flora, the maintenance of ecosystem services and the protection of specific social groups whose lives are linked to natural landscapes have resulted in conservation practices and ideas that require a systems approach. The construction of integrated public policies capable of conserving biodiversity while promoting the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources, however, depends on the use of scientific knowledge and the incorporation of attitudes that value human beings as a unique species, but also as one species that dwells among millions of other species that share the planet with humans. We understand that such integrated public policies depend on the spread of an environmental ethics that is more ecocentric, focused on the notion that all species have an intrinsic value and merit protection and respect.

⁴⁸ Russel Mittermeier; Gustavo Fonseca; Anthony B. Rylands; Katrina Brandon. Uma breve história da conservação da biodiversidade no Brasil. In: *Megadiversidade*, 1, 1, julho de 2005.

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Conservación de la Naturaleza en Brasil en el Siglo 20

RESUMEN

El texto explora actores e instituciones preocupados por la conservación de la naturaleza en Brasil en el siglo XX. Busca comprender el pensamiento y los temas enfocados en el activismo para la conservación de la naturaleza. Se señalan las convergencias y divergencias entre activistas y organizaciones en los contextos políticos en que operaron. La conclusión trata sobre la importancia del diálogo y el desarrollo de políticas públicas integradas capaces de conservar la biodiversidad y promover el uso sostenible y equitativo de los recursos naturales, así como sobre una ética ambiental que promueva una visión más ecocêntrica, centrada en la noción de que todas las especies tienen un valor intrínseco.

Palabras clave: conservación de la naturaleza; protección de la naturaleza; biodiversidad; ONG; áreas protegidas.

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