Neo-Developmentalism versus Sustainability?: An Analysis of the CUT Brazil´s Strategies to Reconcile Ecology, Industrial Policy and Economic Growth

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INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of the center-left Workers´ Party (PT) to power on a national level in 2003, the Brazilian union movement (and especially the *Central Unica dos Trabalhadores*, CUT) was able to work with their party allies to register impressive gains in wage and job growth accompanied by a more equitable distribution of earned income, as a result of successful policy initiatives related to the minimum wage and cash transfer programs for the poorest such as the *Bolsa Familia*. The CUT and PT also prioritized the reactivation of industrial policies that aimed to push Brazil higher up in the global supply network, as a way of creating decent jobs and promoting sustained economic growth, in line with the "neo-developmentalist" and "social developmentalist" theories advanced by economists such as Bresser-Pereira and Carneiro. These policies were only partially successful, as high interest rates and record international commodities prices made agribusiness and financial speculation more lucrative than industrial production for Brazilian capital during the last decade. However, the CUT, pushed by influential constituents such as the metalworkers and chemical workers federations, continues to make industrial development one of its overarching priorities, despite the fact that "production for production´s sake" tends to conflict with the interests of rural workers and small landholders that it also represents, as well as with the positions of other civil society actors such as the environmental movement. In this paper, we will analyze the dialogues between these two CUT constituents and the concrete policy positions constructed by the CUT and its National Secretariat for Environmental Issues during the 2009-2015 period, regarding controversial topics such as climate change, widespread pesticide use by agribusiness, and the expansion of hydroelectric dams in the Amazon region. We postulate that, despite the commitment to environmental issues enshrined in the CUT´s discourse, in practice this national trade union central prefers to seek technological fixes to problems related to climate change and the loss of Amazon biodiversity, instead of more transformational policies. We attribute that outcome to the current balance of power within the central between affiliated industrial and rural unions, as well as to the pragmatic approach taken by the CUT regarding its relations with the government,

and to the limitations in the analysis by certain CUT decision-makers on the links between environmental degradation and modern industrial capitalism.

This paper, which is the result of preliminary research on the topic, will be divided into four sections. To begin, we will discuss the intellectual origins and the current theories of neo-developmentalism and social developmentalism and examples of how they were applied concretely by the PT governments during the previous decade. In addition, we will detail how these economic policies meshed or clashed with the PT´s environmental agenda, particularly regarding climate change, renewable energies, and preservation of the Amazonian biosphere. Following this, we will outline the history of the CUT´s involvement with environmental issues from a political, historical and institutional standpoint, emphasizing the convergences and divergences between rural and industrial CUT affiliates. In the concluding section, we will analyze the current challenges facing the CUT in relation to the environmental agenda in Brazil, in a conjecture marked now by economic stagnation, political polarization, and policy discrepancies between the national government, the Legislative branch and the labor movement.

NEO-DEVELOPMENTALISM AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTALISM IN 21ST CENTURY BRASIL: BRINGING THE STATE BACK IN

Developmentalism in Brazil, as a school of economic thought which promotes industrialization as the principal strategy to overcome poverty and underdevelopment, can trace its origins to the installation of modern industrial capitalism in the country, which took place under the first government of Getulio Vargas, who initially came to power as an elected leader from 1930-1937, then remained in office as an authoritarian leader from 1937-1945. Vargas united the national economy through the reduction of inter-state tariffs, prioritized industrial development (with a heavy dose of State intervention) as a way of weakening Brazil's dependence on agro-export commodities such as coffee and sugar, and stimulated domestic consumer demand

through the establishment of minimum wage laws and the regulation of collective bargaining. According to Bielschowsky (1988: 250-1), the four main precepts of Vargas' developmentalist economic thinking included the need for the establishment of an integrated industrial sector in the country capable of producing capital goods as well as industrialized products for final consumption; the importance of centralizing financial resources that can be dedicated to the promotion of industry, through the creation of public development banks and earmarked taxes; the affirmation of the role of the State as guardian of the national economic interest and of the need to use centralized planning to strengthen the economy; and the resurgence of an emphatic economic nationalism which predicated the imposition of high tariff and non-tariff barriers on international imports and the nationalization of valuable non-renewable natural resources such as oil and minerals.

Even after Vargas' deposition from office in 1945 and the transition back to electoral democracy, developmentalist, anti-liberal thinking continued to dominate Brazilian economic policymaking in the subsequent decades. During this time, three distinct schools of thought were developed: developmentalism in the private sector, conceived by Roberto Simonsen, which supported State assistance for private industrial development but without direct State control of key industries vis-à-vis nationalizations; the "non-nationalist" developmentalism in the public sector of Roberto Campos, which encouraged partial State planning but also the participation of multinational enterprises in the Brazilian industrialization process; and Celso Furtado's "nationalist" developmentalism in the public sphere, which defended direct State participation in strategic economic sectors such as mining, energy, transport, and telecommunications and the exclusion of transnational capital from the development process (Bielschowsky, 1988: 34-5). In the immediate post-war period, the private sector and "non-nationalist" public sector schools of developmentalist thought took center stage in the formulation of economic policy under the Dutra government (1946-1951), with the maintenance of State planning mechanisms together with the encouragement of foreign direct investment in the industrial sector. These ideological currents were overtaken by the "nationalist" school of developmentalism during the

2nd Vargas government (1951-1954), the Kubitschek government (1956-1961) and the Goulart government (1961-1964), all of which strived to deepen national industrialization processes through the nationalization of oil resources, large-scale State infrastructure projects, control of foreign remittances of corporate profits, and the creation of new State institutions, such as the Economic Development Council, to coordinate and direct industrial policy.

This cycle of nationalist, State—led developmentalism came to an end in 1964 with the coup-de-etat perpetrated by the Armed Forces in collaboration with conservative civilian political forces and in line with Cold War-era American foreign policy. However, the authoritarian military governments that took power after this collapse of electoral democracy did not abandon all the tenets of developmentalism (specifically its "non-nationalist" variant), through the maintenance of planning processes led by State technocrats and implementation of heterodox monetary policies, but, unlike the previous developmentalist period, there were no policies put into place to more equally redistribute the economic benefits generated by industrialization (Castelo, 2012: 620). The true rupture with developmentalism only came in the late 1980s and 1990s, under the Collor and Cardoso governments, whose neo-liberal economic policies were based on the theories of infallibility of private market mechanisms and subsequent undesirability of State intervention in the economy. Thus, these governments implemented policies such as large-scale privatizations of State industries in the mining, steel, energy and telecommunications sectors, trade liberalization, the establishment of a floating exchange rate, and a shrinking of the State bureaucratic apparatus which cost the jobs of over 357,000 public employees (Cano, 1999).

As the social failures of these neoliberal policies became evident in the first years of the 21st century, with stagnating wages and spiraling unemployment rates, a majority of the Brazilian electorate placed their confidence in the center-left Workers Party (PT) to find new methods to foment social and economic development, electing Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva as President in 2002. The theoretic underpinnings of the PT's economic

policy can be broadly characterized as “neo-developmentalist”. While no precise consensus definition for neo-developmentalism exists, in general terms, this theory emphasizes the role of the State, in partnership with private enterprise, in the search for sustainable economic growth coupled with an increase in social well-being. Mattei (2011) postulates that Brazilian neo-developmentalism is comprised of four guiding principles: the existence of both a strong State and vigorous private market, the need for explicit macroeconomic policies to strengthen both these institutions, the need to adopt a national strategy which reconciles economic growth with social equity, and the maintenance of levels of economic growth sufficient to overcome historic social inequalities. One of neo-developmentalism’s principal ideologues, Bresser-Pereira, emphasizes the need to correct distortions on the demand side of the economy (principally related to the lack of salary growth on par with productivity, which slows domestic demand, and the periodic overvaluing of national currencies, which creates a barrier to foreign demand for exports), in order to ensure sustained economic development in peripheral countries (Bresser-Pereira, 2011: 77). In Bresser-Pereira´s opinion, these hurdles to development can be overcome through stronger State presence in the economy, in particular in stimulating productive investments, guaranteeing a competitive exchange rate for exports, and facilitating low-interest credit to private industry in strategic sectors. In practice, the PT government (particularly that of Lula) chose not to contain interest rates in order to make investment in the real economy more lucrative than financial speculation, but did create significant new streams of investment financing for national industry, specifically through low-cost loans offered by the State-owned *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social* (BNDES) to the total of R$ 709 billion (US$ 222 billion) for the 2003-2011 period.

In order to emphasize the role that social policy plays in this new form of developmentalism, the related concept of social-developmentalism was formulated simultaneously by economists linked to the PT such as Pochmann, Carneiro and Fagnani. According to this theory, also dubbed “State-oriented redistributive developmentalism” by Bastos (2012: 792), “developmental success depends on

structural economic and political changes. But it also depends on the incorporation of new social demands created by a society, that different from the 1950s, is now predominantly urban and metropolitan." (CGEE, 2013: 14) Therefore, according to social-developmentalists, to be sustainable, the current developmental agenda must not only focus on industrialization and job creation, but also on other social rights issues, such as health care, education, housing, social security, and the fight against poverty. It should be mentioned that social-developmentalism does not explicitly include environmental rights in its policy platform. Under this social-developmentalist agenda, the PT government expressively invested in new anti-poverty programs, such as the *Bolsa Familia* cash-transfer program, the *Mais Medicos* program to improve the public healthcare system, and the *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* low-cost housing program, as well as linked minimum wage increases to both inflation and productivity gains. In turn, these social investments and income redistribution policies helped stimulate economic growth in the short term, through increasing domestic household demand for durable and non-durable consumer goods and services, and in the case of *Minha Casa, Minha Vida*, reactivating the civil construction sector.

THE PT GOVERNMENTS' ENVIRONMENTAL TRACK RECORD: ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Despite the economic and social successes registered by these new developmentalist policies applied by the PT government, from an environmental standpoint, the results were mixed. In regards to environmental justice, the policy platform promoted by Lula during his 2002 Presidential campaign states:

> "Our government will commit to improving the quality of the environment, as a way to generate new opportunities of social inclusion, through three strategies: (a) adoption of socio-environmental sustainability criteria for all public policies, strengthening the national systems of water services, environmental policy, and consumer protections; (b) setting of benchmarks to improve socio-environmental indicators – deforestation, CO_2 and CFC emissions, sewage treatment, water supply, solid waste, air quality, access to natural resources, energy consumption, and clean technologies; (c) social control through citizen participation, education, and information sources, valuing the initiatives of citizens and organized civil society." (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2002:14)

Other sections of the platform also state that the PT government was committed to promoting agrarian reform, technical assistance and guaranteed markets through government purchasing for small farmers, as well as to foment the use of clean energies such as wind, solar, and biomass.

Notwithstanding this, and taking into consideration that a thorough analysis of the PT´s environmental policies is beyond the scope of this paper, it can be stated that the majority of these promises ended up taking a back seat in the policy agenda to more traditional, pro-industrialization developmentalist demands. So much so, that Lula´s first Environmental Minister and historic ecological activist Marina Silva, decided to renounce her position in 2008, due to resistance from both within and beyond the PT to her more stringent policies against the deforesting of the Amazon, and her objections to the commercialization of transgenic seeds and food productions.

A telling example of the subordinate role that environmental concerns have played under the PT governments can be found by studying the public policies related to the Amazonian biosphere enacted over the last 12 years. With respect to deforesting of the Amazon, advances were registered due to the recognition by the Lula government of the complex causes of forest destruction, greater institutional coordination, increased monitoring efforts, and stricter penalties for illegal logging and forest burning, leading to an all-time low of 4,571 km^2 of deforested land in 2012, down from 12,911 km^2 just four years earlier (InfoAmazonia, 2015). However, under the first government led by Dilma Rousseff (2010-2014), spending for forest conservation was drastically reduced, partially because of the previous period's successes and also due to Rousseff's more overarching fiscal priority to complete infrastructure works in time for the 2014 soccer World Cup hosted by Brazil. According to InfoAmazonia (2015), while the 2nd Lula government (2006-2009) spent 6.4 billion Brazilian reales (US$ 1.9 billion) on implementing the Action Plan to Prevent and Control Deforesting in the Amazon (PPCDAM), Rousseff's government spent only 1.8 billion reales (US$ 531

million), in this way putting in jeopardy Brazil's capacity to reach its target of cutting all deforesting by 80% by 2020.

Other policies implemented under the PT governments that have dramatically compromised the ecological integrity of the Amazon region include the enacting of the new Forest Code and the construction of massive hydroelectric power plants on important tributary rivers. The revision to the Forest Code, approved by the Rousseff government in May 2012 after substantial lobbying efforts by the agribusiness sector, reduces the amount of protected land on riverbanks and in other privately-owned forest areas, and also grants an amnesty to any property owner who illegally deforested land before 2008. According to a recent study by Soares Filho and Rajao, the law has diminished the amount of land (principally in the Amazon region) which by law must be reforested from 50 to 21 million hectares (IPAM, 2014), thus putting into question the government's commitment to the preservation of Amazon biodiversity and to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Similarly, environmentalists are questioning the logic behind the construction of large hydropower projects on the Madeira, Xingu, Tapajos and Teles Pires rivers, which form part of the Amazon aquifer, the world's largest source of fresh water. The controversial Belo Monte dam project, currently being erected on the Xingu river, has been criticized for negatively affecting the artisanal fishing-based livelihoods of the Arara, Pakicamba, Trincheira, Juruna, Kaiapo, Paracana and Xikrin indigenous peoples and for not consulting appropriately with these communities before the construction started, for compromising the quality of water in local reservoirs, and for worsening the conditions of sanitation, health care, education and public security in the nearby town of Altamira, where the dam construction workers are being housed (Instituto Socioambiental, 2015: 11). Despite this, the PT governments have continued with the project even after the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights solicited its interruption in 2011 in order to guarantee that the civil, social, cultural and economic rights of the impacted indigenous communities be respected, eager for the 4500

megawatts/year projected capacity to be available to feed the growing energy needs of industries in the more developed Southern and Southeastern regions of the country. Other hydroelectric projects are also in the works, such as the Jirau and Santo Antonio dams in the Amazonian state of Rondonia, which register a projected energy generation capacity of 3350 and 3150 megawatts/year, respectively. According to Zibechi (2014: 185), these dams will principally serve to expand agribusiness interests, and consequently push the agricultural frontier into currently forested areas, as they will provide low cost energy for farm enterprises and reduce transportation costs for soybeans, grains and other commodities. Likewise, the dam construction has not even created decent jobs, as evidenced by the wildcat strikes that hit the Jirau and Santo Antonio sites during 2011 in protest at the lack of decent living facilities at the worksites, exorbitant costs of food and medicines purchased at company stores, and aggressions by supervisors and security guards (Zibechi, 2014: 176).

THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES OF THE CUT BRAZIL – ORIGINS, IMPLEMENTATION, AND TRANSFORMATIONS

As the PT's principal bulwark within the Brazilian union movement, the CUT has had to come to terms with the Lula and Rousseff governments' environmental programs over the last decade and in particular how they have impacted economic and social development in the country. However, before we analyze the CUT's institutional response to the PT's incursions into environmental policymaking at the beginning of the 21st century and their own proposals regarding the reconciliation of sustainable development and employment creation goals, we will examine the historical development of the CUT's work regarding environmental issues.

To begin this analysis, it should be noted that during the first decades of the CUT's existence, environmental issues were largely understood to be linked to the agenda of rural workers, with particular emphasis given to the defense of agrarian reform as a mechanism to generate sustainable employment in the countryside and to promote

more ecologically-friendly forms of agricultural production, in juxtaposition to the agroindustrial model initially fomented by the bureaucratic authoritarian regime. The CUT and the union movement as a whole tended not to involve itself in urban-based environmental demands during the 1980s and 90s, especially those related to issues of air pollution and groundwater contamination due to factory and automobile emissions. For example, the emblematic struggle against the widespread pollution and the corresponding severe health risks for residents of the industrial hub city of Cubatão, São Paulo state, in the early 1980s was led by Catholic Church-based local victims' committees, professional environmental NGOs and scientific associations. However, local union leaders did not join the struggle, in fear that the anti-pollution campaign would lead to factory closings and the loss of hardship pay that chemical-sector workers received at the time (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007: 193).

Notwithstanding this, the CUT's commitment to environmental issues in the rural sphere can be traced back to even before the official creation of this national trade union body. On the eve of the coup-de-etat in 1964, rank-and-file unions joined together to form the national confederation of rural workers CONTAG, which was born with organic links to the Brazilian Communist Party as well as to the sectors of the progressive wing of the Catholic Church. CONTAG maintained the hegemony of representation of rural workers (and their political demands) through the final periods of the dictatorship, and participated in the historic *Conferencia Nacional da Classe Trabalhadora* (Conclat) in 1981, which was the first moment under the authoritarian regime that all the significant actors within the labor movement were able to meet to construct a common political and action program. 949 of the 5247 delegates participated in representation of the CONTAG, CONTAG-affiliated unions, and other rural entities (de Almeida, 2011: 115). Due to the significant presence of rural workers unions at the Conclat, agrarian reform was adopted as a high priority issue for the union movement, on par with the fight for redemocratization and against the rising cost of living.

Following the 1st Conclat, a large group of union leaders linked to the PT decided to take steps to found a new national union central, the CUT, despite the fact that the Communist-influenced labor organizations (including the CONTAG as well as the national union central CGT) opted out of participating in the creation of the new entity. Although the backbone of this movement traced its origins to the industrial and professional unions in the industrial belt of São Paulo, a significant minority stemmed from rural unions based outside of the more developed Southern and Southeastern regions. In order to consolidate and formalize the creation of the CUT, another Conclat (this time titled *Congresso Nacional da Classe Trabalhadora*) was held in August 1983 in the city of São Bernardo dos Campos, Sao Paulo state. At this founding Congress, 1648 delegates from 310 rural workers' unions participated in the event, out of 5059 total delegates, and four leaders of rural unions from the states of Para, Bahia, Espirito Santo and Goias were elected as part of the 15-member CUT National Executive Committee (CUT, 1983). In addition, as part of the action plan adopted at this Conclat, a 24-point program on rural workers' issues was incorporated, which included the demand for agrarian reform and also other environmentally-based demands, such as an end to the construction of hydroelectric plants without prior consultation of local populations and the promotion of ecologically-friendly methods of agricultural production.

After this founding Congress, the importance of rural workers' and small farmers' unions (and their political demands) continued to grow within the CUT, contesting the previously undisputed hegemony of representation exercised by the CONTAG, to the point at which a National Secretariat for Rural Workers is created in 1986, later transforming into a National Department in 1988. A National Commission for Environmental Issues was also created by the central in 1991. Even as the fight against neoliberal economic policies takes center stage in the CUT action and policy agenda in the 1990s, the central continued to lead mobilizations for agrarian reform and against large-scale agroindustry, most notably the *Grito da Terra* march, which began in the state of Para and then became an annual, national event under the leadership of the CUT, CONTAG, and Landless Workers Movement (MST) in 1994. The march specifically

called for agrarian reform, social and labor rights for rural workers, more technical assistance for small farmers, sustainable energy policies, and respect for the environment (de Medeiros, 2014: 263). In addition, the CUT and CONTAG collaborated to create an Alternative Project for Sustainable Rural Development (PADRS), finalized in 1998, which promotes family farming as a mechanism for creating rural jobs and for increasing food security while minimizing negative impacts on the environment. As a product of the CUT's efforts during this period, the CONTAG took the decision to affiliate to the CUT in 1995.

Despite these advances, the CUT only hesitatingly incorporated into its political program other environmental issues such as climate change, sustainable water usage, and air pollution, which go beyond those more explicitly linked to the rural sector and more directly conflict with the corporatist interests of industrial sector unions. In the late 1990s, as another alternative to the rampant unemployment gripping the country, the CUT began promote solidarity economy projects in both rural and urban areas, and tenuously linked them to efforts to stimulate "clean production" (CUT, 2000: 21). A broader, more robust inclusion of environmental rights in the CUT policy platform only begins to appear after the election of Lula to the presidency, surfacing in the resolutions of its 8th national Congress held in June 2003. In this new political moment, the CUT opted for engaging their political allies now in power with new policy proposals, instead of maintaining a largely defensive platform. In the 8th Congress resolutions, the CUT presented its first consolidated vision of sustainable development:

> "Given the harmful consequences of the development model adopted in previous decades, marked by social and environmental exclusion, governmental, non-governmental and multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank, have supported certain types of initiatives in search of sustainability that, in our view, are limited. We want to reach new indicators that allow for the increase of individual and collective productive capacity, while at the same time respecting the principles of sustainability and solidarity.
>
> We distinguish several dimensions that are fundamental in the search for sustainability: an equilibrium between environmental, social, and economic aspects, as a way of guaranteeing the reproduction of human and natural

> resources in the long term; the recognition of and affirmative treatment of differences with respect to gender, race and age, as a way of guaranteeing respect for the diversity and development of these segments of the working class; and the generation of income and reaffirmation of citizenship as fundamental instruments that permit access to material and social resources that are necessary to create and maintain decent living conditions for the population." (CUT, 2003: 17-18).

Following this, the CUT included a list of specifically environmental demands in its 2003 Action Plan, related particularly to the defense of the Amazon forest, the promotion of renewable energy sources, the eradication of "dirty industries", the prohibition of transgenic seeds, and the universalization of basic sanitation services (CUT, 2003: 82). To implement the Action Plan, the CUT called upon its affiliates to join forces with like-minded civil society organizations, including environmental groups, creating an alliance that can struggle for a new model of development and consumption.

In order to further institutionalize the CUT's amplified interest in environmental issues, the National Secretariat for Environmental Issues was created at its 10th Congress in 2009. According to the CUT's by-laws (CUT, 2012) this new Secretariat was charged with elaborating and coordinating the CUT's actions regarding environmental issues, conducting relevant studies on sustainable development, collaborating with other union and civil society organizations working on the topic, and developing training programs with the CUT Secretariat for Education to promote more qualified interventions of CUT union leaders in activities that are related to environmental issues. In addition, the CUT Action Plan approved at that same Congress emphasized sustainable development topics, stating that "ecosocialism" should be integrated into the policies of the central, deforestation should be reduced, transgenic foods should be labeled and the use of pesticides and herbicides should be reduced (CUT, 2009: 95).

The first CUT leader to assume the role of National Secretary for Environmental Issues was Carmen Foro, a leader of the rural workers' union of Igarape-Miri in the Amazon region state of Para, who previously served as Vice-President of the national CUT

during the 2006-2009 period. Foro's nomination gives an indication of the institutional importance that the CUT intended to place on sustainable development in its agenda, as she accepted the position in lieu of the Vice Presidency; it also revives the link between the environment and rural issues, as she represents the CUT's small-farmer constituency. Foro focused her work as Secretary on participating in multilateral and international advocacy spaces regarding climate change and the environment, specifically the United Nations Climate Change Conferences of the Parties (COPs) held annually and the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In these spaces, the CUT defended proposals largely in the same spirit as those advocated by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with an emphasis on a "just transition" for workers whose jobs will be altered or displaced due to climate change impacts, the necessity of technology transfers in order to improve the private sector's capacity to limit its emissions, and the need to create "green jobs" which at the same time also comply with the tenets of decent work as defined by the ILO. Diverging slightly from ITUC positions, the CUT also defended at the 2009 COP in Copenhagen, the notion of an "ecological debt" that developed, high-emissions countries have with poor, developing countries which should translate into direct financial assistance for climate change mitigation in the latter countries, and denounced the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) program as a form of privatization and commodification of forest land in underdeveloped countries (CUT, 2009: 4-5).

While the CUT focused its environmental advocacy work on the international arena during this period, the sustainable development agenda began to lose priority and suffer political defeats domestically. As mentioned previously, with the election of President Dilma Rousseff, an economist with neo-developmentalist persuasions, in 2010, industrial upgrading and infrastructure development took a clear priority over ecological preservation in governmental policies, as evidenced by the hydroelectric construction projects in the Amazon and the reduction in spending for forest conservation. In addition, the "governability" of the Rousseff administration depended on support from center-right and centrist parties such as the PMDB, which represents

the interests of large-scale agroindustry (among other constituencies), explaining, in turn, why Rousseff did not veto the new Forest Code in its entirety, and why the PT government has not restricted further the use of pesticides and herbicides deemed hazardous to human health in other countries.

The internal CUT agenda during this period was marked by a precarious coexistence between sustainable development and pro-industrial policies. This can be explained in part by the declining influence of the rural workers' constituency within the CUT, exemplified by CONTAG's disaffiliation to the CUT in its 10th Congress in 2009, and the gradual reduction of the number of rural delegates at the national CUT Congresses, from 469 at the 2006 Congress to 407 at the 10th Congress in 2009. It should be mentioned, however, that this number is still greater than the 341 delegates that represented industrial-sector (metalworking, chemical, mining, construction, textile, and food production) unions at the event.

Another reason for this was the CUT's strategic emphasis during this period in developing and defending a unitary policy platform in conjunction with the other major national trade union centrals recognized officially by the Labor Ministry (Força Sindical, UGT, Nova Central, CTB, CGTB and CSB), with whom the CUT united politically in order to support Rousseff's election in 2010. With the exception of the CTB, these centrals do not represent rural workers to any significant extent and rarely engage the government or civil society actors in regards to environmental issues. In particular, the Força Sindical has always emphasized the need for improved industrial policies in its political platform, due to the fact that its principal base lies in the metalworkers and chemical workers sectors. From 2010-2014, these centrals focused their mobilizations around a series of common demands, entitled the "Agenda of the Working Class", which included a call for a 40-hour workweek, 10% of the national GDP for education and health cares, the right to collective bargaining for all public sector unions, restrictions on firings without just cause, equal pay for equal work, and agrarian reform, but made no mention of environmental demands around climate change,

mega-infrastructure projects, or anti-pollution measures (Pagina 13, 2014). In addition, the CUT advocated heavily for the application of anti-cyclical, social-developmentalist industrial policies to restart the economy in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, including the reduction of taxes on durable consumer goods (including carbon-burning cars, trucks, and motorcycles), an expansion of large infrastructure investments through the Program to Accelerate Growth, and an increase in funds available to the private sector in low cost loans administrated by the National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES) (CNM, 2010: 6). These policies were adopted with short- term success by the Lula and Rousseff governments, but once again, environmental concerns were not included in their formulation or implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL CRISIS: THE CUT BRAZIL AT A CROSSROADS

In July 2012, Jasseir Alves Fernandes, another rural workers' leader, was elected as the new CUT National Secretary for Environmental Issues for the 2012-2015 period. In contrast to Foro, he decided to focus his work on promoting environmental issues on the national level through campaigns, education, and organization, instead of prioritizing advocacy work in international fora. During this period, Fernandes promoted numerous local and national debates involving CUT-affiliated unions around polemical topics such as the construction of megaprojects in the Amazon region, excessive pesticide and herbicide use, climate change and industrial production, and sustainable water use. Many of these debates were organized in conjunction with other civil society groups with an ecological slant such as Greenpeace, Campanha Permanente contra os Agrotoxicos e Pela Vida, Grupo Carta de Belem, and Via Campesina Brasil.

Under Fernandes' mandate, the Secretariat for Environmental Issues took pains to engage industrial-sector unions in environmental debates, organizing a series of seminars on sustainable industrial and energy policies in conjunction with the *Confederacao Nacional dos Metalurgicos* (CNM), *Federacao Unica dos Petroleiros* (FUP), and *Confederacao Nacional do Ramo Quimico* (CNQ). In addition the Secretariat published an educational pamphlet on sustainable development whose contents attempted to define an organizational position on sustainable industrial policies, defined as "a policy which creates sound economic growth and generates decent work, while at the same time minimizes the negative environmental impacts and improves society's well-being as a whole" (Angelim, et al., 2014: 52).

Unfortunately, these efforts have had little practical effect in modifying the CUT's (and its industrial-sector affiliates') policy positions and priorities with regard to controversial environmental issues. As Fernandes states in an interview with the author:

> "With the metalworkers unions, it is still very difficult to discuss topics related to urban mobility and the environment with them, as they defend the expansion of the automotive industry without restrictions, and believe that environmental concerns will limit the creation of jobs in the sector. They have shown to be less than willing to look at alternatives, such as electric cars, buses, and trains. (…) It is very important to include these unions and others from the Southeastern region in environmental programs, since this region is the heart of the Brazilian economy and industry. It is there where we see most clearly the struggle between the current model of economic growth and quality of life, with poor, Afro-Brazilian workers always getting the short end of the stick in this battle."

It should be noted that no agenda for common work between the industrial unions and the Secretariat for Environmental Issues was developed after the carrying out of these seminars in December 2013 and April 2014. Even more worrying, the CUT supported the tax breaks mentioned earlier that increased the number of gasoline-fueled vehicles in already-congested Brazilian cities, and failed to adopt an institutional position critical of the environmental and social impacts of the Belo Monte, Jirau and Santo Antonio dams currently being constructed in the Amazon region by the PT government.

All these indicators lead to the conclusion, that in its dealings with the federal government, the CUT pushes harder for approval of more traditional labor concerns related to issues such as pensions, salaries, and collective bargaining, than for the emerging environmental topics in its agenda, perhaps in recognition of the difficulties that the PT faces in installing a more progressive policy agenda due to the conservative bent of many of its current coalition partners. Based on this initial research we can also see that the CUT's principal industrial-sector constituents seem to assume positions on climate change issues that Rathzel and Uzzell (2011) characterize as that of a "technological fix," which, in line with neo-developmentalist thought, sustains that a transition to a low-carbon economy and an end to climate change can be reached through the creation and dissemination of scientific innovations, without substantial negative impacts on economic growth or consumerist lifestyles. However, this position flies in the face of more thoroughgoing critiques of the impact of capitalist industrial production on the environment, such as that proffered by Bellamy Foster, Clark, and York (2010: 153):

> "Today's environmentalism is aimed principally at those measures necessary to lessen the impact of the economy on the planet's ecology without challenging the economic system that in its very workings produces the immense environmental problems we now face. What we call 'the environmental problem' is in the end primarily a problem of political economy. Even the boldest establishment economic attempts to address climate change fall far short of what is required to protect the earth – since the 'bottom line' that constrains all such plans under capitalism is the necessity of continued, rapid growth in production and profits."

As a manner of conclusion, it should be noted that in the present political and economic context, the objective possibilities of the PT government assuming a more ecologically-conscious agenda are remote. In fact, even its initial social-developmentalist project is currently at risk, due to a number of significant economic and political factors, such as the end of commodity-export led economic growth linked to the decline in commodity prices and reduction in external demand, a return to moderate levels of inflation which act as a disincentive to consumer spending, and,

most importantly, a crisis of governability brought on by oppositionist politicians that refused to accept defeat in the 2014 elections and are now blocking all labor-friendly measures from being approved by the Legislative branch as well as mobilizing the Judicial branch to search for legal grounds to impeach President Rousseff. This crisis has moved into the civic arena, with political protests on a scale not seen in decades repeatedly overtaking the streets of Sao Paulo and other major Brazilian cities during 2015 to either denounce or defend the Rousseff government. The CUT has spearheaded the efforts to defend the PT government and its pro-worker policies, arguing that the crisis can only be effectively overcome if the government makes a "shift to the left", consolidating its societal base through the expansion of social and labor rights instead of contracting them, which would signal a return to neoliberal economic policy and an abandonment of neo-developmentalism. If the CUT and its social movement allies can obtain enough political force to push through this "shift to the left", it would create an opportune moment to hold the PT government accountable for not only expanding its social policies but also improving its environmental policies, in this way ensuring the social, economic and ecological sustainability of its political project, which has already directly benefitted millions of working-class Brazilians. Nevertheless, it still remains to be seen if this political conjecture will strengthen or dismount the PT government, and what the potential outcomes will signal for the CUT and its labor and environmental agenda.

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