



Scientific Outputs versus Political Decisions: A Brazilian Perspective



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Introduction

Over the years, several cooperation and collaboration have been noticed within the global society. After the period of monarchy, a limited group was responsible for the conquest of civil and political rights and duties based on the principle of liberty. Then the social, economic, and cultural rights raised supported on the idea of equality, mainly because of the needs of others societal groups. The third catalogue of fundamental rights do not focus on a specific number of individuals, it transcends the individuality; the solidarity is the tenet that drives the set of global issues, such as environment, world's heritage, culture, and others. The evolution is a continuous process and, despite the natural and primitive tendency of the natural selection, postulated by Charles Darwin, the humankind seems to abandon self-interest for the collective and universal goods, confirming the idea of a borderless world (Pennisi, 2009). A lot of effort has gone into achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), located on the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations' document is one of the pillars of several regimes and it will be considered as the framework for the discussion, where SDG 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land), are given more importance.

The magnitude of the Brazilian territory and its natural wealth possess significant importance for the whole world. Although the expression *lungs of the planet* have been contested, it is known that the Amazon forest is relevant to the entire ecosystem due to its diversity. According to this reality, the epistemic community worldwide has worked on various aspects and showed not only the probable scientific impacts, through means of research. The complexity of the concern about the environment requires the comprehension of the political aspect too. Many countries have dealt with domestic changes under protests, for instance, and these events have created waves of hate and attacks; it somehow taints the political maneuvers and the external behavior consequently.

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Brazil has faced protests and riots, especially from 2015 on, when the impeachment process of the erstwhile president Dilma Rousseff began. In 2019, Brazil faced two mammoth situations directly evolving the epistemic communities and the environment. The Northeast oil spill and the Amazonian forest fires, both noticed in the second semester of that year, are paradigms for the present discussion, where the aim is to tackle the connection between scientific outputs and political decisions in a framework designed by the SDGs.

SDGs: A Global Agenda

Comprehending the SDGs as constitutive elements of the framework considered for this paper requires a historical approach. The humankind has conquered a great number of fundamental rights and duties. After the decline of the absolute monarchy, a catalogue of civil and political rights has raised in the society, coordinated by the core principle of liberty, deriving from it the right to vote and being voted, to have a propriety, to express ideas and others, forging the first generation of human rights, according to the rationale of the Theory of Human Rights (Vasak, 1978). The social, economic and cultural aspects forge the second list of fundamental rights, where the equality is the basilar tenet; discussions related to culture, education, health *etc* are the important point of this second generation of human rights. The third and last generation postulated by Vasak (1978) explicates the collective and solidarity rights; in this sense, planetary scale issues are the centre of the analysis, such as environment, space resource and everything that can be thought as the humankind's good and heritage. It is important to note the word *generation* can suggest the commencement and the end of a group or moment; in the case of the fundamental rights, the steps shall be interpreted as a continuous stage of the evolution, reason why some authors prefer thinking about *dimensions*, what demonstrates a interlacing of conquests (Sarlet, 2003).

In compliance with all categories of rights above, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the *locus* of the 17 SDGs, all linked to the ideas of prosperity and peace. Reducing inequalities, maximizing education, industry, innovation, infrastructure, economic growth, zero poverty and

hunger, creating partnerships for the implementation of the goals of the agenda, protection of the life below water, climate and life on land are the goals and examples of the set of all the dimensions of the fundamental rights together.

The very start of this sort of this cooperation among nations for the development is seen after the Second World War, with the European Recovery Program (ERP), or the Marshall Plan. Thus in the 60s, the North-South cooperation took place and highlighted the binomial developed and developing countries. In the 70s, Robert Strange McNamara, within the World Bank, traced a plan in which the needs of the developing countries were the pillar of the activities of the institution. Later, in the 80s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) applied the structural adjustments policies (Keohane, 1984). The next decade was marked by the sustainable development and by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Rio Conference or the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In 2000, the United Nations signed the Millennium Declaration, where the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) brought a new vision of humanity and social contract between the leaders of the world and the peoples. This last universal task force turned into the 2030 Agenda from the year 2015 on, as planned.

Considering the enormous quantity of documents related to the planetary scale issues and the importance of the topic since the end of the warfare, the idea of considering the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a basis of the framework to face the main topic of the paper seems to be accurate, because of your idea of being a blueprint regarding the future.

Epistemic communities, Politics and Science Diplomacy

The vast dimension of Brazil's territory and its natural wealth reflect its importance to the whole world, particularly when talking about the environmental aspects, and the events related to this area have easily become points of discussion in several national and international arenas. The first event taken as a paradigm, the crude oil residue spill, firstly noticed on 30th August 2019 on the country's Northeast coast, has turned into a global issue to do

the possibility of threaten the largest marine hot spot in the South Atlantic Ocean. The second one refers to the fire in the Amazon rainforest, observed its apex in August 2019. Though each situation has touched different ecosystems, they have elements and concerns as common links. The studies produced by specialists have been published in journals, and the outputs have pointed out that the unknown origin of the oil spill in the ocean and forest degradation, are on the increase. Moreover, the potential short and long-term hazards are well known or at least comprehensible and audible everywhere, pointing to a complex future in case of negligent or emissive conduct by the States, population, organizations and others players.

Simultaneously to the disasters, the political leadership and the research outcomes have not gelled well; information and the conclusions of the researches related to the fires, particularly provided by the National Institute for Space Research within the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Communications were not taken into account to address the issue. About the crude oil situation, experts did not confirm the origin of the spill at the very first moment, besides all efforts in this sense. It is relevant to note that national political decisions are to be based on rational domestic scientific research as well as the concerns of the international scientific community. In addition, considering the previous impeachment process and the extolling of political ideologies, the main argument for rejecting the scientific outcomes points to the politisation of the science.

It is clear the existence of a loophole between the activities of the epistemic communities and the political department in the current analysis, circumstance that arguably causes issues for the population of the country and diplomatic discomfort.

In light of this, Science Diplomacy is a credible alternative to communicate the two fields. The universal aspect of science cannot be questioned, because it must work in favour of the society. The collaboration between science and politics is possible through the creation of lawful platforms, and partnerships (Siddhartha, 2019). The joint endeavour of public and private sectors is required in this sense, regarding the high costs of some researches and the

need of using of advanced technologies – startups, think tanks and other institutions, who would play a critical role in this context. The cooperation is the fulcrum of the system and the using of science, technology and innovation (STI) to solve or at least decrease global problems should avoid the so called politisation of science and the departments alike seen in the situation in Brazil.

Conclusion

The humankind's conquests regarding the rights and duties present an evolution from the individual to the collective social body. One of the uppermost symbols of this worldwide consciousness is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, *locus* of the 17 SDGs.

The framework designed by them exposes global problems require global solutions and the situation demands cooperation among not only the nations but also among them and the private sector, what includes think tanks, organisations, universities, companies and others. This interaction is requested based on the idea that the implementation of the SDGs calls for the intelligentsia of experts on science, technology and innovation. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that this set of capabilities is a critical tool to achieve the global goals. In Brazil, the two examples given brought to light the lack of communication and confidence between the government and the domestic and international epistemic communities. This brief paper suggests that the Brazilian players step up their cooperation and collaboration for leveraging STI in benefit of the society.

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