TRANSNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS FOR THE AMAZON: NGO STRATEGIES, TRADE AND OFFICIAL RESPONSES

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> Gradually, the image of nature is shifting; even the unspoiled parts are no longer seen as 'commons' which nobody is allowed to cash in, or as a heritage endowed to all living beings, but as a commercial asset in danger. As a result, the widespread acclaim of 'sustainability' makes it harder to sustain an environmentalism which talks about earth and aesthetics, rather than about resources and economics (SACHS, 1995 [1993]: xvii).

The Amazon rainforest is one of the most important topics of global environmentalism. During the past decade, there has been effectively two major campaigns for the Brazilian Amazon guiding the agenda of transnational British-based NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations). Activists bridging biodiversity and social justice issues, who I have classified into tendencies named '*Trees*' and '*Trees & People*' campaigners according to their main focus,[1] were mainly involved in the mahogany campaign - a campaign against the British imports of mahogany, a rare tree species which is predominantly found and illegally logged within Indian reserves.

The second campaign has mobilised mostly campaigners from the '*People*' tendency, that is, those emphasizing social and developmental issues. They have been principally engaged in a campaign for land rights in Brazil as a whole. This entails not only the demarcation of indigenous lands, but a campaign for an overall land reform - such as an agrarian reform - since the concentration of land is at the core of social inequalities in Brazil.[2] In this regard, support for the largest social movement in Latin America, the movement of the landless - *Movimento dos Sem-Terra* (MST) - has increased in the second half of the 1990s. Nonetheless, a long standing campaign for land rights and social justice in the Amazon region has particularly been concerned with the demarcation of indigenous lands.

In this article, my analysis shall focus on the history, framework, dynamics and strategies of different organisations involved in the mahogany campaign, the most significant Amazon campaign in the 1990s, as it also interfaces with the campaign concerning indigenous peoples rights. Moreover, I shall further point out some of the responses the mahogany campaign has generated from the Brazilian government and the British timber trade, along with recent developments concerning NGOs overall strategies for the Amazon.

MOMENTUM AND FRAMEWORK

The mahogany campaign was launched in the early 1990s and became the most visible and relevant Amazon campaign in Britain during this decade. It has occupied the agenda of the majority of forest campaigners, and it is supported by different NGOs in this country and in Brazil, while impelling responses from the trade both in the UK and Brazil, as well as from the Brazilian government.

The strength of the campaign is due to a conjunction of factors from which I highlight the following: the momentum that it was launched with, along with the way the issue was framed in Britain, and the wide range of NGOs involved with different and combined strategies.

The mahogany campaign emerged when the 'Amazon issue' was undergoing a decline on the international scene, following the saturation of campaigns and media coverage, which reached its peak in the late 1980s. Putting it briefly, during that time, and as a development of the MDB (Multilateral Development Bank) campaign launched by the US groups in 1983,[3] attention was given to the issue of the burning of the forest, particularly by agents such as cattle ranchers and settlers under governmental policies and incentives.[4] Images of the burning of the Amazon inundated the media, and by the beginning of the 1990s, the Amazon was considered a topic already dealt with by the press.

The Brazilian economic crisis - which was responsible for subsequent reduced investments in the Amazon region at the time - and governmental cosmetic measures along with global initiatives, such as the Earth Summit in 1992, also contributed to the impression that environmental problems, particularly deforestation, were now being tackled and resolved by the established legal and governmental authorities.

In this context, the fact that mahogany became an issue in the UK was principally due to the manner in which it was framed: *i)* as *the new and real threat* to the Amazon; *ii)* with *clear links* identifiable on both sides of the trade, *iii)* and, particularly, for its component of *injustice* related to the plight of indigenous peoples.

As discussed in Zhouri (2000), a sense of injustice constitutes an important ground for the campaigners' political consciousness, identity and agency in the global realm. Hence, it is possible to identify in most discourses a moral indignation towards an 'unjust global economic and social order' which would be responsible for the 'destruction of the Amazon and the harm to its people'. It is against this broad framework that the Amazon is constituted as an issue for the campaigners I have studied. Yet, in order to become appropriate targets of collective action, broader abstract socio-economic as well as political and cultural forces must be connected to concrete human agents. Therefore, the targets of collective action must be clearly identified and able to bridge abstract and concrete (GAMSON, 1992).

In Britain, a significant reason for the endurance, and to a certain extent, success of the 'mahogany campaign' lies in the fact that it successfully articulates and connects the broad abstract and underlying dimensions held responsible for deforestation in the Amazon to a concrete situation, issue and actors. Mahogany is undoubtedly a

powerful campaign symbol: it is a very rare and valuable tree species; forests are invariably associated with trees; and the image of trees being cut down is automatically related to the destruction of forests. Images and evidence of mahogany being cut down in the Amazon are associated with its commercial trade in the UK - since the dark wood is culturally and traditionally valued in Victorian-style furniture and bathroom fittings in Britain (STONEHOUSE, 1995: 3).

Moreover, besides the biovidersity component, an injustice framework is accomplished when the situation underlines the significant damaging effects for the indigenous populations. The fact that mahogany is taken illegally from indigenous reserves, and that, therefore, indigenous peoples are faced with a situation of conflict, violence, suffering and disadvantage was crucial for the construction of such an ethnic and social injustice framework capable of generating *moral and ethical indignation*.

The final element is the fact that such timber is traded in the UK. British traders and consumers are eventually held to have some responsibility for deforestation in the Amazon and the plight of indigenous people. It was deemed that these evil forces must be restrained, and so a British campaign was not only justifiable, but necessary. Thus, the abstract underlying structure, that is, the international economic and political order within which the Amazon has been destroyed, is concretely embodied by agents within the UK and in Brazil, particularly the timber trade.[5]

I have over-simplified the general logic of the campaign to illustrate how the focus shifted from localised and far away agents of 'destruction' - previously mainly embodied by ranchers and settlers in the Amazon, despite governmental and World Bank connections - to agents within British society associated with the bilateral trade. The Amazon was brought closer to attitudes at home in Britain. Clear messages could be sent out to the public in a consumers' campaign which undoubtedly reflected back on the timber business. Furthermore, the association of the timber trade with deforestation in the Amazon gained new emphasis because of its close connections with the plight of indigenous peoples. This link also made possible the alliance with Brazilian indigenous support organisations - such as CIMI, and former NDI and CEDI (which are now incorporated into ISA - Instituto Socio-Ambiental) - and other UK-based groups, such as Survival International.

Analysing the mahogany campaign's general history and framework in more detail, it is relevant to note in the first place that British NGOs dealing with forest issues were already targeting the timber trade in the 1980s.[6] Nevertheless, their campaigns were mainly focused on the trade with South East Asia rather than the Amazon. Colchester (1991) summarises the general understanding of that period as follows:

> The proportion of forest lost due to logging varies regionally and locally. In South East Asia and Africa, logging is pre-eminent as a cause of forest loss while in Latin America the timber industry has not yet penetrated far into the Amazonian forests. These are being destroyed first and foremost from settlement along roads built to open up the forests to colonisation and to promote 'national integration' and 'development'. (COLCHESTER, 1991: 68)

Another aspect to highlight is that it was not until the late 1980s that the NGOs lobbying the ITTO - International Tropical Timber Organisation[7] - incorporated the defence of forest peoples, with emphasis on indigenous people, into their forest campaigns. Furthermore according to Colchester (1990):

> The question was only raised for the first time in the ITTO's 1988 meeting in Rio de Janeiro, when FOE adapted language drafted by human rights group Survival International urging that the rights of the forest dwellers to their lands should be respected in the handing out of logging concessions. At the November 1989 meeting of the ITTO, Survival International argued that the ITTO must also include the concept of sustaining forest peoples' livelihoods in its working definition of sustainability...The issue of forest peoples' rights finally forced its way into the ITTO's agenda in 1989 as international indignation about the escalating conflict between loggers and native people in Sarawak became too heated to ignore. (COLCHESTER, 1990: 171)

It seems as though most of the forestry debate - with economic and political interests considered in primary position - was supported by a perspective of technical expertise which handled forests' problems in a *strictu sensus* environmental manner, whereby social and cultural elements remained in a very secondary position. Such a perspective - which is dominant regarding the trade's concept of 'forest management' - still remains as a legacy exacerbating some of the difficulties to be overcome by recent NGO-trade initiatives, such as the certification debate led by the Forest Stewardship Council - FSC - which I will discuss further below.

Nevertheless, as far as the tropical timber trade is regarded, it has been estimated that Malaysia and Indonesia supply together eighty per cent of the international market, whereas Brazil contributes only five per cent (RICARDO et al. 1996: 82). However, with the exhaustion of South East Asian and West African forests, the trade has turned its attention to the tropical forests of South America, particularly the Amazon.[8]

Indigenous support organisations in Brazil, such as the above mentioned NDI - Nucleus of Indigenous Rights - were already targeting the Brazilian timber companies that had been illegally extracting mahogany from indigenous reserves since the late 1980s.[9] They were aware of the fact that the best quality logs of this particular timber were directed to the markets of Britain and the US, the two major importers of mahogany.

Nevertheless, it appears that mahogany only became a bilateral issue attracting the major British NGOs when the journalist George Monbiot reported back from his journey to the Amazon in 1989. Monbiot's report was, thus, the historical and symbolic moment when the mahogany issue was brought to existence into the British NGO world, much due to the way in which the journalist framed it as *the new* threat to the Amazon in his book *The Amazon Watershed*:

> While the rate at which the forests of the Amazon are disappearing has remained constant, *the reasons for its destruction and the means by which it might be stopped have shifted rapidly*...I set out in the summer of 1989 with the conviction that *people in the northern hemisphere were missing the real story of the Amazon*...Most of the reports reaching the North still concentrated on such threats to the forests as cattle-ranching, government-sponsored settlement and dam-building. While these remained important, *they were being overtaken by new developments...Timber-cutting, once an insignificant cause of the Amazon's destruction, was threatening to take over as the economic motor of deforestation.* (MONBIOT, 1991:1-2. Emphasis added here and in all subsequent quotes)

Moreover, besides pointing out the timber-cutting as *the new* threat to the Amazon, Monbiot attempts to *set the record straight* in terms of the *causes* of the problems:

> ...it seemed to me that *people were looking in the wrong direction* if they wanted to see why the forests of the Amazon Basin were still being destroyed. All I understood of the situation suggested to me that *the Amazon's problems were not,* as they had repeatedly been portrayed, *ecological... The problems, I felt, had their origin* not in the Amazon itself, but elsewhere, *in the political and economic hinterland of Latin America and the influential nations with which the continent deals.* (MONBIOT, 1991:3)

In this excerpt, Monbiot provides the broad political and economic framework whereby the causes of the Amazon deforestation should be considered. Furthermore, in the Amazon 'story' or 'drama' - the form of narrative mostly used by the media - victims and villains were also misplaced. According to Monbiot:

> All I have witnessed in the last year now persuades me that Brazil is also the place in which the *victims* of the ecological destruction seem to have been blamed most comprehensively for the crimes. For the farmers, the miners and the other most visible agents of the Amazon's prostration also suffer from the fundamental problems affecting the forests. It is these that I shall be investigating in this book, in my attempts to find the *real villains* of the story of the Amazon, and to see how their destructive power might be restrained (MONBIOT, 1991: 3).

Hence, it results from the above that the mahogany issue became singled out within a framework that presents it not only as *the new* problem of the Amazon, but also in a perspective that intends to *correct* previous 'misleading' explanations. Therefore, from a UK campaigning perspective, mahogany overtakes issues such as cattle ranching, settlement, mining and other economic investments in the Amazon.

In a personal interview with me, Monbiot recalled his feelings and motivations for setting out an investigation about deforestation in the Amazon. The influence of social and indigenous rights organisations were clearly referred to, illustrating the importance of the debate (and its tensions), between 'trees' and 'people' campaigners, particularly during the 1980s, within the new campaign perspective of encompassing biodiversity and social justice issues:

> ...I've spoken to a lot of the people involved in NGOs who had spent many years in the Amazon and other parts of Brazil. And what they told me seemed to differ enormously from the story that I was hearing in the media...everything I was hearing from my friends in groups such as Oxfam, and later on Cedi and Cimi and so all the rest of them was that the peasant was the victim of the process as much as the Yanomami Indian or anyone else like that. But *we were blaming the victim for the problem.*

Although identifying other underlying major problems in the Amazon, especially a domestic context of policies and, for instance, the issue of land concentration and industrialisation in the south of Brazil which drives the landless from other parts of the country into the Amazon region, Monbiot sees the mahogany issue as the most appropriate from the point of view of a British campaign:

> I was also, of course, very interested in the *direct effects which British and US policies, either at the governmental level, or just at the consumers buying mahogany level, had on the situation in the Amazon.* I felt it was very important to point this up so, we wouldn't be so self-congratulatory. We wouldn't keep saying, you know: we are the ones who know what is best, you know. So, it is the Brazilians who are getting it all wrong and we are the ones who are right. Whereas, in actual fact, British consumers, even though they are five thousand miles away, are, in my view, far more responsible for the problems in the Amazon than the Brazilian peasants are...I tracked back mahogany taken illegally from Indian reserves there back to the most prestigious shops and even the Buckingham Palace here in Britain. And so, the link was very clear indeed.

However, it seems as though after Monbiot's return from the Amazon, the major British organisations - such as FOE and WWF, followed later by Greenpeace - only acknowledged the potential of the mahogany issue after the first of the protest actions were actually organised by small direct action groups and individuals based in Oxford.[10] This fact can also illustrate the process and dynamics involving small pressure groups and the mainstream environmental NGOs in constituting a campaign. Major NGOs, as professionalised and hierarchical groups, tend to respond to issues at a slower pace than smaller pressure groups. The latter, then, are sometimes responsible for feeding larger groups with issues and dynamism that they sometimes lack due to

their bureaucratic features. On the other hand, major groups also compete for public support and funding, and thus, the potential of the mahogany campaign refers also to its high profile or capacity to involve the public and to generate financial resources for the organisations.

The first major environmental organisation that joined in and has kept a key role in the campaign - holding a special mahogany campaign officer within its structure - has been Friends of the Earth (FOE). Prior to 1992, FOE tropical rainforest campaign in relation to the Amazon was mainly focused on the aid issue, particularly through the support of the MDB campaign, because the imports of timber from the Amazon to the UK were not considered as relevant as the imports from South East Asia and West Africa.[11]

It seems, thus, that beyond the actual changes and figures of the trade, the mahogany campaign related to the Brazilian Amazon represented also an important 'charismatic megaphone' through which rainforest campaigns underlying structural global problems with the timber trade could be addressed and highlighted. This results from the fact that the Amazon is the largest remaining tropical forest in the world, and that in addition to this, it symbolically appeals to the imagination of the British public. In more specific terms, the strength and success of the mahogany campaign in Britain has to do with the above mentioned social and ethnic injustice elements of the framework, and the clear links it could establish on both sides of the Atlantic. Furthermore, it was crucial that local and Brazilian NGOs were fairly organised and could back up the campaign,[12] and that a wide range of organisations in the UK were involved in it with their different and combined strategies.

THE DIFFERENT AND COMBINED STRATEGIES OF BRITISH NGOS

CRISP-O and the Direct Action Strategy

As already mentioned, direct actions organised by small groups and individuals were the ones that first helped to raise the issue of mahogany in the UK. Combined with the broadcast of George Monbiot's documentary - *Your furniture, their lives* - by the *Open Space* series of BB2 in May 1992, *International Timber Day* involved a great number of organisations and individuals in direct actions at the yard of the major British mahogany importer company, Timbmet, in Oxford, and also at the Timber Trade Federation (TTF) in London. Since the direct actions attracted enormous publicity, they helped to put the mahogany issue on the map and created the conditions for a series of dialogues between individual campaigners and the TTF, dialogues amongst the UK campaigners themselves, as well as between these and the Brazilian officials.

The invasion of timber yards and blockades of docks receiving ships loaded with mahogany from Brazil received important additional input by a direct action strategy originating within the mahogany campaign by a newly formed direct action group called CRISP-O - The Citizen's Recovery of Indigenous People's Stolen Property Organisation - lead by Angie Zelter, a campaigner from Reforest the Earth who has

played a key role in the mahogany campaign. CRISP-O's direct action approach consisted of what was (and still is) called '*ethical shop-lifting*', activity focused on retailers selling mahogany furniture. The campaign started in July 1993, having as targets many shops in several different cities in the UK, such as for instance, Harrods, in London, on Human Rights Day, on December 1993.[13] Because the main argument of the mahogany campaign is that eighty per cent of mahogany coming from the Amazon to the UK is *stolen* from indigenous lands, CRISP-O's action consisted of removing mahogany goods from the shops, and thus, handing them over to the Attorney General's Office or the police with the request that they be returned to 'their legal and rightful owners, or to compensate the Brazilians adequately for this unfair trade and act of theft'.[14]

'Ethical shop-lifting' direct actions are carefully planned and carried out in an organised and non-violent manner, and because CRISP-O's campaigners have no intention to permanently keep the goods for themselves, they have not been prosecuted for theft. This direct action strategy along with the backing of Brazilian NGOs - particularly the lawsuit proposed by NDI against the three major Brazilian exporting companies at the time[15] - put pressure on the trade and forged a space for a series of dialogues between individual companies and campaigners. Important in the initial stages of the campaign, this type of direct action gave way to a series of negotiations between traders and campaigners, although always remaining in the background as a possible threat in difficult moments of the dialogue.

The Women's Negotiating Team

One of the main dialogues was initially established between campaigners - FOE and Reforest the Earth on the leading - and Timbmet, the major British mahogany importer. It resulted in the company proposing in March 1994 the phasing out of the sale of all mahogany by the end of 1996. However, FOE was pushing a campaign for an immediate moratorium on the trade and did not accept Timbmet's proposal. The dialogue with this particular company seemed to have reached its end.

It was then that campaigners from the other groups, who incidentally were mostly females, decided to try to resume the talks with Timbmet and formed a Women's Negotiating Team.[16] Inspired by experiences within the peace movement, they adopted a strategy they call 'confidence building' which was underlined by the belief that the timber trade and forest NGOs had a 'common wish to preserve natural forests and old growth areas'.[17] In other words, there was a conviction that there could be a co-operative rather than a confrontational approach. The strategy consisted of combining in fact the approaches of peaceful direct actions and negotiations.

Thus, in order to resume the dialogue, drawing from experiences such as the Women's Peace Camp in Greenham, the group of women from Reforest the Earth, Gaia Foundation, Women's Environmental Movement, among others (Survival International and Greenpeace campaigners eventually joined in the negotiations) first communicated to Timbmet their intentions of fasting for several days in their

yards. Threatened by the bad publicity that such an event would bring to their company, Timbmet re-opened the dialogue with the women.

The negotiations seemed to have taken a gender biased approach - with the women from the NGOs on the one side, confronting the male Directors of individual companies and the TTF board about their timber sourcing policies. The ship agents, that is those responsible for bringing the timber to the UK, were also later involved in the dialogue. The strategy of negotiation relied on the diplomatic skills of the women and the principle that the traders were 'badly informed about the consequences of their business'.[18] Setting a 'pedagogical' tone to the campaign, the women were then sharing information with the traders, sending them copies of the *UK Forest Network Memorandum*, Amazon research findings from their own organisations, and bringing up the issue of timber certification through the FSC - Forest Stewardship Council.

Hence, the strategy of combining peaceful direct action and negotiations has helped to break through the trade and raised some sense of responsibility within it. It led to some punctual successes in terms of improving the environmental profile of individual companies.[19] However, it needs to be understood in the context of the other strategies and general campaign. Once campaigners are involved in negotiations and compromise, direct actions seem to become less necessary, although they remain as a powerful threat in the background. 'Co-optation' and 'compromise' are risks that campaigners are well aware of. For instance, negotiations are time and energy consuming, demanding research and monitoring from campaigners, and the team of women was informal, unpaid, untrained, though very skilful. Most importantly, this strategy relied on voluntary measures by companies, that is, changes in the 'culture' of the business, rather than changes in policies and in the business itself. Such a strategy may be regarded as promoting *ad hoc* and piecemeal solutions by NGOs focusing on a broader framework, such as Friends of the Earth.

FOE's 'Mahogany is Murder' Boycott Campaign

As far as the mainstream NGOs are concerned, Friends of the Earth is the organisation which has taken the lead in the mahogany campaign, as an extension of its general boycott of tropical timber campaign.[20] In general, FOE's standpoint is that there should be no logging in primary growth forest - due to the fact that it is virtually irreplaceable - whilst it also campaigns for legal and sustainable timber trade in all tropical and temperate areas.

The *Mahogany is Murder* campaign was launched with the publication of a booklet written also by George Monbiot in August 1992. It focused on the illegality of the trade and its negative impacts on some indigenous groups - including the murdering of fourteen Ticuna Indians in 1988. It furthermore highlighted the lack of resources and corruption within Brazilian governmental agencies such as IBAMA and FUNAI, and ended up with an open letter from Brazilian environmentalist and former state secretary José Lutzenberger pleading with the British public not to buy mahogany.

Since then, FOE has tackled the mahogany issue on several fronts calling for a moratorium on the mahogany trade until it can be guaranteed that mahogany is sourced legally and sustainably. The strategies involved a consumer boycott campaign, pressures on the retail and timber sectors, lobbying of local MPs to put pressure on the government for controls to be placed on mahogany imports. It has campaigned for tighter international control on the mahogany trade, for instance, the listing of mahogany in Appendix II of CITES.[21] The organisation has also supported direct action protests: demonstrations outside the Timber Trade Federation and large mahogany retailers.[22] In February 1995, FOE held the 'Mahogany Week' which was a country wide educational and public information campaign involving over 100 FOE local groups, schools, celebrities and exhibitions around the country. Furthermore, the organisation has strengthened up its links with Brazilian NGOs and has set up an office with a special programme on the Amazon - Friends of the Earth International-Amazon Programme - in order to deal with the issue on the ground.[23]

Hence, FOE is the organisation identified by both the trade and the Brazilian officials - particularly the Embassy in London - as their most hostile opponents. The organisation has built up a style of campaigning which is based on reports and journalistic investigations that has gradually granted it a role as a source of public information on the mahogany issue, forests, as well as environmental issues at large.[24] However, the high profile of the campaign has also been used as a successful hook for fund-raising, a fact that contributed to create some controversy over FOE's legitimate campaign claims, especially amongst its opponents, with some negative publicity.

One of the highlights of FOE's publicity over the mahogany campaign was a *Mahogany is Murder* cinema commercial. In this advert, a mahogany toilet seat is overtaken by a flow of blood which spreads in a gigantic tide across the floor, poignantly engulfing a cute monkey toy. Meanwhile, a background voice delivers the message: 'It costs a lot to have a toilet seat made from the world's last mahogany trees. If the Brazilian Indians, who own the trees, don't want to sell them, they can pay with their lives. The killing won't stop until you take action.'[25] This commercial raised a strong controversy and reaction from both the TTF and the Brazilian embassy in London who referred it to the Advertising Standards Authority, who in turn declared FOE's claims as unsubstantiated. This is a classic example of how fund-raising appeals might sometimes oversimplify an issue and overshadow legitimate campaigning claims.

Resembling the slogan *Meat is Murder* of animal welfare activists, the *Mahogany is Murder* slogan used by FOE for the mahogany campaign draws heavily on ethical and moral appeals concerning the lives of Indians who appear mainly as victims. FOE's *Mahogany is Murder. Don't buy it!* leaflet of December 1994 for the 'mahogany week' reads:

> Could you kill another human being? Could you shoot a woman or child in cold blood? Of course not. But these things have happened as a result of the demand here in Britain for furniture and fittings made of mahogany. Every time we buy a piece of Brazilian mahogany, we help to fund the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the people who live there.[26]

The emotional appeal of the slogan, connects the 'murdering' of Indians to the destruction of the forest whilst raising a sense of moral responsibility in the British consumer. It creates a story of victims and villains while reducing the deforestation of the Amazon to the single issue of timber-cutting, particularly a single tree species, with its British connections. Furthermore, whereas 'people' oriented campaigners might have raised criticisms that the association of both slogans - *meat is murder* and *mahogany is murder* - by 'trees' campaigners relates the killing of animals and indigenous peoples in the same way, I would rather point to the productive possibilities of mutual references and influences of different social movements and fields. Hence, as the women's peace camp practices have inspired the Women's Negotiating Team in the mahogany campaign, animal rights campaigns might inspire forest campaigners as much as the political boycott campaign against the apartheid regime in South Africa may be related to the campaign for the mahogany boycott. For more than two decades boycott campaigns have persuaded the public not to buy products such as whale-based cosmetics and pet foods, ozone-eating aerosols, ivory jewellery, fur coats made from big cats, and in a more strictly political sense, South African wines during the apartheid regime. In another but similar vein, the FSC - Forest Stewardship Council - may be understood as a development of the '*harvesting of forest products*' campaign run by the 'fair trade' programmes of social NGOs.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in the Background

The FSC is not exactly a specific strategy within the mahogany campaign, but it has acted as an important background context setting up principles and criteria and overall targets for forest management world-wide, against which the mahogany campaign could relate to. Pushing individual timber companies and the trade as a whole to join in the FSC process has been one of the targets of campaigners, as it was the case of the Women's Negotiating Team.

Broadly speaking, the FSC has dominated the agenda of the main international forest NGO gatherings over the last few years (ZHOURI, 1998). In short, it consists of the development of an international certification scheme which involves close co-operation between NGOs and companies. Because it is a voluntary market tool, the FSC can be understood within the framework of a liberal regulatory approach.

The idea was developed in the UK by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which is the organisation pushing the FSC world-wide. The overall argument is that forests can be harvested, and therefore, it is possible for traders to make money from timber if the sustainability of its extraction can be guaranteed. Nevertheless, one of the major practical difficulties that this argument entails is the common understanding or definition of '*sustainability*' between parties with different interests such as industry and NGOs. The establishment of the FSC has not been an easy task, but despite all the political and procedural controversies, the process has kept underway since it was first conceived in 1990.

WWF-UK was already working in partnership with British companies aiming at certified sourcing of timber by the end of 1995, through an initiative called *WWF 1995 Group*.[27] The FSC provided, thus, the instrument for achieving WWF 1995 Group's target. The FSC general aim is defined as follows:

> ...To support *environmentally* appropriate, *socially* beneficial, and *economically* viable management of world's forests. The FSC hopes to accomplish this goal by evaluating, accrediting and monitoring certifiers, and by strengthening national certification and forest management capacity through training, education, and the development of national certification initiatives.[28]

It is significant to highlight that it attempts to accommodate 'environmental', 'social' and 'economic' interests, a fact that places it as a classic and concrete example of a campaign initiative that exposes the articulation, with subsequent tensions, of what I am calling 'trees' and 'people' perspectives.

Public concerns about the impact of forest management has led to a proliferation of certification programmes and self-labelling initiatives in the marketplace. However, the integrity of such 'eco-label' claims on wood products is highly disputed.[29] Thus, the FSC is an attempt to accredit for the integrity of certification through a series of agreed standards, principles and criteria between private, environmental and social sectors.[30]

The FSC was officially founded in October 1993 in Toronto, Canada. Its headquarters were later set up in Oaxaca, Mexico in 1994, with funding from the Governments of Austria and Mexico, and by WWF-Netherlands and the Ford Foundation.[31] It is a membership organisation with the general assembly as the final authority of the association. An elected board is structured to achieve a balance between social, environmental and economic interests, as well as between 'Southern' and 'Northern' countries. The board is composed of nine members from which two represent the economic sector and the other seven are meant to be represented by social, environmental and indigenous organisations. The general assembly was initially divided into two voting chambers: the economic chamber with twenty-five per cent of the voting power in one hand, and the social and environmental chamber with a combined seventy-five per cent of the voting weight. In its first general assembly in June 1996, the two voting chamber system was reviewed to be replaced in the future by three, whereby each one of the three sectors would equally have one third of the total voting weight.[32]

The FSC's strength is that it involves environmental, social and human rights organisations, and that it attempts to be equally balanced as far as 'South' and 'North' representation is concerned. However, the partnership with industries is a total novel experience for many NGOs who traditionally hold the economic sectors as their opponents. Hence, their support to the FSC process has been dealt with caution and criticism.[33] Thus, because a common ground has to be achieved between parties with different interests, particularly NGOs and companies, the FSC has still to overcome

many difficulties. Besides technical, tactical and procedural disputes over definitions, standards, criteria and principles, concerns range from: the actual existence of a market demand for certified products, the cost and benefits of the process, to the more political and operational doubts related to representation and transparency of the FSC.

There is clearly a general concern and demand for 'greener' products in the market with the related proliferation of 'eco-labelling' which makes the FSC initiative timely. However, there is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified products. Estimated figures of actual 'green' consumers suggests that they do not represent a big niche of the market. In Germany, for instance, one of the 'greener' countries in the world, this market accounts for an estimate of only five per cent, whereas in Britain it responds for approximately one per cent.[34] Moreover, the cost of a certification process and its 'chains of custody', which is the crucial monitoring and verification process on the ground, also raises doubts from the trade point of view, since its ultimate interest and goal are to economically profit from the business.[35]

In this sense, the high cost of the process concerns not only the trade, but poses also a problem for the achievement of the social targets claimed by the FSC.[36] It is not clear how small communities and stake holders in the Amazon Basin would cope with the high costs of a certification process. Although it planned to deal with all forest products - timber and non-timber - the FSC has been mainly focusing on timber. One of the main reasons for this is that the economic sector within the FSC only deals with timber. The other products in the market - such as rubber and nuts - are traded by smaller producers and communities which are not relevant in the world market. Thus, 'Southern-social' participation in the process has been very problematic. Most certifications by the FSC accredited certifiers have to date been of large-scale industrial forestry operations. Furthermore, the level of assessment of the social aspects involving forest management has been downplayed by a forestry dominated perspective, and thus, it has been debated by many environmental and social organisations.[37] In many cases to date, the lack of national forest management standards and certification processes leads to the direct application of international Principles and Criteria by 'Northern' certifiers with expertise in forestry, but not necessarily social concern or anthropological sensibility. The process results in lower standards and poor participation, whilst also revealing that local specificities cannot be accommodated on international levels, since the certifiers' emphasis on biodiversity and particular technical 'forest management' concepts tends to obscure social aspects. Significantly, these are some of the problems similarly faced by 'trees' oriented campaigners who hold a perspective on 'forest management' also underlined by a strict forestry expertise.

Notwithstanding, the FSC has acknowledged and attempted to address these problems, as in the first meeting of its Social Working Group held in April 1997, in Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, difficulties concerning the involvement and benefits of certification for small-holders and communities in tropical forests is very likely to remain and the process will continue to be better applied to large-scale industrial producers.

To sum up, the mahogany campaign has mobilised both 'trees' and 'trees and people' campaigners within a common framework, with their different and combined strategies regarding the effects of the timber trade between Britain and the Amazon upon the rainforest and the indigenous peoples. The different campaigning approaches presented here vary in a spectrum that ranges from a more 'transformative' perspective to a more 'reformist' standpoint, although each one of them may, to a certain degree, also accommodate immediate reformist needs for a long-term transformative target.[38] Their strength lies in the fact that they are not mutually exclusive, but they can co-ordinate, liaise and network within their common grounds and principles. Thus, direct action and pressure group campaigners can influence the FSC by lobbying it towards higher standards concerning forest management, including social considerations, meanwhile also pushing companies to submit to FSC Principles and Criteria. On the other hand, FSC benefits from the fact that direct action campaigners and pressure groups create public awareness and push the private sector towards more responsible practices. A concern is whether pressure groups and direct action campaigners might get caught up within the traps of the liberal agenda by traders and politicians willing to share and negotiate. For example, *Participation Overkill* is an interesting expression used by a German campaigner who tried to define the feeling of acting on so many different fronts as a result of traders and politicians' 'openness' to NGOs' participation. Furthermore, a critical view concerning the FSC is whether, as a voluntary market tool, this initiative can serve politicians to conceal their lack of action on national as well as on international levels, such as in bodies as the United Nations.[39] Certification, for instance, has become a topic of UN conferences as a following up process to the Earth Summit in bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests within the Commission for Sustainable Development. FSC has dominated the agenda of campaigners in the Northern hemisphere and they may lose sight of it as *a* particular market tool and perceive it rather as *the* solution for the problems of deforestation. As far as FOE and the mahogany campaign is concerned, similar concerns can be raised. The exclusive focus on mahogany may lead campaigners to think that it is indeed the ultimate problem of deforestation in the Amazon. It may, thus, obscure a rather more complex reality on the ground, which is related to long standing sociological patterns and structures as well as policies and political projects driven by domestic agendas.

GENERAL OUTCOME AND RESPONSES TO THE MAHOGANY CAMPAIGN

The mahogany campaign tackles a very specific problem related to the trade connections between the Amazon and the UK, with possible extensions and implications as far as international trade mechanisms as a whole are concerned. Thus, it is within this very peculiar context and dimension that it should be understood. In this sense, the British campaigners' combined strategies have promoted a few changes in the situation of the trade with drops in the mahogany imports since

the campaign set off in the early 1990s. For example, as a result of the campaign, several individual companies have withdrawn from the trade, including major DIY stores, B&Q, Sainsbury's Homebase, Texas, Great Mills and Do-It-All. Furthermore, by 1994, twenty-four timber companies had already joined the WWF 1995 Group (PORRITT, 1994: 55).

Hence, it is relevant to look more closely into the perspectives and responses from the British traders and Brazilian officials regarding campaigners' concerns about the tropical timber trade in general and the mahogany trade in particular.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRADE

The British timber trade has responded through different initiatives since environmental concerns and pressures about tropical rainforests mounted in the mid 1980s. According to the chairman of the National Hardwood Association of the TTF in Britain, 'in the late '80s the burning of the Amazon forest awoke the environmental consciousness of the public and the timber trade was deeply affected by those environmental concerns and pressure'.[40] This is further highlighted by another trade employee:

> Boycott campaigns from the late 80s, early 90s, gave the impression to the public that timber was not an environmentally friendly material to use. The timber industry was faced with these restrictive clauses in contracts and losses of key markets. We had to do something to combat that.[41]

Hence, the Timber Trade Federation launched in 1990 a PR - Public Relations - campaign called *Forests Forever: a campaign for wood.* This campaign sought as a counter-argument to the environmental allegations and to promote wood as an environmentally friendly material.

The trade, in general, regards environmental concerns as 'emotionally charged campaigns'. A Forests Forever guide for architects states:

> Emotionally charged campaigns, led by environmental pressure groups, have linked the timber trade to tropical deforestation, to the destruction of 'old growth' forests in temperate and boreal regions and the loss of 'bio-diversity' in forests. While there is cause for concern, these problems should be put into perspective. Environmental groups, in their legitimate desire to raise awareness of environmental issues, have a tendency to overstate the case and to ignore the positive progress that is being made in forest management around the world.[42]

Although acknowledging the 'alarming rate of deforestation' in the tropics, the trade regards it as a 'local' or 'domestic' problem against the global

structural framing of environmental campaigners. In short, their argument is that deforestation has to do with 'overpopulation' and 'economic difficulties' of developing countries, by contrast to the over consumption and production patterns of the 'rich nations' argument which is mentioned in Agenda 21. Hence, for the trade farming and cattle-ranching are still to blame as the basic causes of deforestation in tropical forests, particularly the Brazilian Amazon.[43]

Nevertheless, responses to the mahogany campaign launched by environmentalists in 1992 were given by individual trade initiatives, as mentioned above, and furthermore by the Timber Trade Federation itself. As a body, the trade has responded to the allegations of illegality of the mahogany trade with a voluntary non-binding agreement signed in September 1993 between the National Hardwood Association (NHA) of the TTF and the Association of Export Companies of the state of Pará (AIMEX), in the Amazon region. The trade acknowledges that 'problems of boundary identification in isolated and difficult terrain, makes it difficult to refute that some timber may be wrongfully extracted'.[44] The agreement states that NHA members would buy mahogany only from those AIMEX companies who voluntarily signed a declaration that their sources are legal under Brazilian laws. It is a provisional and non-binding accord, with no legal or disciplinary powers. It simply intends to ensure that Brazilian companies are obeying the national law by providing all the documentation required, something that they were supposed to do anyway.

The accord is heavily criticised by NGOs and it is also admittedly classified by the traders themselves as a 'gentlemen's agreement'.[45] It is restricted to the export companies from the state of Pará, and does not cover the issue of forest management plans. According to NGOs, it has no independent monitoring, nor mechanisms on the ground sufficient to ensure legality since governmental bodies such as IBAMA and FUNAI face problems of limitations of resources, limited personnel and even corruption, a local situation which finds documentation being falsified. Another aspect highlighted by NGO allegations has been that although AIMEX companies have no longer extracted mahogany from indigenous reserves themselves - something they have done in the past - they presently buy it from third parties, the 'middle man' who is actually the woodcutter.[46]

The trade denies the allegations of illegal logging activities, although they have no mechanisms themselves to prove the contrary. Arguments raising concerns about foreign imposition on Brazilian affairs are always used to seek NGOs' pressures and drive their attention to Brazilian responsibility. However, another practical response from the trade has been to pay annual visits to their suppliers in the Amazon, and in one of their latest visits, they openly admitted the existence of problems.[47] As a result, they have agreed with a *Women's Negotiating Team* proposal for a 'chain of custody' project in partnership with Brazilian and British NGOs.[48] On the other hand, they denied support for FOE's proposal of listing mahogany under Appendix II of CITES preferring to ally themselves to the Brazilian government position in the matter. Hence, the trade seems to agree with individual, voluntary and timely initiatives rather than changes in an overall situation of the trade, as in the case of tighter international legislation.

The same tendency is identified regarding certification. The TTF's position about the FSC process continues to be one of criticism. Because the trade, in general, regards deforestation as related to 'domestic' problems, it perceives the solutions to the problems of forest management as coming from local and governmental initiatives:

> ...the solutions to the problems of forest management will have to come from the producing nations and from national governments - through continual progress under the terms of commitments such as ITTO Objective 2000, and the Forest Principles signed at UNCED in 1992. This is because so many of the problems associated with forest management are outside the industry sphere of influence - issues such as land ownership, distribution of wealth in producing countries, and the allocation of resources to forest departments, can only be resolved at government level.[49]

Moreover, this position implies that 'forest management' is merely about economic and technical forestry procedures and policies, dissociating it from social, environmental and ethical concerns. Thus, the TTF regards the FSC concept of responsible forest management as being 'too idealistic':

> For some people, certification through the FSC is very difficult. And I think that the FSC makes its own problems...But our first priority is to ensure sustainable survival. And you can do that. There is no problem. If you can get hold of a little bit of forest, legally control it, you can put the system in place...*If you start adding some of the problems of human rights, some of the problems of workers' rights, whether they are getting the right level of wages...I think you begin to complicate the issue. I think the FSC has been too idealistic*...If we start to deal with ethnic problems...those problems go on forever. While you are trying to solve that, the forest is going...if you can get certification, which is a way of looking at...'are you managing the whole forest properly?'...there is no direct link. It is a marketing scheme. It is a marketing scheme for the 1995 club to get the NGOs off their back.[50]

The statement makes clear the distinction between a 'technical forestry' - *strictu sensus* environmental/economic approach, in other words, a forest without people - on the one hand, and on the other, an enlarged environmental concern that encompasses ethical and social considerations, that is an accommodation of 'trees and people', rather than the abstraction of social relations from 'nature'. It makes believe that NHA/AIMEX agreement, the trade's dialogue with NGOs, and its visits to their suppliers in Brazil, are part of the trade's public relations strategy with NGOs rather than a genuine concern about the effect of their economic activity for the forest and its people, as the Women Negotiating Team and others want to believe. Furthermore, pressure from the trade over WWF and the FSC to redefine

their social and environmental standards might undermine the already difficult role of those parties supporting the FSC. In addition, the trade's position regarding NGOs initiatives demonstrates the contradictions and tensions of a debate whereby words such as 'sustainabilitity' and 'forest management' are commonplace, but rather meaning different things and implying different and opposing goals by sectors occupying contentious positions in the field.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS

The Amazon has been one of the main channels whereby Brazil is projected into the world. More precisely, since the 1980s it has been the most important 'political currency' in the relationship between Brazil and the Northern hemisphere. However, occupying a peripheral position in the world's economy - drowned by the external debt and economic crisis - Brazil's policies towards the Amazon have been ambiguous and ambivalent, maintaining historical patterns and mainly reactive to international pressure.

Hence, following a world-wide tendency, there has been more improvement in the environmental rhetoric rather than in concrete and substantial governmental policies. Thus, for instance, governmental co-operation initiatives such as the *Pilot Programme for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests* launched in the early 1990s - although mainly focused in the Amazon and very limited in relation to the problems it seeks to resolve - involved compromise of investment funds of $1.5 million million dollars by the G7, from which only a small fraction of $20 million was actually disbursed during the programme's first five years of implementation.[51]

Nevertheless, international concerns about the Amazon have placed it as a top priority in the Brazilian foreign office's public relations agenda. In the UK, the Brazilian embassy's website reserves a special site for the topic of rainforests and, significantly enough, another separate one for Brazilian mahogany. They share the same section, and therefore status, with the topics of street children, the Brazilian economy and Brazil as an emerging market - the other country's images projected abroad, and particularly into the UK.[52]

Enrolled in such a group of issues, the Amazon is presented as a 'problem' - environmental and social alike - to be resolved by Brazil with international co-operation. However, a more positive image of the Amazon is also found in the section about the general features of the country revealing the Brazilian ambivalence in relation to it. The text proudly describes the physical and human geography of the Amazon region with special emphasis on its 'natural exuberance', as though an important constitutive part of the Brazilian identity.[53] However, although this general presentation might correspond to the projection of the country's image in the global arena at large, the mahogany topic is certainly designed to respond to British NGOs' concerns.

Addressed to the European public at large, the embassy's statement about rainforests opens up with the following:

> Tropical forests have economic value to the countries in which they are located. Above all, they are the habitat of indigenous and migrated populations wholly dependent on forest resources for their survival. Furthermore, they lie within national jurisdiction, and governments exercise full sovereignty over them. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Government understands that there is no contradiction between the full exercise of sovereignty over tropical forests and international co-operation as a means to make possible their rational use and conservation.[54]

This first paragraph establishes the framework in which the Amazon is debated with the 'developed world'. Firstly, the forest is presented as having an *economic value for the country*; second, it is the *home of people* who live from its resources; the third point refers to the sensitive topic of *Brazilian sovereignty* about it; and the fourth aspect opens up the possibility for *international co-operation*, setting up the limits whereby international 'intervention' is accepted. The emphasis is on the economic dimension. Environmental, symbolic, cultural, spiritual, scientific or aesthetic values are not mentioned, whereas the rest of the text gives the impression that even the economic value is rather reduced to the mere exploitation of raw material. Furthermore, as the statement follows: '...the settlement, economic development, and integration of the Amazon region to the rest of the country has been, and still is, one of the main goals of policy-making in Brazil.' This is clearly a legacy of the military geopolitics and 'development' views in the 1960s represented by the slogan: '*integrar para não entregar*', meaning 'integrate in order not to give it away to the foreigners', which depicts also an emphasis on territoriality as a significant element of the Brazilian culture. It underlined the Brazilian 'march to the west' initiated since the 1930s, and its intensification during the expansion of the capitalist frontier by the military in the 1960s, with the rapid and massive projects of infrastructure - the building of roads and hydroelectric dams - and incentives for agribusiness and settlement, within an overall geopolitical perspective.[55] Indeed, these were precisely the policies that originated most of the problems in the Amazon. They have made a comeback in the agenda of the current administration, this time within the context of the regionalisation of the market, as for instance the new concepts of axes for integration comprising the opening of new roads, waterways, and railroads with diverse routes aiming at reaching the markets of the Northern hemisphere.[56]

In a seminar about the images of Latin America in the European media,[57] the Brazilian ambassador in London, Rubens Barbosa, presented his overall agenda for the UK. As a response to the increasing competition in the world market, the Brazilian government has adopted a strategy of singularisation of Brazil in relation to other Latin American countries. Latin America is understood as a totalising European construction whereby individual country idiosyncrasies are concealed. The new approach seeks the association of the country's image more accordingly to the regionalisation of the economy, which in the Brazilian case means the *Mercosur* - the economic co-operation treaty in southern South America.

Following this standpoint, the Brazilian government has reserved a special place for London, and the NGOs, in its strategy for the European continent. London is considered as an 'opinion-maker centre' capable of influencing other nations in Europe, as stated by the ambassador:

> If the perception that opinion-makers in London form about the area today is different from what they have already formed, there will be a big change and impact in other interested groups in other countries. In our case, we are concentrating in three areas of opinion-makers in London: the media, the city, and the NGOs. All of them, in their specific area of activity, form opinions which will reflect in other countries.

Thus, the relationship between the Brazilian embassy in London and the British NGOs has been characterised by a diplomatic dialogue, since they are believed to influence the decision-making of the British government, the British entrepreneurs, and by extension, the other European NGOs, governments and investors. According to the environment and human rights secretary at the embassy:

> I dedicate eighty per cent of my time to the dialogue with the NGOs. There is a great demand from NGOs based in the UK, and also from those in Brazil, over our work here...they are well informed, but a problem that we struggle with here is the image that Brazil is a huge tropical forest. They are elements of a puzzle: street children, forest, Indians, football, carnival are put together, but they do not form a totality. There is a bond missing there, and this bond is the Brazilian reality and its billions of other things that form a whole, an organic totality.[58]

Mainly focused on the demands concerning the Amazon, thus, the diplomatic responses to NGOs have comprised regular visits from the presidents of IBAMA and FUNAI for meetings with NGOs in London. In the agenda are the government's policies in relation to the mahogany trade and the demarcation of indigenous lands. Naturally, some NGOs are regarded as more preferable interlocutors than others, according to the criteria of their capacity and policy of developing projects in the region. Hence, for instance, from the environmental sector, WWF is perceived as 'more serious' than others because of its 'co-operation initiatives', by contrast to FOE which is regarded as 'more concerned with its own campaign and organisation'.[59]

However, such diplomatic visits of IBAMA and FUNAI officials seem to be used mainly as means to soothing NGO pressures since mahogany is not regarded as a major problem in the Amazon.

> Mahogany is a small problem in the universe of the Amazon. It was transformed into a campaign here because it provides a linkage capable of moving the British public: *your toilet seat has caused the death of three Indians.* This is not true. There was death of Indians in conflict with loggers, but this was an incident in 1988. But to make a campaign and

> say that mahogany is the motor of the murdering of Indians is not true. It is an exaggeration.

So, if the trade regards the 'mahogany problem' as a domestic matter, to be dealt with by Brazilian authorities, the latter seem to downplay its relevance by reducing it to matters of British campaigning dynamics and self-interests. On the other hand, there is no overall denial of 'problems' resulting from the illegal logging in the region, but reactions seem to be rather concerned with FOE's campaign strategies. As the secretary further states:

> There are obviously problems of invasion of indigenous areas by loggers and also illegal cuttings. IBAMA has frequently apprehended huge quantities of timber cut illegally. But there is a lot of exaggeration in the campaign.

Following from this, FOE's campaign for a moratorium on the mahogany trade and the listing of mahogany under CITES is rejected with the following argument:

> The demand for a moratorium on the exploitation of mahogany is not feasible in Brazil, and would be a very stupid policy. If a moratorium is established and the exportation is prohibited, the price of mahogany goes down in the market. Then, we have the destruction of a sector and the invasion of the area by the predators, those who cut for smuggling without any control or environmental procedure. The exportation is subject to environmental regulations. Because they have to reach the international market, they have to enter this country, and here there are more concerns and demands for regulations. The smuggler cuts for the internal market, and they are not concerned about the environmental impacts. He is after the immediate profit.

It seems, thus, that despite initially disregarding the importance of the mahogany campaign, in a reversed way, his arguments focus on the relevance of the international trade as a form of regulating the mahogany logging. He appears to admit on the one hand, the failure of domestic regulations, policies and controls on the ground and, on the other hand, the role of international pressure and the arguments of NGOs, confirming, thus, the idea that policies have been mainly reactive to international pressure.

In 1996, Brazil's National Space Research Institute (INPE) released satellite data showing that deforestation had increased by thirty-four per cent, from 11.100 square kilometres per year in 1991 to 14.900 square kilometres a year between 1992 and 1994. In an agile strategic manoeuvre, simultaneous with the announcement of these figures, and before any negative national and international repercussions, the Brazilian government responded with a package of measures, which were considered the toughest in many years.[60] The measures included two major points regarding mahogany: a two-year suspension on new permits to harvest mahogany and another

rare tree called virola - which grows in the Amazon's flood plains - along with the revision of all authorised forest concessions; and secondly, changes in the legislation that increased the amount of land that farmers and ranchers must preserve from clear felling from fifty to eighty per cent of their property.[61]

In broader terms, the basic arguments of Brazilian officials involve matters related to development - the economic importance of the timber industry for the region as the second source of income tax for the Amazonian states, and also providing one hundred thousand jobs. The 'job' argument is indeed the most recurrent. In a meeting held in London between the NGOs and the IBAMA president at the time, Eduardo Martins - a former WWF campaigner in Brazil - the focus was on the governmental measures to deal with the increase of deforestation. Yet the mahogany issue dominated the agenda, despite claims that mahogany was only one in a series of problems in the Amazon.[62] Ambivalent about his NGO background and his actual position in government, Martins made the following assessment about the mahogany campaign in the UK, which coincides with the position of the embassy's secretary mentioned above:

> Mahogany is a good flag ship in many ways. It is a valuable species and involves very clear recognisable groups in the process, here and there. So, it is extremely positive. The problem is that it was too efficient in the work of NGOs, and therefore it obfuscates the rest. This is not only for NGOs here, but they have managed to transfer such a consistent and efficient perspective that the process back there in Brazil is sometimes confused. And this is complicated, because if one starts thinking that the problem is mahogany, then one is not able to resolve the problem. There are 300 other species being explored in the Amazon. The process of timber exploration has to do with the way of life of the colonist, and also the process whereby the big farmer arranges capital to invest in deforestation, for instance...and the same mahogany that is exported is - the rest of it - also consumed internally by the Brazilian middle classes. So, there are also other dimensions of the problem that are not identified...the issue of local communities is very complex. Indigenous communities, for instance, some of them, like the Kaiapó, want to exploit their timber.[63]

Martins' assessment of some of the effects of international campaigning over local realities raises relevant concerns, although confirming the problems identified by NGOs. However, the actual problems are undermined and marginalised by statements and arguments centred on an analysis of 'how the NGO world works'. By focusing on the NGO dynamics, Martins gives the impression of speaking as an NGO person rather than as a governmental official. Nevertheless, with such a position, he ends up by reassuring and reproducing the overall governmental attitude of marginalising the issue whilst responding to it on international diplomatic grounds. The policies towards the Amazon, and the possible conflicts between notions of 'development' and 'environmental preservation', are de-emphasised. As mahogany is

not regarded as a major problem in the context of the Amazon, but a major British concern, it is dealt with mainly by diplomatic *ad hoc* solutions.

On the other hand, NGOs have never fully addressed the 'job' argument. By focusing on human rights and social justice concerns mainly related to ethnic groups - the indigenous peoples - they render invisible the majority of the population related to the trade, who hold no visible marks of ethnic difference, but who are equally exploited by the trade. Hence, the issue of alternative modes of 'development' rather than the logging activity is either marginally addressed, or mainly tackled within the dominant market realm of a disputable framework of 'sustainable forest management'.

CONCLUSION

In the late 80s the burning of the forest was the commonest image of the Amazon spread through the media and the campaigns of environmental groups. In the 1990s, it is logging activity in the Amazon which preoccupies the agendas of most British environmental NGOs. The campaign against the mahogany trade heightened the need for special working links between NGOs based in Brazil and in Britain, since the UK is regarded as one of the major importers of that particular timber. Undoubtedly, Non-Governmental Organisations have become one of the most important political forces in recent years, challenging traditional and nation-state based forms of political organisations. Environmental organisations are among these and their technical expertise has been a necessary and effective tool, for instance, in setting up new forms of forest management and policies. Nevertheless, by over emphasizing forestry, the Amazon ecological, social, political and cultural diversity may be reduced and subsumed under a single globalised perspective. A crucial future challenge for environmental groups, thus, will be to escape from the asepsis of the technical-scientific distance from local cultural contexts, which seems to have driven them currently into the trap of the liberal market-oriented agenda.

Logging activity in the Amazon underlines mahogany as a major campaign focus whereas the setting up of a transnational certification scheme – the Forest Stewardship Council - has dominated all agendas. Certification seems to be presented as *the* solution to the Amazon problems masking the fact that it is rather a means of 'correcting' the already existing market practices. It is costly and addresses major companies only, instead of promoting local-based alternatives of sustainable development.

As mentioned above, major transnational NGOs such as Greenpeace, FOE and WWF have supported FSC initiatives worldwide and in the Amazon in particular. A recent interview of WWF's director, the Swiss biologist Claude Martin, published in a Brazilian mainstream paper, *Folha the São Paulo* (12 June, 2000) celebrates the victory of '*ambientalismo de resultados*'- 'environmentalism of results' - against what he named as the 'fundamentalist environmentalism' of radical organisations WWF's representative places certification as a means to monitor the activities of

logging companies, and thus it seems that he perceives the NGO role as that of making sure that such an instrument works out efficiently and more companies join in. However, the effectiveness of certification is highly depended on a consumer's demand for certified timber, something which still comprises a very small proportion of the first world's consumer behaviour, and is further away from the reality in countries such as Brazil.

Furthermore, a major concern regards the faith on the market itself as an agent to save the forests, instead of discussions about the necessary drop on the levels of consumerism from both northern and southern countries. In other words, the *sufficiency* revolution that should go hand in hand with the *efficiency* revolution is not addressed by the certification strategy. In name of sustainable development, NGOs are now working together with transnational timber companies in other to improve their production practices both ecologically and socially. With support of local research organisations in the Amazon, such as Imazon, the idea is to promote the timber industry as the economic future for the Amazon region rather than cattle ranching and agribusiness (see *Folha de São Paulo*, 22-10-2000, p.A30). With the support of internatinal NGOs and local forestry researchers, industrial forest management certified by the FSC becomes highly attractive to former criticised national and international official bodies, such as the World Bank and state agencies in the Amazon region. The state of Acre, for instance, intends to dedicate twenty-five per cent of the state to certified forest management, which seems to make sense in the context of the advancing agricultural frontier. Thus, NGOs seem now to be addressing the local official claims for the development of job opportunities for the Amazonian people through industrialization. However, the problem with this strategy is that ecological and social sustainability of local economies, societies and cultures are not considered. In fact, the actual certified forests are not competing with agricultural frontiers in the Amazon, but rather with local production systems which could also be regarded as sustainable economies (for a classification of the production system in the Amazon see Lima & Pozzobon, 2000).

The certification perspective of NGOs is thus driven by a globalised industrial approach within a Western development framework of economic growth. In such a global market perspective, the diversity of social and economic modes of existance in the Amazon are all doomed to proletarisation, that is, to their transformation into labour forces capable of feeding the timber industry, and in turn boost local GNP rates. In this sense, sustainability – both ecological and social – is reduced to sustainability of an industrial enterprise within the global economy. So, coming back to WWF's praising of the 'environmentalism of results', a necessary question must be urgently posed: what is the nature of the results being achieved and who are actually their beneficiaries?

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ABSTRACT

The campaign against the mahogany trade from the Amazon has heightened the need for special working links between NGOs based in Brazil and those located in the Northern hemisphere, particularly Britain, since the UK is regarded as one of the major importers of that particular timber. The article discusses the origins, development and different strategies of the mahogany campaign - the major transnational campaign for the Amazon rainforest in the 1990s - as well as the reactions from the timber trade and the Brazilian government. Considering the interface of social justice and forest issues, the analysis presents the ways in which the Amazon is understood and projected into the global sphere, and how such a global perspective – currently dominated by efforts towards timber certification through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)- may render a more complex local reality invisible.

RESUMO

A campanha contra o comércio de mogno extraído ilegalmente da Amazônia tem acentuado a necessidade de um trabalho conjunto entre ONGs brasileiras e aquelas situadas no hemisfério Norte, sobretudo as britânicas, uma vez que o Reino Unido é considerado um dos maiores importadores dessa madeira. O artigo discute as origens, o desenvolvimento e as diferentes estratégias empregadas na campanha do mogno - principal campanha transnacional pela floresta amazônica nos anos 90 – assim como as reações por parte do comércio madereiro e do governo brasileiro. Considerando as interfaces entre justiça social e os temas florestais, a análise apresenta as diferentes formas em que a Amazônia é compreendida e projetada no espaço global, sublinhando como tais perspectivas globais – hoje concentradas nos esforços para a certificação florestal através do Conselho de Manejo Florestal (FSC) - acabam por tornar invisível uma realidade local mais complexa.

NOTES

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[1] Based on an anthropological approach focused on personal and political trajectories of campaigners and their articulated concerns with biodiversity and social justice issues, I have identified the three main tendencies amongst British-based campaigners for the Amazon, which I metaphorically call 'trees', 'trees and people'and 'people'. Some of the 'tree' campaigners are found in different enviornmental NGOs such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth (FOE) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). 'Tree and people' campaigners are spread out in smaller groups and networks such as Reforest the Earth, Gaia Foundation and the Rainforest Movement, whereas 'people' campaigners are those working for Oxfam, Cafoid, Christian Aid, among others. Campaigners involved in groups such as Survival International may be identified within 'trees and people' and 'people' tendencies. For a more comprehensive explanation see further Zhouri (1998; 2000)

[2]Brazil holds the record as one of the world's most unequal systems of land distribution, a problem deeply rooted in its historical colonial past. According to official statistics (IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatistica), in 1985 small farms (properties with less than ten hectares per family) accounted for approximately fifty-three per cent of the rural properties, but only possessed three per cent of the farming land. At the other extreme, large estates called *latifúndios* represented one per cent of the farmers, but owned forty-three per cent of the farming land. The situation remains pretty much the same in the 1990s (ARMANI, 1996). In terms of population this means that four million peasant farmers share three per cent of the farming land in a country where forty-two per cent of the arable land remains idle, while thirty-two million people live in misery. See further BRANFORD & GLOCK (1985), MARTINS (1988), VELTMEYER (1993).

[3]See ZHOURI (1998); KOLK (1996); KECK & SIKKINK (1998).

[4]See COWELL (1990) for an illustration of the main topics, framework and general atmosphere of the period, and also analysis of the documentary series broadcast by Channel Four, *The Decade of Destruction*, in ZHOURI (1998).

[5]For a general framing of this issue see further *UK-Forest Network Memorandum*. This is a collective NGO statement on issues related to national and international forests which was signed out by environmental, social and human rights organisations in 1994. Within the general framework described above, the document calls for the recognition of the underlying, and global, political, industrial and socio-economic causes of deforestation. The primary causes pin-pointed by the document are the 'current consumption levels, human greed, inappropriate incentives and corruption as these affect the attitudes towards ecological and human resources' (p.13). Furthermore, it states that 'consumption thus impacts directly on forests: both directly timber and pulp requirements which encourage logging, oil drilling etc., and indirectly through such factors as forcing peasants into forests by the appropriation of the best farmland for exported cash crops. Some of these impacts are now well recognised, such as the demand for rare tropical timbers such as mahogany that is causing widespread forest damage in Brazil' (p.15). The document then recognises that 'high consumption and debt-ridden society are both largely the result of particular *global trading patterns* that have developed over the past few decades...with underlying impacts in forests. The importance attached to the needs of trade has encouraged forests to be viewed primarily as sources of raw materials for commerce' (p.16-17). After relating the forest decline to 'more deeply rooted problems related to poverty, equity and bases of power', the memorandum calls for moves 'addressing underlying issues of over-consumption amongst the rich elite and of poverty, landlessness, debt and the inter-related problems of equity and population amongst the rest of the global population. Calling upon UK's international obligations the documents demand that the government should prohibit the import of timber unless it can be proved to come from legal sources (p.40). Furthermore, 'It should also prohibit the import of all tree species listed as endangered under the IUCN -World Conservation Unit - definition unless they come from certified sources or well-managed plantations. The UK should lobby for more timber species, including temperate timber species, to be listed in CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and should implement CITES rigorously for timber species' (p.43).

[6] I am using 'timber trade' in a broad sense, as NGOs use it to refer to any business relating to timber, from forestry operations to high street retailers selling timber and paper products. For an overview of the impact of the timber trade on global forest estate see DUDLEY et al. (1996).

[7] International body originated through the workings of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to address the problems of forestry and the international timber trade. It has been a battleground between the trade and the environmental movement, as well as 'consumer' and 'producer' countries. See NGOs positions, for

instance, in *The Ecologist*, 20 (5), Sep./Oct. 1990. For a concise overview of the ITTO see DUDLEY et al. (1996: 121-123).

[8] The 'invasion' of South East Asian companies in the Brazilian Amazon has been cause for great concern since the first news broke through the press in 1996. In September 1996, the Malaysian companies WTK and Samling Strategic Corporation had already bought at least two Brazilian timber companies and hundreds of thousands of hectares in the Amazon region. Since then, they have increased their presence in the Amazon, acquiring land and other Brazilian companies constituting the most recent logging threat to the Amazon. See *O Estado de São Paulo*, 1-5-96; *Parabólicas,* 20 (3) July 1996; *Folha de São Paulo,* 16-09-96.

[9] *Swietenia macrophylla* or Brazilian mahogany also popularly known as 'ouro verde' (green gold) is one of the most valuable timbers in the market. In the Brazilian Amazon, the targets of loggers and timber traders have been the states of Mato Grosso, Acre, Rondônia, Amazonas and particularly Pará. In Rondônia, former main producer of mahogany, the tree species is no longer found outside indigenous reserves and protected areas. The main focus of production has moved to the state of Pará, which is now responsible for 64% of the volume exported between 1985 and 1990. Also in Pará, the most targeted reserves of mahogany are in indigenous lands, those of the Kaiapó people (RICARDO et al. 1996: 81-84). For case studies of the impact of logging on some of the indigenous tribes see MONBIOT (1992) and HERING & TANNER (1998). The fact that mahogany grows in discontinuous areas and that most of the indigenous territories are not yet demarcated, as granted by the 1988 Constitution, results in the entanglement of the two problems. STONEHOUSE (1995: 3) summarises the main technical argument: '...while mahogany cut for export is a small percentage of production, it is particularly responsible for deforestation, because of two specific characteristics of the species. First, because it is valuable, it is extracted at very low densities, being commercially exploitable at one tree per four hectares. Second, because it is scarce, wood cutters cover very large areas to cut it. The trails which this process leaves in the forest effectively lower the marginal cost of extracting other, less valuable species, the extraction of which further opens the forest until it is accessible to shifting settlers, who complete the destruction by agricultural clearance. These latter processes, the argument runs, would not happen but for the initial penetration of the forest for mahogany, because of its high value on export markets - particularly Britain.'

[10] Personal interviews with GEORGE MONBIOT on 03-08-95 and RICHARD HERING on 16-09-96.

[11] Interview with SIMON COUNSELL, former FOE rainforest campaigner on 19-10-95. According to DUDLEY et al. (1996), environmental groups were in general very sceptical about campaigning for rainforests in the early 1980s. FOE initially argued that 'the subject was located too far from home, unlikely to catch the public imagination and so politically complex that outside interference would simply lead to charges of neo-colonialism. WWF was so concerned that tropical forests would not be a popular campaign with members, that first forays into the area were deliberately presented as mainly concerned with primate conservation' (p.109). Tropical rainforests became a major pre-occupation for several large NGOs, and the authors recognised it even as a 'project that was likely to be a successful hook for fund-raising'.

[12] In November 1992, 67 Brazilian NGOs collectively launched a campaign against the predatory mahogany trade in the Amazon. The *Manifesto to the Population: Predatory Logging Threatens Amazonia,* demanding that the Brazilian government prohibit further mahogany logging, was signed by a wide spectrum of social movements from the Amazon region and other southern Brazilian states.

[13] Although major groups such as FOE, Survival International and WWF are not directly involved in direct actions such as CRISP-O's 'ethical shop-lifting', they can occasionally support such initiatives from an outside perspective, as in the case of Harrods' direct action.

[14] *Briefing Pack for the Mahogany Crisp-o Actions*, 1994. Part of the strategy is that each participant writes a statement explaining what s/he is doing, why, time and venue of action. Copies of these statements are sent to the police and the store manager at the very same time the 'seizing' is being carried out. A legal observer is assigned to each individual or small group taking part in the seize. Other people can participate to record or take photos during the event. Meanwhile, participants would be carrying a copy of their statements during the action for showing on request by shop keepers or members of the public. A careful study of the law with the possible charges is carried out by the direct action campaigners.

[15] In 1993 the Brazilian highest court upheld an injunction sought by NDI since 1992, determining that Brazilian logging companies - Peracchi, Maginco and Impar - estimated to account for three quarters of British imports, cease logging in three indigenous areas in South Pará (NDI, *Lawsuits proposed by NDI Against Loggers*, 1994).

[16] Here again, ANGIE ZELTER played a key role in setting up the Women's Negotiating Team. Because of her personality and political beliefs and skills, Zelter has been able to tackle the issue of mahogany trade from several different fronts - such as radical direct action, negotiations with individual companies and the TTF, and she has also contributed towards the Forest Stewardship Council. She was also the organiser of the UK Forest Network. ZELTER is acknowledged by the traders as 'the woman who masterminded the ethical shop-lifting strategy' and has also 'ability to find common ground with the industry' (*Timber Trade Journal*, 6/5/95, p. 18).

[17]Personal communication with ANGIE ZELTER in June 1997.

[18]Personal communication with ANGIE ZELTER in June 1997.

[19] For instance, TIMBMET has appointed a full-time environmental manager - diplomatically, a female manager. A data base of all timber sources categorised against environmental criteria was set up. As a result, there have been changes in some sourcing policies, with increased pressure from British companies to their Brazilian suppliers. However, TIMBMET has shown resistance in joining the FSC process and the WWF 1995 Plus Group (see below) under the argument that the exclusive commitment to the FSC is against the free trade premises of GATT - the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Timbmet correspondence to Angie Zelter on 25 April, 1996). As for the TTF, after continued dialogue, it has recently agreed on the idea of a project for a log-tracking in the Amazon involving NGOs and the Soil Association in the UK, AIMEX (exporters from the state of Pará, Amazon) and NGOs in Brazil. However, the agreement towards this plan has progressed very slowly and with unclear proposals from the trade. Since it was first agreed in April 1997, the trade has only presented a rough draft proposal in November 1997.

[20]See further COUNSELL (1988).

[21]CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Plants and Animals helps monitor and control wildlife trade. It is founded in three levels of regulation:

Appendix I - to strictly protect endangered species through a ban in trade of these species;

Appendix II - to prevent species from becoming endangered that are at increasing risk from international trade, so that the trade can continue, and

Appendix III - which includes any species that a member country identifies as being subject to trade regulation *within its jurisdiction* for the purpose of preventing or restricting exploitation.

An attempt to list Brazilian mahogany under Appendix II was defeated by six votes in 1994. Another proposal in June 1997 supported by the UK, the USA and the Bolivian government found strong opposition from the Brazilian government who eventually agreed that mahogany be listed in Appendix III. For an official Brazilian viewpoint see IBAMA's president interview in *Veja*, 2 July 1997, and further below.

[22]In 1994, for instance, it organised a demonstration on a ship docked at Heysham, in Lancashire, which was bringing imports of Brazilian mahogany into the UK. See *Earth Matters*, N.25, Spring 1995, p. 12-13.

[23]Issues concerning the dynamics of the relationship between British groups and Brazilian NGOs, as for instance, the demands for information from the ground, and the extent to which it poses difficulties for Brazilians dealing with a domestic agenda, were discussed in ZHOURI (1998 and forthcoming).

[24]For further analysis on NGOs as sources see different articles in HANSEN (1993).

[25] See critical note in *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 June, 1995.

[26] The leaflet reports an incident occurred in 1988: over 100 Ticuna Indians were attacked and gunned down by timber cutters. Fourteen Indians, children included, were killed and twenty-two wounded. Further information about the massacre is found in OLIVEIRA & SOUZA LIMA (1996:240-248).

[27]The 1995 Group comprised forty-seven companies in partnership with WWF-UK with a total handling of wood product equivalent to eleven million cubic meters of logs cut from forests each year, an estimate of about a quarter of the UK trade in wood products (WWF, *The WWF 1995 Group - The Full History*, February, 1996). The 1995 Group further developed into the *WWF 1995 Plus Group* with the incorporation of ten new members by February 1996. The Plus Group was committed to the FSC and the phasing out of the purchase of wood and wood products within the FSC framework by 31 December 1999.

[28]*FSC Notes*, Summer 1995, 1(1). Emphasis added.

[29] WWF-UK claims that from the over 600 different ecolabel claims on wood products in the market in 1991, 'only four of those were willing and able to substantiate their marketing claims' (ERVIN, J. *FSC Notes*, 1(1), Summer 1995). See also LASCHEFSKI (1996), for a critical position from a German NGO in which it claims have found a false 'eco-label' in a product sold by the British B&Q shop, a member of the WWF 1995 Plus Group.

[30]The FSC does not certify forest products itself. It proposes to ensure consumers that certification organisations have the highest level of credibility and integrity, by evaluating, accrediting and monitoring certifiers of forest products based on their adherence to the FSC principles and criteria and the guidelines for certifiers (*FSC Notes*, Summer 1995, 1(1)). On the launching of its trademark in February 1996, in London, four certification bodies had been accredited by the FSC: The Soil Association and SGS Forestry from the UK, and Scientific Certification System (SCS) and Smart Wood from the USA.

[31]FSC, *Making its Mark*, February, 1996, p.5. The organisation is funded by accreditation fees, membership subscription, charitable foundations and government donors, e.g. except industries. (FSC, *Briefing Notes, FSC Questions and Answers*, February, 1996)

[32]This was the subject of many criticisms by NGOs which consider the change as a leaning towards the pressures of the economic sector; LASCHEFSKI (1996). Others considered it to be an attempt to strengthen the social representation. Nevertheless, the restructuration would only be institutionalised when each chamber was composed of at least fifteen members. Till May, 1997, there were nineteen possible members of the Northern social chamber against eleven of the Southern.

[33]In the FSC's Founding Assembly, Greenpeace and FOE declined subscription to the process. They preferred to keep their positions as observers. However, in April 1995, an European NGO statement on certification of all forests supporting the FSC initiative was signed by the following organisations: Greenpeace International, World-Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth International, Forest Movement Europe, Soil Association-UK, ARA-Germany, Trees for People-Germany, Robin Wood-Germany and Reforest the Earth-UK. As discussed in ZHOURI (1998, chapter 3), the topic remained very controversial in NGO meetings, such as in the Forest Movement Europe meetings held in Todtmoos, in 1995, Paris in 1996 and Hamburg, in 1997. Actually, British NGOs have been acting more at ease with the process of pushing NGOs from other countries to support the FSC. Whereas the German groups have shown more resistance. The Germans have held a more radical position campaigning for a boycott of tropical timber throughout the years. A critical statement in relation to the FSC and a call for consumers to continue to renounce tropical timber was signed in February 1996 by the following German groups: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Regenwald und Artenschutz (ARA), Artists for Nature, Bund fur Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND), Greenpeace Germany, Gesellschaft fur okologische Forschung, Institut fur Okologie und Aktionsethnologie (INFOE), Klima-Bundnis/Alianza del Clima, Oro Verde, Pro REGENWALD, Rettet den Regenwald, Robin Wood, Urgewald. However, increased support to the FSC process has developed amongst some of the major international groups such as Greenpeace and FOE. FOE Amazon Programme has been effectively engaged in promoting the FSC in Brazil by establishing a Brazilian buyers group involving 38 companies in April 2000. Whereas Greenpeace International has publically anounced support to the only certified timber company in the Amazon, Mil Madereira/Precious Woods. This company has recently made changes in forest management according to Greenpeace's demands and especifications (see Greenpeace press realease of May 31, 2000).

[34] BROCKMANN et al. (1996), FOE (1992), TTJ - Timber Trade Journal (1994).

[35] See also BRUENIG (1996), SCHARDT (1996), BROCKMANN et al. (1996).

[36]Its Principles and Criteria stress the need for legal recognition of land tenure rights, to recognise indigenous peoples' rights, the welfare of workers as well as the participation of all forest dwellers (particularly Principles 2, 3, 4 and 5).

[37]The controversial certification by an FSC accredited certifier from Britain of a major logging concession in Gabon, where local communities have no land rights and workers' conditions are very poor has been the subject of serious concerns by NGOs. See FME meeting report, Hamburg, April 1997.

[38]By 'transformative' I mean groups that fight for structural changes, as well as more radical changes in terms of consumption patterns, life style, land rights, political system and economic order. The 'reformist' groups act within a neoliberal approach lobbying and improving existing market practices.

[39] See further LASCHEFSKI (1996).

[40]Interview with MICHAEL JAMES in 19-7-96.

[41]Interview with GRAHAM BRUFORD from Forests Forever Campaign of the TTF in September 1996.

[42]From Forest Forever, *Timber and the Environment,* an architect's guide to specifying timber and wood products. Also interview with GEOFFREY PLEYDELL and MICHAEL JAMES in 19-7-96.

[43]They support their argument by using plain figures of the trade. According to the Forest Forever representative, the UK imports over eighty per cent of its timber needs, from which eight per cent is tropical timber. These come mainly from the forests of Malaysia, Indonesia, Ghana and Brazil. From the Brazilian imports, eighteen per cent comes from tropical hardwood sources and the majority from softwood plantations from the south of the country. However, one of the NGOs' arguments is that mahogany is not the most destructive thing in itself, but it is the cutting edge of deforestation. The high price of mahogany makes possible the building of the road, which attracts the settlers from whom the cattle-rancher buys the land. Mahogany is thus the beginning of a process which ends in clear-cutting. Besides, the export quality mahogany comes from big old trees mainly found within indigenous reserves. See MONBIOT (1992) and HERING & STUART (1998).

[44]Forest Forever, *Timber and the Environment*, p.10.

[45]*The Mahogany Trail* documentary, *Dispatches* Programme, Channel Four, May 1996 (see further ZHOURI, 1998), and the *Timber Trade Journal*, 1 June, 1996, p.9-11.

[46] This is the topic of Channel Four's *Dispatches* documentary mentioned above. It raised a series of mutual accusations between the TTF and the NGOs, particularly FOE. See further ZHOURI (1998).

[47]According to their report, they found AIMEX companies considering pulling out of mahogany altogether because 'in addition to economic problems, the costs of extraction are high due to the increasingly remote areas from which mahogany is sourced, and markets in the UK are quiet. Besides, AIMEX also stated that the documents indicating a company has committed an offence 'were commonly cancelled on appeal because of the poorly qualified IBAMA personnel issuing them in the first place, and therefore did not constitute proof of illegal activity.' Meetings with Brazilian NGOs also confirmed allegations of illegal logging by third parties and cases of corruption in IBAMA and FUNAI as the main problem confronting the enforcement authorities. DIXON & BRUFORD unpublished *Report of the NHA visit to Brazil*, 6-18 July, 1996.

[48]Meeting between the *Women's Negotiating Team* and the TTF in April, 1997.

[49]Forests Forever, p.6.

[50]Interview with GEOFFREY PLEYDELL and MICHAEL JAMES at the TTF on 19-7-96.

[51]For a critical analysis of the Pilot Programme and the participation of NGOs see HAGEMANN (1994) and KOLK (1996). For a recent NGO assessment and suggestions for the Pilot Programme see *Public Policies for the Amazon: paths, trends and proposals*, Briefing Document for the Meeting of Participants, Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, Manaus, October 27-30, 1997; *Third Discussion Paper from the series Mind the Gap!,* FOE-AP (Friends of the Earth-Amazon Programme) and GTA (Grupo de Trabalho Amazônico), '*Sound public*

policies for the Brazilian Amazon: the challenge of the Pilot Program', Briefing for the III Meeting of the Participants' Pilot Program for the Conservation of the Brazilian Rainforests, Bonn, September 9-12, 1996.

[52] Significantly, under the title of *rainforests*, the text is entirely focused on the Amazon rainforest, with not a single note, for instance, on the Atlantic Forest, an ecosystem by far more endangered than the Amazon, but with no similar international appeal. This has also been a limitation of the Pilot Programme which has been recently acknowledged and awaits addressing. On the Brazilian proposals for the second stage of the programme see *Parabólicas*, 30 (4) junho de 1997.

[53]In general, Brazil's natural resources play a very significant role in the constitution of national identity. This is evident in the symbolism of the country's national flag, national anthem and most importantly, in historical cultural and literary movements. The abundance of natural resources and the overwhelming nature is the country's biggest asset. Paradoxically, remoteness and feelings of superabundance gives the impression of infinity and obfuscates the reality of destruction and plundering. The literature on this is already vast. See further, ARNT & SCHWARTZMAN (1992), PÁDUA (1987,1989), ORTIZ (1984), VENTURA (1991), SUSSEKIND (1991).

[54]http://www.demon.co.uk/Itamaraty/ascfp.html, *Rainforests: basic considerations*, 1995.

[55]VELHO (1972), FOREAKER (1981), SOUZA MARTINS (1984; 1987; 1995), BRANFORD & GLOCK (1985), IANNI (1979). See also ZHOURI (1998, chapter 2).

[56]A northern route to the Caribbean, characterised by highway BR-174, a route to the Atlantic, identified by the Madeira and Amazonas waterways, and the Araguaia-Tocantins, defined by the North-South and Carajás railways. These, along with axes cutting from the centrewest region in the direction at the Pacific, represent a massive spatial scope unique in its attempt and impact. See further in GTA and FOE, *Public Policies for the Amazon: Paths, Trends and Proposals,* Manaus, October 27-30, 1997.

[57] *Reflections of Latin America in the European Media*, Institute of Latin America Studies, Canning House, London, 13-14 February, 1995.

[58]From interview with BRUNO BARTH, environmental and human rights secretary at the Brazilian embassy in 7/11/95. My translation into English.

[59]Interview with BRUNO BARTH at the Brazilian Embassy in 7/11/95.

[60] For a positive impact of this strategy in the media see New Scientist, *Brazil acts on the incredible shrinking rainforest,* 3 August 1996, p.4; and Gazeta Mercantil, *A Amazônia no rumo certo*, 6 August, 1996; Parabólicas, *A guerra das motosserras,* 21(3), August 1996.

[61]Yet, in practical terms, the two-year suspension of new mahogany concessions was not to affect the trade with the UK since the existing concessions are sufficient to maintain the trade for at least the following two years. From personal communication with GRAHAM BRUFORD in August 1996 and EDUARDO MARTINS in October, 1996.

[62]JOSÉ LUTZENBERGER was also present in the meeting representing the Gaia Foundation. He raised a series of other issues such as ranching, charcoal for steal, mining in the Yanomami territory, but the agenda was directed to British NGOs concerns, and as such, basically related to mahogany.

[63]Interview with EDUARDO MARTINS on 2-10-96.

Andrea Zhouri

Transnational campaigns for the Amazon: NGO strategies, trade and official responses

The campaign against the illegal mahogany trade from the Amazon has increased the need for special working links between NGOs based in Brazil and those located in the Northern hemisphere, particularly Britain, since the UK is regarded as one of the major importers of that particular timber. The article discusses the origins, development and different strategies of the mahogany campaign –the major transnational campaign for the Amazon rainforest in the 1990s– as well as the reactions from the timber trade and the Brazilian government. Considering the interface of social justice and forest issues, the analysis presents the ways in which the Amazon is understood and projected into the global sphere, and how such a global perspective – currently dominated by efforts towards timber certification through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)– may render a more complex local reality invisible.
Keywords: Amazon, Forest, NGOs, Campaigns, Transnational, Certification, Local, Global.

Campanhas transnacionais pela Amazônia: estratégias de ONGs, comércio e posições oficiais.

A campanha contra o comércio de mogno extraído ilegalmente da Amazônia tem acentuado a necessidade de um trabalho conjunto entre ONGs brasileiras e aquelas situadas no hemisfério Norte, sobretudo as britânicas, uma vez que o Reino Unido é considerado um dos maiores importadores dessa madeira. O artigo discute as origens, o desenvolvimento e as diferentes estratégias empregadas na campanha do mogno – principal campanha transnacional pela floresta amazônica nos anos 90— assim como as reações por parte do comércio madereiro e do governo brasileiro. Considerando as interfaces entre justiça social e os temas florestais, a análise apresenta as diferentes formas em que a Amazônia é compreendida e projetada no espaço global, sublinhando como tais perspectivas globais –hoje concentradas nos esforços para a certificação florestal através do Conselho de Manejo Florestal (FSC)– acabam por tornar invisível uma realidade local mais complexa.
Palavras-chave: Amazônia, Floresta, ONGs, Campanhas, Transnacional, Certificação, Local, Global.