

Climate Denial and Obstruction in Brazil: actors, strategies and goals

Since the 1980s, a scientific consensus has been established around the existence of climate change and its anthropic attribution. It was reflected, for instance, in the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, and in the release of its First Assessment, in 1990. However, at the same time, an organised and well-funded movement was being formed, mainly in the United States (USA), composed of the fossil fuel and automobile industry, conservative think tanks (CTTs) and contrarian scientists, to obstruct the advance of the national and international climate agenda.

This phenomenon, well studied in the Global North, principally in the USA and the United Kingdom (UK), remains under-researched in the Global South, including Brazil. Given that these countries tend to increase their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) during their development process and their higher vulnerability to global warming's effects, it is important to understand the actors and organisations that delay or obstruct the establishment of mitigation policies.

In this way, the present work intends to map the networks, organisations and leaders that deny or obstruct the climate agenda in Brazil. Furthermore, it wants to understand how these agents are organised, if they establish international connections, which arguments and narratives they mobilise and what strategies they use. For that, it will use semi-structured interviews that look for the impressions of philanthropic organisations, scientists and diplomats who occupied key positions in defining the Brazilian climate and environmental agenda on climate denial in the country. A bibliographic review will also be carried out on national and international publications on the subject, with a survey of books, academic articles, book chapters and essays, in addition to newspaper articles.

At the moment, the preliminary results indicate that, contrary to what happens in Europe and in the USA, where the energy sector linked to fossil fuels is the most active in climate obstruction, in the Brazilian case it is the agribusiness that plays this role. This obstruction is carried out by the politicians who work for the agribusiness interests in Congress, by funding conservative institutes, by publishing denialist articles in industry newspapers and by hiring lectures by scientists who deny the established scientific consensus, among others.

Therefore, we look to confirm the hypothesis that climate denialism and obstruction in Brazil have intensified since the beginning of Jair Bolsonaro's presidency (2019), integrating a set of anti-democratic policies of this government, as well as relating to the upward movement of the far right around the world.