

Strategic Policy Formulation to Ensure the Atlantic Forest Regeneration

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Abstract : Although the existence of two Forest Transition (FT) pathways, the economic development and the forest scarcity, there are many contexts that shape the model of FT observed in each particular region. This means that local conditions, such as relief, soil quality, historic land use/cover, public policies, the engagement of society in compliance with legal regulations, and the action of enforcement agencies, represent dimensions which combined, creates contexts that enable forest regeneration. From this perspective we can understand the regeneration process of native vegetation cover in the Paraíba Valley (Forest Atlantic biome), ongoing since the 1960s. This research analyzed public information, land use/cover maps, environmental public policies, and interviewed 17 stakeholders from the Federal and State agencies, municipal environmental and agricultural departments, civil society, farmers, aiming comprehend the contexts behind the forest regeneration in the Paraíba Valley, Sao Paulo State, Brazil. The first policy to protect forest vegetation was the Forest Code n0 4771 of 1965, but this legislation did not promote the increase of forest, just the control of deforestation, not enough to the Atlantic Forest biome that reached its highest pick of degradation in 1985 (8% of Atlantic Forest remnants). We concluded that the Brazilian environmental legislation acted in a strategic way to promote the increase of forest cover (102% of regeneration between 1985 and 2011) from 1993 when the Federal Decree n0 750 declared the initial and advanced stages of secondary succession protected against any kind of exploitation or degradation ensuring the forest regeneration process. The strategic policy formulation was also observed in the Sao Paulo State law n0 6171 of 1988 that prohibited the use of fire to manage agricultural landscape, triggering a process of forest regeneration in formerly pasture areas.

Keywords : forest transition, land abandonment, law enforcement, rural economic crisis

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