

Brazil's Diplomacy Strategy in Responding to International Pressure on The Problem of Deforestation

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Abstract

This research analyzes Brazil's diplomatic strategy for overcoming the problem of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. The Amazon region is an essential part of the environment, which is a centre of biodiversity and contributes to the environment through carbon absorption. The deforestation problem that occurs in the Amazon region has a significant impact not only on Brazil but also globally. This is what underlies various international criticisms of Brazil, so it needs to be responded to diplomatically. By using qualitative methods and the concept of environmental diplomacy, this research finds that Brazil operates in four main strategies that represent the dynamics of environmental diplomacy practice. The strategy includes a commitment to achieving zero deforestation, holding meetings with Latin American countries to discuss the Amazon crisis, using the summit forum to negotiate with the United States in cooperation to overcome deforestation, and responding to trade demands from European countries that discriminate against Brazilian trade products. This response shows that basically Brazil is committed to realizing environmental preservation. However, there is a contradiction caused by Brazil's condition, which still needs to develop its economy amidst the current crisis. Therefore, the practice of environmental diplomacy is taken to become a momentum in raising awareness of the environment with the policies implemented by Brazil.

Keywords: *diplomacy; deforestation; Brazil*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis strategi diplomasi Brazil dalam mengatasi masalah deforestasi di hutan hujan Amazon. Wilayah Amazon merupakan salah satu bagian penting lingkungan yang menjadi pusat keanekaragaman hayati dan berkontribusi terhadap lingkungan melalui serapan karbon. Masalah deforestasi yang terjadi di wilayah Amazon tidak hanya berdampak signifikan bagi Brazil, tetapi juga secara global. Inilah yang melandasi berbagai kecaman internasional terhadap Brazil sehingga perlu direspon secara diplomatik. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan konsep diplomasi lingkungan, penelitian ini mendapati bahwa Brazil bergerak dalam empat strategi utama yang merepresentasikan dinamika praktik diplomasi lingkungan. Adapun strategi tersebut meliputi komitmen mencapai zero deforestation, mengadakan pertemuan dengan negara Amerika Latin guna membahas krisis amazon, memanfaatkan forum KTT untuk bernegosiasi dengan Amerika Serikat dalam kerja sama mengatasi deforestasi, dan memberikan respon terhadap tuntutan dagang negara Eropa yang mendiskriminasi produk dagang Brazil. Respon tersebut menunjukkan bahwa pada dasarnya Brazil memiliki komitmen dalam mewujudkan pelestarian lingkungan. Namun terjadi kontradiksi yang disebabkan oleh kondisi Brazil yang masih perlu untuk mengembangkan perekonomiannya ditengah krisis yang melanda. Maka dari itu, praktik diplomasi lingkungan ditempuh untuk menjadi momentum dalam mengagendakan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan dengan kebijakan yang dilaksanakan oleh Brazil.

Kata kunci: *diplomasi lingkungan; deforestasi; Brazil*

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, problems related to the environment have become urgent and need to be paid attention to by all countries in the world. The presence of environmental problems will undoubtedly become a global problem because the impact will be felt massively. Global warming, natural destruction, and deforestation are some of the main problems related to the environment. The increase in carbon emissions is also an issue that is of concern to many parties. For this reason, forests are a significant alternative to be able to absorb carbon emissions at a low cost (Furumo & Lambin, 2021). Unfortunately, forest conditions are also experiencing problems due to deforestation, which often occurs in countries with large forest areas.

One country that has received attention for environmental problems is Brazil. We know that Brazil is a country with a vast forest area, and it plays a vital role in the environment. Brazil is known to have tropical landscapes and biodiversity in the Amazon region, which plays a role in providing 20% of the planet's oxygen supply (Poerwantika & Hatami, 2021). The presence of the Amazon as a tropical rainforest area has a vital role in limiting the climate crisis. The Amazon is an area that plays an active role in absorbing carbon and regulating weather patterns (Genin et al., 2021). Unfortunately, there is the problem of deforestation, which is an environmental threat not only for Brazil but also internationally. In 2021, deforestation in the Amazon reached 13,235 Km², an increase of 22% compared to 2020 (Werneck et al., 2022). Therefore, the problem of deforestation that occurs in the Amazon region will receive attention from all over the world, considering its significant contribution to the environment. In addition, deforestation that occurs in the Amazon region, the largest tropical forest in the world, will cause efforts to reduce global carbon emissions to become increasingly challenging. Various international condemnations and criticisms then emerged as a response to the environmental problems that occurred in Brazil. Brazil is considered to have failed to preserve nature and avoid deforestation, which has a global impact.

The criticism of Brazil's environmental problems has begun to heat up since 2019. The Brazilian National Institute for Space Research released data stating that deforestation in the Amazon due to fires and mining activities increased significantly by 29.54% in 2019 (Oliveira & Araújo, 2020). These figures show that Brazil needs to take relevant measures to address the threat of environmental degradation. Unfortunately, the Bolsonaro administration has worsened the situation through various policies that impact the environment. Some policies that lead to anti-environmental policies include reducing the budget costs of the Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, reducing the representation of civil society in the National Environmental Council, and various discourses related to indigenous peoples' land that encourage an increase in illegal activities in the Amazon region. Not surprisingly, deforestation in the Amazon region increased by 222% in August 2019 (Viola & Gonçalves, 2019). A direct negative trend is triggered by Brazil's anti-environmental discourse towards the environment. This practice has become a momentum that encourages resistance to anti-environmental policies in Brazil. Not only at the national level but criticism of the decline of the environmental agenda in Brazil also occurs at the international level, which requires Brazil to be responsive to these problems.

The problem of deforestation in Brazil has become increasingly worrying in recent years, especially since President Bolsonaro took office. Many countries have criticized Brazil's various activities, which are considered to have an impact on deforestation. European countries put much pressure on Brazil in the form of trade restrictions due to deforestation issues and the cancellation of agreements related to investment in Brazil. This pressure will undoubtedly be detrimental to Brazil, considering its position as a developing economic country. In overcoming this pressure, Brazil will, of course, not remain silent but instead carry out diplomacy that can strengthen its position internationally, as well as prove its commitment to environmental conservation efforts. Brazil is one of the main actors in environmental issues based on its great responsibility for preserving the Amazon rainforest region. Unfortunately, Brazil has not shown a relevant commitment to contributing to environmental governance. Thus, this study demonstrates Brazil's major role in environmental governance. Apart from Brazil's failure in environmental policy, other efforts need to be considered about environmental issues in Brazil. One of them is the practice of environmental diplomacy carried out by Brazil to find a middle ground so that Brazil can still carry out its strategic policies in accordance with aspects of concern for the environment. This article will describe the diplomatic efforts undertaken by Brazil until 2022 to respond to criticism expressed by developed countries regarding the problem of deforestation in Brazil.

2. ANALITICAL FRAMEWORK

This article focuses on Brazil's environmental diplomacy to overcome the issue of deforestation, which threatens biodiversity conservation. Environmental diplomacy is a derivative aspect of diplomatic practice that can be understood from two points of view. First, environmental diplomacy is theoretically understood as a diplomatic process that is limited to discussing the environment alone. Second, environmental diplomacy also needs to be understood as a practice that encourages attention to environmental issues along with other related themes, including trade, economy, health, security, and so on (Orsini, 2020). Thus, environmental diplomacy moves dynamically in representing environmental urgency that needs to be addressed through multi-level discussions and actions that can encourage changes in state behaviour so that it no longer becomes a promoter of environmental damage. Environmental diplomacy is an agenda for mainstreaming environmental interests in various political considerations in order to minimize the risk of environmental damage.

Environmental diplomacy has at least three main rules that encourage the formation of government decisions. First, environmental diplomacy is based on consensus that prioritizes collective action. Second, environmental diplomacy results in negotiations with segmentation on several sub-themes in order to combine the various possibilities that arise. Third, the negotiation process in environmental diplomacy is closely related to the chicken game theory, which represents the dynamics of agreement formation (Orsini, 2020). These three rules are the basis for consideration by Brazil in carrying out its environmental diplomacy practices. This is a form of Brazil's response to the problem of deforestation occurring in the Amazon region. The destruction of the Amazon forest area is a problem that not only has domestic implications for Brazil but also affects global dynamics. Deforestation of the Amazon forest not only threatens the destruction of flora

and fauna habitats, which reduces biodiversity but also threatens the earth's defences from climate change (Egelston, 2022).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods aim to describe non-statistical investigative techniques and processes used to collect data about social phenomenon (McNabb, 2015). The phenomenon in question is related to the problem of deforestation in Brazil, which encourages the practice of environmental diplomacy. This research analyzes the environmental diplomacy efforts carried out by Brazil during the Bolsorano administration to overcome the pressing problem of deforestation. The data used is secondary data related to Brazil's actions in its strategy to respond to international criticism of its domestic deforestation problem. Thus, this research is a literature study collected through journals and other official documents related to Brazil's environmental diplomacy.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Deforestation that has occurred in Brazil has become a significant concern since President Bolsorano took office. The policies taken by Bolsorano focus more on easy access for agribusiness actors. This policy will undoubtedly have an impact on further weakening environmental protection in Brazil (Poerwantika & Hatami, 2021). The deforestation issue that occurred in Brazil, especially during the Bolsorano administration, was caused by policies that were not pro-environment and were more oriented towards economic development alone. However, it should be remembered that this step is not without reason, considering that the economic instability that is occurring in Brazil requires the government to take steps that are considered the most rational in developing the Brazilian economy.

Agricultural practices in Brazil adopt the concept of climate-smart agriculture (CSA), which refers to efforts to integrate agricultural productivity with climate mitigation and adaptation. The goal of CSA practices in Brazil is to realize increased income and food security that will benefit the community's welfare. The problem then arises with the conditions that allow CSA practices to depoliticize environmental issues. The argument is based on conditions that allow stakeholders unequal access to resources, which can result in political arbitrage that hides some crucial issues. Agribusiness actors even oppose efforts to control deforestation because they are not in line with the main agenda of increasing agricultural productivity (Milhorance et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a diversion from deforestation to agricultural technology issues, which makes environmental issues sidelined despite their significant impact. Brazil needs to reconstruct the CSA concept to be effective in agricultural practices and mitigating environmental issues.

Brazil is known as one of the largest soybean-producing countries in the world, with a total production capacity of 125 million tons. The increasing demand for soybeans, which can be used as animal feed, medicine, biofuel, biomaterials and consumer products, is the main factor that is making Brazil strive to maintain the growth in demand for soybeans. From these facts, it is not surprising that Brazil continues to encourage increased agricultural production, especially soybeans, as an effort to rehabilitate its economy (Poerwantika & Hatami, 2021). Unfortunately, Brazil's economic orientation towards agricultural products has led to the problem of deforestation caused by land expansion to

increase production. This is what makes the agricultural sector in tropical rainforest areas a threat to deforestation globally (Furumo & Lambin, 2021). Apart from being caused by the agricultural sector, deforestation in Brazil is also caused by the livestock sector. In 2008, around 80% of deforestation that occurred in Brazil was caused by cattle in the country. Cattle farms in Brazil contribute around 3.4% of global emissions resulting from deforestation due to livestock (WWF, 2010). Then, in 2019, the Brazilian government passed a law supporting livestock expansion (Poerwantika & Hatami, 2021). This condition will undoubtedly have an impact on the increasingly high level of deforestation in Brazil. Livestock practices are the main driver of land exploitation in the Amazon, which is used for cattle pasture. The amount of cattle land clearing in the Amazon region reaches two-thirds of the land (Nolte, 2021). The conversion of land to cattle ranching reduces the Amazon's catchment area and exacerbates deforestation and carbon problems.

International Pressure and Criticism Against Brazil

The problem of deforestation that occurs in Brazil, whether caused by the agricultural or livestock sectors or more relevantly related to efforts to rehabilitate the Brazilian economy, which does not take environmental impacts into account, has undoubtedly received various international responses. Several European countries, including England, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Norway, Italy and Belgium, have urged Brazil to take action to overcome the deforestation problem that is occurring. They also threatened that their countries would only cooperate in business and investment if Brazil met environmental requirements (Spring & Paraguassu, 2020). Apart from that, the boycott was also carried out by stopping the sale of Brazilian beef products in European supermarkets as a result of deforestation. Brazilian beef products are considered to be the result of illegal deforestation, which causes damage to the environment, so it is necessary to boycott their distribution (Deutsch & Spring, 2021).

Britain, Europe and America are fully committed to reducing deforestation by limiting imported goods such as soybeans, livestock and palm oil because they are considered agricultural products that cause deforestation. In 2020, the UK also implemented a business ban on products grown using illegally deforested land (Jordan, 2022). The policies of various developed countries will undoubtedly be detrimental to Brazil, which currently still depends on soybean products and livestock. Brazil certainly feels that developed countries carry out discrimination against their superior trade products. The obstacles placed on Brazil as a result of environmental problems will cause Brazil's economic conditions to experience instability again.

The European Union is one of Brazil's main partners, so criticism of environmental issues could have implications for demands to increase commitment to implementing relevant standards to intensify actions to combat deforestation (Faria & Faria, 2022). The percentage of imports made by the European Union with Mercosur countries, including Brazil, is dominated by primary sector products, which amount to 74%. In comparison, manufactured products dominate exports made by the European Union at 84%. In terms of investment, the EU is estimated to have a 68% influence on foreign direct investment (FDI) in Brazil in 2019 (Nolte, 2021). This figure shows that boycotts and instability in relations with EU countries significantly impact Brazil's economy. Moreover, with the European Union being the dominant actor in condemning environmental harm, they set

many standards for other countries' products, including Brazil. Understanding that the risk of deforestation can be an integral part of the global value chain, the products that cause deforestation, including its byproducts such as cowhide, could be boycotted by EU countries. This condition will also constrain the leather trade between Brazil and Italy due to potential deforestation (Mammadova et al., 2020). Thus, pressure on environmental issues in Brazil is not only a rhetorical threat by the European Union but has direct significance to the Brazilian economy.

Apart from putting trade pressure on Brazil, developed countries also put pressure on Brazil in the realm of cooperation, as happened with the EU-Mercosur Agreement (Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay), which experienced obstacles due to environmental problems. EU countries such as France stated that they would not ratify the agreement if there were no agreement on environmental protection (Berghe, 2021). More specifically, the EU ambassador stated to Brazil that the ratification process would only be carried out if Brazil had demonstrated efforts or commitment to overcoming the Amazon forest problem (Spring, 2022). This condition is undoubtedly a pressure for Brazil to carry out its diplomatic relations due to the enormous international demands for Brazil to be able to overcome the deforestation problem that is occurring.

The EU-Mercosur agreement is a momentum that can strengthen trade mobility between regions. Still, the main obstacle lies in how much impact the annual beef import quota of 99,000 tons has on deforestation. Behind the mobilization, there is a big environmental threat, so an additional clause on environmental concerns is needed. For the EU, the rejection of the Paris Agreement violates the EU-Mercosur agreement, which means that Brazilian livestock products can only be exported if there is a guarantee that they are not a source of deforestation (Nolte, 2021). It is not easy and instant for Brazil to meet this standardization, so many considerations must first be elaborated to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

From the data above, Brazil has received quite strong criticism regarding environmental issues, especially from European countries. Europe has indeed become a country that highly values environmental issues and is active in conducting environmental diplomacy. Europe considers that efforts to overcome the current environmental problems are urgent and must be carried out. However, Brazil's position is, of course, that it still needs to be able to fully implement practices like developed countries in Europe, considering that Brazil is still a developing economic country that utilizes many resources as its trading commodities.

Brazil's Diplomatic Efforts to Stem the Pressure of Deforestation Problems

The presence of various pressures from developed countries, especially European countries, regarding the issue of deforestation means that Brazil must strengthen its diplomatic efforts. Meanwhile, in responding to pressure from developed countries, Brazil then used four main strategies. First, Brazil has significantly increased its environmental diplomacy by committing to achieving zero deforestation. Through international forums, Brazil expressed its ambition to eliminate the illegal deforestation that occurs. Apart from that, Brazil also proposes reducing emissions by 43% by 2030 (Biller, 2021). This data certainly shows that Brazil has a significant commitment to realizing the Paris Agreement and overcoming environmental problems. Previously, Brazil received much criticism due

to its policies that needed to pay more attention to environmental impacts. The presence of this target is indeed a demonstration by Brazil that they also uphold efforts to overcome environmental issues through diplomacy.

Second, Brazil carries out diplomacy with its neighbouring countries to help deal with the Amazon forest problem. In 2019, when the problem of Amazon forest fires received international attention, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro invited a number of neighbouring countries in the South American region to hold a meeting to discuss the Amazon forest. The meeting was held in the city of Leticia on September 6, with the main focus being the Amazon crisis (CNN, 2019). Brazil's efforts to conduct diplomacy with South American countries are, of course, a response to the fact that developed countries often corner Brazil over problems occurring in the Amazon forest. Through this meeting, Brazil indeed showed that its diplomatic efforts can be realized concretely, and this is proof of Brazil's concern about overcoming environmental problems, even though many developed countries think that Brazil is indifferent to these problems.

In the South American region, Brazil acts as an actor that voices the urgency of environmental issues in the region. One form of this is through the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), which seeks to gather support from Brazil's neighboring countries in the Amazon. ACTO is not only used to realize the protection of the Amazon forest but also to encourage sustainable development and form a collective strategy that can strengthen the position of South American countries in environmental discussions. Through the ACTO, Brazil and its neighboring countries have successfully engaged in diplomacy to promote the conservation of the Amazon forest in line with efforts to combat climate change, officially recognized in Article 5 of the Paris Agreement. Through these diplomatic efforts, Brazil raised many funds to be used as an Amazon conservation fund (Sequeira & Reis, 2019). Brazil directly utilizes its environmental diplomacy to encourage other countries to participate in efforts to deal with Amazon deforestation, which is a global responsibility related to the environment.

Third, Brazil strengthens its diplomacy with the United States to obtain assistance in overcoming the current deforestation problem. At the Summit of the Americas meeting held in Los Angeles, Joe Biden and Jair Bolsonaro agreed to work together to overcome the problem of Amazon deforestation (Hunnicuttt & Whitcomb, 2022). This agreement is, of course, the result of diplomacy carried out by Brazil towards the United States. This effort was also made by Brazil, considering that the problem of deforestation is a challenging issue to solve independently, so through assistance from the United States, the problem of deforestation can be more easily overcome. One of the biggest moments of Brazil's partnership efforts with the United States was the mobilization of \$20 billion in international funds to benefit Amazon (Richards & Reta, 2021). Such aid could significantly boost Brazil's efforts to address deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

Finally, Brazil also strengthened its economic diplomacy by condemning acts of trade discrimination carried out by European countries. As previously explained, European countries such as the UK have discriminated against Brazilian soybean and livestock products, considering environmental issues. In overcoming this problem, Brazil carried out diplomacy which emphasized that policies that target the issue of deforestation will only provide benefits to developed countries that have overcome this problem; on the other hand, developing countries such as Brazil will be disadvantaged by these policies because

they do not yet fully have alternatives in overcoming the problem of deforestation. Brazil confidently stated that existing trade rules do not take into account the limitations experienced by developing countries, so there needs to be a transformation that also provides benefits to developing countries (Jordan, 2022). Brazil's response to the trade problem certainly shows the actual reality where developing countries are required to implement the same policies as developed countries even though they are not actually able to implement them. Developing countries actually also feel the importance of efforts to protect the environment. However, economic motives are still the primary consideration for developing countries because the condition of the country still needs to be more stable than developed countries.

The strategy implemented by Brazil to reduce the problem of deforestation is an accurate representation of the main rules that shape government decisions through the encouragement of environmental diplomacy. Brazil is a country that has received much international pressure over problems occurring in the Amazon rainforest (Egelston, 2022). Therefore, if analyzed from the rules of environmental diplomacy, the international pressure given to Brazil represents a joint consensus on the interests of mainstreaming the environment. This is the basis for Brazil to take part in taking collective action towards environmental concerns carried out through the various strategies above. In carrying out this environmental diplomacy strategy, Brazil has also considered various possibilities for each action taken through policy segmentation, ranging from reducing carbon emissions and preventing deforestation to considering trade aspects that environmental problems may hamper. The considerations made by Brazil also represent the determination to win the game on environmental issues. Brazil has become a country that has been criticized massively by Western countries, so to counter this pressure, Brazil is required to play the dynamics of environmental diplomacy appropriately. In the end, the efforts made by Brazil became momentum in forming an agreement on environmental concerns that was not counterproductive for Brazil itself.

5. CONCLUSION

The issue of deforestation that occurred in Brazil has received international attention because its impact involves the whole world. Brazil's pro-policy towards land expansion for economic purposes is actually a response to economic conditions and also Brazil's domestic interests. Unfortunately, Brazil's economic interests are not accompanied by the ability to manage the environment appropriately, which makes deforestation inevitable. Developed countries, especially Europe, are putting much pressure on Brazil to immediately take action to overcome the deforestation problem in the form of pressure from investment, trade, and criticism in international forums. In response to this, Brazil then strengthened its diplomacy by showing its commitment to overcoming the problem of deforestation, holding meetings with Latin American countries to discuss the Amazon crisis, using the summit forum to negotiate with the United States in cooperation to overcome deforestation, and responding to European countries' trade demands, which discriminates against Brazilian trade products. This response shows that basically Brazil is committed to realizing environmental preservation. However, Brazil must also continue to think about the condition of its country, which still needs to develop its economy amidst the current crisis. As for this paper, the most relevant diplomatic lesson

to learn is the environmental diplomacy carried out by Brazil in its efforts to achieve zero deforestation, mainly due to various pressures from developed countries. Apart from that, there are also other diplomatic processes carried out by Brazil to realize Brazil's foreign policy, which seeks to reconstruct its economy and build awareness of environmental conservation.

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