

# Procedural Tensions In The Brazilian Pesticide Packaging Reverse Logistics

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## **Abstract**

*Relationship between enforcement and compliance can facilitate laws and regulations development in such a way that the target audience, over time, internalizes such efforts and understands them as legitimate. There are important gaps to understand in this relationship, such as structures and practices as resulting legitimacy bases in organizational and sociolegal environments. This study aims to demonstrate legitimacy emerging from tensions between enforcement and compliance mechanisms, from the organizational to the socio-legal level, based on the pesticide packaging reverse logistics (PPRL) case, in Brazil. Methodologically, an integrative model between mechanisms facilitating resulting legitimacy was used, and empirical data linked to the case was collected through documents and interviews. Results show that tensioning enforcement and compliance mechanisms in management is feasible to adjust organizational behavior to the law and, eventually, the law itself, based on strategies to create symbolic and substantial structures. We conclude that practices considering enforcement and compliance mechanisms jointly can be an important legitimacy source in organizational, legal and societal fields.*

**Keywords:** Legitimacy. Enforcement Compliance. Resulting Legitimacy. Legal environment. Pesticides.

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## I. Introduction

### *Background and problem statement*

Pervading various fields, "legitimacy" is one of the most ambiguous and treacherous in the entire modern theory of power" (Panbianco, 2005, p.78), driving discussions about organizations and institutions, usually encompassing informational and materials imbricated in the processes of seeking social acceptance (Scott et al., 2000). For this reason, studies seeking to deepen the legitimacy concept, based on socio-legal understanding - in other words, bringing legal and social factors closer to organizations and institutions - are developed. Mechanisms that may impact legitimacy, such as enforcement and compliance that integrate legal aspects and the commitment to act in accordance with the law (Edelman, 2016) needs to be brought together. This study's aim is to articulate such mechanisms, in order to achieve legitimacy as a result (Haack, Schilke & Zucker, 2020).

The empirical reality of legally enforced pesticide packaging reverse logistics (PPRL) in Brazil, which follows general laws - such as the National Solid Waste Policy - PNRS, in Portuguese acronym - and standards - such as those regulating the law, created specific management and compliance programs (Santos, Castro & Lima, 2019) - shows that there is non-exhaustiveness, non-definiteness and, finally, incompleteness allowing symbolic creation. Legitimacy is usually implicit in discussions about organizational and social institutionalization processes (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), given that organizations inserted in regulated environments are part of a broad social system (Parsons, 1956). Legitimacy emerges, both as a result of organizational routines, as from interpretation and acceptance by a myriad of actors directly or indirectly associated with organizational process (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). In organizational level, it emerges as a link between organizational and social analytic levels: organizations considered legitimate would tend "to have a greater chance of survival and a greater capacity to raise resources than those that are not legitimate" (Rossoni, 2016, p. 122). Legislation must be accompanied by validity recognition and different actors must legitimize it. Regulations legitimacy is when laws are perceived as appropriate, from a socially constructed norms and values system (Bitektine, 2011).

Enforcement and compliance mechanisms stand out as legitimation processes. They relate to law enforcement monitoring and inspection efforts, beyond negotiation for adjustments based on specific interests (Guarido Filho et al., 2018). However, a 'gray area' is inherent to these mechanisms. It is not uncommon for

laws socially judged to present uncertainty (Haack, 2012), imprecision or confusion. Such judgment may even be dichotomous, when a law is acceptable or unacceptable. In the latter extreme, the law cannot sustain its legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011). Thus, this study aims to advance understanding enforcement and compliance as mechanisms that facilitate legitimacy (Almeida, 2017), with legitimacy resulting from tension between these two mechanisms.

The case relevance owes to better results shown in PPRL compared to other cases that, similarly, seek to implement reverse logistics to meet legal requirements struggling to achieve results. Therefore, the study sheds light in the question of why some reverse logistics programs achieve good results in the face of legal compliance while others do not.

After these introductory notes, it is worth highlighting the importance of the quest for understanding how laws and interpretive changes - inherent in the dynamics of broad societal systems that configure legal environments - can interfere in organizations legitimacy. These are, therefore, the nodal points to be analytically articulated in this study to, in the end, contribute to its objective.

### *Legitimacy*

The term legitimacy origin is related to social order, government, or norms and laws. It can be discussed from three points of view: social, which aims at obedience and morality; politics, which is expressed by laws and norms (Weber, 1991[1922]); and anthropological, as a given situation recognition and acceptance due to its hereditary and orderly character (Brown, 1932; Bitektine, Lucas & Schilke, 2018).

Legitimacy can be understood from power and the domination types highlighted by Weber and, subsequently, be noticed by the consensus or conflict that occurred due to legitimate or illegitimate values. In conflict, the relationship with power is clearly perceived, with action ordered by rules and obligations in order to inhibit attitudes, and in accordance with the interests at stake (Weber, 1991; Rossoni, 2009). It can also be understood as a result of societal adjustments arising from norms, laws and values congruence, shared in a social context (Parsons, 1960), that is, as resulting from an orderly process in which the right to exist is obtained, with focus on results and technical performance in order to ensure survival, efficiency and compliance with organizational myths (Maurer, 1971; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Yet - from a negative definition - it is likely to be considered as an action or practice absent attribute, being normally manifested as illegitimacy, which can be expressed in negative evaluations or comments and subject to different contestations intensities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

A subject from which legitimacy emerges can be considered, on an ideal scale extending from legitimate to the illegitimate. An organization can be conceived as a culturally and cognitively formed entity (Meyer & Scott, 1983), and is likely to be considered from the performance resulting from administrative efficiency (Hirsch & Andrews, 1984). Thus, to organizations, legitimacy achievement relates to improving their image in a social space. Support for donation strategies (Galaskiewicz, 1985), and efficient use of non-renewable natural resources are examples of organizational legitimacy building practices. Both symbolic and substantive approaches can be used to achieve and maintain legitimacy in a given context. Socio-technical legitimacy results from cultural and technical elements conversion in a socio-productive center.

The distinction between organizations' cognitive and emerging socio-political legitimacy tends to be based on the regulatory, normative and cognitive dimensions, and also on the behavioral and cognitive dimension confronted with rules (Stryker, 1994). Cognitive legitimacy results from socially acceptable knowledge dissemination, while socio-political results of public adherence to current norms and laws (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994).

A noticeable continuity in arguments on the fundamental regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars for legitimacy (Scott, 1995) is also manifested in the pragmatic, moral and cognitive trichotomy, that focus on legitimacy, maintenance and repair based on technical and institutional approaches. Pragmatic legitimacy is anchored on organization's own interest values and public calculations; morality inspires the positive normative shared value evaluation for right and wrong judgment; and, finally, cognitive legitimacy involves organization acceptance based on cultural aspects, with plausible models and explanations accepted as taken-for-grantedness (Suchman, 1995; Zelditch, 2006).

Other arguments from institutional theory, such as the resource-based view, highlights profitability and compliance aspects (Oliver, 1997). More empirical-centered approaches, maintaining an organizational perspective, deals with legitimacy in a multinational context, making internationalization explicit (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). More recently, a promising conceptual reframing and legitimacy densification emerged from property, process and perception, brought by Suddaby et al. (2017). Among these three research streams on legitimacy, procedural approach is central in advancing the relationship tension between compliance and enforcement mechanisms in organizational and legal fields, because, in it, legitimacy occurs through the social actors and change agents agency. This centrality lies in considering an interactive relationship between these two mechanisms in practical actions for the property generation and the legitimacy perception, considering

multiple social actors' opposition or agreement, as well as the agents' intentions that make their efforts at field and organizational levels. In practical terms, due to the legitimacy compliance and enforcement can be apprehended from multidimensional assessments, for example, completeness/partiality of the presence/absence of rules; agreement/consent on positions and practices (Almeida, 2017).

Legitimacy has both an institutional perspective, which emphasizes social beliefs, and a strategic, focused on achieving organizational results (Suchman, 1995). The latter is related to punctual results production organizational practices internalized *modus operandi* and *modus faciendi* driven by agents who seek to situate the organization in a given organizational field; in the former perspective, institutions constitution and maintenance is based on social perception: they define an identity and subsist through relationships maintained with the external environment, thus configuring legitimacy standards. In summary, "institutions exhibit more permanent structural properties in social systems, which can associate them with resistance to change conditions" (Guarido Filho, 2008, p. 20); hence, to legitimacy standards permanence.

A legitimate-seen organization manages to survive and have a long-term performance, while gaining greater access to resources (Brown, 1932); therefore, the *modus faciendi* and *modus operandi* results are legitimacy bounded. In any case, resultant legitimacy depends on both (a) agency capacity and implicit intentionality communicated by organizational strategies, which is more related to compliance and (b) how these strategies resonate positively or negatively in different organizational or societal fields and how to adjust the organizational strategy. That is, the internal and external imposition or subjection capacity tension to enforcement mechanisms is two-dimensional.

Recent researches, e.g. Haack, Schilke and Zucker (2020) present multilevel legitimacy, that is, micro, meso and macro, which correspond to the ownership level, consensus and validity: property refers to an individual evaluator's belief that an legitimacy object is appropriate for their social context; validity denotes an institutionalized collective level, adequacy perception. Consensus refers to the agreement between the evaluators' property beliefs. The author's contribution in relation to the meso level reflects the field perspective with an eye focused on peers.

After the conceptual summary to situate legitimacy as a result of the tension between compliance and enforcement mechanisms, there are promising spaces for procedurally dealing with these tensions in the legal environment, in line with some initial bases already built by Sudabby (2017) and Edelman (2016).

## **II. Methods**

In this section, the research design and the resulting legitimacy concept, intended to demonstrate the relationship between compliance and enforcement programs, is described.

### *Resulting Legitimacy Approach Development*

The main questions are why some laws are more effective than others and why organizations and individuals comply with certain laws while not with others. We relate law itself with compliance programs to understand which mechanisms imply acceptance and legitimacy by the law's target audience, that is, legitimacy resulting from the relationship between enforcement and compliance.

Discussions about law and organizations interactions highlight the difficulty for organizations' behavior independence from legal issues and vice versa. Therefore, compliance with norms or other responses to legal conditions can impact the resulting legitimacy, depending on the organization's behavior in a given industry. Among legal impositions and organizational responses, compliance is associated with a self-imposed duty, often described as ethical and transparency practices. Simple legal imposition classic views deal with law and organizational behavior interaction is supported by symbolic constructions, enhancing or weakening legal strength and law effectiveness on organizational practices (Edelman, 2016), according to the legitimacy level resulting from the organizational practical action. These symbolic constructions result from interpretations and meanings given to complying with law's importance; therefore, they are agents' intentions and organizational behavior dependent.

### *Case study selection and design*

Qualitative research (Bandeira-de-Melo e Silva, 2010) was chosen as the study approach. In order to understand the resulting legitimacy from the PPRL, it is also a descriptive and exploratory research (Creswell, 2010). To analytically substantiate the results, data collected and the theoretical concepts used (Hair, et al., 2005; Flick, 2009).

Research strategy was interviews and document analysis. Collection was carried out through different evidence sources, in order to build data triangulation (STAKE, 2008). Primary data was collected in 12 semi-structured interviews carried on with distributors, distributor associations representatives, waste and packaging carriers, with agricultural producers, and regulatory agencies. Organizational documents and records in digital files on official websites formed a secondary source data corpus. We carried out thematic analysis relating to the

research theme and objectives, in addition to interviews and secondary sources data confrontation.

#### *Evaluating Legitimacy Resulting*

The analysis highlighted, through analytical categories (see table 1), the positive relationship between enforcement and compliance mechanisms in order to achieve the resulting legitimacy.

Table 1 here

For each interview, a Informed Consent Term where the respondent agreed to the use of the data collected in the research was signed. Non-participating direct observations and a field diary were also used. Through semi-structured interviews each of the answers enabled to identify arguments that elucidated the research problem.

### **III. Findings**

#### *Resulting Legitimacy mechanisms*

Legitimacy social construction emerges from an interactive process between organizational agents, permeated by standardized functional norms and codes of conduct, which places such construction in the intersection between a given organizational field values and practices with a legal field rules and values. In this interaction, any norm will generate behavioral responses, with greater or lesser force, in terms of effects or legal causality. However, it is difficult to measure *a priori* causality and original stimulus power that would define, objectively, enforcement capacity (or regulatory compliance), since law compliance can occur in different ways among organizations. Thus, enforcement and compliance efforts in processes (subject to regulation) development are tensioned with different intensities in time and space, reflecting in (a) different organizational behaviors and (b) in acceptance or rejection levels in legal or societal fields (Edelman & Suchman, 1997). Therefore, between enforcement and compliance there is a certain ease in establishing mutual relations. It does not mean that they are or will be deterministic.

Compliance, more than attempting to demonstrate conformity to standards, seeks, in a political perspective, particular interests suitability or acting according to law. At the same time, it provides and designs actions based on the resulting legitimacy. Therefore, compliance actions and resulting legitimacy consider symbolic and substantive issues, seeking different adherence levels to laws. This occurs, for example, when an organization's internal practices routine are conceptually designed against legal demands, while resulting legitimacy depends on how real world application generates acceptance or rejection in the legal field.

#### *The case: the PPRL in Brazil*

Conservation initiatives effectiveness depends on users' compliance with regulations. Compliance may be driven by social norms, but some kind of enforcement is commonly needed. Inspection, as an enforcement strategy, is expensive especially in remote areas, but can be optimized based on a relationships network (Santos, Castro & Lima, 2019). PPRS started from regulation and went through institutionalization processes, including using *compliance* measures, to achieve legitimacy.

Selling pesticides comprises commercial and industrial activities that, following legal requirements, significantly contribute to the economy (Magalini, Kuehr & Baldé, 2015). In Brazil, to minimize environmental issues related to consumption and pesticide packaging disposal, laws regulate the entire return process (Santos, Lima & Angnes, 2019). Notably, agricultural pesticides commercialization process has a political, economic and social scope, thus involving the relationship between different actors; not only production and marketing conditions of these products, but reverse logistics aspects draw and guide such relationships.

Agricultural pesticides marketing was under Law 7.802/1989 and Decree 4.074/2002, which mainly dealt with formulation mechanisms, application and agricultural pesticides marketing. However, they did not specifically deal with the packaging disposal. The law 9.974/2000 regulates packaging return and handling process after its use, making the industries and distributors responsible for PPRL.

Campo Limpo program was then implemented by the National Institute for the Processing of Empty Packaging (INPEV), which shares the different functions needed for the proper return of packaging that will be recycled or incinerated with distributors, rural producers, inspection agencies and transporters.

The National Solid Waste Policy – PNRS conceptualizes reverse logistics as a tool for economic and social development preceded by actions, to create ways to facilitate the collection of solid waste and its environmentally appropriate final destination. Through this instrument, manufacturers, traders and distributors must be committed to collecting packages they sold (MMA, 2017; Blowfield, 2013).

According to Guarnieri (2011), PPRL in Brazil is well organized and is considered an example in the world. This structure is due to the legal requirements that emerged and modified the previous scenario. Companies operating in this segment took responsibility for finding solutions for toxic pesticide residues and post-consumer packaging. From this organizational behavior change, INPEV emerged. It designed the Campo Limpo system in order to collect empty packages, making them return and be recycled, thus avoiding problems to humans, environment and animals. Due to the complexity and need for packaging return, it is INPEV's responsibility to monitor products so that their packaging is returned and recycled/incinerated (Dorion, Abreu;

Severo, 2011; Faria; Pereira, 2012).

Guarnieri (2011) explains the PPRL by the following interrelationships: a) production, distribution and marketing of pesticides; b) purchase and use of the product; c) triple washing of packages; d) packaging storage until the time of return; e) transport and collection at the receiving station; f) separation and pressing, and g) transport for recycling and/or incineration. All these inter-relational aspects are part of the technical reference environment for the PPRL.

However, for this entire process to actually take place, a legal basis should drive and regulate. Initially, oriented by Law 7.802/1989 and Decree 4.074/2002, discusses use modes, handling, control and return of packaging, highlighting the risks related to the chemical formulation that makes up the product and the aggravating factors to human, animal and environmental health (INPEV, 2016). It should be noted that the requirements of Legal frameworks comprise the institutional environment, which contributes to the reference context for actions legitimacy. Although there is a law that guides the entire process, other stakeholders involved throughout the production and consumption pesticides chain adopt practices that legitimize reverse logistics.

Also according to INPEV (2016, p.1), Law 9,974/2000 "required each actor involved in agricultural production in Brazil to fulfill a specific role in empty pesticide containers collection and final disposal process, as links in an integrated chain". In Table 2, it is possible to observe the specific regulation on agricultural pesticides, their legal basis and determinations.

Table 2 here

The PNRS maintains a close relationship with other national plans such as Climate Change, Water Resources, Sustainable Production and Consumption. It also harmonizes with the National Environmental Education Policy and the National Basic Sanitation Plan proposal, showing, in this way, the scope and complexity of the subject in question (Planares, 2012).

Despite its initial role, INPEV's responsibilities are shared. Pesticide consumer's awareness is essential, since he is the fundamental link for correct packaging return, according to what is required. It is his responsibility to ensure containers are triple washed, storage and delivery in accordance with legislation requirements, for example, the time limit of approximately 12 months. Manufacturers finance a fair part of the process.

Table 3 here

Some report that "the process grew over the years and became accepted by producers, consumers, because they understood the real need, why the law was created, and why the industry implemented the INPEV" (interviewee 2). Another adds "we have increased packaging collection quantity and quality, today they are washed and separated, but to get here we had to teach the producers every time they came to deliver" (interviewee 1). [...] Interviewee 4 mentions that "most of them return the packages, they do this out of obligation, because the purchase invoice has their name and this can compromise them in the future and generate fines".

In their turn, distributors, in addition to selling the product, must guide farmers as to the location and delivery time, printing this information on the invoice. Finally, there is the government, which is responsible for overseeing the entire process, licensing specific packaging receiving units, and consequently, educating and making everyone aware of the importance of this process (Boldrin et al, 2009; INPEV, 2017).

#### **IV. Discussions**

A subsequent effort was to address the two mechanisms in interconnection processes between organizational behavior and legal fields. This effort showed that, from an initial pure substantive and naturally naive action perspective, *enforcement* is related to coercive processes intensity. A practical consequence would be that, as supervisory capacities expanded, there would be a reduction in the need for *compliance* actions. They result in greater legitimacy, as the organization's actions would be to read the law and create mechanisms to fulfill it. This chain of imposition and substantive responses allows defining an infinity of different symbolic structures creation moments, which can intensify or eliminate the *enforcement* capacity both in the organization and in the organizational field scope.

It is evident from the case of PPRL that a well-structured complaints program to meet the enforcement requirements drove process legitimacy, as an estimated 94% packaging return. Why do other products and industries not achieve the same success, even when there are laws and regulations? Veterinary products, tires, etc also face disposal issues. We argue that, in these products, lack of logistics processes legitimacy is due to the lack of a structure (compliance program) that integrates the industry, sellers, distributors and subsequent collection, as in the case of pesticides.

A path to a broader and closer reality understanding, regarding the tension between *enforcement* and *compliance*, would be in law management processes, which allows rules reading and interpretation in terms of existing organizational capacities or those likely to be built. Even this seems unrealistic, given that practical

actions are not confined to a closed system: agents and organizations behavior are constantly scrutinized by other agents and organizations from different organizational and societal fields. So, the view centered on the procedural tension relationship between *enforcement* and *compliance* seems to constitute a heuristic that allows us to understand and assess the *enforcement* potential of a standard; and, internal organizational efforts to develop *compliance* mechanisms to demonstrate efforts to adhere to such standard investment intensity. In this relationship between *enforcement* and *compliance*, the projection of the resulting level of legitimacy seems to constitute a parameter for defining strategies and risks dimensioning that the organization is willing to assume when it sets itself up as a unit that seeks to justify its actions in organizational, legal and societal fields.

Varying degrees and three distinct sources of organizational compliance with the law are observed: (a) coercive models, where organizations conform because the law commands them and imposes sanctions; (b) normative models, where organizations conform because the law enunciates social values internalized by them; and (c) cognitive models, where organizations conform because law makes certain actions seem more plausible and appropriate. Within each perspective, organizational responses differ from profoundly transformative to formally ceremonial. Organizations can adopt externally compatible structures as a visible compliance demonstration, while preserving traditional managerial prerogatives. Regardless of motivation, ceremony dissociation from substance arguably weakens and marginalizes the role of law (Edelman & Suchman, 1997, p.496).

The *enforcement* capacity substantially takes place via inspected, rigid practices, and, as the first parameter is the logical-technical interpretation of the law, it presents little space for *a priori* negotiation. Reflexively, it leads to legitimacy arising from understanding and seeking to demonstrate the application of the formal law content. In this perspective, the greater the *enforcement*, the more substantive structures needed to comply with the law. Obtaining legitimacy should be the more symbolic the actions. These tend to be reflexively substantive actions, until the emergence of an imminent risk perception legitimacy standards erosion.

Meaning construction within the social reality permeated by different organizations seeks, through measures located in the tension between *enforcement* and *compliance*, formal strengthening to obtain legitimacy via substantive and symbolic structures, identifying and assessing standards. Examples are corporate governance and corporate governance practices. The biggest challenges are defining a *priori* how to comply (and, especially, how to report on compliance) in order to avoid operational difficulties and actions against law, institutionalized norms or expectations.

It is possible to portray the resulting legitimacy as a result of the social construction process between actors with power in which organizations will be in relationship with the legal environment. Thus, acting to build meanings for the law and shaping ideas likely to be widely accepted as basis for institutionalizing acceptable organizational practices in organizational, legal and societal fields. This resulting legitimacy is possible because legislation is ambiguous. It can be strategically "ambiguous": symbolic constructions justify organizational practices, processes and strategies adherence to law. Edelman (2016) presents the law managerialization concept, allowing legitimacy understanding as a result of internal symbolic and substantive conditions of organizations and organizational fields that are manifest in other fields.

Law management involves values and management/business ideas infused into the law. It is encouraged by organizations legalization, as professionals bring law into the organizational domain and are influenced by organizational environments where they work, their background, and their aspirations. Professionals adapt ambiguous legal requirements to the organization's needs or reformulate legal constructs in more favorable terms to managerial interests. A critical element of law management is the organization's symbolic structures becoming prevalent: they influence lawsuits' design, and responses to these claims. In particular, practitioners accept symbolic structures not only as a means of achieving compliance, but also as compliance and legality representations. As law meaning within legal fields is influenced by law compliance in organizational constructions, law becomes endogenous, or constructed within the social fields it seeks to regulate (Edelman, 2016, p. 25).

Resulting legitimacy, thus, tends to incorporate what is desirable, viable and acceptable, while respecting limitations imposed by professional's rationalization processes, real technological support capacity to enable legal determinations, and by cultural bases for accepting the behavior of agents and organizations in a given space and time, for example. In this sense, professional collectivities can impact organizational and legal environments by guiding companies' actions, decisions and socially reasonable paths.

Law internalization through a management process makes more legal institutions incorporate enforcement mechanisms, or intensify compliance mechanisms creation and, therefore, adhere to legal ideals by substantive structures. It is noteworthy, however, that this process tends to be relativized by symbolic structures emergence that can elide efforts of substantive apparatus creation. Symbolic mechanisms generate compliance perceptions with legal requirements, even no adherence to substantive conditions in organizations/organizational fields exists (Edelman, 2016). This tension between external impositions and internal acceptance conditions constitution, organizations/organizational fields simulation or rejection is important, but can't determines

resulting legitimacy level, as there will always be a conformation judgment based on values and standards that go beyond those likely to be strategically conducted by organizations/organizational fields in a relatively closed system, such as those emerging from political fields or from momentary social constructions about certain organizational practices acceptability.

In any case, *enforcement* and *compliance* measures contribute to legitimation process which, according to Berger and Luckmann (1996 [1966], p. 127), “produces new meanings, which serve to integrate meanings already linked to processes disparate institutional [...] in making objectifications objectively accessible and subjectively plausible”. Legitimacy, resulting from a social construction process, involves guidelines moving from the legal to organizational fields and *vice versa* (Sitkin, & George, 2005). It has multiple influencing actors capacities of *enforcement* in multilevel/multifield regarding legal rules and procedures. As greater legitimacy tends to favor agency power, it tends to expand response capacity of *compliance* mechanisms from actors’ intentional efforts as they use resources to generate symbolic and/or substantive structures. Legitimacy will result from the assessment of how such efforts are judged in organizational, legal and societal fields.

## V. Conclusions

As structuring elements of society itself, laws are diffuse and have diffuse effects in organizational dimensions and in large part of individual agents’ behavior; therefore, searching for congruence with legal guidelines or commands is inherent in legitimacy social construction actions. In this construction, *compliance* actions seek to minimize organizations risks of rejection in different fields and to create an identity that communicates care of compliance with the legal environment. Complying with the law and its general principles transcends effects on the legal system and constitutes an important resulting legitimacy driver. Efforts to institutionalize and strengthen *compliance* mechanisms tend, consequently, to make organizations less prone to legal *enforcement*, adopting organizational behaviors compatible with demands from organizational, legal and societal fields. Practical consequences of *compliance* mechanisms advancement by organizations/organizational fields are, for example, reducing regulatory support structures (internal control bodies, regulatory agencies, etc.) maintained by governments and organizations themselves; therefore, it can have important social and economic impacts.

Brazil is a world reference in environmental-friendly material disposal of plastic pesticide packaging. In 2020, 49,881 tons of packaging were recycled or incinerated, consolidating its position. For this success, INPEV highlights the importance of legislation that establishes shared responsibility for all actors involved in the agricultural production chain (INPEV, 2021)

Advancing, without the intention of going deeper into this work, there are spaces to search in the organization's internal capacities for elements to procedurally assess the legitimacy resulting from the relationship between *enforcement* and *compliance*, so that the organization itself can strategically position itself at the local level, regionally, nationally or internationally due to its action scope or its interests and, depending on the legitimacy level reached, try to change rules, and legislation itself, that conditions its performance in its organizational field, thus advancing to change the legal field action bases from regulatory construction in the legislative field. All these fields depend on the new rules' acceptance as legitimate by different societal fields (political, religious, corporate, etc.). Thus, based on this attempt to discuss the tensions between *enforcement* and *compliance* mechanisms, it is expected to contribute to deepen the understanding of resulting legitimacy in multilevel and multi-institutional perspectives in different societal contexts.

As a contribution to future investigations, this work built, from the beginning, a narrative with the purpose of approaching discussions about legitimacy over time, based on a recent systematization constructed by Suddaby *et al.* (2017), advance from the procedural perspective to understand the tensions between *enforcement* and *compliance* mechanisms, as a means of positioning organizations in different organizational and societal fields.

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