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Institutionalization of rural social movements in the Lula government and the decline of land reform in Brazil: co-option, political identity and agency

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EDIÇÃO E PROPRIEDADE

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Institutionalization of rural social movements in the Lula government and the decline of land reform in Brazil: co-option, political identity, and agency. This paper analyses the institutionalization of rural social movements during the Lula government in Brazil, in light of a worsening of land reform in the period as well as continued government support of traditional rural elites, resulting in the expansion of large landholdings at the expense of family held small holdings. It questions the major theories addressing this phenomenon and its outcomes, largely centred on co-option processes and presents an alternative explanation, stemming from a series of interrelated factors until now generally not considered in the literature. It argues that these academic debates need to acknowledge the existence of a role played by identity, creativity, agency, and political opportunities of these actors, as well as their predefined meanings and strategies.

KEYWORDS: Brazil; rural social movements; land reform; lulism; co-option.

Institucionalização dos movimentos sociais agrários durante o governo de Lula e o declínio da reforma agrária no Brasil: cooptação, identidade política e agência. Este artigo analisa a institucionalização dos movimentos sociais rurais durante o governo de Lula no Brasil, à luz de um decréscimo nas políticas de reforma agrária e de um apoio contínuo do governo às elites rurais tradicionais do país, resultando na expansão dos grandes latifúndios em detrimento das pequenas propriedades familiares. Questiona as principais teorias sobre estes fenómenos, em grande parte centradas em processos de cooptação, e apresenta uma explicação alternativa, baseada num conjunto de fatores inter-relacionados e até agora pouco considerados pela literatura. Argumenta que, ao invés de ver esses processos como resultado de atração e/ou manipulação de líderes, é necessário que os debates académicos reconheçam a importância do papel desempenhado pela identidade, criatividade, agência, oportunidades políticas dos atores e estratégias predefinidas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Brasil; movimentos sociais rurais; reforma agrária; lulismo; cooptação.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years social scientists have identified a new trend in which representatives of social movements start taking positions in official administrative state structures¹. These works point to the process of co-option leading to demobilization, distraction from original radical goals, and failure to secure significant positive outcomes. However, in this paper I argue that a case study based upon the experience of Brazil gives a more subtle explanation for this outcome than co-option. I draw upon the case of the participation of rural movements in the Brazilian government under the Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's presidency and its effects on land reform policies in the early 2000s. I show that the worsening of land distribution and decline in the number of new settlements resulted not from co-option, but from a deep identification of representatives of social movements with a political project agreed on by government and activists, ultimately concerned with ensuring governability. Furthermore, it also allowed the government to support traditional elites controlling important export agro-mineral sectors and contributing to the expansion of large properties.

Important aspects of this process have been analysed in the recent literature. They relate to the configuration of internal forces and alliances built to ensure governability in Brazil under Lula (Bruera, 2015), as well as the option by favouring the country's export sectors. However, a third and crucial component, which is the focus of this work, has not been studied. It also relates to the relations between government and its internal supporting political

1 This article was originally written as part of the research carried out as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of International Development at the London School of Economics, sponsored by the São Paulo Research Foundation, FAPESP.

forces, but concentrates especially on social movements. This is made in view of the pact established amid various sectors of society to ensure governability, known as *Lulism*.

Aiming to answer the question about why the decline of land reform happened, despite the participation of rural social movements in government, this paper confronts the Brazilian case with the two main models of co-option processes of (Coy & Hedeem, 2005) and (Murphree, Wright, & Ebaugh, 1996). Since these main theories on processes of institutionalization and co-option of social movements emphasize the role developed by their representatives within the government, the field work was carried out with semi-structured interviews with these representatives working within the Lula government. The research was conducted from a fresh theoretical perspective on topics such as land reform, peasantries, institutionalization, and co-option of social movements, and comprises full a set of official data on land reform in the period.

The paper is divided into the following sections. The first discusses the literature on the institutionalization of social movements and co-option. It also identifies its limitations for understanding particular situations in which processes of deep identification between government and social movements are built to ensure not just governance and gains, but also demobilization and impeding structural reforms. Furthermore, it also discusses the methodology used in the paper. The second section shows the importance of the participation of social movements in the Lula government and the symbiotic relationship between social movements and the Workers' Party, resulting in their incorporation within the government. The third section analyses official data on land reform in the Lula government, showing a worsening of land distribution and decline in the number of new settlements. The fourth section presents qualitative data collection and analyses the interviews, showing the distinctive features brought by the literature and the Brazilian case. The paper concludes by drawing lessons for the current analyses of the institutionalization of social movements, showing the limitations of approaches such as those based on co-option. It suggests another analytical approach in which the agency and identity of social movements can be highlighted, showing self-chosen options rather than just manipulation and exchanging of favours.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND CO-OPTION

Social movements, as “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/ or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani, 1992, p. 13) have

become in recent years increasingly formal organizations. This includes the professionalization of their structures and sometimes their incorporation within public spheres (Della Porta & Diani, 2009, pp. 150-151). Especially when their representatives start acting as members of governments and taking positions in official administrative structures, this process has attracted the attention of many scholars (Giugni & Passy, 1998; Goldstone, 2004; Oommen, 1990; Santoro & McGuire, 1997; Suh, 2011). These works seek especially to understand the effects of this relation in two ways. The first in view of defining characteristics of these movements in the classic sense, as non-bureaucratic structures involved in adversarial relations with the state and operating outside formal politics, as defined by authors such as Habermas (1981), Melucci (1980) and Touraine (1989). The second concerns the outcomes of this association, not just in terms of achievements of social movements' demands, but also for subsequent processes of demobilization and misuse of purposes, which the main scholars point to as a result of co-option processes (Coy & Hedeem, 2005; Druck, 2006; Ganson, 1975; Gohn, 2008; Hershberg & Rosen, 2006; Jaffee, 2012; Murphree et al., 1996; Pellow, 1999; Santoro & Brown, 2003; Trumpy, 2008).

Thus, since the 1960s studies on new social movements have emphasized the autonomous character of their actions, generally dissociated from formal institutional structures of power. These studies have also pointed to the streets as the main locus of actions and public confrontations aiming at radical changes in society, instead of innovations built through dialogue and consent. Nevertheless, recent studies have shown different paths taken by different groups and social contexts. In many countries some movements have been acting not only cooperatively with formal social institutions, but there is also a growing process of professionalization and bureaucratization of their structures (Giugni & Passy, 1998; Goldstone, 2004; Oommen, 1990; Santoro & McGuire, 1997; Suh, 2011). Consequently, the adoption of strategies of moderate action and participation in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state also subvert the basis of the traditional analysis on these movements.

The literature has increasingly seen the phenomenon of institutionalization as a result of a shift from confrontational to cooperative actions, an option that takes into account costs and benefits (Suh, 2011, p. 443). By this account, the cost of an institutional way is seen as more advantageous than the street confrontations, and it varies according to "the nature of the state and character of political parties" (Suh, 2011, p. 443). Another important component refers to the reformist status of the state. The presence of innovative political forces within the state contributes to this process, because this environment facilitates alliances with progressive groups, increasing the impact of actions and contributing to better results (Suh, 2011, pp. 449-450).

This process is a challenge for the theorists, who have sought to understand the actions of social movements over the years. It is especially pertinent for the theories that see social movements as a reaction to a new form of social and cultural domination based on technology and science, thus creating a new zone of conflict distinct from social movements of the 19th century, when the focus was labour and redistributive issues.

These studies differ from those focused on the process of professionalization and formalization (Staggenborg, 1988) of these groups which, from the work of McCarthy & Zald (1977b) and McCarthy & Zald (1977a) have been strongly associated with the theory of resource mobilization, given that they do not focus on a logic inspired by the companies. They also differ from other works (Lapegna, 2013) that analyse the proximity and cooperation between social movements with the states not under the focus of institutionalization, as they do not require the participation of the movements in the state apparatus. Instead, the survival strategies built in environments marked by patronage and clientelistic relations are emphasized (Hilgers, 2009; Munro, 2010; Álvarez Rivadulla, 2012), resulting in demobilization.

Instead, these works mainly seek to understand this phenomenon based on historical, political, and social processes. They do it by analysing their strategic actions and outcomes, generally guided by the idea of bureaucratization and co-option “that are activated by the governmental sphere to social movements that originated in civil society” (Iglesias & Di Filippo, 2011).

While the focus of these analyses is always a set of actions and reactions, advances and setbacks, gains and losses, construction and reconstruction of tactics by the actors, in many of these works the loss of the transformative and reformative characters of these movements is especially emphasized. For this, the term co-option has been used mostly to describe this process.

In these works, co-option is always seen from a perspective of distortion of purpose, manipulation of leaders, exchanging favours, and subsequent demobilization. This interpretation sometimes obscures specific social processes that engender different logic of action groups in their interaction with state power. Thus, classic works such as Piven & Cloward (1979), analysing the power possibilities and limitations for the poor in movements of the 1930s and 1960s in the US, underline how political leaders tried to silence the protests for social change by attending to more immediate demands and giving incentives to movements’ leaders. Other research, such as that of McAdam (2010, p. 55), also points out the risks faced by movements when trying to establish support to ensure their survival, i.e., the concessions made that weaken their ability to promote changes due to social control that rises from governments. This process is also shown by Meyer & Tarrow (1998), when they observe that groups

with more moderate actions achieve more inclusion, advantages, and gains, instead of those with more radical views. Yet, the analyses that show that the movements' deviation of goals resulting from co-option processes, and subsequent demobilization multiply, as demonstrated by the work of Coy & Hedeem (2005), Gamson (1975), Jaffee (2012), Murphree et al. (1996), Pellow (1999), (Santoro & Brown (2003), and Trumpy (2008).

Also in Latin America, studies that analyse the alliances built by the so-called "pink tide" in Latin America, characterized amongst other things by approximation and cooperation of several social movements with governments, also underline the co-option processes there elapsed (Druck, 2006; Gohn, 2008; Hershberg & Rosen, 2006; Prevost, Vanden, & Oliva Campos, 2012). This shows that co-option has been a common conclusion about the institutionalization of social movements.

However, analysis of specific cases such as Brazil under Lula shows that difficulties and even regression in issues such as land reform can be explained by a conjunction of factors that differ from current analyses on this phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodology, two complementary and classic models of co-option processes were used to analyse the Brazilian case. The first was the Murphree et al. (1996) model based on the pioneering study of Selznick (1948), about the failures in attempting to co-opt leaders in a toxic waste implementation plan made by a company in Dayton, Texas. The original conception of co-option formulated by Selznick (1948), as "attempts to influence the opposition and dilute its resistance by incorporating its members into the legitimate structure of the negotiating process, thereby focusing and channeling opposition into a more easily controllable environment", (Murphree et al., 1996, p. 451) defined three basic components of this process: channeling, inclusion/participation, and salience control (1996, p. 452).

The second model was developed by Coy & Hedeem (2005). It aims to analyse the community mediation movement in the US, representing the four stages that, according to the authors, usually comprise the co-option process: 1) Inception/Engagement; 2) Appropriation of language, technique/Appropriation via inclusion, participation; 3) Assimilation of challenging movement (CM) leaders, members, participants/transformation of programme goals; 4) Regulation and Response.

The debate on the institutionalization of social movements has shown that cooperative processes between governments and social movements has

challenged the traditional examinations of this subject: first by subverting the logic that defines these movements as opposed to the state; then by revealing that this collaboration can have different results, in terms of achieving the demands of the movements and on demobilization processes of these groups. However, these analyses often fail to consider the negative effects of this relationship as a result of the co-option of these movements. The next section shows how collaborative processes can originate from symbiotic relations between government and social movements that differ from current analyses, with reference to Brazil under Lula.

PT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE LULA GOVERNMENT

In the last two decades, most Latin American countries have elected heads of state with profound links to social movements. This has served to promote and redefine the role of these movements through a new configuration of forces at play (Abers, Serafim, & Tatagiba, 2014; Druck, 2006; Gohn, 2008; Goodwin, 2016; Iglesias & Di Filippo, 2011). Brazil's turn to participate in this process came with the election of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, labour leader and founder of the Workers' Party (PT) as President.

Along with the PT, large parts of the new social movements also went to power, such as the major trade union confederation and many leading NGOs. This appeared to be the dream scenario for many excluded people, in which the social policies would finally begin to alleviate historical injustices.

The rural social movements stand out here, which despite their multiple expressions and although representing different social groups in rural areas, share in the struggle for land, respect for traditional ways of life, social justice, social security, financial support, and technical assistance.

The Brazilian rural social movement includes different groups such as the landless, trade unions, rural women, those affected by dams, and extraction workers – represented by specific organizations, most of them connected in some way to PT. Among the 110 movements operating in Brazil in the context of the struggle for land reform between 2000 and 2010², the Landless Movement (MST), the National Confederation of Rural Workers (CONTAG), the National Federation of Workers in Family Agriculture (FETRAF-BRASIL/CUT), and the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) are the most important and representative of these movements.

2 Source: DATALUTA – Banco de Dados da Luta Pela Terra, 2011: http://www2.fct.unesp.br/nera/projetos/dataluta_brasil_2010.pdf.

The creation in 1999 of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, MDA, was a direct result of the intensification of the actions of rural social movements in Brazil during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) (1995-2002), mainly marked by the growing number of land occupations led especially by the Landless Movement, MST, and conflicts between farmers and landless people.

Once in power, PT reached a political agreement with the most important groups that supported its election. That was addressed by redesigning the MDA to accommodate them in its secretariats. Therefore, the names of the secretaries were negotiated and appointed by these organizations with a mission to implement policies that met the demands of the rural population: Territorial Development Secretariat and Department of Agrarian Reordering were appointed by CONTAG; INCRA by MST; Secretariat of Family Agriculture by FETRAF.

Besides appointing the secretaries, most professionals working for these secretariats were consultants hired through international technical cooperation projects with institutions such as Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. In fact, most of the MDA's staff was composed of these consultants until 2009, when it appointed its own permanent staff for the first time. A survey of their profiles between 2002 and 2012 shows that 92 percent of these professionals had strong links with the PT and the rural social movements. These representatives operated not only in Ministerial secretariats but also in partnerships established with NGOs for policy implementation, while many who joined the government had previously worked for these institutions.

A picture of the political appointees in both terms of Lula's government drawn up by d'Araujo (2009) show us that from a total of 1.1 million federal civil servants between 2003 and 2010, 80,000 were political appointees, going from technical assistants (DA-S1) to senior managers of public institutions (DAS-6 and NES) (d'Araujo, 2009, p. 29). From this total, the highest hierarchical level, called DAS-5, DAS-6, and NES, 80.0 percent in Lula's first term, and 81.1 percent in his second term were affiliated in PT. Furthermore, 46 percent of them had strong connections with social movements in the first term, and 46.3 percent in the second term (d'Araujo, 2009, pp. 51-55). It shows the strength of the presence in Lula's government of senior positions with solid ties with social movements, resulting in important spaces for involvement and influence on public policies (Abers et al., 2014, p. 326).

However, it is important to notice that despite the large presence of people working in the Lula government with strong links with social movements, the leaders of these movements did not work there. Instead, in addition to having technical knowledge, the key people appointed also had significant activism in these movements and PT. Although they did not work within the government,

these leaders always had direct access to the highest government authorities, such as the President of the Republic and the ministers.

OFFICIAL DATA ON LAND REFORM UNDER THE LULA GOVERNMENT

Land reform was initiated during the Lula period through a document having contributions from recognized scholars, activists, and various stakeholders. It resulted in a detailed proposal for land reform that was the basis for the II National Land reform Plan (PNRA II). The plan established a goal of “settling 4,000,000 landless peasant families, granting titles to 5,000,000 *posseiros*, and providing credit to 127,000 family farmers over a four-year period” (Petras, Robles, & Veltmeyer, 2015, p. 28).

However, according to INCRA, in 2003 58,000 properties concentrated 133 million unproductive hectares, while in 2010 69,200 were unproductive properties concentrating 228 million hectares. Furthermore, data analysis of land concentration in Brazil, in the first decade of the 21st century, shows that even with the increase in the number of small properties, it has always lagged behind the increase in the size of large properties. Official data from the National Rural Registration System (*Sistema Nacional de Cadastro Rural*), which are based on information declared by the landowners, give an interesting overview of land concentration in the country between 2003 and 2010. The data reveal that while the number of small, medium, and large properties increased, respectively by 20.5 percent, 24.3 percent, and 18.5 percent, the size of properties followed a different logic, by increasing 20.87 percent, 21.8 percent, and 65.17 percent.

These data clearly show that the concentration of land rose dramatically during the Lula period, despite policies for the sector and strong presence in the government of members of rural social movements.

Even core actions of the land reform process such as the establishment of new rural settlements, which was expected to be much greater than during the previous government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), are highly contradictory and have been contested. As we can see in Figure 1, it did not happen so markedly, so that in the first, fifth, seventh, and eighth years of their respective governments, the number of families settled by FHC was still greater than during the Lula government. In total, Lula settled just 13.5 percent more families than FHC.

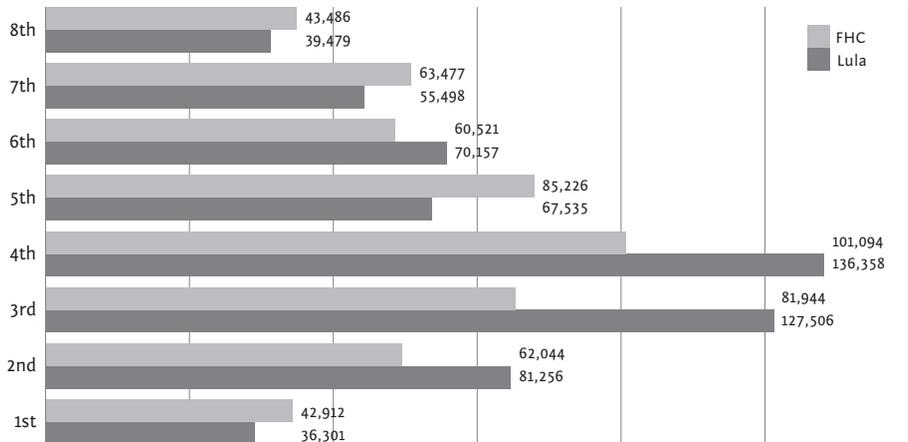
Furthermore, these numbers are also questioned by specialists such as De Oliveira (2009), who argues that the government is playing games with statistics when classifying the families. It does so by including those who had their possessions regularized, their rights recognized in old settlements, or

TABLE 1
Land concentration in Brazil between 2003 and 2010

Properties	2003		2010	
	Number	Area (ha)	Number	Area (ha)
Small (Less than 1 up to 200 ha)	3,971,255	118,937,866.40	4,786,515	143,119,195.60
Medium (200 up to 2,000 ha)	286,172	152,556,741.10	355,880	185,826,579.73
Large (2,000 up to 100,000 ha)	33,104	146,988,724.80	39,250	242,795,144.63

Source: DATALUTA: Struggle for Land Database, 2011.

FIGURE 1
Number of Settled Families - Lula and FHC, by year of Government



Source: Institute for Colonization and Land reform (INCRA).

who were resettled because of the construction of dams in new settlements, consequently as part of “land reform”. Thus, reclassifying the 519,111 families settled between 2003 and 2008 we would have: 1 – land resettlement: 2,061; 2 – land reordering: 195,502; 3 – land regularization: 138,240 and; 4 – land reform: 183,308. This means that just 183,308 were in fact settled out of those 519,111 (25.3 percent) officially announced (De Oliveira, 2009).

UNBALANCED FORCES IN THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

The pattern of land reform in the Lula government has been explained by the following factors. The first concerns the so-called “coalition presidentialism”

(Abranches, 1988), a result of Parliament fragmentation into many political parties, which forces the executive power to adopt practices commonly used in a parliamentary system. The lack of a majority in the National Congress forced Lula to establish broad alliances (including those conservatives opposed to land reform), in order to guarantee governability and implement government projects.

An example of the difficulty in promoting land reform related changes is the upgrade of the rural properties productivity index. Based on 1975 data and established in 1980, the update of this index is one of the oldest demands of the rural social movements. It would create new parameters by which rural properties considered productive could then be re-evaluated in order to be considered appropriate for land reform. Several proposals for updating the index were sent to the National Congress, but the strong presence of representatives of agribusiness and *latifundios*, combined with reduced protests and land occupations enabled opponents to block these proposals.

This contributed to the great expansion of sectors linked to agribusiness, mostly cash crops such as soybeans and sugarcane, given that these are seen as “flex crops” for several end products, such as biofuel, animal feed, food, etc. (Borras, Franco, Isakson, Levidow, & Vervest, 2014), and also others like maize, cotton, eucalyptus, and livestock. Rural area programmes were focused mainly on the creation of new settlements on public lands, credit expansion, and the support of family farming through social policies.

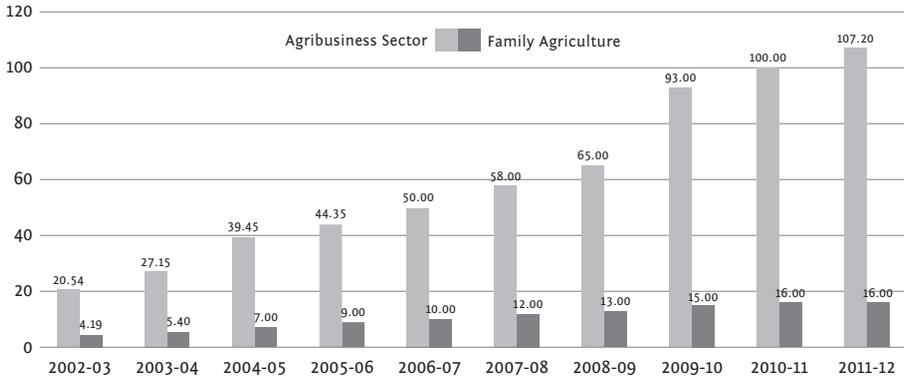
GOVERNMENT OPTION FOR AGRIBUSINESS INVESTMENTS

Also in terms of official investments, there was a considerable advance of agribusiness, understood by the importance of this sector in the composition of the Brazilian GDP, with an average increase of 19.16 percent from 2003 to 2010³. As we can see in Figure 2, although Lula’s presidency did make a significant increase in spending on poverty focussed rural development, it made a far greater investment in large-scale agribusiness. Investments designed to reduce poverty and support family farming rose 281.3 percent in the period, while investments in agribusiness increased 421.9 percent.

With regard to land reform, investments in new settlements have decreased from 2007 on, so that the number of new settlements also declined. Moreover, most of them still need basic infrastructure such as water, roads, electricity, new housing, or sanitation, as well as access to essential public services such as health and education, and timely access to credit (IPEA, 2012, p. 273).

3 Source: Centro de Estudos Avançados em Economia Aplicada CEPEA; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, IBGE: <http://cepea.esalq.usp.br/pib/>.

FIGURE 2
Resources made available by the official rural credit in Brazil



Source: MAPA/SPA/DEAGRI.

FIELD RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with people linked to social movements and working in the Ministry of Agrarian Development. These actors were divided into two groups: those who held political appointment positions, known as DAS, and consultants hired through international technical cooperation projects. Seventeen interviews (10 with consultants and 7 with DAS) were conducted during the months of May and June 2016, with people who worked in the Lula government. Former consultants were 6 men and 4 women, aged between 28 and 55, all with higher level education. DAS respondents were 5 men and 2 women, aged between 32 and 52, and all with higher level and post-graduate education in different areas, holding leading positions in the federal government. The co-option models of Murphree et al. (1996) and Selznick (1948) were then tested, and the central topics to be explored in the interviews were defined (Foddy, 1994; Wengraf, 2001). This was done in order to serve as a basis for understanding similar processes of co-option in other contexts and at the same time allow an understanding of the specificities of the Brazilian case. These 10 topics were:

- 1 the political trajectory of these actors;
- 2 their militancy in social movements;
- 3 how they came to occupy that position in government;
- 4 interaction and communication with the government;
- 5 challenges for the implementation of policies;

- 6 advances and retreats of public policy for rural areas;
- 7 current importance of land reform;
- 8 strategies developed to implement social policies, given the political scenario and configuration of forces to support the government;
- 9 contacts with the movements when doing this work;
- 10 an assessment of official data on land reform during the Lula government.

According to these topics, the information collected was then coded for analysis.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITY

The first stage of the model co-option process by Coy & Hedeén (2005) underlines a moment of emergence of movements, as a product of complaints around issues that are shared by a group, from which they mobilize to solve that problem. The collective identity that is formed from the sharing of complaints about a particular issue (Taylor, Whittier, & Morris, 1992), plus the political environment existing around the group, which allows it to be affirmed and often get the sympathies of a large audience, are then key features of the emergence and affirmation of social movements (Coy & Hedeén, 2005; Tarrow & Tollefson, 1994). Thus, these characteristics would be present in many different contexts, varying depending on the demands being made, the political environment, and political opportunities.

Two other aspects are also important to the authors. The first is a time when “state and vested interests, responding to external and internal pressures, began to perceive a need for policy adjustments or even reform”. A second moment is when the political elites recognize the need for change, “including genuine support for the policy change, efficiency concerns, repaying political favours, political expediency, re-election concerns, or a desire to blunt the challenge and head off more substantive changes” (Coy & Hedeén, 2005, p. 412).

However, while the Brazilian social movement has experienced a moment of emergence of movements as a product of complaints regarding issues that are shared by a group, the other two moments did not happen as described by Coy & Hedeén (2005).

The political exhaustion of the neoliberal period and the inability of the traditional elites of the country to respond to the desires of an increasingly organized population created the opportunity for a leftist government, as represented by PT. However, creating the possibility of a PT government meant

setting up the conditions for social movements to have a position of participation and influence in government as never before.

The interviewees can attest to this process of outward movement to the government. In all cases the respondents described a strong political engagement with PT, and a presence in the social movements linked to the rural area. They also highlighted their rural origins, struggles to access education, and a very early awareness of the injustices they suffered, which led them to engage in social movements. Many were also linked to the Roman Catholic Church and its pastorals, participating in different groups targeting rural areas and their various demands, such as education, gender equality, income generation, and access to land.

With the emergence of PT, they felt welcome and saw the Party as an opportunity for a political activism in an institution that included many other social groups that emerged following the military period, bringing a proposal for change and social justice.

Life in the city where I was born was very difficult. Since I was little, I saw the effort of my father and oldest brothers cutting sugarcane, earning a pittance, and my mother making a true miracle to buy food and everything we needed. When participating in the Church's youth groups and later on in the Pastoral of Land, I began to see that things could change (...) and when I started to attend PT meetings, I saw that there were a lot of people who also wanted to do something, and it gave me so much hope.

Thus, the collective identities built around social demands, and the strengthening of movement given political opportunities provided by the end of the military regime and the neoliberal period, happened concomitantly with the emergence and strengthening of the Workers' Party. Many activists of social movements helped to create and remained with PT until it achieved election to the federal government. Consequently, becoming part of the government did not happen by pressure from society or a kind of necessity, concession, or elite's changing of strategy.

METHODS, LANGUAGE, AND PARTICIPATION OF POLICIES

The co-option stages of Coy & Hedeén (2005, p. 4143) subdivide the second phase into two moments: the appropriation of methods and language of movements by the state, and the invitation of movement actors to participate in the formation of policies.

The interviewees stated that the communication within the government had both negative and positive aspects. The positive aspect was the environment

surrounded by militants of PT and social movements, which allowed them to use their own language. Thus, terms such as *companheiro* (comrade), largely used by leftists to refer to, identify, or address another militant was widely utilized by these actors within the government. It also helped to provide strong identity amongst them around their mission. This can easily be seen in public speeches, such as the inaugural speech of the first Minister of Agrarian Development of the Lula government, Miguel Rossetto:

A greeting to all my *companheiros* and *companheiras*, who have been with us for so long in this great journey of transformation of this country, this great journey of building a country with increasing social justice, democracy and freedom... I hope that we have the capacity, the energy, the happiness and the willingness to collaborate, in our work space, with this enormous democratic, civic, transformative and supportive joint effort that we began to live from yesterday, under the command of our *companheiro* President Lula.⁴

Also in the numerous speeches of President Lula this term was widely used, as in this one addressed to rural workers in 2004:

I think that if we do things in a more mature, more appropriate way, using the power of pressure that we have, you do not have to worry about demanding from us. You know that with the same frankness that you come to talk to me and ask for a lot of things, I can have the same frankness to say: look, this I can do, this I cannot do, that is possible, that is not possible, and that is going to happen next year. Because if we don't have this sincere relationship, of *companheiros*, I ask myself: what are we doing here?⁵

Similarly, the emphasis always required stressing the male and female genders in written messages and public. The women's movement has demanded this usage to give visibility to females, in a language like Portuguese, in which the grammatical male gender can be applied generically to all humans, thereby also designating women. This can be seen in this speech by President Lula to rural workers during the launch of the Harvest Plan for Family Agriculture - 2007/2008:

4 http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:at8j5qhGf7wJ:www1.uol.com.br/fernandorodrigues/030106/discurso_de_posse-desenvolvimento_agrario.doc+&cd=5&hl=pt-BR&ct=clnk&gl=uk.

5 <http://www4.planalto.gov.br/consea/comunicacao/discursos/2004/discorso-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cerimonia-de-lancamento-do-seguro-de-agricultura-familiar>.

So, *companheiros e companheiras*, I will tell you something, *companheiro* Mané, *companheira* Elisângela, go back to your piece of land knowing something. We are still far from achieving everything we want, but we have already achieved much more than we dreamed of conquering in many years, and we know that we will build a little bit more each year.⁶

Hence, the simple use of *companheiro* to call or to refer to someone, or start a speech by saying *companheiros e companheiras*, *todos e todas* (everybody, men and women), *trabalhadores e trabalhadoras* (male and female workers), emphasizing both genders, instantly creates amongst the followers a feeling of empathy, proximity ties, respect, commitment, and complicity. When government officials talked to social movements, these expressions were always used, as it helped to create strong ties by denoting a common mission. That is why it was common to see President Lula addressing speeches to social movements starting by saying *companheiros e companheiras*, but not using those terms when talking to other groups such as business people.

In the beginning, it was a bit difficult to convince permanent government officials about the importance of these things. But we are accustomed to dealing with people from outside social movements and whenever we could we talked about the importance of changes in gender relations. We have always explained that the worst prejudice is in the details, and the importance of highlighting the presence of women and men. Moreover, it is a mistake that the male gender also represents the female. That was really great to see that things were gradually changing in the government.

In addition to verbal language, from which were taken two examples, the body language and informal way of dressing, traditionally used by militants, were also incorporated in the government. The interviews highlighted the familial atmosphere created by these aspects, and the initial difficulty to deal with civil servants in the face of those innovations. It meant that both sides, militants in the government and permanent civil servants, had to adapt to each other in order to coexist.

It was strange at first, especially during the meetings, and we noticed clearly that there were two groups in the room. The permanent staff dressed and spoke more formally, and people from social movements were more relaxed. We wore the same clothes that we wore

6 <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/20-mandato/2007/27-06-2007-discurso-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cerimonia-de-lancamento-do-plano-safra-da-agricultura-familiar-2007-2008>.

as working with the population, and we brought various expressions of our meetings with the communities. Little by little things changed, and I think they even liked it. I also learned things from them, such as planning, budgeting and bidding.

Thus, in the case of the Brazilian rural movement, there was no appropriation and transformation of the movement terminology by the government, because their language was already partially the language of the new government, which continued to be used, giving identity to those who used it.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, GOVERNMENT, AND CO-OPTION

The process of incorporation of members of social movements within the state, as part of co-option processes, is also an important part of the models brought by Coy & Hedeem (2005, p. 416) and Murphree et al. (1996). It first presupposes the effort of the dominant group to centralize discussions, creating bodies to make decisions that allow an easier neutralization of the main causes advocated by the groups, redirecting them to less important demands (Coy & Hedeem, 2005, p. 416; Murphree et al., 1996, pp. 452-453). A second important aspect is the inclusion of representatives of social movements in these institutionalized boards who are responsible for the discussion and implementation of policies. This is something always stressed as being extremely important in the co-option process, and often with contradictory consequences. Among these effects are gains and specific changes in the balance of political forces – something that does not become effective for a long time. Another aspect considered by Murphree et al. (1996, p. 455) is the greatest government control over the leaders of the movements integrating the structures of the state, the main consequence of which is the introduction of small and controlled changes seen as legitimized by these leaders.

Thus, Coy & Hedeem (2005, p. 418) underline that:

The inclusion/participation component of co-optation relies on a principle that is well known in conflict resolution theory and practice: that participation in decision making and policy making tends to increase ownership in the policies and decisions, even when the policies do not undergo substantive change and when the specific outcomes are not actually very satisfactory to the included participant.

As a result of this process, there is usually a change in the relevance of certain issues previously seen as critical to the social movements, which are apparently being treated properly and, “as a result, no longer need to be at the forefront of the group’s list of outstanding issues” (Murphree et al., 1996, p. 457).

The analysis of the Brazilian case, in the light of these models shows that, as discussed above, the incorporation of actors of social movements in the government was distinct from the cases brought by the literature, first by not incorporating the leaders. Analysis of the interviews shows us that both the consultants and those occupying senior positions in the government were people who actively participated in the movement and militancy of PT, but did not occupy leadership positions in the movement. However, they maintained close ties with the leaders throughout the period in the government, which in turn had ready access to senior government officials.

Likewise, these activists came to power not by a government's willingness to have these people working there as part of an attempt to attract support and manipulate leaders. In the case of consultants, in all cases analysed they were very well known by the heads of the secretariats, and were highly active militants in PT and social movements.

Yet, the work previously developed in these institutions and their militancy in PT, led them to establish a network of contacts that facilitated their move to the government.

I helped a lot in the PT's campaigns in my State [Maranhão], and the Secretary and I were *companheiros* of struggle in PT and in the MST. When Lula won, he came to Brasilia to help with the government transition and then took over the Secretariat. He then sent me an email saying that he was setting his team and asked me if I wanted to participate. That was the opportunity I had to try to do something to change the reality here in my State and in Brazil.

It is important to observe that being a militant was important, but only as a first step. Given that PT is composed of various internal political groups (Secco, 2011), which helped to create the Party in the early 1980s, and that many of them still maintain their identity as a group within the party, the PT governments shared the government between the coalition parties and its internal factions. Thus, during the Lula government, MDA was in charge of an internal political group called Socialist Democracy (Trotskyist orientation), and to be part of this faction favoured the consultant being accepted in the ministry. Hence, invitations were issued for key people to apply for consultant posts, knowing that they would obtain those jobs.

For DAS positions, since they are senior positions, their appointments were products of negotiations between the parties supporting the government and social movement leaders.

In the same way, the establishment of forums and public conferences to discuss policies (Pogrebinschi, 2013; Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014) had an

TABLE 2
Consultants interviewed

Consultants	Gender	Organization	Party
1	M	CONTAG-MST ¹	PT
2	M	FETRAF ²	PT
3	M	CONTAG-MST	PT
4	M	IADH ³	PT
5	M	ASSOCENE ⁴ -MOC	PT
6	M	IADH	PT
7	F	CPT ⁵	PT
8	F	CONTAG-MST	PT
9	F	IADH	PT
10	F	FETRAF	PT

1 National Confederation of Rural Workers – Landless Movement.

2 National Federation of Workers in Family Agriculture.

3 Instituto de Assessoria para o Desenvolvimento Humano.

4 Associação, Orientação, Cooperativas, Nordeste – Movimento de Organização Comunitária

5 Pastoral Land Commission.

TABLE 3
DAS interviewed

DAS	Gender	Organization	Party
1	M	IPEA ¹	PSB
2	M	State Government of Minas Gerais	PT
3	F	State Government of Rio Grande do Sul	PT
4	M	CUT ²	PT
5	F	IPEA	PCdoB
6	M	State Government of Bahia	PT
7	M	State Government of Rio Grande do Sul	PT

1 Institute for Applied Economic Research.

2 Unified Workers' Central.

unprecedented expansion in the PT government. Established by the 1988 Constitution, they were one of the main instruments of dialogues between government and civil society about the implementation of actions, and not aimed at the incorporation of only leaders in these discussions, but of the whole society. Within the government, discussions were made informally in meetings of the

departments, and the main decisions were always shared with the leaders of the movement by both the consultants and the DAS.

CHANGE IN THE SET OF PRIORITIES

However, the priority of the movement for land reform has changed significantly in favour of other demands seen as less important by these actors, following what was identified by Coy & Hedeem (2005) and Murphree et al. (1996).

When asked about the strategies adopted for the implementation of policies, the interviewees always stressed the open internal debate about all issues, never adopting a discourse marked by an opposition between us (movements) and them (government). On the contrary, they adopted a double identity, feeling at the same time government and civil society, and always calling the President and the PT ministers and leftist parties *companheiros*.

However, they did not see themselves as part of the government as a whole, always making a distinction between those who they thought were on their side, as friends and *companheiros*, and those whom they opposed. Among these was especially the Ministry of Agriculture, led by representatives of agribusiness and *latifundia*.

When asked about the presence of these sectors in a leftist government, they responded that they understood that it was necessary for the government's support base, recognizing the difficulty in making the necessary reforms with such powerful "enemies" within the government.

I think that PT took a long time to understand the need to make wider alliances to get the power, but now that we get that we have to adapt to this reality, which is not easy. But gradually we are managing to improve the situation of rural areas in Brazil, with policies that are changing the reality of people and bringing them more dignity.

The interviewees also said that the decision makers were always very willing to implement important and more specific policies. That includes programmes such as: My Home My Life Programme, School Nutrition National Programme; More Food Programmes; Family Farming Harvest Plan; Programmes for Strengthening Family Agriculture; Credit for Agriculture; Sustainable Territorial Rural Development Programme; Technical Extension; and Biodiesel.

Nevertheless, respondents also admitted the difficulties of advancing the land reform programme, and the justification of the decision makers was the governability of the country and then the impossibility of confronting representatives of agribusiness in the government and in the National Congress.

When faced with the data on the worsening of land distribution in the Lula government, most of them were initially surprised. Nevertheless, assuming a position of being in government, they defended results such as hunger reduction, social inclusion, income distribution, reduction in the Gini index, number of residences offered by the My Home My Life Programme. They also defended the greater support for family farming, improvement of rural settlements, improvement in commercialization conditions for products of the settlements, etc.

Yet, when asked about whether social movements would not have lost their great opportunity to finally carry out land reform, the majority of respondents answered that the possible land reform had been made, given the existing situation. However, they hoped to continue promoting further reform and did not feel betrayed or abandoned by the government, stating that they understood the difficulties and saw advances during the period.

We get a little surprised by this data, but we see many landless people being settled and many policies being implemented benefiting many people. Of course we can always do more and must... I think we still have not won the battle against the *latifundia*, but a lot has been done and I believe that we will advance further. And I'm sure the *companheiros* in the government are engaged in it.

This shows us that although there was, in the case of rural social movements in defence of land reform, a change in the set of priorities considered less important, this change did not happen as a result of co-option. Instead, this occurred as a result of the deep identification of these agents with the government throughout Lula's mandate.

Given the broad spectrum of groups that comprise the Brazilian rural movement, there have always been voices dissonant and critical of the slowness or even absence of an effective land reform that would represent a clear position of the government against the *latifundia*. Nevertheless, these criticisms have never represented an opposition of the movements to the government, since the main groups have continued to support it.

ATTEMPTS TO REGULATE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS' VALUES

The last phase of the process of co-option by Coy & Hedeem (2005) exposes the need for regulation of platforms and social movement values. There was a great deal of pressure from rural movements in the Lula government to include these demands in the legislation. However, very little was achieved in terms of land reform, again, because of the political strength of agribusiness in the National Congress.

The case of the upgrade of the rural properties productivity index, as seen above, is an example of this difficulty. Another example is the legal framework for territorial development policies. To the extent that territorial policy was one of the main instruments of rural development in the Lula government, the demand for regulation of territorial actions was seen as crucial for the government and social movements. However, the recognition of the territories, besides states and municipalities, as an important sphere of action of the government has never materialized.

We had many discussions with the social movements on the need to create a law that recognizes and legitimizes the territories as a policies implementation space. This is important, because our law only recognizes the federal, state and municipal spheres, and this causes conflicts. We even prepared a project, but it had no support in the House of Representatives and has not advanced in the discussions committees.

Thus, the complex and symbiotic relations between the Workers' Party and the rural social movements in Brazil produced a very particular social dynamic, which challenges current assumptions on the institutionalization of social movements. Instead of co-optation, the Brazilian case shows that although the results of this process are basically the same as those verified in the cases analysed by other authors, the materialization of it was a product of different logics.⁷

CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to advance the discussion on new ways of interactions between state and civil society, looking at the institutionalization of social movements and its effects on structural reforms such as land reform. In order to do this, this work questions the major theories that address this phenomenon and its outcomes, focused mainly on co-optation processes, looking for the participation of rural social movements in the Lula government in view of a

7 It is important to observe that, given the great diversity of social groups and the complexity of the Brazilian society, the process of cooperation between social movements and the government was also permeated by tensions, sometimes generating disagreements and occasionally creating new groups. An example is the controversial relationship between the MST and the government. Although the MST actively participated in the implementation of a series of public policies, it also continued to use protest methods such as marches, road closures, and occupation of public buildings (Branford, 2009; Abers, Serafim, & Tatagiba, 2014). This shows the contentious and contradictory relationship of some social movements with the government, which at times sought to protect their autonomy by mobilizing classic instruments of protests against the government they were working with.

worsening of data on land reform in the period. It shows that the difficulties in promoting structural reforms, even when the actors are highly involved in the design and decision-making processes of policies, can result from a different series of factors generally not considered by the literature. In the case of Brazil, my findings are that the Brazilian case was the result of the interrelation between three dimensions. They are: the weakness of the representation of movements in the national congress; the government's strategy to achieve greater gains in the international commodities market; and the one that is the focus of the present work, the particular relationship built between the government and the rural social movements.

I argued that despite tensions between government and social movements, these actors in Brazil have been guided in their actions by two basic factors other than co-option: first, their deep ideological convictions informed by the militancy of social movements and within the PT, clearly taking the same positions with the government; second, the fact that they simultaneously maintained a strong relationship based on a shared identity with the movements and their demands. This created an interesting process of diminishing the distinction between being part of the government and a member of civil society. In fact, they saw their role within the government as an extension of their political militancy in the party and in the movement, generally not seeing the state as an enemy that they should oppose. That implies that the historical demands of these movements, such as land reform, became less of a priority when set against investments in other sectors. The demobilization of these groups would then be neither entirely a product of clientelistic relations set up between government and social movements, or co-option and manipulation of leaders.

However, what the processes such as the institutionalization of social movements in the Lula government show us is, above all, creativity and agency of these actors, which is generally underestimated by the main theories on this topic, which see these stakeholders as easy objects of manipulation. Rather than actions imposed from above, exchange of favours, and co-option, the close collaboration between governments and social movements may be the result of self-chosen options that allow the actors to act, adapt, and reinvent themselves according to specific situations and political logics toward what is possible but not always ideal.⁸

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