CAMILA PENNA
Universidade de Brasilia*

PARTICIPATION AND LAND REFORM IN BRAZIL: TRACING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BUREAUCRATS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Abstract

There are different forms by which the state bureaucracy relates to social movements in the realm of agrarian reform policies in Brazil. A number of possible connections and very complex relations have been taking shape over the last 30 years. Possible connections include institutional spaces for discussion, but also a number of informal relations between bureaucrats and social movement mediators. I would argue that the literature on participatory democracy is not the best approach to analyze this wide-ranging scope of connections, inasmuch as it assumes the existence of two different and separate actors - the state and the civil society – and usually considers the state as a monolithic actor while focusing on civil society. In fact, the diversity of formats by which social movements relate to state bureaucracy can be apprehended more fully by the actor-network approach, as this gives the researcher tools to account for connections taking place in different sites and in a multiplicity of formats, as well as to analyze their effects on actors' agency during the political process. Data that supports this argument is drawn from ethnographical research within the Brazilian state institution in charge of implementing agrarian reform policies, INCRA (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform). By focusing on how the bureaucracy understands and reacts to one of the most organized and mobilized beneficiary publics in the Brazilian political arena, this investigation presents some interesting findings regarding the complexity of networks in which bureaucrats are entangled and their effects on the negotiation and implementation

* e-mail: Camilapenna2003@yahoo.com.br

of policies claimed by rural social movements. In what follows I discuss some of these findings in light of participatory democracy and theoretical actor-network contributions.

Keywords: INCRA; Bureaucracy; Actor-network theory; Participatory democracy; Brazil

OPENING THE BLACK BOX OF THE STATE

Brazilian rural social movements, and especially the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), have been a very popular subject of social science research, both in Brazil and internationally (Ondetti, 2008; Carter, 2003; Carter, 2009; Fernandes, 2003; Medeiros, 2004; Sigaud, 2005; Rosa, 2011). Studies on this subject cover, *inter alia*, aspects such as the movements' political organization, its educational project, communication, religiosity, gender relations, leadership formation, repertoires of protest, and relations with the state. Likewise, Brazilian rural sociologists' research has developed a considerable body of knowledge regarding agrarian reform policies, their results and impacts on rural communities, and the participation of social movements' representatives in mediating the negotiation and implementation of such policies (Leite, 2004; Medeiros et al., 1994; Martins, 2003; Neves, 2008; Neves, 1999).

Notwithstanding this vast number of investigations into rural social movements and agrarian reform policies, little attention (Wolford, 2010) has been paid to the state branch responsible for agrarian reform, INCRA, as a subject of research and as an agent in the agrarian reform process. In other words, systematic knowledge about the personnel, organization, and internal functioning of the state institution that interacts most closely with rural social movements while implementing agrarian reform policies is locked inside a black box. In order to understand why policy implementation is sometimes inefficient, why certain programs never get out of the paper stage (or when they do they come out incomplete or biased), it's necessary to open the black-box of the state. Only then it will be possible to observe the interaction with the beneficiary public – organized in movements, trade unions and associations – from the privileged standpoint located inside a bureaucratic institution, where claims are translated into policies.

The box this work proposes to open is one of the most controversial institutions in the Brazilian state apparatus and is frequently targeted by media criticism. As it deals directly with a very polarizing topic in Brazil – the landless movement

– INCRA works under a great deal of pressure and constant media attention.[1] It is the second largest and one of the oldest *autarquias*[2] in Brazil. It was created in 1970 and currently has a staff of 5,783 employees spread all over Brazilian national territory. It is estimated that over 4 million people are affected by its agrarian reform policies[3], which encompass more than just land acquisition and redistribution. After acquiring a piece of land, INCRA creates a settlement project that includes proper agronomical and geological analysis; demarcation of plots to each family unit; infrastructure construction, such as bridges and roads; and grants credits for the acquisition of tools, production inputs, and housing construction. Settled families are also given benefits in the form of special bank loans for small-scale agriculture, for which INCRA has to approve a production project. All of these activities have to be overseen and monitored by INCRA's employees. According to official data, today in Brazil there are 8,790 settlement projects with 921,225 families controlled by INCRA.[4]

In order to more effectively control all of these settlements, INCRA has a decentralized structure with regional and sub-regional offices in each Brazilian state. Each regional office (*Superintendência* or SR) is autonomous in terms of choosing its own local managers,[5] but depends on the central office in terms of budget decentralization and general orientations on the National Plan of Agrarian

[1] Lately INCRA has been present in the media due to its deforestation denouncements inside territories it controls and because of a recent change of managers. Media treatment usually relates INCRA with inefficiency and corruption.

[2] *Autarquia* is a decentralized public administration institution. Besides INCRA, some of the most important Brazilian *autarquias* are: National Institute of Social Security (INSS) - the largest; National Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (IBAMA); and Indigenous National Foundation (FUNAI).

[3] In addition to agrarian reform policies, INCRA is also responsible for land regularization and land cadastres.

[4] http://www.incra.gov.br/index.php/reforma-agraria-2/questao-agraria/numeros-da-reforma-agraria

[5] The designation of regional managers is a complex process involving party allegiance, the correlation of forces correlation in each state, and the endorsement or support of social movements. According to Brazilian legislation up to 30% of the positions in the Executive can be filled by non-public servants. Public servants are bureaucrats who joined the public service after being approved in a public competition for a lifelong position in the state. Non-public servants are bureaucrats who join the public service temporarily, usually via political nomination. Many of INCRA bureaucrats resist political designations of management positions, which has implications for the implementation of policies. (Penna, 2012)

Reform[6]. In states with a great number of settlements and land-related conflicts there are more than one regional office.

This is the case of the northern state of Pará, one of the largest states in Brazil and the most complicated in terms of land disputes. Pará has three INCRA regional offices and supervises 25% of the families settled by agrarian reform policies in Brazil. Much of the land-related conflicts in the region have to do with its disorganized and overlapping occupation process, fostered in part by the 1970's military governmental policy of colonization in northern Brazil, which offered incentives both to big enterprises and producers from the south as well as to poor landless workers from the northeast (Guerra, 2009; Assis, 2009; Almeida, 2006; Pereira, 2004).

When INCRA was created in 1970, the official colonization program was just starting and northern regional offices were given the mission of settling small-scale workers and great-scale producers in "empty" lands (INCRA, 2000). Many of INCRA's bureaucrats in Pará regional offices have worked on this colonization program. In 1985, following the democratic transition, the agrarian reform program replaced the colonization project, and the institution, along with its bureaucrats, had to learn how to work under a new logic and with a different public – now mobilized and armed with organized claims.

There are many reasons that make Pará an interesting site of observation when it comes to issues related to agrarian reform: the large amount of land disputes involving different actors, such as social movements, trade unions, mining companies, large-scale producers, and local, regional and national governments; the great number of settlements and of beneficiary families attended to by INCRA in Pará; the fact that many of the regional office bureaucrats worked in the colonization project during the military regime, when INCRA's tasks and proposals were different and the relationship with the beneficiary public had another tone.

The Marabá regional office (SR-27) in southeastern Pará was the site chosen for ethnographical observation. More so than in the area of the other two regional offices in this state – Santarém (SR-30) and Belém (SR-01) – the Marabá region has an organized and strong social movement network. The three largest and most important rural movements are present in the region: MST; the Agriculture Workers Federation (FETAGRI), and the Federation of Rural Workers and Family

[6] The National Plan of Agrarian Reform is a comprehensive plan that contains guidelines for policies. In 1985, during the democratic transition, the first national plan was created, but its goals were not implemented (INCRA, 2000). The present national plan was created in 2003 when the Workers' Party assumed the Presidency.

Farmers (FETRAF). The following section will go into in more detail regarding these beneficiaries' organizations. Marabá's INCRA regional office is responsible for 495 settlement projects and for 69,657 families. There are also around 6,000 families in encampments, considered as clients and possible future beneficiaries.

The within research on the SR-27 commenced in October 2011 and is still being conducted. Drawing on the contributions that anthropology has made to the study of the state (Sharma and Gupta, 2003), the investigation focuses on every day practices of state bureaucrats and their clients. It has so far included following tasks and work of bureaucrats: firstly, as they receive beneficiaries inside the office and supply information, respond to requests, organize meetings, mediate conflicts, and receive and register documents; and secondly as they hold internal managerial meetings and read and respond to both internal and external paperwork. Bureaucrats' work trips to encampments, settlements and properties have also been followed and examined. During these trips it's possible to observe bureaucrats interactions with beneficiaries outside the office, which provides a very elucidating perspective insofar as deeper and more complex interactions take place in these contexts. I also had the opportunity to observe, from the inside, other situations, such as INCRA's occupation by the MST in March 2012; a number of meetings between the movement's leaders and INCRA's bureaucrats and managers; INCRA's workers' association meetings; meetings with local and national politicians; and meetings with other actors such as *VALE* mining company representatives, technical assistance companies, and other branches of the state (*Policia Federal, Ouvidoria Agrária Nacional, Ministério Público, CGU* and municipal governments). The strike activities of bureaucrats currently taking place nationally were also followed. On the national level, INCRA's five-day annual planning forum held in February 2012 in Brasília was also attended and is examined. In addition to all these 'official activities,' informal relations outside the workplace have been maintained with a number of bureaucrats throughout the entire research period.

By closely observing INCRA's bureaucracy it's possible to construct an interpretation of its interaction with social movements from the state perspective. This new perspective has so far yielded interesting and revealing results that cannot be fully apprehended and interpreted within the traditional framework categories of state and civil society. In effect actors' roles frequently overlap and fall outside such constraining classifications, as they interact and negotiate important political and practical issues, in a variety of places such as clubs, churches, party conventions, bars, and other sites and situations entangled in the ever-changing system of networks.

With the investigative lenses focused on the bureaucracy, it was also possible to get a closer look into the bureaucrat's rationale regarding beneficiaries and their representatives, i.e. rural social movements. The frameworks these bureaucrats use to interpret the beneficiaries' actions and wishes, making them legible so as to adequately incorporate them into and according to existing policies (Scott, 1998), together constitute a determinant of the format by which agrarian reform is executed. INCRA has a number of normative instructions that specify who is the ideal beneficiary and how to proceed when s/he deviates from this ideal model[7]. However, these normative instructions become tangible only through the actions of the bureaucrats who execute them. For these so-called street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), discretion is one of the inherent prerequisites of their job – to have the discretion needed in order to adjust public policy to the local realities and contexts. Thus, when INCRA regional office bureaucrats use their discretion to fit local realities into comprehensive public policies, they are not only *implementing* agrarian reform policies, they are actually *constructing* them.

Making INCRA the object of investigation and looking at the agrarian reform process from the perspective of the state helps clarify two things. The first is that the final format of public policies are not always the same as those originally planned. In order to assess why some policies are not accomplished, or take an unintended format, this study highlights internal aspects of the bureaucracy, such as its perception of the beneficiary, its material deficiencies (lack of financial resources and unprepared staff), its internal rules, and the networks that link some of the bureaucrats elsewhere. The second thing research focused on the inner workings of the INCRA helps to clarify is the participation of social movements – through beneficiary-organized representatives - in the processes of formulation and implementation of agrarian reform policies. The remaining section of this article discusses the participation of rural social movements within the scope of SR-27 regional office activities.

[7] Two of the most important normative and executive instructions are the IN 47 and the NE 45, which define who is the beneficiary public of land reform, and how to proceed in case he deviates from the rules and obligations established by the agrarian reform program (i.e.: in case he sells his plot, or accumulates one or more plots in an irregular form).

TRACING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND BUREAUCRATS

INCRA's SR-27 bureaucrats have a long and ever changing experience of interactions with beneficiaries. In contrast to other regional offices, the station in Marabá was directly subordinated to the Council of National Security for seven years (1980-1987).[8] Due to the great number of violent land-related conflicts in the region – a region that is also geographically and geologically strategic – the military government considered it a priority area in terms of land regularization. This meant that the office in Marabá received not only considerable financial support, but also material and personnel support directly from the military. This military presence in the region during and after the democratic transition in 1985 had implications for the forms by which beneficiaries approached INCRA.

Poor rural workers and migrants from the northeast and other regions formed an important part of the beneficiary public during the colonization period (1970's and early 1980's). During this time INCRA bureaucrats would settle families in demarcated plots, in some cases granting them credit for production and houses. Some analysts characterize the relations between INCRA and beneficiaries during this period as one of tutelage (Ferreira, 1994). Over 50% of today's SR-27 workforce began their career as public servants working with beneficiaries during this period.

Beneficiaries of the colonization program were not organized into social movements or trade unions in the region of Marabá. The military regime was at its highpoint and the most important guerrilla organization - linked to the communist party – that had attempted to overthrow the government had just been extinguished in this very region (the *Guerrilha do Araguaia*). There was a strong military presence and control inside SR-27 during the 1970's as well as between 1980 and 1987 (when INCRA was subordinated to the National Security Council). Rural trade union activities were highly controlled by the army, which was then so entangled within INCRA's bureaucracy that at times even the institution's personnel and material resources were used to interfere in internal trade union elections, by either helping or hindering the voting process as the military deemed

[8] During this period the office in Marabá became the headquarters of a new institution, subordinated to the National Security Council, known as the Executive Group of Araguaia and Tocantins Lands (GETAT). It kept some of the employees of the extinguished INCRA regional office and hired a number of new public servants. When GETAT became extinct, all of its employees were incorporated to the re-established INCRA regional station. Many of the current bureaucrats in SR-27 were hired during the GETAT period.

appropriate. Land occupation, which had become the most common method of pressing claims for land reform (Sigaud, 2005), was vigorously repressed.

Nonetheless, between the late 1970's and the early 1980's hundreds of land occupations took place in southern Pará (Pereira, 2004). Over several decades the standard practice for obtaining and guarantying land tenure in this region had been the occupation and deforestation of "abandoned" or "empty" portions of land, followed by agricultural production thereon. However, besides the formal colonization program, the government in this period also gave incentives for the establishment of large-scale farming production, which involved the 'capture' of great expanses of land, some of which overlapped with areas already occupied by small-scale workers. Considering the practices long assimilated by these workers and the expropriations they were subject to resulting from the governmental incentives to grand-scale production, some of them began to occupy lands collectively, following up on their old ways. To do this, they would arrive at an "abandoned" portion of the property, deforest and plant sustainable agricultural products, live there with their families and communities, and claim land tenure until they were discovered (and often expelled).

This practice of land occupation at the time was considered spontaneous (Pereira, 2004), meaning that it wasn't organized by any social movement, trade union or party, but by the workers themselves. It led to violent confrontations between workers and the property owner and its employees, supported by police forces. During the late 1970's the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), a progressive branch of the Catholic Church, began an extensive program aimed at evangelization, political education, leadership formation, and judicial advice for rural workers in the region (Assis, 2007; Pereira, 2004; Intini, 2004). Land occupation during this period became an important form of resistance. The resulting violence and growing conflicts that it spawned became public and gained media attention, assisted by mediation from the CPT. This growing public awareness of violent land related conflicts contributed to the government's decision to make Marabá a priority area for land regularization and agrarian reform.

The final years of the military regime coincided with the organization of leftist political forces in the region. Leaders, groomed by the CPT and other advising and mediation organizations, began to construct an organized opposition to the rural trade union leaders linked to the conservative government. The Workers Party (PT) and other leftists' parties also began activities and organization in the region. Hence during the late 1980's, in the early years of the new democracy, forces organized by the political left began to act in southeastern Pará.

Rural trade unions became the main representative institutions of rural workers, who now demanded not only agrarian reform, meaning land redistribution, but also a guaranty of their rights to the land they already had. This specificity of the Pará region, in which land tenure wound up being guaranteed by land occupation in the form described above, reflected the need for differentiated agrarian reform policies (Magalhães, 2003), which were not considered in the national program. Decades long land tenures became regular lots inside agrarian reform settlement projects, and their squatters became agrarian reform beneficiaries that had the same rights as families that had just acquired land. The adaptation of the general rules of the agrarian reform program to the local specificities of the beneficiaries' situation in the Marabá region was left to the regional office's bureaucrats.

This characteristic of land tenure and of workers' organization in the region had implications not only for the state action. It also had effects on the organization of rural social movements and their repertoires of action. Squatters, now rural workers, were mainly represented by trade unions. During the 1980's rural trade unions, allied with PT and other political organizations, managed to organize themselves in a regional federation of rural workers (*Fetagri Sul e Sudeste do Pará*). The Union's representation focused on formal communications with the state, mainly through official documents that requested things such as land regularization for rural workers and the expropriation of properties in order to settle workers who were already occupying the land. Sometimes CPT lawyers would represent workers in the judicial process or in cases where they were arrested (as they still do today). It should be noted that the unions' repertoire didn't include massive land occupation and encampments, nor the occupation of official buildings or blockage of roads.

The MST's arrival in the region during the early 1990s had a significant impact on the unions' forms of action. The movement's base included not only rural landless workers, but also poor people in urban areas. They also included more landless workers than squatters, who were already claiming tenure over the land they occupied. In this sense, even though there was an initial competition between the MST and the already established representatives, the movement tried not to compete with the trade unions in terms of their base. Notwithstanding this decision however, its form of actions and protest tactics pressured the trade unions into making important changes in their usual formal representation. If one may say that up until the 1990's workers' representation was done by formal means that were recognized by INCRA (but not always effective), it may also be said that after MST's arrival those forms of interacting with the state underwent a great change (Assis, 2007; Intini, 2004).

MST actions of land occupation and road obstruction gained great visibility and attracted media attention, for which the movement was well prepared with its flags and helmets. Union leaders ended up being overshadowed, even though they had a much larger base. This process, also identified in the state of Pernambuco (Rosa, 2011), led trade unions to adopt a more movement-like format. Land occupations and encampments were organized along the lines of the massive MST's model; the unions created flags and organized actions such as INCRA occupations.

The apex of MST influence in the region occurred in 1996, when 19 workers were killed by the police in a march that would culminate in the occupation of a property in *Eldorado dos Carajás*, within the Marabá municipality at the time. After this event, extensively covered by the national and international media, the movement grew stronger, along with other representative organizations of the landless. As a consequence the federal government was pressed into taking action in order to guarantee workers' security and to accelerate the agrarian reform process. Marabá's regional office again went through a change and became a special office, with its own budget directly connected to INCRA headquarters. From that moment on social movements began to constitute a new form of relations with INCRA in the region, annually occupying the office and making demands related to internal issues, such as a changes of regional managers and participation in budget allotment discussions.

The relationship between INCRA bureaucrats and social movements at the national level had started to change when the democratic government assumed power in 1985. Palmeira (1994) argues that when the new management staff – composed of him and some other agrarian reform researchers and activists – assumed control of INCRA's national direction in 1985, close ties prevailed between the bureaucrats and large-scale farmers. Their lawyers had free access to official expropriation processes and other documents inside INCRA's headquarters. Likewise, rich farmers were received at any time by bureaucrats and walked freely through INCRA offices. As for landless workers' representatives, they weren't received by bureaucrats and didn't have access to official documents or any of the information they needed.

The attempt to introduce changes to this biased treatment was a great challenge due to the segmentation and factionalism among INCRA bureaucrats, which made it harder to enforce hierarchical positions and to implement changes in the institution (Palmeira, 1994). What the new managers finally did was grant landless workers' representatives unrestricted access to INCRA's bureaucracy. Soon the headquarters were crowded and it became impossible for the bureaucrats to do their work. At this point the managers were able to establish common rules of

access for both public segments with which INCRA works, at least temporarily (Palmeira, 1994). During this time some of the workers' leaders from Pará and other Brazilian states were invited to a meeting in Brasília, where priority areas for expropriation were defined. Pará leaders presented a list of properties with land-related conflicts which were already occupied by workers (INCRA, 1986)

Even though there was a strong disposition on the part of this new INCRA management staff for implementing a comprehensive agrarian reform program, the conservative forces still had a great influence in other realms of the state. During the democratic transition the landowners, who until then had had their property rights protected by the military regime, also intensified their own actions by forming a landowners' organization (Landowner Democratic Union – UDR), with the aim of avoiding and repressing land occupations and expropriations in the new democratic context. In southern Pará this meant an intensification of resistance and conflicts among workers and farmers (Pereira, 2004).

The changes which took place in INCRA's national headquarters were not incorporated into the Marabá regional office immediately. Access to local bureaucracy continued to be biased and asymmetrical, i.e. restricted for workers' representatives. Conservative politicians with long established ties to the institution's bureaucrats still exercised a great influence on internal affairs, such as budget allocations and the designation of managers. Things began to change following the killings in 1996, when social movements increased their activities and Marabá was granted autonomy as a special regional office. In the following year the military was designated as regional manager, which made the participation of social movements very difficult. After a number of frustrated attempts to negotiate with INCRA, workers' organizations planned a large-scale occupation and encampment outside the regional office (Intini, 2004; Assis, 2007).

This massive organized action took place in 1997 and included marches and negotiations with INCRA managers. As this was the first massive experience of occupation, both for the workers and for the bureaucrats, the behavioral codes were still undefined and experimental forms of negotiations were being undertaken at all times. When the negotiations came to a dead-end, the workers' leaders locked some of the managers inside the regional office (Intini, 2004; Assis, 2007). After many weeks they accomplished the most important point in their list of claims: Brasilia agreed to replace the military regional manager. After this successful occupation a number of other occupations followed, and every year a massive occupation in INCRA was held until eventually the occupations came to acquire a more routine character, as both bureaucrats and workers learned how to behave

in these situations. These annual occupations lasted until 2001, after which they took place sporadically. The last massive occupation occurred in 2011.

After the 1997 occupation an interesting change began to take place. Workers' organizations started to be recognized as legitimate interlocutors. After a long time during which they pressed for the right to participate in decisions regarding expropriations, infrastructure, credit distribution, and technical assistance for production, the movements were finally recognized as actors entitled to make demands. And gradually official spaces were created where they could participate and negotiate their proposals.

Within the SR-27 these spaces were: the Forum of Agrarian Reform and Family Agriculture, created in 1997 to discuss settlements demands, and the *PROCERA/Lumiar* Commission, created in 1998 to discuss credit assignments (PROCERA) and technical assistance (Lumiar). This latter program assumed a significantly participative character. Social movements began to create entities specialized in technical assistance to rural workers living in settlements. Not only would they execute the assistance project with funds from the governmental budget but also, within the scope of their commission, they would choose which settlements were priorities. The Technical Unit of Articulation, which replaced the commission in 2000 but only deliberated on credit for agricultural projects; the Technical Chamber in 2002 that replaced the Unit; and the Management Commission created in the same year all had the purpose of deliberating on technical assistance services. Of all these spaces however, only inside the *PROCERA/ Lumiar* Commission could social movements effectively make proposals in important decisions (Pereira, 2004).

In all of these institutional spaces the workers' representatives were present and establishing regular contact with bureaucrats and managers inside INCRA's regional office, learning how the bureaucracy worked and gathering information on policies, legislation, and the technical rules of public administration. No matter their formal results, these constituted very important experiences in term of the social movements' qualifications and familiarity with the state branch they were now closely interacting with. Social movements' leaders proximity with INCRA increased much more after 2003, when the PT (Workers Party) won the presidential election. The leftist political forces with which the social movements were long connected were brought into INCRA as national and regional managers.

After a dispute surrounding the regional manager post in Marabá, the party designated a local politician. The social movements had proposed other names (Assis, 2004), but after some negotiations they agreed on this local political leader, who would later, supported by the votes of INCRA regional beneficiaries, become

a state legislator. It's important to note that prior to 2003 the social movements, as they protested and pressed for change, had already gained a veto power over the designation of managers. After 2003 they became a part in the negotiation process and in most cases the designation of regional managers would require their endorsement. It's also important to keep in mind that the leaders of rural social movements are closely connected to the PT or other leftist parties. In the Marabá region a number of important leaders, most of them coming from rural unions, take part in the party's internal discussions and often present candidates for elections. As for MST leaders in the region, they usually are not organically connected to the party, but nevertheless maintain ties with some of its politicians and often assist in campaigns.

Currently, budget allocations for SR-27 activities are negotiated with social movement leaders in March of every year, when managers travel to each sub-regional office and present and discuss the annual budget program. Local politicians also participate in these discussions. After this participative budget process (as social movement leaders call it), social movements usually organize national mobilizations in order to press claims for an increase in the agrarian reform annual budget. After that, specific regional decisions regarding goals for each of INCRA's sectors are negotiated with social movements and orient the bureaucracy's activities for that year. The land acquisition sector only works with expropriations demanded by social movements, who indicate properties which the bureaucrats should inspect and prepare the legal work required for acquisition and the creation of settlements. Properties presented by social movements are usually already occupied by a number of families in the form of encampments, now recognized by INCRA as a legitimate form of land claim. Likewise, the infrastructure sector only creates work projects for areas indicated by social movements, who present a list of settlements to be benefited by the construction of roads and bridges, or needed repairs.

The land expropriations and infrastructure budget allotments are broad decisions that encompass all areas of SR-27 activities. Settlement priorities are negotiated firstly between social movements recognized by the SR (MST, FETAGRI and FETRAF) and then presented to the INCRA's regional office via formal request. They are comprehensive actions negotiated directly with the highest level of representation of workers' movements, social movements, and political leaders. There is, however, also a lower level of beneficiaries' representation recognized by INCRA and with whom bureaucrats interact on a daily basis: the settlers' associations. These associations are the juridical entities recognized by INCRA to represent settled workers with respect to decisions assigning credits. They were

initially a formal imposition on governmental credit assignment programs. Credit should be destined to go to agrarian reform beneficiaries through their settlement associations. Each agrarian reform settlement has to have at least one association, and its president must be a beneficiary.

After the first associations were created for this purpose in the 1990s, social movements began to slowly incorporate them into their structure. Trade unions included settlement associations as an important part of its base, and most of the associations are also affiliated with trade unions since they need them for their labor rights. There are also associations connected to MST in settlements controlled by the movement. Interactions between the presidents of associations and bureaucrats are very frequent both inside and outside INCRA's regional office. As they are the main mediators between the bureaucrats and the beneficiaries, these representatives frequent the SR-27 regional office on a daily basis. Dozens of presidents from different settlement associations come to INCRA every day to deal with issues such as credit assignment, regularization of beneficiaries' claims, and disputes between settled families. They also come to pick up official documents such as the "beneficiary relation," which includes all the settled names for each settlement, and the "beneficiary mirror" with each beneficiary's complete status since joining the agrarian reform program.

Not surprisingly, the participation of this lower level of representation in INCRA is more localized, as they represent only their association members. At the same time it is much more massive. There are around 500 settlements controlled by the SR-27, and some of them have more than 10 associations. INCRA recognizes the autonomy of associations as mediators who control the beneficiaries' situation inside the settlements. They deliberate and choose which families should be benefited with a credit budget and during what time frame, presenting official lists to the credit sector, supervised by the bureaucrats. Associations also present official requests to include and/or exclude beneficiary families, and following the receipt of such requests bureaucrats make field trips to assess these families' compliance with the agrarian reform program rules. Sometimes associations require a visit by a bureaucrat to the settlement in order to monitor and regularize a family's situation. This last type of official request often includes the name of the bureaucrat that the association would like INCRA to send to its settlement.

Relations between association presidents and INCRA bureaucrats are very close in some cases. As mentioned above, SR-27 has a number of older public servants who have been there since the colonization period. During the last 30 years these bureaucrats have become acquainted with some of the workers' representatives, most of whom have also been working in the region for decades.

Interactions among some of them have become even closer because the same bureaucrats have been working in the same settlement for years, and as part of their job they often make field trips to these settlements and stay for weeks. Pará is one of the largest states in Brazil and has one of the worst road systems. This means that trips to settlements are difficult and time-consuming. In order to do their work bureaucrats usually have to sleep inside the settlement, often using the association president's house as a point of reference. This practice, repeated over the years, ends up creating strong ties of socialization, and in some cases of friendship. These relations are a far cry from the impartial, distant, rational relations usually taken for granted between a bureaucrat and beneficiary, or state and social movement representative.

A sociological analysis of the relations expressed by, for instance, an official document in which an association requests that the state send a specific person to do a routine bureaucratic job, requires that a much deeper account be taken of the connections that supersede the state-civil society divide. A better account of policy implementation processes would be even more likely once these connections are all disclosed and described. In essence, it's not enough to know only what are the participative institutional spaces in which the state interacts with social movements and how such spaces work. A full explanation of the participative and policy implementation processes can be much more comprehensive once the connections between the bureaucrats, beneficiaries, and social movement leaders are traced in every possible field of social action. This is not only because they have acquired familiarity while carrying out their work, but because they are not insulated actors.

Some of the bureaucrats who exert key roles in INCRA's management and policy implementation are affiliated with the PT or other parties; some of them used to be MST cadres; others come from a conservative background and are against landless movements. Some are religious and belong to the same church as many of INCRA's regional office beneficiaries and leaders. All of them are executing agrarian reform policies and all of them have some degree of discretion in their work. By opening the black box of the state we can analyze how all of these connections have an impact on interactions between INCRA and those social movements which participate in agrarian reform policies, and how such policies evolve from project to reality

This paper concludes with some remarks on how to deal theoretically with the empirical evidence with respect to social movements' participation in agrarian reform policies at the regional office in Marabá. Contributions from theories concerning participatory democracy and actor-network relationships are assessed.

CONCLUSIONS

The activities of social movements, both inside and outside INCRA, are complex and diversified. What is the best approach to aid in understanding such a unique case of interaction among state and social movements?

Researchers working within the theoretical framework of participatory democracy have paid a great deal of attention to Brazilian experiences of institutional deliberative spaces. Participatory budget talks (Abers, 2000), conferences (Faria, 2012), and councils (Abers and Keck, 2009) are among the most investigated institutional experiences in Brazil. Assuming that there is a clear division, and in some cases even an opposition, between state and civil society, the literature on participatory democracy focuses on institutional deliberative spaces, where the participation of civil society would help deepen or democratize the democracy (Santos, 2002; Avritzer, 2002) by fostering a more democratic and participative political culture (Avritzer, 1995). By taking part in the political decision-making process, civil society would be empowered and as a result would demand more accountability from the state.

Wolford (2010) tried to analyze the participation of social movements in the agrarian reform policies implemented by INCRA through the lens of the participatory democracy approach. This led the author to conclude that there is a unique form of participation of civil society in agrarian reform policies, which is not the result of a planned institutional design but rather happened by default, due to the INCRA's institutional weaknesses (low budget, understaffed offices and underprepared personnel), as agrarian reform had not been a priority for the government in previous years.

Even though the author points to interesting and important aspects of how INCRA functions, due to the civil society/participatory democracy theoretical framework she adopts her the paper doesn't succeed in opening the black box of the institution. The state side of the interaction is seen as a whole, a coherent unity that sanctions MST's illegal land occupations by accepting the movement's selection of beneficiaries and of properties to be expropriated. However, it's equally possible to conclude from the data presented above that INCRA does not act as a whole, nor even as a coherent unity, when interacting with social movements' representatives. The relations between the beneficiaries' representatives and INCRA as an institution are part of a kaleidoscopic phenomenon, ever changing according to the positioning of managers and bureaucrats.

Another important aspect that influences not only participation, but also INCRA's capacity to implement negotiated decisions, remains left inside the box

in Wolford's (2010) analysis: the important segmentation and the basic dispute among INCRA's employees. This dispute – between bureaucrats more identified with party politics and bureaucrats that defend a less politicized INCRA – is a major issue for the institution and has implications for its capacity to implement agrarian reform policies (Penna, 2012). There is also a cleavage between bureaucrats who are more favorable and enthusiastic supporters of social movements, and bureaucrats who are more resistant and even opposed to their collective actions. There exist a not insignificant number of the latter in SR-27. Nevertheless, INCRA employees work with social movement leaders on a daily basis, inside and outside the regional office, as they are recognized and legitimized by the state as the beneficiaries' representatives.

These are only two of the most relevant internal segmentations inside INCRA which demonstrate the shortcomings of a state-civil society dualistic approach, which remains plastered both by the theoretical divide between the state and civil society and by the static status it assigns to the state while focusing on civil society. No matter how useful it can be to analyze deliberative and participative institutional spaces, a participatory democracy approach which assumes the state is a single unit, separated from civil society, is not the best approach to interpret the multifaceted participation of social movements within INCRA.

In order to account for the intricacies involved in the participation of social movements in agrarian reform, an approach is needed that permits opening the state's black box. By treating the state as an actor-network (Latour, 2005; Passoth and Rowland, 2010), it's possible to deal theoretically with the diverse and non-organized connections that permeate the state. The actor-network (ANT) approach (Latour, 2005) argues that a good sociological explanation is one that discloses and describes connections between things as a way to explain social action. Since all the actors are multilayered and have a number of connections elsewhere that influence their social action, the best way to explain such action(s) is by tracing a comprehensive network that embraces the entire patchwork of connections relevant to the actor. Hence INCRA actions would be better explained by tracing the relevant connections of its bureaucrats which impact the institution's work, rather than by attributing a number of causal variables, drawn from a previous theoretical model, to such actions.

Passoth and Rowland (2010) argue that even though the view of the state as an unitary actor has been useful in the theorization of political science and international relations as well as for analyzing political discourse and action, a sociological and political analysis would only suffer from working within this "state as a unit" framework. Taking the state unit for granted limits analysis

because it doesn't account for many complex and determinative aspects that influence policy formulation (Li, 2005) and implementation.

The complexity of the data presented above in terms of connections between bureaucrats and beneficiaries couldn't be properly analyzed using an approach which views the state as a monolithic actor. Likewise, if such an approach were adopted prior to the empirical observation, the density of connections permeating INCRA would escape notice. This is why this paper defends the actor-network approach rather than the state-civil society approach as being more adequate to account for the complex, incoherent, and unpatterned data which shows up in empirical research. When considering the state as an actor-network rather than an actor, it's possible to postulate on and include unusual forms of connections in order to explain how social movements participate in INCRA's policies. Along with Keck and Abbers (2002, 2203), I would argue that the best way to understand what comes out of the participation process, in terms of concrete state actions, is by opening the state's black box and describing all the controversies and internal procedures that influence public policy implementation.

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Camila Penna

PARTYCYPACJA I REFORMA ROLNA W BRAZYLII: ŚLEDZĄC POWIĄZANIA MIĘDZY BIUROKRATAMI A RUCHAMI SPOŁECZNYMI

(Streszczenie)

W realizacji reformy rolnej w Brazylii obserwuje się różne formy relacji biurokracji państwowej i ruchów społecznych. Wiele możliwych i złożonych powiązań dało się zauważyć w ciągu ostatnich 30 lat. Możliwe powiązania wskazują na przestrzeń instytucjonalną dla dyskusji, ale także na wiele relacji nieformalnych miedzy biurokratami i mediatorami ze strony ruchów społecznych. Literatura nt. demokracji uczestniczącej (partycypacyjnej) nie jest najlepszym środkiem do analizy tego wielkiego obszaru powiązań, ponieważ stwierdza się w niej, że mamy dwóch oddzielnych aktorów: państwo i społeczeństwo obywatelskie i że państwo jest aktorem monolitycznym. Zróżnicowanie możliwych form relacji ruchów społecznych i biurokracji może być lepiej badane przy zastosowaniu podejścia „actor-network" (aktor w sieci), ponieważ podejście to daje badaczowi narzędzie obserwacji powiązań w różnych miejscach i formach, jak również narzędzie do analizy ich wpływu na działania aktorów w procesie politycznym. Dane potwierdzające ten argument pochodzą z etnograficznych badań w Brazylijskich instytucjach państwowych, które wprowadzają reformę rolną, INCRA *(National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform)*. Badanie skoncentrowano na tym, jak biurokracja rozumie i reaguje na jedną z najlepiej zorganizowanych i zmobilizowanych publicznych akcji na brazylijskiej arenie politycznej. Przedstawia ono interesujące wyniki dotyczące złożoności sieci, w których są uwikłani biurokraci oraz skutki dla negocjacji i implementacji polityki rewindykowanej przez wiejskie ruchy społeczne. W artykule omawia się niektóre wyniki badania w świetle teorii demokracji partycypacyjnej i teorii „aktor w sieci".

Słowa kluczowe: INCRA, Biurokracja, teoria „aktor w sieci", demokracja partycypacyjna, Brazylia, proceduralizacja partycypacji