

**INSIDE THE WORLD'S BARN: LAND CONCENTRATION,  
AGROBUSINESS AND THE NEW BRAZILIAN MIDDLE CLASS**

By

Marilia Arantes

Submitted to Central European University - Private University

Department of International Relations

*In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of International Relations*

Supervisor: Professor Michael Merlingen

Vienna, Austria

2021

## Abstract

The highly concentrated land structure in Brazil is a central feature of this country's society, economy, and politics. In this research, I explore the discursive aspect of the Brazilian land question during the years of Lula Government (2003-2010). I argue that the academic consensus of a 'moderation' and class alliance between land reform movements and the agrobusiness have overlooked what was indeed the incorporation of Lula's Government into the agrobusiness hegemonic project. I employ Post Structuralist Discourse Theory to investigate how, through a chain of equivalence, the 'new middle class' identity was associated with the agrobusiness, assuring stability. I combine this ideological reading of hegemony with neo-Gramscian works to consider the political, economic context around these discourses. With the methodology of discourse analysis, I find that the approximation between middle class and agrobusiness happened in three main areas: first by linking exports, consumption, and employment, second by articulating the idea of a 'record' concerning both agrobusiness and the middle class, third by stating a view of 'exceptionalism', in which the middle class and agrobusiness prosper despite ongoing economic hardships and crisis. In this context, Brazil was claimed to become 'The World's Barn' and 'The country of the middle class'. This case study contributes to the literature on critical theory in Latin America, while understanding the middle class and the precarity of identity and discursive projects can shed new light to ongoing political events in Brazil.

**Key words:** Land concentration, Agrobusiness, Commodity Boom, Post structuralism, Gramsci.

## Acknowledgements

Seria injusto iniciar esta tese sem agradecer, primeiramente, a minha mãe e a meu pai, não apenas por seu amor incondicional, mas por apesar de sua própria falta de oportunidades, terem me ensinado a priorizar minha educação. Carrego a honra de ser a primeira da nossa família com um título de mestra – e se eu cheguei até aqui, se aguentei cada desafio, foi por vocês.

Moving back to English, I must then second thank my supervisor Michael Merlingen not only for his brilliant academic advice, but for his humanity and kindness. You are an inspiration for me.

Equally, I must thank Robin Bellers, the person who taught me how to communicate and to be understood in English academic writing.

In addition to that, I also thanks all the friends I left in Brazil, and the friends I made during my stay at CEU – It would be unfair to mention each name, risking forgetting someone. Each of you helped in the process of becoming who I am now. Thank you very much.

Nevertheless, a special thanks to two of my dearest friends: Raissa, who being 11.000 km away managed to be present in every achievement and struggle over the past two years, and Sara, relentlessly there to shelter me and hold my hand. Finally, my thanks to Ana Luiza, as your presence could be felt in each line of this thesis writing – no need to say that you were always right about loving Gramsci.

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Discourse Theory, antagonisms, and Hegemony .....	5
1.1 A genealogy of discourse theory .....	5
1.2 Identity and Antagonisms.....	8
1.3 Hegemony .....	10
Chapter 2: Crafting the agro-hegemonic self.....	14
2.1 Brazilian agrobusiness, consolidating hegemony. ....	14
2.2 The new agroparliamentary hegemony.....	18
2.3 Lula da Silva, moderation, and the expansion of agro hegemony. ....	23
Chapter 3: Incorporation and stability: the new Brazilian middle-class.....	28
3.1 Brazilian middle class in the Lula years.....	28
3.2 A process of linking: how the agrobusiness incorporated the new middle class. ....	32
3.3 Self, Other and land.....	41
Conclusion .....	44
Bibliography .....	47

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Opportunity of profit that comes from the soil.....	20
Figure 2: ‘Agricultural products save commercial balance’ .....	22
Figure 3: Land Reform will not be achieved by shouting. ....	26
Figure 4: Evolution of the social classes in Brazil 1992-2009. ....	29
Figure 5: Foreign Trade creates employment, 2004. ....	35
Figure 6: Brazil became the country of the middle class.....	36
Figure 7: MST replaces land reform by the agrobusiness. ....	37
Figure 8: Popular consumption around US\$ 137 Billion in 2005. ....	38
Figure 9: The motor of growth since almost six years, the consumption of the families accelerates. .....	39
Figure 10: New year of success .....	40

## Introduction

General accounts of Brazilian domestic and foreign policy would hardly be complete if ignoring the country's complex land question – the structural problem of the concentration of agricultural land. Firstly, because Brazil is one of the largest agrarian countries in the world, with 44% of its territory being used for agriculture and cattle rising,<sup>1</sup> responsible for 22% of its GDP and 40% of its exports.<sup>2</sup> Second and foremost because of the historical concentration of land in the hand of a small agrobusiness elite, meaning the association between large agroindustry capital and land ownership.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, from all the available agricultural land in Brazil, 76% belongs to corporations, while family and peasant farmers use the remaining 24%.<sup>4</sup> In Brazil, 1% of the largest farms hold 44.5% of all land.<sup>5</sup> There are several reasons why the high concentration of resources, such as land, is related with the persistence of economic inequality. High inequality harms poverty reduction and can foster even larger socio-economic gaps, also conditioning the political power and cultural resources, and producing a disconnected and segregated society.<sup>6</sup> While this complex issue also encompasses environment and food security concerns, it is quite clear that fighting the Brazilian unequal land structure is necessary to tackle this country's structural land concentration.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, Clifford Andrew Welch, Elienai Constantino Gonçalves. Land Governance in Brazil. *Framing the Debate Series*, no. 2 (ILC, Rome: 2012). p. 11

<sup>2</sup> "Agribusiness in Brazil: an overview." PWC. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com.br/pt/publicacoes/setores-atividade/assets/agribusiness/2013/pwc-agribusiness-brazil-overview-13.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Miguel Carter. *Combatendo a desigualdade social: o MST e a reforma agrária no Brasil*. (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2010), p.93

<sup>4</sup> Fernandes, p. 11

<sup>5</sup> "Unearthed: Land, Poverty and Inequality in Latin America." Oxfam. Available at: [https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/bp-land-power-inequality-latin-america-301116-en.pdf](https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-land-power-inequality-latin-america-301116-en.pdf), p.25

<sup>6</sup> Carter, p.43-45

This study explores the ‘land question’ in recent Brazilian history, shedding light on the antagonistic discursive articulation between the pro-agroindustry agenda and the land reform discourses during Lula’s Government (2003-2010). Drawing on Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, I argue that the co-existence of these antagonistic projects was legitimized by the process of identity articulation of the new Brazilian middle-class in relation to the agrobusiness. Simultaneous to the incorporation of the new middle class to the agro-hegemonic ‘Self’, the land reform movements, previously allied to Lula da Silva, were turned into the ‘Other’. Performing a discourse analysis, I attempt to answer *how and why the articulation of the new middle-class identity into a hegemonic self can stabilize antagonistic discourses*.

The timeframe of this analysis are the years in which Brazil was governed by Luis Inacio Lula da Silva (Lula), between 2003-2010. A former metallurgical worker and trade union leader, Lula became the President of Brazil in 2003, after three failed attempts to be elected.<sup>7</sup> A vital strategy for his first electoral victory was the adoption of a moderated discourse, reformulating his image of an anti-establishment leader by one of a conciliator, together with orthodox changes in his economic discourse and alliance with right-wing parties.<sup>8</sup> While since the 1980’s a broad land reform program was a promise of the Workers Party (PT),<sup>9</sup> the new ‘moderate’ image adopted by Lula also meant a connivance with Brazilian agroindustry. Lula was part of the Latin American ‘Pink Tide’ - the wave of new left governments in the region during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Fernandes, *Land Governance*.

<sup>8</sup> Edmund Amann, Werner Baer. The Macroeconomic Record of the Lula Administration, the Roots of Brazil’s Inequality and attempts to overcome them. *In Brazil under Lula Economy, Politics, and Society under the Worker-President*. Ed. Joseph L. Love and Werner Baer. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2009), p. 35

<sup>9</sup> Carter, p.428

Century.<sup>10</sup> However, this period is coupled with the Chinese led commodity boom in Brazil, the consequent increase of agro-exports and political power of agroindustry elites.

Previous studies on the context of Lula's government have highlighted his moderation, for instance the study by Hernan Bruera, who affirms that to achieve governability, PT adopted compensatory policies rather than structural changes.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, many scholars have equally accounted for the historical failure of Brazilian governments to tackle the structural issue of land concentration, for instance Bernardo Fernandes.<sup>12</sup> These studies, however, overlook that Lula's alleged moderation meant, indeed, his full integration into the hegemonic agrobusiness project. In this context, I argue that to achieve discursive stability between the two antagonistic projects, a discursive chain of equivalence was crafted to associate the 'previous poor' – the 'new middle class' – and the agrobusiness, incorporating the former into the hegemonic self.

My thesis is composed of three themed chapters. In the First Chapter I explore Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory and Neo-Gramscian Theories of Hegemony. While the first approach focuses strictly on discourse, I found essential to combine it with Neo-Gramscian literature to understand the political economic aspects of the agrobusiness hegemony. In the Second Chapter, I offer a brief genealogy of the Brazilian land structure and the consolidation of the agrobusiness as a hegemonic class. I discuss the process of integration of pro-land reform PT and Lula da Silva within the hegemonic class. In the Third Chapter I explore the establishment of the 'previous poor' as the 'new middle class', and I analyze the articulation of the new middle class identity with the agro-

---

<sup>10</sup> Peadar Kirby, "Probing the Significance of Latin America's 'Pink Tide,'" ed. Eduardo Silva et al., *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 89 (2010): 127–33.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Amann, Werner Baer. The Macroeconomic Record of the Lula Administration, the Roots of Brazil's Inequality and attempts to overcome them. *In Brazil under Lula Economy, Politics, and Society under the Worker-President*. Ed. Joseph L. Love and Werner Baer. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Fernandes, 2012.

hegemonic project. While I argue that this new middle class was integrated into the hegemonic Self, I explain that the movements for land reform were integrated into the Other, portrayed as enemies of the agrobusiness project.

This thesis contributes to the critical literature on a recent period of Brazilian and Latin American politics: the decade of the commodity boom and of the Pink Tide, rampantly ended by the ‘Blue Tide’, or ‘Conservative Turn’. Looking at the underexplored relation of the new middle class and agroindustry during the pink tide can shed light on the development of the conservative turn and of more recent political projects, as the election of far-right Jair Bolsonaro widely supported by the Brazilian middle class and the agroindustry.

Furthermore, this study exceeds Western experiences by looking at a case from the Global South, which ‘permits analytical refinement and conceptual breadth by capturing transnational mobilization beyond the narrow confines of the Global North.’<sup>13</sup> Finally, this study critically investigates the deep social and economic problem of land distribution in Brazil, where the agrobusiness remains a crucial political actor: the official political power of landowners is managed by its ‘Agricultural Parliamentary Front’ established in the early years of the commodity boom, in 2002. Currently, this group holds 41% of voting power in the Parliament. The lack of literature on the power of agrobusiness is a significant problem for researchers, and my work will be useful for overcoming this lacuna.

---

<sup>13</sup> Rose Spalding, ‘Domestic Loops and Deleveraging Hooks: Transnational Social Movements and the Politics of Scale Shift’. in: *Movements Dynamics: New Perspectives on Theory and Research from Latin America*. (San Diego: Ashgate, 2015), p. 181

## Chapter 1: Discourse Theory, antagonisms, and Hegemony

Amending the puzzle around Lula's progressive Government, the reactionary Agrobusiness groups and the enlarging Brazilian Middle-class seems at first sight a challenging task. Building the basis to analyze these political and social aspects of paramount capillarity, in this section I elaborate on Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory (PSDT) and on neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony. I present these as the most suitable theoretical and methodological tools to make sense of the antagonistic relations around discourse on the land structure during Lula's government. As in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, PSDT abolishes the division between base and superstructure to acknowledge all social formations as resulting from discursive processes.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the theory of hegemony, developed by Antonio Gramsci and explored by Laclau and Mouffe, presents itself as fundamental in explaining the complex relations between State and civil society, and the material and ideological.

This chapter is composed of four sections. The first section will look at the genealogy of post-structuralism and its main elements. The second section will look at the place of identity and antagonisms in post structuralism, followed by a third section on the Gramscian theory of hegemony. Lastly, I will briefly discuss the employment of these theories in the present case study.

### 1.1 A genealogy of discourse theory

The work of David Howarth on discourse theory in European politics provides a remarkable genealogy on the evolution of discourse theory, starting from a narrowly linguistic terrain towards

---

<sup>14</sup> Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips. Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory In: *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. (London; Thousand Oaks [Calif.: SAGE, 2002) p. 9

post-structuralism.<sup>15</sup> On the *first generation* of discourse theory, linguistic scholars as William Downes and Ole Holsti produced narrowly semantic analysis, lacking engagement with sociolinguistics or views on discourse in relation to politics and power struggles. These views were expanded by the *second generation*, which understands discourse in relation to social practices. A prominent example of this generation is the book *Critical Discourse Analysis* by Norman Fairclough.<sup>16</sup> CDA was largely inspired by the work of Michael Foucault, regarding discourse and discursive practices as ideological and contributing to the construction of meanings. Although the work of Fairclough has been extensively employed in different fields of the social sciences, criticisms to CDA points to its limited approach to discourses, seen as a linguistic mediation of events produced by causal powers and mechanisms embedded in the structures of society.<sup>17</sup> As David Howarth argues, this materialistic approach reduces the explanatory power of CDA.

Finally, Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory emerges as part of the *third generation* of discourse theory, addressing the limitations of CDA as it

further extends the notion of discourse so that it now covers all social phenomena. These are discursive because their meaning depends upon a decentered system of contingently constructed rules and differences. Discourse no longer refers to a particular part of the overall social system but is taken to be coterminous with the social.

While several writers contributed to the development of the third generation, I employ in my project the Post-Structuralist Theory derived from the *synthetic third generation*,<sup>18</sup> as developed by Laclau and Mouffe. Their in-depth work on discourse theory was constructed by the combination and modification of Marxism – in relation to the social dimension - and structuralism

---

<sup>15</sup> David Howarth and Jacob Torfing, Introduction. In: *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy, and Governance*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Howarth, p. 6

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 9

– a theory of meaning.<sup>19</sup> They elaborate on concepts from the *second generation* and on contemporary writings from *third generation*, translating post-structuralism in a framework from which to start social and political analysis. The combination of Laclau and Mouffe’s writing style with the deconstructionist method, makes their work to be often criticized as ‘inaccessible’. Therefore, together with David Horwath, the work by Jørgensen and Phillips<sup>20</sup> on Laclau and Mouffe provide a reliable perspective from which to develop my theoretical and methodological approach.

In a nutshell, PSDT understands the social as a discursive phenomenon, being discourse the structured totality resulting from the articulation of signs.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, all social phenomena can be analyzed by employing discourse analytical tools. The first fundamental argument of Laclau and Mouffe’s is that discourse, as social practices, takes place against already existing specific discourses. Therefore, while a discourse is never finished and always changing, it happens in conflict with other discourses and definitions of reality.<sup>22</sup>

Laclau and Mouffe translate the ‘relational systems of signification’ from which discourses originate as *articulation*: ‘any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified because of the articulatory practice.’<sup>23</sup> In this aspect, the signs in a discourse are defined as *moments*,<sup>24</sup> having the meaning determined in relation to the other signs. Another important concept is that of *nodal points*: a site of discursive concentration, which condenses

---

<sup>19</sup> Horwath, p. 2

<sup>20</sup> Jørgensen and Phillips.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 2-3

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>23</sup> Laclau and Mouffe 1985, as cited in Jørgensen and Phillips, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

several associative chains.<sup>25</sup> The creation of discursive nodal points formed the central focus of the study by Oscar Reyes, in which the author looked at New Labor's Politics drawing on PSDT.<sup>26</sup> Reyes analyzed how the 'hard working family' was used as a nodal point to hold together discourses on work and the family.

This section has briefly analyzed the origins of post-structuralist discourse theory and its distinguishing theoretical aspects. I have argued that the work of Laclau and Mouffe in translating discourse to social practice proves a suitable theoretical and methodological lens for this research. The next section will further elaborate on identity and antagonisms, two central aspects of PSDT that I explore in Chapter 3.

## 1.2 Identity and Antagonisms

Post-structuralist Discourse Theory can be characterized as *relationalist*, one of its most valuable contributions lying on the understanding of identity formation. Laclau and Mouffe affirm that groups are created in a political discursive process,<sup>27</sup> perceiving identity as shaped in relation to other meanings.<sup>28</sup> In sum, the hegemonic articulation of identity in a discourse is necessarily associated to the construction of social identities and the production of political frontiers.<sup>29</sup> The previous section highlighted discourse as the structure resulting from articulation, the discursive processes that produces identity in discourses being understood by the 'logic of equivalence' and the 'logic of difference'. While these two logics have been explored in several contributions in

---

<sup>25</sup> Oscar Reyes. New Labour's Politics of the Hard-working Family. In: *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy, and Governance*. Howarth, David R., and Jacob Torfing, eds. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) p.241

<sup>26</sup> Reyes, p. 241

<sup>27</sup> Jørgensen and Phillips, p.8

<sup>28</sup> Howarth, p. 14

<sup>29</sup> Howarth, p.15, 16

International Relations, the theoretical-methodological framework elaborated by Lene Hansen provides an in-depth understanding of that.

Drawing on Post-structuralism, Hansen writes about discourse analysis and foreign policy, widely exploring the place of the two logics on construction of identity. For Hansen, identity is at the ontological and epistemological center of poststructuralist discourse analysis, being ontologically interlinked with policy. Language has a productive nature, meaning that problems and subjectivities are constructed through discourse.<sup>30</sup> Drawing on post-structuralism, her approach to identity provides both theoretical and methodological insights on discourse analysis:

Analytically, the construction of identity should therefore be situated inside a careful investigation of which signs are articulated by a particular discourse or text, how they are coupled to achieve discursive stability, where instabilities and slips between these constructions might occur, and how competing discourses construct the same sign to different effects.<sup>31</sup>

Although the elaboration on ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are extensively present on Hansen’s work, she argues that identity construction goes beyond this dichotomy. Instead, it involves a series of related and different juxtapositions which constitute processes of linking and differentiation.<sup>32</sup> The analysis of this process, therefore, looks at how it attempts to construct stability, how they become unstable and how do they can be deconstructed or change.<sup>33</sup> With this attempt of achieving stability discourses are defined as a precarious system, contingent on political attempt to undermine or restructure it.<sup>34</sup> This process of exclusion of a discursive other stabilizes the discursive system, involving the exclusion of identities and meanings articulated in a chain of equivalence.<sup>35</sup> Because of that, the hegemonic construction of meaning – the self – is necessarily linked to the construction

---

<sup>30</sup> Lene Hansen. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. (The New International Relations. London: Routledge, 2006), p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Hansen, p. 37

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.33

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>34</sup> Howarth, p.14

<sup>35</sup> Howarth, p. 15

of social antagonism – the other. As I elaborate in Chapter 3, this creation of a social resentment towards a discursive other is vital to understand the case of land concentration in Brazil.

This section has attempted to provide a summary of how identity has been explored on the PSDT literature. The section that follows will explore the Gramscian problematic of hegemony and its relation to post-structuralist literature.

### 1.3 Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci is probably one of the most important Marxist scholars of the 20th Century. Gramsci's theory of hegemony set the bases for Laclau and Mouffe's post structuralism. A major source of inspiration for these authors, Gramsci presents a counterpart to Marx's economic determinism by elaborating a theory of hegemony that looks at the organization of consent in State and Civil Society.<sup>36</sup> Drawing on that, Laclau and Mouffe complement Gramsci by adding the discursive aspect on the construction of hegemony, class, and identity. Over the Chapters 2 and 3 I attempt to conciliate perspectives on ideological hegemony, as from Laclau and Mouffe, with political economic perspectives, such as from Crehan and Jessop.

An extensive work on Gramsci's problematic of hegemony was accomplished by the anthropologist Kate Crehan. In relation to land and peasantry, one of her remarkable contributions lies in her work on peasants in Zambia.<sup>37</sup> She argues that hegemony lies at the center of Gramsci's approach to power structures, providing not ready-made analytical boxes but ways to address complex stories in a larger structure of power. In relation to the Marxist problematic of superstructure and infrastructure, Gramsci's hegemony presents another way of framing the

---

<sup>36</sup> Jørgensen and Phillips, p.8

<sup>37</sup> Kate Crehan. *The Fractured Community: Landscapes of Power and Gender in Rural Zambia*. (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997)

passage between economic and political. Gramsci does not reduce hegemony to the purely ideological but sees how material forces are embodied in institutions.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, hegemony is not opposed to force, but rather evidences the entwined relation between force and consent.<sup>39</sup> In dialogue with post-structuralist discourse theory, Crehan also evidences how social lives involve a continuous struggle over meaning, while in certain power configurations specific ways of understanding the world acquire more or less authority and hegemony.<sup>40</sup> While Crehan offers an in-depth discussion on the analytical employment of Gramsci, the deconstruction of Gramsci's work by Laclau and Mouffe provide rich theoretical insights for discourse theory.

While Laclau and Mouffe extrapolate and deconstruct the work of Gramsci, hegemony remains 'more than a useful category, it defines the very terrain in which a political relation is constituted'.<sup>41</sup> Hegemony in their work is explored from the optics of production and organization of consent, looking at how forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion.<sup>42</sup> Close to what Crehan referred as the 'politics of naming', Laclau and Mouffe write on how the stabilization of power relations results from the production of meaning, a way to naturalize power.<sup>43</sup> In dialogue with works on discourse and hegemony, Stuart Hall defines that 'language is the medium par excellence through which things are represented in thought and thus the medium in which ideology is generated and transformed.'<sup>44</sup> Hall writes on how hegemony is a result from ideological struggle, by its turn a result of the constellation between ideas and social forces.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Crehan, p.24

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.29

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.31

<sup>41</sup> Ernesto Laclau, Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics. In: Butler, Judith, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. Phronesis. London: Verso, 2000. p. 44

<sup>42</sup> Jørgensen and Phillips, p.8

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Hall, Stuart, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1996. p. 39

<sup>45</sup> Stuart, p. 35

Therefore, my attempt to analytically combine Post-Structuralism with neo-Gramscian perspectives allows to situate language in a context of accumulation acknowledging that together with economy, discourse and ideas both are constituted and constitute the political and social reality.

Although rooted in Gramsci, the Post-Structuralism of Laclau and Mouffe also deconstructs his work, mainly in respect of the distinction of base and superstructure. These authors oppose such distinction and argue that, indeed, all societal formations result from discursive processes.<sup>46</sup> This view also encompasses the view on class and class identity, another important component of Gramsci's thought. As explained in the previous section in relation to identity, post-structuralism establishes that both individual and collective identity result from discursive processes – therefore, class identity does not determine the political relevance of groups.<sup>47</sup> The post-structuralist views on hegemony, therefore, allow the understanding of how political projects are, thus, a precarious and incomplete discursive result.

Using the literature and developments of post-structuralism, the intertwining of identity and discourse in the constructions of antagonisms and, finally, Gramsci's theory of hegemony conciliating ideology and political economy, in my project, I look at discourses around Brazilian land structure during the years of Lula government. This enables to understand the construction of the agrobusiness hegemonic project over antagonistic discourses of land concentration and income distribution. For this purpose, the views of Laclau and Mouffe's on discourse as constructed through hegemonic struggles and aiming at establishing a political and moral leadership prove suitable tools in understanding the construction of hegemonic discourse in Brazil. Together with

---

<sup>46</sup> Jørgensen and Phillips, p 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

this approach, neo-Gramscian problematics of hegemony – such as that from Crehan – allows me to explore the economic and material context beyond the discursive sphere.

## Chapter 2: Crafting the agro-hegemonic self.

Drawing on the post-structuralist and on neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony, I begin to shed light on Brazilian land structure through a brief genealogy of the Brazilian agrobusiness and on what I argue to be their consolidation as a hegemonic class. While the roots of this powerful group lead us back to the colonial times, I look at the early history of land in Brazil and its long-lasting consequences. In the second section, I focus on the crucial developments of the 1980's and 1990's and the consolidation of the 'modern' Brazilian agrobusiness class. Finally, in the third section, I look at the Workers Party (PT) and Lula da Silva in their process of integration to the hegemonic class. In my case study, I take an analytical position of reconciliation between political ideology (discursive) and political economy (material), articulating themes originated from both approaches.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the examples of identity construction to discourse as part of hegemony are seen as coupled with an accumulation strategy.

### 2.1 Brazilian agrobusiness, consolidating hegemony.

The work of Mouffe on Gramsci's hegemony offers valuable lenses from which to analyze the consolidation of the Brazilian agrobusiness. For Gramsci, hegemony is defined as the ability of one class to subsume the interest of other social groups to its own, neutralizing them to prevent the development of specific demands, occasionally promoting the full developments of these demands to solve contradictions.<sup>49</sup> Central to Gramsci's theory of hegemony are the intellectual and moral aspects of hegemony. Mouffe argues that hegemony consists of the union of political leadership with intellectual and moral leadership, operating at the ideological level.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, a class would

---

<sup>48</sup> Alexander Gallas. *The Thatcherite Offensive: A Neo-Poulantzian Analysis*. Historical Materialism Book Series, volume 107. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Chantal Mouffe, ed. *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. p.183

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p.178

become hegemonic by creating ideological consensus, establishing a 'collective will'.<sup>51</sup> She also defends that a class hegemony goes beyond political leadership, including the discursive articulation of ideological elements of a hegemonic social formation.<sup>52</sup> Drawing on Gramsci, Mouffe writes that

Hegemony is not to be found in a purely instrumental alliance between classes through which the class demands of the allied classes are articulated to those of fundamental class, with each group maintaining its own ideology. Hegemony involves the creation of a higher synthesis, so all this elements fuse in a 'collective will' which becomes the new protagonist of political action which will function as the protagonist of political action during that hegemony's entire duration.<sup>53</sup>

Exploring how this 'collective will' assured the establishment of the agrobusiness as a hegemonic class, I also look at how the ideological formation corresponded with an institutional configuration. According to Jessop, a hegemonic project needs the existence of a viable economic growth pattern in articulation with the group's ideology.<sup>54</sup> In my genealogy of the Brazilian land structure I explore the ideological consolidation of the agrobusiness as coupled with an accumulation strategy. I identify three major moments in the history of the agrobusiness elite: The first, broadly explaining, is rooted in the colonial period, between the XVI and XIX centuries. Then, the land was divided in *Semarias*, large estates run by a Portuguese nobleman, employing a plantation system sustained by enslaved Amerindians and Africans.<sup>55</sup> The colonial structure resulted in a dual system, passed onto future generations: the control of under-used *latifundios*, large areas held by powerful farmers, opposed to over-used *minifundios*, small portions used for peasant agriculture.<sup>56</sup> A key moment to understand the sequels of this period to the Brazilian land structure is the 1850's 'Land Law' (Lei de Terras). This law legalized the *latifundios*, establishing a payment system for

---

<sup>51</sup> Mouffe, p.191

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 195

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.184

<sup>54</sup> Gallas, p.16

<sup>55</sup> Fernandes, p.17

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.19

the land and denying the peasant's equal political rights by forbidding associations and establishing literacy as a requirement to vote.<sup>57</sup> Yet one must avoid a deterministic conclusion on how this division is reproduced at the present, it is clear how the legacy of slavery and State control by landowners left sequels in the land structure of the present.

The second moment is the early period of the change from the 'Rural Complex' to the 'Agro-industrial Complex', from the 1850's to the first half of the 20th century. Then, the primitive rural techniques were replaced by the agricultural activities integrated with industry, together with the intensification of labor and intersectoral changes, and specialization of agricultural production.<sup>58</sup> As in 1888 Brazil became a republic, the monopoly of the State through the rural elites was consolidated by the successive presidencies of Sao Paulo coffee planters.<sup>59</sup> Between 1930-1945, amid the industrialization of the country and of the agriculture, Brazilian dictator Getulio Vargas first launched the idea 'Brazil, the World's Barn', subsequently explored by Lula's Government. A series of political turmoil in the early 1960's brought to power the progressive President Joao Goulart,<sup>60</sup> who created in 1963 the Superintendent of Agrarian Policy (SUPRA), an entity responsible for helping peasants to establish unions.<sup>61</sup> This led to a backlash from the agricultural oligarchy, who funded civil society groups in support of the 1964 military coup.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the transition from this period to the current structure of agrobusiness hegemonic class begins with the establishment of the 21-year military regime, a strong period for silencing counterhegemonic movements in Brazil.

---

<sup>57</sup> Carter p.502

<sup>58</sup> José Francisco Graziano da Silva. *A Nova Dinâmica Da Agricultura Brasileira*. Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Economia, 1996. p. 1

<sup>59</sup> Fernandes, p.31

<sup>60</sup> Elected the Vice President of Janio Quadros, Goulart came to power after Quadros' resignation in 1963.

<sup>61</sup> Fernandes, p.32

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.33

The military regime in Brazil promoted an intense modernization of agriculture, planned, and executed by the State and influence groups. The emerging discourses of land reform that resulted in 1964's coup were opposed by a prevailing discourse of technical agricultural modernization.<sup>63</sup> Then, changes in the functions of agriculture in the economy deepened its relations with the industry and foreign sector, incorporating strategic blocs of capital for the current agrobusiness.<sup>64</sup> Instead of bringing changes to the land structure, this period was punctuated by the 1980's foreign debt crisis, which required a larger participation of the agricultural sector through the expansion of exports and alliance with financial capital.<sup>65</sup> The unfolding of the 1970's-1980's was decisive for the establishment of the agrobusiness hegemonic class in its current form, which is defined by the Brazilian Agrobusiness Association (ABAG) as

A self-contained system composed of financial sources, scientific knowledge, technological innovation, hired labour, agricultural production, animal husbandry, industrial processing, and marketing, which encompasses all capitalist and non-capitalist farmers, both large and small, defining them as large or small agrobusinesses.<sup>66</sup>

The first two moments of Brazilian Land history explained in this section reveals how the agrobusiness class is rooted in the historical articulation between economic power and the State. For Gramsci, hegemonic projects are grounded not only in the economy, but in the whole sphere of state and civil society relations.<sup>67</sup> In the case of agrobusiness, as I intend to evidence, the economic power comes followed by civil society bodies, such as ABAG, the control of political space and exercise of ideological influence.

---

<sup>63</sup> Fernandes., p.81

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.85

<sup>65</sup> Carter, p. 89

<sup>66</sup> Fernandes, p.37

<sup>67</sup> Adam David Morton,. *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy*. London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007, p. 153

## 2.2 The new ‘agroparliamentary’ hegemony.

Contraposing ABAG’s definition, the peasant-led organization Via Campesina understands agrobusiness as

part and parcel of the discursive apparatus used to construct its hegemony over the countryside (...) the agrarian capitalism paradigm as a set of systems for the production of commodities by means of large-scale monoculture, mainly for export, that exploits peasant land and labour.<sup>68</sup>

The third phase of agrobusiness consolidation, which I refer to as *agroparliamentary hegemony*, begins with the democratization of the country during the 1980’s and is influenced by two aspects. The first is the awakening of progressive social forces after two decades of military regime. Social movements, among which the Landless Movement (MST), advocated for the definition of the ‘social function of the land’ in the new Brazilian constitution, bringing forward the debate for the 1985 First National Plan of Land Reform (PNRA).<sup>69</sup> However, this promising progress was stopped by the second forementioned aspect: the domestic and international context of the debt crisis in Brazil and the start of a neo-liberal and privatized decade under the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment Programs.<sup>70</sup> Then, the incorporation of the agricultural sector as a solution for the crisis reinforced the strategy of concentration on the land market.<sup>71</sup> Amid this crisis, the government adopted a policy of abandoning commercial superavits and opening to foreign markets, leading to a generalized fall in agricultural income and intense abandoning of agricultural activities.<sup>72</sup> Simultaneously, the policy of attraction of Foreign Direct Investment brought transnational agroindustry firms to the country, such as Cargill, Bunge and Monsanto.<sup>73</sup> This economic context established the label ‘agrobusiness’, a modern and a powerful tool to the

---

<sup>68</sup> Fernandes, p. 82

<sup>69</sup> Primeiro Plano Nacional de Reforma Agraria. Carter, p. 81,88.

<sup>70</sup> Carter, p. 88

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 90

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 91

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 33

development of the country, replacing the image of an old rural oligarchy by a modern and westernized project.

The changes in the economic context were parallel to the political organization of the agrobusiness. In the Brazilian Congress, the now directly elected rural landlord caucus neutralized the PNRA before it would reach the president's eyes. The same political group also managed to disband the Ministry of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, from 1985, by adding the topic of agrarian reform to the agenda of the Ministry of Agriculture, in 1989.<sup>74</sup> In 1993, the Brazilian Agrobusiness Association (ABAG) was established, setting a further important stone for the agrobusiness class. As Ana Chã writes, this new moment of the Agrobusiness distinguishes from the previous by its ideological construction, which would take place from five main aspects:<sup>75</sup>

1. An active rural caucus in the Parliament - Consolidated with the Agricultural Parliamentary Front, initially established in 1994.<sup>76</sup>
2. An active association to move the marketing and popular perception on agrobusiness - the role of ABAG, since 1993.
3. A group of medias ideologically identified with the agrobusiness - Which is organized by the Brazilian Association of Rural Marketing and Agrobusiness, including the country's largest media network (Rede Globo), universities and large corporations, such as Syngenta.<sup>77</sup>
4. A bureaucracy actively conceding public credit to the agrobusiness – A role occupied by the Brazilian National Development Bank (BNDES).

---

<sup>74</sup> Fernandes, p.33

<sup>75</sup> Ana Manuela de Jesus Chã, [UNESP. "Agronegócio e indústria cultural: estratégias das empresas para a construção da hegemonia," March 24, 2016. Accessed 26 May 2021 <https://repositorio.unesp.br/handle/11449/144217>, p. 36

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 45

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p.56

5. A passive operation of institutions linked to land regulation, unauthorized to promote the constitutional principles of land property, such as INCRA, IBAMA and FUNAI.<sup>78</sup>

On Figure 1, below, the image of a newspaper article from 1994, highlights the new approach towards the agrobusiness:



*Figure 1: Opportunity of profit that comes from the soil<sup>79</sup>*

The publication declares that ‘The most recent trend to make money comes from the soil.’ In the context of economic recovery and stabilization, ‘agrobusiness’ is articulated with positive signifiers such as ‘profit’, ‘opportunity’, ‘to make money’. There is also an attempt to bring it closer to society by reinforcing its triviality, as it ‘arises from the soil’. From the ideological elaboration of a ‘collective will’, the transformation of rural oligarchies in an agrobusiness elite during the 1990’s can be understood from a neo-Gramscian perspective as the combination of an accumulation strategy with a hegemonic project. The first refers to a specific economic growth model, which includes extra-economic preconditions and complex relations among factions of

<sup>78</sup> National Institute for Colonization and Land Reform (INCRA), Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), National Indian Foundation (FUNAI).

<sup>79</sup> O Globo. Opportunity of profit that comes from the soil. 27 Nov. 1994, *Matutina, Boa Chance*, pg. 4

capital – this accumulation relies on a hegemonic project, which is grounded not only in the economy, but on the whole sphere of state-civil society relations.<sup>80</sup>

One of the most striking aspects of the period of consolidation of the agrobusiness hegemonic project is the establishment of the Agricultural Parliamentary Front (FPA), the reason why I named this period *agroparliamentary hegemony*. The rural caucus existed informally since 1988, dating from the National Constitutional Assembly, but was officially established as the Agricultural Parliamentary Front, in 1994.<sup>81</sup> As of today, the FPA is considered the most influential group in Brazilian Congress and its main goal is ‘fostering the increasing of public policies for the development of national agrobusiness’.<sup>82</sup> According to Ivete Simonato, the FPA results from a promotion of the ‘modern’ agrobusiness – resulting from the modernization of agriculture – against the old ‘rural world’. The consolidation of the FPA, therefore, reinforces the institutionalization of the agrobusiness project and the appropriation of the State space for its perpetuation in power. Actively working in the Brazilian Parliament,

The ruralist sector today guarantees its hegemony through the parliamentary action developed by its congressmen, in which domination and exploitation seem to gain the unquestionable status of Law, and, still, by the cooptation of the media, of contesting all and contestation and the traditional land structures, and armed violence, supported by the constitutional prerogative of the right to property.<sup>83</sup>

I illustrate the conclusion of this section by exposing a second news piece about agrobusiness in Brazil, published in 2001, one year before the election of Lula da Silva:

---

<sup>80</sup> Morton, p. 153

<sup>81</sup> FPA. “História da FPA » FPA.” Accessed April 20, 2021. <https://fpagropecuaria.org.br/historia-da-fpa/>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ivete Simonato, Como os Dominantes Dominam. *Temporalis, Brasília (DF)*, ano 12, n. 24, p. 215-237, jul./dez. 2012, p. 224

## Produtos agrícolas salvam balança comercial

Dados da FAO mostram que participação brasileira nas exportações mundiais foi de apenas 0,89% em 2000

**Citizius Alves  
e Mauro Torres Baccetti\***

■ **NOTA-DEBASTA.** O agronegócio vai, esta vez, salvar o Produto Interno Bruto (PIB) do Brasil. Segundo o relatório da FAO, a balança comercial brasileira, Orlatório da Agricultura, Paralelo de Moraes, fez as contas: as vendas ao exterior de produtos agrícolas em dólares atingiram US\$ 5 bilhões no acumulado de janeiro a novembro deste ano. As vendas de açúcar duplicaram e as de carne, o Brasil vai conseguir embalar mais US\$ 1 bilhão do que no período. Em outras palavras, as exportações de carne de boi, salmão, frango e leite totalizaram US\$ 2,4 bilhões, contra US\$ 1,7 bilhão do mesmo período de 2000.

O Ministério da Agricultura também está comemorando que, até 2000, o país importava mais de produtos agrícolas do que exportava. Este ano, está exportando US\$ 600 milhões. No cultura de algodão, a situação é parecida: o país saiu de um quadro de importação de US\$ 1 bilhão no ano passado para exportar de US\$ 200 milhões este ano.

— O agronegócio vai gerar um superávit de US\$ 1,8 bilhão este ano, acima dos US\$ 14 bilhões do ano passado. Con-

— O maior produtor de algodão no Brasil é o Mato Grosso, que está com uma queda prevista de 30% para a safra de 2001/2002 — diz o ministro, que prevê compensações para a indústria têxtil.

Não é apenas a balança comercial que colhe os frutos da expansão da agropecuária brasileira. Segundo cálculos, no centro do IICA, o setor será decisivo para o desempenho do Produto Interno Bruto (PIB) deste último trimestre do ano, quando as expectativas de crescimento são de 12,0%.

**Paraná é um dos mais fortes no setor do agronegócio**

O Paraná, um dos mais produtivos pelo bom desempenho do setor de agronegócio nacional, registra um dos melhores resultados dos últimos dois anos. A Cooperativa Agropecuária Mourãoense (Coa-20) antecipa neste semana US\$ 10 milhões de participação nos lucros a uma 17 mil cooperadoras no Paraná e Santa Catarina. O valor é 43% superior ao registrado no ano passado.

— O agronegócio vai gerar um superávit de US\$ 1,8 bilhão este ano, acima dos US\$ 14 bilhões do ano passado. Con-

O produtor de soja, milho e trigo, Milton Munhoz, de 40 anos, está comemorando os R\$ 7 mil que recebeu antecipadamente. Vai usá-los no pagamento de funcionários, despesas e na compra de "alguns presentes para a família". Com o valor a ser recebido no próximo ano, Munhoz pretende incrementar o próprio negócio.

— Estou começando a investir na compra de boi, em integração da boiaria com a pecuária — disse.

Apesar dos ritmos positivos, o que favorece a entrada de dólares no país, e de um superávit no PIB — que não garante, porém, de despreocupação, tempos difíceis — o Brasil não tem ainda tantos motivos para comemorar. Mesmo vendendo mais produtos agrícolas e afilados corados, o país continua com uma participação muito pequena no comércio mundial.

Enquanto as exportações mundiais somam US\$ 62 trilhões, segundo dados da Organização Mundial do Comércio (OMC), o Brasil tem uma participação de apenas 0,89%.

Elas já foram 1,03% em 1993. Além disso, é preciso levar em conta que a falta do comércio agrícola no mundo em relação



Figure 2: 'Agricultural products save commercial balance'<sup>84</sup>

This image taken from a newspaper depicts the ideological, economic, and political promotion of the agroparliamentary project, it states that 'The agrobusiness will, once again, save the GDP and, presumably, the Brazilian commercial balance'. The modern agrobusiness is associated with positive signifiers of development and progress, promoted as the 'savior' of the Brazilian economy — and consequently, society. This is conclusive to situate the agrobusiness in Mouffe's interpretation of class hegemony: when a group manages to articulate in its discourse ideological national-popular elements and those of a class-formation, becoming the class that expresses national interests.<sup>85</sup> Besides this ideological aspects, the economic gains of the period situate the agrobusiness within Jessop's definition of a hegemonic project, which for the existence of an active consent requires the existence of an accumulation strategy.<sup>86</sup> Considering this, on the following section, I outline the years of the Lula Government as incorporated to this hegemonic narrative.

<sup>84</sup> "Busca | Acervo O Globo." Accessed April 26, 2021. <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=agroneg%C3%B3cio&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2001>.

<sup>85</sup> Mouffe, p. 195

<sup>86</sup> Gallas, p.19

## 2.3 Lula da Silva, moderation, and the expansion of agro hegemony.

With one strike of the pen, I will give you so much land that you will not even be able to occupy everything (Lula to the Landless Movement in Paranapanema, in 1994)<sup>87</sup>

The way to overcome the fragility of public finances is to increase and improve the quality of exports and to promote a competitive substitution of imports in the short term. Here, it gains its full dimension of a policy aimed at valuing agrobusiness and family farming. (Lula during his presidential campaign in 2002)<sup>88</sup>

Therefore, it is essential to make a land reform, peaceful, orderly, and planned (...) This is compatible to our vigorous support of the corporate agriculture, agroindustry and agrobusiness. (Lula in his inaugural address in 2003)<sup>89</sup>

Lula da Silva was elected the president of Brazil in 2002, after three failed attempts since 1989.

Several studies on the election of Lula and the history of the Worker's Party (PT) have argued that the adoption of a moderate discourse and image were preconditions for his success. The image of Lula in 1989, radical, emblemized the slogan 'Worker votes in Worker', but evolved towards an attempt of engaging other sectors of society in 1994, yet still contraposing the media.<sup>90</sup> In 2002, Lula assumed an image of 'hope for change', pacifist and moderate.<sup>91</sup> In this aspect, Lula's 1989 discourse of Land Reform and his closeness with the Landless Movement (MST) - dating to the foundation of PT in the 1980's<sup>92</sup> - was replaced by a moderate defense of this project.

The relation between Lula and PT and the MST significantly reflects the changes in the relation with agrobusiness. The Landless Movement was established by Brazilian peasants in 1984, having as its main grievance land reform – a project that directly opposes the agrobusiness for its

---

<sup>87</sup> Carter, p. 417

<sup>88</sup> "Folha Online - Brasil - Leia Íntegra Da Carta de Lula Para Acabar o Mercado Financeiro - 24/06/2002." Accessed April 21, 2021. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u33908.shtml>.

<sup>89</sup> Biblioteca. "biblioteca\_interna\_ex." Accessed March 31, 2021.

<http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luliz-inacio-lula-da-silva>.

<sup>90</sup> Marcelo Bolshaw Gomes. "A imagem Pública de Lula e Eleições Presidenciais Brasileiras (1989/2002)," n.d., 29. p.4

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Carter, p.164

concentration of land in large properties.<sup>93</sup> Importantly, land reform means the expropriation of land from the large estates to promote a rupture with the land system and change the economic, social and political structure – strengthening the peasants enough to change the GINI index of the land by 10-20%.<sup>94</sup> Since its establishment in the 1980's, PT promised repeatedly to promote a structural land reform program, attracting dissidents from the Landless Movement who joined the party hopeful of a change in the country.<sup>95</sup> However, it is evident from the three excerpts above how the radical 'so much land' was replaced by the defense of an antagonistic combination of a 'peaceful' land reform and a 'vigorous' support of the agrobusiness.

Different aspects of the 'moderation' and 'class conciliation' in Lula's campaign and Government have been widely covered by the literature,<sup>96</sup> highlighting its alliance with the elites and the agrobusiness class. However, drawing on Post-Structuralist and Neo-Gramscian works, I find that these accounts have failed in understanding two central aspects of this period:

1. *The electoral victory of the worker's party did not mean the shift to a 'left-wing' hegemony but was indeed a necessary condition for the expansion of the hegemonic class.*<sup>97</sup>

In this case,

The State is conceived as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point.<sup>98</sup>

This is evident in how the agrobusiness hegemonic project prevailed between 2003-2010 despite of Lula's earlier alignment with the landless movement. For instance, Lula named as his Minister

<sup>93</sup> MST. "84-86." Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://mst.org.br/nossa-historia/84-86/>.

<sup>94</sup> Carter, p. 420

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 415

<sup>96</sup> For instance, Puzone, Vladimir, and Luis Felipe Miguel. *The Brazilian Left in the 21st Century: Conflict and Conciliation in Peripheral Capitalism*. Springer, 2019.

<sup>97</sup> Mouffe, p.181.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.181-182

of Agriculture Roberto Rodrigues, an important representative of the agrobusiness and former leader of the ABAG. Moreover, the concentration of land by the agrobusiness increased by almost 54% during the years of Lula's administration.<sup>99</sup> Besides this material aspect, the agrobusiness was also continuously incorporated by Lula's discourse as connected with views of national progress. For instance, in 2005, in the meeting of South American State leaders, Lula reinforced Brazilian natural wealth and the vocation of becoming 'The World's Barn'.<sup>100</sup>

Foremost,

*2. Lula's moderate discourse did not articulate the conciliation of agrobusiness and the land reform project. Instead, it was incorporated to the hegemonic project where he contributed to evidence the antagonism between a modern agrobusiness country and a backward peasant project.*

As evidenced in the previous point, the concentration of land increased during the years of Lula's government, while no effective land reform was promoted: 75% of the resettled families during Lula's Government were directed to pre-existing land-reform batches or unoccupied land in the Amazon.<sup>101</sup> These policies had no effect on changing the concentration of land. In addition, the two excerpts below reveal how during his two terms, Lula kept articulating in favor of a land reform, but progressively contraposing it to agrobusiness – synonym of national project. For instance, in the two following pieces:

<sup>99</sup> MST. "Concentração de terra cresce e latifúndios equivalem a três Sergipe," January 14, 2015. <https://mst.org.br/2015/01/14/concentracao-de-terra-cresce-e-latifundios-equivalem-a-tres-sergipe/>.

<sup>100</sup> Brazil, Lula, and Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, eds. *Discursos selecionados do Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva*. Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2008.

<sup>101</sup> Eduardo Scolese. "De FHC a Lula: manipulações, números, conceitos e promessas de reforma agrária." *Terra Livre* 2, no. 23 (August 10, 2015): 123–38.



Figure 3: Land Reform will not be achieved by shouting.<sup>102</sup>

In a rally in 2004, Lula argued that ‘The land reform will not be achieved by shouting.’<sup>103</sup> He refers to the pressure made by the Landless Movement towards his Government, while complaining of their tactic of invasion of agrobusiness land. The association with the landless and ‘shout’, an act of violence reinforces the historical connection between peasantry and backwardness.

On another occasion in 2007, Lula stated that sugar-cane planters were becoming national heroes:

#### Lula diz que usineiros estão virando heróis nacionais

Chico de Góis - O Globo, 20/03/2007 08:00 | Atualizado em 05/03/2012 01:40

f t l | Não-votantes

MINEIROS (GO) - Em discurso pronunciado na inauguração do Complexo Industrial da Perdigão, o presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva elogiou o setor canavieiro. Segundo Lula, os usineiros, antes vistos pela sociedade como vilões, podem ser os novos heróis nacionais por conta do álcool combustível.

- Os usineiros estão virando heróis nacionais porque todo mundo está de olho no álcool, que agora tem uma política séria - afirmou Lula, que no seu passado de líder esquerdista foi um dos maiores críticos das elites canavieiras. **Alcool mais caro**

Figure 4: Sugar-cane planters are becoming national heroes<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> O Globo. Lula: Reforma Agraria não vai ser feita no grito. 03 April 2004, Matutina, O País, p.5.

<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+Sem+terra&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000>.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> “Lula Diz Que Usineiros Estão Virando Heróis Nacionais - Jornal O Globo.” Accessed April 26, 2021. <https://oglobo.globo.com/economia/lula-diz-que-usineiros-estao-virando-herois-nacionais-4207718>.

‘The sugar-cane planters are becoming national heroes because everyone is paying attention ethanol, which now has a serious policy.’

Mainly in considering the aspect 2 in Lula’s administration, there is a clear articulation of antagonistic projects in Lula’s discourse. In considering these relations, how would this incompatible projects still result in stability and assure Lula the re-election for a second term and the conclusion of his Presidency with an 83% approval rating?<sup>105</sup> In the next chapter, therefore, I explore the discursive incorporation of the Brazilian middle class by Lula, and the craft of an agro-middle class identity, allies of progress, in opposition to the one of the peasants, backward and enemies of progress.

I argue that the incorporation of the new middle class to the hegemonic project, was a crucial feature to assure the persistence of the agrobusiness’ hegemony: at the material level, resources were channeled to the ‘previous poor’, allowing the minimal necessary gains, and enlarging the hegemonic project. At the discursive level, the new middle class was associated to the agrobusiness self to the construction of a chain of equivalence between this emerging identity and the agrobusiness project.

---

<sup>105</sup> VEJA. “Lula encerra mandato com aprovação de 83%, afirma Ibope.” Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/lula-encerra-mandato-com-aprovacao-de-83-afirma-ibope/>.

## Chapter 3: Incorporation and stability: the new Brazilian middle-class.

In this third and final chapter I explore what I consider to be the missing link on the juxtaposition of antagonistic discourses by Lula da Silva and stabilization of the agrobusiness hegemonic project: the new Brazilian middle class. I analyze how the new middle class identity was constructed through the articulation of a chain of equivalence to assure stability for the agrobusiness hegemonic discourse, excluding the land reform project and movements previously endorsed by Lula da Silva. In this intricate context, the most consistent description of this period comes from the sociologist Jesse Souza: claims on the ‘progress’ around the emerging middle class are only half true.<sup>106</sup> These are real because, to a certain extent, they refer to real changes, but they are also fake because they are interpreted in a distorted way, dismissing conflicts and reinforcing a new kind of capitalism.<sup>107</sup> To understand the incorporation of the new middle class on the discursive sphere I employ Lene Hansen’s methodology of discourse analysis, largely derived from the Post Structuralist Discourse Theory of Laclau and Mouffe. In the next sections I explore the complex ascension of the new middle class, its discursive association with the agrobusiness through Hansen’s *logics of linking* and its opposition to the landless movements, through a *logic of differentiation*.

### 3.1 Brazilian middle class in the Lula years.

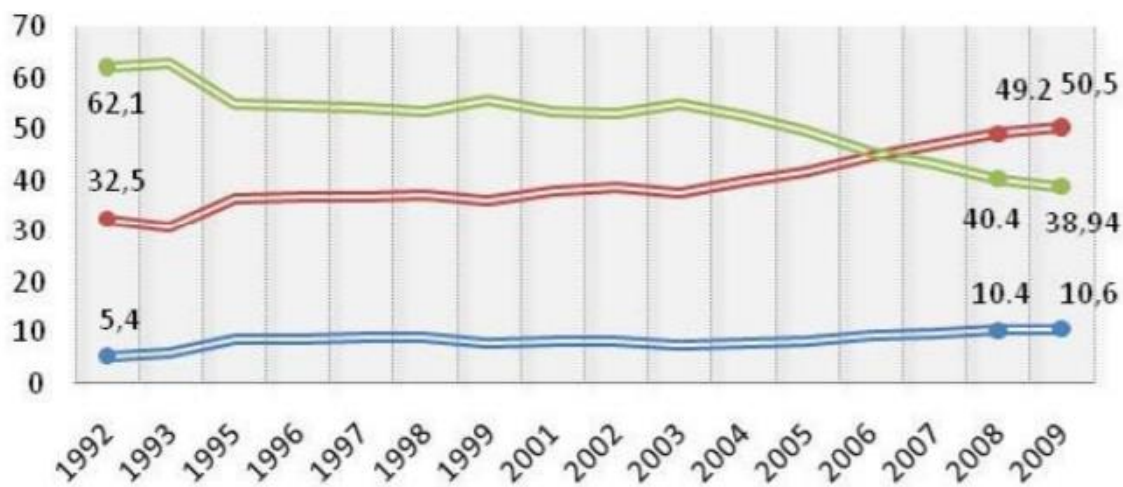
During Lula’s Government (2003-2010) the Brazilian middle class went through an expressive enlargement, becoming the country’s biggest social strata. As poverty fell more than 55% during these years, 35 million Brazilians experienced unprecedented upward mobility and joined ‘Class

---

<sup>106</sup> Jessé Souza, and Brand Arenari. *Os batalhadores brasileiros: nova classe média ou nova classe trabalhadora?* 2nd. rev. ed. Humanitas. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2012, p. 21

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

C', the what I refer as the 'new middle class'.<sup>108</sup> This group increased in 34% between the years of 2003 and 2009, becoming 51,8% of the Brazilian population.<sup>109</sup> Some critics however note that this ascension was not associated with the creation of 'white collar jobs', but with an overexpanded definition that looked at the emerging 'poor working class'.<sup>110</sup> For instance, as the 'Class C' expanded, the upper classes – A and B – kept mostly stagnated, as portrayed in figure 3.1a.



**Figure 4: Evolution of the social classes in Brazil 1992-2009.<sup>111</sup>**

AB Class: Blue | C Class: Red | D Class: Green

As the mobility encompassed the bottom of the pyramid (Class D and C) and kept the top unshaken (Class A and B), one vital aspect to understand how the new middle-class identity evolved within the agrobusiness project can be made clear by looking at its consumption-driven ascension. The expressive growth in this period is evident from the expansion of credit and consumption,

<sup>108</sup> Charles H. Klein , Sean T. Mitchell, and Benjamin Junge. "Naming Brazil's Previously Poor: 'New Middle Class' as an Economic, Political, and Experiential Category." *Economic Anthropology* 5, no. 1 (2018)., p. 84

<sup>109</sup> Ludmila Costhek Abílio. "A 'NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA' VAI AO PARAÍSO?," n.d., 14, p.1

<sup>110</sup> Waldir Quadros, Davi Antunes, and Denis Gimenez. "O BRASIL E A NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA DOS ANOS 2000." *MPRA Paper*, October 2012. <https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/48927/>. p. 3-6

<sup>111</sup> Marcelo Neri, A Nova Classe Media: o lado brilhante dos pobres. Slides. Available at: [https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM\\_Apresenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_fim.pdf](https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM_Apresenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o_fim.pdf)

obscuring how labor income didn't grow in the same proportion.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, categories that look at income are limited in understanding the new middle class, to which consumption was much more symbolic – based on credit and easing of instalments, rather than welfare.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, the indicators of the 'Boom' of the C Class were a house, a car, a computer and a formal job, which by 2008 had achieved a historical record.<sup>114</sup> As I explore in the next section, the aspects of consumption and credit are central to explore the identity construction of the new middle class and its establishment as a nodal point.

One remarkable study on the evolution of the Class C during the years of the Lula government looks at how the main national newspaper 'Folha de São Paulo' shaped the identity of this group. Ana Fonseca argues that one identifier for the new middle class was 'Inclusion', as easing access to State and Private sector services was an active economic policy of the period.<sup>115</sup> Inclusion then happened by consumption: an organizer of social expectations and a source of political legitimacy, simultaneously answering popular demands and proposing an ideological and identity transformation.<sup>116</sup> According to Fonseca, this decenters values that previously conducted life in community and creates a fake impression of harmony, in which opening a door (consumption) would be enough to include the previously poor.<sup>117</sup> Exploring Fonseca's argument in the light of Post-Structuralism, in which identity is relational and resulting from articulation, the identity of the new middle class during Lula's Government was established with the association of signifiers:

---

<sup>112</sup> Abílio, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Yaccoub, Hilaine. "A chamada 'nova classe média': cultura material, inclusão e distinção social." *Horizontes Antropológicos* 17, no. 36 (December 2011): 197–231. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-71832011000200009>.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Fonseca, Ana Silvia, Félix Pablo Friggeri, Sonia Álvarez Leguizamón, Norma Naharro, Neyla Graciela Pardo Abril, Juan Ruiz Celis, Marcela Valencia Toro, and Victoria Inés Darling. "DA POBREZA À CLASSE C: CONSTRUÇÃO IMAGINÁRIA DA NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA BRASILEIRA PELA FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO." In *Pobreza En La Prensa Hegemónica de Colombia, Argentina y Brasil*, 239–76. Modos de Legitimación de La Desigualdad. CLACSO, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvnp0jj8.10>, p. 248

<sup>116</sup> Fonseca, p.248.

<sup>117</sup> Fonseca, 249.

poverty reduction, increase of income, consumption, inclusion.<sup>118</sup> Considering these economic and ideational aspects, in the next section, I explore the *process of linking* and the construction of the new middle-class identity in association with agrobusiness.

Before moving to the next section, two theoretical elements must be briefly highlighted. The first one refers to the place of discourse and identity construction in relation to the agro-hegemonic project. As I aim to explore below, according to Laclau and Mouffe, ideological hegemony emerges from articulatory practices, or discursive structures, that constitute and organize social relations and consequently hegemony.<sup>119</sup> Together with the economic context presented above, looking at the articulation of the new middle class in the following section allows us to understand the establishment of this identity through three main nodal points – a privileged signifier that fixed a certain meaning in the discursive chain. The second element refers to the crucial location of the new middle class as ‘previously poor’ in relation to the hegemonic project. As I argue in the next section,

the two conditions of a hegemonic articulation are the presence of antagonistic forces and the instability of the frontiers which separate them. Only the presence of a vast area of floating elements and the possibility of their articulation to opposite camps - which implies a constant redefinition of the latter - is what constitutes the terrain permitting us to define a practice as hegemonic. Without equivalence and without frontiers, it is impossible to speak strictly of hegemony.<sup>120</sup>

As ‘previously poor’, the new middle class supported the election of Lula da Silva during the 1990’s, in opposition to the rural oligarchies – and therefore in the same field than the landless movement. However, as expressed in the excerpt above, frontiers between signifiers are not fixed, but subject to a constant redefinition. This allows the existence of hegemony itself, as a dimension

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 257

<sup>119</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 2001), p. 69, 96, 134.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p.135

of politics in expansion.<sup>121</sup> Considering these two aspects of hegemony – resulting from articulation and a system in expansion – in the next section I explore the discursive incorporation of the new middle class to the hegemonic self.

### 3.2 A process of linking: how the agrobusiness incorporated the new middle class.

The time has come for us to take a new step, the moment of definitive union, of the productive with the social. Just as it was in the achievement of stability, this is also a struggle that will take place in stages. (Lula on national Radio and TV about the debt payment to IMF, 2006)<sup>122</sup>

In this section I employ Lene Hansen’s Post-Structuralist methodological approach to investigate the identity construction of the new Brazilian middle class. As explained in the previous section, hegemony is constituted through articulation – practices that establish a relation among elements in a way that modifies their identity.<sup>123</sup> Here, therefore, I look specifically at the discursive *process of linking* between the new middle class identity and the agro-business project, as composing a hegemonic self. From this relation, the new middle class identity was established by a series of nodal points – chains of equivalence - in common with the agrobusiness. As a partial ‘fixation’ of meaning, nodal points are vital for the stability of the agrobusiness project – as discourses are never fixed, these special signifiers provide partially fixed meanings in an equivalence chain.<sup>124</sup> I argue that while discourses are always unstable and never fixed, the association between the new

---

<sup>121</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p.138.

<sup>122</sup> “16-01-2006-Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Em Cadeia de Rádio e TV, Sobre o Pagamento Da Dívida Com o FMI — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/1o-mandato/2006/16-01-2006-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-o-pagamento-da-divida-com-o-fmi-1/view>.

<sup>123</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p. 105

<sup>124</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 112.

middle class and the agrobusiness identity allowed, yet briefly, a degree of stability inside the hegemonic project.

Hansen translates Laclau and Mouffe's 'logics of difference' and 'logics of equivalence' as a *process of linking and differentiation*. While she sees identity as the central methodological account in Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis, identity construction is analyzed as the way in which discourses achieve stability. Hansen describes the three dimensions of this construction as: first the establishment of boundaries, second the way how subjects are constituted by these boundaries and third to whom responsibility is applied.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, I look at how the new middle class identity was discursively incorporated into the agro-hegemonic self by the constitution of equivalence chains between the two signifiers. I argue that while PT's pro-Land-Reform identity was replaced by an antagonistic pro-Agrobusiness agenda, the *process of linking* the new middle class and the agrobusiness was vital to assure Lula discursive stability.

In material terms, it is vital to acknowledge that the economic expansion of the agrobusiness sector during the Lula Government, driven by the Chinese-led commodity boom, is directly related to the economic prosperity of Brazil between 2002-2011. The moment of growth experienced by the Brazilian middle class was indeed a result of progressive policies – such as conditional cash transfer – but also of positive global conditions that delivered material gains.<sup>126</sup> The development of the neo-extractivist model (agrobusiness) was pushed by the strong Chinese demand for commodities, the main dynamic force in the economic cycle of Lula's Government.<sup>127</sup> The material conditions allowed the economic expansion of this hegemonic model, but also that of the middle class. While this relates to an accumulation strategy, the shared constructions of a

---

<sup>125</sup> Hansen, p.33

<sup>126</sup> Puzone, p. 37-36

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 42.

'progressive', 'optimistic', and 'enriching' agrobusiness and middle class identity composes the hegemonic strategy of a consensus in defense of this project.

Drawing on PSTD, Hansen argues that language is political, producing particular subjectivities while others are simultaneously excluded – identities are made by a *process of linking*, through associations that do not reflect an objective dimension.<sup>128</sup> In my research, I analyzed discourses by President Lula da Silva between 2003-2010 and news articles from the two largest Brazilian publications – Folha de São Paulo and O Globo. I found that the new middle class - or class C - is constantly associated with nodal points also associated with the agrobusiness – or agroexportation, composing an equivalence chain. Described in detail below, these are mainly three categories that are related with 'growth', 'record', and 'exceptional performance'. As a remarkable example, Lula's re-election speech in 2007 summarizes the view on 'Brazil' in that context, as a country in expansion and ready to exclude whoever threatens that project: "*And we want to make sure that Brazil creates a moment of confidence and optimism. Those that bet on the failure of Brazil will be defeated*".<sup>129</sup>

### 1. Growth

The most basic *liking process* of the period is that of agrobusiness as responsible for the growth in exports, while exports, in their turn, were articulated to the growth of employment. As I described in the previous section, employment, and its consequence – consumption – were ideas constantly associated with the new middle class. The news article below (Figure 3.2a) opens wide this association with the title "*(Job) Vacancies type exportation*", in which it describes that foreign

---

<sup>128</sup> Hansen, p.16

<sup>129</sup> "01-01-2007 - Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Na Cerimônia de Posse — Biblioteca." Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/2o-mandato/2007/01-01-2007-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cerimonia-de-posse/view>.

trade created 500 thousand employment opportunities in 2004. ‘Exportations’ in this context are not generic but refers to agro-exportation: between 2000-2013, the volume of agroexports increased by 230%, while the surplus increased by 468%.<sup>130</sup>



Figure 5: Foreign Trade creates employment, 2004.<sup>131</sup>

While I found this association widely reproduced in the largest media vehicles, it was also voiced by Lula on key occasions, for instance in his New Year speech, in 2005:

Attracting international resources to our country, more than ever, was fundamental. And the best way to achieve this, in the short term, was to increase exports, which would also help in the creation of jobs.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>130</sup>Rebecca Lima Albuquerque, Maranhão. “A DINÂMICA DO CRESCIMENTO DAS EXPORTAÇÕES DO AGRONEGÓCIO BRASILEIRO,” n.d., 46, p. 14.

<sup>131</sup> O Globo. Vagas tipo Exportação. *Matutina, Boa Chance* August 15 2004,p.1. Available at: <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&pagina=&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Com%C3%A9rcio+exterior&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2004&mesSelecionado=&diaSelecionado=>

<sup>132</sup> “02-01-2005 Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Em Cadeia de Rádio e Tv, Sobre as Realizações Do Governo Em 2004 e Perspectivas Para 2005 — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/10->

As explained in the previous section, the creation of formal employment was crucial for the ascension of C Class – or ‘new middle class’, whose identity was crafted around expectations of consumption. On the same talk explored in the item below, in 2005, Lula reinforced this association by stating that the exports were beneficial to industry, that created jobs and promoted consumption. In 2008, another publication declared that Brazil officially became the ‘Country of the middle class’: “*the middle class became 51,8% of the population – more formal employments helped to include 5 million Brazilians in this criterion*”.<sup>133</sup>



**Figure 6: Brazil became the country of the middle class.<sup>134</sup>**

Besides the *process of linking*, Hansen argues that identity is simultaneously built through a *process of differentiation*. During the Lula Government the *process of differentiation* turned the Landless into ‘the other’, depicted as a threat to the Agrobusiness project and, consequently as a

[mandato/2005/02-01-2005-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-as-realizacoes-do-governo-em-2004-e-perspectivas-para-2005/view](http://mandato/2005/02-01-2005-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-as-realizacoes-do-governo-em-2004-e-perspectivas-para-2005/view).

<sup>133</sup> O Globo. Menos e Pobres e mais divergências. *Matutina, Economia*, 06 August 2008, p. 23. Available at: <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=menos+pobre+s+e+mais+divergencias&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2008>.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

threat to the middle class. Movements such as MST were associated with excluded them from the agrobusiness project. For instance, in a publication from 2008, the movement is explicitly articulated as excluded from the ascending neo-extractivist model (Figure 3.2a). The piece states: “*MST replaces the Land Reform by Agrobusiness: the landless are attacking areas belonging to national companies and transnationals*”.



**Figure 7: MST replaces land reform by the agrobusiness.<sup>135</sup>**

Indeed, the media played a crucial role in building MST's image as 'the other'. As seen in the other sections, this posture was also adopted by Lula, yet in a more conciliatory tone.

## 2. Record.

In line with the optimism brought by the period of the Commodity Boom during PT years, the idea of the 'Record' appears constantly linked to both the agrobusiness sector and the new middle class. The two discourses below, by Lula da Silva, evidence this association

We have a growing economy, we have growing exports, we have a growing surplus in bank accounts, we have the surplus of the balance of payments breaking records after records, we have

<sup>135</sup> O Globo. MST troca reforma agrária por agronegócio. Available at: <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&pagina=&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=MST+troca+reforma+agr%C3%A1ria&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2006&mesSelecionado=&diaSelecionado=>

an increase in salaries, we have an increase in employment.<sup>136</sup> (Interview to TV Program ‘Roda Viva’, 2005)

Brazil, instead of unemployment, started finally to initiate a new cycle of new hires, creating, only in 2004, almost 2 million new formal employments, what did not happen for over 10 years. Meanwhile, our exports continued to beat record after record.<sup>137</sup> (Broadcasted speech about the goals for 2005, in 2005)

As previously addressed, ‘exports’ and ‘employment’ are signifiers constantly articulated in relation to the new middle class and agrobusiness. In the discourses of Lula, above, ‘Record’, a new positive idea is linked to the categories, part of an optimistic Brazil with unprecedented exports and consumption. These ideas were also widely disseminated by the largest media vehicles. In figure 3.2c, the publication celebrates the intensive growth in consumption of the Brazilian ‘Class C’: *‘the creation of more employments of up to three minimum wages and a gain in income of the poorer families brought an explosion of popular consumption’*. In figure 3.2d, the title of the article states that the growing consumption of the families is increasingly the ‘motor’ of the consumption of the families, which keeps growing despite the global economic crisis.



Figure 8: Popular consumption around US\$ 137 Billion in 2005.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup> “07-11-2005 - Entrevista Exclusiva Concedida Pelo Presidente Da Republica Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva Ao Programa Roda Viva Da Tv Cultura Sp — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/entrevistas/10-mandato/2005/07-11-2005-entrevista-exclusiva-concedida-pelo-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-aoprograma-roda-viva-da-tv-cultura-sp/view>.

<sup>137</sup> “02-01-2005 Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Em Cadeia de Rádio e Tv, Sobre as Realizações Do Governo Em 2004 e Perspectivas Para 2005 — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/10-mandato/2005/02-01-2005-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-as-realizacoes-do-governo-em-2004-e-perspectivas-para-2005/view>.

<sup>138</sup> O Globo. *Matutina, Primeira Página*, February 5, 2005, p.1. Available at: <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Consumo+popular&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2006>

A HORA DA VIRADA: Mesmo na crise, renda do trabalhador e crédito subiram

## Motor do crescimento há quase seis anos, consumo das famílias acelera

Gastos dos consumidores crescem 3,2% frente ao 2º trimestre de 2008

Henrique Gomes Batista  
e Cássia Almeida

• O principal propulsor do crescimento do PIB há mais uma vez, o consumo das famílias, que se amplia há 21 trimestres, ou quase seis anos, em relação ao mesmo período do ano anterior. E, dessa vez, o gatilho doméstico acelera. Entre abril e junho, o consumo das famílias subiu 3,2%. Com esse resultado, novamente tendência registrada desde o terceiro trimestre do ano passado — após da crise mundial — quando passou a apresentar sinais cada vez menores. De uma expansão de 7,2% entre julho e setembro de 2008, o consumo das famílias passou para uma alta de apenas 2,2% no último trimestre do ano passado e chegou a sua menor taxa nos três primeiros meses deste ano, de 1,3%.

**Consumidor já engrenou antes de desaquecer**  
Para Rafaela Fiala, gerente de Contas Trimestrais do IBGE, o que pesa mais no crescimento do PIB no último trimestre foi o consumo.  
— Os gastos das famílias foram afetados por vários fatores. O primeiro foi a situação do governo, com as medidas de desoneração para autônomos e eletrodomésticos. Além disso, houve a continuação do crescimento da massa salarial (jornais dos empregados) e do crédito (os trabalhadores) e do crédito para as pessoas físicas.



O VIGILANTE Alex Goulart faz compras num supermercado. "Faltam, pode manter o padrão de vida"

Na comparação com o primeiro trimestre deste ano, há série caso ajuste sazonal, o consumo das famílias avançou 2,1% entre abril e junho. Alexandre Maia, economista-chefe da GDP Asset, afirma que isso demonstra o consumo das famílias espelha a confiança no mercado de trabalho e no crédito, cuja retomada foi puxada pelos bancos públicos.  
— A expansão da renda também ajuda e o mercado doméstico tem tudo para acelerar daqui para frente.

Se o consumidor nunca se retirou — sem nunca se agredir e diante de perspectivas muito ruins para o emprego —, agora o tempo parece ter sido apertado de vez. O vigilante Alex Goulart apresenta os produtos básicos para renovar cozinha e sala. Há três meses, começou de novo. Segundo ele, a crise foi motivo de preocupação apenas nos primeiros meses.  
— A crise foi mais cruel para quem trabalha na indústria, o que não é o caso de ninguém na minha família. Faltam, mas podemos manter o padrão de vida e ainda aprender os preços para fazer compras — afirma Alex, de 38 anos, que é casado e tem três filhos.

Além de evitar seguradoras, o emprego, os consumidores aproveitaram a redução no imposto sobre Produtos Industrializados (PI), promovida pelo governo como medida anticrisis. Segundo especialistas, o corte no IPI para eletrodomésticos tem um impacto mais amplo que a redução do imposto para carros, que beneficia mais a classe média. ■

**Figure 9: The motor of growth since almost six years, the consumption of the families accelerates.<sup>139</sup>**

The nodal point of ‘exceptional performance’ excludes those portrayed as underachievers or moaners, a posture constantly attributed to the landless. As I referred in section 2.3, in a speech in 2004 Lula da Silva argued that “*The land reform will not be made by spouting*”, and that he would not accept threats from the landless.<sup>140</sup> In addition, he affirmed that “*In Brazil, some people wake up and go to sleep hoping for things to go wrong*” (Illustrated by figure by figure 3). In this talk, Lula associates the Landless Movement with negative signifiers such as ‘pessimism’, ‘violence’, ‘barbarism’. These are clearly opposed to those associated with the middle class and the agrobusiness with ‘growth’, ‘record’, and ‘exceptional performance’.

### 3. Exceptional performance.

The third constant association found in this discourse analysis was the statement of the new middle class and of the agrobusiness as ‘exceptionally’ successful, a view widespread in media vehicles.

<sup>139</sup> O Globo. Motor do Crescimento a quase 6 anos, consumo das famílias acelera. *Matutina, Economia*, p.24.

Available at:

<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=consumo+das+fam%C3%ADlias+acelera&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2009>

<sup>140</sup> O Globo. Lula: Reforma Agrária não vai ser feita na grito. *Matutina, O país*, p. 5. Available at:

<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+MST+Critica&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2004&economia=on&pais=on&rio=on&primeirapagina=on&segundapagina=on>.

For instance, a publication from 2007 (Figure 3.2d) describes that despite of the economic crisis in the United States, the Agrobusiness predicts another year of success. The piece states that “*the countryside is celebrating*” and that agrobusiness producers are optimistic despite of the crisis.



Figure 10: New year of success<sup>141</sup>

In another piece, from 2008, the publication states that the ongoing global food crisis can consolidate Brazil as the ‘World’s Barn’: “*The food crisis that has brought concern to the world is proving to be a good opportunity for the growth of Brazilian agribusiness.*”<sup>142</sup>

Figure 3.2d, in the previous section, shows an article from 2009 stating that the expenses of consumers of Class C have increased in the past year, despite of the global economic crisis and expectations of recession. The piece narrates that the ‘domestic market’ has all needed to accelerate from then on. In another piece, from the same year, the publication states that the consumption of

<sup>141</sup> O Globo, Agronegócio prevê novo ano de crescimento. *Matutina, Economia*, p. 23. Available at: <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Agroneg%C3%B3cio+prev%C3%AA+nov+ano+de+sucesso&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&noSelecionado=2009>

<sup>142</sup> “G1 > Economia e Negócios - NOTÍCIAS - Crise de Alimentos Fará Do Brasil ‘Celeiro Do Mundo’, Avaliam Especialistas.” Accessed May 10, 2021. [https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia\\_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356-00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.htm](https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356-00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.htm)

armored cars has increased after the 2008's economic crisis, increasing by 36% due to the consumption desire of the economic crises.

The signifier of 'exceptionalism' excludes those associated with preventing the country from success or for achieving its 'manifest destiny'. These are therefore associated with 'delay' and 'barbarism'. For instance, these are the signifier associated to the Landless in another situation, in 2009, Lula condemned one of MST's protests, accusing it of violence and vandalism: *"I believe that everyone in this country already learned that it has laws, a constitution. Whoever is inside the law can do anything, whoever is not will pay a price for breaking it"*.<sup>143</sup>

The analysis of discourses in this period reveals how a *process of linking* has created associated ideas between the new middle class and the agrobusiness in Brazil. This equivalence chain of a series of nodal points approximating middle class and agrobusiness attributed stability to this discursive articulation. Similar positive signifiers associate the two in an image of progress and optimism, mainly in the three central aspects explored above. These perspectives, aligned with an agro-hegemonic project, were adopted by President Lula da Silva, and replicated by large communication vehicles. They instrumentalized the identity of the new middle class by using it in support of a project previously condemned by the Worker's Party: the agrobusiness and the land concentration regime.

### 3.3 Self, Other and land

Hansen argues that the construction of identity is highly structured but inherently unstable:

Seeing identity as built through processes of linking and differentiation shows the possibility for destabilization: the link between some of the 'positive signs might become unstable; or a negatively

---

<sup>143</sup> Política. "Lula critica ação do MST em SP e diz que país tem 'lei' para punir culpados." Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2009/10/09/lula-critica-acao-do-mst-e-diz-que-pais-tem-lei-para-punir-os-culpados.htm>.

valued term of one discourse might be constructed as positive within another discourse, making the clear attribution of inferior or superior value to signs more complicated.<sup>144</sup>

This assumption better translates the relation between the Worker's Party, the movements for land reform and agrobusiness. As I narrated on the previous chapter, the early identity of the Worker's Party was associated with Land Reform as opposed to the Agrobusiness. Once in power after building a so-called moderate image, the Party assumed an antagonistic identity, incompatible with land reform: one in defense of the agrobusiness project. While the new middle class – allegedly half of the Brazilian population – had its identity incorporated to the agrobusiness self to create stability, the Landless became 'the other'. As I contextualized in relation to the Chinese-led commodity boom, the expansion of this ideological hegemony was coupled with a successful accumulation strategy, in which the country's economy became largely dependent on the exportation of commodities.

The material gains of the previous poor – the new middle class – and of the agrobusiness excluded economically and ideologically movements for land reform – as it promoted land concentration and the criminalization of the landless. This excluding mediatic representation was denounced by the movement on several occasions, for instance when condemning its representation on the largest news program (Jornal Nacional) in one of the protests of the national day for Land Reform

To this end, the images and words are articulated to convey to the viewer the idea that its activists are responsible for all the fear that surrounds Pará. Right at the opening, the darkened background behind the presenter shows the shadow of three peasants carrying work tools in threatening positions, such as destroying the fence carefully lit by the broadcaster's art department... At no time are MST leaders heard, which goes against Globo's own journalism manual.<sup>145</sup>

As I have argued over this chapter, the changes in the positions of the Worker's Party and Lula da Silva were not towards moderation, but instead incorporated into the hegemonic project, upholding

---

<sup>144</sup> Hansen, p.18

<sup>145</sup> MST. "Nova onda de criminalização do MST," May 6, 2008. <https://mst.org.br/2008/05/06/nova-onda-de-criminalizacao-do-mst/>.

a structure of land concentration socially and economically incompatible to its early land reform agenda. In this context, as I explained in this section, MST became ‘the other’: violent, pessimist, backward, a threat to the agrobusiness and, consequently, to the new middle class. This ‘other’ appears in relation to a ‘self’, whose identity was crafted in a discursive nodal point to assure a certain degree of stability – this was the new middle class, incorporated into the agrobusiness project. While the advancement of popular demands during Lula’s government are commonly used as examples of social progress, I defend that these were still compatible with the hegemonic character of agrobusiness. Hegemonic projects are only sustainable through their expansion, therefore allowing a certain degree of flexibility towards popular demands – yet restricting the advancement of structural changes.

## Conclusion

Drawing on ideological and economic political Theories of Hegemony, derived from the seminal work of Antonio Gramsci, this thesis has analyzed the agrobusiness' hegemonic project during the years of the Lula Government in opposition to discourses on land reform. I explored the consolidation of the agrobusiness over the 20th Century, looking at its roots on oligarchic rural elites and its development to the present agro-parliamentary hegemony. Drawing on the Post-structuralist perspective of Laclau and Mouffe and neo-Gramscian works such as from Crehan and Jessop, I advanced that the agrobusiness comprises a hegemonic class: it exercises domination not merely by economy or coercion, but by ideologically elaborating a collective will. Grounded on the whole sphere of State-Civil society relations, the agrobusiness political domination takes place for instance with the Agricultural Parliamentary Front and by the control of media vehicles. In the context of the hegemonic consolidation of the Brazilian agrobusiness, Lula da Silva was elected the president of Brazil in 2002. Preceding his election, Lula had adopted a moderate tone and a posture of class conciliation – but the defense of anti-agrobusiness and pro-land reform movements were still present in his rhetoric as an elected president.

In this thesis, I attempted to defend that previous studies overlooked Lula's moderation concerning the land question: by analyzing discursive processes of linking and differentiation, I argue that during Lula's government there was indeed the articulation of an agro-hegemonic self in opposition to the landless other. In my research, therefore, I point to what I consider the 'missing-link in providing stability to Lula's identity shift: the new middle class. This social stratum refers to the previously poor that emerged economically due to Lula's economic policies and the global context of a Chinese-led demand for commodities – the 'Commodity Boom'. Beyond the promising economic context, the new middle class had its identity discursively articulated towards

consumption and employment. The approximation between the new middle class and the agrobusiness through a chain of equivalence brings stability to the hegemonic project of the agrobusiness, in which Lula da Silva was elected with antagonistic discourses. This articulation happened mainly by the reinforcement of three nodal points: first by signifiers around the nodal point ‘growth’, second by articulating the nodal point of a ‘record’ concerning both agrobusiness and the middle class, third by stating a view of ‘exceptional performance’, of both the middle class and the agrobusiness. In this context, Brazil was claimed to become ‘The World’s Barn’ and ‘The country of the middle class’.

One important aspect that I managed to briefly analyze is the articulation of land reform movements – mainly the Landless Workers Movements (MST) as the ‘other’, for defending a land reform project incompatible with the agrobusiness project. These groups were vital in the support for Lula da Silva during his 2002 presidential campaign, but, while the ‘new middle class’ enlarged and was progressively associated with the agrobusiness, the land reform movements became ‘the other’ - a pessimistic and retrograde group in comparison to the optimistic and progressive middle class. While previously to his election the discourse of Lula da Silva was stable because of the articulation between economic redistribution and land reform, the stability between 2003-2010 was achieved by the incorporation of the new middle class as a nodal point for the identity of the agrobusiness project.

Being limited by length and time, this research could not explore in-depth relevant aspects of the period. For instance, the Chinese-led Commodity Boom and the issue of land grabbing, matters merely touched upon in my second and third chapters. Moreover, I believe that the struggle of the Landless Movement and their ‘otherization’, as well as their mobilization and international projection, are remarkable research areas that could not be covered by this research.

Despite these limitations, I believe that this research contributed to studies on the Land Question in Brazil and Latin America, studies on the Latin American Pink Tide, and the employment of critical theories to study the region. Although offering a comprehensive analytical capacity, neo-Gramscian theories remain overlooked among the International Relations scholars of the region. Therefore, with this research, I hope to be part of a new generation of studies on Latin America shedding new light on this Region's society, economy, and politics.

## Bibliography

01-01-2007 - Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Na Cerimônia de Posse — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/2o-mandato/2007/01-01-2007-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cerimonia-de-posse/view>.

02-01-2005 Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Em Cadeia de Rádio e Tv, Sobre as Realizações Do Governo Em 2004 e Perspectivas Para 2005 — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/1o-mandato/2005/02-01-2005-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-as-realizacoes-do-governo-em-2004-e-perspectivas-para-2005/view>.

07-11-2005 - Entrevista Exclusiva Concedida Pelo Presidente Da Republica Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva Ao Programa Roda Viva Da Tv Cultura Sp — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/entrevistas/1o-mandato/2005/07-11-2005-entrevista-exclusiva-concedida-pelo-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-ao-programa-roda-viva-da-tv-cultura-sp/view>.

16-01-2006-Pronunciamento à Nação Do Presidente Da República, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva, Em Cadeia de Rádio e TV, Sobre o Pagamento Da Dívida Com o FMI — Biblioteca.” Accessed May 11, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/1o-mandato/2006/16-01-2006-pronunciamento-a-nacao-do-presidente-da-republica-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-em-cadeia-de-radio-e-tv-sobre-o-pagamento-da-divida-com-o-fmi-1/view>.

Abílio, Ludmila Costhek. “A ‘NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA’ VAI AO PARAÍSO?,” n.d., 14.

Amann, Edmund. Baer, Werner. The Macroeconomic Record of the Lula Administration, the Roots of Brazil’s Inequality and attempts to overcome them. In Brazil under Lula Economy, Politics, and Society under the Worker-President. Ed. Joseph L. Love and Werner Baer. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2009).

Biblioteca. “biblioteca\_interna\_ex.” Accessed March 31, 2021. <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva>.

Brazil, Lula, and Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, eds. *Discursos selecionados do Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva*. Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2008.

Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+Sem+terra&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000>.

Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+Sem+terra&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000>.

- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 23, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+Sem+terra&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 23, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+Sem+terra&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 26, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=agroneg%C3%B3cio&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=1990&anoSelecionado=1994>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 26, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=agroneg%C3%B3cio&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2001>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 26, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=agroneg%C3%B3cio&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=1990&anoSelecionado=1994>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed April 26, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=agroneg%C3%B3cio&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2001>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed May 10, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=Lula+MST+Critica&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2004&economia=on&pais=on&rio=on&primeirapagina=on&segundapagina=on>.
- Busca | Acervo O Globo.” Accessed May 11, 2021.  
<https://acervo.oglobo.globo.com/busca/?tipoConteudo=pagina&ordenacaoData=relevancia&allwords=menos+pobres+e+mais+divergencias&anyword=&noword=&exactword=&decadaSelecionada=2000&anoSelecionado=2008>.
- Carter, Miguel, ed. *Combatendo a desigualdade social: o MST e a reforma agrária no Brasil*. 1a. ed. São Paulo, SP : [Brasília, Brazil] : [Oxford, England]: Editora UNESP ; NEAD, Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário ; Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford, 2010.
- Chã, Ana Manuela de Jesus [UNESP. “Agronegócio e indústria cultural: estratégias das empresas para a construção da hegemonia,” March 24, 2016. <https://repositorio.unesp.br/handle/11449/144217>.
- Esteves, Anderson Alves. “A ideologia da ‘classe C’ como a classe média brasileira.” *Intuitio* 8, no. 1 (July 31, 2015): 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1983-4012.2015.1.16765>.
- Folha Online - Brasil - Leia Íntegra Da Carta de Lula Para Acalmar o Mercado Financeiro - 24/06/2002.” Accessed April 21, 2021.  
<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fofha/brasil/ult96u33908.shtml>.

- Fonseca, Ana Silvia, Félix Pablo Friggeri, Sonia Álvarez Leguizamón, Norma Naharro, Neyla Graciela Pardo Abril, Juan Ruiz Celis, Marcela Valencia Toro, and Victoria Inés Darling. “DA POBREZA À CLASSE C:: CONSTRUÇÃO IMAGINÁRIA DA NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA BRASILEIRA PELA FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO.” In *Pobreza En La Prensa Hegemónica de Colombia, Argentina y Brasil*, 239–76. Modos de Legitimación de La Desigualdad. CLACSO, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvnp0jj8.10>.
- FPA. “História da FPA » FPA.” Accessed April 20, 2021. <https://fpagropecuaria.org.br/historia-da-fpa/>.
- G1 > Economia e Negócios - NOTÍCIAS - Crise de Alimentos Fará Do Brasil ‘Celeiro Do Mundo’, avaliam Especialistas.” Accessed May 10, 2021. [https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia\\_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356,00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.html](https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356,00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.html).
- G1 > Economia e Negócios - NOTÍCIAS - Crise de Alimentos Fará Do Brasil ‘Celeiro Do Mundo’, Avaliam Especialistas.” Accessed May 10, 2021. [https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia\\_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356,00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.html](https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Economia_Negocios/0,,MUL464557-9356,00-CRISE+DE+ALIMENTOS+FARA+DO+BRASIL+CELEIRO+DO+MUNDO+AVALIAM+ESPECIALISTAS.html).
- G1 > Edição São Paulo - NOTÍCIAS - Classe Média Compra Carro Blindado Em Até 36 Vezes, e Produção Bate Recorde.” Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/SaoPaulo/0,,MUL1128091-5605,00-CLASSE+MEDIA+COMPRA+CARRO+BLINDADO+EM+ATE+VEZES+E+PRODUCAO+BATE+RECORDE.html>.
- G1 > Edição São Paulo - NOTÍCIAS - Classe Média Compra Carro Blindado Em Até 36 Vezes, e Produção Bate Recorde.” Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://g1.globo.com/Noticias/SaoPaulo/0,,MUL1128091-5605,00-CLASSE+MEDIA+COMPRA+CARRO+BLINDADO+EM+ATE+VEZES+E+PRODUCAO+BATE+RECORDE.html>.
- Gomes, Marcelo Bolshaw. “A imagem Pública de Lula e Eleições Presidenciais Brasileiras (1989/2002),” n.d., 29.
- Hall, Stuart, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. Comedia. London ; New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Hansen, Lene. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. The New International Relations. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Howarth, David R., and Jacob Torfing, eds. *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy, and Governance*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Jørgensen, Marianne and Louise Phillips. Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory In: *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. (London; Thousand Oaks [Calif.: SAGE, 2002)

- Kirby, Peadar. "Probing the Significance of Latin America's 'Pink Tide,'" ed. Eduardo Silva et al., *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe / European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 89 (2010): 127–33.
- Klein, Charles H., Sean T. Mitchell, and Benjamin Junge. "Naming Brazil's Previously Poor: 'New Middle Class' as an Economic, Political, and Experiential Category." *Economic Anthropology* 5, no. 1 (2018): 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12104>.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. London ; New York: Verso, 2001.
- Mancano Fernandes, Bernardo, Clifford Andrew Welch, and Elienai Constantino Goncalves. *Land Governance in Brazil: A Geo-Historical Review of Land Governance in Brazil*. Framing the Debate Series 2. Rome: International Land Coalition Secretariat, 2012.
- Morton, Adam David. *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy*. London ; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007.
- Mouffe, Chantal, ed. *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
- NCM\_Apresentação\_fim.Pdf." Accessed May 4, 2021. [https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM\\_Apresenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_fim.pdf](https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM_Apresenta%C3%A7%C3%A3o_fim.pdf).
- NCM\_Pesquisa\_FORMATADA\_Sumario.Pdf." Accessed April 28, 2021. [https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM\\_Pesquisa\\_FORMATADA\\_Sumario.pdf](https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010/NCM_Pesquisa_FORMATADA_Sumario.pdf).
- NMC\_Research\_FGV\_CPS\_Neri\_FORMAT\_ENG\_FIM\_apres\_SITE.Pdf." Accessed May 10, 2021. [https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010\\_eng/NMC\\_Research\\_FGV\\_CPS\\_Neri\\_FORMAT\\_ENG\\_FIM\\_apres\\_SITE.pdf](https://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/ncm2010_eng/NMC_Research_FGV_CPS_Neri_FORMAT_ENG_FIM_apres_SITE.pdf).
- O Globo. "Lula diz que usineiros estão virando heróis nacionais," March 20, 2007. <https://oglobo.globo.com/economia/lula-diz-que-usineiros-estao-virando-herois-nacionais-4207718>.
- Política. "Lula critica ação do MST em SP e diz que país tem 'lei' para punir culpados." Accessed May 10, 2021. <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2009/10/09/lula-critica-acao-do-mst-e-diz-que-pais-tem-lei-para-punir-os-culpados.htm>.
- Puzone, Vladimir, and Luis Felipe Miguel. *The Brazilian Left in the 21st Century: Conflict and Conciliation in Peripheral Capitalism*. Springer, 2019.
- PWC. "Agribusiness in Brazil: an overview." Available at: <https://www.pwc.com.br/pt/publicacoes/setores-atividade/assets/agribusiness/2013/pwc-agribusiness-brazil-overview-13.pdf>
- Quadros, Waldir, Davi Antunes, and Denis Gimenez. "O BRASIL E A NOVA CLASSE MÉDIA DOS ANOS 2000." MPRA Paper, October 2012. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/48927/>.
- Reyes, Oscar. *New Labour's Politics of the Hard-working Family*. In: *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy, and Governance*. Howarth, David R., and Jacob Torfing, eds. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

- Scolese, Eduardo. “De FHC a Lula: manipulações, números, conceitos e promessas de reforma agrária.” *Terra Livre* 2, no. 23 (August 10, 2015): 123–38.
- Silva, José Francisco Graziano da. *A Nova Dinâmica Da Agricultura Brasileira*. Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Instituto de Economia, 1996.
- Souza, Jessé, and Brand Arenari. *Os batalhadores brasileiros: nova classe média ou nova classe trabalhadora?* 2nd. rev. ed. Humanitas. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2012.
- Spalding, Rose ‘Domestic Loops and Deleveraging Hooks: Transnational Social Movements and the Politics of Scale Shift’. in: *Movements Dynamics: New Perspectives on Theory and Research from Latin America*. (San Diego: Ashgate, 2015).
- VEJA. “Lula encerra mandato com aprovação de 83%, afirma Ibope.” Accessed April 23, 2021. <https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/lula-encerra-mandato-com-aprovacao-de-83-afirma-ibope/>.
- Ystanes, Margit, and Iselin Åsedotter Strønen, eds. *The Social Life of Economic Inequalities in Contemporary Latin America*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61536-3>.