

Research Article

Emil A. Sobottka*

New Wine in Old Wineskins? Incomplete Democratization in Brazil During the First Pink Tide

<https://doi.org/10.1515/humaff-2023-0010>

Received January 17, 2023; revised March 7, 2023; accepted March 10, 2023

Abstract: During the last decades in Brazil, two societal projects strived for hegemony: a democratic and participatory project disputed against an alliance of the emerging bourgeoisie with traditional political forces. The PT-led government, driven by Lula da Silva (2003–2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), representative of the democratic and participatory line, implemented many innovative policies concerning notably social citizenship rights and industrialization. Perhaps, like many other Latin American countries during the first pink tide, it was unsuccessful in transforming the old economic, political, and social frameworks to provide a suitable environment for new politics. The text examines this period, emphasizing improvements in political participation, inclusive social policies, and the relationship between the government and social movements, as well as some flaws that hastened its demise.

Keywords: Brazil, political participation, social movements, social policies, Workers Party

1 Latin America Between Colonialism, Imperialism, and Dependence

To analyze the period of progressive and democratic government between 2003 and 2016 under the leadership of the Workers' Party (PT) in Brazil as part of the *pink tide* it is important to remember how the country fits into the political-territorial space called Latin America. The term Latin America is a historical construct arising from geopolitical disputes in the transition from European colonialism to European and

*Corresponding author: Emil A. Sobottka, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Rua Prof. Fitzgerald, 192 – Petrópolis 90470-160, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil, E-mail: esobottka@pucrs.br

US-American imperialism over most of the territory known as America. It expresses a designation for the territories sought by France in its dispute with Great Britain. Publicly it was presented as protection against “the double inundation of the Germans or the Anglo-Saxons and the Slavs” (Chevalier, 1853, p. 9), but Napoleon the 3rd was clearer in writing that France would be “creating immense markets for our commerce and in procuring the raw materials essential to our industry” (Phelan, 1968, p. 285).

France could not compete with the beginning economic domination of the USA, and texts such as José Martí’s *Buenos y malos americanos* and *Nuestra América* (Martí, 2005, p. 14–17; 31–39) reflect the beginnings of US imperialism. The Latin American dependency school (Kay, 1989) has underlined how capitalism has partially transformed the economy in this area of America through strong external intervention. However, it was unable to replace the existing social structures that arose from extractive economies and vast plantations specializing in commodities, founded on slavery and exploitation of indigenous populations. This externally induced modernization reinforced the hierarchical structures of these societies. The state of “underdeveloped” societies is attributable to their dependence on and exploitation by capitalism, not to purported historical backwardness (Gunder Frank, 1966).

It was this insertion as dependent and tutored countries, accepted and cultivated by dominant groups within the respective countries, that became the main, even if not the only, limiter of what the progressive and democratic governments of the beginning of the twenty first century could accomplish of their comprehensive projects of social transformation during the first *pink tide*. After the effervescence of mobilizations of social movements and their organizations in the 1980s, two projects of society were confronting each other in Brazil: a democratic and participatory project that disputed hegemony with an alliance of the emerging bourgeoisie with traditional political forces. It was this bourgeois-conservative alliance that elected Collor de Mello and Fernando Henrique Cardoso and supported their neoliberal governments.

The election of a PT-led government was the victory of a pragmatic alliance of political forces around the democratic participatory project alternative to the neoliberal-conservative one. The present text focuses on the protagonism of PT in this alliance. It briefly recalls three basic principles PT had placed as distinctive of its administrations: repoliticization of politics, inversion of priorities in public policies, ethical values against corruption. Then it discusses how political participation and assistance programs have translated the first two principles, indicates how the third principle about ethics has ended up being neglected, and analyzes the party’s new relationship with social movements and its challenges. The text concludes by indicating that in Brazil, the old social structures remained largely in place and precipitated the crisis of the first *pink tide*. So the progressive project ended as a new good wine put back into old wineskins.

2 The PT Way of Governing and the Repoliticization of Public Policies

Brazil follows many cycles that Latin American countries go through, including the pink tide at the beginning of the twenty first century. But specific features of the governments led by the PT deeply marked the pink wave in Brazil. Some will be discussed here. The first attitude was to unmask the discourse that decisions about state and government activities were only technical ones. The objective was to show that public policies are always political decisions, even when they need good technical foundation. This emphasis was present in the PT since the early 1990s and is part of the so-called PT Way of Governing (Bittar, 1992). Three principles characterize this repoliticization of politics: inversion of priorities as a way to redistribute the socially generated wealth (s. PT, 1980), the establishment of ethical values in public administration, and a new relationship between state and society, broadening participation in political decisions.

It is a synthesis of practices already adopted in the PT-led municipalities, to orient new administrations. Internally it was controversial, since it would be close to a social democracy way of governing and silent on alternatives for a transition to socialism, which had been part of the party program. Political opposition and many opinion-makers sought to discredit these principles with arguments such as fear of neglect of the wealthier parts of the cities or a supposed inability of ordinary citizens to decide on complex “technical” issues such as public budgets.

The inversion of priorities indicated that the municipal government should break with the norm of prioritizing the wealthier areas of cities while ignoring the poorest areas. Priority would be given to investing public resources based on comparative needs: where there was a greater need and a larger population, more resources should be distributed. The execution of this idea gave rise to the Participatory Budget, in which communities decided the priorities for various investments in local assemblies.

The PT-led government at the national level implemented many social policies to minimize poverty and inequality. Large investments were made in emergency assistance and combating hunger, in the form of direct cash transfer programs. The urgency of the needs was a result of the failure of previous neoliberal policies. The problem was that sometimes this assistance overlapped with the priorities of the electoral base of PT, which had a program to strengthen universal citizenship rights policies (Filgueiras & Souki, 2017).

The repoliticization strategy of the new government did not only involve fighting hunger, prioritizing health care, social assistance, and education, but also changing economic priorities, regulating labor relations and consumption, and preservation of

natural and cultural heritage. It also involved redirecting financial policy to democratize it. Politicization also brought taboo subjects like sexuality and human reproduction into the public sphere, making policy decisions, in general, more participatory. The state gradually stopped being at the service of neoliberal policies and acquired again the sense of aggregator of the collective demands, of mediator in social conflicts, of guarantor of rights, and also of the supervisor of the duties of all social groups with the collectivity.

3 Participatory Policies: Participatory Budgeting, Public Policy Councils and Thematic Conferences

The mobilizations carried out during the re-democratization and the elaboration of a new constitution in the 1980s legitimized the participation and social control of policies by citizens in their roles as workers, consumers, taxpayers, public servants, or beneficiaries of public policies. A good part of these provisions, however, depended on political force and also on complementary legislation to become effective.

The PT had already included this demand from the social movements in its program. In 1982 it put as the slogan of its electoral campaign “govern with popular participation and inversion of priorities”. These two ideas became fixed as principles – or as ideological core – of the party. The theme of participation was adapted to the political challenges of different situations. In the beginning the idea of direct and broad participation in political decisions prevailed, sometimes bordering on the idea of the associated free citizens of the socialist tradition. Over the years there was a moderation and gradual acceptance of institutional mediation, moving “from the radical ideal of total delegation of power to social movements to a gradual consolidation of the function of supervision, control, and elaboration of public policies in shared spaces between government and civil society” (Bezerra, 2019).

Participatory Budgeting expresses well this politicization of public issues through citizen participation. The city of Porto Alegre is where it has grown and where it became well-known. It was implemented there in 1989 and has since spread widely and been continually updated. Its legitimacy and mobilizing force depended on the commitment of the governor to respect priority indications, transforming them into public policy. It was the policy that took further the idea of political participation as deliberation, as a sharing of power, claimed for years by social movements that wanted to dispute the influence on public policies with the country’s traditional elites.

In addition to Participatory Budgeting, other forms of participation have thrived. One of them was the Public Policy Council (Almeida & Tatagiba, 2012). The initial conception was that of a government through popular councils. The references were social movements, basic ecclesial communities, unions, and some public policy councils already existing in the state structure in Brazil. But there were also mentions of experiences with councils in socialist revolutions and reflections by Antonio Gramsci. Public Policy Councils are a form of shared participation between representatives of the respective government, civil society entities, related service providers, users, and other participants, depending on the area in which the council operates. The first council was created in Brazil's health sector as early as 1937. During the PT-led administrations, their implementation was expanded, and they began to have a prominent place in public management (Cortes & Gugliano, 2010). Some, such as that of health, have decision-making power in the co-management mode, while others are only advisory. But all have social control as part of their attributions. By the end of the PT-led governments, it was estimated that there were a little more than 50 organized areas with more than 40,000 councils throughout Brazil. The incentive for the creation and expansion of these councils, even in non-mandatory areas, was done through the linking of federal funds (Arretche, 2015). With this, they sought to put into practice the concept of participatory public policy, and at the same time meet the demands of social movements and civil organizations supporting a progressive policy.

Another space for participation received a prominent place: the so-called Thematic Conferences. Thematic Conferences are structured public places for debate on broad public policy issues. They are thematically organized, with government and civil society representatives, held in accordance with the bottom-up principle. The cycle of discussions over preferred local policies begins in municipalities – or, in certain situations, in neighborhoods within bigger municipalities. State conferences next, followed by a national conference attended by delegations from the preceding levels.

There are records of national conferences in education since 1927, but the first formalization as part of political institutions occurred in the health sector in 1937, during Getúlio Vargas' regime of exception. They were included in the 1988 Federal Constitution and have grown in popularity since then. The Conferences became a symbol of participatory democracy in the country during PT-led administrations. Around 40 areas of public policy had their guidelines debated in conferences, some with more than one complete cycle: from the municipal to the federal level. They mobilized thousands of people and social movements, giving them the opportunity to influence the configuration of particular policies and to place new themes in the Brazilian political debate. The most structured and politically influential conferences are the healthy ones. From them emerged the claim for the creation

of the Unified Health System (SUS), which guarantees public, free, and non-contributory health care for every person in the Brazilian territory. The main organization behind this conference is the Sanitarist Movement, which emerged in the 1920s when campaigns for social hygiene and modernization were carried out in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The Council for Economic and Social Development was created in 2003 to be an advisory body to the Presidency of the Republic. Its objective was to assess and produce normative indications, policy proposals, and procedural agreements on national development. This council used a methodology they called the social concertation process, bringing together representatives from the most different social groupings and classes, with members freely chosen by the government. This was perhaps one of the initiatives that best reflected the conciliatory strategy adopted by Lula da Silva already before his election. His assessment was that governability would only be assured if he also had the support of broad sectors of the dominant classes – the financial market, industry and commerce, and large rural producers. A report of 2018, subsequent to the parliamentary coup and PT-led administrations, is quite optimistic about the Council's impact.¹ This contrasts with academic evaluations, which attest to a modest capacity to articulate and influence public policies (Santos & Gugliano, 2015).

The multiplicity of initiatives summarized here reveals the importance given to political participation in the PT-led governments. The degree of success and impact was very diverse and always depended on multiple factors. But it reveals how seriously the PT took this principle inscribed in its program, and how it tried to meet the demands of social movements and a democratically minded part of civil society.

4 Social Policies: Social Justice, Citizenship Rights or Assistance?

Alongside the multiple forms of political participation, income support programs were expanded enormously during the PT-led governments at the national level. In the campaign, Lula proposed a campaign to fight hunger, massively supported by civil society organizations. The pledge was to provide everyone with at least three meals a day and to ensure that no one went to bed hungry. Income support programs for the very impoverished elderly and persons who are permanently unable to work, among other things, were based on citizenship rights and were guaranteed by the

¹ See Padilha: Conselho gerou 65 ações de governo e melhorou ambiente de negócios [28.11.2018] <<http://www.cdes.gov.br/Plone/noticias/2018/11/padilha-conselhao-gerou-65-aco-es-de-governo-e-melhorou-ambiente-de-negocios>> Access: 01.03.2023.

constitution. But there was a lack of economic assistance for people in extreme poverty in general. Unemployment insurance assists for three to four months, making prolonged unemployment a fast track to extreme poverty.

The most important policy to combat hunger and extreme poverty was the Bolsa Familia Program (BFP), a cash transfer similar to what was recommended by the World Bank. It provided financial aid, primarily to women who headed poor households, and its amount depended on the already available per capita income. It also included some conditionalities such as regular school attendance by school-age children, and preventive health programs for women, among others. One emphasis of the BFP was to bring beneficiary people closer to other social programs, to support them in developing their capacities and regaining social and economic autonomy (Rinaldi, 2022).

The BFP had two contentious issues: being a focalized policy and the issue of conditionalities. In the PT Way of Governing conception, social justice was a priority. Social justice was always connected to citizenship rights, provided for in the Constitution – and associated with structural reforms such as agrarian, urban, tax, and financial market reforms, areas considered the ultimate sources of inequality. Social movements and popular organizations defended the universality of income transfer through a basic income program. This struggle of many years was trampled by internal pragmatism in the Lula da Silva government: The BFP was created exactly one day after the approval of the universal basic income (Silva, 2014). Yet, the universal basic income was never implemented. This was a clear expression of the shift in priorities: from universal rights to a focalized, i.e. a restrictive assistance policy (Monnerat et al., 2007; Sobottka, 2006). It was also a demonstration of the PT-internal strength of political pragmatism over established party principles crystallized in years of debate.

The conditionalities were a small set of requirements that families had to meet to continue in the program. Per capita income was the decisive indicator for entering the program. A substantive increase in it, for example, by acquiring a regular source of income, led to benefit ending. As the program wanted to break the cycle of poverty reproduction and develop skills for the autonomy of all family members through other public policies, there was a provision for mandatory activities. Not complying with them implied the risk of exclusion. The debate about these conditions focused on the possibility of tutelage and privacy violations. Given these dangers, it was assessed that the program would not encourage the autonomy sought Filgueiras and Souki (2017). Some studies claim that some level of autonomy was fulfilled, while others are more skeptical about it. In terms of the latter, the BFP was politically successful in broadening support among segments of the electorate and was also supportive of alleviating extreme poverty. However, it fell short of its objectives in terms of empowering beneficiaries to exit extreme poverty on their own and interrupting intergenerational reproduction (Monnerat et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2022).

5 Political Mistakes that Took the Charm out of Progressive Governments

The PT-led governments went “from heaven to hell” in a short time. Lula da Silva ended his second term with 83% approval and Dilma Rousseff had for a long time excellent approval levels in opinion polls. Even so, she was deposed by a parliamentary coup² when there was a dramatic drop in this public support. An analysis of this breakdown of institutionality is not possible here. But it is important to analyze some internal errors that helped create the political opportunity for the opponents of a democratic and participatory model of society to regain power.

Besides the Participatory Budgeting (PB) and the inversion of priorities in public investment, the PT-led administrations found ways to also serve the middle and dominant classes. This reflects changes in the party itself. While for a long time it had a very clear ideological definition, expressed in socialism as a final goal, gradually the initial clarity and radicalism gave way to a growing pragmatism. Besides waving socialism as a goal, the PT increasingly prioritized so-called governability – the ability not only to win elections, but to run a government with the political conditions to realize its priorities with stability. Even if it is controversial, if Brazil’s political-governmental structure is *sui generis* (Limongi, 2006), it imposes on the President the need for coalitions that frequently distance him from his party’s political program (Abranches, 1988). This prioritization marked preparations for the 2002 election campaign, in which Lula da Silva would be a candidate for the fourth time.

Two decisions reveal this pragmatism in favor of governability: the choice of a big businessman, affiliated with a liberal party, as the vice-presidential candidate, and the publication of the Letter to the Brazilian People,³ a manifesto in which Lula da Silva reassures mainly the agribusiness, the large transnational industry and financial market that radical transformations would not occur in his government. This letter can be perceived as a unilateral declaration of divorce with the most loyal and combative sectors of the PT’s base, which placed hope for a new society in the construction of the party and the conquest of power at the national level. Perhaps an

2 Formally it was an impeachment that was carried out within the legally prescribed procedures, with the final word given by parliament. Its basis, however, was illegal processes such as Operation Lava Jato, with covered support of the USA, falsified reports from the Court of Auditors (rectified and approved without reservation in 2022), and ostensive pressure from the army on the Supreme Court, among other illegalities. For this reason, from a democratic perspective, it is called a *parliamentary coup*.

3 See <https://fpabramo.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/cartaaopovobrasileiro.pdf> (access: 22 Dec. 2022).

interpretation of the letter as a betrayal of the party's historical foundation is not so far off the mark.

Electoral defeats of the PT and its allies are related to another rupture: the commitment to the priorities chosen in the PB processes. As the years went by, more and more activities planned by PB ceased to receive attention, demobilizing communities. Moreover, the PT made an ostensible *symbolic appropriation* of the PB as a brand of a single political party. In election campaigns, he claimed that only his re-election would ensure the continuity of the PB. The lack of commitment and the symbolic appropriation sharpened the opposition to the PB and were undoubtedly decisive factors for the obstacles that, as Olívio Dutra, its main creator, reports, were placed when trying to implement the PB at the Federal level as well (s. Hrubec & Sobottka, 2022). The PT had stopped treating the PB as a basic principle of democratic government and turned it into a simple strategic tool of management (Sobottka & Streck, 2014).

Among the principles that the PT propagated as one of the pillars of the PT Way of Governing was the establishment of ethical values in public administration, especially intolerance of corruption. The plurality of parties in Brazil, together with the presidential system, leads to constant difficulty for the Executive to achieve majorities in parliamentary votes. It is mitigated by the abundant distribution of positions of free nomination in exchange for support, but it is still an unstable system. It has become known in the academic literature as “coalitional presidentialism” although these were not formal coalitions as in parliamentary systems. This system attracts parliamentarians willing to exchange political support for jobs and money, regardless of the political orientation of the ruler. For more than three decades, this group has outperformed any political party.

The governments led by the PT had a very small parliamentary bench. As a consequence, they made use of this rented support – and provoked two crises. The first, known as “mensalão” (Miguel & Coutinho, 2007), exchanged parliamentary support for monthly payments. The breakdown of confidence that the PT would make ethically oriented public administrations created a feeling of betrayal of principles. The second was the publicizing of new episodes of corruption, especially in the management of state companies like Petrobras. With it, the disenchantment and revolt against the PT spread and created a political climate favorable to the rise of what was known as anti-petism. The coup that ousted Dilma Rousseff in 2016 was the coronation of the loss of political support to some extent driven by mistakes of the PT-led governments themselves.⁴

⁴ It is not up to this space to go into the issue of the lawfare that culminated in the imprisonment and subsequent acquittal of Lula da Silva, and the rise of a conservative movement, permeated with

6 The Difficult Relationship Between Government and Social Movements

Three major internal movements are often pointed out at the origin of the PT: the unions, the social movements, many of them influenced at the time by Liberation Theology, and intellectuals who were engaged in the re-democratization of the country. The fight for re-democratization after two decades of military rule was what brought these groups together in the formation of this party. The party has always had internal difficulties as a collection of quite divergent political forces. When forming supra-party electoral alliances, obviously the differences increase.

Beyond these more specific characteristics of the PT and its allies, in representative democracies, every political party must face constitutive tension. It needs to aggregate and propose to represent the desires and demands of a segment of the electorate but when it reaches positions of power it needs to make alliances that imply occasional support for policies that are divergent or even contrary to what its constituents expect. In executive positions, this tension is amplified considerably. In political parties with strong ties to organized segments, the tension between party and base becomes stronger and more explicit, thanks to the habit of public discussion of divergences.

Social movements and their organizations face the challenge of finding the right relationship with the party in which they place their trust. What is the appropriate measure of proximity, support, and “fidelity” without losing critical distance and autonomy? Social movements and their organizations fulfill similar political functions to parties, which partially places them in a situation of competitors. Both aggregate political demands and expectations, both politically orient their members and sympathizers, and both transform multiplicities of individuals into collective political actors. While both are in opposition, the possibility of dual affiliation mitigates this tension. But while social movements and their organizations have the vocation to mobilize demands in front of institutions, political parties have the vocation to recruit leaders to acquire access to deliberative and managerial functions in state institutions. So tensions between movements and parties are structurally programmed (Hochstetler, 2008).

Since the first municipal administrations, the PT-led governments’ relationship with social movements has been contentious. Some movements had a strong affiliation with the political party, and accepting the role of the critical voice of governments led by that party was a tough challenge. The Landless Rural Workers

fascist traits, that governed the country between 2018 and 2022, which relied strongly on the same rent-seeking parliamentarians involved in the two aforementioned crises.

Movement (MST) balanced this tension well (Bernardes, 2019). It cultivated a pragmatic relationship of support, interspersed with marches, protests, and demands in the face of the assessment that agrarian reform was not a priority in PT-led administrations. Meanwhile, as soon as the PT and its allies assumed executive administrations, they needed people to fill the many positions of free nomination, which traditionally serve to accommodate sympathizers and supporters of those who win elections. To occupy them, the people considered most capable and available were mostly also active in social movements (Silva & Oliveira, 2011). Removing them from the social movements and organizations in order to give them responsibilities as administrators contributed to the movement's demise. It also emphasized the movement's difficulty in exercising criticism, as some of their own members were now in positions of power.

The political party, to some extent, suffers similarly from a sense of emptiness. After a decade of municipal governments, the PT's evaluation in this sense was very clear: "In general, governments tend to empty the party. [...] Consequently, there is a reduction of political staff in the party leadership. The party is left without authoritative interlocutors to fulfill a role that is fundamental" (Bittar, 2003). Even so, one can also observe a movement in the other direction: studies show that while it held power, the PT had an influx of militants from social movements, but the bond that they established was weaker and the engagement of new members was very punctual (Amaral, 2013), not replacing the previous leaders to their satisfaction.

7 Pink Tide en Crisis in Brazil

There is a consensus in the specialized literature that the decline in commodity prices and the 2008 international economic crisis also provoked the domestic crisis in Latin American countries (Enríquez & Page, 2019). Thanks to a cycle of high commodity prices, some countries with progressive governments had for years resources for social policies. But the crisis changed this favorable conjuncture. The continuation of neoliberal policies and privatizations harmed those sectors of the economy that added value, strengthened reliance on sectors such as mining, extraction, and agribusiness, and internationalized the finance sector. There were few economic alternatives to compensate for these losses during the crisis, allowing political opposition to arise.

Mixed policies, with the increase of social inclusion policies, on the one hand, and the maintenance of inherited social and economic structures, on the other, proved to be fragile as soon as resources for social policies decreased. There was a disengagement of social movements, which saw their demands for structural reforms frustrated (Hochstetler, 2008, p. 34). Added to this was the ethical crisis,

which drove a decrease in support also from the middle sectors of society. Like other progressive governments in Latin America, the PT-led administrations did not dare to confront the agrarian elites by carrying out agrarian reform and redistributing the wealth extracted at the expense of nature and the environment. On the macroeconomic and structural level, they were a continuation of previous governments (Oliveira, 2020). André Singer, an economist with historical proximity to the PT, described this duality of governments as a *duality of souls*: one for the historically exploited and marginalized segments, and one to ensure the continuity of the capitalist system that generates inequality and poverty (Singer, 2010).

The international insertion of Latin American countries as commodity suppliers, reinforced during the neoliberal regime, led to the agricultural industry and extractivism becoming the mainstays of these governments. Similarly, the local and international rentier elites, supported by the institutions of the international financial system, managed to prevent the concentration of income from being overcome. High private and public indebtedness associated with high-interest rates make the financial system the mediator of the transfer to rentiers at home and abroad.⁵

By leaving untouched the structures that concentrate the collectively generated wealth, the policies of the reformist period prevented those elites from feeling the need to access the construction of a stable supra-class coalition, typical of the period of European social welfare regimes. They also prevented the large contingents living off their formal or informal labor from forming strong organizations capable of bringing about structural reforms that would democratize the economy and social relations. The dynamics of the relationship between the governments of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff with their original support base is almost paradigmatic in revealing how the timidity in making structural reforms and in reversing certain measures made by the neoliberal governments undermined their own support base.

The formation of a structurally hybrid government was evident in Lula da Silva's government: for the important areas of his government, he created a double structure, with one ministry occupied by representatives of the dominant sectors, and another to welcome the leaderships and claims of the party's historical base as well as the democratic field. It is in this duality that Singer (2010) sees the souls of the party. Even though the forums for the participation of organized civil society in Public Policy Councils and the intensification of National Conferences have been greatly expanded, this was not enough for there to be at least a reasonable balance in political power and the budget allocations of the ministries.

5 Of the R\$ 5174.9 billion budget in 2023, R\$ 2517.2 (48.6%) is reserved for interest on public debt. Planned investments make up only 3.2%. See: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/orcamento-da-uniao/raio-x-do-orcamento/2023/raio-x-do-orcamento-2023-ploa> (access: 22 Dec. 2022).

Thus it is not surprising that social movements and their organizations found it difficult to support the government when it needed it most. Hochstetler (2008) already detected this during Lula da Silva's second term: "Once Lula's unwillingness to steer a more radical course was clear, civil society and social movement organizations began to separate themselves from him and from the PT" she says. The dissatisfaction and alienation of social movements became evident after the 2013 demonstrations. The mobilizations began with demands such as better and more accessible public transportation, but "quickly expanded to a denunciation of a wide variety of issues, including the restructuring of public education, the state of health care, and government corruption" (Enríquez & Page, 2019). From them sprouted a movement of rejection of the PT, the anti-petism. The right-wing opposition knew how to take advantage of this wave, which culminated in the parliamentary coup of 2016.

The mobilization of the middle and wealthy classes of society added a feeling of nationalism and the fear of a supposed communist threat, giving rise to right-wing and far-right movements. The most ardent social movements, which have typically produced new repertoires to convey their demands, were caught off guard by the right's and the extreme right's new discursive configurations. They knew how to make political demands, but they couldn't formulate moral discourses or confront their opponents' double morality. Parliamentarians and businessmen among the coup leaders were infamous for their involvement in the same scandals that they now accused the PT of – and the movements didn't know how to unmask them.

Moreover, with social media, *platform capitalism* (Habermas, 2022) has created forums for direct communication that do not expand the public sphere and political participation as originally expected. Its algorithmic structuring has driven the formation of relatively closed private spheres of communication, sometimes called bubbles. These bubbles become redundant and do not foster public argumentation or a well-informed plurality of social worldviews. Add to this the promiscuous relationship between the platform providers and US security and foreign policy agencies. They have made the platforms not only powerful instruments of capitalist economic domination but also instruments of geopolitical domination over countries and populations in Latin America. The alliance with right-wing and extreme right-wing movements made the platforms one of the most powerful instruments of the ideological struggle to delegitimize progressive governments and to resurrect anti-communist and salvationist discourses in a populist or even messianic style.

The struggle against those different orders of domination, including foreign interventions, needs to be remade by the present generation. The return of a PT-led government in 2023 opens a second chance for at least some of the major structural problems to be finally overcome. Only new structures will prevent the progressive and democratic project from ending up out of character a second time. Only radical reforms can avoid that the reemerging hope in Latin America will be frustrated again, leaving behind the bitter taste, as of a new wine matured in old wineskins.

Research funding: Supported by National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), process nr. 307532/2019-4.

Declaration: All individuals listed as authors qualify as authors and have approved the submitted version. Their work is original and is not under consideration by any other journal. They have permission to reproduce any previously published material.

References

- Abranches, S. H. (1988). Presidencialismo de coalisão: o dilema institucional brasileiro [Coalition presidentialism: The Brazilian institutional dilemma]. *Dados – Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 31(1), 5–34.
- Almeida, C., & Tatagiba, L. (2012). Os conselhos gestores sob o crivo da política: balanços e perspectivas [Management councils screened by politics: examinations and perspectives]. *Servico Social & Sociedade*, 109, 68–92.
- Amaral, O. E. D. (2013). As transformações nas formas de militância no interior do PT: maior inclusão e menor intensidade [The changes in the forms of militancy within the PT: Greater inclusion and lesser intensity]. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 28(82), 67–86.
- Arretche, M. T. S. (Org.). (2015). *Trajetórias das desigualdades: como o Brasil mudou nos últimos cinquenta anos* [Trajectories of inequality: How Brazil has changed in the last fifty years]. Editora Unesp.
- Bernardes, B. (2019). O Movimento Sem Terra e os governos Lula: a utopia e do pragmatismo [The landless movement and the Lula administration: From utopia to pragmatism]. *Political Observer – Revista Portuguesa de Ciência Política*, 12, 95–112.
- Bezerra, C. D. P. (2019). Os sentidos da participação para o Partido dos Trabalhadores (1980–2016) [The meanings of participation for the workers' party (1980–2016)]. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 34(100), e3410016.
- Bittar, J. (Org.). (1992). *O modo petista de governar* [The PT way of governing]. *Teoria & Debate* 36. Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo.
- Bittar, J. (Org.). (2003). *Governos estaduais – desafios e avanços: reflexões e relatos de experiências petistas* [State governments – challenges and advances: reflections and accounts of PT experiences]. Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo.
- Chevalier, M. (1853). Sobre el progreso y porvenir de la civilización [On the progress and future of civilization]. *Revista española de ambos mundos*, 1, 1–10.
- Cortes, S. V., & Gugliano, A. (2010). Between neo-corporatists and deliberationists: an interpretation on the paradigms for analysis of participatory forums in Brazil. *Sociologias*, 5.
- Enríquez, L. J., & Page, T. L. (2019). The rise and fall of the pink tide. In E. J. Cupples, M. Palomino-Schalscha, & M. Prieto (Orgs.), *The Routledge handbook of Latin American development*. Routledge.
- Filgueiras, C. A. C., & Souki, L. G. (2017). Individualização da incerteza: direito condicionado e ativação da proteção social [Individualization of uncertainty: conditional right and activation of social protection]. *Sociedade e Estado*, 32(1), 89–114.
- Gunder Frank, A. (1966). The Development of under development. *Monthly Review*, 18(4), 17. https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-018-04-1966-08_3.
- Habermas, J. (2022). *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit und die deliberative Politik* [A new structural change of the public sphere and deliberative politics]. Suhrkamp.
- Hochstetler, K. (2008). Organized civil society. In E. P. R. Kingstone & T. J. Power (Orgs.), *Democratic Brazil revisited* (pp. 33–53). University of Pittsburgh Press.

- Hrubeč, M., & Sobottka, E. A. (2022). “Perdi ilusões, mas não a esperança”: Entrevista com Olívio Dutra [“I have lost illusions, but not hope.” Interview with Olívio Dutra]. In E. D. R. Streck, E. Eggert, & E. A. Sobottka (Orgs.), *Dizer a sua palavra: Educação cidadã, pesquisa participante, orçamento público* (pp. 1–24). Seiva.
- Kay, C. (1989). *Latin American theories of development and underdevelopment*. Routledge.
- Limongi, F. (2006). A democracia no Brasil: presidencialismo, coalizão partidária e processo decisório [Democracy in Brazil: Presidentialism, party coalition and decision-making]. *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, 76, 17–41.
- Martí, J. (2005). *Nuestra América [Our America]*. Fundación Biblioteca Ayacucho.
- Miguel, L. F., & Coutinho, A. D. A. (2007). A crise e suas fronteiras: oito meses de “mensalão” nos editoriais dos jornais [The crisis and its frontiers: eight months of the “mensalão” in newspaper editorials]. *Opinião Pública*, 13(1), 97–123.
- Monnerat, G. L., Senna, M. D. C. M., Schottz, V., Magalhães, R., & Burlandy, L. (2007). Do direito incondicional à condicionalidade do direito: as contrapartidas do Programa Bolsa Família [Unconditional to conditional rights: counterparts in Brazil’s family allowance program]. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 12(6), 1453–1462.
- Oliveira, A. N. C. D. (2020). Neoliberalismo durável: o Consenso de Washington na Onda Rosa Latino-Americana [Lasting neoliberalism: the Washington consensus in the Latin American pink tide]. *Opinião Pública*, 26(1), 158–192.
- Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). (1980). Manifesto de fundação do Partido dos Trabalhadores [Founding manifesto of the workers’ party]. <https://pt.org.br/manifesto-de-fundacao-do-partido-dos-trabalhadores/>
- Phelan, J. L. (1968). Pan-latinism, french intervention in México (1861–1867) and the genesis of the idea of Latin America. In E. J. A. Ortega y Medina (Org.), *Conciencia y autenticidad históricas: Escritos en homenaje a Edmundo O’ Gorman* (pp. 279–298). Unam.
- Rinaldi, D. (2022). *Estudo biográfico sobre políticas de transferência de renda condicionada no Brasil: Atender necessidades para fomentar e desenvolver capacidades [Tese] [Biographical study on conditional cash transfer policies in Brazil: targeting needs to foster and develop capacities]*. Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul.
- Santos, P. R. D., & Gugliano, A. A. (2015). Efetividade das políticas participativas no governo brasileiro: O Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social [Effectiveness of participatory policies in the Brazilian government: The council for economic and social development]. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 23(56), 3–19.
- Silva, J. P. D. (2014). *Por que renda básica? [Why basic income?]*. Annablume.
- Silva, M. K., & Oliveira, G. D. L. (2011). A face oculta(da) dos movimentos sociais: Trânsito institucional e intersecção Estado-Movimento – uma análise do movimento de economia solidária no Rio Grande do Sul [The hidden face of social movements: institutional transit and State-movement intersection – an analysis of the movement of solidarity economy in Rio Grande do Sul]. *Sociologias*, 13(28), 86–124.
- Singer, A. (2010). A segunda alma do Partido dos Prabalhadores [The second soul of the workers’ party]. *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, 88, 89–111.
- Sobottka, E. A. (2006). Por que se faz políticas sociais no Brasil? Notas sobre estratégias de legitimação nos últimos dois governos federais [Why making social policies in Brazil? Notes on legitimization strategies during the last two federal governments]. *Civitas – Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 6(1), 79–93.
- Sobottka, E. A., & Streck, D. R. (2014). When local participatory budgeting turns into a participatory system. Challenges of expanding a local democratic experience. *International Journal of Action Research*, 2, 156–183.