



**Observatory of the dynamics of interactions between societies and  
environment in the amazon  
Sustainability and adaptations to global changes**

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# Construction of public policies of agroecology and organic production in the federated states of Brazil

## First results

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### Objectives of the study

The study aimed to analyse the processes of construction, institutionalization and implementation of agroecology and organic agriculture (PEAPO) policies in several federated states of Brazil to identify progress, obstacles and effects of interactions between public authorities and civil society.

Theoretical reference system and method:

- Application of a common analysis framework built by the Public Policy and Rural Development Network in Latin America and the Caribbean (PP-AL) in 11 states: Amazonas (AM), Bahia (BA), Federal District (DF), Maranhão (MA), Minas Gerais (MG), Pará (PA), Paraná (PR), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Rio Grande do Sul (RS), Sergipe (SE), São Paulo (SP) + city of São Paulo;
- Analysis framework of the dynamics of public action in 5 points (Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007): situation and institutionalization of policies, actors and coalitions, representations (conceptions of agroecology), governance and main instruments;
- Tools: document analysis, dialogue with the actors and series of semi-structured interviews.

## Participantes

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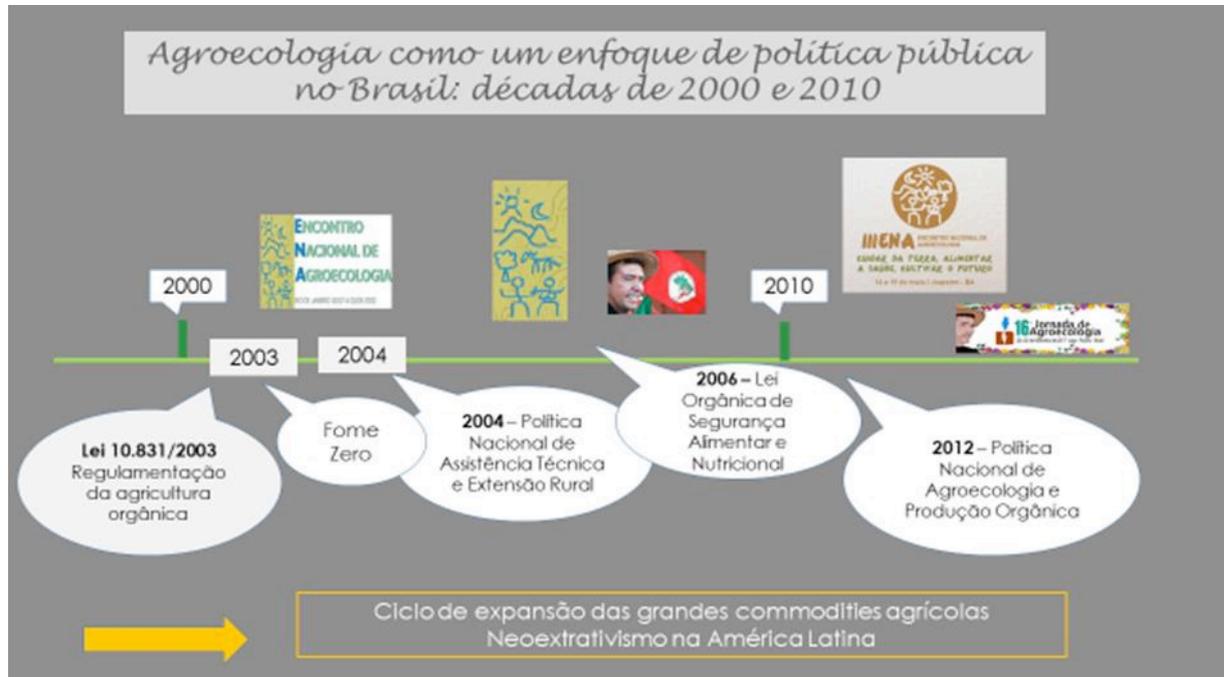
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### Escola de Artes, Ciências e Humanidades (EACH/USP)

### CIRAD/UFMA

## FIRST TRANSVERSAL RESULTS

### 1 Institutionalization of Agroecology in the Federated States of Brazil



Four dimensions are to be taken into account in the process of institutionalization of agroecology at the level of the federated states:

- An early trajectory in terms of construction programs and actions in favour of agroecology and organic production in certain states (RS, DF, PR) compared to the national policy (PNAPO) but also difficulties in establishing mechanisms of transversality and coordination between different instruments;
- The diversity of institutionalization mechanisms (legal frameworks, instruments, instances of participation and social control) sets challenges for structuring in a coherent frame of reference in order to guide the action of the institutions;
- The institutions / organizations involved in this construction internalize and manage this participation and the commitments in various ways, but not all of them manage to influence or integrate the management or implementation institutions;
- However, the construction of PEAPOs has had a structuring effect for the promotion of agroecology: on the agenda and in public debate, legitimization, mobilization of actors and ability to influence the design and execution of certain instruments.



## 2 Actors and coalitions

- Who are the actors involved and around which material or symbolic interests?
- Strategies and choice of actors?
- Role of the Organic Production Committees (CPORGs) or other coordination areas.

A diversity of actors is involved in the construction of PEAPO, but with a relative homogeneity from one state to another: local representations of the Brazilian agroecology movement (Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia-ANA, Associação Brasileira de Agroecologia -ABA, Associação de Agricultura Ecológica-AGE); agroecological and organic producer organizations (associations and cooperatives), rural social and trade union movements, environmental NGOs, social movement of food and nutritional security (SAN), academy (university and agricultural research); municipal and state agricultural & development technical services; private actors (production, certification, trade, restaurants), members of parliament, and finally mixed structures of consultation (territorial colleges, councils, commissions, inter-sectoral chambers).

## Atores na Concepção e Implementação



The representation of this diversity of actors is generally lower in the management and implementation bodies.

### Public Policy Coalitions: comparison

In the states studied, there are no coalitions or movements openly opposed to the institutionalization of PEAPO, except in Paraná. Elsewhere, PEAPO is not blamed, at least openly, but there are tensions around agribusiness, agrifood lobbies and extractive industries.

In Minas Gerais (MG), the PEAPO was built while actors related to agroecology and the SAN held positions of responsibility in various instances of the State. It is therefore not easy to clearly identify the boundaries between the coalition supporting broad-based family farming policies and those specific to agroecology. These configurations sometimes involve "soft" agreements, such as those between agroecology and organic production.

But, there are also cases of ruptures when new governments enter office: for example in Minas Gerais with a resumption of control by the executive. In Paraná (PR) the closure of the CPRA (Center for Agroecology) and the Emater-lapar-CPRA-Codapar merger resulted in the creation of a new Rural Development Agency without mentioning agroecology.

In Rio Grande do Sul (RS) there is a depletion of civil society participation in the PEAPO Steering Committee.

### Typology of coalitions - three situations

- Broad coalition between Family Farming (FF) organizations and public managers (RS, PR and MG, SE, BA);
- Broad coalition between AA and public managers, but with interest groups related to a differentiated FA or differences in agroecology and agri organic (DF, MA);
- Differentiated coalitions between the greening of agribusiness and the social movements of political agroecology (PA, AM);

Three kinds of tensions:

- within the broad category of the AF: for example in the Federal District (DF) Tension on the marketing methods (organic market of CEASA vs markets and management of knowledge) or in Maranhão (MA) between two groups of interests related to the AF on the concept of agroecology.
- between government (pro-agribusiness) and civil society (PA, AM, BA, MG), for example RS: conceptual tensions, on the budget and scope of the agroecology plan;
- in SE and RJ, more doubts about governance and implementation than real tensions.

### **Main areas of debate and political arenas**

In almost all states, there are forums for debate involving social movements and / or government representatives.

Civil society is organized in networks or articulations of agroecology (MA, DF, BA, AM, PA), facilitation and training often occur through the Study Nucleus on Agroecology (NEA) related to educational institutions and research (AM, DF, PA).

Governmental bodies have Rural Development Councils (MA, PA) and specific legislative or executive arrangements (BA), or joint committees on organic production, such as CPOG (PA, AM).

We also note hybrid instances, whether joint or not: PEAPO Management Committee (RS, AM), Working Group (MA), Agroecology Seminars (DF, PA), Chamber of Agroecology and Organic Production (CAO, DF), Cedraf (MG).

### **3 Ideas and representations: the conceptions of agroecology**

The definitions of agroecology (and agro-organic) adopted in most federated state policies studied often reproduce those of the National Policy of Agroecology and Organic Production (PNAPO) at the federal level. However, there are adjustments in the sense of recognizing categories and social practices specific to the reality of each state.

The definitions in the official texts are based on an all-encompassing conception in which the idea of agroecology predominates as a science or field of knowledge rather than as a social or alternative movement to the conventional agri-food system. These definitions show the diversity of actors in agroecology but also the centrality of actors from academia in interaction with the state.

The range of definitions also suggests a construction process that has integrated the demands and particularities of each social group, in order to avoid latent conflicts.

In terms of the orientation of public action, such a broad definition is not very operational and therefore leads to the emergence of tensions or latent conflicts for the formulation of priority instruments and actions or their contents. These conflicts essentially express the confrontation between:

- a techno-productive and commercial perspective associated with organic production and a perspective of political agroecology (DF, MA, PA);
- a perspective where actions should integrate the agro-ecological practices of conventional and / or non-certified farmers versus a tendency to focus priority efforts on ecological and / or certified farmers (RS, PR, SP);
- a design that prioritizes actions to increase the supply of certified products, as opposed to the one focused on technical advice and agricultural extension to promote training and capacity building processes (DF, MA);

- priority to the traditional marketing circuits of the agro-ecological movement such as agro-ecological markets (“feiras”) and public procurement versus: priority access to conventional markets: supermarkets, restaurants and organic stores (DF, MA, PA).

These confrontations are expressed by the type of action considered as a priority in the PEAPO. We observed six main (non-exclusive) categories:

- Technical advice and extension: DF, MA, BA, RS, PR
- Financing (credit): DF, PR
- Training and knowledge management: DF, MA, MG, SE
- Marketing: DF, MA, MG, BA, SE, PR
- Management of natural resources, seeds, pesticides: MG, BA, RS
- Basic ecological technologies: DF, BA, RS, SE, PR

To summarize:

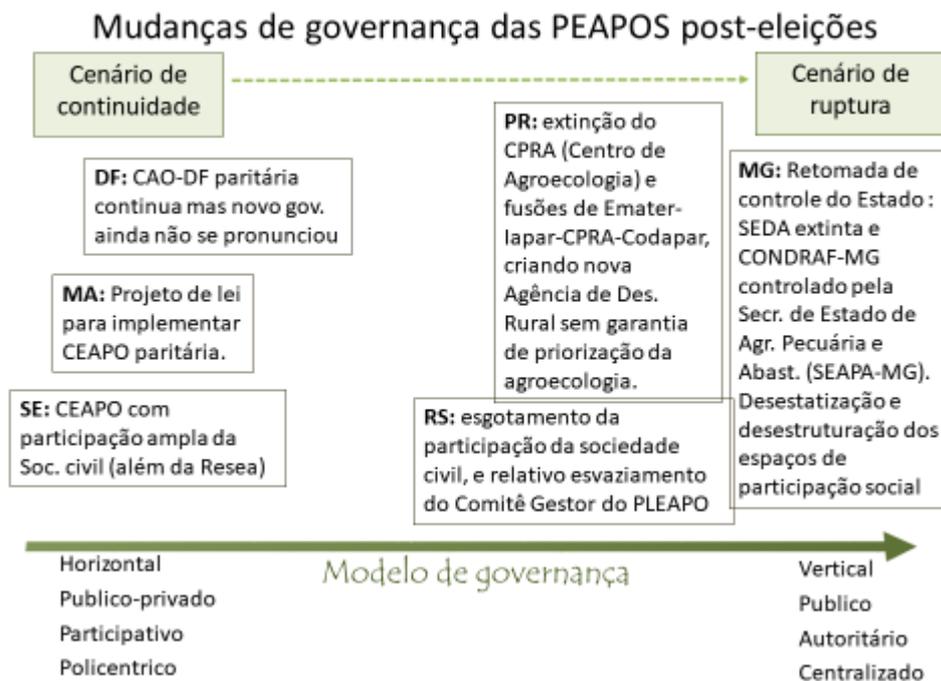
In order to obtain at the same time the support of the organizations related to family farming, the social movements related to agroecology, those related to agro-ecological farming, and the public authorities, the PEAPO opted for a "broad" definition of agroecology. As a result, by including so many actors and visions, these conceptions do not enable to guide public action from the point of view of the target categories and the priority actions. This results in a tension between focusing on agro-ecological farmers or the promotion of "agro-ecological / sustainable" practices for all family farmers (and, in some states, including for family businesses or green agribusiness).

## 4 Governance

The governance structures of the PEAPO in the 11 states studied show a proximity to the federal model of the PNAPO built around the National Commission of Agroecology and Organic Production (CNAPO), parity between 14 representatives of the organized civil society and 14 representatives of the federal public authorities. Some states have created a specific joint body on this model (commission, committee or chamber): this is the case of the DF (CAO), Sergipe (CEAPO), Maranhão (CEAPOMA), RS (management committee of CTAGRO). Others have chosen to integrate agroecology into the State Council for Rural Development and Family Farming (CEDRAF, Minas Gerais) or create a specific sectoral chamber within this council (Paraná).

PR/2008	RS/2014	MG/2014	SE/2018	DF/2017	MA/2018
Sectorial Chamber of Agroecology and Organic Agriculture within CEDRAF - Council for Rural Development and Family Agriculture (2007)	Joint Management Committee, 24 gov. + 24 civil society, from CTAGRO (Technical Chamber of Agroecology)	CEDRAF-MG State Council for Rural and Family Agriculture Developmen (2014)	CEAPO With public participation + Resea (Agroecology Network of Sergipe) and other social movements (solidarity economy, organic products...).	CAO-DF (Sectorial Chamber of Agroecology and Organic Production), 7 gov, 7 soc. civil.	CEAPOMA (in progress, bill drafted in Feb 2019). 8 gov + 8 civil assistance chosen by RAMA (Agroecology Network of Maranhão).

However, we observe changes following the recent elections in some states (RS, MG and PR) with a standby of this joint governance (SR) or its removal and put under direct control of the executive (MG) or an expanded council not favourable to agroecology (PR). We then move from participatory and polycentric governance to a more vertical and authoritarian system, controlled by the government.



## 5 PEAPO instruments

Few, especially new, instruments are actually applied because of obstructions in the current phase of implementation of PEAPO (RJ), deconstruction (RS, PR and MG) or because they are still in development (DF, SE, BA, MA, PA). Most of the instruments analysed are under discussion or have already been implemented in programs prior to the creation of PEAPO (DF, RS, MG, PR, SP).

### *Typology of mobilized instruments*

- Agro-ecological knowledge management: research, training, technical assistance and extension, action of NEAs (Research Nucleus on Agroecology), strengthening of organizations and networks (Ecofort Program);
- Financing, mainly producer credit programs, some tools for group subsidies and technical and advisory services
- Marketing: markets and fairs, public purchasing programs, product valuation and consumer information
- Regulation: certification, laws on heirloom seeds, tools based on environmental conditionalities (PSE, green grants), negotiation areas (councils, territorial colleges), legislation and land policies (Indian, quilombola, agrarian reform).

### *Main innovations*

- Financing arrangements: state / municipal / civil society co-financing (RS, DF, SE, SP and SP city), taxes and tax exemptions for agro-ecological and organic products (MG and SE);
- State purchases of subsidized organic or agro-ecological foods from States or municipalities;
- CSA (Communities that Support Agroecology) in capitals (Brasilia, SP, Rio);
- Purchase and distribution or exchange of local organic or eco-friendly seeds (BA, SE, PR, RS, MG).

### *Regional specificities*

- Amazonia: tension or complementarity between agroecology and green agro-trading (AM, PA, MA); free territories of GMOs
- Semi-arid: joint programming in territorial development colleges, municipal councils for rural development and Semi-Arid Articulation (ASA), local seed laws, recovery of degraded areas of caatinga (BA, MG, SE) ;
- Cerrado: valorisation of products of socio-biodiversity and defense of the rights of traditional peoples (MA, MG, BA).
- Southern States: Articulations related to previous participatory certification (Ecovida Network);
- Urban Agriculture, Payment for Environmental Services (São Paulo, Belo Horizonte)

## **6 Some conclusions**

- In the majority of the studied cases, the agroecology policies were prepared after 2016 and were built in continuity or on the model of the federal PNAPO instituted in 2013, with the exception of pioneer states which had previously initiated a program or local agroecology policy: DF (2007), Minas Gerais (2014), Paraná (2010) and Rio Grande do Sul (2014).

In the states of the Nordeste and Amazonia regions (BA, SE, MA, AM, PA), it is the progressive paralysis of federal policies that has pushed social movements and allied governments to promote PEAPO in compensation for the reduction or end of the federal PNAPO.

- For all that we observe movements of institutionalization and de-institutionalization depending on the political context (in two pioneering states: dismantling in Paraná and control by the executive in Minas Gerais);
- When institutionalization is in progress (BA, SE, PA, RJ, MA, DF), there are still uncertainties due to lack of resources, difficulties of coordination and social mobilization or parliamentary delays.
- The links and complementarities between state instruments and policies at other levels (municipal, territorial, federal) could only be examined in the cases of Paraná, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and DF. They focused on technical assistance programs (agro-ecological ATER of the Ministry of Agrarian Development-MDA), public procurement of food or seeds locally to family farmers (NAPs and PNAEs) and support to Quilombola and traditional communities (Minas Gerais). Finally, there is an articulation with the urban agriculture policies of the cities of São Paulo and Belo Horizonte.

## 7 Comments from the discussants

**The President of the Brazilian Association of Agroecology (ABA), Romier da Paixão Sousa**, spoke about the links between agro-ecological farmers and society at the local level. Along with the slow construction of public policies and instruments, agroecology is being constructed as a "way of life" that goes beyond conventional conceptions of the relationship between the state and society. He stressed the importance of treating agroecology as a cross-sectoral and non-sectoral element and drew attention to the need to open up and broaden the debate beyond public support for production or producers, involving consumers on agroecology and health, nutrition, agroecology and education.

He is very dubious about the technological or normative vision of the concept of agroecology in the public policies studied. Local action by agro-ecological or organic family farmers' organizations remains the first element to establish a balance of power with the public authorities to build policies. How did society participate in the process? What are the visible and invisible actors? what is the role of mediators and what types of mediators?

The ABA is thinking about the implementation and the future of these policies mainly in terms of strengthening spaces for dialogue, promoting more agroecology, political and cultural, debate on health and nutrition issues, management of natural and human resources related to agro-food system alternatives such as agroecology.

For **Doriana Daroit (political science, UnB-PPGIS)**, institutionalization "in" action must be analysed locally, this action is primarily local; it results from the interactions between producers, their organizations and public officials. In terms of public policy, we are progressing more through interactions than through regulation.

"You cannot separate the technique from the policy, the consumer and the producer ask for the technique".

She insisted on the notion of transversality to characterize what happens between the conceptual dimension and that of practical experience. The transversality can be discussed in several ways:

- The conceptual, historical and experiential trajectory;
- The normative dimension (how to "organize the world"?)
- The operational dimension (instruments that meet this standard)

**Rogério Neuwald (Former secretary of the CNAPO at the Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic)** recalled the exemplary processes of participation and consultation that led to the creation of the PNAPO, then the coordination experience of the Interministerial Chamber of Agroecology and Organic Production (CIAPO) which, in consultation with the joint CNAPO, elaborated PLANAPO 1, (2013-2015), to evaluate it and refocus federal policy with PNAPO II (2016-2019). Finally, the PNAPO, which had seen its resources brutally reduced by the Temer government, has just been dismantled by the Bolsonaro Government, which ended the existence of its joint commission (CNAPO).

**The public interventions have mainly focused on the following comments:**

- the importance of agricultural biodiversity, often neglected in debates;

- the importance of socio-biodiversity and in this sense of the participation of young people and women, ethnic minorities and traditional peoples: how is it present in the policy documents, but especially how do plans and programs propose to implement it?
- the need to implement a "system" with structures to ensure the effectiveness of the policy. Other policies have such systems, which even imperfect, provide some guarantee of continuity and implementation;
- the need to examine interfaces with other policies (an element addressed by the study);
- the need to analyse the "governance of government" (the institutional architecture of the government) because this governance structure influences the implementation of sectoral policies (power of some sectoral secretariats, those of finance for example);
- the need to analyse the impact on the agro-ecological transition of other public policies that do not refer to agroecology but have a strong impact on its future (land and water management policies in the first place);
- what are the practical results of this whole study for the stakeholders themselves?