Introduction: Deconstructing the Post-Neoliberal State Intimate Perspectives on Contemporary Brazil

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Introduction

Deconstructing the Post-Neoliberal State

Intimate Perspectives on Contemporary Brazil

by
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The last three presidential administrations in Brazil, including the two presidencies of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva (2002–2010) and the first term of Dilma Rousseff (2010-2014), have complicated widely held understandings of the Brazilian state. It is no longer possible to characterize recent governments as simply authoritarian, patrimonial, or divorced from the experiences of the Brazilian public (see Pereira in this issue). The path to "deepening democracy" (Fung, Wright, and Abers, 2003) has not been an easy or straightforward one, as recent protests and ongoing corruption scandals have shown, and yet a brief history of the recent past illustrates dramatic change. In 1985 a 21-year dictatorship—what Peter Evans (1989) called a "developmental state"—was defeated only to be followed by debt-fueled crisis and a decade of economic stagnation. Hyperinflation and economic uncertainty led in turn to an era of neoliberal governance, including the privatization of state-owned enterprises, reduction of trade protections, and establishment of regional free-market zones (Baker, 2002; Corrales, 2012; Power, 1998; Wolford, 2005).

As discontent with neoliberal policies rose, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party—PT), led by Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva (hereafter Lula), emerged as a leading actor in demands for political change. Perhaps one of the best examples of innovation under PT administrations in the early 1990s was the participatory budgeting process pioneered in the southern states (Abers, 2000; Baierle, 1999; Baiocchi, 2005; Novy and Leubolt, 2004) and subsequently extended throughout Brazil (Wampler, 2007). Operating under reasonably sound electoral rules, the PT was eventually successful at the national level, winning the presidency—although not the other branches of government—in four consecutive elections (2002, 2006, 2010, 2014) and establishing a remarkably durable left-leaning government that has stood at the center of recent Latin American "left turns" (Barrett, Chavez, and Rodríguez, 2008; Cameron and Hershberg, 2010; Cannon and Kirby, 2012; Castañeda and Morales, 2008; French, 2009;Levitsky and Roberts, 2011; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter, 2010).

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The intellectual and political challenge of understanding the Brazilian state is heightened by the lack of a clear, singular label to apply to it; the state contains policies, programs, and politics that appear from the outside to be contradictory. In the immediate aftermath of Lula's first election, observers debated over whether his administration would be defined as populist, developmentalist, neoliberal, social welfarist, or, as Armando Boito and Alfredo Saad-Filho argue in this issue, "hybrid neoliberal-neodevelopmentalist." The answer has been all of the above (Oliveira, 2014). Like other recently elected, left-leaning Latin American governments, the past three presidential administrations in Brazil are best understood as "post-neoliberal" in the sense that they ran on electoral platforms rejecting neoliberalism. Many of these governments, however, have stitched together new platforms that maintain key elements of neoliberalism, such as decentralization, free markets, and privatization, even as they add new dimensions of social policy that seem to counter or at least soften the so-called Washington Consensus (Williamson, 2000). As the papers in this issue show, contemporary political governance in Brazil is still driven by the dominant power bloc (led by the often competing interests of the internal and international bourgeoisie, according to Boito and Saad-Filho in this issue) even as it involves "a search for progressive policy alternatives arising out of neoliberalism's many contradictions" (Macdonald and Ruckert, 2009: 6–7).

Since the writing and passage of the 1988 democratic constitution (a process that took three years), activists from Brazil's diverse political left have embraced the expanded rights proclaimed therein while seeking to transform state policies and institutions. Having succeeded in their "long march through the institutions" (Baiocchi, 2003), activists on the left in unions, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, and organized social movements gained increasing access to local and state elective and administrative positions (Ferreira and Fortes, 2008; Jan French, 2009: 166). Under these conditions, the fall of the dictatorship in 1985 and the rise of the PT transformed the state from simply an enemy to something more complicated; faced with producing change and delivering results, former civil society activists and politicians were forced to grapple with the contradictory realities of working with and through government rather than against it (Dagnino, 2002). In this way, the achievements of the PT-led administrations can be defined as transformative even if, as critics have noted (Morais and Saad-Filho, 2011: 38; see also Anderson, 2011; Boito and Saad-Filho in this issue; John D. French and Fortes, 2012), they were ultimately "in no way revolutionary."

This issue seeks to examine the policies, practices, and politics of the Brazilian state in the contemporary moment. It does this by approaching the state "from the inside out" (Riles, 2000), exploring what Abers and Keck (2013: 21) call "institutional entanglements"—the qualities and dynamics of everyday administration and the manifold relationships within and between state institutions and civil society actors. Building on the growing literature about the contemporary Latin American state (Bersch, Praça, and Taylor, 2013; Kurtz and Schrank, 2012), the articles focus for the most part on actors, processes, and practices that make up the state (Abers and Keck, 2013; Auyero and Joseph, 2007), or what Sergio Leite (in this issue) calls the "sausage making." The

contributors suggest that states are not unitary actors but must be seen as contested spaces marked by internal politics, clashing personalities, competing interests, and different external alliances, permeated by historically embedded institutional cultures and politics. As Lula says in an interview conducted in 2013 by Emir Sader and Pablo Gentili (translated for this issue):

> Government has to understand that the exercise of democracy is living with diversity. To my way of thinking, democracy is not a pact of silence. It is a society moving in different directions, responding to a variety of pressures. And this is what we have to learn to live with. We have been learning how to build the necessary alliances.

In a very real sense, these articles collectively paint a picture of what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (cited by Santos in this issue) calls simply a "heterogeneous state."

To develop their arguments about the internal workings of the state, the articles in this issue pay considerable attention to an understudied group in Brazil: the bureaucracy. "When people think about Brazilians' struggle to change the status quo," Abers and Keck (2013: 2) observe, they tend to "picture charismatic politicians, community organizers, labor leaders, or rural activists organizing a land occupation," not the government employees and administrators examined here. Yet it is precisely the multiple changing roles of such actors—particularly the bureaucrats but also the officials, politicians, and lawmakers—that constitute, represent, negotiate, and enact the state (Jan French, 2009). Properly seeing the work of governance, therefore, requires "locating" (Ferme, 2013) the state in the "beliefs, desires, hopes and interests" (Ortner, 2006: 167, cited in Auyero and Joseph, 2007: 6) of state actors themselves. This is what Peter Evans (1989: 573, cited in Luna, Murillo, and Schrank, 2014: 9) aptly called the "non-bureaucratic elements of bureaucracy" and what Jan French (2009: 6–7) calls "post-legislative negotiation." Focusing on the work of state actors provides new insight into the ideologies, politics, and practices that inform state practice as well as the multiple factions, interests, and "fragmented relationships" (Striffler, 2002: 9; cf. Boito and Saad-Filho in this issue) that constitute the broader terrain of state power and state making. We join Abers and Keck (2013: 15) in their insistence that to focus on practice is "not to deny the importance of power politics or of structural conditions" but to insist on the "interpenetration of ideational and material realms" in the experience of rule.

In what follows, we explore in more detail four arguments that come out of the collection. The first argument is that analyses of the Brazilian state need to be situated in time and place through an examination of the historical roots of particular policies and agencies. The Brazilian state may have undergone significant transformations in the past two decades, but these transformations are shaped by traditional alliances, class-based power struggles, and historical identities and relationships. The second argument is that the relationship between state and society is changing rapidly in Brazil, making it increasingly difficult to draw clear lines between the two. The contributors suggest that focusing on the work state actors do (rather than simply the positions they occupy) helps to overcome unnecessary binaries between state and society.

Third, the papers highlight negotiation between actors within the state; they suggest that competition, antagonism, collaboration, and creativity exist within the state and often combine to produce unexpected outcomes. Finally, the papers argue that one of the new aspects of the Brazilian state may be the construction of new political subjectivities. Actors in and outside the state demonstrate new ways of acting politically that have as much to do with new political repertoires, from land occupations to juridical innovations, as with new opportunities.

LOCATING THE STATE IN TIME AND PLACE

Locating the state historically and spatially is particularly crucial for an analysis of contemporary Brazil given that state/civil-society relations have changed so dramatically in the past 40 years (Arico, 1985). The very act of locating the state complicates its theoretical distance: once grounded, "the" state is a chaotic web of often-conflicting institutions, ideologies, political cultures, policies, practices, and people (Coutinho, 2003). Old concepts and assumptions, as Anthony Pereira argues in this issue, are no longer completely sufficient (Burgos, 2002). Cecilia Macdowell Santos begins her discussion of contemporary indigenous politics in Brazil in the colonial period, outlining a stark history from the original "encounter" to massacre, civilization, villagization, and, eventually, "protection" and assimilation. Although policies around indigenous peoples have changed significantly since the colonial period, Santos's interpretation might be seen to align, if loosely, with Sergio Leite's theoretical framework of neo-institutionalism, in which contemporary practices within the state are shaped by gradual changes in historical institutions.

Against this appeal to the "longue durée" of the Brazilian state, many contributors locate their case-study material specifically in the transition from the military dictatorship (1964–1985) to democracy, as this is the period when state-society relations underwent the most dramatic transformation. Until the 1970s, one could say that civil society in Brazil was "primordial and gelatinous," in Antonio Gramsci's (1971: 238) distinctive phrasing. It was partly because of fear of organizing efforts throughout Brazil—particularly rural Brazil—that the military seized power in 1964 and instituted authoritarian rule. Given the weakness of civil society and the fragility of electoral norms, military rule was less a substantive change from earlier periods of rule than a modest shift in the ruling elite. Under the shadow of the armed forces, however, disgruntled politicians—marginalized by electoral restrictions—joined with radical priests, communist activists, ex-guerrillas, businessmen, indigenous peoples, landless squatters, trade unions and women's movements, and university students among others to form a widespread movement of resistance to the dictatorship (Martins, 2002; Medeiros, 1989). As the outward edifice constructed by the military began to weaken, people took to the streets. Public mobilizations such as the one for direct elections were both constituted by and constitutive of a new Brazilian civil society.

The writing of a new constitution (1985–1988) provided opportunities and challenges for political change, as the articles in this issue demonstrate. LaDawn Haglund argues that the emergence of new legal approaches to social

and environmental problems was partly made possible by the "ideological opening" of the new constitution, which provided political and institutional space for the enactment and deepening of new laws and regulations. She suggests that state reforms in the wake of the military regime helped to "professionalize" and managerialize the machinery of governance but that the crisis of the 1990s shut down further innovation. She argues that it was only with the leftward shift after 2002 that there was sufficient political space for a spirited discussion of bureaucratic practice. Haglund situates her piece in the legal apparatus in São Paulo in order to ground the discussion of bureaucracy in a set of actually existing agencies, people, and practices.

The four papers on rural Brazil by Brenda Baletti, Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, Sergio Leite, and Wendy Wolford are situated in different arenas, but all trace contemporary political practices back to the context of neoliberalism and deepening democracy in which the opportunistic alliance between decentralization and participation ushered in a "new institutionality" (Deere and Medeiros, 2005; Deere and Royce, 2009). This new institutional logic was symbolized in the agenda for a New Rural World. The New Rural World was not a policy; it was a more comprehensive policy *shift* intended to reduce the dependency of rural producers on the government. It was promoted as a way of removing politics from technical or economic decisions through third-party contracting and multi-stakeholder decision making. As Leite says, it "attempted to interpose a 'managerial' relation between the government and the beneficiaries of agricultural programs (referred to in ample documentation as clients subject to contractual negotiation with the state)." For Leite, this managerial focus was produced at least in part by World Bank discourse that emphasized the supremacy of the market in mediating land tenure disputes, turning state actors into semi-impotent bureaucrats.

Decentralization, participation, and privatization often created competing goals, however. Wolford's paper on land reform and Baletti's paper on extractive reserves in the Amazon both suggest that local bureaucrats—from agency officials to union leaders and mayors—were simultaneously vested with more authority to conduct government business and divested of that authority by having to collaborate with increasingly well-organized civil society and third-party actors on the ground. In the case of land reform, the civil society actors with whom the state engaged were militant social movement activists who represented rural and urban squatters. Employees of the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform—INCRA) resented having to work with social movement activists even though Wolford's research suggests that they lacked other means of reaching the target population. State bureaucrats who had started their careers in INCRA on the Brazilian frontier in the 1970s had trouble reconciling their increasingly weak political position vis-à-vis landless social movements with the memory of their near omnipotence just 20 years earlier (Wolford in this issue). In the case of extractive reserves, the state acted through local unions and unsuccessfully attempted to incorporate indigenous and traditional leaders. Baletti situates present-day Amazonian politics in territorial conflicts dating back to the early 1800s and argues that tensions in the region were exacerbated 100 years later by "the federal government's efforts to re-'colonize'

the region through infrastructural, agro-industrial, and extractive development projects, [which] set off a new wave of violence—this time enacted by the *latifundia* (large landholders) and loggers against the peasant farmers—that was accompanied by widespread environmental devastation."

Finally, Rémi Fernand Lavergne and Bernadete Beserra write on the well-known Bolsa Família program intended to assist "poor" and "extremely poor" families around the country. One of the largest conditional cash transfer programs in the world, reaching almost one-quarter of Brazil's population, Bolsa Família provides small funds to parents who agree to keep their children in school and maintain regular medical checkups. Lavergne and Beserra situate the rise of Bolsa Família in the neoliberal turn of the 1990s, when the inclusive impulses of the 1988 constitution met with the realities of both structural adjustment and the demands of multilateral lending agencies. Without understanding the historical specificity of Bolsa Família, they argue, it is difficult to grasp the significance of the turn away from the universal provision of basic goods toward the prioritization of rules designed to target the poor as well as to decentralize and privatize service delivery.

BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIETY

All of the papers in the collection interrogate the supposed separation between state and society, a separation that originates in the founding of the modern state. As Baletti argues in this issue, the social field is "far more complex than the dyad of state and civil society has allowed us to see." A theoretical language that goes beyond the objective categories of state and society to focus on processes or practices such as governing and organizing is necessary to understand the work done by either (see Ferguson and Gupta, 2002; Gupta and Sharma, 2006; Sharma and Gupta, 2006).[1] A focus on the way in which governing occurs in both state and society highlights how much work "of the state" is done by actors outside the official apparatus (see Alvarez, 2009; Baiocchi, 2005; Mayer, 2009; Wolford, 2010b). This blurring of the line between state and society is central in Michel Foucault's prescient discussion of governmentality or internalized notions of self-discipline (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, 1991; Jan French, 2009: 6–7) and in Gramsci's analysis of the relationship between state and society (Coutinho, 2003; Dagnino, 1999; Scherer-Warren, 1987; 1993). Gramsci, in particular, focused on the need to create alliances within and between state and society (Grzybowski, 1987; Karriem, 2009; Militão, 2010; Vergara-Camus, 2009; Wolford, 2010a). In his work state and society are rhetorically separate and yet inherently intertwined and sometimes equivalent: organizations, resources, and people move easily between the two (Sassoon, 1982: 112). For Gramsci these interactions were a novel part of advanced capitalism, as they were for Max Weber in Pereira's examination of patrimonialism in this issue. Writing in an era when the Italian state intervened heavily in the national economy to maintain the conditions of reproduction (Sassoon, 1982: 32), Gramsci argued that distinctions between state and society and between politics and the economy were narrowing. For him, therefore, the state could contain civil society, be opposed to it, or be synonymous with it (Anderson, 1977: 13).

The papers in this issue help to illuminate such interrelationships and to analyze the ways in which particular ideologies or actors become hegemonic at different times. Brenda Baletti's paper suggests that new political subjects are being created "outside of the familiar state-mediator-movement political framework." There are movement actors who focus on negotiation and inclusion in government and others who "refuse inclusion or see negotiation as pursuit of a different strategic goal." In her paper on competing models for development in the Amazon, Baletti argues that the increasingly blurry lines between state and society have fostered tensions around new development projects, in part because social movement activists see their objectives being compromised by government economic programs. As she says, "these development projects, which intensify dispossession while granting limited benefits, are often implemented, supported, or negotiated on the ground by elected PT politicians who were once important social movement militants and leaders." She suggests that elite interests in the Amazon have benefited from these more symbolic or ritualized relationships with civil society. Discomfort with such intimacy has led many local leaders to reject participation on the grounds that it is inclusive co-optation.

Christopher Gibson's paper on public health policies in southern Brazil focuses on civil society participation in policy making but suggests that such participation does not always improve governance or even the policies themselves. As he says, his research raises questions about "the ostensibly muscular policy-making authority" bestowed on civil society participants by the state. Gibson argues that the privileging of participation and participatory institutions in the bastion of PT politics, Porto Alegre, the capital of the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, enrolled health care workers in lengthy discussions about state-society relations and the value of participation while failing to provide them with critical tools for implementing a key piece of the progressive agenda, universal primary public health care provision.

The new "social state" envisioned by the 1988 constitution (Bresser Pereira, 2007, cited by Haglund in this issue) was implemented in the 1990s by administrators with a background in the private sector, according to Leite in this issue, while governance under Lula and Dilma saw a switch to "public administrators recruited from unions, universities, and NGOs, in addition to administrators and congressional staff with experience in state and local government." This switch created a very different relationship between state and society; whereas one could argue that, previously, the lines between state and society were blurred at the highest levels (because of elite control of the state), now they became increasingly porous at the grassroots and administrative levels.

LaDawn Haglund's article demonstrates the ways in which the push for environmental and human rights protection in the city of São Paulo emerged from an alliance of actors inside and outside the state. As environmental problems were increasing in this densely urbanized region, "networks of socio-environmental activists and their allies in the newly elected PT and state agencies stepped up their efforts for change." These alliances were not always easy, and early collaborations such as the Upper Tietê River Basin Committee illustrated the potential for civil society organizations to be dominated by

technical experts and personalistic goals. Haglund argues that state–civil-society collaborations suffered from a lack of funding and a tendency to focus on narrow, apolitical initiatives, and so her larger story is one of the judicial system stepping in to push for real change.

In his paper on rural political administrators, Leite reminds us that the lines between state and society were porous long before the return to democracy. He says, "During the military regime an intimate relationship had developed between the partners of modernization—the state and big business (both urban and rural), as mediated by the government bureaucracy." This partnership shaped everything from bank lending to overall macroeconomic policy in ways that Fernandes (in this issue) argues led to the creation of two very different development paradigms within and outside the state.

Ultimately, the papers in this issue give us new theoretical tools to help overcome the supposed opposition between state and society both in theories of the state and in theories of mobilization. In collaborating with the state, social movement activists retain the ability to protest *against* the state—something that Brian Wampler (2007) and Evelina Dagnino (2002) suggest is critical to deepening effective democracy through participation.

COMPETITION WITHIN THE STATE

Working through state-society struggles or interactions on the ground as these papers do illuminates a central argument about the workings of the state: just as civil society actors struggle for access to state resources, so, too, state agencies and employees have to negotiate and struggle for recognition and resources against competitors within the government apparatus. Across even the most powerful agencies, state actors are trying, with more or less success at different times, to control resources and make their own positions less vulnerable. Paying attention to access within the state itself means paying attention to hierarchy, divisions, and difference—all of which enable certain sorts of collaborations while restricting others. Actors exploit ambiguity, jurisdictional overlap, and compartmentalization, and they are in turn exploited by these; internal state divisions influence the struggle for resources and the various strategies for action—or inaction. The breadth of recent congressional coalitions—in which the PT is a minority—complicates internal dynamics even further given the division of ministerial posts among political parties with very different agendas and histories.

This is very clearly illustrated in Haglund's paper on the search for new forms of environmental governance in São Paulo. Haglund illustrates the tensions between those advocating for environmental protection and those advocating for basic human rights for communities living in fragile ecosystems. She quotes a city judge as saying, "Reality is rebellious. If the law was strictly followed in terms of illegal occupations or industry, we'd have major dislocation (perhaps 2–3 million poor people) and economic destruction. Our environmental law is very rigorous, which may be why it is so hard to enforce" (this characteristic of Brazilian law making is discussed in detail by French, 2004). As she goes on to illustrate, within the Ministério Publico (Attorney General's

Office), the watchdog agency for the state, the tensions between state actors with competing jurisdictions can become absurd, as is demonstrated in the following account by the prosecutor and legal scholar Ronaldo Porto Macedo Júnior:

> Fabio Feldmann, the state environmental secretary, reported that the MP sued him because he did not protect some areas by forcing community displacement. But the children's rights branch of the MP sued him because there was no school there, and another branch sued him because there was no hospital. He said, "If I start building hospitals and schools, of course the illegal occupation will increase." . . . So we don't have, even within . . . the MP, a clear, integrated view of what is to be done.

In his article on patrimonialism, Pereira argues that generic terms no longer do justice to the complexity of and competition within the Brazilian state. As he says,

> In the Brazilian case, the term [patrimonialism] has been increasingly applied to the state at precisely the period in which industrialization and urbanization have weakened the power of traditional agrarian elites, and reforms have made the federal civil service far more "Weberian" than it was before. It therefore makes more sense to see "patrimonialism" as one of several logics operating within the Brazilian state.

Falling back on a description of the Brazilian state as simply patrimonial would be a "generalization in disguise" (Reinhard Bendix, quoted in Sartori, 1970: 1040, cited in Pereira in this issue).

Leite summarizes the above very well when he argues that "the state or government is a strategic actor that brings together within its internal structures—which are both differentiated and hierarchically unequal—the conflicts that permeate the relations among those interest groups and class segments." He outlines different policies that coexist within the state but are often channeled through different institutions or supported by very different constituencies. He identifies four types of policy that have different audiences and intentions: "distributive policies (such as rural credit), regulatory policies (such as those related to agricultural prices), redistributive policies (such as agrarian reform), and institutional or constitutive policies (such as the creation of municipal, regional, and/or national councils)." These different policies can overlap, compete, run parallel, and conflict in ways that complicate both political administration and popular participation.

At the same time, Fernandes argues that there are actually two competing agricultural development models or views of the world underlying the different policies described in Leite's paper—the agrarian model and the capitalist model. These two different schools of thought, or paradigms, embody and enact very different perspectives on the best way to develop agriculture, the market, and society. From the former perspective poverty and inequality derive from capitalism, while from the latter perspective they derive from the inability of certain markets or actors to succeed within capitalism. As Fernandes says, this latter logic "sees the peasantry and capital as components of a single political space, part of a single whole (capitalist society), making no distinction

between them because the class struggle is not an element of this paradigm." For capitalist agriculture, the massive exodus of families from rural Brazil over the past 70 years (one of the most rapid transformations from rural to urban in the world) is part of the normal development process in which inefficient factors of production (in this case, underemployed farmers and low-yielding land) are employed in new areas (urban production and agro-industrial methods). From the perspective of the agrarian paradigm, however, this rapid rural exodus is neither natural nor good but a sign of selective state support for agro-industrial modernization designed to make rural smallholders migrate to urban centers where cheap food will lower their basic wage requirements. Fernandes describes the manifestation of these struggles between capitalism and the peasantry as they play out in the different regions of the country, noting how different conditions are created by different ecological, social, and economic dynamics.

Fernandes argues that one of the manifestations of the two paradigms he outlines is the creation of two separate ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply on the one hand and the Ministry of Agrarian Development on the other. Leite also points to the seeming paradox of having two separate agencies in agriculture but argues that the presence of both "has actually proven to be necessary." Lula, he says, has supported agribusiness for business reasons and family farming for social reasons, considering both to be pieces of an alternative development strategy. Leite's close look at political administrators in the rural arena shows that the practices of the two ministries are different because their mandates are different but also because the people who work in them are different: "In the case of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply, for example, a considerable number of officials came from academia, business, and professional associations, while in the case of the Ministry of Agrarian Development there was a preponderance of administrators with previous experience in NGOs, social movements, and unions."

In a very different case, Haglund suggests that, in the wake of the 1988 constitution, "tensions between environmental protection and human activities created complex challenges for state institutions attempting to fulfill a wide range of potentially contradictory obligations." Agencies with overly ambitious or unclear mandates had difficulty with implementation, particularly in urban slums where the need was great but coordination and political oversight limited. "Despite the recent emphasis on sustainability and human rights in São Paulo, conflicts between these goals and traditional forms of development are often resolved in favor of those with greater economic power." Ultimately, Haglund suggests that such competition was potentially productive for the state because it "fostered proactive strategies of coordination, tested old assumptions about the state/society relations, and provoked broader conversations about difficult socioeconomic and political questions at the heart of creating sustainable, just societies."

Gibson argues that competition or struggles between state-level government in Rio Grande do Sul, national politicians such as the federal health minister, José Serra, and local health care workers made it difficult to implement and finance primary public health care across this seemingly progressive state. Santos concurs with this conflictual representation and argues that the Brazilian

state has evinced a bipolar or Janus-faced attitude toward indigenous peoples that vacillates between an individualistic colonial approach and a collectivist multicultural one.

As obvious as these tensions seem, they are rarely recognized in popular or scholarly discussions. When people talk about the state, they tend to invoke agencies and actors as coherent parts of a whole. Whether the state is condemned or praised, it is treated as a structural object with a single identity—that of a government party, agency, or state. This makes sense from the government's point of view, but from the perspective of governance as a process (as it happens on the ground) it does not.

CREATING NEW POLITICAL CULTURES AND SUBJECTS

A fourth contribution of these papers is an unwillingness to assume that political identities are simply a function of material or structural positions. As the anthropologist Enrique Mayer (2009) argues in his retrospective account of the 1969 agrarian reform under the Peruvian military leader Juan Alvarado Velasco, there was something missing from the prevailing types of "economic and Marxist class analysis" of the 1970s, which failed to address the full complexity of the historical actors involved with the processes being dissected: "people as human beings who are sentient, rational, and irrational at the same time, culture bound and seeking other horizons simultaneously; actors engaged in a process that involved their energies, their emotions, their passions, and basest instincts" (Mayer, 2009: 239).

This openness to new political identities is productive at a time when the boundaries between different ways of being political are changing dramatically (Dagnino, 1999). Over the past 15 years, new political subjects have been constituted in the negotiation between and within state and society. Political actors such as unions have lost space to new social movements that have a very different relationship to the state and to formal politics; at the same time, practices such as encampments, marches, and even abstaining from political action have added significantly to the political repertoire.

Analyzing these new political actors and subjectivities is complicated by the structuralism evident in many of the theories invoked for studying the state. Although Foucault's structuralism is a matter of debate (Brenner, 1994), the application of his work on biopolitics to the study of new state programs such as Bolsa Família may lead to a focus on power and discourse while neglecting the importance of everyday experience, practice, and negotiation (see Lavergne and Beserra's discussion of the Bolsa Família program in this issue). At the same time, a Marxist political economic analysis of class interests in the contemporary state (Boito and Saad-Filho in this issue) is critical for examining the structural dynamics of surplus production and appropriation but may miss the subtler negotiations between state agents and civil society actors who struggle to fulfill contradictory mandates (Haglund in this issue), protect a wide range of often-competing interests (Leite in this issue), and even make things up as they go along (Wolford in this issue). Thus, reading these papers brings together multiple theorists—from Marx and Gramsci to Foucault and Weber—who

highlight the importance of structure and agency, negotiation and experience. All told, the result is a situated, relational approach that "recognizes that power operates at many different levels and that it is simultaneously ubiquitous and hard to assemble" (Abers and Keck, 2013: 7, 13).

In their piece on Bolsa Familia focusing on the construction of new political subjectivities, Lavergne and Beserra discuss the opposing evaluations of the program, with some scholars arguing that it has been remarkably successful at reducing so-called poverty traps and others arguing that by making access conditional the state is placing conditions on basic rights that create a contractual and subordinate relationship to the state. They argue that, ironically, it is the targeting of recipients (as opposed to earlier proposals for the program that would have provided universal access) that essentializes the poor, creating a "typical" subject that is simultaneously pressured to become "normal" and separated from the rest of the "non-needy" or undeserving population. Lavergne and Beserra argue that the program does not lift people out of poverty; rather, it simply allows them to survive at a minimum level of "monitored poverty." They argue that the focus on families reifies a notion of the household that poorly reflects the conditions of most men, women, and children.

Haglund adopts a somewhat different perspective and, following Boaventura de Sousa Santos, argues that legal work to protect environmental and social rights has created a new subjectivity among citizens, one in which ordinary people have "become more confident in the rule of law" and the accessibility of political protection. As one of her interviewees says, legal interventions are "breaking a tradition of impunity."

Baletti's paper on the Amazon argues that the PT's progressive political project nationwide depends on traditional extractive projects in the Amazon region. She suggests that the combination of extractivism and populism means that the projects have to appeal to—and in so doing create—a sort of "green growth" subject and subjectivity. This means not only that the profits of mining and agribusiness fund the PT's redistributive projects but that "in Amazonia, these projects have also been 'greened' through international environmental NGO support" and made "participatory" through purportedly inclusive planning initiatives and possible through territorial reorganization that opens new areas to development (Baletti in this issue). She argues that resisting both the state and corporate models of extraction has given rise to new political subjects, productive of and produced by "nascent forms of political resistance that break with the institutional frames of 'progressive governments' and the traditional social mediator organizations linked to them." She highlights the formation of the subject of the movement, a collectivity that resisted exploitation and cooptation by forcing the state to engage on the movement's terms. This subject of the movement emerged organically from a spontaneous protest on the river during which members blocked the passage of barges of illegally cut timber. After the blockade was successful,

> rather than disbanding they set up a long-term encampment where they collectively developed systems for fishing, camp maintenance, meetings and decision making, and a rotation to maintain the river blockade and deflected constant harassment and threats while they sought legal means to compel

> enforcement. Their resistance was not merely an authorized, temporary, ephemeral disruption of space. Rather it was a spatial strategy for resisting the territorial fragmentation necessary for extractivism by recovering, securing, and defending their territory—a strategy of resistance through which they constructed a new identity for themselves on the basis of existing community organizational forms.

All of the papers in this issue present actors who are grappling with what it means to act politically in a postauthoritarian, post-neoliberal Brazil. From judges to peasants, bureaucrats, social movement activists, and legislators, doing political work is constituting new relationships, new practices, and new understandings of who and what are political subjects. Citizens now have the protection of a broadly inclusive constitution and civil code, but implementation of these inclusions requires the development of new tactics, from judicial bargaining to negotiating behind closed doors as protesters camp outside.

Engagement with the everyday practicalities of governance, whether through active participation in state institutions through elected office, participatory councils, meetings, or even mobilizations and protest, is creating new political subjects both within and outside the institutions of the state (Wolford, 2010b; 2015). Although historically a powerful elite has dominated the Brazilian political landscape, new actors, opportunities, and understandings of citizenship rights and responsibilities have emerged since the 1970s. Recent decades have seen social movement activists who are now part of the state (indeed, the nation's popular president Lula is a fourth-grade-educated manual worker turned unionist), and, in turn, state actors are engaging in movement activities, whether in cooperation with outsiders or as members of unions themselves. These new relationships and tactics are part of the construction of new political subjectivities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The sociologist Phillip Abrams (1988: 59) once famously observed that "we have come to take the state for granted as an object of political practice and political analysis while remaining quite spectacularly unclear as to what the state is." Focusing on process and practices as the articles in this collection do helps us to conceptualize both the power of the state and its role in society. Instead of assuming coherence, competence, or intentionality, we are forced to reckon with paradoxes, contradictions, and transgressions. The state comes to be seen less as a monolith and more as an unfinished project full of competing interests, compromises, and surprising entanglements. In their everyday work, state actors at all levels redefine what governance means while both enacting new forms of what Joseph and Nugent (1994) called "everyday forms of state formation" and reproducing old and even archaic practices across a range of institutions, policies, and programs.

The papers in this issue focus on the constitution of actors and groups within the state and the relationship between state and society, paying close attention to the practices, both cooperative and conflictive, that have transformed "ideas, resources, and relationships in creative ways" (Abers and Keck, 2013: 16). Some

of them analyze the micropolitics of governance on its own terms or in the context of broader clashes of interest and diverging political cultures. Increasingly, it is also clear that state actors are working with nonstate actors, though for many different reasons: they may have similar goals and comparative advantages, or civil society may be required because the state lacks the resources and technical or logistical competence to carry out the work on its own. The inclusion of civil society actors may be grudging, resisted, or solicited by other state actors, but regardless of the incompatibility of "political projects" (Dagnino, 2002) or ideology they are often pushed together by necessity or pragmatism. As Abers and Keck (2013: 18) say, "Both state and societal actors have had to learn a particular grammar for negotiating complexity . . . [in order] to get things done."

These articles demonstrate that only what we call an "intimate" perspective allows us to understand the processes by which decisions get made and implemented and even their reception and impact. While shedding light on the longer-term trajectory of governance in a country, a focus on process and practices also reminds us that not everyone acts rationally or even strategically in all circumstances. Operating within specific contexts, people are constrained by power relationships that shape access to resources, including state resources. By paying closer attention to the multiple possible directions any given policy or program can take, we can see how overlaps, contradictions, and mistakes are constitutive of the state as a whole. New forms of politics often begin as accidents or experiments or even as transgressions that are slowly incorporated into everyday practice (Abers and Keck, 2013: 16–17; Wolford, 2010b).

Dealing with very different institutions and policy realms, the papers in this issue offer in-depth analyses of the dynamics between state and society in a country that is undergoing significant and dramatic political changes. They provide insight into governance at multiple scales, from the local to the regional and national, while paying close attention to the radical differences in form and function of localized state actors across different policy arenas. With an interdisciplinary set of research questions, the contributors discuss a wide range of topics, such as organic intellectuals of the state, microlevel ethnographies of subaltern actors, local government practice, the surprising paths through which legislation is enacted, and the contradictions experienced during implementation. They explore questions of class power and ideology—at the broadest level of contested politics of social and political transformation—while working on the ground to highlight the paradoxical entanglements and surprising configurations of policy and practice in the face of both continuities and discontinuities.

NOTE

1. The theorization of "practical authority" by Abers and Keck (2013: 2) exemplifies this fluid approach to politics, governance, and state-society relations. What they call "practical authority" is to be "understood as the kind of power-in-practice generated when particular actors (individuals or organizations) develop capabilities and win recognition with a particular policy area, enabling them to influence the behavior of other actors. It is neither a direct function of formal authority nor properly explained in terms of the political legitimacy of the state as a whole" and "can shift over time from organization to organization within the state and even into society and can be shared among organizations in complex and changing ways."

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