

# Is the State a Good Partner in Advocating Food Sovereignty and Agroecology? An Overview About Brazilian Policies

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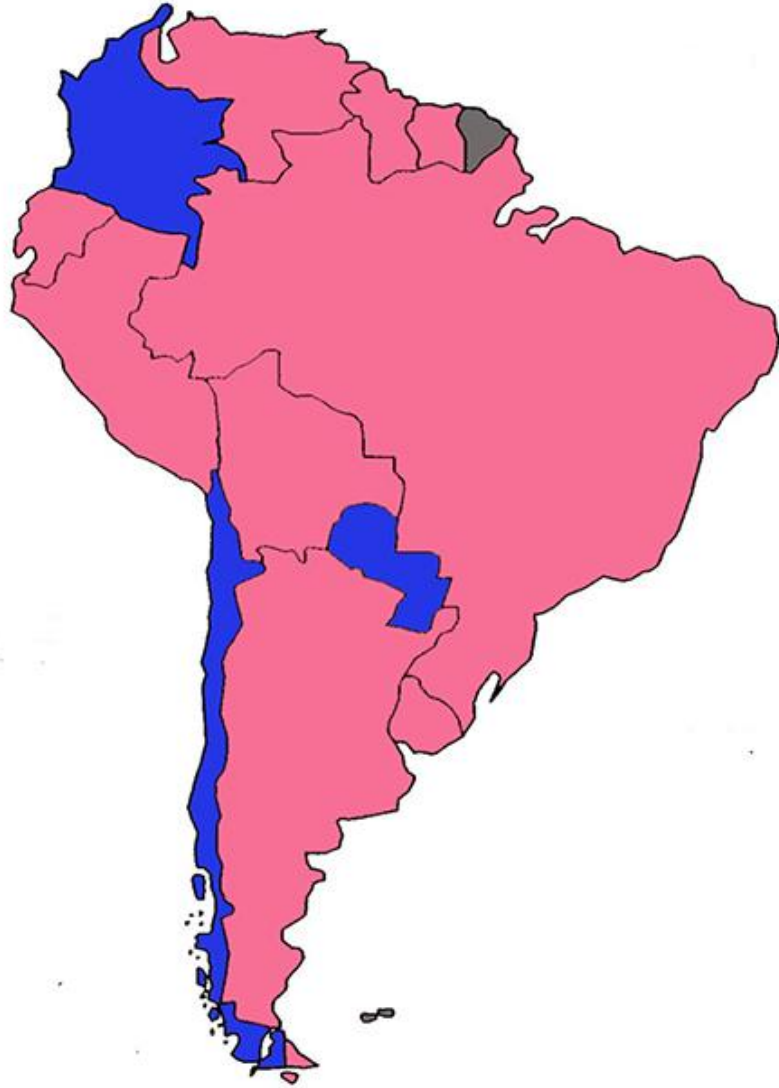
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# Pink Tide

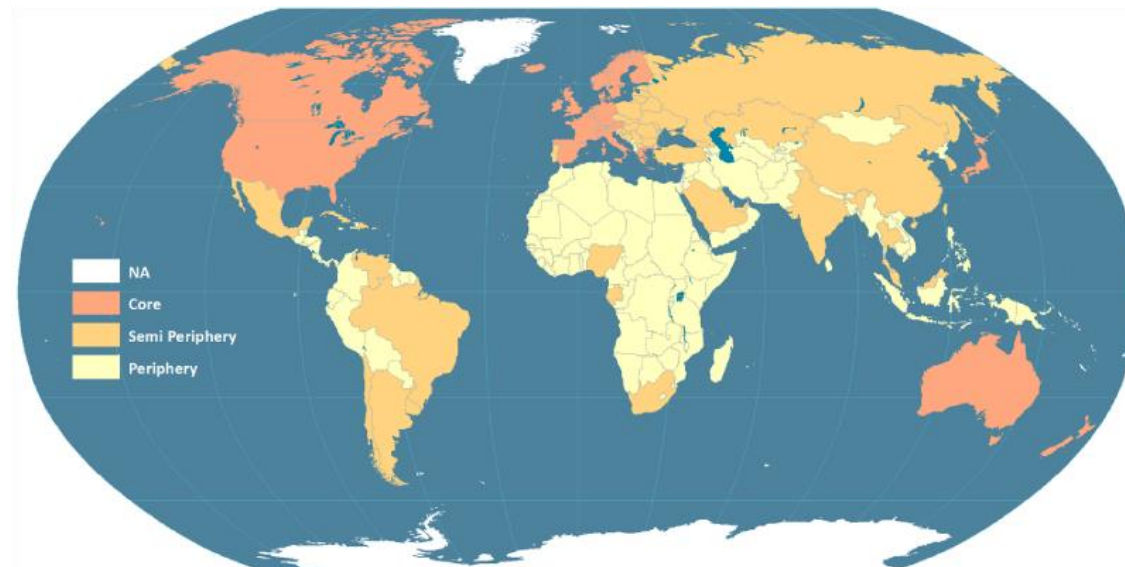


# Brazil

- Environmental and social movements lied on State to address a significant share of their demands
- The belief that structural changes were possible through the State
- Brazilian State opened its “ears” and some “doors” for those demands, and, in some sense, also addressed some of them
- Many policies, programmes, projects were “set in motion.”
  - Amazônia Sustentável,
  - Combate ao fogo no arco do desmatamento
  - plano de desenvolvimento sustentável da BR 163.
  - Terras Indígenas – Raposa Terra do Sol

# Working paper - Objective

- Explore potential hypotheses that explain the limits in the strategy of inducing counter-hegemonic agro-food systems through the state route in countries of **peripheral capitalism**.



# Context

- History of Brazilian agroecological movement
- After 2003, those actors had begun to participate (through different forms) in deliberative spaces of Brazilian State
- Set of policies was constructed and implemented
  - Pronera, PAA, PNATER, PNAE, PLANAPO, NEAs

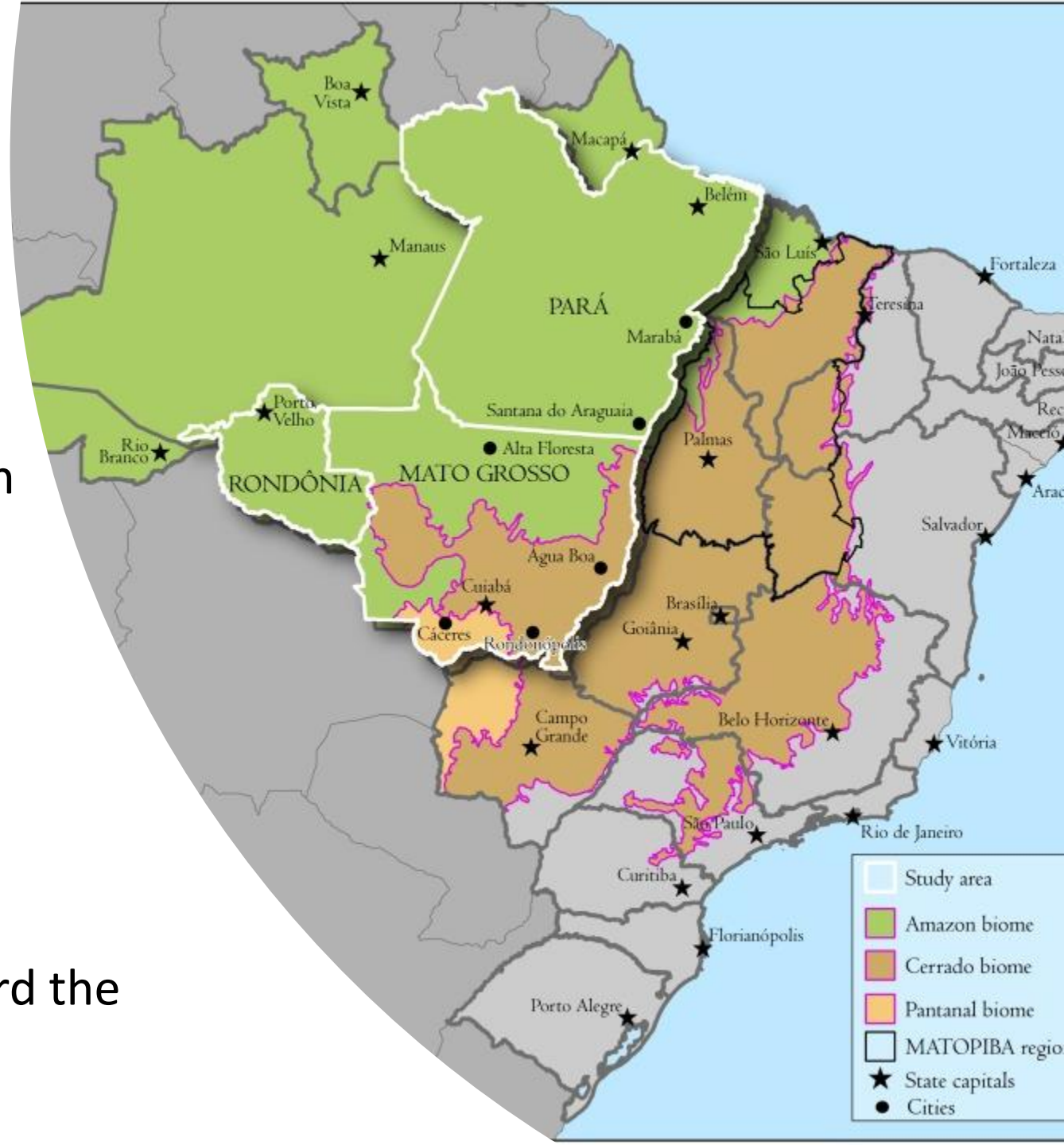
# Results of those policies

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- Significant counter-hegemonic changes in the Brazilian agro-food system **didn't happen**

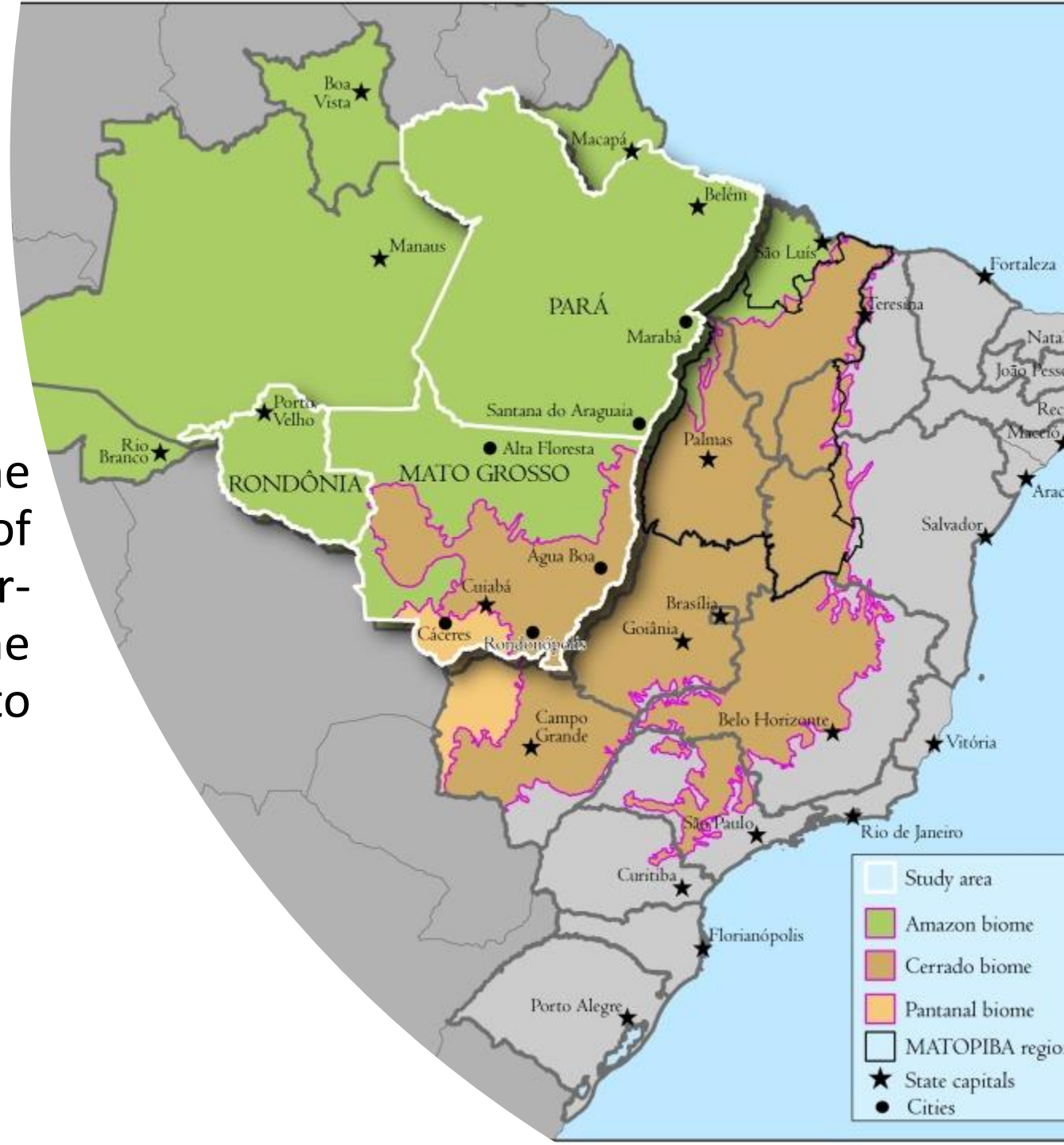
On the contrary,

- Level of pesticides consumption raised
- We produced and exported agricultural commodities as never before
- Our agricultural frontiers advanced toward the Brazilian Amazon



# Results of those policies

- Those data reveal that even with the structuring of a comprehensive set of policies aimed at supporting counter-hegemonic agro-food systems, the results observed do not point to significant structural changes.





- We centred most of the efforts in conquering spaces inside the government structure.
- Other essential initiatives were left in the background
- Dispute the State? Or to focus our efforts on other fronts?





# Lessons

There is a **clear limit** to the strategy of inducing counter-hegemonic agro-food systems through the State in peripheral capitalist countries.

It is not a question of disregarding the strategic relevance of the State as a space for negotiation and fostering change, but rather to **adequately situate its role** in this process.

# Lessons

Investigations about the role of the State in social transformation and, more specifically, about its effectiveness as an agent of counter-hegemonic changes are not an unprecedented topic in the social sciences.

In this way, we are seeking to identify explanatory hypotheses that allow us to reach a better understanding of the exposed scenario.

# Group of hypotheses to be explored

- Anti-change bourgeois State (structuralist)
  - Resistances (e.g. accountability, bureaucracy)
  - Structures (mainly lack)
- State's cooptation/neutralization of counter-hegemonic movements (institutionalism)
  - Path dependence
- State bureaucracies have the potential for autonomous operations (State as a constellation of organizations)
  - Power of the parties
  - Different interests being disputed

# Ideas to be explored

The assimilation of counter-hegemonic themes by the governmental agenda **does not necessarily mean their full assimilation** by the State apparatus.

The globalization process implied in the loss of the State's relative power to regulate economic activities.

If counter-hegemonic changes affect the strategic objectives of large transnational corporations, **there will be resistance to change.**

Within a context marked by the capitalist order, the State is important, but without other elements, its **potential for effectiveness is very limited.**

# Ideas to be explored

Should we dispute the State or focus efforts on other fronts? (False dichotomy)

The **State is important**: (e.g. land demarcation, agrarian reform, coercive power, regulations, etc.)

But the **civil society has a crucial role** (e.g. mobilization, materialization, sensibilization, education, etc.)

The incorporation of counterhegemonic perspectives into the government's agenda is fundamental for structural changes, but it is, evidently, **insufficient**.

# Our intentions

**Set a research agenda** intending to support (guide) social/environmental/food movements in their relations/negotiations with the State



Thanks!

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