

Interfaces of school food procurement and family farming: the social constitution of the “30% Law” 11947/2009

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Introduction

BRAZIL’S 2009 Law 11947 stipulates that 30% of publicly financed school food must come from local Family Farmers. A Family Farmer (FF) is defined as a smallholder production unit¹, relying largely on family-sourced labour and on the activities of his/her own establishment (Brasil, 2006). In a country rife with social tensions between large-scale industrial agriculture and small-scale farming

1 To be considered a smallholder a Family Farmer should work a maximum of four “fiscal modules”. The surface of the fiscal module varies among municipalities depending on the main type of production, the income that the latter generates and other relevant types of productions present in the municipality. In the State of Rio Grande do Sul, where this research was conducted, a fiscal module is equivalent to 12 ha in the *gaúcha* mountains (municipalities like Caxias do Sul or Bento Gonçalves), whereas it is 28 ha at Bagé, a southern *gaúcha* region of extensive cattle production (<http://agrosoft.com/agropag/216317.htm>, accessed 27/1/2012). Area of fiscal modules for all of Brazil’s municipalities can be found at: Instrução especial/INCRA/nº 20, de 28 de maio de 1980.

(Van der Ploeg; Jingzhong; Schneider, 2010), the “familiar” or family-centred way gained popularity with the re-democratization in the 90s, when social movements recognized it as an effective response to the growing concerns over the well-documented unwanted social, health and environmental consequences of agricultural modernization (Sherwood et al., 2013).

Although the “30% Law” 11947/2009 intends to open new opportunities for Family Farming by regulating new market logics, beyond the institutional and juridical framework there is a complex network of actors who interpret it in diverse ways, thus generating diverse practices and therefore, diverging policy outcomes. Our starting point is that the 30% Law is socially constructed. The objective of this text is to explore how people, organized around emergent positions, interests and political agendas, utilise, navigate and mobilise the resources of seemingly contrasting policies – i.e., Rural Development and Food Security – for competing, colliding and colluding purposes. In the process, they generate new market logics and quality criteria that, over time, come to represent alternatives to agricultural modernisation. In doing so, we employ an actor-oriented perspective as a means of describing and explaining socio-technical heterogeneity in food (Long, 2001), emphasizing how people, in their creative exercise of passion, will and flair, as expressed in their daily food practices, become agents of change, even under extreme conditions of scarcity, hardship, and duress. For insights into localised policy-making processes, we provide qualitative attention to interpretation (Wagenaar, 2011), understood as the agency involved in people’s day-to-day activity of meaning-making and social-networking. Ultimately, we view the contingent, strategic and performative aspects of people’s practices in response to public policy as commonly neglected, though nonetheless central element of governance.

Following Lula's launch of the Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) strategy in 2003, the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) became a pillar of Brazilian national food policy. Fome Zero integrates interactive concerns for health, nutrition, social assistance, education and agricultural policies. One of its main tools is the National Food and Nutrition Security System (Sisan). According to an Oxfam (2010) study, since its creation, Fome Zero has helped move 20 million Brazilians out of poverty. Its starting point is that poverty reduction, food security, and support for small-scale agriculture are intimately connected. In providing a market tool that links the political issues of Food Security (FS) and Rural Development (RD), the 30% law employs this perspective.

Brazil faces the challenge of feeding an increasingly urban population of 190 million people. Smallholder, family farmers own 84% of farm units, distributed among just 24% of the land dedicated to agriculture. Nevertheless, family farms provide about 75% of the country's food (Consea, 2010). Regardless of this situation, pricing and market exclusion disfavours smallholders, leading to widespread poverty in rural villages (Van der Ploeg; Jingzhong; Schneider, 2010). Awareness of this situation led the Brazilian government to propose specialized purchasing arrangements via the school food programme (PNAE). According to the public body in charge of PNAE, the National Fund for the Development of Education (FNDE), school food purchasing from FFs has increased from 47% in 2010 to 67% in 2013 (Soares et al., 2013).

In addition to regulating the procurement from family farmers, the policy makers have proposed new criteria to the primacy of low cost. In particular, the policy emphasizes attention to local quality as a means of fostering development as well as fresh and organic products as a means of improving environmental management and human

health. In this chapter, we explore how the social activity around these legislative innovations has opened up (or not) spaces for the inclusion of new actors and market logics. Before entering the findings of our study, however, we need to introduce the arrival of the 30% Law.

The “30% Law”: bridging the gap between rural development and food security

THE 30% LAW for the school food procurement from family farmers is the result of two traditionally distinct and competing policies: Rural Development (integration of farmers in markets) and Food Security (right to food for all).

On the side of Rural Development, Brazilian policies have traditionally prioritised agricultural modernization (Schneider; Shiki, 2010). Van der Ploeg (2003) summarizes the underlying logic of agricultural modernization through four dynamics: (1) commoditization of rural life (putting prices on resources, labour and products), (2) introduction of currency (and debt) as the primary means of inter-mediation, (3) social distancing of markets (production to consumption) and (4) dependence on externally based knowledge and technology. Concerned about the exclusion of smallholders, the erosion of agrobiodiversity and soils, destruction of hydric systems, pesticide poisoning and inefficient production and marketing of commodities caused by agricultural modernization (Sherwood et al., 2013), since the 1980s a growing number of counter-movements, in particular the Landless Peasant’s Movement, have promoted “Family Farming” as an alternative (Turpin, 2009; Schneider; Shiki, 2010).

In what concerns the Food Security policy, the school food programme (PNAE), prioritizing cost over food quality, long has been

the target of critique by parents and the broader public concerned over children's health (Triches; Schneider, 2010; Triches, 2010). Provided raising concerns over food security, since the 1990s, PNAE has risen from merely a "second hand" welfare programme designed to calm the appetites of children (Spinelli; Canesqui, 2002; Froehlich, 2010) to a structural policy at the fore of political priorities (Triches, 2010) – a centrepiece of the 2003 Fome Zero food policy.

Approach: interface analysis

THE RESEARCH analysis is informed by an Actor-Oriented perspective, emphasizing how people, operating as social actors and through the capacity of agency, struggle to give meaning to their unique experiences and resulting competing political interests and agenda (Long, 2001). In this research, we argue that policy is not only determined by major structural factors, such as trends in capital accumulation on a global and national scale, international markets, and the assumed importance of class struggle. Policy is also constructed by the social interests, ideologies and administrative styles of the state's political and bureaucratic elite – of the street-level civil servants and of the local beneficiaries, as well as by the grassroots activity of civil society itself. In this chapter, we explore what Long calls the more "autonomous" processes taking place off-stage or in the interstices of formal political-administrative frameworks. Such autonomous processes open up space for the continuation and challenge of diverging views or logics of bureaucracy, for example with regard to that over the national school food programme in Brazil.

In this chapter, we look specifically at the logics of agricultural modernization and to the dynamics of cooperation in market governance, as performed during the grounded activity of bureaucrats

charged with implementing PNAE. In doing so, we place qualitative attention on two interacting processes:

Lens 1: practices

BOTH LONG (2001) and Bacchi (1999) have described the emphasis of Foucault on the interlinkages of discourses with practices. Long contends that social perceptions, cultural dispositions, values and classifications must be analysed in relation to interlocking experiences and social practices, not at the level of general cultural schema or value abstractions. An emphasis on practices reveals the social heterogeneity of the policy process, thereby blurring the boundaries between agency and structure (Schatzki; Knorr-Cetina, 2001).

Lens 2: social interfaces

THE SPACE CREATED by the 30% Law means that the gatekeeping position of the food industry between consumers (public school students) and producers is partly challenged. At least for that 30%, the municipalities are making the purchase directly, positioning the state as a new gatekeeper (Lozano, 2012) between Family Farmers and school children, between Food Security/Public Health and Rural Development. In order to examine these interrelations, we work with Long's (2001) concept of "social interface". Through ethnography based on participant observation, we explore how discrepancies of social interest, cultural interpretation, knowledge and power are mediated and perpetuated or transformed at critical points of linkage or confrontation.

Drawing on data from five months of ethnographic study of lead author in Rio Grande do Sul (Vicente-Almazán, 2012), we examine the tensions arising at diverse interfaces between:

1. “market conventions” in the renegotiation of “best value” (Morgan et al., 2006; Morgan; Sonnino, 2008). These characteristics of socially embedded markets result from the addition of the domestic and civic conventions to the dominant commercial and industrial quality conventions. Domestic conventions are largely based on trust, face-to-face relations and attachment to place and traditional methods of production, whereas civic conventions respond to a set of collective principles and involve goods and products that have general societal benefits (Murdoch et al., 2000; Renard, 2003; Morgan et al., 2006 in Lewicki, 2006; Morgan; Sonnino, 2008; Paredes, 2010);
2. diverging, “taken-for-granted lifeworlds” of the policy actors (Long, 2001) and their assumptions and representations when designing and interpreting the policy in practice;
3. “mediated arrangements of power” in the market negotiation which shape whether the exclusive dynamics of “modernized” markets are continued or challenged.

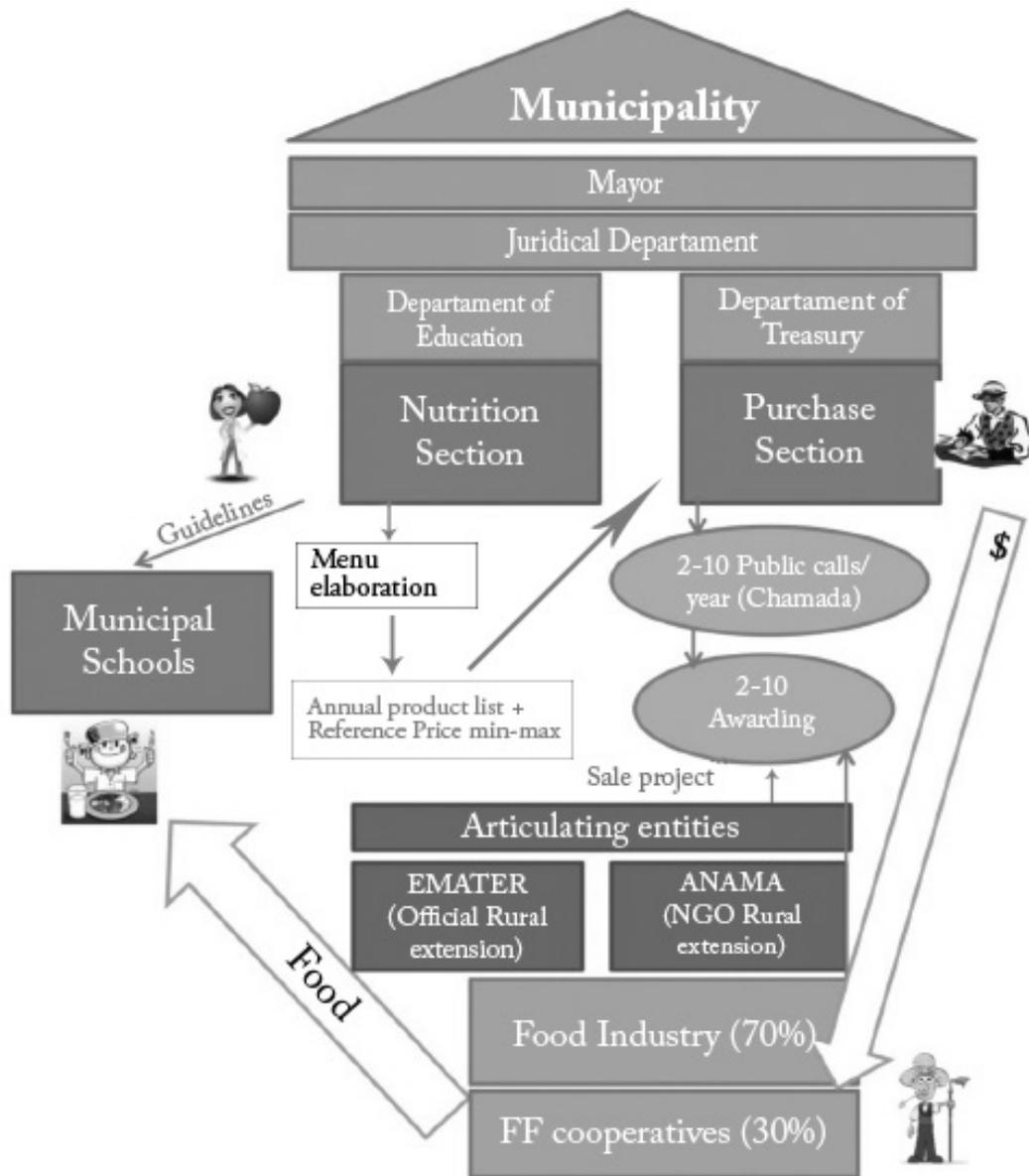
The research is based on experiences in two municipalities belonging to the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul: Maquiné and Porto Alegre, where the procurement from FFs was uniquely well established and the local actors were willing to host the research. Porto Alegre is an example of a large-scale, urban municipality (1,4 million inhabitants: 72,555 primary school students and 133 farming families), while Maquiné represents a small rural

municipality (6,908 inhabitants: 501 primary school students and 545 farming families). We analyze the interfaces arising in the creation of spaces for new actors, new market logics and quality criteria, commenting on some tensions between the abstract legal framework and the actual practices, as well as on creative responses intended to deal with these contradictions. We do not focus on state-managed schools, but only on those schools for which procurement is organized by the city and town hall. Let's first see how the procurement happens in practice in Porto Alegre and Maquiné.

Determining the School Food Programme in maquiné and Porto Alegre

THE NUTRITION section of the city hall releases once a year a “Public Call for FF suppliers”, including a description of demanded products, schedule for school menus and general requirements for FF suppliers. According to this yearly general plan, the procurement section publishes periodically (monthly, in the case of Porto Alegre, and biannually in the case of Maquiné) updated requests for specific food items. In contrast to the yearly on-line bidding done for food companies (70% of the budget), the bidding process for FFs is in-person (30% of the budget) (see figure 1). The Civil servants from the Procurement Section meet directly with growers and nutritionists. Different cooperatives may compete for each commodity. In the case of Porto Alegre, a relatively large market, many groups of farmers participate, while in Maquiné, a smaller market, usually only one local group takes part. The articulating entities like the public agrarian extension office EMATER or the NGO ANAMA also play an important role in mediating the market. They help farmers to organize to access the school food market.

Figure 1 – Actors and tools involved in the school food procurement



Source: self-elaboration.

Moving on to our ethnographic observations in Porto Alegre and Maquiné, we can contend that some of the heterogeneous practices of actors challenge the assumptions of the legal framework, socially constituting the Law 11947. We will start by presenting the diverse practices of Family Farmers that we found.

Family farmers farming and selling practices are heterogeneous

THE FAMILY FARMERS and cooperatives accessing the PNAE market in Porto Alegre and Maquiné live in very diverse lifeworlds. Our ethnographic observations show that among the school food suppliers there are: (1) large modern cooperatives completely integrated in “modernized” agri-industrial processes of production, which we have called *integrated farmers*, farmers who do not really fit within the policy assumptions about family farming; (2) smaller groups of more “peasant-like” farmers, understanding the peasant condition as one less driven by the logics of agricultural modernization. We have called this group *colonos* (common terminology for peasant farmers in Rio Grande do Sul). We follow Van der Ploeg’s (2008) concept of the “new peasantries” – a group of farming styles that emphasize the reproduction of the family unit (“family” logics) and the biological/environmental cycles within the farm (“biological/environmental” logics) over the “external” cycles of the market; and (3) a category of *colonos* who combine the peasant tradition with the will to link to markets otherwise, which we call *entrepreneurial colonos*.

Therefore, the results of the research place into question the policy assumption of homogeneity in the category “Family Farmer” as a solution to the problems of modernization². Our interpretation is that the policy makers of the 30% Law see the “Family Farmer” as largely homogenous producer category that has relatively coherent support

2 We use the concepts of *modernity* and *modern* in describing socio-technical processes that have undergone “development” or “progress”, regardless of direction, whereas *modernized* responds to a process of “progress” in the direction of *agricultural modernization*, as defined in my theoretical framework.

needs for competing in markets, which if met, will enable members to deliver sustainable development. Nevertheless, these three groups practice contrasting visions of *modernity*, leading them to organize their production systems around different rationales: commercial market-oriented production for the *integrated* and culturally oriented peasant-led production (family and farm biological/environmental cycles, social cooperation) for the *colonos*. For example, integrated farmers are less driven by biological or environmental cycles than *colonos* (see table 1), since they follow the “technification” strategy that the *técnicos* of the cooperative advise them. Technification is a version of the green revolution that consists on the specialization on the most productive crops of the farm and on the optimization of their productivity through better organization and a complete industrial input package from agrochemical transnational companies who are their “partners”.

Regarding the ways to link to the PNAE market, as a result of externalizing commercialization (they sell their products to the cooperative), the *integrated* farmers do not know to whom the cooperative sells their products. In order to modernize, they “need” the protection of the cooperative *vis-a-vis* the “threatening” modernized markets. For these “vulnerable” families, this entails high trust (and thus risk to manipulation) in the cooperative. *Integrated* farmers belong to the category “Family Farmers”, which is portrayed as an alternative and counter-movement to the “bads” (i.e., the unwanted, though uncontrollable and undeniable products) of agricultural modernization (Sherwood et al., 2013), but they still are capable of re-producing the former market logics in terms of harmful health, social and environmental outcomes.

Nevertheless, amongst the school food suppliers, I also identified another category of farmers that combines the practice of a peasant

tradition like *colonos*, with the will to integrate in conventional markets, like *integrated farmers*. We have called them *entrepreneurial colonos*, and we can describe them as *colonos* who have taken the opportunities to access new markets, such as the school food market. Therefore, we can expect that this institutional market has an important influence on them. They are the leaders of a new generation of cooperatives born in the 90s, smaller in size and with a hybrid vision of what a “modern” farmer is, more related to empowerment, cooperation and autonomy.

The paradox that shows the interface is that these *entrepreneurial colonos* describe those that practice modernized *integrated* farming as “traditional cooperatives”, and they question the legitimacy of their access to the school food market through the mechanisms of the 30% Law, because they already had access before the law and because they do not consider them different to modern food companies. For the *entrepreneurial colonos*, the PNAE market represents an *in extremis* measure to get “their head above the water”, since they encounter difficulties defending their peasant values under the pressure of modernized markets.

Therefore, we can conclude that *integrated farmers*, even if they officially belong to the category “Family Farmers”, which is portrayed as an alternative to the bads of modernized markets, still reproduce the former market logics in terms of environmentally harming practices and centralized governance. These farmers are currently accessing the school food market. On the other hand, we have observed that in Porto Alegre and Maquiné the 30% law is creating space for the *entrepreneurial colonos*, new actors who have a new understanding of the market relations. In the next section, we will see how they are building a new market governance rather based in cooperation.

Table 1 – Comparison of the weight of the logics that drive the practices and narratives of PNAE suppliers in Porto Alegre and Maquiné

	Integrated	Colonos	Entrepreneurial Colonos
Formal organization	***	*	**
Vulnerability	**(*) ³	**(*)	*
Autonomy⁴	*	**	***
Dependence⁵	***	**	*
Protection⁶	***		**
Cooperation logics	*	**	***
Family logics	*	***	**
Market logics	***	*	**
Farm biological/ environmental cycles logics	*	***	**
Civic logics	*	*(*)	**(*)
Meaning of the PNAE market	No special meaning, commercialization is externalized. Social distancing production-consumption.	FROM an additional nested market TO an opportunity to fight the downward spiral towards poverty.	An opportunity for FFs to access markets without renouncing to some peasant values. The <i>in extremis</i> measure to prevent FF from disappearing.

Source: self-elaboration.

3 I have used a bracket when I have found such variability of my cases within the category, that I could not decide how to classify the categories in the variable.

4 From central modes of ordering.

5 On central modes of ordering.

6 From conventional markets.

*“Direct” purchase doesn’t necessarily entail
more collaborative market governance*

IN THE PREVIOUS section, we found an interface between the *entrepreneurial colonos* and the *integrated farmers*, both belonging to the group of the so-called “Family Farmers”. The fact that there is no differentiation between those two groups makes that those interfaces arise further at the school food procurement. Our cases show that *entrepreneurial colonos* and *integrated farmers* link differently to the school food market, despite the policy makers’ assumption that direct supply from FF cooperatives (i.e., free of intermediary agents) will narrow in all cases economic and social proximities between family farmers and the public tenderers, thus generating a more efficient, effective and inclusive market governance. They intermediate the market in diverse styles, which are determined in large part by unique power relations, and therefore they shape the extent to which the dynamics of exclusion of the conventional market are reproduced or substituted for new value systems and rationales (a new governance).

We differentiate *paternalistic* from *collaborative* intermediation by contrasting their notions of leadership, entrepreneurship and learning processes (see table 2). In our cases, we have observed that the “traditional cooperative” of integrated farmers, and some public agrarian extension agents of EMATER adopt a *paternalistic* intermediation based on: (1) non-family farmers leading the cooperative; (2) adopting centralized modes of ordering⁷ to intermediate the PNAE market

7 In order to clarify the notion cooperation that I am using, I draw on the difference made by Adams (1975) in Long (2001): “Between coordinate and centralised patterns of relations. In the former, there is no central figure of authority, since the individuals grant reciprocal rights to each other. Coordinate/cooperative/

which enhance the social distancing of production from consumption and can imply manipulation of FFs by the cooperative board and by agrichemical companies; (3) being driven by the market-oriented logics of modernization; and (4) not building capacities at farmer level due to PNAE access.

One of the requirements of the law to be a FF is actually that the family manages the farm. When it comes to a FF cooperative, however, it is not required that it is led by FFs. Therefore, there are “FF cooperatives” led by managers that are not any more FFs or that were never FFs. This was the case of the traditional cooperative that we studied, in which the managers had whether turned soy large estate owners or were not farmers at all (earning their life with the cooperative salary). And in what concerns the associates of the cooperative, there were big and small farmers, since the law allows a FF cooperative to have maximum of 30% of non-family farmers (Ordinance 17/2010, one of the legal developments of the Law 11326/2006, (Brasil 2006). Then, the consequence in this case was a difference of influence between the large-state owners and the family farmers, as perceived by small-scale farmers:

The cooperative is turned to the big [farmers]. The problem is that smalls don't complain! We have to create another cooperative, one only for 'smalls' [...] The 'poison' firms always tend to exploit the small. (A26).

collaborative networks are generally symmetrical in form, but often have ambiguous and shifting boundaries. On the other hand, in the centralised case, there are imbalances in the exchanges, differences in access to strategic resources, and a degree of centralised control (hierarchy) and decision-making exercised by an authoritative body or persons (and sometimes backed by 'higher' authorities) who claim to 'represent' the collectivity in its dealings with external actors.”

The managers of the cooperative recognized such differences:

If we would only keep the ‘small’, we would pay more for the inputs due to the smaller quantities. Everybody wants to buy from them [big farmers]. Hence, we have to ‘give in’ to some things in order to keep them with us [...] As a medium-big farmer [he firstly says big, then he adds medium], small properties don’t disturb me with all those benefits. They don’t compete with me. (A25b).

The fact that he articulates his explanation on the importance of farmers for the cooperative on the price of the inputs makes sense when we know that inputs sale is their second biggest source of turnover (28%). Together with the soy sales, they represent the majority of the turnover of the cooperative (68%). Therefore, the farmers integrated in these modernization logics drive the cooperative, and those who do not fit them so well (“smalls”, that is, FFs) may benefit from the “externalities” of the former (from the purchase of chemical inputs through the “progress” of the region, creation of employment etc.).

Moreover, under such *paternalistic* intermediation, the empirical evidence points out at the fact that the access to the PNAE market is not specifically building capacities for *integrated farmers*. This is due to the social distancing of markets, thus the new market not representing new production standards or networks for them. Nevertheless, at the managerial level they have hired a new administrative assistant who is specifically working on the communication with schools. On the other hand, they have externalized the negotiation with municipalities to a commercial agent. Therefore, the capability building stays at the managerial level or outside the cooperative.

Despite the risks of *paternalistic* intermediation in terms of social exclusion of FFs and power concentration, many PNAE street level civil servants and public officials have a tendency to choose for them. This happens because they are logistically more skilled due to their

experience in conventional markets and their adoption of business-type strategies. Conversely, we draw from our data that in Porto Alegre and Maquiné there are groups of *entrepreneurial colonos* and intermediaries building a more *collaborative intermediation* style, which may be a source of alternativeness in the governance of PNAE market because it is: (1) led by FFs; (2) adopting collaborative modes of ordering which empower FFs and create accountability through proximity links; (3) driven by market, family, biological/environmental and civic logics, and (4) building capacities based on farmer-to-farmer learning.

Table 2 – Characteristics of Paternalistic vs. Collaborative intermediation

	<i>Paternalistic Intermediation</i>	<i>Collaborative Intermediation</i>
Leadership	<p>Non-Family Farmers. Paternalism = authority + protection. Centralized modes of ordering RISK!>abuse of authority> manipulation (privileges for the leaders)</p>	<p>Family Farmers Proximity managers- -associates Empowerment = autonomy through cooperation. Limitation of the scale to enhance coordinate modes of ordering.</p>
Entrepreneurship	<p>Driven mainly by market logics (alienation from peasant values.) Social distancing of markets Low participation of FFs</p>	<p>Driven by market, family, biological/environmental and civic logics. Increased proximity production-consumption (trust-building/accountability) Higher participation of FFs.</p>
Learning processes	<p>Individually-focused capacity building under a lay/expert-based interaction.</p>	<p>Individual and Group-based capacity building, farmer-to-farmer sharing knowledge.</p>

Source: self-elaboration.

As opposed to the traditional cooperative, the cooperatives of entrepreneurial *colonos* do not leave the trust building only to the *técnicos*, but they rather pledge their commitment to proximity by the construction of spaces of direct communication. According to one of the managers of a cooperative practicing *collaborative* intermediation:

It was more about the people's trust; it was very difficult to trust each other to do the work. Today thanks to everybody who already worked here, I get to the members; I get to talk to them without anyone else intermediating, a technician or... they believe in us. (A54).

Another common characteristic of the cooperatives led by *entrepreneurial colonos* is the conscious self-limitation of their scale (50-125 members) in order to control their governance. For example, one of the managers of the citrus cooperative explained to me that, in the last years, they had designed initiation protocols (training, awareness raising etc.) to control the incorporation of new members to the cooperative. This was due to some problems that they had with farmers who had entered the group only to get higher prices for their products, without being aware of the commitment to their specific conception of entrepreneurship. Another of the cooperatives limited their scale due to an understanding of territorial development as necessarily decentralized, instead of through big central nodes of power:

This cooperative is for three municipalities [...], and it is limited to this, our idea is to never go beyond 160 members. Today, we have 116. The idea is that if there would be a bigger demand from more members, it's to make another cooperative, because we think that if it grows too big she ends up becoming a company. (A54).

In 2011, in the municipality of Porto Alegre, 35% of the budget was invested in school food from FFs through *collaborative* intermediation (data from Nutrition Section) and 32% by paternalistic intermediation. The other 30% was intermediated in hybrid ways, combining characteristics of both. Moreover, the intermediating role of some Civil Society groups, such as the agroecological NGO ANAMA in Maquiné or the CAEs (School Food Councils) at both municipalities have been essential to building accountability and more collaborative market arrangements. These groups are using the autonomous spaces between the Market and the State to include their civic values as *civic conventions* in the qualification process of the PNAE market. They are doing so through the control of the public budget, capability-building with farmers and civil servants etc.

Finally, the research also included the analysis of the bidding sessions as spaces for nuance to be locally distributed and resolved. We have chosen not to overload the article with this other set of results, but they show that *entrepreneurial colonos* are building local arrangements with nutritionists to bypass the concurrence of the traditional cooperatives and the preference for the lowest price “at all times” of the bidding regulation. Although the logics of bidding for the lowest price continue in both Porto Alegre and Maquiné, we argue the building of common knowledge and trust through face-to-face bargaining, together with the civic engagement of some local actors with the farming style of *entrepreneurial colonos*, is enabling a shift in power towards more collaborative, inclusive and efficient market governance. Our results show that this new governance is capable of generating positive-sum returns for both producers and purchasing agents beyond what is normally possible during the more anonymous processes of standard commercial markets.

Conclusions: accommodating nuance for more effective policy

TO WRAP UP, we have identified the following interfaces embedded in the social constitution of the 30% Law 11947/2009. (1) The practices of the Family Farmers accessing the school food market are endlessly creative and nuanced. Rather than an affront to the homogeneous notions of effectiveness and efficiency criteria of modernized production-consumption marketing schemes, we find opportunities in this heterogeneity. For example, despite lingering problematic relationship with agrochemical companies of *integrated farmers*, which can lead to environmentally harmful production practices or the persistence of *paternalistic* intermediation of the school food market, *entrepreneurial colonos* have managed to generate alternative practices leading to more environmentally friend production and improved economies.

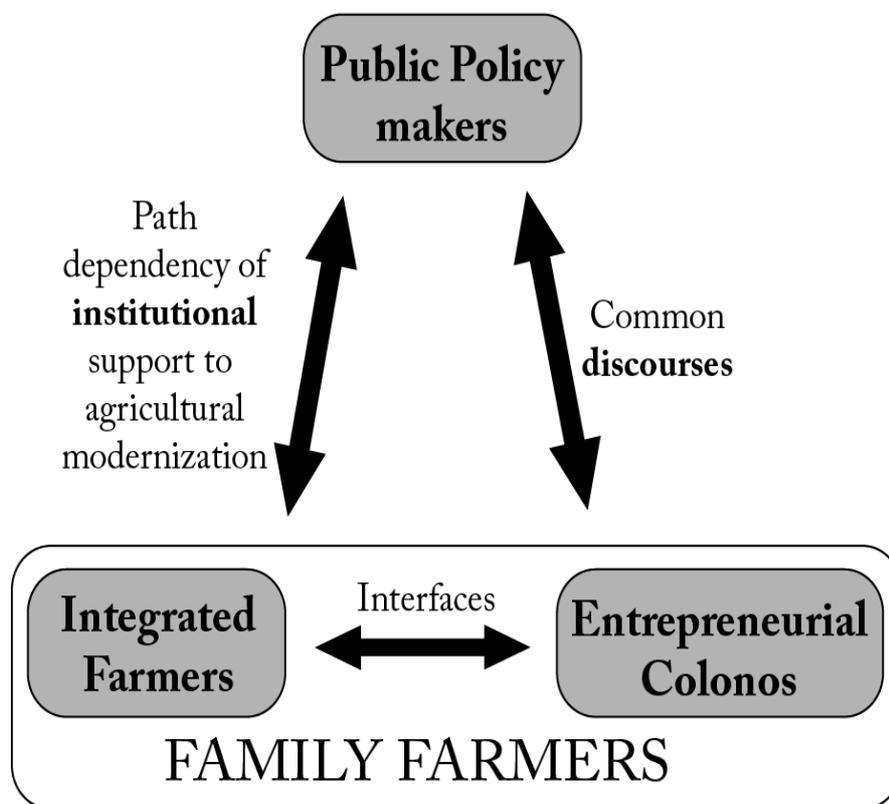
Often these are achieved through unique worldview, knowledge, social relationships and management of production factors; (2) Non-family and business-oriented models of food production continues to access the school food market, surviving in the hidden organizational niches of integrated farmers cooperatives; (3) The actors have different interpretations of food quality, due to the combination of some path dependency on commercial and industrial conventions, with new opportunities for domestic and civic conventions being open by some nutritionists and *entrepreneurial colonos*.

Both meaning-making processes involved in the daily activity of food production and procurement, as well as battles among the social networks organized around particular meanings/ideas, reveal

that concept of family farmer is, in practice, far from defined or static. To be successful, in terms of its original intentions, the policy process must accommodate the nuanced and often contradictory realities involved in the social construction of food. Then, if we go back to the main question of the article, *how is the FF law creating space for new actors?*, we could say that on the one hand, there are some “former” actors, such as the *integrated farmers* and the large-scale farmers within the traditional cooperatives, that continue to successfully access the school food market. At the same time, however, new actors, in particular the *entrepreneurial colonos*, have emerged to gain access to the market.

Established in the 1990s, the *entrepreneurial colonos* cooperatives are part of broader social movements that have championed new political discourses around Food Security and Rural Development. These discourses aim at overcoming the “bads” of agricultural modernization through organic farming and collaborative governance of markets. As summarized in Figure 2, the discourse of the *entrepreneurial colonos* closely resonates with the public discourse of the 30% Law. Nevertheless, we have found that underlying the public discourse lays an institutional path dependency of agricultural modernization, as represented by the administrative norms and procedures as well as the organizational structures underlying the integrated farmers.

Figure 2 – Institutional tensions between Family Farmers and Policy-makers



Source: self-elaboration.

Within the dynamic, competing networks of family farming we have found, in the activity of civil servants and entrepreneurial farmers, local counter-movements that are providing effective responses to the contradictions between agricultural modernization and the ideals of food sovereignty as an effective alternative. Through the growing influence of collaborative governance of markets and organic farming as a counter discourse, these actors are creating spaces for new market logics and quality criteria that appear to be giving rise, if slowly and not always coherently, to institutional change.

Our two cases show us how different actors have interpreted differently the general regulations of the law. We have also found diverse kinds of farmers and cooperatives accessing the school food

market at both sites, due to the different size of the municipalities, but also to the different local arrangements and negotiations that each team of civil servants is building with the farmers. Originating from the same policy, an array of heterogeneous local interpretations and arrangements is yielding different outcomes in the school food procurement of Porto Alegre and Maquiné. Therefore, the actor-oriented approach to policy analysis can be useful to understand the intricate paths through which the government establishes procurement relationships with different actors. In a way, this analysis shows that the 30% Law represents a breakthrough in relations between civil society and government, and, at the same time, it shows how an analysis from an actor-oriented approach is particularly interesting in the understanding of contemporary public policy.

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