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THE SOCIAL GAME OF TOBACCO
GROWING IN THE VALE DO RIO
PARDO/RIO GRANDE DO SUL:
ANALYSIS COVERING 2002 TO 2005**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article was to analyze the manifest interests demonstrated between 2002-2005 by those social actors with an interest in tobacco farming in the Rio Pardo Valley in Rio Grande do Sul, which has the highest concentration of tobacco plantations and tobacco processing facilities in Brazil. Tobacco farming is undertaken by farming families as part of an integrated production system linking them by contract to multinational companies. This period was chosen because it encompasses a series of disputes over the ratification of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control in Brazil, a treaty whose objective was to curb the global tobacco epidemic. The main point of reference for the analysis was the Theory of Social Production by Carlos Matus. This enabled us to identify social actors, social facts and the interests manifested by the actors. We were able to observe conflict-of-interest relationships between tobacco growers and manufacturers in relation to the distribution of income and working conditions, cooperative relationships between tobacco growers and manufacturers and conflicts between actors in the Brazilian government and anti-smoking organizations on social issues associated to limiting tobacco. It was also concluded that the Brazilian ratification of a global tobacco control agreement did not change the basic rules of this social game.

Keywords: Tobacco Farming. Rio Pardo Valley. Framework Convention for Tobacco Control. Theory of Social Production. Social Game.

RESUMO

Este artigo visa analisar os atores sociais e seus interesses na fumicultura no Vale do Rio Pardo no Rio Grande do Sul, no período de 2002 a 2005. Trata-se da região que possui a maior concentração de lavouras de fumo no Brasil, e onde se encontra um complexo de indústrias fumageiras. Lá, a fumicultura é desenvolvida por agricultores familiares em um sistema integrado de produção que consiste em contratos com indústrias transnacionais. O período estudado foi selecionado por compreender disputas em torno da ratificação brasileira da Convenção-Quadro para o Controle do Tabaco, um Tratado que teve como o objetivo frear a epidemia mundial do tabagismo. As análises tiveram como referência a Teoria da Produção Social, de Carlos Matus, que possibilitou identificar atores sociais, fatos sociais e os interesses manifestados pelos atores. Foram constatadas a existência de relações de conflito entre fumicultores e indústria quanto à distribuição de renda e condições de trabalho. No que se refere ao controle ao tabaco, foram identificadas relações de cooperação entre fumicultores e indústria; e de conflito entre esses e governo brasileiro e organizações antitabagistas. O estudo aponta que a ratificação brasileira à Convenção-Quadro não alterou as regras básicas do jogo social da fumicultura na região.

Palavras-chave: Fumicultura. Vale do Rio Pardo. Convenção-Quadro para o Controle do Tabaco. Teoria da Produção Social. Jogo Social.

INTRODUCTION

Brazil is the largest exporter and the second largest producer of tobacco in the world, with almost a quarter of this production taking place in Vale do Rio Pardo (the Rio Pardo Valley - VRP), located in Rio Grande do Sul (Buainain and Souza Filho, 2009). This region also has the largest concentration of multinational tobacco companies operating in the country. These industries manage an integrated system consisting of small farmers who supply them with the raw material (tobacco): the Integrated Tobacco Production System (SIPT). This is made up of a series of contracts between the tobacco manufacturers, who provide agricultural inputs and technical support, and tobacco growers who commit to selling all of their crop to these companies (Buainain and Souza Filho, 2009). As well as having no established employment relationship, the workers operate in unhealthy working conditions and have to live on very small profit margins. By way of illustration: the farmer's profit margin is only 4.4% of the total price of a pack of cigarettes sold in Brazil, the rest goes on taxes or to the manufacturers and traders (AFUBRA, 2023). In terms of the impact on jobs and income in the country, the analysis for the last year studied here, 2005, by the Association of Tobacco Growers of Brazil (AFUBRA), stated that the industry was responsible for 2.4 million



direct and indirect jobs and 236,000 families relied on small farms dedicated to tobacco farming. In total, the farmers received a R\$ 3.65 billion gross in 2005 for their crops (Brasil, 2005; AFUBRA, 2023).

Skin contact with tobacco leaves and the use of pesticides cause acute and chronic diseases, intoxication, neurobehavioral problems, as well as environmental pollution (Etges *et. al.*, 2002; Eichle and Troian, 2009). As for the health of the consumers of tobacco products, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned, at the end of the 20th century, that the increase in smoking had caused a worldwide epidemic. As a result of the pressure from the WHO itself and the anti-smoking movement, the WHO was able to propose the first international public health treaty in history, the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), in 1999, together with the Member States of the United Nations (UN). The aim was to protect present and future generations from the harmful effects of smoking and combat the efforts of the Tobacco trade (Brasil, 2004).

The FCTC, as well as seeking to reduce smoking, also provided for the establishment of international cooperation to give tobacco growers technical and financial support so that they could migrate to other economically viable activities. This Treaty began to be widely publicized and discussed in the VRP from 2002 onwards. The ratification process in Brazil lasted until 2005. This was, therefore, a period the issue was being argued over, during which various social actors with manifest interests attempted to sway people and organizations all over the region. Even today, tobacco growers still believe that the aim of the FCTC was to end tobacco production (Troian, Eichle and Dal Soglio, 2014). However, almost two decades after it was ratified, tobacco farming has not significantly changed in the VRP (AFUBRA, 2023).

The research in this article stemmed from an interest in examining who the social actors were in this issue and, in particular, how they behaved in response to the Federal Government's intention to ratify an international treaty that had the potential to affect the tobacco industry. The research of Boeira (2002; 2006), within the authors' field of Organizational Studies, seemed particularly significant for this topic. In his doctoral thesis, Boeira (2002) expounded two operational concepts to account for the relationships between the actors involved in tobacco farming: strategic network and multifragmentary network. The first, made up of the tobacco industry, its allies and representatives, supports the SIPT, which is the basis of relations between tobacco growers and

manufacturers. The multifragmentary network, on the other hand, is made up of the organizations and people who are the leading players in the disputes with the tobacco companies. According to the author, the actions of the members are decentralized, which hinders their intended anti-tobacco and anti-smoking activities. Boeira (2002) states that these two networks clash and the strategic network has an advantage because there is a central core of members who coordinate all the other parties in the network: the Tobacco Industry Union (SINDIFUMO)¹ and the company Souza Cruz. In the multifragmentary network, however, there is no central actor to coordinate the parties or elements, which helps to explain its failure. Therefore, based on this researcher's approach, the analysis of power is restricted to the organizational form of each separate network. His argument derives from a power analysis based on the position that a component occupies in a network (central or peripheral) (Nohria, 1992; Powell and Smith-Doerr, 1994). The actors listed by Boeira (2002) are statically allocated to one of the two networks. They are unable to change position or their relationships throughout the process. The analysis, therefore, loses sight of the fact that actors are endowed with their own power resources that can change during the process through their actions, and they do not obey deterministic laws.

Due to such limitations in the approach used to analyze this subject, we resorted to the Social Production Theory (SPT) of Carlos Matus. For Matus (1997, p. 570), a social actor is "a personality, organization or human grouping that, in a stable or transitory way, has the capacity to accumulate strength, develop interests and needs and create facts in any situation". These actors make moves in the social game according to their situation and the interests they are pursuing. By providing his own definition of a social actor (which will be discussed later), Matus (1997) opposes the category of agent in traditional economic theory, which treats the entity as having no human characteristics, merely subject to market dynamics. SPT was developed by Carlos Matus to support his government planning method, Situational Strategic Planning (SSP). However, the theory has been used to analyze the actions of actors in shared power situations (see, for example, Misoczky, 2002; Costa and Goulart, 2011; Pinto, Misoczky and Flores, 2017; Barragán-Martínez,

1 After 2008, the organization changed its name to the 'Interstate Tobacco Industry Union' (SINDITABACO), but for the purpose of this research, it will be referred to as SINDIFUMO, which was its name during the studied period.



2023). SPT has also been used for this research, but the SSP method will not be examined in any greater depth.

The article analyzes the social facts produced between 2002 and 2005 in relation to tobacco production, in order to identify the interests around the moves by the social actors with an interest in tobacco growing in the Vale do Rio Pardo from 2002 to 2005. Although the duration was based on the milestones in the constitution and negotiation of the Framework Convention, the research was not limited to facts strictly related to the Treaty, but also covered any relevant facts found in the data gathered in relation to social games during the study period.

The next item introduces Carlos Matus' social production theory. Afterwards, we will discuss the methods and procedures used in the study; the analysis of the data gathered through a report on the social production and an analysis of the disputing interests in the social game of tobacco growing in the VRP during the studied period; and then a summary of the conflicting and cooperative relationships in the social game. Finally, we conclude with some final observations.

THE THEORY OF SOCIAL PRODUCTION

The SPT was designed by the Chilean economist and minister of Salvador Allende's government, Carlos Matus, who was one of the foremost academics on government planning in Latin America. One of the central concepts of Matus's theoretical construct is situation. He refers to the actor for explanation, rather than the idea of diagnosis, which is impersonal and deals in the third person. The situation is the area of social production. It refers to everything, relevant to the actor's action (Matus, 1997). Matus (1997, p. 219) defines the concept of situation as

The explanation of reality, produced by a social force as a function of its actions and its struggle with other social forces. This relates to the actor of explanation, his opponents and allies, his actions, the actions of his opponents and allies, and the social reality constructed by the social process. This reality appears as it is at a certain moment in its social formation, but it is the product of the constant struggle to maintain, reproduce and transform the system.

The explanation or "situational analysis as a practical explanation proper to an actor in the social game only has value (even if it does not always have sufficient rigor) due to the author who speaks, the owner of the explanation, who is responsible for what he says" (Matus, 2005, p. 180). For Matus (1997), the actor is guided by personal and social motivations. His behavior is



unpredictable; he is capable of being a reflected protagonist and of changing the process of social production. According to Matus (1996b, p. 204), to be treated as such, a social actor must fulfill these requirements: possess creative action; be a producer and product of the social system; their actions must have a design behind them; produce facts as part of the social game; take part in a partial game or large social game; have a stable organization that allows them to act with the weight of a reasonably coherent collective, or be a personality with a strong and stable presence, so that they attract a social collectiveness; accumulate expertise, pass judgment, make speeches and moves.

The social production of social actors, on the other hand, can be seen as a cycle in which all of their production is based on their use of power resources and collections. Social actors act in the game by using their available abilities and power resources, and the critical resources vary according to each social game. Matus (1997; 1996a) lists some of the resources that can be used by social actors in a game: economic resources, political resources; collections of values; collections of knowledge; legal resources; and embedded natural resources. They are not limited to just these and they can vary according to the game, and also resources and collections can increase or decrease, or change in value according to the actor's production in each run through. According to Matus (1997, p. 109), "all social production reverts to the actor-producer as social accumulation (or dispersal) of new economic resources, power, reaffirmation, reevaluation or the emergence of new values and accumulation of new knowledge".

To make it easier to understand the process of social production, Matus (1997) uses the analogy of a game. The power relations in the game, in this case, gradually change, until we reach an extreme in which some have a certain chance to win and others to lose. In this situation, the variety of possible moves available to the former significantly increases, while, for the latter, this decreases in the face of the option of defeat. The social game can be considered to be "the arena where political practice takes place and government is exercised. It is an environment of conflict, competition and cooperation, involving the participating players or actors" (Matus, 2005, p. 56). The game has fundamental rules before it starts, which establish its genostructures, which define the possible room for moves. The genostructures are maintained by the actors who benefit from them, while those who are harmed by them try to change them and create new rules.



When genostructures are altered, they cause major changes in history. The social game also has phenostructures, which are the various capabilities for producing social facts, economic goods and services and values. These only occur within the scope allowed by the genostructures. In addition, there are different production flows, which are social facts, events, actions or goods generated or influenced by the phenostructures.

The strength of a given actor is their social production capability compared to their power. It indicates the actor's ability to produce operations and actions. Power "is related to an actor's motivation, as it expresses the ability to sustain it" (Matus, 1996b, p. 110). According to Matus (1996b), a social actor's motivation is based on the value he attributes to a move and by the interests he pursues in the social game. The value an actor attributes to an operation depends on what it can achieve, in respect of their goals in the game. The player could rate the value on a scale from very high (VH), high (H), medium (M), low (L) to very low (VL). Its importance depends on the impact that the operation will have on the actor's assets, whether political, economic or organizational.

The interest of a social actor, therefore, is "their intention or purpose to use their efforts" (Matus, 1996b, p. 104). Interest defines whether an actor is supportive, opposed or indifferent in the game or social fact, in relation to the other actors in the social game. According to Matus (1996b, p. 104) "the interest indicates how the actor signals their position or intentions regarding an operation". Matus (2005) describes three positions, or degrees of interest and their respective signs: the first is support (+), when the move would be beneficial if completed, and therefore they establish a cooperative relationship with actors with the same sign and oppose the opposite sign: the actor will use their will and strength to ensure the move is successful. The antagonistic degree of interest to the first is reject (-), when the move would be costly if completed, this creates conflict with those who support it and means that they can cooperate with those who reject it: the actor will use their will and strength to prevent the move from being successful. The final one is indifference (0), when the actor has no particular interest.

In addition to these three positions, Matus (2005) states that there are important nuances, due to the complexity of the social game. The author states that there are various degrees of support or rejection that can be, at times, transparent positions (their degree of interest is obvious), and at other times, masked positions (their degree of interest is hidden). According to Matus (2005, p. 375), “Hiding or Displaying your position are both resources in the social game”. The concepts of Carlos Matus, which have been described here briefly, were central to identifying the actors and social facts, and as a basis for the analysis we intended to carry out. The next item describes the methods and procedures used to conduct the analysis.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

We resorted to searching the literature to gather data for this qualitative study. We set the scope of the information gathering to the years 2002 to 2005, inclusive. This was because we found that the first meetings to present the text of the Framework Convention and debates in the VRP were in 2002, from the studies we used to design the process. In the following year (2003), the ratification process began in Brazil. This lasted until October 2005, when the Government signed the treaty.

The main sources we consulted were the newspapers with the greatest circulation in the VRP region: “Gazeta do Sul”, from the municipality of Santa Cruz do Sul, “Folha do Mate”, from the municipality of Venâncio Aires; and the magazine “Anuário Brasileiro do Tabaco”, which provided information on the tobacco growing industry. Data was also gathered from other studies related to this topic, the websites of health-related organizations and their publications; the websites of departments of the Federal Government, organizations representing farmers and tobacco manufacturers, as well as organizations that produce data on demographics and agriculture.

Every edition of the cited newspapers, published from the beginning of 2002 to the end of 2005 were read, and the articles related to tobacco farming were picked out. Once this was done, we produced a report listing them in chronological order. Although the period under analysis is directly linked to the negotiations around the Framework Convention, the data collected and analyzed were not limited to just the Treaty; we also included any discussion on tobacco growing in the VRP during this period.



We identified and described twenty-one social actors with an interest in the social game of tobacco growing in the VRP, from analyzing the data. They were identified on the basis of the requirements for them to be considered as social actors, recommended by Matus (1996b). We also listed the power resources that were available to each social actor in the game, allowing them to make moves. We identified nine social facts, produced by the actors, in the report. We used the quantity of information and its impact on the social game, as the criteria for choosing these facts. These social facts were analyzed on the basis of the interests of the social actors involved and the accumulation or dispersal of the power resources of each. Next, we summarized the conflict and cooperation relationships between these actors during this period. This enabled us to meet the research objective to identify the interests for the moves by the social actors with an interest in tobacco growing in the VRP between 2002 and 2005. The information, analysis and summaries of this are presented in the next section.

SOCIAL PRODUCTION AND THE INTERESTS IN DISPUTE IN THE SOCIAL GAME OF TOBACCO GROWING IN VALE DO RIO PARDO BETWEEN 2002 AND 2005

Even in the early discussions on a possible international public health treaty, AFUBRA was responsible for establishing cooperative relationships between industry representatives, the Brazilian Tobacco Industry Association (ABIFUMO), and SINDIFUMO. Due to its influence in the region, AFUBRA was able to convince its members that the FCTC would put an end to tobacco growing. They did not, therefore, describe how the Treaty's negotiations anticipated that there would be financial support for converting production. The Association fought against all proposals to establish financial funds for the use of tobacco growers who wished to change their economic activity, and cooperated with the interests of the tobacco industry (REETZ, 2002b, p. 11).

The corporate press in the VRP, represented here by the Empresa Jornalística Folha do Mate LTDA. and the Grupo Gazeta de Comunicações LTDA., played an important role, working closely with the actors opposed to the FCTC: they provided space for their quotes and published articles that praised the tobacco industry and attacked the situational explanations by those actors who supported the anti-smoking measures and migrating regional production to other activities.



Studies have shown that there were options available (Vargas and Oliveira, 2012; Zanchi, Rudnicki and Etges, 2017). Other social actors representing farmers and tobacco growing municipalities, such as the Federation of Municipal Associations of Rio Grande do Sul (FAMURS), the Federation of Agricultural Workers of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (FETAG), the Federation of Agriculture of the State of Rio Grande do Sul (FARSUL), and the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) also worked with industry representatives during this time. They wanted to work together to protect the continuity of tobacco growing, which meant supporting their members.

The social actors who set themselves in conflict to industry representatives showed that their interest was in supporting the Framework Convention, as they believed it was a way to take on the tobacco industry and reduce smoking on a global scale (Brasil, 2004). In Brazil, the WHO established cooperative relationships with the Ministry of Health, the National Cancer Institute (INCA) and the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (CONICQ), an organization created specifically to implement the Treaty across the country. Anti-smoking activists, such as Paula Johns, also played a leading role in opposing the actors who made moves based on their interest in rejecting the FCTC. The President's Office of the Republic of Brazil also worked with the latter actors because they saw the Treaty as a way for the country to contribute to an area of international discussion. The Brazilian Government, through its diplomatic offices, was one of the leading authors of the FCTC. Brazilian ambassadors in Geneva presided over the drafting of the text. Meanwhile, however, the Office of the President of the Republic also cooperated with the tobacco industry's operations, in relation to tax benefits and funding, for reasons due to tax, jobs, or its importance to the balance of trade, since almost 90% of Brazilian tobacco is exported (AFUBRA, 2023).

On February 17, 2002, the then president of AFUBRA, Hainsi Galow, gave a lecture entitled "Smoking in the world", during the 6th Municipal Tobacco Festival, which took place in the municipality of Venâncio Aires. In his speech, Galow expressed concern about an anti-smoking treaty proposed by the board of the WHO and supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Health. In his view, this document would lead to the dismantling of the tobacco industry in this country. At the same time, a letter was written in the presence of the tobacco growers, addressed to the Brazilian



people and the political authorities, together with a petition collected at the event and, later, throughout the VRP (Tesche, 2002, p. 6).

The VRP corporate press published the letter and its aftermath. They strongly criticized the health authorities and anti-smoking organizations, and began publishing articles that reinforced the idea that these actors and the Brazilian Executive were attacking tobacco growers (Reetz, 2002a, P 8; Reunião..., 2002). After this, several reports were published that provided a situational analysis by the tobacco industry and their union (SINDIFUMO), as well as other actors for tobacco growers with an interest in maintaining the genostructures of the social game, such as mayors and FAMURS. These reports did not address the debate about smoking and public health.

While the text of the Framework Convention was still being negotiated, people from anti-smoking organizations around the world, including the NGO Tabaco Zero, led by Paula Johns, denounced attempts by the tobacco industry to convince some member states of the UN to water down the agreement. The NGO also stated that tobacco growers in Brazil, especially in Rio Grande do Sul, had been influenced to oppose the Treaty.

At this point, it is possible to see conflict relationships between tobacco growers through AFUBRA, its representative unions, FETAG and FARSUL, and anti-smoking organizations and bodies and the Departments of the Federal Government that were in favor of the FCTC. The actors related to the Federal Government which had an interest in supporting the Treaty included the Ministry of Health, INCA, CONICQ and even the Office of the President of the Republic. They used their power resources to produce facts based on their situation. The Open Letter, addressed to the authorities and the Brazilian people, produced an accumulation in social production for the actors with an interest in supporting the social fact. Although written by the president of AFUBRA, according to his own interest and the actors with whom he established cooperative relationships, the letter was legitimized by the signatures of a large number of tobacco growers and other parts of regional society.

At the same time as the Framework Convention was being discussed in the VRP, negotiations were also underway to set the prices the tobacco companies would pay to purchase tobacco. This negotiation took place between SINDIFUMO, representing the tobacco industry, and AFUBRA, FETAG and FARSUL, each year. The first actor, therefore, clearly recognized the others as the legitimate



representatives of the tobacco growers. The Small Farmers Movement (MPA), which had recently been established in the VRP, had no right to take part in these negotiations. The Movement had a conflict relationship with the actors who set the prices, because they challenged the low price paid for tobacco and the exploitation of the tobacco farmers' work by the companies (Schneider, 2003). They encouraged demonstrations by farmers and were quickly criticized by the VRP corporate press for having held a march and occupied the private property of a tobacco company and SINDIFUMO (Invasões..., 2003, front page). The demands by the MPA in February 2003 were: better prices to be paid to tobacco growers with additional hazard bonuses for handling pesticides; the Movement to be included in tobacco price negotiations; debt renegotiation; the product to be classified on the rural property; freedom for the farmer to purchase supplies outside of the SIPT; and the migration of the technical model used for organic production (Oliveira, 2003, p. 10).

All of the demands made by the MPA were rejected. The fact that the regional press cooperated in rejecting another move that would cause costs to the tobacco industry shows how it was subordinate to the industry's views. The leaders of AFUBRA, FETAG and FARSUL were indifferent to this move, despite the producers failing to achieve any greater adjustment than 29% on the price of tobacco, which, according to the tobacco growers, did not even cover the increase in the cost of production. The directors of these three representative entities continued to try to negotiate with the leadership of SINDIFUMO; however, they did not support any protests by the tobacco growers and the MPA. A similar lack of support by AFUBRA and FETAG has previously been noted in Etges' (1991) research on organized protest movements that emerged in the second half of the 1980s in the region. These organizations have helped manage to maintain the rules of the social game more or less unchanged, including therefore the profit rates for the manufacturers and ensuring that tobacco farming operates within the SIPT.

At the end of May 2003, in the final few weeks of tobacco sales that year, the value rose higher than the prices previously offered by the tobacco manufacturers. According to company representatives, this was due to an increased demand for Brazilian tobacco due to the lower than expected amount of tobacco produced, and the demands of the consumer market. In addition to the late price rises, the manufacturers did not stick to the amounts agreed between the companies



and farmers either, as they also began purchasing from competitors and intermediaries. This approach angered the directors of those bodies which had the legal resources for negotiating the prices (AFUBRA, FETAG and FARSUL), since a large number of farmers had sold all their tobacco for around 50% less than what was then offered, and the companies refused to supplement this. This was the first social fact in the game that showed the leaders of those organizations in conflict relationships with SINDIFUMO.

According to the corporate press in the VRP, the situation where the tobacco manufacturers failed to comply with the purchase and sale contracts and the prices set by the tobacco industry brought the Integrated System to the verge of collapse. This led the president of FETAG to announce that the tobacco growers would form a cooperative if this fact came to fruition. The situational explanation of the president of SINDIFUMO attempted to counter the threats of dissatisfied tobacco growers by claiming that the biggest losers from the collapse of the SIPT would be the farmers, who would no longer be guaranteed that their tobacco would be purchased. The manufacturers' union immediately published a clarification note at the end of May 2003, refuting the criticism and confirming that its position was not open to negotiation (Comunicado..., 2003, p. 7). There were demonstrations organized by FETAG, which accumulated political and organizational resources for this the social fact.

In 2004, farmers linked to the MPA staged strong protests demanding an increase in tobacco prices, better working conditions and also the recognition of the Movement as a legitimate representative with the right to participate in negotiations with SINDIFUMO. There were clashes between protesters and police, which resulted in the violent eviction of tobacco growers and some injuries. The truculence of the police was justified on the basis of an injunction granted to SINDIFUMO, which ordered the eviction of anyone occupying property belonging to a company (Manifestantes..., 2004, p. 11). Protests and even boycotts of tobacco sales continued throughout the harvest period, which were encouraged by the MPA and FETAG. Various social actors representing the farmers and Albino Gewehr, a social actor who attacked the unfair power relationship between farmers and the companies, asked the Federal Government to support negotiations, to no effect. SINDIFUMO denied that the prices offered by companies had increased and stated that any change



to the amount paid for tobacco would make Brazilian tobacco growing unfeasible, because the product was only competitive if it could be sourced at low cost. The MPA, despite all its effort and having accumulated political and organizational resources from these moves, was unable to progress and be recognized as a representative of the farmers to SINDIFUMO. If a social movement based on the situational analysis of the MPA could have achieved recognition, this would have produced new facts in the social game to the detriment of the industries' capital accumulation strategies. The Movement's situational analysis challenged the rules of the integrated production system (SIPT): use of agrochemicals, the precariousness of the work contracts between the industry and the farmers, for example.

The Brazilian ratification of the FCTC was approved in the Chamber of Deputies in May 2004, but the VRP corporate press ignored the framework and its approval. However, as soon as the Draft Legislative Decree entered the Senate, AFUBRA's leadership published an alarmist statement about the supposed catastrophe that would result from the approval of the Framework Convention (Querem..., 2004, p. 5). The Association stated, in their note, that all of the jobs in this sector of production in this country would be wiped out and the only way to avoid social chaos would be for the people from these locations to protest against the FCTC. The protests were to be directed towards the senators and the Office of the President of the Republic. The State Government of Rio Grande do Sul assured tobacco industry representatives that it would also lobby federal bodies (Müller, Tescher and Silva, 2004, p. 6).

Following the printing of this communique in both of the newspapers consulted, the VRP corporate press began to report regularly on the proceedings in the National Congress and to express the situational explanation of the actors with an interest in rejecting the FCTC. As a result of this social fact, there were thousands of complaints which drew the attention of the senators and the Federal Government. The region's press shared the situational explanation of the social actors opposed to the FCTC quite prominently and openly criticized the health agencies and social movements that fought for the agreement's approval (MÜLLER, TESCHER and SILVA, 2004, p. 6). In this region, the idea coalesced that the FCTC needed to be fought without room for discussion and every manifestation of interest in support of the ratification of the Treaty was opposed.



As a result of the demonstrations against the Framework Convention from the VRP, the Senate Foreign Relations Commission decided to hold public hearings outside its headquarters, in tobacco-producing regions, for the first time in its history. This Commission admitted that it was already in favor of approving the ratification of the FCTC, but that due to the pressure from the farmers it would examine the matter in situ before issuing a decision and forwarding the matter for voting by the full Federal Senate (Müller, Tescher and Silva, 2004, p. 6).

The interest of the tobacco industry and the social actors that represented it was essentially this: that social production was done in their interest, but without any association to the companies; instead it was linked to the people who were most vulnerable to any negative impact on tobacco farming: the farmers. This ensured that they could continue to maximize their profit rates and allowed them to have better relations with the social actors who represented the tobacco growers, with whom they had conflict relationships under the previous social facts, as described in the paragraphs above.

As the hearings took place in tobacco-producing regions, most of the audience was opposed to Brazil enacting the international treaty. The representatives of the farmers, who had an interest in opposing approval of the FCTC in this country and the tobacco industry, ensured that tobacco growers attended the hearings. The latter made moves behind the scenes. They even chartered buses to take farmers to public hearings (Caríssimi, 2004, p. 13). Social actors with different situational analyses spoke at these events. Those who opposed Brazil ratifying the FCTC argued about the loss of jobs and the lack of alternatives to tobacco growing, and were applauded; social actors who insisted that approving the Treaty to curb the tobacco epidemic was urgent and that there was international cooperation for farmers to migrate to activities were booed (Müller, 2004, p. 6). The MPA cooperated with the representatives of the manufacturers and the other entities linked to farmers on the social fact linked to the ratification of the Framework Convention in Brazil. They opposed the treaty, although criticizing the exploitation of the farmers and the Production System. These positions are quite clear from the statements by members of the Movement (Etges, 2004a, p. 18; Etges, 2004b, p.20). The campaigns by the social actors in relation to the situation for tobacco growers caused the ratification of the Treaty in Brazil to be delayed and produced another year and a half of debate in the Federal Senate.



SINDIFUMO's press office and the VRP's corporate press stated that the report of the rapporteur for the matter, Heráclito Fortes, would advise against ratification. However, the ministries of the Brazilian Executive produced an interpretation of the International Treaty that helped to form their decision. In this, the Federal Government guaranteed that there would be no restriction on tobacco growing in Brazil in the event of this matter being approved by the Federal Senate (Machado, 2005, p. 10). As Albino Gewehr had already stated during the ratification process, the text of the Framework Convention did not require the signatories to make any restrictions, it was only the Senate that expected the Executive Branch to legislate in this way.

The Office of the President of the Republic of Brazil, which had expressed its interest in supporting the ratification of the Treaty from the very beginning, agreed to maintain a support program for tobacco growers, under various departments. This program would help the tobacco growers to migrate to more economically viable activities if they wished (Etges, 2005, p. 19). This way, the Brazilian government was able to satisfy many of the actors with different positions of interest. At the same time, under this analysis, it drew a line between production and consumption: stating that it continued to support the tobacco-growing sector, while still supporting measures to reduce smoking. This way, the government cooperated with the multinational tobacco industry, which represented an important source of tax income for the public treasury, while it was also able to join an agreement, through its ambassadors, which allowed Brazil to take part in an additional arena of international discussion. The matter was approved in the plenary session of the Federal Senate on October 27, 2005. Brazil's ratification and the interpretation were deposited with the WHO, in Geneva. (Machado, 2005, p. 10).

Having described the actions of the social actors, their interests and moves, and the social facts of the game, we will provide a summary of the conflict and cooperation relations in the social game in the next section.

SUMMARY OF THE CONFLICT AND COOPERATION RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SOCIAL GAME

The analysis of the social actors and the disputing interests revealed, as well as the findings discussed below, that the positions of conflict and cooperation in relation to different social facts can change, as can be seen in Table 01, which summarizes the moves during the period analyzed.



Table 1 | Summary of the conflict and cooperation relationships between the social actors*

THE SOCIAL FACT	SUPPORTED (+)	INDIFFERENT (0)	REJECTED (-)
Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC)	CONICQ / INCA MINISTRY OF HEALTH WHO / PAULA JOHNS OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC		ABIFUMO / AFUBRA / FAMURS FARSUL / FETAG VRP-PRESS ITGA / SINDIFUMO
Open Letter from AFUBRA and Tobacco Producers to the Authorities about the International Anti-Tobacco Treaty	AFUBRA / FAMURS FARSUL / FETAG VRP-PRESS SINDIFUMO		CONICQ / INCA MINISTRY OF HEALTH WHO / PAULA JOHNS OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
Protests by tobacco growers in 2003	MPA	AFUBRA / FARSUL FETAG	VRP PRESS SINDIFUMO
Protests over the price of tobacco at the end of the sale of the 2003 harvest	AFUBRA / FARSUL FETAG	MPA / VRP PRESS	SINDIFUMO
Protests by tobacco growers during the 2004 harvest	AFUBRA / ALBINO GEWEHR FAMURS / FARSUL FETAG / MPA		VRP-PRESS SINDIFUMO
Attempts to vote on the draft ratification of the FCTC by the Federal Senate	CONICQ / INCA MINISTRY OF HEALTH WHO / PAULA JOHNS OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC FEDERAL SENATE		ABIFUMO / AFUBRA FAMURS / FARSUL RIO GRANDE DO SUL STATE GOVERNMENT. VRP PRESS ITGA / MPA / SINDIFUMO
Campaign in the VRP against ratification of the FCTC	AFUBRA / FAMURS / FARSUL FETAG / VRP PRESS / SINDIFUMO	FEDERAL SENATE	ALBINO GEWEHR / CONICQ INCA / MINISTRY OF HEALTH WHO / PAULA JOHNS
Rejection of the FCTC during public hearings in tobacco-producing states	AFUBRA / FAMURS FARSUL / FETAG VRP PRESS SINDIFUMO		ALBINO GEWEHR / CONICQ DIOCESE OF SANTA MARIA. FEDERAL SENATE / FETRAF-SUL MINISTRY OF HEALTH MPA / PAULA JOHNS / INCA
Brazilian ratification of the Framework Convention	ALBINO GEWEHR / OMS CONICQ / DIOCESE OF SANTA MARIA / FETRAF-SUL / INCA/ MPA MINISTRY OF HEALTH / PAULA JOHNS / OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC FEDERAL SENATE		ABIFUMO / AFUBRA FAMURS / FARSUL FETAG / RIO GRANDE DO SUL STATE GOVERNMENT. VRP PRESS ITGA / SINDIFUMO

Source: The Author (2023)

* The different degrees of interest from Carlos Matus' Social Production Theory are 'displayed' or 'hidden'. In the table, they are identified through font formats, as follows: Displayed - normal font; Hidden - strikethrough font, e.g. ~~Hidden~~.

According to relationships shown in Table 1, the social actors representing the tobacco growers and the tobacco manufacturers cooperated with each other against the government and the anti-smoking organizations in social facts related to the FCTC. In the tobacco price adjustment negotiations, the actors who represented the tobacco growers collaborated with each other and opposed the industry representatives, in fighting against SINDIFUMO's position where they offered increases considerably below that requested. AFUBRA and FARSUL only adopted a conflict relationship with the Union at the negotiating tables, while MPA and FETAG encouraged protests and boycotts of companies. In terms of the last facts, the VRP corporate press demonstrated an interest of rejection cooperated with SINDIFUMO, due to their importance to the local economy, which could harm their business.

After the announcement that the Framework Convention might be urgently approved by the Federal Senate, the actors representing the tobacco growers and the manufacturers again formed a cooperation relationship to block the ratification of the Treaty in Brazil. The government of Rio Grande do Sul and FAMURS, which had not expressed any interest in the impasses in negotiations between the farmers and companies at any time, stated that they were concerned about the future of tobacco farming and, for this social fact, they cooperated with actors connected to the tobacco production chain. FETAG, which had supported the decision to stop negotiating with SINDIFUMO, in that same year, had already expressed their interest in cooperating with the union. They also took part in price negotiation meetings with the representative of the tobacco companies. The actors who represented the tobacco growers, therefore, helped the tobacco industry and also continued to act as representatives for the tobacco growers, their associates or members. These farmers' representatives established conflict relationships with the actors who defended the ratification of the FCTC in Brazil, such as the Ministry of Health, INCA, CONICQ, the activist Paula Johns and the Federal Government of Brazil, who, at the same time, had concerns about the public health issue and the impact on the economy.

AFUBRA, FETAG and FARSUL did not cooperate with the MPA over some of their moves because they wanted to remain the only representatives of the tobacco growers during negotiations with SINDIFUMO. The Movement's protests against the manufacturers were about more than just the price adjustment negotiations. They also criticized working conditions, occupational risks and aspects of the Integrated



System. In the last year that we looked at, the MPA did not cooperate with the tobacco industry and its representatives in relation to social facts related to the Framework Convention. Like Albino Gewehr, the Diocese of Santa Maria and the National Federation of Family Farm Workers in the South Region (FETRAF-SUL), the MPA began to support ratification of the FCTC to allow Brazilian tobacco growers to access the resources available from international cooperation and migrate to other activities, if they wished. This change to the MPA's position from their conflict and cooperation relationship in this social fact shows how the dynamics of the social game can operate. The actors can change their degree of interest for each move (Matus, 2005). The other actors who represented the tobacco growers cooperated with SINDIFUMO and still rejected the Framework Convention at the end of the period under analysis.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This study addressed the question - what were the manifest interests of the social actors with an interest in tobacco growing in the Vale do Rio Pardo (VRP) from 2002 to 2005? The period investigated began with the drawing up of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the first discussions in the VRP up to when it was ratified by Brazil. The aim was to use the theoretical constructs of Carlos Matus to help identify the social actors and the social facts that would allow us to analyze the various interests in this social game. Based on this, the manifest interests in each identified social fact were analyzed and we consequently were able to lay out the conflict and cooperation relationships in the plays.

It was possible to observe various conflicting interests in the game, and we utilized the characteristics suggested by Matus in relation to the situation of each player, and showed how the relationships between the social actors can transition between conflicting and cooperative. In addition to the drafting and ratification of the FCTC, we also identified social facts linked to conflicting interests between the tobacco growers and the tobacco industry, which also had an impact on this social game and, therefore, we analyzed these too. The nine social facts during this period were identified on the basis of their relevance to the game and the existence of interests in dispute. We summarized these events, the actors with an interest in them, the content of that interest and identified the cooperation and conflict relationships.



The characteristics that were evidenced in the social game are the main contribution by this study to the theory about the relationships that exist between the actors with an interest in tobacco growing in the region and the country. In contrast to a framework analyzing deterministic power relations, the study was able to identify how conflict and cooperation relationships between actors in a social game can be transitory. In these relationships, the specific interests of each social actor and their accumulated power resources indicate the how their moves will be at each point of the game.

According to Faé and Flores (2012, p. 409), “the various regions need to respond to the economic and social demands that emanate from a given structure defined in global terms”. On the other hand, the authors believe that the official and media discourse presents “an inaccurate perspective that suggests that the only reason for the problems is a lack of foreign investment and uses economic growth as a measure for the development of the region” (Faé and Flores, 2012, p. 410). This study, therefore, highlights the potential value of Carlos Matus’ Social Production Theory for articulating themes on the fields of Management (by analyzing the strategies that different social actors adopt for their moves) and Regional Development, which can result at any time as a result of the various moves played in a social game; and can reconfigure phenostructures and, eventually, genostructures. A social game such as this can be articulated by applying the approach of Harvey (2005) who contends that the region is the “result of a systemic ordering in space-time and its relationships with the geographic, historical and cultural aspects of each region” (Faé and Flores, 2012, p. 431).

The main limitation of this research was that it does not identify the value attributed to each actor for each move, which was due to the number of social actors identified in the social game in this study. As a result, it was not possible to verify the motivation of each actor in the social facts identified, which would be the main requirement if we were to analyze the social production achieved. Further studies could carry out this analysis, using the results obtained in this research as a basis and conduct a more in-depth analysis of the impact of each actor’s moves.

Among the contributions made by this research, our analysis of the disputing interests in this social game allowed us to understand why the idea was propagated in the VRP that the Framework Convention was intended to put an end to tobacco growing in Brazil. As a result of the moves by social actors, especially by AFUBRA and the regional corporate press, the only situational



explanation published in the region was that of these actors. These results could be used to help inform the development and planning of Public Policies on tobacco control in relation to the range of issues that can have a negative impact on tobacco growers.

The study provides ideas on how to understand the situation of tobacco growers in the region, for the purpose of migrating to other agricultural activities. Even though the Association of Tobacco Growers supported diversified production on farms, it showed that it had an interest in rejecting proposals to create funds and special taxes to finance converting production. Similarly, AFUBRA continued to act quite clearly in this social game. They are an organization that seeks to conserve its position and create profit from tobacco farming. It also had extensive social production capabilities that it used in social events, demonstrating cooperation relationships with the tobacco industry. Its interest was in supporting continuing tobacco production centered in the Vale do Rio Pardo region, where it had its national headquarters.

The representatives of the tobacco growers who negotiate with the industry (AFUBRA, FETAG and FARSUL) were happy with the integrated system and did not want to contest it. They continued to be the only organizations with the political and legal resources to provide such representation. The MPA wanted to introduce other social facts beyond just discussing price adjustments. This worried the industries and the actors mentioned above, who were comfortable with the status quo. Among the issues raised by the MPA, the most important were the precariousness of work relations and the risks to the health of tobacco growers. Although it was systematically investigated by the local scientific community, this topic was not addressed by the VRP corporate press at any time during the analyzed period. Overall, the scientific community was mostly ignored by the data sources we gathered, in terms of the relationship between public health and tobacco growing, feasibility studies on converting to other products etc.

We can say that, from the data we analyzed, the tobacco growers' legitimate representatives made very limited efforts to contest the low remuneration for tobacco growers by the industry. The companies and SINDIFUMO make it clear that Brazilian tobacco farming is only strategically viable because the industry can purchase the raw materials at low cost through the integrated production

system. Since these organizations depend on this economic activity to keep their members and associates, they cooperate with the interest of the tobacco industry in the country.

The category “tobacco growers” was not identified as a social actor in this study because it does not meet Matus’s (1996b) requirements. In particular, it is not a stable organization that would allow them to act with the weight of a collective. It was not possible to identify any organized group during the period analyzed, which was created and formed by tobacco growers to produce facts based on their interests in the game. The protests were led by federations, unions and social movements that were not established by tobacco growers or to defend their agendas. The only way that the farmers will be able to deal with the subordination and exploitation to which they are subjected to by the tobacco industry, and legitimized by the social actors who supposedly represent them, is through organizing themselves.

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