

**Adrian Gurza Lavalle, Euzeneia Carlos, Monika Dowbor, José Szwako (Orgs), (2019) Movimentos sociais e institucionalização: políticas sociais, raça e gênero no Brasil pós-transição, Rio de Janeiro: EdUERJ, 410pp. (ISBN 978-85-7511-480-3). Brochura/Ebook.**

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*Social movements and institutionalization: social policies, race and gender in post-transition Brazil* is a book that brings significant contributions to studies on democracy, collective action, and processes of institutionalization. It provides an analytical framework of historical events regarding social movements across different arenas of Brazil since its democratization. The country is well known for its examples of participative spaces, which have molded new relationships between the state and civil society, impacting agenda setting, the formulation and implementation of public policies, and presenting the limits and complexities involved in these processes, which are described in great detail throughout the book.

The dynamics of institutionalization, the processes through which social movements, ideas, categories, or tools become institutionalized, are the focus of the several analyzed cases from various policy fields. Since there is not a widely accepted definition of institutions, there is much controversy in the literature surrounding what exactly an institution might be. In general, however, it is possible to rely on a broad definition that includes both the formal organizations and formal and informal procedures and rules that structure behaviors.

Institutionalist theory can be defined by three major schools of thought: rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and organizational theory – also known as sociological institutionalism. The different types of institutionalism have their own characteristics, and, despite their differences, all are united by the common conviction that institutions, including their arrangements and processes, matter. Historical institutionalism states that institutions provide the context in which political actors define the strategies to achieve their interests. Greater emphasis on contingency, the historical legacy in the trajectory of organizations, and the way this shape path dependence is part of this stream. It posits that political actors should not only be seen as individuals wanting to maximize their interests, as they are often influenced more by the rules than by individual interests. Thus, historical institutionalists analyze how actors, their interests and strategies, and the distribution of power between them relate to social, political, and economic institutions in different ways over time, as well as the different combinations they can produce.

Institutionalization, the focus of this book, does not occur by chance. It is considered the product of a historical process, shaped by transformations within institutions themselves. Asserting that a segment of human activity has been institutionalized means it has been subjected to social control. Lavalle, Carlos, Dowbor, and Szwako thus adopt historical institutionalism to learn about processes of institutionalization. They justify the use of this conceptual framework by highlighting

its capacity to establish temporal processes, sequences, trajectories, causal chains, so-called path dependences, and an analytical perspective that allows us to assume the mutually constitutive character relations between the state and civil society. In this sense, the book presents “processes of institutionalizing social interests, values and agendas, and the constitution of State capacities [both understood] as a product of State/society interactions” (LAVALLE et al, 2019, p.23).

One of the authors’ main achievements is the precision and consistence with which they guide the reader through detailed descriptions, in-depth theoretical analysis, and a diverse range of encounters and examples. As explained by the organizers and detailed by authors in each of their specific chapters, interactions between the state and social movements constitute different domains of agency, each of which has its own characteristics while adhering to a similar set of strategies. These domains of agency and fields of policy are presented as the result of their individual historical trajectories and conflicts, as well as regulation, strategy, and the social and state actors involved.

The role, action and strategies of three historical movements in Brazil are addressed in chapters 1 (health movement), 2 (immigrants movement), 3 (urban popular moment) and 4 (social movement surrounding socio-educational policy) as readers may see in part one of the book. In “Escaping the uncertainties of the electoral game”, Monika Dowbor analyzes how social movements surrounding health sought institutionalized access to the state. In this way, they directly influenced the construction of new institutions through which to participate in decision-making processes. Some of their historical strategies were: creating an association of representatives at the federative level; participating in the National Health Council and commissions that focused on the municipalization of health services; and institutionalizing their participation in health policies through the Organic Health Act 2011. The chapter provides both the historical details and reflections on the role of social health movements in state influence, independent of the electoral game, by detailing the role of movements in terms of trajectory and of their capacity to build hybrid (state and civil society) decision-making spaces, the result of a decades-long joint and persistent action.

In Chapter 2, “The entry of new immigrants into the local politics of São Paulo”, Patricia Tavares de Freitas explores Bolivian immigration in the city, presenting the historical genesis of immigrants’ constitution as social subjects in the political space of the city. The chapter grants significant agency to the *Pastoral do Migrante*, which made its first institutional contributions under Governor Mario Covas of the PSDB. In the 2000s, it approached the PT’s Marta Suplicy to demand guaranteed protections for immigrants in certain sub-municipalities, and form an immigrants’ association. The analyzed case study thus presented multiple profiles from across various domains of agency, each permeated by the logic of two parties that made up the political scenario of the municipality and the state at the time.

Euzeneia Carlos presents the case of the urban popular movement in Espírito Santo, and the construction of institutional settings and agency domains during Brazil’s democratization, in chapter three. In her analysis, the author highlights the role of “institutional incubators”, such as religious organizations and left-wing parties involved in the foundation of the movement, as well

as their capacity to provide agency, their alliances with party coalitions in municipal elections, and their role in the permeability of the state.

In “Analyzing the impacts of the social movement on the construction of socio-educational policy”, Maria do Carmo Albuquerque explains – both profoundly and systematically - the process of mutual constitution between civil society and the state through the action of the children rights’ movement and the civil defense of adolescents in socio-educational politics. The achievement of specific group policy paradigms has depended broad coalitions composed of civil society and political-state actors. Those coalitions, in turn, are shaped and influenced by interactions between different actors as their interests and ideals converge in the political sphere to generate new policy paradigms.

The second part of the book addresses movements focused on the discussion of race, gender, and public policy. It begins with “Anti-racism, social movements and the State (1985-2016)” whose author, Flavia Rios, addresses the historical and institutional trajectories of the Brazilian black movement. Her analysis points to the construction of an active and broad network, presenting its internal changes in organizational terms, as well as the ways they managed to influence public policy and institutionalize the racial equality agenda in Brazil, mainly through interactions between certain components of black movement organizations and the Executive power.

Following this, “Feminisms, women's movements and health policies for women”, by Layla Pedreira de Carvalho, presents how the interaction between activists and state actors influences the National Policy for Integral Attention to Women's Health and the *Rede Cegonha* Program. Her focus is on the performance of three articulation networks, in which not only do they find instances of cooperation, but also a complex societal logic made up of different cleavages. The feminist agenda has specific challenges considering the patriarchal structure of the Brazilian state and its paradoxical reality: it can reproduce inequality at the same time as providing opportunities for change in societal power structures.

And last, but not least important, is the discussion presented in “Black and indigenous movements and health and HIV / AIDS policy”, in which Vera Schattan Coelho and Adrian Gurza Lavalle analyze the difficulties faced by these movements in the field of health as they claim specific policies for the HIV / AIDS epidemic. The performance and strategic and discursive repertoires that these movements built together with state actors over the years allowed for the institutionalization of specific policies for each group, reaffirming how civil society and state are mutually constitutive.

For those wishing to better understand Brazilian democratic practices on collective action, social movements strategies, and the dynamics of institutionalization, this book is a must. While the themes and analytical frameworks are not new, the level of focus provided by each author is unique in bringing historical data and analytical lenses to different fields of social movements and networks of collective action, resulting in an incremental collective work. Future studies that employ sociological institutionalism, more specifically, the microfoundations of institutionalism and the role of specific actors in the process of institutionalization, would certainly allow for an important comparative perspective in terms of these promising theoretical frameworks.