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THE AGRIBUSINESS INFLUENCE IN THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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To oblivion, the fate of all things.

After so much sacrifice in writing this dissertation, it will rest on the back shelf of a library, where it too will be forgotten. I can only hope that the pain it caused me will share the same fate.

Ultimately, this is nothing more than a tribute to the inevitable destiny of all things.

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The Ph.D. program was the greatest challenge I have ever faced. It taught me more than technical knowledge: it deepened my self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Its most important legacy is a simple yet powerful lesson: We do not achieve great things alone. Throughout this journey, I received support in many forms, and I cannot imagine overcoming these challenges without it. It was difficult and painful, but it was worth it.

The Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) has changed my life forever. I entered as a young dreamer, energetic and naive. Now, I leave as a wiser man. There is always more to learn, of course, but UFMG has given me more knowledge and wisdom than I ever expected from any other educational institution.

I am part of the generation that benefited from the expansion of higher education. My parents never completed basic education. My grandparents, who raised me, could barely read. I studied my entire life in public schools. Given these circumstances, I never expected a fate different from theirs or that of most of my high school classmates. Yet UFMG embraced me like a mother taking her child into her arms. It has endured difficult times but has never wavered in offering, at the very least, minimal support to its students.

I have spent the last twelve years at UFMG. Finishing this journey leaves an unfamiliar void in my life. UFMG became my second home, where I met incredible friends, professors, and the love of my life, Maria Fernanda – people who will remain in my heart forever. Words cannot fully express my gratitude. From now on, I will honor UFMG by moving forward with pride in having been part of this institution and with a commitment to fight tirelessly for public education and science.

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administration, rising inflation, full remote learning, and mandatory social distancing. At times, it felt as though the nightmare would never end. Yet, we resisted together. I have rarely witnessed such solidarity in my life. I could have given up on the Ph.D., but I could never have forgiven myself if I had not fought alongside you all. It brings me great joy to see you completing this journey. Thank you so much, Maycon Costa, Aglaé Tumelero, Ana Luísa Machado, Albany Lima, Carlos Estevão Cruz, João Paulo Gabriel, Luiz Coletto, Ananda Winter, Shandor Torok, Gustavo Sabbag, Mariana Dias, Nayla Lopes, and Camila Soares.

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Although my grandparents were not literate, they played an essential role in fostering my ambitions to pursue a university education and a research career. They made me who I am. Words cannot express my feelings and gratitude. I wish they were mentally healthy enough to witness this achievement because so much of it belongs to them.

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“All phenomena of government are phenomena of groups pressing one another, forming one another, and pushing out new groups and group representatives to mediate the adjustments. It is only as we isolate these group activities, determine their representative values, and get the whole process stated in terms of them, that we approach to a satisfactory knowledge of government.” (BENTLEY, 1908, p. 269)

RESUMO

A influência das organizações de interesse sobre a elaboração de políticas públicas é uma questão crítica nas democracias liberais, pois pode impactar a qualidade da representação. Apesar da relevância da questão, a literatura sobre o tema enfrenta desafios teóricos e metodológicos significativos, colecionando inúmeras evidências inconclusivas. No Brasil, os poucos estudos que utilizam a abordagem dos grupos para avaliar o comportamento e influência das organizações de interesse concentram-se no setor industrial, o que deixa uma grande lacuna na literatura sobre os outros interesses potencialmente relevantes. Esta pesquisa investiga a influência do lobby do agronegócio no Congresso Nacional Brasileiro durante a 55ª Legislatura (2015-2019). Esse segmento econômico é um dos mais importantes no país devido a sua magnitude econômica e organização política. De forma a delimitar a estrutura de conflito de interesse relacionada ao agronegócio, foram predominantemente utilizadas estatísticas oficiais para discutir o desenvolvimento da agricultura no Brasil e a formação dos complexos agroindustriais. Os resultados destacam o conflito intrínseco entre a agricultura e a indústria e o papel das intervenções estatais para limitar a expropriação de excedentes agrícolas. Em seguida, alguns argumentos neo-pluralistas sobre a mobilização e manutenção de interesses foram submetidos à verificação empírica por meio do estudo do Instituto Pensar Agropecuária, uma das entidades mais importantes na representação dos interesses do agronegócio no Congresso Nacional. Para isso, foi realizada uma análise temática de entrevistas feitas com lideranças políticas representando grandes entidades da agricultura e agroindústria, além de uma análise de dados de um questionário sobre proposições legislativas e dados secundários econômicos. Os resultados indicam que alguns distúrbios políticos e econômicos ocorridos nos anos 2000, combinados com a ausência de uma entidade capaz de representar os interesses das cadeias produtivas mais valiosas do agronegócio, foram elementos essenciais para a fundação do Instituto. No entanto, a sobrevivência dessa organização está atrelada a um desenho institucional em evolução, que visa manter o deslocamento de propósito e o compartilhamento da reivindicação de créditos entre as entidades afiliadas em um grau mínimo. Por fim, a influência do lobby do agronegócio foi estimada através de um modelo preditivo baseado em um questionário com um colaborador-chave do Instituto. Os resultados sugerem que o lobby direto do Instituto tem um efeito preditivo grande sobre o sucesso político do agronegócio. Todavia, o *counterlobbying*, a opinião pública contrária e o grau de conflito não apresentaram os efeitos esperados, contrariando as hipóteses neo-pluralistas sobre a influência do lobby. Ademais, a posição do Poder Executivo surgiu como o fator moderador mais importante da influência do lobby: quando o governo é contrário, o efeito do lobby diminui drasticamente, quase alcançando o patamar nulo. De forma geral, esses resultados são similares aos encontrados na União Europeia e nos Estados Unidos, fortalecendo os argumentos de que a abordagem dos grupos oferece explicações consistentes e úteis sobre o processo de elaboração de políticas públicas e de que a desigualdade na influência do lobby é um fenômeno alarmante para a qualidade da representação em democracias liberais.

Palavras-chave: grupos de interesse; lobby; influência; agronegócio; Congresso Nacional.

ABSTRACT

The influence of interest organizations on policymaking is a critical issue in liberal democracies, as it directly impacts the quality of representation. Despite the relevance of this topic, the existing literature faces numerous theoretical and methodological challenges, producing largely inconclusive evidence. In Brazil, the few studies adopting the group approach to evaluate the behavior and influence of interest organizations focus primarily on the industrial sector, leaving a significant gap in the literature regarding other potentially influential interests. This research investigates the lobbying influence of agribusiness in the Brazilian National Congress during the 55th Legislature (2015-2019). This economic segment is one of the most important in the country, both for its high economic magnitude and its political organization. In order to delineate the structure of interest conflicts from the agribusiness perspective, I used official statistics to analyze agricultural development in Brazil and the formation of agro-industrial complexes. The results underscore the intrinsic conflict between agriculture and industry and the role of state interventions in curbing the surplus expropriation from agriculture. Subsequently, I empirically tested neopluralist arguments regarding interest mobilization and maintenance using the case of the Farming Thinking Institute, one of the most prominent entities representing agribusiness interests in the National Congress. For this purpose, I conducted a thematic analysis of interviews with political leaders from major agricultural and agro-industrial organizations, complemented by data analysis of agribusiness lobbying on legislative proposals and secondary economic data. The results reveal that economic and political disturbances in the 2000s, coupled with the absence of an entity capable of representing the interests of the most profitable agricultural chains, were essential to the Institute's foundation. However, the organization's survival hinges on an evolving institutional design that mitigates purposive displacement and shared credit-claiming among its affiliated entities. Finally, I estimated the lobbying influence of agribusiness through a predictive model based on structured interviews provided by a key agent from the Institute. The findings suggest that the Institute's inside lobbying exerts a strong predictive effect on agribusiness lobbying success. However, contrary to the neopluralist hypotheses, factors such as counterlobbying, opposing public opinion, and the degree of conflict did not have the expected effects. Instead, the position of the Executive Branch emerged as the most relevant moderating factor for the lobbying influence of agribusiness. When the government's stance was contrary, the lobbying effect diminished dramatically, approaching a null effect. These findings align with similar studies conducted in the European Union and the United States, reinforcing the argument that the group approach can provide consistent and valuable explanations regarding policymaking while emphasizing the alarming effects of unequal lobbying influence on the quality of representation in liberal democracies.

Keywords: interest groups; lobbying; influence; agribusiness; National Congress.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABAG – Brazilian Agribusiness Association
ABCS – Brazilian Association of Swine Breeders
ABCZ – Brazilian Association of Zebu Breeders
ABECAFE – Brazilian Coffee Exporters Association
ABIC – Brazilian Coffee Industry Association
ABIOVE – Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries
ABPA – Brazilian Animal Protein Association
ABRAFRIGO – Brazilian Association of Meat Packers
ABRAMILHO – Brazilian Association of Corn and Sorghum Producers
ABRAPA – Brazilian Cotton Producers Association
ABRASS – Brazilian Association of Soybean Seed Producers
AGROBIO – Association of Biotechnology Companies in Agriculture and Agro-industry
AMPA – Mato Grosso Association of Cotton Producers
ANDEF – National Plant Protection Association
APROSOJABRASIL – Brazilian Association of Soybean Producers
APROSOJA/MT – Soybean and Corn Producers Association of the State of Mato Grosso
ARENA – National Renewal Alliance
CECAFE – Council of Coffee Exporters of Brazil
CNA – Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil
CNC – National Confederation of Commerce of Goods, Services, and Tourism
CNI – National Confederation of Industry
COSAG – Superior Council of Agribusiness
FAMATO – Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of Mato Grosso
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOSTAT – Food and Agriculture Organization Statistics
FIESP – Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo
FNBF – National Forum of Forest-Based Activities
FNS – National Sugar-Energy Forum
FPA – Parliamentary Front of Agriculture
GMOs – Genetically Modified Organisms
IBA – Brazilian Tree Industry
IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
IPA – Farming Thinking Institute
LAPIG – Image Processing and Geoprocessing Laboratory
OCB – Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives

ORPLANA – Organization of Sugarcane Producers Associations of Brazil

SINDAN – National Union of the Animal Health Products Industry

SINDIRAÇÕES – National Union of the Animal Feed Industry

SINDIVEG – National Union of the Plant Protection Products Industry

SNA – National Agriculture Society

SRB – Brazilian Rural Society

UDR – Rural Democratic Union

UNICA – Sugarcane Industry Union

UNIMED – National Confederation of Medical Cooperatives

UNIPASTO – Association for the Promotion of Forage Improvement Research

VIVALACTEOS – Dairy Industry Association

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1 INTRODUCTION

Concerns about the influence of interest organizations are closely tied to the quality of political representation in modern democracies. On the one hand, the pluralist tradition emphasizes that political decisions represent a balanced outcome of the competition among interest organizations for influence, ensuring that they reflect majority interests within the constituency (DAHL, 1961; TRUMAN, 1951). On the other hand, the elitist tradition offers a contrasting perspective on the role of interest organizations in shaping public policy. Given their unequal capacities to mobilize supporters, raise resources, and pressure decision-makers, competition for influence tends to favor powerful interests over the representation of all individuals potentially affected by policy decisions (STIGLER, 1971; LOWI, 1969; OLSON, 1965; SCHATTSCHNEIDER, 1960).

Consequently, if interests are unevenly distributed in their capacity to represent segments and exert pressure on decision-makers, are the core values underpinning modern representative democracy protected from such pernicious influence? Are democratic institutions able to block such undue influence, thereby preserving popular sovereignty and minority rights? These concerns have sparked a long-standing debate among political scientists, dating back at least to the 1950s (SALISBURY, 1975).

Despite the undeniable relevance of these questions to citizens' overall well-being, answering them remains one of the most significant challenges in political science (DÜR, 2008b; LOWERY, 2013). Indeed, the topic presents numerous research challenges, such as conceptual disagreements, theoretical ambiguity, and limited data availability, leading to its partial abandonment (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998).

Fortunately, these questions reentered the research agenda of a growing number of political scientists in the 1990s, prompting a surge of new literature on the subject (HULA, 1999; KOLLMAN, 1998; AUSTEN-SMITH, 1996; GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a; POTTERS; SLOOF, 1996; WRIGHT, 1996; HEINZ et al., 1993; PETRACCA, 1992; ROTHENBERG, 1992; WALKER, 1991; WRIGHT, 1990). That decade marked a turning point in the research of interest organizations, as studies achieved greater methodological and theoretical consistency, though not necessarily resulting in substantial progress in the literature (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998).

The 2000s witnessed the consolidation of a new theoretical perspective, Neopluralism, which revived some valuable hypotheses from the pluralist tradition

while incorporating contributions from elitist critiques (LOWERY; GRAY, 2004; MCFARLAND, 2007). In addition to the enhanced theoretical and methodological robustness (KLÜVER; BRAUN; BEYERS, 2015; BERNHAGEN; DÜR; MARSHALL, 2014; LOWERY, 2007a; HALL; DEARDORFF, 2006), as well as greater concordance among results, even across different political systems (HOJNACKI et al., 2012; MAHONEY, 2008), the renewed focus on the subject prompted an unprecedented geographic expansion of research. New studies emerged across Europe, including Germany (KOCH; SCHULZ-KNAPPE, 2021; KLÜVER, 2015), the UK (BERNHAGEN, 2012), Denmark (HELBOE PEDERSEN, 2013), and the EU (DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; CHALMERS, 2011; DÜR, 2008a; DÜR; DE BIÈVRE, 2007; MICHALOWITZ, 2007), as well as in Latin American countries like Chile (GAMBOA; SEGOVIA; AVENDAÑO, 2016), Mexico (HOGENBOOM, 2014), and Brazil (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 1999; MANCUSO, 2007; SANTOS, 2011).

Empirical studies about interest organizations in Brazil started to emerge gradually in the late 1990s (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 1999). After a quarter of a century, this subfield of Brazilian Political Science still has substantial gaps (RIBEIRO, 2019). A few researchers had studied the subject previously, but they took an alternative approach, namely corporatism (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 1979; MALLOY, 1977; SCHMITTER, 1971). Most studies concerning the topic center on the political action of the industrial business sector (MANCUSO, 2007; SANTOS, 2011). A few studies on biases and diversity of the Brazilian interest representation system indicate a situation similar to that of the US and EU systems: there is a broad diversity of interests, but only a small number of them have political prominence, especially those representing business interests (CESÁRIO, 2016; SANTOS, 2014; RESENDE, 2018). Regarding lobbying techniques, only one large-scale research project has been conducted in recent years, reaching similar conclusions to studies in the US and EU: different kinds of interest organizations mobilize a wide array of tactics, varying in intensity, but combining inside and outside tactics (SANTOS et al., 2017).

Finally, studies on lobbying success are relatively more numerous. There is pioneering research on agriculture and industry lobbying success in the National Congress (MANCUSO et al., 2024; COSTA; BORCK, 2019; SANTOS et al., 2015; MANCUSO, 2007; RIBEIRO, 2019), business lobbying success in the Federal Supreme Court (CARVALHO et al., 2016), and in some federal regulatory agencies (BAIRD, 2016; BAIRD; FERNANDES, 2014; SILVA, 2012). However, analyses of the

influence of interest organizations through the group approach remain rare (SANTOS, 2011).

In this context, this dissertation contributes to the literature in three ways. First, by expanding the current knowledge about interest organizations in Brazil to the agribusiness segment, with an emphasis on the agricultural sector, it fills a gap in the literature on this strategic economic segment. Second, by testing neopluralist hypotheses on the mobilization and representativeness of interest organizations in Brazil – an area that has not yet been explored in the Brazilian literature – this study opens a new avenue on the national research agenda. Third, by evaluating the influence of agribusiness lobbying in the National Congress, adding to the local literature a discussion from the neopluralist perspective and providing evidence for the development of a theory of lobbying influence.

This study focuses on the political influence of agribusiness, as it has rarely been addressed in Brazilian lobbying studies (MANCUSO et al., 2024; RIBEIRO, 2019; IGLESIAS, 2017). Although farmers have been a dominant political actor in Brazilian politics since the Colonial Era, many changes brought about by economic modernization undermined their political role. This forced them to undergo multiple transformations before assuming their modern organizational form as part of agribusiness, an economic segment deeply rooted in the financial sector. Ultimately, understanding the contemporary political power of agribusiness requires examining the historical trajectory of farmers as political actors in Brazil.

Farmers, who were the driving force of the Brazilian pre-industrial economy during the 19th century, maintained significant influence throughout the Imperial Era (1822-1889). Among the most striking examples of their power were their resistance to abolishing slavery, regulating land ownership, and taxing land (CARVALHO, 2019a; PRADO JR., 2012a). However, the transition to the Republican Era inaugurated the process that reduced the political power of farmers, although it did not entirely erode their political relevance (LEAL, 2012).

Industrialization in the 20th century brought profound changes to the political landscape, as the recruitment base of political elites moved from rural areas to urban centers (CODATO et al., 2016; SIMONI JR.; DARDAQUE; MINGARDI, 2016; MARENCO, 1997). Nevertheless, social and economic modernization created pressing needs for farmers' survival, such as the demand for credit to cover agricultural inputs. Another key concern was protecting land ownership from the distributive

pressures that accompanied the massive political inclusion of the late 1980s. As a result, these demands pushed farmers back into the political arena.

Although farmers initially supported the 1964 Military Coup, primarily due to fears that a democratic government might promote land reform, their relationship with the Military Government soon became increasingly contentious (MENDONÇA, 2002). The authoritarian government implemented some measures that contradicted the interests of farmers, for example, a limited land reform; the intensification of the policy of differentiated exchange rates – using the agricultural surplus in the trade balance to finance industrial imports; and the control of representative organizations of farmers, such as the National Confederation of Agriculture (ORTEGA, 2005).

Furthermore, the Military Government prompted agricultural modernization to boost the trade balance surplus and stimulate industrialization (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; SORJ, 1980). To this aim, it implemented developmentalist policies that enabled farmers to purchase machinery and biochemicals, a policy that primarily benefited large-scale farmers. The main consequence of these policies was the emergence of the agro-industrial complex, a mode of production in which agriculture is profoundly vulnerable to the expropriation of surplus by industrial and financial sectors (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996).

Thus, while the Military Regime's interventions ensured that the most economically important crops remained dependent on state support, they failed to establish a solid governance structure for agricultural policies, leading farmers into one of the worst economic periods in Brazilian history (BACHA, 2018). When the developmentalist policy system collapsed in the early 1980s, resulting in a decade marked by monetary crises, hyperinflation, and economic recession, many farmers went bankrupt (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996). Some lost their land, while others postponed and scaled back their debts. This marked the end of the so-called Golden Age of Brazilian agricultural modernization.

The regime transition in the late 1980s opened up a large window of opportunity for various interests to influence the design of the new political system. However, farmers were largely unorganized at that moment (ORTEGA, 2005). Modernization had produced a highly heterogeneous economic profile across agriculture and agro-industry, leading to the formation of product-specific associations for major agricultural chains, but not to a unified entity representing agribusiness interests. As a consequence, agribusiness suffered setbacks in the National Constituent Assembly

(1987-1988). For example, despite farmers' fierce opposition to land reform, the principle of the social function of land was enshrined in the new constitution (BRUNO, 1997). Additionally, the governance structure for agricultural policy could not be defined at that opportunity, postponing any discussion on the matter until the early 1990s (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 2001; LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994).

The first government after the regime transition caused severe damage to agriculture and agro-industry with its economic liberalization program. The grain harvest declined by around 18% between 1990 and 1991 (CONAB, 2024). In response to this hostile environment, the interests of farmers and agro-industrialists from different agricultural chains converged on the need for stable and predictable agricultural policies. They mobilized using a strategy similar to the one employed during the National Constituent Assembly to resist land reform: building a wide, *ad-hoc* coalition to secure support from sympathetic members of Congress (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994).

The Agricultural Law was passed in 1991, representing the most important victory of agribusiness over President Collor de Mello (TAVARES, 2018). However, the coalition dispersed soon after that victory (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994). The convergence between agricultural and agro-industrial interests would not resume until 16 years later, when the Soybean and Corn Producers Association of the State of Mato Grosso (APROSOJA-MT) and the Mato Grosso Association of Cotton Producers (AMPA) jointly developed a strategy to unify the agricultural and agro-industrial interests.

During President Cardoso's two terms (1995-2002) and Lula's first term (2003-2006), agricultural and agro-industrial sectors followed different paths, occasionally coming together, for instance, during the legislative assessment of the biosafety law (TAGLIALEGNA; CARVALHO, 2006). In the agricultural sector, the primary objectives included blocking any form of land reform and securing debt renegotiations (TAVARES, 2018). Meanwhile, agro-industrial actors concentrated their efforts on improving sectoral competitiveness (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004; MANCUSO, 2007).

Today, agribusiness represents around a quarter of Brazil's GDP (CEPEA, 2024) and one-third of the trade balance (CONCEIÇÃO; CONCEIÇÃO, 2014), maintaining significant economic importance. Furthermore, agribusiness holds the largest parliamentary caucus in the Brazilian National Congress (GRACIANO et al., 2023). It was a major financier of electoral campaigns for the Federal Legislative

Branch in the 2014 national elections (RIBEIRO, 2019). Its representative organizations are among the most frequently invited to testify at public hearings in Congress (CESÁRIO, 2016; RESENDE, 2018). These indicators collectively suggest that agribusiness is a powerful political player in Brazil.

Given this political and economic significance, this dissertation examines the political action of agribusiness within the Brazilian National Congress, addressing a critical gap in the national literature on interest organizations and refining theoretical propositions derived from the group approach. The primary research questions are: How much influence does agribusiness exert on the decisions made in the National Congress? What variables moderate agribusiness lobbying influence? In order to answer these questions, I first took two preparatory steps: (1) understanding the motivations behind agribusiness's efforts to influence public policies, and (2) investigating the emergence and ongoing presence of the Farming Thinking Institute (IPA), the main entity representing agribusiness's interests at the federal level.

In alignment with these goals, Chapter One examines the key features of agriculture following the end of the Conservative Modernization implemented by the Military Regime. The process of agricultural industrialization, central to the concept of agribusiness, catalyzed changes in the prevailing agricultural mode of production, leading to the emergence of a new structure of interest conflicts and connecting agriculture to the economic dynamics of the industrial and financial sectors.

The new economic relationships resulting from agricultural modernization created numerous contradictions, generating an anomic environment capable of destabilizing the entire economy. In such an adverse scenario, a set of public policies was designed to preserve a delicate balance in the distribution of profit among agriculture, industry, commerce, and services, ensuring that economic players in each sector remained engaged in their productive activities.

Chapter Two focuses on identifying the explanatory factors behind the emergence and maintenance of IPA, contrasting this experience with previous attempts to coordinate agribusiness political action at the federal level. To explain the emergence of that organization, I combined three hypotheses from the neopluralist perspective on group behavior, arguing that IPA was created as a result of: (1) disturbances that altered the distribution of utility among different segments of the agribusiness sector; (2) critical resource dependence on the impacted audience; and (3) an unmet demand for political influence within the agribusiness community.

Additionally, I draw on hypotheses from lobbying coalition studies within the neopluralist framework to explain the organizational survival of IPA. I argue that its continued existence has been sustained by: (1) internal mechanisms that limit purposive displacement, thereby increasing affiliation costs for entities with extreme preferences; (2) mechanisms to minimize competition among affiliates for the same audience by restricting shared credit claims on policy achievements; and (3) the maintenance of an appealing agenda that delivers policy outcomes addressing the most pressing concerns of its affiliates.

These arguments were empirically examined through a case study research design. The primary source consisted of in-depth interviews with key leaders from the agricultural and agro-industrial sectors. Based on the proposed arguments, I developed analytical categories and coded the interview transcripts, assigning relevant excerpts to the corresponding topics. Additional data sources complemented the interviews, including official statistics, the list of IPA-affiliated entities, and a dataset of structured interviews regarding the proposals lobbied by the organization during the 55th Legislature (2015-2019).

The final chapter analyzes the influence of agribusiness in the National Congress and tests four hypotheses. One hypothesis from the pluralist perspective posits that counterlobbying can limit the success of agribusiness lobbying. Another, from the elitist framework, argues that lobbying effort is the primary predictor of lobbying success. The remaining two hypotheses, both from the neopluralist perspective, suggest that the degree of conflict and the preference of public opinion serve as moderating factors in lobbying influence. To test these hypotheses, I gathered data on all the proposals lobbied by IPA that completed legislative assessment during the 55th Legislature. For each proposition, a key informant from IPA indicated the degree of success, lobbying effort, counterlobbying, allied pressure, conflict, and the majority preference within the Executive Branch and of public opinion. I then modeled this data using logistic regression, with the outcome variable representing whether IPA's demands were satisfied to a significant degree or not in legislative decisions.

2 ANOMIE AND CONTRADICTION IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS

Traditional agriculture in Brazil required minimal state intervention to maintain profitability. Farms have been modeled as autonomous productive units, internalizing all production processes (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; PRADO JR., 2011, 2012a). The profitability of traditional agriculture was based on the intensive exploitation of labor and land, as well as oligopolistic access to external markets. Consequently, the main conflictual issues stemmed from regulations on agricultural inputs (CARVALHO, 2019b, 2019c; PRADO JR., 2012b, 2012c).

This dynamic changed significantly with the modernization of agriculture. Farms became increasingly integrated into the urban economy, with profitability depending on input costs and output prices in competitive markets (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; SORJ, 1980). As a result, modernization enlarged the structure of interest conflicts in agriculture, leading to the emergence of the mode of production of the agro-industrial complex.

Previous studies have suggested that the structure of interest conflicts in the Brazilian contemporary industry derives from the challenges imposed by low competitiveness in national and international markets, a situation I argue also applies to agro-industrial products (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004; MANCUSO, 2007). However, there are no similar studies on the structure of interest conflicts in agriculture. In order to fill this gap in the literature, I pose the following question: What motivates farmers to try to influence public policy? What are the main policy domains of interest to them?

To answer these questions, I conducted a case study about agricultural development in Brazil from 1985 to the present. The theoretical framework guiding the empirical analysis of statistical data is based on the work of Graziano da Silva (1996), one of the most important studies on agricultural development in Brazil. I extracted two central concepts from this study that reflect the modes of production in Brazilian agriculture: the rural complex and the agro-industrial complex.

While these concepts are central to the theoretical discussion, they were not sufficient to define the policy domains within the structure of interest conflicts in agriculture. For this reason, I expanded the analysis to include meso-categories: integrated, semi-integrated, non-integrated, and subsistence establishments. Then, I

updated previous analyses from Graziano da Silva (1996) and Sorj (1980) with data from 1985 onwards.

The data used to identify the current organization of agriculture were primarily sourced from official statistics: (1) the agricultural census, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) every ten years, which provides data on rural establishments; (2) the Brazilian Statistical Yearbook, which offers annual productivity data for each crop; and (3) the Food and Agriculture Organization Statistical Database (FAOSTAT), which provides data on crop productivity in other countries. Where official data were unavailable, I relied on secondary sources. This included data on seed production, the use of genetically modified seeds, precision agriculture, and compliance with environmental protection regulations.

The chapter is structured as follows. The second section provides an overview of the theoretical framework, focusing on the modes of production and types of rural establishments in Brazilian agriculture. The following section examines the legacy of conservative modernization under the Military Regime, emphasizing its role in increasing heterogeneity within the agricultural sector. The third section analyzes how the current productive organization shapes the structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture, identifying the policy domains of greatest concern to farmers. Finally, the last section concludes with a set of final remarks.

2.1 Agricultural dynamics in the agro-industrial complex

A new pattern in agricultural dynamics emerged in Brazil following the modernization promoted by the Military Regime. The traditional organization of agriculture could not withstand the commodification of production factors such as labor and land, the dissolution of oligopolies in international markets, and the adoption of modern agricultural implements and structures (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; SORJ, 1980). By the 1980s, a new mode of production became hegemonic in Brazilian agriculture: the agro-industrial complex.

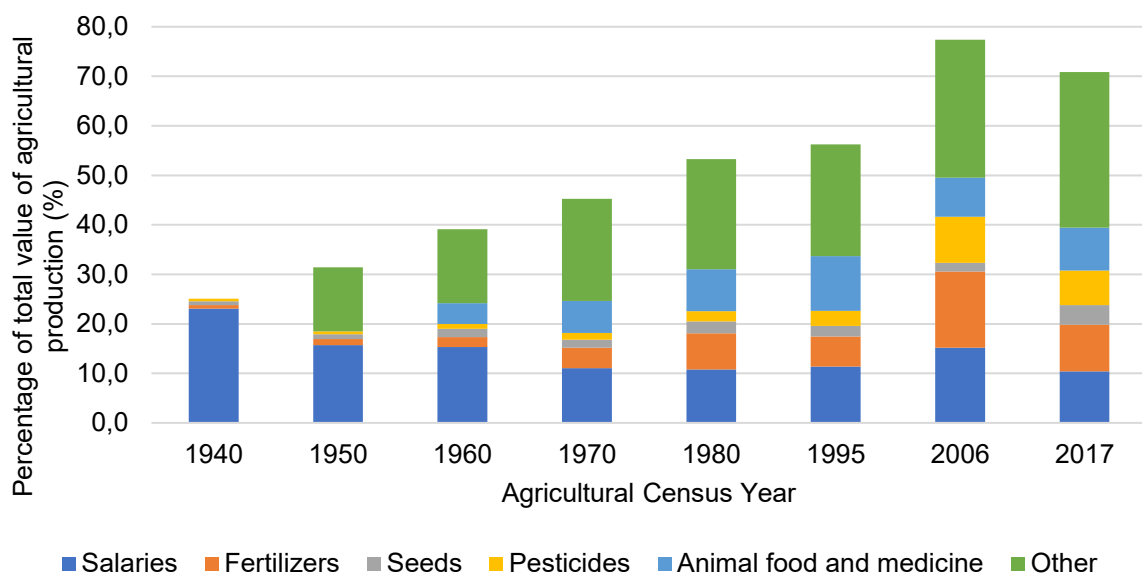
Today, the agro-industrial complex accounts for the majority of Brazil's agricultural exports, such as soybeans, maize, beef, sugarcane, coffee, poultry meat, and cotton. However, remnants of the rural complex persist in the current agricultural dynamics. Various indicators point to an incomplete process of modernization in the 1980s. For instance, as of 2016, 40% of the total number of rural establishments still

produced primarily for subsistence, occupying about 13% of the total arable land (IBGE, 2017).

According to Graziano da Silva (1996), the agro-industrial complex is a mode of production characterized by vertical integration across agriculture, industry, and finance. In other words, it signifies the capitalization of agricultural activities. Modern agriculture demands substantial capital investments in land, implements, and infrastructure, such as fertilizers, pesticides, tractors, machinery, improved seeds, irrigation systems, storage facilities, animal feed and vaccines, and high-quality breeding matrices. For this reason, it is heavily reliant on credit to finance the immediate inputs required for production, making macroeconomic performance a critical concern for farmers.

Figure 2.1 illustrates one of the main effects of agricultural modernization. While the total value of agricultural production increased, total expenses also rose and became diversified. Initially, wages constituted the largest share of expenses. Over time, however, wage costs declined relative to other types of expenditures. Today, spending on animal food and medicines, pesticides, fertilizers, and seeds accounts for 29% of the total value of agricultural production, while wages represent only 10%. Overall, total expenses have risen from 25% of the production value to 70%.

Figure 2.1 – Percentage of expenses relative to the total value of agricultural production, 1940-2017.



Source: IBGE (1950, 1956, 1970, 1975, 1984, 1998, 2009, 2017).

The agro-industrial complex differs in key aspects from the rural complex. In the former, land use is intensive, meaning that the total production depends more on productivity than on the size of the cultivated area. This shift became attractive because modern agricultural implements and infrastructure enable farmers to largely retain the investment surplus, i.e., the profit generated by the productivity gains.

In the rural complex, agricultural profits are primarily derived from the expropriation of labor surplus and land income. By contrast, the agro-industrial complex reduces the relevance of labor surplus, as machines replace workers, introducing the question of investment surplus. In the rural complex, the main investments are in slaves and land, making it less reliant on credit. However, the agro-industrial complex emerged as a product of agricultural industrialization, which means greater control over production. For example, infertile lands are made fertile through fertilizers; irrigation systems address the problem of drought; pesticides and medicines minimize disease-related losses; granaries protect harvested crops; and mechanical traction replaces animal labor. All these modern agricultural technologies require a large investment of capital to generate a surplus.

Additionally, the agro-industrial complex operates with a high degree of social division of labor. In other words, rural establishments, along with agricultural input and output industries, have become specialized production units aimed at enhancing productivity gains. This advanced division of labor has created exchange chains that have leveraged domestic accumulation and consumption. Consequently, production has increasingly shifted toward the domestic market. The manufacturing industry has become the primary consumer of agricultural products, transforming raw materials into goods for either domestic consumption or exports.

The modernization of agriculture has also resulted in a deeply heterogeneous Brazilian countryside. Beyond preexisting inequalities related to production orientation (internal vs. external markets) and the natural distribution of edaphoclimatic conditions (favorable or unfavorable to specific crops or livestock), modernization has added a new layer of inequality rooted in selective access to subsidized rural credit (ALVES, 2001; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996).

2.1.1 Rural establishments in contemporary Brazilian agriculture

In general, rural establishments in contemporary Brazil can be classified into four categories. The first category is the integrated establishment, which represents modern agriculture. The second is the semi-integrated establishment, a transitional type between integrated and non-integrated establishments. The remaining two categories are remnants of colonial agriculture: non-integrated establishments and subsistence establishments. Table 2.1 outlines the key features of each type.

Integrated rural establishments emerged in the 1970s as a consequence of the agricultural modernization process underway at that time. Farms in this category have adopted the mode of production of the agro-industrial complex. They massively use fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, and other modern implements and infrastructures in production. Consequently, they maintain a very close relationship with industry, either as consumers of agricultural machinery or suppliers of raw materials.

Table 2.1 – Types of rural establishments in contemporary Brazil.

| Key features | Integrated establishment | Semi-integrated establishment | Non-integrated establishment | Subsistence establishment |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Degree agricultural implements use | High | Low | None | None |
| Degree of industrial demand | High | High | Low | None |
| Production orientation | External and internal markets | Internal and external markets | Internal market | Self-consumption |
| Average agricultural technique | Sophisticated | Regular | Rustic | Rustic |
| Surplus accumulation | High | Medium | Low | None |

Source: author's elaboration based on Sorj (1980) and Graziano da Silva (1996).

This integration between the two sectors has had profound effects on the organization of production. Industry demands large quantities of standardized raw materials for automated or semi-automated processing, while agriculture relies on a steady flow of inputs to sustain productivity. This interdependence makes coordination indispensable for the profitability of both farmers and industrialists. Graziano da Silva (1996) illustrates this through the increasing number and the growing relevance of sectoral associations, in contrast with the crisis of corporatist and homogeneous representation.

Farmers who accessed subsidized credit were able to implement modern technologies on their farms, improving productivity and, by extension, their capital.

After the successful transition to modern agriculture, these farmers could continuously access new technologies due to their improved productivity and lower credit risk. Nevertheless, this virtuous cycle has also exacerbated inequalities in the countryside.

The production chain of soybeans is the prime example of an integrated establishment. While other products, such as maize and sugarcane, are also significant, soybeans have achieved a leading economic role. In 2019, soybeans were the most cultivated crop in Brazil, covering approximately 36 million hectares and generating 125 billion reais in revenue (IBGE, 2023). From 2016 to 2020, Brazil achieved an average yield of 3.22 metric tons per hectare, the second-best performance in the world – behind only the US, with 3.36 metric tons per hectare (FAO, 2023).

Semi-integrated establishments, on the other hand, did not experience the same virtuous cycle as their integrated counterparts. These establishments often remained at lower productivity levels due to difficulties in accessing subsidized credit during the Military Regime, such as rice and bean production. This category also includes farmers who expanded their land use in response to high credit costs relative to land prices. In this case, cattle farming provides the most illustrative example. Despite the growth of the animal medicine industry from 1970 to 1990 and the widespread use of these medicines, productivity gains in cattle farming remained limited (IBGE, 1975, 1984, 1998; SORJ, 1980). The low adoption of feed supplements and processed rations, due to the lower cost of natural pasture, may be the main explanation for these contrasting results (IBGE, 2017).|

Under such conditions, semi-integrated farms have retained the traditional agricultural pattern of increasing production by expanding arable land. However, a large manufacturing industry has developed, dependent on these farms for raw materials, whereas they rely less on industrial inputs. As a consequence, these farms remain only partially integrated into the industry. Due to their limited use of agricultural implements, they maintain low productivity levels despite incorporating some modern techniques. In the end, they struggle to accumulate sufficient surplus to fund further modernization, particularly since the relative cost of credit exceeds land costs.

Non-integrated and subsistence establishments are remnants of the rural complex. These establishments have not undergone modernization and still exhibit many characteristics of 19th-century agriculture. Subsistence establishments account for 40% of all rural establishments in Brazil at present. They reproduce a peasant mode

of life, producing primarily for their own consumption and generating no surplus. This mode of production is essentially non-capitalistic and guided by non-profit-oriented priorities (ABRAMOVAY, 2012). For peasants, land is merely a means of subsistence, allowing them to produce most of what they need, such as beans, rice, maize, and limited livestock, while maintaining low productivity and minimal social division of labor.

The last category comprises non-integrated establishments. These are typically subsistence farms that transitioned to commercial agriculture or farms that failed to modernize. Publicly available data are imprecise, but as of 2016, only 31% of establishments used chemical fertilizers¹, and 40% produced mainly for their own consumption; the remaining 29% would represent semi-integrated and non-integrated establishments.

Non-integrated establishments have limited access to modern agricultural implements, leading to low productivity. They failed to modernize due to limited access to rural credit during the Military Regime. Additionally, they have been unable to generate a surplus to fund their modernization alone because they operate in highly competitive regional markets, as they are usually not connected to the industry and sell their production directly to supermarkets and open-air markets. Their prevailing agricultural techniques remain rudimentary due to their limited access to regular technical assistance, which also reduces their capacity for surplus accumulation.

Non-integrated establishments produce a significant portion of the food consumed domestically. Cassava production best exemplifies this category. Cassava yield gradually declined from 1931 to 1999 (IBGE, 2021), and the present-day yield is below the average recorded between 1931 and 1936. As a native South American tuber and a staple in Brazilian cuisine, cassava faces limited international demand. In 2019, cassava and its derivatives accounted for a mere 0.003% of Brazil's total export value (COMEXSTAT, 2023). That year, Brazil produced 17.5 million metric tons of cassava, more than oranges and approximately equal to the combined production of beans, rice, and wheat (IBGE, 2023). Of this total, only six thousand metric tons were exported, primarily as cassava starch.

These general categories emphasize the diverse demands of the Brazilian agricultural sector, shaped by varying degrees of modernization among rural establishments. These demands become even more nuanced when considering

¹¹ Considering establishments that use chemical fertilizers as “integrated” is a poor indicator. However, disaggregated data for these establishments are not available due to a legal clause of confidentiality.

regional differences and crop-specific segmentation. The political implications of this landscape will be addressed in the following sections, beginning with the critical contradiction inherent in the organization of modern agriculture.

2.1.2 Antinomies within the agro-industrial complex

In the rural complex, state intervention is largely unnecessary. Autarchic units self-regulate the allocation of production factors such as labor, land, and capital. Surplus is generated by intensive exploitation of labor, extensive use of land, and engagement in strategic commercial arrangements (monopolies and oligopolies). The need for internal market supply is almost nonexistent, given the prominence of subsistence production.

Economic modernization fundamentally altered this scenario, creating a need for state intervention in the agricultural economy. The problem of supplying cities became more critical as the subsistence economy receded, especially because food prices serve as an index of labor costs across the entire economy. Then, ensuring stable and lower prices became essential to maintaining the competitiveness of national products in a globalized economy.

The first problem the state faced was the seasonality of agricultural production. During harvest periods, prices fall significantly due to oversupply, while in the off-season, prices rise sharply because of supply constraints. This price instability negatively affects farmers, who plan production based on expected prices at planting time (between harvests); consumers, who experience a decline in purchasing power; and employers, who are forced to adjust wages to maintain a steady labor supply.

The state responded by establishing minimum prices and buffer stocks. Following the successful policy of stabilizing coffee prices after the 1929 crisis, the government expanded this strategy to include other strategic crops such as rice, beans, maize, peanuts, soybeans, and sunflower seeds in 1945 (BRASIL, 1945). Under this policy, whenever the price of covered crops fell below the minimum, farmers could sell their production to the state, which would release stocks during the off-season at the established minimum price.

This strategy, also adopted by the US after the 1929 crisis, helped stabilize prices (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 2001). However, in periods of sustained overproduction, buffer stocks grew faster than their release, even when prices for stock sales were set

lower than the purchase prices. As a result, the state became vulnerable to accumulating debts, as public resources were used to support artificial prices.

The second problem stemming from the agro-industrial complex is the high demand for credit in agriculture. Since modern farming requires purchasing large quantities of inputs, a significant portion of credit becomes locked into land assets. This new demand adds even more challenges for farmers to access credit because agriculture intrinsically faces lower liquidity and higher risks compared to other sectors. As a result, banks charge even higher interest rates on agricultural loans, which are already elevated.

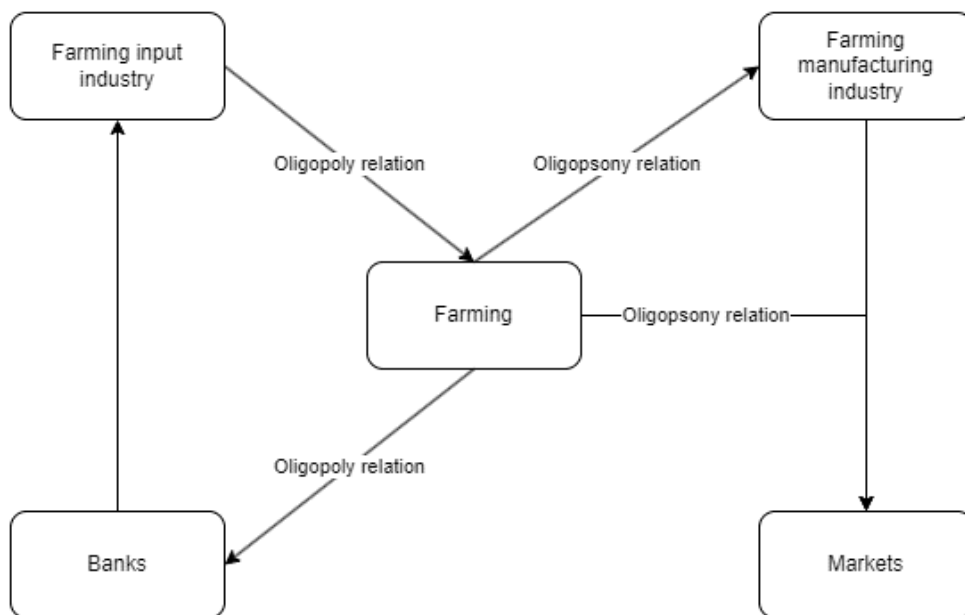
The Brazilian case exemplifies this contradiction between the cost of credit and the modernization and performance of modern agriculture. The shortage of credit in the late 19th century, along with the inherent risks of agricultural activity, contributed to delaying rural modernization for nearly a century². From 1970 to 2015, credit contracted to finance agricultural immediate inputs under the National System of Rural Credit never accounted for less than 41% of the total volume of contracted credit in any given year. The average percentage of credit dedicated to funding agricultural inputs is 58.5% (BACHA, 2018, p. 86–87). Credit for this purpose reached 80% in 1989 and 82% in 1991, during a period of economic recession and hyperinflation. This underscores the critical role of credit in modern agriculture.

Brazil responded to the rural credit issue by creating a system that combined private resources (savings and demand deposits in banks) and public resources (contributions from the National Treasury, public banks, and public savings like the Worker Support Fund). From 1970 to 2015, the government succeeded in keeping real interest rates negative or near zero to support agricultural modernization and fund modern agricultural operations. Despite the success of the National System of Rural Credit, credit has never reached more than a quarter of the total number of farms in the country, leaving a significant unmet demand for credit (IBGE, 1956, 1970, 1975, 1984, 1998, 2009, 2017).

² Carvalho (2019, Part II, Chapter I, p. 261-290) discusses this topic. He argues that “without delving into details, rural credit policy was the cause of a constant battle between the government, landowners, and bankers. An examination of the agricultural congresses of 1878 reveals that the issue of capital availability was central for farmers, both in the south and in the north. Widespread complaints targeted the government for its inability to provide the necessary capital. The most common accusation was that, through the sale of bonds and securities, the government was draining the market and harming agricultural credit.” (CARVALHO, 2019a, p. 283, our translation).

The third critical antinomy within the agro-industrial complex is the industrial capture of agricultural surplus. Figure 2.2 illustrates the economic relationships embedding agriculture within the agro-industrial complex. First, agriculture depends on banks to finance industrial inputs essential to farming. This relationship between agriculture and finance was discussed in the previous paragraphs. In addition to the excessive demand for credit, which characterizes the Brazilian case, modern agriculture also faces significant inherent risks and low liquidity. Furthermore, agriculture often deals with oligopolistic relationships with banks – large financial institutions that control a significant portion of the credit market and, as a result, can independently set interest rates in response to agricultural credit demand. In the absence of government measures to lower these interest rates, banks can expropriate agricultural surplus, jeopardizing both the agricultural profitability and broader economic stability.

Figure 2.2 – Agricultural relationships within the agro-industrial complex.



Source: author's elaboration based on Graziano da Silva (1996).

Second, the relationship between agriculture and the agricultural input industry is oligopolistic. This issue arises due to the specialization of industries in producing inputs tailored for specific crops, soils, and edaphoclimatic conditions. Consequently, the number of farms demanding inputs far exceeds the number of industries supplying them. In the absence of government measures to limit the expropriation of agricultural

surplus by the input industry, agricultural profitability may decline to the point of triggering a supply crisis.

Third, the relationship between agriculture and the agricultural manufacturing industry is oligopsonic. In other words, there are far more sellers of agricultural raw products than buyers. Because producers cannot store their outputs for extended periods, buyers are able to control prices. For instance, the Brazilian raw milk market is considerably concentrated among a few companies. In 2015, the twelve largest dairy companies, measured by raw milk intake, accounted for about 40% of national production (MILKPOINT, 2016). Together, these twelve companies relied on nearly 60,000 raw milk suppliers. As a result, the largest dairy companies could control raw milk prices while still securing suppliers, since competition among sellers drives prices down to minimal margins. Once again, free market dynamics risk derailing agriculture.

Finally, the relationship between agriculture and supermarkets, though mostly limited to fresh food, also exhibits oligopsonic features. By extension, it suffers from the same issue observed in the relationship between agriculture and the manufacturing industry. In 1966, the Brazilian government implemented the Guarantee Policy of Minimum Prices to safeguard agricultural profitability (BRASIL, 1966). In addition to direct government purchases at minimum prices, the policy introduced subsidized loans that enabled farmers to store their production until market prices exceeded the guaranteed minimum.

Although minimum prices played a significant role during the Military Regime, it was severely impacted by the fiscal crisis of the 1980s. Faced with pressure to balance the public budget, the government gradually reduced funding for key agricultural policies, including minimum prices and subsidized rural credit. In 1988, direct government purchases amounted to 9.6 billion reais (adjusted to 2014 prices) (BACHA, 2018, p. 109). By 1998, this amount had dropped to 2.5 billion reais. By 2008, it further declined to 958 million reais, and by 2014, to just 605 million reais.

During this period, the government introduced new modalities of operations to guarantee minimum prices while minimizing the fiscal impact on the public budget, particularly by reducing the buffer stocks. These new modalities included subsidies for transporting products to regions where prices exceeded the minimum, price supplements to bridge gaps to the minimum level, and mandatory price insurance for accessing subsidized rural credit.

Table 2.2 – Average annual coverage of selected crops under the Guarantee Policy of Minimum Prices.

| Culture | Period | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1985-1989 | 2005-2013 |
| Beans | 11.6 | 1.51 |
| Cotton | 53.9 | 11.08 |
| Maize | 24.4 | 10.62 |
| Rice | 44.4 | 6.28 |
| Soybeans | 21.5 | 4.67 |

Source: author's elaboration based on Bacha (2018, p. 113).

Despite these innovations, the coverage of crops under the minimum prices policy decreased dramatically. As shown in Table 2.2, the average annual coverage for rice harvests – one of the most widely supported crops – dropped significantly, from 44% between 1985 and 1989 to just 6% between 2005 and 2013. Similar declines can be observed for other major crops, such as beans, cotton, maize, and soybeans.

2.2 Legacy of conservative modernization

From 1994 to 2017, agricultural census data revealed no significant structural changes in Brazilian agriculture. Land distribution remained highly concentrated, as evidenced by successive census reports (IBGE, 1998, 2009, 2017). For instance, the first percentile of the largest rural establishments controlled approximately 47% of all agricultural land in 2017, whereas the 50% smallest rural establishments occupied only 2.2% (IBGE, 2017).

Regarding access to agricultural machinery, only the percentage of establishments owning tractors showed notable growth, increasing from 10.5% in 1994 to 14.5% in 2016, as detailed in Table 2.3. The number of establishments with trucks saw a modest rise, as did those with harvesters, while the percentage of establishments owning seeders remained largely unchanged.

Similarly, changes in the use of agricultural biochemicals were minimal. The percentage of establishments using fertilizers increased slightly from 1994 to 2016, as did the use of lime. However, the percentage of establishments using pesticides remained virtually unchanged throughout the period.

Table 2.3 – Percentage of rural establishments with selected agricultural implements and infrastructure.

| | Year | | |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| | 1994 | 2006 | 2017 |
| Machinery | | | |
| Tractors | 10.5 | 10.3 | 14.5 |
| Seeders | 5.0 | 4.7 | 5.0 |
| Harvesters | 1.9 | 1.7 | 2.4 |
| Trucks | 2.9 | 2.4 | 3.5 |
| Biochemicals | | | |
| Fertilizers | 38.3 | 32.8 | 42.3 |
| Pesticides | 35.3 | 36.7 | 35.8 |
| Lime | 12.0 | 15.9 | 14.4 |
| Infrastructure | | | |
| Irrigation | 5.9 | 5.2 | 9.9 |
| Forage granary | 3.3 | 3.0 | 1.1 |
| Electricity | 39 | 68.1 | 83.1 |

Source: IBGE (1998, 2009, 2017).

Regarding infrastructure, one notable change since the Military Regime has been the substantial expansion of electricity access among rural establishments. By 2016, 83% of rural establishments had electricity, more than twice the rate recorded in 1994. In contrast, irrigation infrastructure has evolved minimally since 1994, reaching only 10% of rural establishments by 2016. Although the number of establishments with irrigation infrastructure grew by 76% between 1994 and 2016, the covered area expanded faster, from 3.1 million hectares in 1994 to 6.6 million hectares in 2016, a 114% increase (IBGE, 1998, 2017). Despite this growth, irrigation infrastructure remains limited in Brazil, covering only 6% of the crop area (IBGE, 2017).

From 1994 to 2016, the percentage of rural establishments with forage granaries declined significantly. As an indicator of agriculture storage infrastructure, this trend suggests a growing inequality and dependency on storage services provided outside the farms. Indeed, commerce and industry control about 44% of the available storage capacity; storage services account for 37%, and farms only 19% (IBGE, 2022).

The crisis in subsidized rural credit during the 1980s and 1990s may largely explain the stability in indicators related to agricultural implements and infrastructure. The contracted rural credit started to rise after the monetary stabilization in the 1990s. However, it achieved a similar relevance and dimension only after 2013. That year, 173

billion reais were contracted, equivalent to approximately 70% of the inflation-adjusted amount released in 1979 (BACHA, 2018).

Furthermore, real interest rates have never been as negative as they were during the Military Regime. Following monetary stabilization, real interest rates for rural credit have generally remained null or slightly positive (BACHA, 2018). Although access to rural credit has recovered since 1994, it remains below 1979 levels: only 8% of establishments obtained rural credit from public sources and approximately 7.5% from private sources in 2016 (IBGE, 2017).

Regarding seed production, some crops have exhibited impressive growth. Table 2.4 presents detailed data on this topic. From 1992 to the 2020/21 harvest, the production of soybean seeds increased more than twelvefold, an explosive growth unmatched by any other crop in Brazil. The second seed with great performance was maize, which gradually increased from 1992 to the 2020/21 harvest, approximately 60% per decade, and ultimately grew fourfold over the entire period.

Table 2.4 – Production of selected seeds, 1992-2020.

| Harvest | Production (Tonnes) | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | Cotton | Maize | Rice | Soybean | Wheat |
| 1992 ¹ | 30 162 | 131 504 | 159 610 | 853 152 | 333 420 |
| 2001/02 | 9 529 | 232 510 | 93 018 ² | 828 881 | 196 474 |
| 2011/12 | 8 783 | 323 495 | 124 333 ² | 1 524 392 | 226 601 |
| 2020/21 | 72 586 | 537 756 | 434 731 | 10 958 288 | 494 588 ³ |

Source: author's elaboration based on Kiyuna & Ferreira (1994) and ABRASEM (2023).

Note: (1) Data extracted from Kiyuna & Ferreira (1994, p. 36), who also used ABRASEM data; (2) For all types of rice; (3) In 2019/20 harvest.

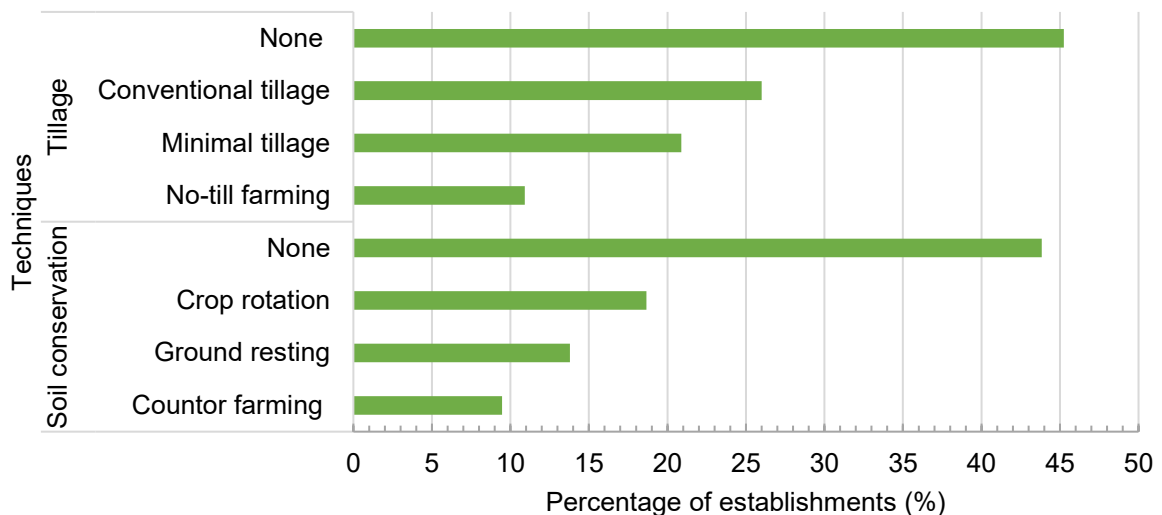
On the other hand, the production of rice and wheat seeds followed a similar pattern. Both experienced a decline in production from 1992 to the 2001/02 harvest, with a recovery observed in the subsequent decades. From the 2011/12 to the 2020/21 harvest, their production increased significantly. During this period, rice more than doubled its seed production, while wheat production more than tripled. Finally, cottonseed production exhibited an unusual trajectory: it declined from 1992 to 2011/12 harvest and only began to recover in the last decade.

In addition to implements and infrastructure, techniques have also played a crucial role in hindering agricultural productivity in Brazil. From 1994 to 2017, the

percentage of rural establishments that received any form of technical assistance remained virtually unchanged at about 20% (IBGE, 1998, 2017). Consequently, the majority of the rural establishments lacked technical assistance during this period. Naturally, this lack of regular support reflects on the agricultural techniques implemented on farms.

As shown in Figure 2.3, even basic agricultural techniques are rarely applied across rural establishments. Among tillage techniques, conventional tillage is the most commonly used, practiced in 26% of establishments. On the other hand, no-till agriculture – a technique known for improving soil fertility, productivity, and efficiency – is used by only approximately 11% of establishments. Minimal tillage, an intermediate technique between conventional tillage and no-till agriculture, is employed by about 21% of establishments. Since a single establishment can use more than one technique, the percentages for tillage techniques are not additive. Despite this, it is notable that 45% of establishments do not use any form of tillage technique at all.

Figure 2.3 – Adoption of common agricultural techniques among rural establishments, 2017.



Source: IBGE (2017).

The employment of soil conservation techniques in Brazil follows a similar pattern. Nearly 44% of rural establishments do not employ any form of soil conservation technique. Basic techniques, such as crop rotation, ground resting, and contour agriculture, are employed by fewer than 20% of establishments.

However, the scenario differs when examining livestock management. Approximately 77% of establishments with animals implement disease and parasite control (IBGE, 2017). Salt supplementation is common in 88% of these establishments, while supplemental feeding with grains and forage occurs in 67% (IBGE, 2017). These indicators suggest the existence of modern livestock practices in Brazil, but cattle breeding remains largely extensive.

Pasture is the primary food source for cattle, covering approximately 160 million hectares – 45% of the total area of rural establishments – while crops occupied just 63.5 million hectares in 2017 (DIAS-FILHO, 2014; IBGE, 2017). Various studies suggest that a significant portion of pasture land is degraded. For instance, Dias-Filho (2014) estimates that 50% of Brazilian pasture is heavily degraded, while 25% is moderately degraded. Longitudinally, LAPIG (2022) reports a substantial reduction in severely degraded pasture from 30% in 2000 to 15.7% in 2020. This change has contributed to an increase in non-degraded or slightly degraded pasture, which rose from 28.6% to 45.3%, while moderately degraded pasture remained nearly unchanged, shifting from 41.2% to 38.9%.

The prevalence of extensive cattle breeding, coupled with the degraded pasture, points to the primary use of traditional techniques. Furthermore, the practice of cattle confinement remains minimal in Brazil. According to the Brazilian Beef Exporters Association, only about 2.4% of the cattle herd was confined in 2017 (ABIEC, 2018). Among establishments with more than 50 cattle, only around 10% practiced confinement in 2017 (IBGE, 2017). As a consequence, the integration of livestock into industry is still partial, as cattle breeding in Brazil remains nearly entirely based on extensive land exploration.

In conclusion, beyond the limited use of agricultural machinery and implements, reliance on traditional techniques in both agriculture and livestock is a key factor to behind the relatively low level of productivity in the country.

As explained earlier, beef production in Brazil demonstrates relatively low productivity. The difference between the US and Brazilian beef productivity is approximately 100 kg per animal. This disparity likely stems from the limited integration of cattle breeding with industry and the widespread use of degraded pasture. Conversely, for pork and poultry – segments with a high level of industrial integration – the productivity gap between Brazil and its most productive competitors is significantly narrower. For pork, the difference with the US is only 9 kg per animal, and

compared to the EU, it is a mere 4kg per animal. In the case of poultry, Brazil ranks second in productivity among the top producers, surpassing the US and trailing Japan by just 0.6 kg per animal, which constitutes about a quarter of Brazil's current productivity.

For milk production, the extensive use of pasture to feed cattle again reveals its limitations. Brazilian raw milk productivity significantly lags behind that of leading producers. On average, Brazil produces 2.1 thousand liters of raw milk per cow annually, compared to 10.6 thousand liters from the US and 7.3 thousand liters from the EU. In other words, achieving parity with the most productive countries would require a fivefold increase in Brazil's current productivity, clearly highlighting the developmental gap in the country's dairy sector.

Regarding crop productivity, notable differences arise between export-oriented crops (such as soybeans, coffee, and sugarcane) and those primarily consumed domestically (such as cassava and wheat). Export-oriented agriculture has benefited from the modernization incentives since the 1950s, whereas production aimed at the domestic market maintained similar productivity levels for much of the period from 1950 to 1990. Wheat is an exception, as it has historically been an imported commodity. Consequently, state intervention under the broader import substitution policies sought to reduce dependency on imports.

Export-oriented crops exhibit productivity levels comparable to those of major competitors in the global market. For instance, Brazilian soybean productivity ranks second worldwide, less than 5% below the US level. In the case of sugarcane, the productivity gap with the US is around 10%, with Brazil performing similarly to India and China. Despite these differences, Brazil still ranks as the second-best producer among the listed countries for coffee and cotton.

Figure 2.4 presents the average annual productivity for the twelve largest crops in Brazil from 2016 to 2020, along with the three countries with the largest producers in 2020, plus the US and the EU. The data presented here are based on official statistics from the FAO database. If a country does not provide official data, the next country in order of productivity is used as a substitute. In cases where Brazil, the US, or the EU ranks among the top three producers, the country with the next highest productivity is added to the figure.

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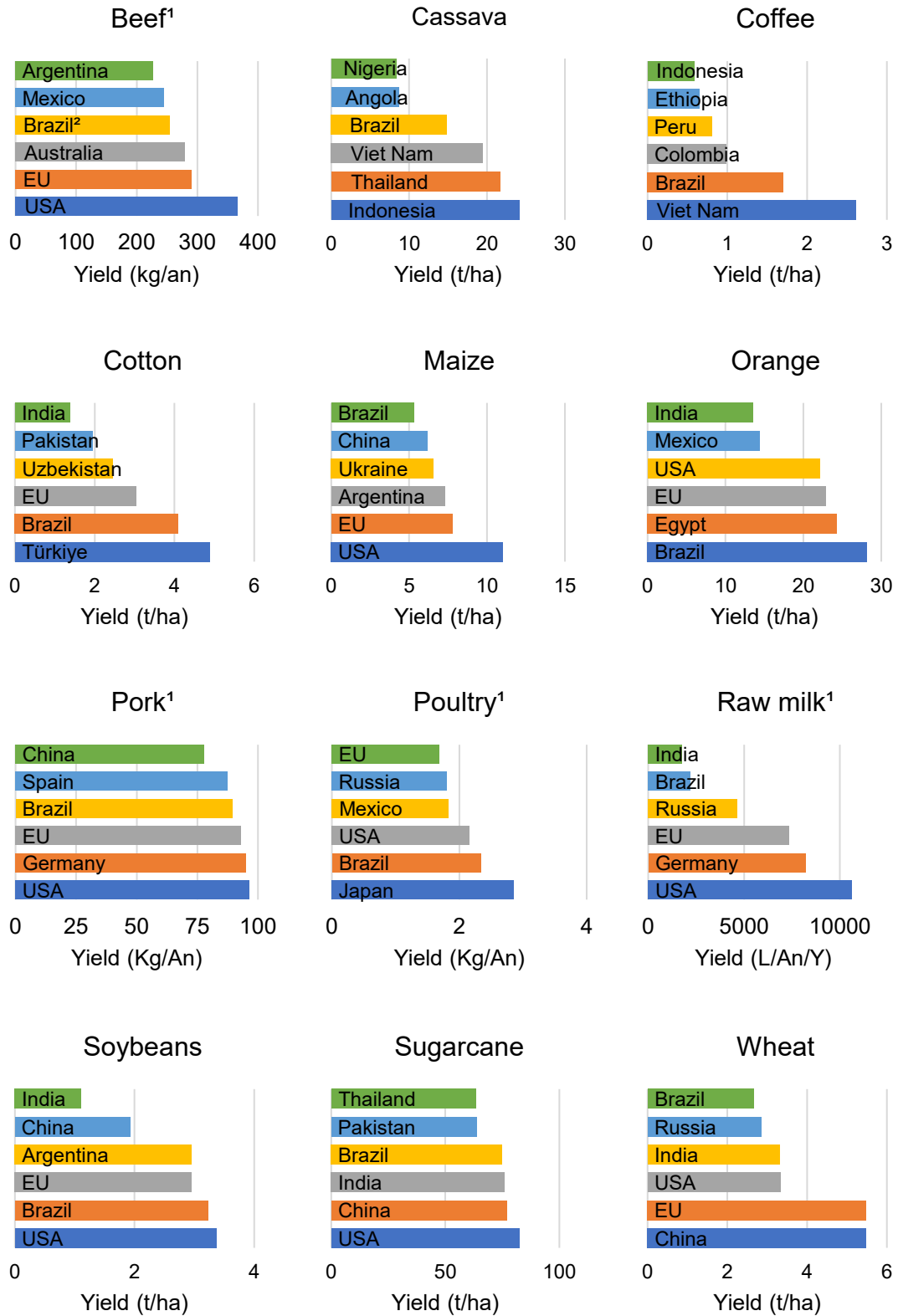
approximately 100 kg per animal. This disparity likely stems from the limited integration of cattle breeding with industry and the widespread use of degraded pasture. Conversely, for pork and poultry – segments with a high level of industrial integration – the productivity gap between Brazil and its most productive competitors is significantly narrower. For pork, the difference with the US is only 9 kg per animal, and compared to the EU, it is a mere 4 kg per animal. In the case of poultry, Brazil ranks second in productivity among the top producers, surpassing the US and trailing Japan by just 0.6 kg per animal, which constitutes about a quarter of Brazil's current productivity.

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Figure 2.4 – Comparative average annual productivity of Brazil's twelve largest agricultural products and selected countries, 2016-2020.



Source: FAOSTAT (2023).

Notes: (1) For 2017-2020; (2) Data for Brazil extracted from the Brazilian Statistical Yearbook (IBGE, 2017-2020) due to the absence of official data in the FAO database.

Maize cultivation is an exception because its production in Brazil serves both domestic and international markets. It is also prevalent among subsistence farms, as

maize feeds humans and animals. This heterogeneity in the production purpose leads to significant variations in yield from farm to farm. Consequently, the performance of non-modernized farms (subsistence and non-integrated establishments) drags down the average yield. Brazilian maize productivity is less than half of the US, reflecting a considerable gap and a long path to improving the current performance.

Vegetable crops for domestic consumption and subsistence (such as beans, cassava, potatoes, rice, and wheat) exhibited relatively stable yields throughout much of the 20th century. Table 2.5 presents the average geometric annual yield variation for relevant crops from 1931 to 2020. Rice productivity started to rise consistently only after 1980, with most productivity gains occurring in more recent years. Between 1998 and 2016, rice yield doubled. Similarly, potato yield increased gradually from the 1950s to the 1990s but surged significantly after 1998. During the period from 1998 to 2016, potato yield also doubled.

Beans and cassava have followed different trajectories compared to rice and potato. As mentioned earlier, cassava maintained nearly the same productivity throughout the twentieth century. Between 1998 to 2016, its yield grew by only 20%. This modest performance may be attributed to cassava's relatively low trade value, as it is predominantly tied to subsistence production. Consequently, despite being a native crop, cassava productivity in Brazil is lower than in other tropical countries in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and Thailand. For instance, Indonesia's yield is nearly double that of Brazil.

Bean productivity follows a slightly different pattern. As one of the country's staple subsistence crops, bean yield declined steadily from 1931 to 1987 but recovered over the next decade. Similar to the trends observed in rice and potato yields, bean presented significant improvement from 1998 to 2016, with yield increasing by nearly 50%.

Although wheat has benefited from specific incentive policies since the 1950s, its productivity remained erratic throughout the twentieth century. Despite annual fluctuations, no sustainable productivity gains were achieved until the 1970s. Wheat yield increased consistently during the 1980s but stagnated in the first half of the 1990s. Like other crops primarily oriented to the domestic market, wheat productivity doubled between 1998 and 2016. In general, wheat does not find suitable edaphoclimatic conditions in most parts of the country, except in the southern region,

as it is a crop native to temperate climates. This may explain the significant productivity gap between Brazil and the EU.

Table 2.5 – Average geometric annual variation of yield for relevant crops and livestock, 1931-2020.

| Period | 1931-1945 | 1946-1964 | 1965-1985 ¹ | 1986-1996 | 1997-2020 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Vegetables | | | | | |
| Beans | -4.1 | -0.6 | -1.2 | 1.6 | 2.9 |
| Cassava | -3.8 | 0.6 | -0.7 | 0.2 | 0.7 |
| Coffee | -0.2 | 2.5 | 4.8 | -1.0 | 1.5 |
| Cotton | -1.3 | 0.6 | 4.5 | 0.5 | 5.3 |
| Maize | -1.6 | -0.1 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 3.7 |
| Orange ² | -1.4 | 0.2 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 1.9 |
| Potato | -6.9 | 0.9 | 3.6 | 1.2 | 3.4 |
| Rice | -0.3 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 2.7 | 4.0 |
| Soybeans ³ | - | -3.5 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| Sugarcane | -1.4 | 0.7 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Wheat | -2.0 | 0.9 | 2.9 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| Livestock | | | | | |
| Bovine | -0.7 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.9 |
| Swine ⁴ | -0.8 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| Poultry ⁵ | - | - | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Raw milk ⁶ | - | - | 0.8 | 4.3 | 2.8 |

Source: IBGE (2021).

Notes: (1) Data for 1971 and 1972 are not available. Values for the 1970 yield replaced missing values for these years; (2) Orange production suffered changes in measurement units during the period. Rough estimates were made using the following conversion: 40.8 kg per box and 6 units per kilogram; (3) Data for soybeans are available only from 1952 onward; (4) From 1940 to 1957, the total weight of pork carcasses included pork, bacon, sausage, lard, and related compounds; (5) From 1997 onward, yield data refer exclusively to chicken; (6) Data for raw milk are available only from 1974 onward, as reported by IBGE (2020).

Most crops destined for the internal market followed a similar trajectory of intense growth in productivity after 1998, except cassava. Since these crops are predominantly cultivated on small and medium-sized farms, the observed gains may be attributed to the creation of the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture in 1996. This program facilitated access to subsidized credit and other agriculture policies for family farmers.

In summary, Brazil's conservative agricultural modernization has resulted in a deeply heterogeneous landscape of agriculture and livestock production. Ultramodern technologies coexist alongside pre-capitalistic practices, shaping distinct policy

demands and the political organization of each agricultural segment. Ultimately, despite being one of the world's largest agricultural producers, Brazil still has significant progress to make in achieving the advanced stages of modern agriculture.

2.2.1 New wave of modernization

After a decade marked by economic recession and monetary crisis, Brazil began to witness a new wave of agricultural modernization. This shift, though still in its early stages, marked a stark contrast to the Green Revolution of the 1970s, which defined Brazilian agriculture for decades (INAMASU; BERNARDI, 2014a; SOUZA et al., 2020). Despite the ongoing debates about terminology – precision agriculture, digital agriculture, smart agriculture, or Agriculture 4.0 – some key distinctions set this new wave apart.

Unlike the earlier technological advancements, which primarily focused on improving the performance of agriculture through chemicals and machinery, this new wave incorporates cutting-edge developments in genetics, information technology, and artificial intelligence. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and biotechnological innovations have delivered seeds that are more adaptable to local environmental conditions, while data-driven automation and machine learning algorithms have enabled unprecedented levels of precision and efficiency in farming operations.

However, the environmental context surrounding agriculture has also evolved. Climate change has introduced new challenges, intensifying the need for farming practices that are both productive and sustainable. The increasing controversy surrounding the use of pesticides and genetically modified seeds has driven demand for more eco-friendly agricultural practices. In this sense, the new wave of modernization is not solely focused on increasing productivity but also on making agriculture more sustainable and responsible.

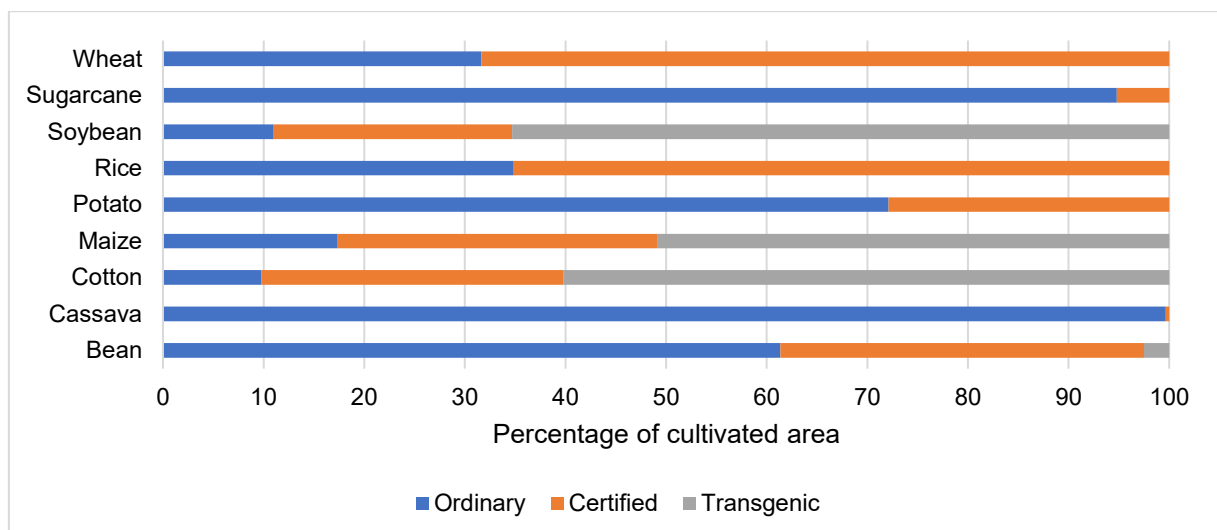
As the twenty-first century progresses, the challenge for agriculture lies in balancing the need for higher productivity with sustainability and public health. Modern agriculture must not only ensure food security but also contribute to mitigating climate change and promoting healthier food systems. To this end, technologies are being implemented to increase productivity, advance intensive agriculture, conserve water, preserve soil, offset deforestation, and improve the welfare of farm animals.

A key component of this new wave of modernization is the increased adoption of transgenic seeds, particularly in crops like soybeans, cotton, and maize (CIB; AGROCONSULT, 2018). From the early 2000s onward, the area cultivated with genetically modified seeds surged, contributing to significant productivity gains. Figure 2.5 illustrates the adoption pattern for different crops in 2017. Transgenic seeds accounted for the majority of the cultivated area in cotton (60%), maize (51%), and soybean (65%).

In contrast, other crops such as beans, rice, and wheat have transitioned from the use of ordinary seeds to certified seeds, reflecting an increasing concern regarding productivity. Finally, crops like cassava, potatoes, and sugarcane have remained predominantly reliant on ordinary seeds.

As highlighted in Table 2.5, the period from 1997 to 2020 saw significant productivity gains across most crops. Notably, crops relying on transgenic seeds, such as cotton and maize, experienced the most dramatic productivity improvements. In contrast, crops based on ordinary seeds (cassava and sugarcane) presented minimal productivity gains during this period. Meanwhile, crops that have transitioned from ordinary to certified seeds, like rice and beans, saw a considerable increase in productivity.

Figure 2.5 – Percentage of cultivated area by type of seed.



Source: IBGE (2017).

A pioneering study provides the first approach to farmers' adoption of precision agriculture in Brazil. Bernardi and Inamasu (2014b) surveyed the participants in the

Precision Agriculture Seminars promoted by the National Service for Rural Learning across the country and found that farmers who adopt precision agriculture are better educated, have larger incomes and farms, and already employ more modern agricultural techniques.

The same study noted that farmers had only recently begun operating under this new paradigm. At that time, they had, on average, just four years of experience with precision agriculture and were still acquiring new machinery. Only 37% of the respondents reported using autopilots on their farms. This evidence suggests the persistence of the Brazilian modernization pattern: a continuous segmentation of farms based on their previous performance, i.e., modernizing farms that had already successfully modernized.

Finally, environmental protection is an increasingly sensitive issue in the twenty-first century. Brazil has had regulations for protecting forests and water streams on private lands since 1934 (Decree No. 23793/1934), which were updated in 1965 to stratify the percentage of preservation areas according to regional differences (Law No. 4771/1965), and relaxed in 2012 (Law No. 12651/2012). However, the Forest Code, as these regulations are known, did not have much enforcement until Law No. 9605/1998, which defined environmental crimes and increased penalties.

A study on farms' compliance with legal deforestation limits in the Cerrado and Amazonia³ biomes revealed the critical nature of this issue for agriculture (RAJÃO et al., 2020). In the Cerrado, 52% of the establishments potentially comply with the limits. In the Amazon, this level is slightly higher, at 55%. Thus, nearly half of the rural establishments in Brazil's two largest biomes fail to comply with the deforestation regulations.

The lack of state capacity to enforce these regulations, combined with the high cost of land, labor, and credit, may be the key to understanding this behavior. As the costs of these factors have risen due to, respectively, depletion of potentially arable land, labor regulation enforcement, and state fiscal crises, the most cost-effective option for farmers to expand production and maintain profitability in an increasingly competitive market is to violate preservation areas within their lands. As a result, these non-compliant farmers are socializing costs to ensure profitability, which amplifies political conflict around environmental issues.

³ These two largest biomes in Brazil cover approximately 73% of the Brazilian territory.

2.3 Structure of interest conflicts in contemporary agriculture

On political grounds, the main consequence of the segregation of farms into different waves of modernization is the heterogeneity of interests. Consequently, the agricultural interests are unlikely to be effectively represented by a peak organization, such as the official confederation responsible for representing them. Farmers have more in common within the specific context of each crop and herd than they do across all crops and herds. Modernization has made agriculture increasingly heterogeneous in terms of production and organization, and this has had a similar effect on agricultural interests.

As Graziano da Silva (1996) argues, agricultural interests had two primary incentives to organize around product associations rather than under a unified representation. First, the Brazilian state has a tradition of farming policies focused on specific products, particularly due to the economic prominence of commodities such as coffee, sugarcane, and cotton. Second, the imbalanced relationship between agriculture and industry forced farmers to seek ways to protect themselves against the expropriation of surplus. In this context, collective negotiation of sales to the industry was the best option.

Analyzing the organizational structure of production of different types of rural establishments in contemporary Brazil, Table 2.6 outlines the key factors of political conflict. First, there are no broad similarities between the types of establishments that would support a single structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture. In this case, treating agriculture as a homogeneous analytical unit conceals the complexity and contradiction within it, leading to a poor understanding of the agricultural economic performance, policies, lobbying strategies, and political players (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; ORTEGA, 2005).

Even within each type of establishment, treating them as a homogenous analytical unit risks underestimating product dynamics, which are far more important for understanding certain policies and political conflicts than the overall category dynamic. For example, import taxes vary considerably based on a product's performance in the domestic market. When a product has lower average productivity in the country compared to abroad, maintaining high import taxes becomes crucial for the survival of domestic producers. In these conditions, product associations lead lobbying efforts aimed at decision-makers.

Despite these centrifugal incentives, some agricultural peak organizations continue to play a role in the Brazilian political landscape, such as the National Confederation of Agriculture, the Brazilian Agribusiness Association, and the Farming Thinking Institute. In addition to the compulsory affiliation that characterizes the official organizations responsible for agriculture representation, a few highly sensitive factors shared within specific categories may explain the existence and behavior of these organizations. As shown in Table 2.6, the guideline to understand the structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture is the degree of modernization. As agriculture modernizes, it becomes more dependent on state interventions to maintain basic profitability.

Table 2.6 – Key factors of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture.

| Group | Factors | Integrated establishments | Semi-integrated establishment | Non-integrated establishments |
|------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Inputs | Land | Expropriation regulation | Expropriation regulation, land cost, and usage restrictions | Cost and usage restrictions |
| | Labor | Qualification | Cost | |
| | Credit | Cost | Access | |
| | Implements | Cost and availability | - | - |
| Operations | Technical assistance | Cost | | Access |
| | Innovation | Funding | - | - |
| | Food safety | Regulatory scope | | - |
| | Transportation | Cost and availability | | - |
| | Storage | Cost and availability | | - |
| Output | Selling | Price stability and access to markets | Price stability, access to markets, and protection of domestic markets | Governmental purchases and protection of domestic markets |

Source: author's elaboration based on Sorj (1980), Graziano da Silva (1996), and IBGE (1998, 2009, 2017, 2021).

Integrated establishments are the most vulnerable to regulations. As previously mentioned, the core of the conflict for this category revolves around input costs. Integrated establishments are highly capitalized enterprises, meaning credit costs can limit productivity and profitability. The cost of implements is an issue derived from the

industry, especially when imports are involved, and, by extension, the exchange rate policy. Consequently, macroeconomic performance assumes significant importance.

As these establishments use modern techniques and technologies, policies affecting these factors may generate conflict. In the first case, the challenge is the cost of private technical assistance, as public assistance is insufficient. In the latter, the socialization of agricultural research costs competes against other expenses in the public budget. Moreover, these farms rely on qualified labor, making the availability of suitable workers a sensitive issue.

Foreign trade issues may exceed domestic politics, as these establishments are also integrated into global trade chains. For this reason, they do engage in foreign politics and international agencies to reduce protectionism. However, this factor contributes to the segmentation of agricultural representation, as the degree of protectionism varies across products (IGLÉCIAS, 2007). The same happens with the minimum prices policy and export taxes, where incentives to press the government for exceptions and subsidies depend on each product's performance in the international market.

Returning to the centripetal factors, there are regulations concerning sanitation, food safety, and transportation and storage services. The first encompasses a significant portion of general regulations on pesticides, fertilizers, transgenic seeds, etc., which impact the cost and availability of inputs. The second involves both international and national regulations, which often share substantial content. These regulations establish general guidelines for authorizing the commercialization of food, affecting operational costs and profitability for both agriculture and agro-industry. Lastly, transportation and storage services depend on public investment in infrastructure, which particularly impacts integrated establishments due to the competition in international markets while also competing with other expenses in the public budget.

Semi-integrated establishments rely on extensive land use and labor-intensive exploration, having less competitiveness due to lower productivity. As a result, regulations regarding land use, labor, and trade are particularly sensitive. This constitutes the core of their conflict structure.

For these establishments, land use constraints, such as environmental preservation regulations, reduce profitability as the expansion of production relies on increasing the explored area rather than on capital investments in lands, as is the case

of integrated establishments. Similarly, labor regulations increase production costs, pressing profitability down. These two factors are broad regulations that affect the entire agricultural sector, particularly semi-integrated establishments. For this reason, these establishments tend to act collectively against such regulations.

Despite the central role of import taxes for the survival of semi-integrated and non-integrated establishments, this factor also contributes to the segmentation of representation by product, as it depends on product performance in the domestic market. This is a particularly sensitive issue, as it allows low-productivity farms to survive at the expense of consumers.

Semi-integrated establishments share some conflicting issues with integrated farms, such as minimum prices, export taxes, and trade policy. These issues, along with broader concerns like sanitation and food safety regulations, infrastructure challenges, and the cost of technical assistance, also contribute to product-based representation. Regarding credit, the conflict for semi-integrated establishments, as well as for non-integrated ones, is more about access – which is why this type of establishment fails to modernize – rather than the cost.

Non-integrated establishments also face conflictive factors similar to those of semi-integrated ones. They share the same core conflicts (labor and land costs, access to credit, and land use restrictions). However, as they are not integrated into the industry, they do not rely on the minimum prices policy to protect their profitability. In contrast, they are highly sensitive to agricultural product purchase policies, such as the Food Purchasing Program. These farms, with low productivity, depend on market reserves to survive, reflected in pressures for higher import taxes and public purchases – both of which encourage product-based representation.

Finally, non-integrated establishments depend on public technical assistance to leverage productivity, making access to it a conflictive issue, as it does not meet demand. Unlike semi-integrated establishments, which can purchase private technical assistance due to higher sales volume to industry, non-integrated establishments have less capacity to generate surplus and fund production. They do not use any agricultural implements and have limited capacity to trade their production, being confined to local and regional markets.

Subsistence establishments are not vulnerable to all the sensitive factors mentioned above because they are not commercial establishments. However, they face two specific problems. First, they exist primarily due to the lack of land

regularization, which could compel them to enter the monetary economy. Thus, land regularization becomes their core conflictive issue, but it is contradictory in itself. While regularizing their land holdings protects them from arbitrary expropriation, it also forces them to abandon the peasant lifestyle. Second, operating with low productivity and unable to generate surplus, subsistence establishments face very limited well-being conditions. In other words, they tend to offer miserable living conditions in a capitalist economy. For this reason, their material conditions surpass the agriculture policies.

An exceptional issue that affects all commercial agricultural establishments is land distribution. The high land concentration that characterizes the Brazilian countryside has been a source of conflict since the twentieth century (BRUNO, 1997; POMPEIA, 2021). As a result, the regulation of land expropriation remains a contentious issue between large and medium landowners on one side and small and landless farmers on the other.

Despite these structures of interest conflicts, the types of rural establishments do not have the same economic importance, which also affects their mobilization capacity for political action. According to Table 2.7, soybeans, beef, maize, chicken, sugarcane, milk, coffee, cotton, pork, and wheat together account for approximately 90% of the total value of agricultural products in 2022.

Table 2.7 – Percentage of total production value and the geometric average of annual productivity¹ for the most important agricultural products in Brazil.

| Product | Percentage of total production value in 2022 | Geometric average of annual productivity (1965-2020) |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Soybeans | 28.7 | 2.4 |
| Beef | 13.1 | 0.6 |
| Maize | 12.6 | 2.9 |
| Chicken ² | 10.0 | 1.1 |
| Sugarcane | 8.4 | 1 |
| Milk ³ | 5.0 | 2.7 |
| Coffee | 4.7 | 2.2 |
| Cotton | 2.9 | 4 |
| Pork | 2.7 | 0.6 |
| Wheat | 1.6 | 2 |
| Others | 10.2 | - |
| Total | 100 | - |

Source: author's elaboration based on IBGE (2021) and SPA (2023).

Notes: (1) Data for 1971 and 1972 are not available. Values for the 1970 yield were used to replace missing values; (2) Starting in 1997, yield data is for chicken only. Annual productivity calculated for

poultry between 1965 and 1996; (3) Data for raw milk are available from 1974 onward, according to IBGE (2020).

Additionally, the geometric average of annual productivity, a proxy for the degree of modernization, shows that these crops and livestock have experienced productivity gains of over 1% per year since 1965, with the exceptions of beef and pork. A striking comparison is the evolution of cassava productivity, a crop primarily produced by non-integrated and subsistence establishments, which saw only a 0.1% annual productivity gain during the same period (IBGE, 2021). From this, we can infer that the most economically significant crops and livestock in Brazil are generally produced in integrated establishments, while an important livestock, cattle breeding, is largely carried out in semi-integrated establishments.

Together, the five crops and livestock with the highest production values (soybeans, beef, maize, chicken, and sugarcane) account for about 73% of the total value of agricultural production in Brazil. In other words, a few agricultural products are economically significant. Again, except for beef, these products have experienced a high increment in productivity since 1965, indicating that they are mostly produced in integrated establishments.

On political grounds, the concentration of production value also translates into a significant inequality in the capacity to mobilize and influence. As a result, the primary issues contested by agricultural representative entities predominantly reflect the interests of integrated establishments. However, semi-integrated establishments retain economic relevance, especially due to cattle breeding, allowing them to exert political pressure when mobilized.

Consequently, the structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture reveals sensitive issues where demands from both integrated and semi-integrated establishments intersect. These include issues such as land expropriation, credit availability and cost, transportation and storage infrastructure, price stability, and market access. In contrast, questions like land prices or access to public technical assistance, which express demands from non-integrated establishments, tend to occupy a marginal position on the agricultural entities' political agenda.

The intersection of agricultural and industrial interests creates a contradictory agenda for agribusiness. Both sectors share a common agenda on the macroeconomic grounds, particularly regarding credit, inflation, and exchange rate, but also about public investments in infrastructure, operational efficiency, and the competitiveness of

agriculture-derived manufactured goods. Additionally, overlapping demands – such as environmental, labor, and food safety regulations – can align their interests to some extent. However, critical tensions emerge over issues like price stability for agricultural products, which limits the industry's ability to expropriate surplus from agriculture and distributive policies that, while benefiting specific products, increase pressure on the public budget.

2.4 Final remarks

Brazilian agriculture underwent significant transformations during the second half of the twentieth century. The rise and consolidation of the agro-industrial complex as the economically dominant mode of production in agriculture redefined its relationships with industry and finance while assigning a new role to the state. Modernization introduced new layers of inequality in agriculture, creating distinct challenges for farmers. On one side are those who failed to modernize, continuing to operate with traditional methods and technologies. On the other are those who have successfully modernized, confronting entirely new challenges to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of their farms.

Modernization also led to the diversification of crops, making some more economically attractive than others. Beyond market fluctuations, one of the key factors shaping this process was state intervention. During the Military Regime, policies favored crops with higher profitability in international markets, relegating food security to a secondary political priority until the 1980s. This approach resulted in a significant concentration of production in a few commodities: soybeans, beef, maize, chicken, and sugarcane. Thus, while Brazilian agriculture is broadly diverse, its economically significant segments remain highly homogeneous.

In terms of political relevance, a similar concentration likely occurred. Consequently, the structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture is predominantly shaped by the demands of integrated and semi-integrated establishments. However, even within these establishments, the diversity of products encourages product-oriented solutions rather than broad regulatory frameworks. This dynamic fosters the creation of commodity-specific associations and shifts the resolution of issues to administrative bodies rather than the National Congress. For peak entities, their primary role is to advocate for policies that ensure access to credit, the provision of

appropriate infrastructure, and affordable inputs – factors largely dependent on the country's macroeconomic performance – as well as to provide compatible food safety standards.

Naturally, the historical concentration of land ownership in Brazil has resulted in widespread conflict in the countryside. As a consequence, the regulation of land expropriation remains a highly sensitive issue for farmers, maintaining a level of political relevance comparable to that observed during the last constituent debates. This issue became even more pressing following the modernization of agriculture, as the expansion of intensive agriculture required significant investments in lands, further increasing the costs associated with land expropriation for farmers.

On the side of the industry, the political concerns have been encapsulated in the agenda of "*Custo-Brasil*". While certain issues within this agenda – such as relaxing environmental or labor regulations – could also benefit agriculture, there are few overlapping demands between the two sectors. In fact, the integration between these sectors has resulted in an unstable set of economic relations, enabling industry and finance to extract profits from agriculture. As a consequence, the structure of conflict in agribusiness conserves a critical centrifugal factor, significantly limiting the potential for political alliances among sectors.

In the end, the high level of heterogeneity within agriculture and industry decisively shapes a structure of interest conflicts where *ad-hoc* alliances among different segments of agribusiness are far more likely to emerge than a unified alliance representing the entire agribusiness' interests – primarily because such unified interests scarcely exist. Paradoxically, the survival of agribusiness depends on state intervention to balance profitability across sectors, but this cannot be achieved through broad macro-regulations due to the inherent heterogeneity of Brazilian agriculture. Consequently, the structure of interest conflicts is far more pronounced and economically significant at the meso-levels of agribusiness (specific product chains) than at the macro-level. This condition steers political action by associations towards agencies within the Executive Branch or bipartite organizations focused on self-regulation, rather than to the National Congress.

3 THE FARMING THINKING INSTITUTE IN AGRIBUSINESS INTERESTS ARTICULATION

“Today, we know that our unity ensures [agribusiness] survival.”

– Agro-industrial political leader, interview excerpt

The mobilization and institutionalization of collective interests are central components of the group approach. Within this subfield, four theories of collective action have been developed over time: Modernization Theory (BENTLEY, 1908), Disturbance Theory (TRUMAN, 1951), Transactional Theory (OLSON, 1965), and Ecological Theory (LOWERY; GRAY, 2004). Each of these theories attempts to address the influence of interest organizations on public policies by analyzing the processes of mobilization and institutionalization of collective interests.

The rivalry between pluralist and elitist theories has underscored the relevance of various factors that may explain the formation of interest organizations, such as the material benefits of associating (OLSON, 1965), the moral value and socialization benefits (CLARK; WILSON, 1961), the role of entrepreneurs (SALISBURY, 1969), the environmental competition (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996b), among others. However, none of the first three theories has been able to provide conclusive evidence to eliminate alternative explanations (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a; WALKER, 1991; KNOKE, 1990). The neopluralist perspective, which encompasses the Ecological Theory, remains under investigation (WITKO, 2015; BAUMGARTNER et al., 2011; GRAY et al., 2005).

In Brazil, studies on the formation of interest organizations using these theories are rare (RIBEIRO, 2019), largely due to the country’s corporatist tradition. This feature reserved much of the interest articulation to corporations operating in non-competitive and state-controlled environments for most of the twentieth century (REIS, 1995; DINIZ; BOSCHI, 1979; SCHMITTER, 1974). Research on industrialist interest representation has dominated the field in the last decades, identifying traditional state corporatism and the weakness of the Legislative Branch as key factors that have been debilitating the mobilization of interests from that segment (MANCUSO, 2007; DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004).

In this chapter, I draw upon these prior studies to analyze the case of agribusiness in Brazil. This case-driven approach is justified by the emergence and

consolidation of a peak umbrella organization – the Farming Thinking Institute (IPA) – that has assumed the role of the main advocate of agribusiness in the National Congress, an unprecedented development in Brazilian history. The success of IPA is particularly intriguing given the heterogeneity and intrinsic conflicts within agribusiness, as discussed in the previous chapter. Its emergence and success over the past decade stand in stark contrast to the failure of prior attempts. Additionally, examining IPA also provides insight into its scope of representation, a crucial element for understanding lobbying influence, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Theoretically, I employ a diverse set of arguments from studies on interest mobilization within the neopluralist framework, extending beyond Ecological Theory. This is necessary because IPA, as an umbrella organization (i.e., an association of representative entities), is not directly addressed by existing theories. To explain the emergence of a peak umbrella organization like IPA within the Brazilian political and economic context, I propose a causal set of arguments:

1. The occurrence of disturbances affecting the distribution of utility across agribusiness segments;
2. The existence of critical resource dependency among those impacted audiences;
3. The establishment of an influence market for agribusiness segments.

In addition, I draw on studies of lobbying coalitions to develop an explanation for the IPA's maintenance, as umbrella organizations share similarities with *ad-hoc* coalitions. Based on these exploratory studies, I propose the following causal set:

1. IPA created mechanisms to limit the purposive displacement effect, which increases the costs of affiliation for entities with extreme preferences;
2. IPA limited shared credit claiming while offering alternative benefits, thereby avoiding internal competition among affiliated entities;
3. IPA maintained an attractive political agenda, delivering policy outcomes to solve the most relevant concerns of its affiliates.

I designed a case study based primarily on in-depth interviews with key actors to explore the successful mobilization and institutionalization of agribusiness interests in Brazil and to test neopluralist arguments regarding this phenomenon.

Complementary evidence includes official statistics on economic performance and agricultural production, records of IPA-affiliated entities, and a database of proposals lobbied by IPA during the 55th Legislature, compiled with information provided by a key informant who has worked at the organization during the period of interest for this research. These additional sources aim to enhance the validity of the inferences drawn from the thematic analysis of the interviews.

Following this introduction, which outlines the chapter's purpose, the subsequent sections are organized as follows. The next section delves into the theoretical discussion, providing a detailed account of the arguments. The third section reviews previous studies on agribusiness interest mobilization in Brazil, emphasizing IPA as an atypical case. The fourth section describes the research design. The fifth section presents and discusses the findings, and the final section summarizes the conclusions.

3.1 Theoretical foundations of collective action

Although the interest group field has a long-standing body of work on collective action, many questions remain unanswered. From Pluralism in the 1950s to Neopluralism today, significant effort has been devoted to developing a theory of collective action capable of predicting the most common outcomes in the formation of interest organizations (LOWERY; GRAY, 2004; MOE, 1981; SALISBURY, 1969; OLSON, 1965; TRUMAN, 1951). However, neither Pluralism nor Elitism has provided a stable foundation for advancing knowledge on the topic. Even Olson's transactional theory of collective action, one of the most influential, has faced numerous unpredicted empirical results (OSTROM, 1990; SALISBURY, 1984; MOE, 1981; OLSON, 1965).

Furthermore, theories of collective action are not particularly useful for evaluating the formation and representativeness of umbrella organizations, such as IPA. These theories are designed to predict outcomes for individuals acting collectively to produce collective or public goods, not for organizations. In this case, more recent developments on the formation of *ad hoc* lobbying coalitions prove far more relevant (HANEGRAFF; PRITONI, 2019; BEYERS; DE BRUYCKER, 2018; MAHONEY, 2007a; HOJNACKI, 1997).

According to the neopluralist perspective, the context in which interests are embedded plays a crucial role in the success or failure of collective action initiatives

(LOWERY; GRAY, 2004). In other words, the collective action dilemma proposed by Olson (1965) is not the dominant outcome in mobilization. Reinforcing pluralist contributions to collective action theory, recent studies suggest that interest group systems are diverse and dynamic (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a).

Contrary to Olson's model of collective action, factors such as the different types of benefits provided by collective action (CLARK; WILSON, 1961), the role of political entrepreneurs in fostering cooperation (SALISBURY, 1969), beliefs about the relevance of individual contribution and incomplete information (MOE, 1981), and uncertainty regarding the potential damage for not cooperating (TRUMAN, 1951), are all relevant for explaining the composition and evolution of interest groups systems (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2011; BERKHOUT; LOWERY, 2010; GRAY et al., 2005; GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a). Similar findings have emerged in the collective action literature, with special relevance to the Evolutionary Theory of Collective Action, which emphasizes the diversity of actors (conditional cooperators and rational egoists) (OSTROM, 1990, 2000).

Ultimately, Social Disturbance Theory remains a valuable tool for predicting both the formation of interest organizations (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2011; GRAY et al., 2005) and *ad hoc* lobbying coalitions (HANEGRAAFF; PRITONI, 2019; PRITONI, 2019; BEYERS; DE BRUYCKER, 2018; HOJNACKI, 1997). However, these outcomes are not automatic, as Truman (1951) originally proposed. Instead, dilemmas that extend beyond rational egoism arise from the interaction between interests and their context.

First, the formation of interest organizations depends on the availability of key resources in the environment, such as the attractiveness of benefits an organization can offer to members or donors, the appeal of its agenda, and the financial capacity of its target audience (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996b). Thus, given the high cost of political action and uncertainty on its outcomes, affiliating with an interest organization must be crucial for ensuring the survival of a group of individuals, companies, or NGOs (LOWERY, 2007b; PFEFFER; SALANCIK, 1978).

Second, representative organizations compete for scarce resources, such as members, reputation, and political influence (BEYERS; KERREMANS, 2007; GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a, 1996b; LOWERY; GRAY, 2004). As a consequence, the emergence of new interest organizations depends on the inability of the existing organization to provide valuable assets to potential members or donors in the influence market.

Based on these factors, the argument proposed is that IPA was created in response to a governmental decision or non-decision (**the disturbance**) that posed significant risks/costs to the most policy-dependent segments of agribusiness (**the critical resource dependency**) in a context where existing representative organizations were unable to provide the necessary political influence to change the governmental course of action (**the influence market**).

Since umbrella organizations and lobbying coalitions are similar forms of interest representation – differing primarily in their degree of institutionalization – coalition studies can offer some explanations for the phenomenon under analysis here. Nonetheless, these studies also reveal the complexity underlying the formation of lobbying coalitions, which involves a wide range of explanatory variables and dilemmas that organizations face when deciding whether to join a coalition or not. Here, the debate will focus on the most relevant variables in these studies.

First, purposive displacement⁴ discourages organizations from joining a coalition, particularly when they attribute a high relevance to political goals (BEYERS; DE BRUYCKER, 2018; HOJNACKI, 1997). Coalitions tend to be unattractive to organizations with extreme or opposing preferences because the median collective preference – weighted by the political relevance of each organization – is likely to diverge significantly from their ideal position. Consequently, these organizations may prefer to act independently to safeguard their organizational purpose, even at the risk of undermining their policy goals.

Second, coalition members share the credit for positive outcomes. As a consequence, the potential benefits for any organization within a coalition – such as increased political prestige or enhanced reputation – are often smaller than those obtained by acting independently. These benefits diminish further as the coalition expands, as organizations in a coalition often share the same target audience (HULA, 1999). Therefore, participating in a coalition entails costs that can impact the organizational survival, making coalitions less attractive to certain organizations.

On the other hand, joining a coalition also offers benefits to organizations, for example, increased access to policymakers or a reduced risk of defeat in influence battles. For this reason, joining/building a coalition remains a common strategy for interest organizations (HANEGRAAFF; PRITONI, 2019; MAHONEY, 2007a).

⁴ This concept refers to the negative effect an organization may experience when joining a coalition whose dominant preference significantly diverges from its own goals (BEYERS; DE BRUYCKER, 2018).

One widely recognized explanatory factor in the study of lobbying coalitions is the degree of conflict over salient issues for organizations. Although measured in various ways, most studies indicate that higher levels of conflict increase the likelihood of organizations joining coalitions (HANEGRRAFF; PRITONI, 2019; NEWMARK; NOWNES, 2019; PRITONI, 2019; MAHONEY, 2007a). The risk of losing influence over an important political decision can induce cooperation among organizations with aligned interests, even if this choice may entail some organizational costs.

Another relevant factor is the scope of issues on an organization's agenda. Although underexplored, the argument is compelling: the broader the segments an issue can affect, the higher the propensity that organizations have to join a coalition (MAHONEY, 2007a; HULA, 1999). The reasoning is straightforward. Issues that impact a large share of society tend to attract more organizations competing to influence the decision-making process compared to narrower issues that affect only a small segment of society.

These findings inform the second argument: as an umbrella organization, IPA must maintain a limited distribution of preferences among affiliated organizations to minimize the **purposive displacement effect**. Moreover, it must offer benefits beyond policy outcomes to mitigate the effects of **shared credit claiming** and avoid the affiliation of organizations with overlapping target audiences. Finally, its political agenda must be mostly composed of issues that affect multiple segments of agribusiness, making independent lobbying an ineffective option (**agenda attractiveness**). Alternatively, the agenda can include highly conflictual issues, where lobbying efforts led by an umbrella organization are more likely to achieve the desired outcomes.

3.2 Agribusiness associative dynamics in Brazil

The root of agricultural associative mobilization in Brazil can be traced back to the Old Republic period (1889-1930). Following the dissolution of the Empire in 1889, the State Secretary for Business of Agriculture, Trade, and Public Works lost its ministerial status with the administrative reform of 1891 (BRASIL, 1891). At that time, agriculture faced several challenges, particularly due to the high demand for labor triggered by the abolition of slavery in 1888, which had a significant impact on less

economically dynamic segments of commercial agriculture (PRADO JR., 2012a; CARVALHO, 2019a; IGLÉSIAS, 1993).

The National Agriculture Society (SNA) was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1897 by farmers, liberal professionals, and businesspeople (LAMARÃO; ARRUTI, 2024). It was the first major (and the oldest) farmers' association in Brazil. Initially, the association focused on restoring the ministerial status to the agriculture secretary and expanding public policies to support farmers (ORTEGA, 2005). However, as a centennial association, its goals have changed significantly over time (MENDONÇA, 2010).

Another prominent historical association created in the Old Republic is the Brazilian Rural Society (SRB), founded in São Paulo in 1919 by coffee and cattle farmers, along with businesspeople, bankers, and traders involved in the beef and coffee markets (LAMARÃO, 2024). Coffee farming, as a very different segment within Brazilian agriculture, was characterized by significant investments, economic integration, and earlier modernization. These distinct characteristics soon placed SRB in conflict with SNA (ORTEGA, 2005).

For over sixty years, these two associations competed fiercely for dominance over the political representation of agriculture, with their predominance declining only during the broad economic crisis and political transition of the 1980s (MENDONÇA, 2010; ORTEGA, 2005). Notably, SNA played a pivotal role in the unionization of farmers and the extension of corporatism to agriculture, which culminated in the establishment of the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil (CNA) in 1964 (LAMARÃO; PINTO, 2024; ORTEGA, 2005).

3.2.1 Conservative modernization within state corporatism

As discussed in Chapter One, the military regime promoted significant changes in agriculture by stimulating the adoption of new technologies such as machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, and pesticides (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; SORJ, 1980). However, the regime's control over corporations, both by direct control and repression, hindered similar organizational modernization of CNA, leading to its increasing institutional sclerosis (ORTEGA, 2005; HIDALGO DA SILVA, 1992; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004).

Although most farmers supported the 1964 military coup, fearing that President Goulart could implement agrarian reform (MENDONÇA, 2010; BRUNO, 1997; IGLÉSIAS, 1993), the new government had to make concessions to restore peace in rural areas. Thus, eight months after the coup, the first military president, General Castelo Branco, approved the Land Statute, contrary to the expectations of farmers (BRASIL, 1964). The reaction from those farmers' representative organizations that conserved some freedom, for example, SBR and SNA, was immediate. Ultimately, these organizations, pressing representatives in the National Congress and mobilizing allies within the government, undermined the military's efforts to implement land reform (MENDONÇA, 2010).

Following this initial victory, farmers' dissatisfaction with the military government increased over time. Despite the creation of subsidized rural credit in 1965, development policies continued to prioritize industry at the expense of agriculture (SORJ, 1980; BACHA, 2018; MENDONÇA, 2010). When the whole national developmentalism policy system began to collapse in the early 1980s, measures to curb inflation – such as price controls and the abolition of subsidized rural credit – further exacerbated the discontent among farmers and their representative organizations (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; BACHA, 2018; MENDONÇA, 2010).

Even in this adverse context for agriculture, CNA remained, if not entirely aligned with the military government, at least affable and deferential to the regime. According to a technical consultant from the entity interviewed by Hildago da Silva (1992, p. 174), the aforementioned confederation “was being converted into a sort of bureaucratic extension of the military regime, far from the transformations that have taken place in Brazilian agriculture due to the modernization process”.

Previous research emphasizes the continued presidency of Flávio da Costa Brito at CAN – from 1967 to 1987 – as a key indicator of the organization's alignment with the military (HIDALGO DA SILVA, 1992; LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; BELIK, 1998; ORTEGA, 2005). A farmer and agribusinessman, Brito was elected substitute senator by the governing party, the National Renewal Alliance (ARENA), for Amazonas in 1966. He served as a full senator from 1969 to 1974 and maintained a close relationship with all military presidents (CPDOC, 2024; LAMARÃO; PINTO, 2024).

Furthermore, the gradual modernization of agriculture and the rapid expansion of agro-industry, along with regional differentiation, contributed decisively to creating a

more diverse economic environment (SORJ, 1980; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996). The emergence of new agro-industry complexes or the expansion of existing ones led to the creation of sectorial associations within productive chains, such as the Organization of Cane Producers Associations of Brazil (ORPLANA) and the Brazilian Association of Coffee Industry (ABIC). This new dynamic posed a challenge for organizations representing broader economic sectors like agriculture and industry (HIDALGO DA SILVA, 1992; HIDALGO DA SILVA; MOYANO, 1993; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; BELIK, 1998; ORTEGA, 2005).

Consequently, not only corporations like CNA but also free associations such as SNA and SRB were increasingly weakened on political grounds. The 1980s brought decisive tests for these organizations because of the deterioration of the national economic performance and the intensification of segmented representation, resulting in an unfavored scenario during the regime's transition. As Belik (1998, p. 14) notes: "it is from the early 1980s onwards that sectorial interests in Brazil began a true process of emancipation, starting to define autonomously – albeit under state oversight – the key elements of sectorial policy".

Another important change in the 1970s was the emergence of the Organization of Cooperatives of Brazil (OCB) as a key political player. Although cooperatives had existed in Brazil since the late eighteenth century, it was only after the new regulation, which was approved during the military regime, that they formed a major representative organization. Law No. 5 764, passed on December 16th, 1971, established an organization paired with other corporations, except for two particularities that made OCB a suitable vehicle for political representation.

First, subnational units were established only at the state level, eliminating the distortion caused by the aggregation of votes from municipal organizations where a particular type of cooperative might dominate. For instance, small agriculture cooperatives could determine the actions of a state-level organization if they were the majority in the state, even if they did not represent a majority of municipalities. This system favored the representation of cooperatives geographically concentrated in a few municipalities.

Second, representative organizations of cooperatives at the state level were granted the right to elect delegates to the national executive board in proportion to the number of cooperatives in each state. Then, states with more cooperatives had greater

influence over national decisions, further reducing distortion in the representation of cooperatives.

Although the Brazilian state had promoted cooperativism since the Old Republic, it had not directly intervened in the national free associations of cooperatives (HIDALGO DA SILVA; MOYANO, 1993; MENDONÇA, 2002). Consequently, these associations continued to compete for national representation until the creation of OCB in 1969, with the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture. When the Cooperatives Law of 1971 established a non-competitive system for the national representation of cooperatives, it created a fertile ground for the emergence of a powerful interest organization, which effectively became reality in the 1980s, when the military started the regime transaction (MENDONÇA, 2010; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; HIDALGO DA SILVA; MOYANO, 1993).

These institutional changes contributed to the dominance of agricultural cooperatives within OCB. Despite the existence of urban services cooperatives, such as those for healthcare workers (UNIMED), agricultural cooperatives became the predominant type within the organization. Most of its executive members have been farmers or agribusiness figures, representing highly modernized and integrated crops and livestock (MENDONÇA, 2010). This explains why OCB has played a leading role in representing the agricultural political agenda since the 1980s.

3.2.2 Crisis of corporatism and regime transition

The severe economic recession that affected the Brazilian economy in the early 1980s greatly heightened the discontent of farmers. While inflation and interest rates surged, the public budget allocated to agricultural policies shrank each year, dropping from US\$ 4.8 million in 1980 to US\$ 1.4 million in 1983 (GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996, p. 110). Politically, this crisis marked the beginning of a process that led to the strengthening of the Ministry of Finance, with the implementation of aggressive measures against the costly policies of the Ministry of Agriculture (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994).

In response, traditional representative organizations of farmers began to adopt more radical positions against the military government. For example, the SNA's magazine, *A Lavoura*, even argued that: "Today, the right thing would be to sell our lands, escape the harsh climate, avoid labor rights issues, and no longer seek funds

that we are entitled to” (SNA, 1981, p. 22). Similarly, SRB expressed resistance: “[...] We cannot accept the practice of suicide through agriculture without subsidies” (SRB, 1981, p. 5).

The transition to democracy in 1985, marked by the indirect election of a civilian president, further intensified the conflict between farmers' representative organizations and the government. The end of military repression on social movements and workers' unions sparked a wave of demands from various sectors of society, including the call for agrarian reform, which the military regime had tightly controlled for over two decades (GOZETTO; THOMAS, 2014; MENDONÇA, 2010).

In response to the popular pressure for agrarian reform, President Sarney approved the First National Agrarian Reform Plan in 1985. Despite the weakened position of peak farmers' organizations at that time, the governmental attempt to implement agrarian reform led to the reorganization of the entire agriculture interest system – a process that would take over two decades.

Amid the debate over the governmental proposal of agrarian reform, a new agricultural association was formed: the Democratic Ruralist Union (UDR). Initially composed of cattle farmers from Brazil's Midwest, UDR capitalized on the vacuum left by traditional farmers' organizations (BRUNO, 1997). By tapping into farmers' fears of agrarian reform, UDR became one of the most important players in the agricultural representative landscape during the late 1980s (MENDONÇA, 2010; ORTEGA, 2005).

However, UDR's relevance proved to be short-lived. Farmers disengaged from the association after the National Constituent Assembly (1987-88), where they successfully limited agrarian reform in the new constitution (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994; ORTEGA, 2005). UDR's violent tactics – such as encouraging armed resistance against land expropriation or land occupation by peasants – and its political promotion of Ronaldo Caiado, the organization's leader, alarmed many farmers, particularly those from the most economically dynamic segments in agriculture (BRUNO, 1997).

Another significant change during this period was the evolution of SNA. With agriculture modernization and the pressure to remain competitive, the association reformed its statute in the 1970s to admit anyone with ties to agriculture. This reform triggered a shift in the organization's membership, bringing many liberal professionals – especially lawyers, teachers, and researchers (MENDONÇA, 2010) – which diluted the central role of farmers within SNA and opened the door for the emergence of new activities, such as promoting agricultural cooperativism and rural technical education.

In 1985, when SNA accepted the invitation to advise the government on a proposal for agrarian reform, it sparked fury among farmers and attracted criticism from other traditional associations, especially its main competitor, SRB (MENDONÇA, 2010). Losing support among farmers, SNA shifted its focus to other agendas, such as promoting sustainability in agriculture. This initiative made it a pioneer on the subject in Brazil, but by the 1990s, it had become an irrelevant political actor (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994; ORTEGA, 2005).

Reacting to UDR's rise, OCB led the formation of a broad coalition called the Wide Front of Brazilian Agriculture in 1986 (MENDONÇA, 2010). Bringing together SNA, SRB, CNA, and dozens of segment associations, the Front was able to rival UDR in the National Constituent Assembly (ORTEGA, 2005). Various analysts argue that the Front was responsible for several victories for farmers during the drafting of the new constitution and Collor's presidency, including the approval of the Agricultural Law in 1991 and the reversal of some disastrous measures implemented by the Executive Branch (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994; ORTEGA, 2005; MENDONÇA, 2010; TAVARES, 2018).

The Front was the first experience of coordinating the diverse interests within agribusiness and inspired the creation of new associations in the 1990s. Despite its relative success between 1987 and 1991, it lost support and disbanded in 1992 (TAVARES, 2018). Lamounier and Almeida (1994) identify some factors contributing to its dissolution: (I) President Collor consistently managed to weaken farmers' representative organizations because they obstructed his liberal agenda; (II) the turbulent economic environment from 1985 to 1992, which fostered cooperation among various agribusiness representative organizations, ended in 1993 with the success of the Real Plan (III) CNA regained its prestige and started to dominate agricultural representation alone at the early 1990s.

In 1986, Flávio da Costa Brito lost his bid for re-election to CNA's presidency after twenty years at the helm. Alysso Paulinelli, a former Minister of Agriculture (1974-1979), won the election by mobilizing a broad coalition that included the most dynamic agricultural segments. During his term, CNA underwent numerous reforms, the most important being the creation of departments dedicated to supporting the demands of each large productive chain within agribusiness, thus bringing the organization closer to numerous segment associations (HIDALGO DA SILVA, 1992).

However, Paulinelli faced new challenges in making CNA an effective vehicle for agribusiness representation: the liberalization policies of President Collor. In 1989, the government implemented radical measures to open the economy, weakening the corporations. Many concertation forums disappeared, and most agricultural and industrial policies began to depend on decisions made by the National Congress (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994; BACHA, 2018).

In this new political environment, the Agriculture Front played a key role in blocking some neoliberal policies. Nevertheless, the government did not effectively empower the restored concertation forums, which remained largely sidelined in the policymaking process (LAMOUNIER; ALMEIDA, 1994). As a result, corporations continued to lose their political relevance throughout the 1990s, largely due to the neoliberal measures enacted by various governments (BELIK, 1998; DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004).

In 1990, when Paulinelli's term ended, Antônio Ernesto de Salvo, a cattle farmer, was elected to lead CNA. He shifted the organizational focus back to agriculture, moving away from the intersectoral perspective. With the collapse of the Wide Front in 1992, the agro-industry lost the last remaining space for national articulation with agriculture. As a consequence, several large agribusiness companies, with support from OCB and SRB, founded the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG) in 1993, hoping to recreate a synergetic political representation across multiple segments of agribusiness (MENDONÇA, 2010; ORTEGA, 2005).

Initially, ABAG struggled to attract representative organizations and was seen as a rival by both CNA and UDR (ORTEGA, 2005; POMPEIA, 2021). However, its efforts to engage with segment associations produced the expected results, and the organization gradually grew throughout the 1990s (ORTEGA, 2005). The government did not immediately recognize ABAG as a legitimate representative of agribusiness, but by the late 1990s, the association had acquired significant political relevance, especially because of its ability to unite the interests of the largest agribusiness companies (POMPEIA, 2021). Despite its growing influence, ABAG was not fully successful in managing the conflict between agriculture and agro-industry, as many of the main agricultural representative organizations remained outside the association (NASSAR; ZYLBERSZTAJN, 2004).

Finally, with the increasing empowerment of the National Congress following the regime transition, legislators became key players in policy-making (DINIZ; BOSCHI,

2004). In this new political context, a small group of legislators specialized in agriculture formed the Parliamentary Front of Agriculture (FPA) in 1995, after the left-wing Workers' Party took control of the Agriculture Committee in the House of Representatives (TAVARES, 2018). Though small, the group created a new dynamic with regular meetings to study proposals and define political strategy outside the committee. This eventually incorporated the agribusiness representative organizations, redefining the traditional pattern of relationship these organizations maintained with representatives. Thus, as agribusiness grew in economic importance, the influence of FPA expanded, gradually gaining prominence in advancing the agribusiness political agenda from the mid-2000s onwards (VIGNA, 2001, 2007; CAMARGO, 2009; GRACIANO et al., 2023).

3.2.3 In search of coordination for the agribusiness interest system

The economic liberalization of the 1990s brought significant changes to Brazilian agribusiness. The agricultural policy was reduced in scope, operating with less dependence on the public budget (GASQUES; VILLA VERDE; BASTOS, 2006; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; BACHA, 2018). Furthermore, the agro-industry underwent a large concentration through mergers and acquisitions by multinational companies (GIAMBIAGI; MOREIRA; ALÉM, 1999; KPMG, 2001).

Rising commodity prices in the international market during the 2000s led to a sharp increase in Brazilian agricultural exports, further reinforcing the growing economic relevance of agribusiness (BACHA, 2018). As a consequence, it not only became a key sector for the country's economic performance but also elevated the agro-industry to one of the most prominent economic segments in Brazil.

The concentration of the agro-industry into a few large multinational companies significantly enhanced ABAG's political relevance. During the early 2000s, ABAG became one of the most prominent organizations representing agribusiness interests in Brazil. It even influenced the appointment of the Ministry of Agriculture, nominating its president, Roberto Rodrigues, during the first Lula administration (2003-2006) (POMPEIA, 2021).

In competition with ABAG, CNA established the Superior Council of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil in 2002. This new association aimed to articulate agribusiness segment associations, but it succeeded in attracting only a few representative

organizations (BEEFPOINT, 2002). CNA's efforts to use that new organization to recover its political prestige made it less appealing to other agricultural entities. Following the death of Antonio de Salvo, CNA's president from 1991 to 2007 and the main sponsor of the initiative, the Council lost political relevance for agriculture representation (POMPEIA, 2021).

In 2006, the São Paulo State Federation of Industries (FIESP) founded the Agribusiness Superior Council (COSAG) with support from the former Minister of Agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues (FIESP, 2024). The growing dissatisfaction of the agro-industry associations with CNA's narrow political agenda and their limited influence within ABAG triggered this initiative (POMPEIA, 2021). Although COSAG remains active, it predominantly represents agro-industrial organizations, with minimal participation from agricultural associations.

Dissatisfaction with CNA also emerged within agricultural organizations. In 2006, the Mato Grosso Association of Cotton Producers (AMPA) and the Soybean and Corn Producers Association of the State of Mato Grosso (APROSOJA/MT) withdrew from CNA. Empowered by the commodities boom, these regional organizations began to directly engage with legislators from FPA and created an office to manage these relationships in 2007 (TAVARES, 2018; POMPEIA, 2021).

This office, with a budget of 40 thousand reais per month equally funded by the aforementioned associations, created a specialized administrative structure to support FPA's regular meetings (TAVARES, 2018). As a result, FPA became increasingly effective in the National Congress, garnering support from additional agribusiness representative organizations and legislators (POMPEIA, 2020). After 2007, numerous FPA prominent members were appointed as Minister of Agriculture, regardless of ideological changes in government – for example, Reinhold Stephanes (2007-2010), Mendes Ribeiro (2011-2013), Neri Geller (2014-2015), Blairo Maggi (2016-2019) and Tereza Cristina (2019-2022).

In 2007, FPA introduced the reform of the Forestry Code to the National Congress agenda. This initiative mobilized a broad coalition of agribusiness representative organizations to lobby legislators. As FPA's office facilitated coordination between pro-reform organizations and legislators, other agribusiness organizations, such as the Sugarcane Industry Union (UNICA), joined in funding the office (RIBEIRO, 2019).

This growing alignment of interests among different organizations led to the transformation of the FPA's office into the Farming Thinking Institute (IPA) in 2011. This new organization, a private association, was tasked with advising FPA, coordinating lobbying efforts from affiliated entities at the federal level, and creating a political agenda for agribusiness (RIBEIRO, 2019; TAVARES, 2018).

IPA's membership is exclusive to national or regional agribusiness organizations, which established it as an umbrella peak organization of agribusiness. Initially, IPA had only three members (APROSOJA/MT, AMPA, and ABRAPA). However, its membership expanded during the debate of the Forestry Code Reform and grew substantially after the enactment of the New Forest Code in 2012, a significant victory for agribusiness (RIBEIRO, 2019).

João Henrique Hummel, a political consultant, played a pivotal role in creating the FPA's office in 2007 and transforming it into IPA in 2011. An agronomist and former advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, Hummel worked as a political consultant for numerous agribusiness associations. He led the creation of FPA's office when he was a consultant at the APROSOJA/MT and served as IPA's executive director from 2011 to 2018.

Under Hummel's leadership, IPA underwent rapid institutionalization. Membership increased from 3 to 43 organizations, and its monthly budget grew from 40 thousand to 400 thousand reais (TAVARES, 2018). However, this growth triggered internal conflicts, which occasionally threatened IPA's survival. For example, during the 2014 elections for a new president, founder members disagreed over the composition of the executive board and threatened to withdraw from the organization (TAVARES, 2018).

Many of these conflicts stemmed from external factors. For instance, CNA and IPA have maintained a contentious relationship since APROSOJA/MT left the former to lead the creation of the latter. CNA perceived IPA's success as a threat to its own legitimacy and political relevance, prompting efforts to weaken IPA through external pressure on affiliated organizations and the use of federal government power (POMPEIA, 2021; RIBEIRO, 2019; TAVARES, 2018).

Tavares (2018) offers an illustrative example: Katia Abreu, CNA's president, a Senator from Tocantins state, and Minister of Agriculture (2015-2016), exploited the rivalry between President Rousseff and FPA to push for IPA's dissolution. However,

Rousseff's impeachment in 2016 led to Abreu losing her position as Minister of Agriculture and stepping down from the CNA's presidency.

Another effort to counter IPA came in 2016 when CNA's new president, João Martins da Silva Júnior, established the Farming Entities Council. This new organization, created to replace the defunct Superior Council of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, brought together 13 regional or national agricultural organizations but included only one representing the agro-industry – starkly contrasting with IPA's composition of 10 agricultural and 23 agro-industrial representative organizations (POMPEIA, 2021).

3.3 Evaluating the emergence and maintenance of IPA

The case study is the most suitable research design for investigating the origins and maintenance of a specific organization, as these objectives require examining the behavior of key actors interacting with one another and their environment. In other words, it necessitates an in-depth analysis of administrative records, official documents, and personal accounts from individuals who experienced relevant events related to the topic. Thus, case studies offer the flexibility to tailor the research strategy to the specific conditions of the investigation, combining multiple techniques for data collection and analysis.

Although case studies have become less common in research on interest organizations, they remain essential for explaining how these actors operate within policy domains (WITKO, 2015). For example, case studies on the political organization of industrialists in Brazil have successfully explained the dismantling of corporatism and the emergence of a hybrid interest system, in which the National Industry Confederation (CNI) had to adapt to survive (DINIZ; BOSCHI, 2004; MANCUSO, 2007). In the US literature, Hansen (1991) and Bosso (2005) provide further examples of the value of case studies for investigating the lifecycle and behavior of interest organizations, focusing, respectively, on farmers and environmentalists.

In general, case studies are highly recommended for exploratory research, even among neopositivist scholars in Political Science. However, there is considerable debate regarding their value for descriptive and explanatory purposes (KING; KEOHANE; VERBA, 1994; BRADY; COLLIER, 2004; BRADY, 2009). Critics often highlight intentional sampling and limited variability as reasons to question the internal

and external validity of case studies. While these limitations are valid concerns, they do not necessarily negate the utility of this research design (GERRING, 2004).

The nature of explanations provided by case studies differs significantly from those rooted in the counterfactual framework. Instead of measuring effects, case studies seek to identify necessary and/or sufficient causes and uncover the underlying causal mechanisms (GEORGE; BENNETT, 2005; GERRING, 2007). The primary advantage of case studies lies precisely in exploring complex causal relationships, allowing researchers to observe how the presence or absence of specific causes, as well as their interactions, shape the phenomenon under investigation.

Furthermore, case studies can offer generalizations based on analytical reasoning. The most common type of generalization in case studies is contingent-middle-level generalizations grounded in specific case settings (GEORGE; BENNETT, 2005). Such contingent generalizations can be enhanced through strategic case selection, for example, by focusing on a typical case (GERRING, 2009).

Here, the case study research design is used to investigate the emergence and maintenance of IPA, an umbrella peak interest organization that emerged in the 2010s as one of the most important representative entities of agribusiness in Brazil, particularly due to its proximity to FPA. As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, there are numerous theoretical and methodological reasons for selecting this research design. The main rationale derives from the goals of this chapter, which are essentially case-driven. In the remaining discussion in this section, I will explain the data-gathering and analysis methods employed for each objective.

In-depth interviews with key players in the agribusiness interest system serve as the main data source. The four selected informants are individuals who performed critical functions in IPA and competing organizations⁵. The expectation is that the informants' multiple roles within the agribusiness interest system will provide a dataset less biased by individual experiences and beliefs. Customized roadmaps for each interview can be found in Appendix A.

For analyzing the interview transcripts, I derived categories from the theories integrated into the arguments. Table 3.1 presents the categories, along with their

⁵ In order to preserve the anonymity of both the interviewees and the organizations, all direct quotations containing potentially identifiable information have been edited to suppress these sensitive details.

respective meanings and illustrative quotations⁶. After assigning the paragraphs directly or indirectly related to the codes in each interview transcript, I analyzed each category to identify common and divergent understandings expressed by the interviewed leaders.

Table 3.1 – Analytical categories for qualitative analysis.

| Code | Meaning | Example |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Formation | The formation process of IPA and the factors that led to the alignment of existing entities | "We did not have, in Brasília, beyond CNA, a representation focused on agricultural production chains that could serve as a source of political influence to resolve the issues that, at that moment, were particularly affecting the soybeans and cotton sectors". |
| Composition | The segments and entities that have participated in IPA | "[...] the soybeans and cotton sectors certainly stood out there, but there was also the soybeans processing industry, which was already present with a quite significant participation [...]". |
| Influence market | The effectiveness and attractiveness of the existing organizations that sought to represent agribusiness at the federal level | "Those who represent everything, like CNA, end up doing a bit of everything and not delving deeply into what each sector might specifically demand". |
| Internal conflict | The internal divergences among IPA-affiliated entities and how the organization handled these conflicts | "[...] you have to find a balance between the interests of the entities, what has strength, what is common, what is transversal, and what is of interest to the group of legislators who will support it [...]". |
| Benefits distribution | The benefits IPA offers to its affiliated entities, particularly how these benefits are distributed to avoid internal conflicts | "As long as it is a pacified demand, the affiliated entity, no matter how small the sector it represents, has the power to place its demand under the responsibility of a lawmaker and periodically holds them accountable for delivering legislation, agreements with the government, amendments, or even blocking opposing projects. This is very efficiently done by IPA [...]". |
| Agenda attractiveness | The results of IPA's lobbying on key policy issues for its affiliates | "I believe that the results of IPA might not have pleased everyone, but they always satisfied a large majority. There were never any issues on which the affiliated entities were completely opposed to what the legislators decided". |

Source: author's elaboration.

⁶ As all interviews were conducted in Portuguese, every quotation mentioned in the chapter was translated by the author.

Additionally, the investigation incorporated official statistics on economic performance and agricultural production, as well as the IPA's list of affiliated entities. This list was drawn from Ribeiro (2019) and discussed with a collaborator who held a key function at the Institute, aiming to identify the segments each entity represented within IPA. For more details, refer to APPENDIX B.

The use of multiple data sources in qualitative research is a common strategy to enhance the validity and reliability of data gathered by in-depth interviews (NATOW, 2020; FLICK, 2018). Following this strategy, this study conducted triangulation among multiple data sources.

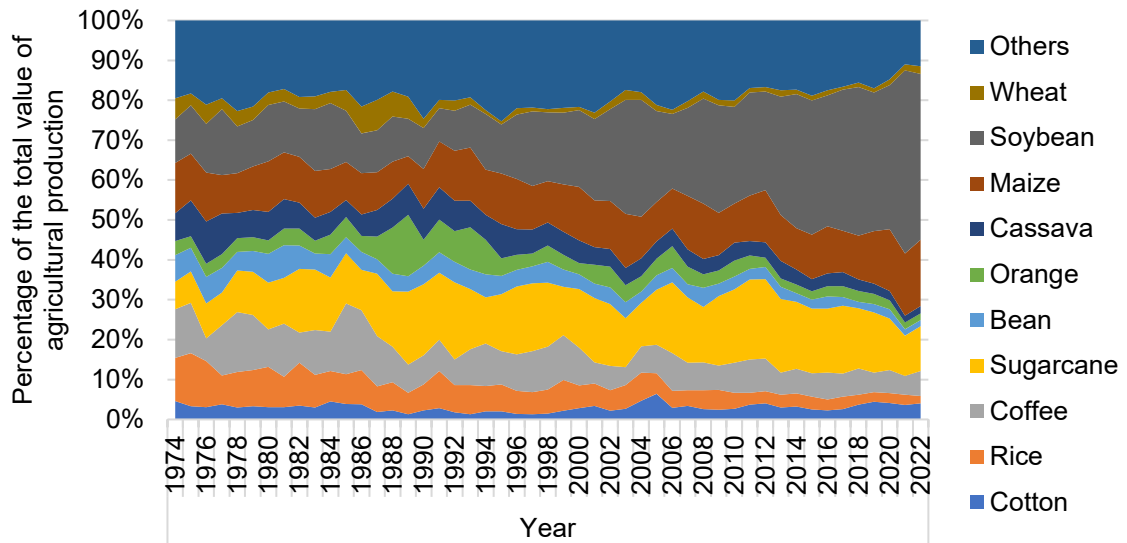
Finally, I utilized additional evidence to support the analysis of benefit distribution and agenda attractiveness factors. In both cases, the information was gathered from a form that included questions about the degree of internal divergence regarding IPA's positions and the degree of conflict IPA faced while attempting to influence legislative proposals in the National Congress. I identified all legislative proposals lobbied by IPA that were resolved in the 55th Legislature (2015-2019). Then, a former executive member of IPA filled out a form about each proposition. More information about this database can be found in the next chapter.

3.4 Creating an agribusiness institute

The foundation of the Farming Thinking Institute in 2011 resulted from the confluence of at least four factors. First, the concentration of production value in a few crops with similar productive processes and modes of production. As shown in Figure 3.1, the distribution of agricultural production value in 1974 was much more equitable than in the 2000s. During the last decade of the twentieth century, Brazilian agricultural production shifted toward a concentration on soybeans cultivation. This trend intensified in the 2000s. Today, the value of soybeans production alone accounts for about 40% of the total value of agricultural production.

In addition, most of the productive activities in soybeans cultivation are similar to those in maize and cotton cultivation. Consequently, they face similar challenges in terms of production. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter One, most of these crops operate within agro-industrial complexes (soybeans, maize, orange, sugarcane, coffee, and cotton). This is another shared feature among the most important agricultural products.

Figure 3.1 – Evolution of the total value of agricultural products, 1974-2022.



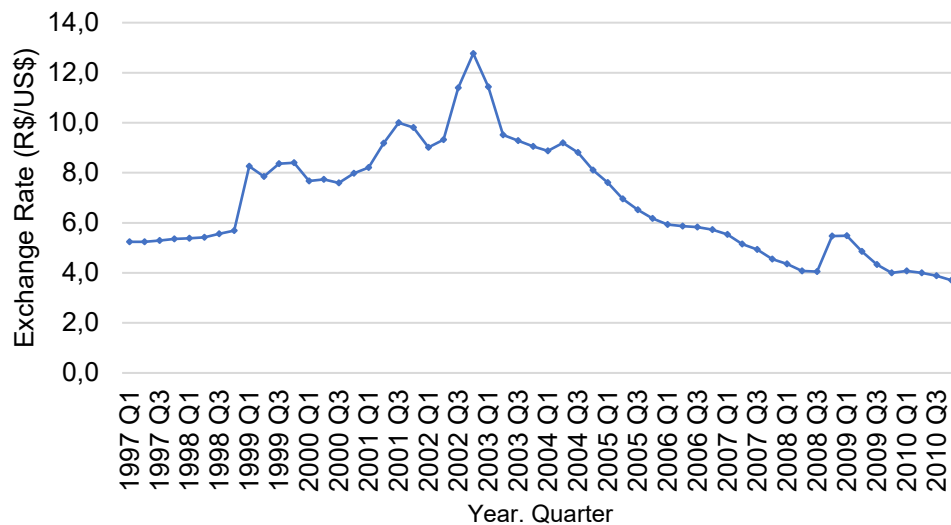
Source: author's elaboration based on IBGE (2023)

The increasing concentration of agricultural production value in a few modernized crops is a necessary condition for alignment among their representative entities, but it is not sufficient to create a cohesive peak umbrella organization. Achieving this goal requires at least three additional elements: (1) an explosive and encompassing issue that unites the segments to pressure policymakers; (2) the absence of a potentially effective entity capable of encompassing these different segments and sectors; (3) a political entrepreneur willing to bear the costs of coordinating a broad coalition of entities.

Regarding the issue factor, farmers within agro-industrial complexes began facing cyclical crises throughout the 2000s. This prosperous decade for the Brazilian economy resulted in an unusual economic environment: the exchange rate between the real and the dollar decreased significantly. Figure 3.2 shows the evolution of the exchange rate since the implementation of the floating exchange rate regime in 1997.

After the tumultuous transition to the floating exchange rate regime in 1997, the exchange rate remained relatively stable until 2000. This stability is crucial for farmers, as it provides predictability when planning the planting and harvesting of their crops in a context where most implements are imported and much of the production is exported. If the exchange rate fluctuates significantly, farmers risk purchasing implements at a higher exchange rate than the price at which they can sell their products, making agriculture unviable.

Figure 3.2 – Deflated average commercial exchange rate between the Brazilian real and the US dollar, 1997-2010.



Source: IPEADATA (2024).

Although the economic conditions between 1997 and 2002 were largely favorable for farmers, the Brazilian currency entered a phase of continuous appreciation after this period. In this scenario, farmers received comparatively less for their products than they spent on purchasing implements from the international market. This interpretation is not only supported by the exchange rate data but also by some understandings provided by interviewed agricultural leaders. They emphasized the negative impact of the exchange rate appreciation on agricultural financing and expressed concerns that this trend might recur in the future, leaving farmers without the means to protect their investments.

“We had difficulty engaging with Lula’s administration on the debt renegotiation project resulting from the mismatch between buying and selling products in dollars. The exchange rate reached R\$ 4,5 when purchasing inputs, and when it came time to sell the products, it was around R\$ 2. So, the sector needed working capital. We sought to engage with the government, but they did not listen to us.” (Agricultural political leader A).

“[...] we were coming out of a period of a major crisis in 2005 and 2006, where the sectors, especially here in the Midwest, faced significant economic impacts. It was a crisis that dragged on for several years [...] and we needed, in some way, to rebuild or even create safeguards for the sector, not only in the economic field but in the broader legislative context.” (Agricultural political leader B).

On the industrial side, a significant incorporation into the group that founded IPA occurred later, during the discussion of the Forest Code Reform between 2008 and 2012. While exchange rate instability was less important for the sector, environmental regulation was crucial for the survival of the industry, especially due to its impact on the reputation of products in the international market. Both industrial political leaders interviewed emphasized that moment:

"[...] the Forest Code was a turning point; agricultural producers themselves realized that if they did not have strong alignment with the agro-industry, the new Forest Code would undermine both sectors. [...] the Forest Code was decisive in showing that it was crucial for both the agriculture and agro-industry to be politically organized and united [...]." (Industrial political leader A).

"[...] the industry has a position within the Institute that seeks to protect the forest. We do not want deforestation. This is the modern view of agribusiness. Ten or twenty years ago, it was not like this. Today, there is an awareness that we need to end illegal deforestation because it harms the image of Brazilian agribusiness [...]." (Industrial political leader B).

The update of the Forestry Code, the most important set of environmental regulations in Brazil, has been under consideration in the National Congress since President Cardoso's second term. The critical importance of this issue has grown steadily due to international pressure (POMPEIA, 2020; TAVARES, 2018). When President Lula issued Decree number 6 514 in 2008, regulating the administrative procedures for penalizing environmental crimes and enforcing Law number 9 605 from 1998 (promulgated by President Cardoso), the approval of a new Forestry Code became urgent for both farmers and industrialists.

Thus, the governmental action, regardless of its source or underlying motivation, set in motion a process that brought together the representative entities of the main agricultural and agro-industrial products. Initially, the floating exchange rate regime crisis provided an opportunity for the union of soybeans, cotton, and maize producers. Subsequently, it created another opportunity. This time, it brought farmers and agro-industrialists under the same cause: the reform of the Forestry Code.

However, this process was not without its challenges. Interviewed leaders representing industrial interests often remembered the disagreements between agricultural and industrial entities within IPA. They emphasized the political learning involved, the creation of institutional mechanisms to manage conflicts, and the role of

leaders with a diplomatic style, whose efforts were crucial in building consensus on contentious issues.

“[...] in the beginning, I was impressed because there were leaders from [organization name omitted] who were very aggressive and fought with [organization name omitted], representing the industry, to the point of insulting them. But the others present intervened to keep the discussion at a civilized level. This mechanism [meetings with all entities present] made the relationships easier because when only two people are fighting in a room, there is no third party to mediate the conflict. However, when there are 50 people representing different segments, they will moderate the conflict between those two and prevent it from escalating [...]” (Industrial political leader B).

“[...] at that time, there were leaders who were sensitive to dialogue and made things move forward. [...] [Name omitted] is a diplomat, and he was very important. To help him, there was the former congressman [name omitted], who was also highly respected. [...] Then came [name omitted], who was also a very good man. After that, there was [name omitted], a professional at building coalitions [...]. So, during those tense moments, there were leaders in IPA and FPA who were very open to dialogue and willing to find a path toward consensus [...]” (Industrial political leader A).

The institutional mechanisms created to manage conflicts played a crucial role in the survival of the Institute. The political entrepreneurs behind IPA's creation strategically united the most valuable agriculture segments first, focusing on those with similar modes of production. Later, they incorporated the related agro-industry's representation, initially maintaining it as a minority.

IPA's core organizations were the Mato Grosso Association of Cotton Producers (AMPA) and the Soybean and Corn Producers Association of the State of Mato Grosso (APROSOJA/MT). These organizations had a unique funding model based on a semi-mandatory⁷ tax applied to each sale of soybean or cotton. The Mato Grosso state government established these funds, allowing farmers to deduct from state taxes an amount exceeding their contributions to the fund.

The funds were managed by the respective regional producer association for each segment, the state government, and the Mato Grosso Federation of Agriculture (FAMATO). They were allocated to initiatives such as research, rural technical assistance, organizational maintenance, lobbying, etc. Given that the Mato-Grosso state is one of the largest soybeans producers in the country⁸ and the leading cotton

⁷ See (BRASIL, 1997, 2005).

⁸ Mato Grosso state was responsible for about 1/5 and 1/3 of soya bean production in the country between 2000 and 2015 (IBGE, 2023).

producer⁹, these funds benefited significantly from the expansion of both crop production in the 2000s. Consequently, APROSOJA/MT and AMPA were able to enhance their lobbying in the National Congress.

This semi-mandatory tax also played a vital role in financing a lobbying office in the capital and supporting less economically significant entities that could not afford a permanent presence in Brasília. In this way, APROSOJA/MT and AMPA controlled the group's development until it reached sufficient maturity to be politically relevant and attract the attention of potential allies and competitors.

“APROSOJA/MT and AMPA financed IPA's expenses for quite some time [...]. Afterward, ABRAPA and APROSOJA Brazil continued to make significantly larger contributions to sustain IPA's activities, allowing other associations to join the group with almost symbolic contributions.” (Agricultural political leader B).

“Many small entities struggle to contribute money to IPA every month. The large ones do not. That amount of money was insignificant for them. So, back then, when IPA started, only a few associations participated, but they were large ones [...].” (Industrial political leader B).

Following the hiring of a lobbying office in the capital, the foundation group focused on aggregating additional partners who shared similar concerns. Through this process, new national and regional associations representing agriculture segments joined the group: cattle breeders, pig breeders, maize farmers, coffee farmers, sugarcane farmers, and cooperatives. As previously mentioned, the agro-industry started aligning with the group during the discussions of the Forestry Code in Congress and solidified its alliance during the economic recession of 2015-2016, under President Rousseff's second term.

“We went through a very difficult time during Dilma's government, with a significant economic downturn, a dramatic situation, and that led to the unification of the entire productive sector. [...] I believe that during Dilma's impeachment, a vision emerged that we needed to have a well-organized political lobby. So, we really started to think about bringing more entities together [...].” (Industrial political leader B).

By the end of 2017, the Institute's composition encompassed the most economically significant agricultural products and their related agro-industries, as detailed in Table 3.2. Additionally, the official entity responsible for representing the

⁹ Mato Grosso state produced between 40% and 70% of the total cotton produced in Brazil between 2000 and 2015 (IBGE, 2023).

cooperatives, OCB, alongside other traditional entities such as the Federations of Agriculture from São Paulo, Paraná, and Mato Grosso states, ABAG, and SRB were also affiliated with IPA. By this point, the Institute had transformed into a peak umbrella organization representing the major agro-industrial complexes, including both integrated and semi-integrated establishments. Nevertheless, it maintained a predominance of agricultural entities, with approximately 16 entities exclusively representing agricultural interests compared to about 14 entities exclusively representing industrial interests.

Table 3.2 – Entities affiliated with the Farming Thinking Institute and the economic relevance of their represented segments.

| Product | Total value of production in 2022 (%) | Agriculture | Industry |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Soybeans | 28.7 | APROSOJA | ABIOVE SINDIRAÇÕES SINDVEG ANDEF |
| Beef | 13.1 | ABCZ | ABRAFRIGO SINDAN |
| Maize | 12.6 | ABRAMILHO | ABIOVE SINDIRAÇÕES |
| Chicken | 10.0 | ABPA | ABPA SINDAN |
| Sugarcane | 8.4 | ORPLANA | UNICA SINDVEG ANDEF |
| Milk | 5.0 | ABCZ | VIVALACTEOS SINDAN |
| Coffee | 4.7 | CNC | ABECAFE CECAFE SINDVEG ANDEF |
| Cotton | 2.9 | ABRAPA | ABRAPA SINDVEG ANDEF |
| Pork | 2.7 | ABPA | ABPA ABRAFRIGO SINDAN |
| Wheat | 1.6 | - | - |
| Others | 10.2 | - | - |

Source: author's elaboration.

Recovering the conclusions from Chapter One, all these agriculture segments are partially or fully integrated into the industry, meaning they depend on state interventions to limit the expropriation of agricultural surplus. They are also vulnerable to macroeconomic fluctuations (e.g., interest rate, exchange rate, inflation, etc.) and broad regulations, such as those governing land use (Forestry Code) and labor (e.g., the 2017 Labor Code reform). This evidence demonstrates that IPA represents segments that are critically dependent on state interventions, which explains its nature as a permanent peak umbrella organization rather than a temporary *ad-hoc* coalition. The typical mode of production in agribusiness requires enduring arrangements to

coordinate transversal policies and their changes, thereby avoiding supply crises that could affect the entire economy of a country.

The final explanatory factor behind IPA's emergence as a key player in agribusiness political representation is the failure of other entities, such as ABAG, COSAG, and CNA, to create an organization capable of attracting and integrating all agribusiness segments. The first two entities eventually became spaces dominated by the agro-industry, which agricultural entities viewed with suspicion and dissatisfaction. According to Pompeia (2021), COSAG had 35 national or regional entities in 2007, 25 of which represented the agro-industry, while ABAG included 9 entities in 2013, with 6 affiliates from the agro-industry. Moreover, as highlighted by an interviewed leader, these entities could not be politically effective in Congress, which likely further reduced their appeal to agricultural entities.

“The existing entities were not effective spaces for representing agribusiness. Some were very old and limited. COSAG, far from Brasília and being a state-level entity, had little influence in the National Congress. [...] ABAG, another entity created in São Paulo, was the same.” (Industrial political leader B).

On the other hand, CNA, the official entity responsible for representing agricultural interests, faced the challenge of advocating for a heterogeneous sector within a rigid and outdated institution. During the Military Regime, CNA experienced the most stringent control among business confederations, leaving a representational deficit that persisted until reforms were implemented in the late 1980s (ORTEGA, 2005; GRAZIANO DA SILVA, 1996; HIDALGO DA SILVA; MOYANO, 1993).

Despite its modernization, CNA struggled to effectively coordinate agricultural interests, as associations representing products assumed most of this role. Similar to the industrial sector, the corporatist structure representing agriculture failed to balance the disproportionality in internal elections and the economic weight of each segment. In both cases, the maintenance of mandatory contributions to these entities, combined with a lack of accountability and internal competition for leadership positions, led to inertia.

In 2002, CNA established the Superior Council of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil to regain its waning political relevancy. However, the initiative had a short lifespan and failed to attract significant support from national agricultural associations (POMPEIA, 2021). The council's failure marked the beginning of efforts by

APROSOJA/MT and AMPA to create a new representative entity (TAVARES, 2018). One of the interviewed leaders recalled that period:

"If a new national entity emerged, it was because the existing ones were not working, right? [...] The work of building IPA only began because CNA did not want to revive the Superior Council of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil." (Agricultural political leader A).

All interviewed leaders expressed similar opinions about CNA: its limited representativity and lack of ability to operate effectively in competitive political environments at that time made it useless to represent agribusiness interests.

"[...] what we needed was action, not discourse. The big difference between IPA and CNA at that time was that IPA acted. It went to the proper debate forum, the Congress, and not to closed rooms. It sought debate and shared responsibility with society. [...] So, it was able to move the discussion from the Executive Branch to the Legislative. I think no other entity was capable of or interested in doing it that way." (Agricultural political leader A).

"[...] CNA had a generic political approach involving all production chains, but it lacked specific actions for these two chains [soybeans and cotton]. [...] We felt there was a lack of willingness from the established entities, and, due to the strong corporatism, there was no renewal of leadership." (Agricultural political leader B).

"I think this is a flaw of confederations in general. [...] Confederations have to deal with very diffuse interests. Aligning interests within a confederation, whether in agriculture, industry, or commerce, is very complicated. And there is still a lot of regional political interference. So, depending on who is in charge of the confederation, it represents more the interests of the leader's region." (Industrial political leader A).

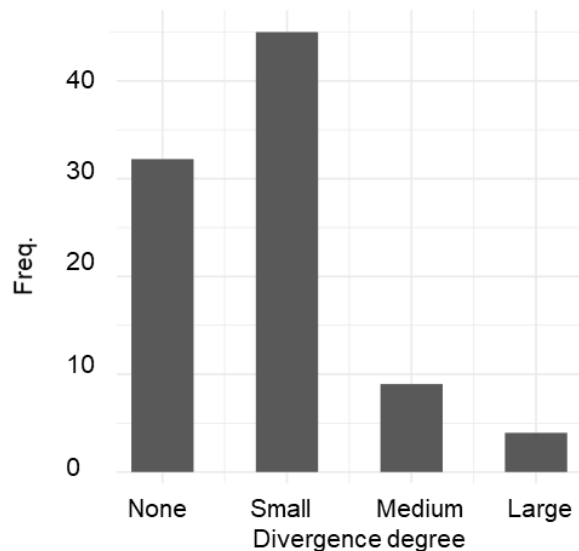
In summary, the agribusiness influence market, particularly for agriculture, in the 2000s had an unmet demand for a peak and aggregative entity. Despite the efforts of existing organizations like ABAG, COSAG, and CNA to represent agribusiness at the national level, they were unable to attract the main associations from the most important agricultural and agro-industrial segments. The first two entities were perceived by agriculture as biased toward agro-industrial interests, while the latter failed to effectively promote the aggregation and representation of interests. As a result, APROSOJA/MT and AMPA, assuming the initial costs, identified a favorable opportunity to create IPA.

3.5 Maintaining the Farming Thinking Institute

Similar to previous initiatives, IPA faced the challenge of promoting sustainable growth in terms of affiliated entities while keeping internal divergences limited to prevent evasion. In general, the interviewed leaders reported continuous institutional learning within IPA, enabling it to accommodate divergences and build consensus – an adaptability that only young organizations can demonstrate. Now thirteen years old, IPA has achieved several victories in Congress, and the factors behind its success align closely with the neopluralist argument for the maintenance of interest organizations.

The first critical organizational aspect in which IPA succeeded was in limiting the purposive displacement effect, i.e., preventing the evasion of entities with preferences far from the majority on critical issues. In fact, the divergence among agribusiness entities regarding the positions IPA has taken on the legislative proposals it lobbied was minimal. As shown in Figure 3.3, the highest degree of divergence occurred in just four proposals out of 90. The most frequent observation was minimal divergence with 45 proposals, while there was no divergence at all in 31 proposals.

Figure 3.3 – Degree of divergence in IPA's position on legislative proposals it lobbied.



Source: author's elaboration.

The interviewed leaders pointed to two key factors that help explain these results. As a peak organization, the IPA's mission is to build consensus around cross-cutting issues in agribusiness, regardless of the economic importance of each segment within the entity. This principle is reflected, either directly or indirectly, in the statements of all interviewed leaders:

“The IPA’s mission is to identify the points of convergence between the entities and reach an agreement. In cases of divergence, it is the role of explaining the issue to those with decision-making power, the representatives, and allowing them to be the arbiters of the dispute...” (Agricultural political leader A).

[...] In that space, we sought consensus. By consensus, it is understood that the issue was more transversal, something that affected everyone or the vast majority [...]. It may be that sometimes we failed to achieve consensus, but we at least obtained consent. Without consensus or consent, the issue would be left to be discussed at another time; it would remain paralyzed.” (Industrial political leader A).

Notwithstanding, the organization had to equalize the internal power among affiliated entities to attract other segments of agribusiness and gain representativity in the political disputes within the National Congress. This was a critical demand until it was addressed in 2014 when a statutory reform equalized the financial contributions and voting weight. The interviewed leaders representing the agro-industry emphasized that this change was essential to realizing the IPA’s mission:

[...] having a balanced statute with one vote per entity was crucial for building consensus.” (Industrial political leader A).

[In the beginning] there were entities with very strong influence, such as APROSOJA and ABRAPA, but we realized that the sector needed more coordination. [...] So we started thinking about bringing in more entities, working together, having formal meetings, renting a house, etc. Then came the fights over financial contributions and voting power. The sector took time to organize.” (Industrial political leader B).

Secondly, the collective decisions in IPA do not obligate the entities to engage in joint lobbying efforts. The Institute coordinates lobbying activities among those interested in a specific issue and aligns the demand with members of Congress who are part of FPA when there is a majority decision to proceed with lobbying. Consequently, the possibility of opting out of lobbying activities that do not align with a particular entity’s interests allows members to disagree without incurring significant costs in terms of maintaining their affiliation with the Institute.

“When there is no convergence, the entities are free to act independently. Even so, there is a leveling. Everyone has the opportunity to express their satisfactions and dissatisfactions [...].” (Agricultural political leader B).

"When the decision does not favor my segment, I abstain. We have learned to be smart and not demand unanimity. [...] This is respected. You do not have to support 100% of what the soybean producers wants." (Industrial political leader B).

Another critical organizational challenge that IPA had to address was distributing the benefits among affiliated entities without fostering internal competition. The Institute implemented strategies to limit the sharing of credit claiming among members and between members and the Institute, aiming to preserve the attractiveness of affiliation. The first measure, implemented at the foundational stage, was restricting membership to entities representing agribusiness segments rather than companies or individual producers. This prevented competition between IPA and its affiliates for the same target audience. Furthermore, applications for new entity membership are evaluated by the group, ensuring that only entities that do not compete with the existing entities for the same target audiences are allowed to join.

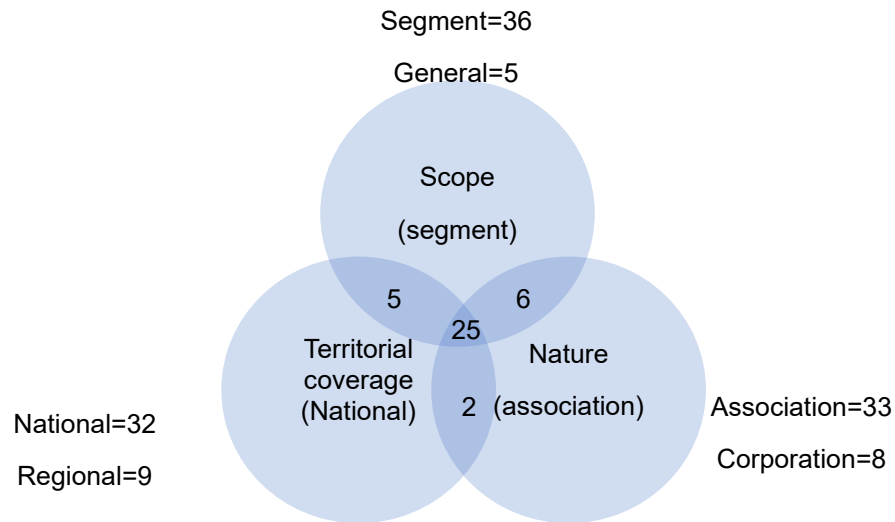
"We kept expanding, to the point where there came a time when IPA had to limit the number of entities. [...] We do not want to include every type of entity here, otherwise, it will become very difficult to manage the interests." (Industrial political leader B).

As shown in Figure 3.4, by 2018, only nine of the 41 entities affiliated with IPA were regional representations. The majority of entities (n=32) aimed to represent their constituencies' interests nationally. Furthermore, most entities were focused on representing a specific segment of agribusiness (n=36). Finally, the majority of entities were associations (n=33). Consequently, while there was some overlap in the target audiences of some affiliated entities, it was generally partial. For example, there are both regional and national entities representing cotton and soybean crops. Additionally, there was limited overlap between entities representing general interests and those focusing on specific segments, such as some state agricultural federations.

In 2018, IPA members were primarily national associations representing various agribusiness segments. The competition for the same target audience among these members would pose a significant challenge for attracting and retaining such entities, as they would have to share credit claims before the same audience. However, IPA leaders have managed to minimize this issue. Figure 3.5 illustrates the segments represented within IPA in 2018 by national entities, including both associations and corporations. For nearly all segments, there was only one entity representing the

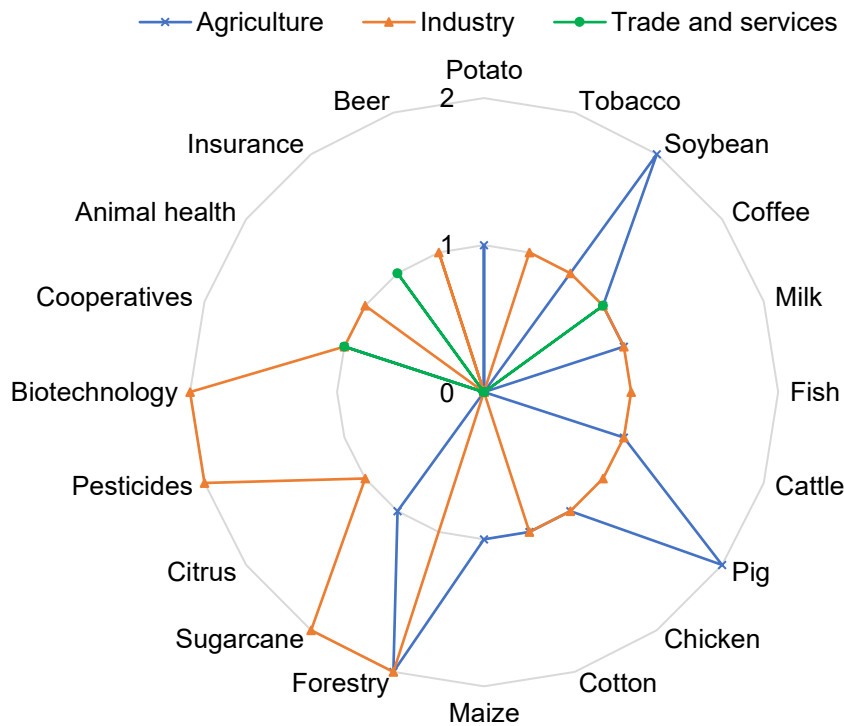
interests within the peak umbrella organization, ensuring that credits for its success in Congress could be claimed only by one member per targeted audience.

Figure 3.4 – Distribution of IPA-affiliated entities by the scope, territorial coverage, and nature of representation.



Source: author's elaboration.

Figure 3.5 – Distribution of national entities within IPA by the represented segment.



Source: author's elaboration.

Some cases where two entities represent the same segment require specific explanations. For soybeans, the two entities representing this segment have distinct

targets, although they maintain some overlapping audiences. On the one hand, the Brazilian Association of Soybean Seed Producers (ABRASS) focuses on representing the demands of seed producers. On the other hand, the Brazilian Association of Soybean Producers (APROSOJABRASIL) represents the broader interests of soybean producers (ABRASS, 2024; APROSOJABRASIL, 2024).

There are also two entities affiliated with IPA representing pig production. They share some overlapping audiences, but the Brazilian Association of Animal Proteins (ABPA) has a broader audience, representing the entire production chain for pigs, poultry, and their derived products (ABPA, 2024). In contrast, the Brazilian Association of Pig Farmers (ABCS) focuses exclusively on representing pig farmers (ABCS, 2024).

Similarly, two entities represent the forestry segment, but they cater to different audiences. The Brazilian Tree Industry (IBA) primarily represents large companies, while the National Forum of Forest-Based Activities (FNBF) focuses on local and regional entities (FNBF, 2024; IBA, 2024). Regarding the sugarcane industry's representation within IPA, the Sugarcane Industry Union (UNICA) represents the interests of large companies and cooperatives (UNICA, 2024), and the National Sugar-Energy Forum (FNS) speaks for local and regional entities (FNS, 2024).

The last example of segmented representation within IPA is the biotechnology sector. While the Association for the Promotion of Forage Improvement Research (UNIPASTO) represents biotechnology companies engaged with forage research and forage seed producers, the Association of Biotechnology Companies in Agriculture and Agro-industry (AGROBIO) represents biotechnology companies across the entire sector (UNIPASTO, 2024; AGROBIO, 2024).

Regarding pesticides, two organizations within IPA have very similar audiences but differ in nature. One is the National Union of the Plant Protection Products Industry (SINDVEG), a corporatist organization, while the other is the National Association for Plant Protection (ANDEF), a voluntary association (SINDVEG, 2024; ANDEF, 2024). Until the 2017 reform of the Labor Code, unions had a mandatory contribution from every company in the represented segment. This may be the main reason both organizations were admitted into IPA. However, after the reform, they began competing for the same audience, as corporatist organizations lost the mandatory contribution that funded their activities and started competing with voluntary associations.

An incisive inconsistency within IPA emerged with the affiliation of ABAG and SRB, both of which seek to represent agribusiness interests nationally, despite their

stronger regional strength. SRB is not as politically relevant as it once was, as it now engages in many activities beyond the political representation of agribusiness (MENDONÇA, 2010), which may explain its continued affiliation with IPA.

On the other hand, ABAG is more politically relevant, though with limited coverage of agricultural interests (POMPEIA, 2021). As a result, its audience mainly overlaps with entities representing the agro-industry within IPA. ABAG even disaffiliated from IPA in 2020 but rejoined in 2022. Its membership is small, with most affiliates being large companies from industry, trade, and services related to agribusiness. While ABAG may compete with some associations within IPA for representation, its participation in that space offers its members a more direct channel of political influence than other associations, where their power may be diluted among many small and medium-sized companies.

The most significant inconsistency within IPA emerged with the entry of its main competitor in 2019, the CNA. As the official entity representing agriculture, it has always competed with IPA for public recognition as the leading representative of agribusiness interests in the country (POMPEIA, 2021; TAVARES, 2018). Some of the interviewed leaders saw this as a capitulation, but the consequences of the CNA's affiliation, including assuming IPA's presidency in 2021, remain unclear.

"There came a point when CNA surrendered. [...] In the past, it acted as if it did not need IPA. A vain stance, believing they had political power." (Industrial political leader B).

In addition to limiting shared credit claiming, IPA also offers selective incentives to its affiliated entities through technical and political support in demands that do not conflict with the interests of other affiliates. Two interviewed leaders clearly highlight the opportunity that affiliates have to use IPA's expertise to leverage their political demands:

"As long as it is a pacified demand, the affiliated entity, no matter how small the sector it represents, has the power to place its demand under the responsibility of a lawmaker and periodically holds them accountable for delivering legislation, agreements with the government, amendments, or even blocking opposing projects. This is very efficiently done by IPA [...]." (Agricultural political leader B).

"[...] demands that benefit only one segment are not a priority, but they are supported by IPA whenever it is called upon by the affiliated entity." (Industrial political leader A).

IPA maintains multiple channels for direct contact with key decision-makers at the federal level, including representatives, senators, ministers, national secretaries, and even the President. Affiliated entities have opportunities to reach out to these decision-makers during the regular lunch meetings that IPA promotes weekly at its headquarters (POMPEIA, 2021; TAVARES, 2018).

The final explanatory factor for IPA's maintenance is the unique advantage it offers to affiliated entities in a competitive market of influence. For all interviewed leaders, the primary reason for attracting entities to affiliate with IPA is its effectiveness in lobbying. IPA has consistently achieved results, while other organizations have not. On their own, each entity would not be able to accomplish as much as they can by working together within the Institute.

"When IPA became a forum for debate and an effective political force, the entities found themselves compelled to join in to avoid being excluded. They invested in a model that was working." (Agricultural political leader A).

"It is simple: IPA delivers results. It is much more advantageous to be there for what it helps me with than not being there for what it might hinder. The converging issues are much larger and much more important. [...] The entities on their own would certainly not achieve the same results, at least not through republican means." (Agricultural political leader B).

"Success attracted the entities. Everyone realized that the issues were starting to yield positive results. Moreover, the Institute's coordination was good, [in the sense of building internal consensus]. In the end, the Institute began to gain importance." (Industrial political leader A).

"Individually, the entities do not get anywhere in political terms. Even [name of the organization omitted], which has power, money, and resources, reaches the National Congress and has no strength to get anything approved. [...] What we realized is that we all had to acknowledge that we would not be able to influence Brazilian politics by acting alone." (Industrial political leader B).

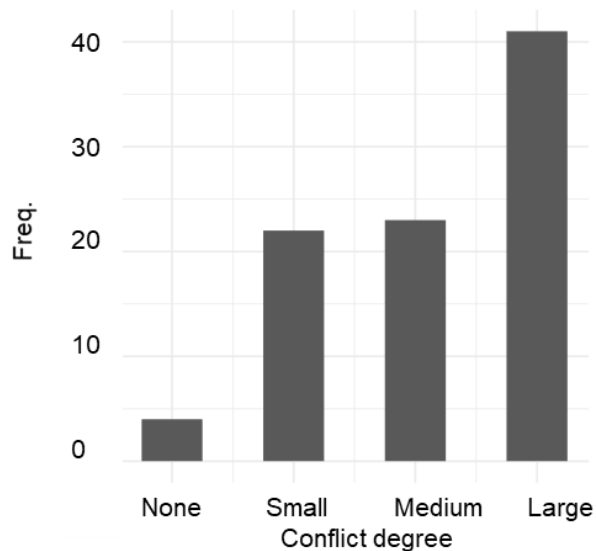
The results presented in Chapter Three support the perceptions shared by the interviewed leaders: IPA lobbying is closely linked to the results agribusiness seeks to achieve in the National Congress. Moreover, even when lobbying on issues that are not cross-cutting to agribusiness, IPA's efforts tend to focus on highly contentious issues, where few entities alone could not achieve the desired outcomes. As shown in Figure 3.6, 41 of the 90 legislative propositions that IPA lobbied and ended assessment in the 55th legislature are highly conflictual, while 23 have an intermediate level of

conflict. Together, these account for 71% of the proposals. Therefore, only a small proportion of the proposals IPA lobbied were of low or no conflict.

In summary, IPA has endured because no other peak entity has been able to effectively manage the divergence among agribusiness segments, building consensus and delivering valuable influence on public policies. Internal conventions and rules have mitigated the potential harm of participation for entities with more extreme preferences. For instance, the commitment to act on transversal issues with the assent of the majority of affiliated entities, along with the non-binding decisions, has prevented the evasion of such entities.

Additionally, the requirement for majority support when new entities seek affiliation, alongside a shared understanding that IPA must limit internal diversity to the minimal degree when seeking to include the most representative and politically relevant entities, ensured that overlapping audiences among affiliates remained minimal. This minimizes internal competition for credit claiming and ensures affiliates' satisfaction.

Figure 3.6 – Degree of conflict in proposals lobbied by IPA.



Source: author's elaboration.

Finally, IPA offers selective benefits to retain its affiliates. The most significant include the possibility of mobilizing the Institute's expertise to advance non-conflictive demands benefiting one or a few segments in agribusiness and utilizing its political network to access key decision-makers at the federal level.

3.6 Final remarks

The Farming Thinking Institute has become the main entity representing agribusiness interests at the federal level. However, this process took at least one decade to complete. Structurally, IPA's emergence, as well as numerous entities representing different productive chains or segments of agribusiness, is a consequence of agricultural modernization under the military regime. This evolution made agribusiness, particularly agriculture, critically dependent on state interventions and macroeconomic performance to stabilize profitability and ensure the urban supply.

In this context, the consequences of the federal government's macroeconomic policy acted as the catalyst for farmers' mobilization. Economic instability became a critical factor for investing in agriculture, especially in more modernized crops, i.e., those dependent on agricultural inputs. The reaction began in the Midwest, where three crops within agro-industrial complexes dominate the regional economy: soybeans, cotton, and cattle. Much of the success of IPA's creation stemmed from two regional entities from the Midwest: APROSOJA/MT and AMPA. Sustained through a quasi-corporatist arrangement, these entities funded IPA's activities and sponsored the inclusion of other segments with smaller organizational capacity or financial resources.

As predicted by the Disturbance Theory, a change in the scenario triggered the farmers' mobilization, but it alone does not fully explain the emergence of IPA. In several previous cases, such as the creation of UDR in the late 1980s or ABAG in the early 1990s, farmers' dissatisfaction with existing entities led to the creation of new ones. The existing entities may have suffered from institutional sclerosis, as in the case of CNA in the 1980s, been captured by a narrow set of interests, as with ABAG, or simply been politically ineffective. Whatever the reason, the response was to create a new entity and abandon the previous ones. The IPA case was no different.

Therefore, the Ecological Theory introduces an important explanatory factor: the influence market. I have incorporated this element into the argument for explaining IPA's emergence, though it was not sufficient to explain the phenomenon alone. While the creation of IPA was a response from APROSOJA/MT and AMPA to the existing entities, particularly the CNA's representational deficit and political ineffectiveness, as well as the cyclical problems with the exchange rate faced by soybean and cotton

farmers, it was the critical resource dependency on state interventions that drove these segments to invest in the uncertain activity of lobbying.

It is not any disturbance in any structural condition of production within any setting of the interest system but rather a specific set of elements working together to explain IPA's creation. The structural elements set the stage for the confluence of interests into one organization: the integration of agriculture into industry made it critically dependent on state interventions, and the concentration of economic relevance into a few products allowed their associations to sustain a peak umbrella organization when it was not attractive to others. These elements also help explain the entrance of entities representing agro-industrial interests into IPA after the Forestry Code Reform in 2012, as the fate of agro-industry is intrinsically linked to agriculture in agro-industrial complexes.

Ultimately, the result stems from the actions of the players involved. On one side are key actors managing existing organizations to conserve their resources; on the other are farmers and industrialists pressuring these organizations to address economic challenges. Together, this dynamic corresponds to the explanatory factor identified as the market of influence in the argument. In the case of IPA, the existing organizations presented representational deficits and political ineffectiveness, which rendered the representation of agribusiness interests – especially on transversal issues – at the federal level inadequate to address the challenges faced by farmers and industrialists at that time.

In addition, a key explanatory factor that emerged from this case study was the role of political entrepreneurs. Without the engagement and resources provided by APROSOJA/MT and AMPA, it is unlikely that IPA would exist. As Salisbury (1969) observed over half a century ago, political entrepreneurs can overcome the central collective action dilemma – rational selfishness. However, to achieve this, they must possess both financial and political capacity, as illustrated by the case of IPA. Without these resources, such initiatives are likely to fail before evolving into interest organizations capable of attracting broader audiences.

Although the explanation derived from this case has limited external validity, it offers valuable guidance for constructing a general theory of interest organization's emergence:

1. Structural elements play a crucial role by defining the standard distribution of utility among actors, as well as the dependence on each other, including

their reliance on the state. This is encapsulated in the critical resource dependency factor;

2. Critical events operate as catalysts for mobilization. These events appear to be a necessary condition because they disrupt the standard distribution of utility, prompting reactions from those disadvantaged to restore the prior balance;
3. Agential factors are equally important as they reveal the battle for representing interests. Not only do organizations compete to preserve their resources – particularly their constituencies – to survive, but these constituencies exert pressure for solutions, occasionally driving the creation of new interest organizations. Within this process, political entrepreneurs play a pivotal role by sustaining the organization while simultaneously competing to attract and consolidate support from their target audiences.

To explain IPA's organizational maintenance, the explanatory factors drawn from the Ecological Theory and lobbying coalition studies have demonstrated strong applicability. The empirical verification revealed that IPA enhanced its internal structure to accommodate conflicting demands from its affiliated entities while preserving the attractiveness of membership. Unlike previous entities that had only a transitory existence or political relevance, IPA has maintained its survival and significance over the past decade, outcompeting all other organizations that struggled for the same audience and political influence.

Following significant internal disagreements, IPA's statute was reformed to equalize the contributions and voting weight of affiliates. Since decisions are made collectively and follow the majority rule, a considerable degree of consensus is required for IPA's actions at the federal level when representing agribusiness interests. Moreover, IPA regulates the number of affiliates, minimizing internal heterogeneity to the extent necessary for retaining substantial political influence. As a result, divergence among affiliated entities regarding decisions taken within IPA is minimal, effectively neutralizing most of the effect of purposive displacement. This arrangement is further reinforced by allowing entities with extreme preferences to opt out of lobbying activities.

To maintain its appeal to affiliates, IPA has developed a mechanism to prevent victories on cross-cutting issues from being appropriated as collective benefits. Membership is restricted to only one entity representing each segment or sector of

agribusiness, thereby reducing internal competition for the same target audience. These single-sector representatives comprise the majority of IPA's affiliates, while the remaining entities have either regional scope or general representation. Consequently, the effect of shared credit claiming is minimal. Furthermore, IPA provides support to affiliated entities with non-conflictive demands, helping them advance their specific agendas at the federal level. This service functions as a classic selective benefit, increasing the value of membership in the organization.

Crafting political agendas for economic sectors has always been a challenging task for peak national organizations due to the heterogeneity of interests. In addition, delivering political influence on such issues is even more difficult. IPA assumed these responsibilities for agribusiness as its core organizational mission. To achieve this, it established regular interaction routines among affiliates, facilitated demand negotiations, provided support to FPA, and coordinated the majority of agribusiness lobbying activities. Consequently, IPA has successfully met the demand for political influence on cross-cutting issues in agribusiness, a success that has positioned it as one of the most powerful interest organizations in the country.

On theoretical grounds, the explanatory power of the argument regarding organizational maintenance indicates several critical elements in analyzing the survival of interest organizations. The most significant factor is the organization's ability to address the unmet demand within the interest system it operates. For entities representing heterogeneous segments, this presents a significant challenge, requiring institutional resilience and flexibility to develop mechanisms for conflict management, demand accommodation, and coordination of affiliates' participation in lobbying strategies.

However, achieving political influence on transversal issues is vulnerable to the adverse effects of shared credit claiming, which can undermine peak organizations. As a result, shared benefits alone may not be enough unless accompanied by selective benefits. Even when the problem of shared credit claiming is minimized and selective benefits are provided, a peak organization may still struggle to survive if it fails to address the issue of purposive displacement. For this objective, two strategies are viable: controlling internal heterogeneity or adopting non-binding collective decisions, which allows affiliates with extreme preferences to opt out of actions that would conflict with their own affiliates' preferences.

4 SHAPING POLICIES IN THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

I got tired of attending lunches at the IPA's headquarters with former President Temer, former President Bolsonaro, and several ministers [...]."

– Industrial political leader, interview excerpt

The influence of interest organizations on policymaking is a highly controversial question in Political Science, given the critical implications for representative regimes and the current literature's inability to offer robust solutions (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009; BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998). It is well established that certain segments of society face fewer barriers to associating, raising resources, and acting politically to secure advantages (CESÁRIO, 2016; DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; HOJNACKI et al., 2015; SANTOS, 2011; BERKHOUT; LOWERY, 2010; GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a).

Determining the returns these privileged segments gain from their investments in influencing public policy and evaluating the impacts of these advantages on the population's utility curve is an essential step in addressing the problem and proposing solutions. However, answers to these questions remain far from a consensus (BURSTEIN, 2019; HOJNACKI et al., 2015; BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009). This chapter seeks to contribute to the literature by evaluating the influence of agribusiness lobbying in the Brazilian National Congress and testing the effects of moderating factors such as counterlobbying, public opinion, and the degree of conflict.

Studies on interest organizations in Brazil are limited (MANCUSO et al., 2024; RIBEIRO, 2019; SANTOS et al., 2017). The most developed research area concerns industrialists' lobbying success and influence (BAIRD; FERNANDES, 2014; SILVA, 2012; SANTOS, 2011; MANCUSO, 2007). Consequently, analyzing the lobbying influence of one of Brazil's most important economic segments also provides the additional benefit of addressing another gap in the literature. This chapter explores two research questions: (1) How does agribusiness lobbying affect its lobbying success in the Brazilian National Congress? (2) Can counterlobbying, public opinion opposition, and conflict degree limit agribusiness influence?

Although all theoretical perspectives on lobbying influence predict a positive relationship between lobbying efforts and legislative outcomes, I opted to design the hypothesis based on the elitist perspective, as it provides a more explicit explanation

of the mechanism linking interest organizations and decision-makers while also predicting larger effects from business lobbying (STIGLER, 1971; HALL; DEARDORFF, 2006). The hypotheses concerning moderating factors are grounded in Pluralism and Neopluralism. The first perspective emphasizes counterlobbying as a mechanism for balancing lobbying influence (SALISBURY, 1975; TRUMAN, 1951). Neopluralism highlights the role of public opinion in holding decision-makers accountable in democratic regimes and the impact of conflict in fostering participation, reducing information asymmetry, and amplifying public opinion's influence (RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018; MAHONEY, 2007b).

To test these hypotheses, I collected data on lobbying efforts and legislative outcomes in collaboration with the Farming Thinking Institute, the most prominent agribusiness interest organization operating in the National Congress. An executive representative from the organization provided information on lobbying success, lobbying efforts, counterlobbying, public opinion, and the Executive Branch's position for each legislative proposition the organization engaged with during the 55th Legislature. Using logistic regression for multivariate analysis, I examined the predictive effects of key variables on achieving significant degrees of lobbying success.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. Beyond this introduction, the next section outlines the theoretical foundations of the group-approach and a concise literature review. The subsequent section details the methodological framework and addresses the challenges in predicting agribusiness lobbying success. Finally, the findings are discussed in the fourth section, followed by the conclusions.

4.1 The group-approach in the study of political influence

Any expert researching interest groups inevitably encounters a lack of a structured model to comprehensively explain their political effects. Despite a century of debate and numerous hypotheses, no theory has emerged yet (SALISBURY, 1975; BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; HOJNACKI et al., 2012; BURSTEIN, 2019). Instead, most researchers, explicitly or implicitly, align with one of five major traditions of thought: Pluralism, Elitism, Corporatism, Neopluralism, and Neo-Corporatism (CLIVE et al., 2004).

Corporatist and neo-corporatist approaches will not be discussed here, as they stem from fundamentally different interest group systems. In these frameworks,

interest representation is centralized on formal and regulated institutions, which enjoy guaranteed access to decision-making arenas (SCHMITTER, 1974). From this perspective, interest groups are expected to collaborate in policymaking under the oversight of the state rather than competing for access and influence. Consequently, the research agendas associated with these approaches diverge significantly from the remaining traditions (SIAROFF, 1999; LEHMBRUCH, 2003).

The bulk of research on interest group influence originates in the US, where a pluralistic interest group system has prevailed since the 19th century (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; HOJNACKI et al., 2012). In this context, where interest representation is barely regulated by lobbying and campaign finance laws, interest groups actively compete to attain their policy preferences. As a result, the question of “who gets what, when, and why” has become a pivotal issue for the legitimacy of the US liberal democracy to both daily political news and Political Science, dating back to at least the early 20th century (BENTLEY, 1908).

US politics has provided fertile ground for the emergence of “theories” concerning the influence of interest groups. Partisans of Pluralism and Elitism have sought to explain public policies as either the product of group competition (TRUMAN, 1951; LATHAM, 1952) or domination (SCHATTSCHEIDER, 1935, 1960; OLSON, 1965). These debates have significantly expanded the available literature on the subject (SALISBURY, 1975; BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998). While social scientists disputed the ascendancy of their perspectives, criticizing the limits of opposing “theories”, they uncovered critical insights to understand the puzzle of interest groups, many of which were later synthesized within the neopluralist approach.

Neopluralism emerged in the late 1990s, primarily in the US (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a; LOWERY; GRAY, 2004), but it also incorporated findings from other contexts, such as the European Union and European countries, to construct a more comprehensive theory of interest organizations¹⁰ (MAHONEY, 2007b; KLÜVER,

¹⁰ The concept of interest group has long been a contentious topic among experts (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; BURSTEIN, 2019). The organizational approach confines the term to a restricted number of organizations – those based on individual membership (JORDAN; HALPIN; MALONEY, 2004; BEYERS; EISING; MALONEY, 2008). In contrast, the functional approach adopts a broader definition, encompassing all organizations that seek to influence public policies without competing in elections (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a; BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009). The distinction between the organizational and functional perspectives has proven to be theoretically significant, as most organizations involved in policymaking are not membership-based (SALISBURY, 1984). Indeed, even in contemporary studies, much of the research on the influence of interest groups includes a substantial number of non-associative organizations (BURSTEIN, 2019). Given that this debate only gained prominence as a critical issue in the late 20th century, I employ the term ‘interest group’ when discussing Pluralism and

2011). Scholars within this tradition acknowledged the theoretical limitations identified by critics of Pluralism but did not entirely reject its foundations. Instead, neopluralists sought to understand the conditional effects of political context and institutional frameworks on the behavior of interest organizations, including their influence on policymaking (LOWERY, 2007b; MAHONEY, 2008; KLÜVER; BRAUN; BEYERS, 2015).

This research draws on and tests hypotheses derived from these three approaches – Pluralism, Elitism, and Neopluralism – to examine the influence of interest organizations on policymaking. The following paragraphs will delve into each of these approaches, highlighting their core concepts and relationships among explanatory elements.

4.1.1 Pluralist perspective

Different literature reviews on interest groups acknowledge Truman's *The Governmental Process* as the most important work in the pluralist approach to the subject (SALISBURY, 1975; BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998). Even elitist scholars, such as Schattschneider (1960), Olson (1965), and Lowi (1969), recognize the relevance of this reference to Pluralism as they directly confront Truman's propositions. Therefore, I will use this study as the primary reference to derive hypotheses regarding Pluralism.

The first point to highlight is that the early literature on interest groups is remarkably recognized for its theoretical vagueness (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; CLIVE et al., 2004), except for works by economists like Olson (1965). As a

Elitism, and 'interest organization' when referring to Neopluralism and more recent studies. Recognizing the relevance of this distinction for advancing the research, I align with previous recommendations to use the term 'interest organizations' when analyzing organizations that aim to influence public policies. This broader concept captures a wide range of actors involved in the policymaking process, as the narrow definition of 'interest group' often excludes significant contributors (BEYERS; EISING; MALONEY, 2008; BURSTEIN, 2019). For this study, I define interest organizations as entities that meet the following criteria: (I) they possess some degree of organizational structure; (II) they are not ephemeral, such as spontaneous mass protests; (III) they seek to influence decision-makers; (IV) they do not compete in elections. These organizations may be governmental or non-governmental entities, such as executive agencies or labor unions. In the case of governmental organizations, their involvement in influencing public policy must target external decision-makers, such as a ministry representative lobbying decision-makers in Congress or a city delegate petitioning the federal government for project approval. Importantly, the distinction between associative and non-associative entities – such as universities or professional associations – and between profit-seeking and non-profit organizations, such as companies and NGOs, is irrelevant to this analysis. What matters is their engagement in political debates and their potential to shape public policies.

consequence, hypotheses often depend on how the reader interprets these writings. The fact that critics of Pluralism frequently drew biased conclusions from these works exposes this risk (CLIVE et al., 2004). While I approach Truman's work aware of this risk, it is not less dangerous. Hence, the hypothesis presented here is confined to the core of the pluralist tradition, which is widely accepted among scholars.

The idea of a society in which numerous groups compete for power is central to the state-building process in the US and dates back to the Federalist Papers (HAMILTON et al., 2009). In the ninth and tenth essays, Madison discusses the risks of factionalism for the Confederation, mentioning lessons from the small republics of medieval Italy. He concludes that interests will associate and enter the political sphere as long as freedom rights endure.

As liberty is a paramount value in a republic, Madison argues that the only way to annulate political instability from factionalism is by designing counter-majoritarian institutions. This involves limiting the majority's power by protecting minority rights, creating multiple access points to the state, and veto players in policymaking, besides installing a representative regime across a large territory – thus incorporating as many factions as possible into politics. Since no single faction can dominate in a diverse society, the dynamics of cooperation and competition among factions will prevent any one group from unilaterally exercising power.

Ultimately, the Federalist influence on the design of the US political system (HAMILTON et al., 2009), along with the strong associative tradition of that country (TOCQUEVILLE, 1994), created a fertile environment for the emergence of Pluralism. For example, when Truman (1951) argues that any unorganized group can organize itself in the face of a menace and exert a countervailing force in policymaking, he is evoking the idea of overlapping freedom rights and counter-majoritarian institutions. More than just reflecting ordinary perceptions about US political dynamics, Truman's work provides a broad framework to connect individual interests to political stability.

Beginning with collective action dilemmas, *The Governmental Process* aligns with the Modernization Theory found in Bentley's *The Process of Government* (1908). The Social Disturbance Theory predicts that people or organizations will act as a group when facing a tangible threat to their shared preferences regarding rights, values, and goods. As long as this menace persists, collective action will institutionalize into an organized interest group.

According to this theory, organizing a group may be perceived by some individuals or organizations as a threat to their own preferences, potentially triggering the formation of opposing interest groups. Truman (1951) explained the significant rise of new interest groups in the 1950s US as a result of this chain reaction.

Thus, any preference can become an interest – that is, entering the collective domain and getting organized - if necessary, in a liberal democracy in which: (I) individuals and organizations are free to communicate, assemble, and associate; (II) the decision-making process is transparent and accessible through multiple channels (III) the media widely informs the public. In such a system, political decisions reflect a balance of competing interests. In other words, the dynamics of pressure and counter-pressure yield balanced decisions. This understanding leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: The lobbying success of agribusiness decreases as counterlobbying increases.

Truman (1951) also introduces the idea of institutionalized shared beliefs, which he calls the “rules of the game”. These rules act as a constraining force on organized interests in favor of unorganized ones. The “rules of the game” represent a fundamental political consensus embedded in political institutions, such as values of human dignity and mass participation in the selection of political leaders. In liberal democracies, political systems are designed to hold representatives accountable to their constituencies through regular, competitive, and fair elections. As a result, majoritarian preferences in each constituency will limit the decisional scope of representatives.

From this logic, it can be inferred that public opinion, as the representative of the broad unorganized interests, will constrain the decisional scope of representatives. Given this somewhat unclear conclusion, the influence of interest groups shall be significantly limited when confronted by public opinion. This moderating role of public opinion is better articulated in Neopluralism, and a more detailed analysis of this aspect will follow in the corresponding subsection.

The elitist critique following *The Governmental Process* frontally attacked the idea of a balance in the US system of interest groups (SCHATTSCHEIDER, 1960), the capacity of potential interests to mobilize and organize, and the effectiveness of diffuse interests pressure to balance the competition (OLSON, 1965). However, less

attention was paid to the rules of the game and public opinion, largely due to the prevailing Theory of Rational Ignorance at the time (DOWNS, 1957). While elitist scholars contributed with valuable insights to the study of interest groups, they also failed to offer a consistent theory due to theoretical biases and methodological limitations (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; CLIVE et al., 2004), as the next subsection will present.

4.1.2 Elitist perspective

Elitism decisively turned the tables against Pluralism with Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965). Although the elitist approach dates back at least to Schattschneider (1935), it only gained clear theoretical delimitation with Olson's work. Before this pivotal contribution to the elitist perspective, Schattschneider had already pointed to the domination of private interests in a key federal case (SCHATTSCHEIDER, 1935) and the overwhelming presence of business and upper-class interest groups in the US national sphere (SCHATTSCHEIDER, 1960).

According to Olson (1965), the empirical bias toward business in the US interest group system stems from individual rational behavior. There are two main reasons why business interest groups outnumber public interest ones. First, individuals pursuing a collective interest – one that exhibits characteristics of a public good – face a setting in which non-cooperation is less costly. In other words, because it is impossible to exclude anyone from enjoying a public good, even those who did not contribute to achieving it can still benefit. Meanwhile, only those who collaborated bore the cost of securing goods. As a result, there are no rational incentives to cooperate.

Second, the larger the number of members in a group, the weaker the rational incentives to contribute to collective goals. Small groups can enforce cooperation through coercion since noncompliance is more easily noticed and punished. In contrast, in large groups, the dynamics shift drastically – for instance, if one hundred out of one thousand members do not comply with the collective goals, their absence goes largely unnoticed. Consequently, larger groups face greater challenges in mobilization and collective action.

Business interest groups tend to be highly specialized, with relatively few companies competing within the same sector. This structure provides strong incentives to associate and seek political benefits. A similar pattern applies to professional

associations with relatively few members, such as doctors and judges. However, professions with vast membership – such as managers, drivers, and teachers – encounter the same collective action dilemma as public interest groups: a few individuals may contribute to securing a collective benefit, while the majority enjoy the outcome without participating. As a result, these groups have a lower probability of mobilizing and organizing compared to business interests.

Public interest groups or private interests involving large populations tend to organize under coercion – such as through mandatory affiliation and contributions, as seen in corporatist systems – or by offering selective incentives, which provide individual benefits to cooperative members. Although Olson (1965) acknowledges that for a small number of individuals, moral obligations may play a significant role in cooperation with collective goals, he argues that the majority behave in an economically rational manner. Consequently, large societal interest groups are rare, and when they do form, they operate sub-optimally due to low cooperation levels.

The classical Theory of Regulation further reinforced the elitist perspective on interest groups influence (STIGLER, 1971). From an economic standpoint, this theory models the interaction between elected politicians and business interest groups based on the expected utility of each actor's decision. Given that voters are rationally ignorant about the behavior of their representatives – meaning they do not closely monitor them (DOWNS, 1957) – the main strategy of elected politicians for reelection is to accumulate as many resources as possible to fund their campaigns.

On the other hand, business interest groups control a significant share of these resources. Since politicians affect corporate profits, and private economic actors guide their decisions by profit maximization, business interest groups have strong incentives to exchange electorally valuable assets (e.g., money, information, manpower, etc.) for favorable policies, even at the expense of public interest. In this model, elected officials trade policymaking influence for electoral resources to maximize their chances of reelection.

These two elitist theories lead to conclusions about the influence of interest groups that directly oppose those of Pluralism: special interests¹¹ capture government

¹¹ This is a common concept in economic approaches to interest groups (BEYERS; EISING; MALONEY, 2008). It refers to an associative organization of individuals or entities that share preferences for collective benefits attainable by influencing public policy (GROSSMAN; HELPMAN, 2001). Such interest groups face fewer challenges in collective action due to their small and restricted membership (OLSON, 1965).

for their own benefit to the detriment of society. Consequently, interest group competition is neither balanced nor capable of producing balanced public policies. This logic yields the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a strong association between agribusiness lobbying volume and its lobbying success.

The Pluralism response to these theories was swift but ultimately insufficient to curb their influence on interest group studies. Critics challenged both the assumptions underpinning these theories and their predicted outcomes. For instance, pluralists contested the primacy of economic incentives in driving cooperation, arguing that moral and social benefits from collective action are equally significant and that political entrepreneurs play a critical role in mobilization by assuming organizational costs (SALISBURY, 1969).

Moreover, the Theory of Rational Ignorance – already contested in debates on constituency behavior by the incorporation of sociological and psychological explanatory variables (CAMPBELL et al., 1960) – began to lose traction in the 1970s. As a result, the Theory of Regulation also declined in influence, as it failed to consistently predict policy outcomes (POSNER, 1974; BECKER, 1983). In the end, the study of interest groups, mired in methodological and theoretical challenges, gradually lost prominence in the decades following the rise of the elitist perspective (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998).

4.1.3 Neopluralist perspective

After nearly three decades of limited production, interest group studies regained scholarly attention in the late 1990s (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; HOJNACKI et al., 2012). Challenging the assumption of an inevitable dominance of special interests, this new wave of research revisited the pluralist perspective to develop models capable of predicting the behavior of interest organizations (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996a; HEINZ, 1993). Some scholars have referred to this renewed perspective as Neopluralism (LOWERY; GRAY, 2004).

Despite the lack of consensus on the precise emergence of Neopluralism or its leading representatives (LOWERY; GRAY, 2004; MCFARLAND, 2007), a key

distinguishing feature of studies under this label is their emphasis on the context in which each policy dispute takes place. This includes the design of political institutions (MAHONEY, 2008), issue characteristics (KLÜVER; BRAUN; BEYERS, 2015), socio-economic environment (GRAY; LOWERY, 1996b), and political dynamics (GRAY et al., 2005).

Unlike the perspectives discussed earlier, Neopluralism lacks broad theoretical studies that directly inform the hypotheses tested here. Instead, a wide range of empirical investigations has introduced new insights into longstanding debates, necessitating reference to multiple scholars and works in this discussion.

One key moderating factor of lobbying influence is the degree of conflict among stakeholders (MAHONEY, 2007b). When there is broad consensus on an issue, interest organizations can influence policymakers more easily than when they are engaged in fierce competition with opposing groups. The underlying mechanism is informational asymmetry, which affects the ability of decision-makers to anticipate how their choices will impact their chances of reelection.

A high level of conflict not only signals policymakers that organized interests hold divergent preferences but also draws public attention and stimulates citizen participation. As a result, policymakers operate within a broader decisional scope than in contexts where the dominant interest points clearly in one direction. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: The greater the degree of conflict, the weaker the effect of agribusiness lobbying on its lobbying success.

Public opinion is another critical factor moderating the lobbying effect (RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018). When a mobilized majority in society pushes public opinion in a particular direction, organizations lobbying for the same position benefit from this diffuse pressure. Public opinion mobilization constrains the decisional scope of policymakers by increasing the electoral costs of noncompliance.

Here, the key mechanism is electoral accountability. Elected officials depend on the support of their constituents to remain in office. When public opinion is mobilized, it signals the salience of the issue to decision-makers, increasing the risk of electoral punishment for those who act against the majority's preference. Consequently,

lobbying efforts that contradict public opinion are unlikely to be effective. This reasoning translates into the following hypothesis:

H4: The effect of agribusiness lobbying on its lobbying success is weaker when public opinion is opposed.

As discussed in previous sections, both Pluralism and Elitism assume that decision-makers are rational actors primarily motivated by reelection, yet largely neutral regarding policy preferences. In other words, these theories expect policymakers to support the majority preference of their constituencies regardless of their own ideological leanings. However, this assumption is difficult to sustain, especially given that decision-makers are elected precisely because of their policy stances (or those of their parties).

Elections and political parties serve as filters that pre-select candidates for decision-making positions. As a result, policymakers enter office with predefined policy preferences, meaning they are predisposed to either support or reject certain issues even before they reach the political agenda. For this reason, interest group scholars were initially puzzled when Bauer, Pool, and Dexter (1963) found that interest organizations tend to work closely with decision-makers who already share their views rather than attempting to persuade their opponents.

From this perspective, lobbying opponents may represent a misallocation of valuable resources, whereas supporting allies can yield greater returns (HALL; DEARDORFF, 2006). Influencing the preferences of decision-makers who are already near the stance the interest organization desires is far more feasible than attempting to shift them dramatically. Thus, policymakers' preferences play a crucial role in any study of interest organization influence on policymaking.

4.2 Powerful but not omnipotent

A quick consultation of the current literature on the influence of interest organizations reveals that many issues identified in the past remain hindering knowledge accumulation (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998). However, as noted by Hojnacki et al. (2012) nearly a decade ago, recent studies have introduced important new evidence that improves the existing theories outlined in the previous section.

One of the most significant findings is the consistent evidence of the lobbying influence of interest organizations. Among 16 articles published in high-impact journals between 2011 and 2023, 12 indicated a positive effect of lobbying, while only four showed no effect¹², even when considering different institutional contexts, such as those of the European Union and the United States.

However, these studies vary greatly from one another, with no shared theoretical guidance or methodological approach. For instance, some research includes key issue variables, such as the degree of conflict or complexity (DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; RASMUSSEN, 2015), while many others do not (GILENS; PAGE, 2014; KOCH; SCHULZ-KNAPPE, 2021). Some use the number of groups involved as a proxy for lobbying volume (KLÜVER, 2011), others use the number of employees (DE BRUYCKER; BEYERS, 2019), lobbying expenditures (STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020), or the frequency of key lobbying actions (MCKAY, 2012). Some studies model the relationship by considering the counterlobbying effect, using net lobbying expenditures or the net number of interest organizations on an issue (GRASSE; HEIDBREDE, 2011), but most do not. Ultimately, much of the variation in results can be attributed to the factors included in the analysis and their operationalization, particularly since most studies are observational.

Despite these challenges, there are some notable similarities. All three studies that incorporated the degree of conflict found the same result: the greater the conflict, the smaller the lobbying effect (RASMUSSEN, 2015; DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; DÜR; MATEO, 2014). This may be due to counterlobbying effects balancing influence, the reduction of informational asymmetry by increasing the amount of information provided by interest organizations, or an increase in rival administrative subsidies as new interest organizations become involved in issue discussions. All these hypotheses are plausible and may even occur simultaneously, though no study has tested them concerning the degree of conflict.

Another area where results are increasingly consistent is the relationship between lobbying effects and public opinion or media salience. Both factors appear to

¹² The reviewed articles are: DEBRUYCKER; BEYERS, 2019; DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; DÜR; MATEO, 2014; GILENS; PAGE, 2014; GRASSE; HEIDBREDE, 2011; GROSE et al., 2022; KLÜVER, 2011; KLÜVER; PICKUP, 2019; KOCH; SCHULZ-KNAPPE, 2021; LEWIS, 2013; MCKAY, 2012; MCKAY, 2020; RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018; RASMUSSEN, 2015; RICHARDSON; JOHN, 2012; STEVENS; DEBRUYCKER, 2020.

be strongly correlated. When counter-majoritarian lobbying faces heightened media salience, the lobbying effect diminishes, even reaching null results (DE BRUYCKER; BEYERS, 2019; RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018). Conversely, the increase in media salience or public opinion support boosts the effect of majoritarian lobbying. In both cases, the main mechanism is likely electoral accountability, though no study has explored this aspect in depth.

Incorporating public opinion or media salience factors into the analysis introduced new challenges. A critical consequence is that, unless the distinction between majoritarian and counter-majoritarian preferences is addressed, the results may lack meaningful interpretations. For example, Dür and Mateo (2014) found a positive association between media salience and the lobbying effect of diffuse interests in the case of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, while Rasmussen (2015), studying business lobbying cases, found negative effects of media salience on lobbying influence. These findings are not contradictory but highlight the importance of considering both majoritarian and counter-majoritarian preferences in the analysis.

Regarding the effects of issue complexity on lobbying influence, the few recent studies that have incorporated this variable have yielded mixed results. For instance, Koch and Schulz-Knappe (2021), surveying lobbyists in Germany, found no effect of issue complexity on perceived influence. On the other hand, Rasmussen (2015), analyzing the influence of business interest organizations on the European Union through comparative case studies, found that higher issue complexity was associated with greater lobbying success for business organizations.

These mixed findings are not robust enough to dismiss the relevance of issue complexity in predictive models of lobbying influence. Therefore, questions regarding the cost of informational supply in complex issues remain unanswered. While the importance of information for lobbying influence is widely accepted (KOCH; SCHULZ-KNAPPE, 2021; DE BRUYCKER, 2016; BERNHAGEN; DÜR; MARSHALL, 2015), the factors that affect the informational asymmetry mechanism remain underexplored.

More definitive are the findings on the effect of the *status quo* on lobbying success. Four studies included this variable in their analysis: three found negative effects (STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020; RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018; MCKAY, 2012), while one found no effect (KLÜVER, 2011). Despite the pluralist argument that the *status quo* represents a balance of conflicting interests, overturning it has proven more challenging than a mere question of power balance. In fact, policy

changes tend to empower or undermine certain interests, and institutional designs perform a critical role in setting agenda costs and diluting power among veto players (BAUMGARTNER; JONES, 1991; KINGDON, 1984). However, these factors are seldom explored in studies of the influence of interest organizations on policymaking (DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; RASMUSSEN, 2015; MAHONEY, 2007b).

In summary, recent literature on the influence of interest organizations shows progress compared to the significant ambiguity observed by Baumgartner and Leech (1998) in the two last decades of the 20th century and reinforces the trends identified by Hojnacki et al. (2012) in the 2000s: a growing consensus that lobbying significantly affects policymaking. Moreover, issue characteristics are important for explaining lobbying success and failure, beyond simply the volume of resources the organizations have or the number of organizations involved in the decision-making process. Finally, contrary to the pessimistic predictions of elitist studies, the influence of interest organizations is not limitless. It faces rival forces such as counterlobbying, public opinion, preferences of decision-makers, public bureaucracy, and the institutional design of decision-making processes.

4.3 Measuring lobbying influence

The first step in measuring the agribusiness lobbying influence in the Brazilian National Congress is defining the empirical scope of the research. This involves selecting an interest organization that represents agribusiness interests in the Legislative Branch and delimiting the period of analysis. Both decisions are critical for calculating lobbying success and measuring lobbying volume.

For this study, I selected the Farming Thinking Institute as the reference organization. As established in the previous chapter, this organization has become one of the most important advocates of agribusiness causes in the Federal Legislative Branch. Closely linked to the powerful Parliamentary Front of Agriculture, the Institute serves to aggregate interests from agribusiness associations and align them with congressional members.

The 55th Legislature (from January 2015 to January 2019) was chosen as the period of analysis due to empirical limitations. Although the Institute was founded in 2011, during the 54th Legislature, its administrative records for that year, and the first half of 2012, were irregular. In this early phase, the Institute focused on setting up

administrative procedures and recruiting personnel. After institutionalizing in 2012, the quality of its administrative records improved, although they were not perfect for this research. As a result, data on the proposals the Institute lobbied during the 54th Legislature could not be included. Additionally, gathering reliable data on lobbying volume for that period would present significant challenges due to the considerable effort required from the key informant to record such experiences.

The 55th Legislature is particularly noteworthy due to key events, such as the deterioration of the government coalition in 2015, the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in December 2016, and the formation of a new government and legislative coalition in 2017. Furthermore, President Michel Temer, the former Vice-President, maintained strong relations with most members of Congress but faced corruption allegations that nearly led to his impeachment.

The 56th Legislature was also atypical. President Jair Bolsonaro struggled to maintain a steady coalition in the Legislative Branch and governed with a minority for much of his term. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020 in Brazil, triggered profound changes in congressional operations. Key changes included the creation of remote legislative procedures, the deactivation of permanent committees, and the assessment of proposals related to the pandemic only. Regular legislative operations only gradually returned after November 2021. For these reasons, the 56th Legislature was excluded from the analysis.

Thus, only the 55th Legislature provides the best scenario for analyzing the agribusiness lobbying influence. I merged three datasets to identify the proposals that concluded legislative evaluation during this period. The first dataset was provided by IPA in August 2023, containing the proposals it monitored and/or lobbied during the 55th, 56th, and 57th Legislatures. This database is highly accurate for proposals monitored from 2020 onward, but it is less reliable for the 55th Legislature due to a migration of the IPA's informational system in 2019, which led to some data losses, especially regarding proposals that had concluded legislative evaluation before the migration.

The second dataset comes from Mancuso et al. (2024), who collected data on proposals monitored by IPA and its position during the 55th Legislature. During that period, IPA released analyses of proposals affecting agribusiness weekly on its website, informing other organizations that could potentially support agribusiness causes in the Legislative Branch.

The third dataset is from Ribeiro (2019), whose pioneering study on agribusiness lobbying success in the Brazilian Congress resulted in a database of proposals that IPA worked on from 2011 to 2014 and concluded congressional evaluation. Although this dataset is valuable, it has limitations due to the lack of an informational system and clear administrative procedures at the beginning of IPA's existence.

After merging these databases, I reorganized the data so that each entry represented a single proposition, prioritizing the most recent information when there were discrepancies in IPA's stance across databases. For proposals presented up to 2018, I added the conclusion date from the information available on the House of Representatives and/or Federal Senate websites.

From 2012 to 2023, IPA monitored over 3,000 legislative proposals, but only 373 concluded congressional evaluation during the 55th Legislature. Most proposals are still under congressional review. I removed moot proposals – those rejected due to the approval of a similar alternative proposition – and eliminated proposals that IPA did not lobby, based on the key informant data. This left 90 proposals for final analysis. The methodological implications of this limited dataset will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1 Measuring the dependent variable

Lobbying success refers to the degree of alignment between the preference of an interest organization and the outcome of the decision-making process (BERNHAGEN; DÜR; MARSHALL, 2014; MAHONEY, 2007b). This is a descriptive concept; it does not determine whether the outcome was directly caused by the organization's lobbying efforts but rather reflects the extent to which the outcome matches the organization's goals.

The operationalization of this concept in the literature generally follows two approaches: the attributed success method and the preference attainment method. The first approach involves asking an agent, typically a lobbyist – who has privileged information about the process – to assess how much the outcome reflects the organization's preference. This data is usually collected via surveys, with the advantage of gathering insider knowledge, such as changes in the organization's preferences throughout the process. However, as a subjective measure, it is

susceptible to social desirability bias – lobbyists may either overstate their success to demonstrate their value or understate it to maintain the stealth of their activities.

The second method provides an objective measure of lobbying success. In this case, the researcher identifies the organization's preference by analyzing public communications or consulting insiders (e.g., journalists, experts, or public officials). The researcher then compares the outcome to the organization's preference to determine the level of success. While this method removes the social desirability bias, it requires a large amount of data to produce ordinal measures. Additionally, ordinal measures introduce measurement errors due to the difficulty of classifying outcomes into close ordinal categories.

In the present study, the lobbying success variable was operationalized using the attributed success method. A key informant from the Farming Thinking Institute, possessing extensive knowledge of the organization's operations during the 55th Legislature, collaborated with the research. This individual completed a self-administered form, which included the acronym and number of each proposition, its summary, the legislative outcome, the author along with their party and state, and the IPA's position (favorable or contrary). For each proposition under study, the informant was asked the following question:

Question 01: *How much do you believe the legislative outcome for the mentioned proposition [in the form header] reflected the agribusiness demands represented by the Farming Thinking Institute?*

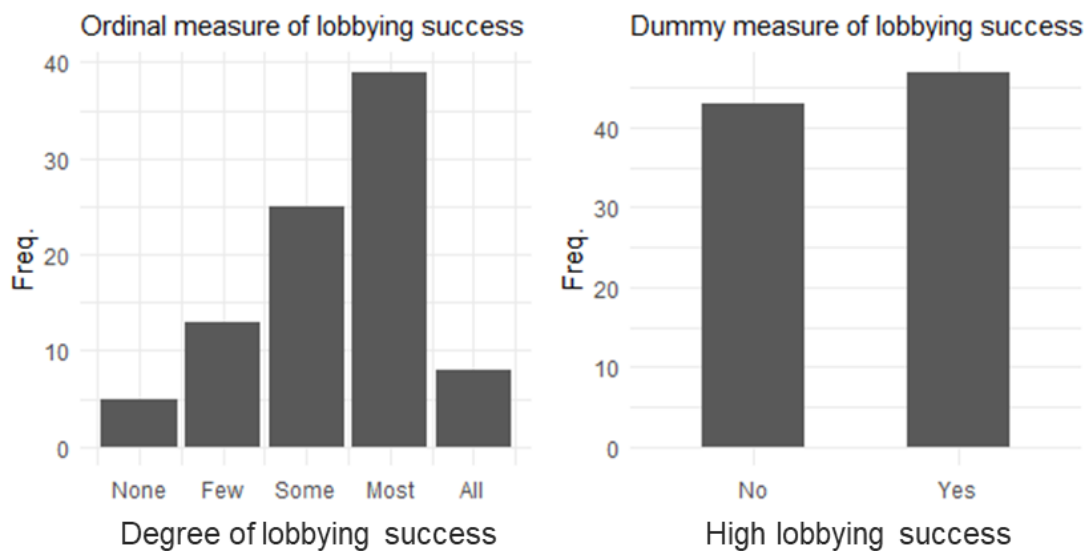
Options: *No demands were covered; A few demands were covered; Some demands were covered; Most of the demands were covered; All demands were covered.*

Figure 4.1 presents the frequency distribution of the lobbying success variable. The first graph shows the ordinal measure, with frequencies in each category constrained by the overall limits of the dataset. This distribution does not permit the use of ordinal logistic regression or multivariate logistic regression due to insufficient cases in each category. Therefore, I transformed the variable into a dummy. Given the research focus on extreme cases of influence, I categorized the variable into two groups: those with low lobbying success (none, few, and some) and those with high

success (most and all). The resulting dummy variable is balanced, with nearly equal observations in each group, as shown in the second graph of Figure 4.1.

In terms of validity, the ordinal measure created by the attributed success method employed here represents a significant advancement over the traditional dummy variable generated through the preference attainment method, commonly used in Brazilian lobbying studies (RIBEIRO, 2019; SANTOS et al., 2015; SANTOS, 2011; MANCUSO, 2007). As seen in Figure 4.1, extreme values in the ordinal measure are rare, meaning that a dummy variable based on the preference attainment method would generate considerable measurement error, likely biased toward overestimating success.

Figure 4.1 – Frequency of lobbying success in ordinal and dummy measures.



Source: author's elaboration.

On the other hand, the ordinal measure could be criticized for its susceptibility to social desirability bias. However, the evidence suggests otherwise. Table 4.1 presents the outcomes for both methods, showing no significant differences overall. The key patterns of lobbying success remain consistent across both approaches.

First, the outcome distribution for proposals that were converted into law is not substantially different between the two methods. Under the preference attainment method, eleven proposals that IPA was favorable were converted into law. In the ordinal measure, having the most demands covered is the most frequent outcome for these proposals, while outcomes with a low degree of success are rare.

Regarding proposals that IPA was contrary but were ultimately converted into law, the results differ somewhat. While the preference attainment method generated three such cases – representing concrete losses for agribusiness – the attributed success method did not produce any cases of complete failure. Instead, cases with a low degree of success may account for this difference, reinforcing previous findings that the IPA’s lobbying strategy during the 54th Legislature was largely focused on modifying proposals with a higher likelihood of becoming law (RIBEIRO, 2019).

Table 4.1 – Lobbying success measures by method type.

| Dummy measure under the preference attainment method | | |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| IPA’s Position | Converted into law | |
| | No | Yes |
| Contrary | 27 | 3 |
| Favorable | 46 | 11 |
| Missing | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 76 | 14 |
| Ordinal measure under the attributed success method | | |
| Degree of success | No | Yes |
| None | 5 | 0 |
| Few | 12 | 1 |
| Some | 23 | 2 |
| Most | 30 | 9 |
| All | 6 | 2 |
| Total | 76 | 14 |

Source: author’s elaboration.

The differences between the two methods are more pronounced for proposals that were not converted into law, though the core patterns of lobbying success remain unchanged. In both methods, disappointments – when IPA was favorable and the proposition was not approved – are the most common outcome. Again, extreme values of success or failure are rare. Consequently, the number of observations classified as clear disappointments or reliefs (when IPA was contrary and the proposition was not approved) under the attributed success method contrasts with the results obtained through the preference attainment method.

The sum of the highest degrees of success (most and all) in the ordinal measure is 36, which exceeds the number of proposals that the IPA opposed and were not converted into law (27). The remaining cases correspond to disappointments, respectively, 46 under the preference attainment method and 40 under the alternative method (the sum of the lowest degrees of success). Ultimately, the occurrence of

disappointments or reliefs largely depends on the extent to which IPA supports or opposes each proposition, making it difficult to directly compare the outcomes of both methods.

Overall, the different approaches to measuring lobbying success yielded similar results, suggesting that the social desirability bias in the attributed success method is not as strong as the literature indicates. This issue appears to be more pronounced when the attribution method is used to measure influence. When lobbying influence and lobbying success are measured separately, respondents seem to struggle more with liking the two, potentially biasing measures of lobbying influence. This presents a methodological question that should be explored in future research. For now, the evidence suggests that the ordinal measures under the attributed success method provide a more valid measure of lobbying success than the dummy measure under the preference attainment method.

4.3.2 Measuring the variable of interest

As previously mentioned, there is no consensus on how to measure lobbying. The literature employs a variety of variables and proxies, including lobbying expenditures (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009), the frequency of key activities (SANTOS, 2011), the number of lobbyists involved in a given dispute (STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020), lobbying hours (LEWIS, 2013), and the size of coalitions (KLÜVER, 2011), among others.

The challenge of measuring lobbying becomes even greater when distinguishing between inside and outside lobbying. The former encompasses advocacy tactics that involve direct contact with decision-makers, such as personal meetings or participating in public hearings (GROSE et al., 2022). While this dimension is often the primary focus of lobbying studies, it does not fully capture the phenomenon (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009; LEWIS, 2013; MICHALOWITZ, 2007; STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020).

Conversely, outside lobbying comprises advocacy tactics that do not involve direct contact with decision-makers but still seek to influence them, primarily by shaping public opinion (KOLLMAN, 1998). Typical outside lobbying tactics employed by interest organizations include protests, public campaigns, and mass e-mails (DE BRUYCKER; BEYERS, 2019; DELLMUTH; TALLBERG, 2017).

To measure both types of lobbying, I relied on a self-administered form applied to the same key informant previously mentioned. In Brazil, there are no legal requirements for interest organizations to report lobbying-related expenses or activities. Furthermore, such organizations rarely maintain detailed records of their activities or have disaggregated financial data related to lobbying. Consequently, no objective measures of lobbying are available in the analyzed scenario.

Asking the informant about lobbying expenses would likely result in either non-responses or substantial measurement errors due to the sensitivity and difficulty of estimating such amounts. An alternative approach – inquiring about the frequency of lobbying tactics – would also be highly vulnerable to measurement error, as it relies heavily on the respondent's memory. To minimize these issues and provide a comprehensive indicator of lobbying activities, the informant was asked to assess the level of effort exerted by IPA in each proposition.

For inside and outside lobbying, I designed the following questions and options. The underlined and bold sentence was included in the form. During a pre-test, the informant indicated that a five-point Likert scale was excessive. Therefore, I opted for a four-level scale.

Question 03: What was the level of effort made by IPA in direct contact with congress members (e.g., through formal or informal meetings, individual or collective interactions, lunches, or dinners) to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?

Options: None; Small; Medium; Large.

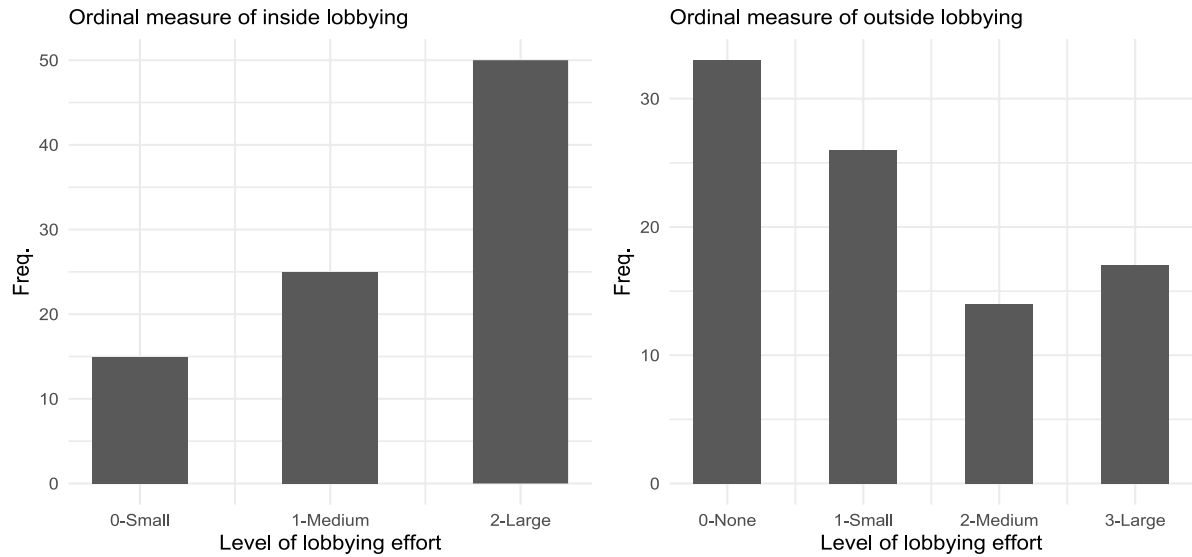
Question 04: In your opinion, what was the level of effort made by IPA to indirectly influence congress members (e.g., through protests, mass e-mails, petitions, press releases, advertising campaigns, among others) regarding the mentioned proposition?

Options: None; Small; Medium; Large.

Figure 4.2 presents the frequency distribution of both types of lobbying observed in the database. Due to the overall limitation in the number of observations, each category contains a relatively small number of cases. This constraint makes covariance analysis unfeasible, as few observations remain in each category when

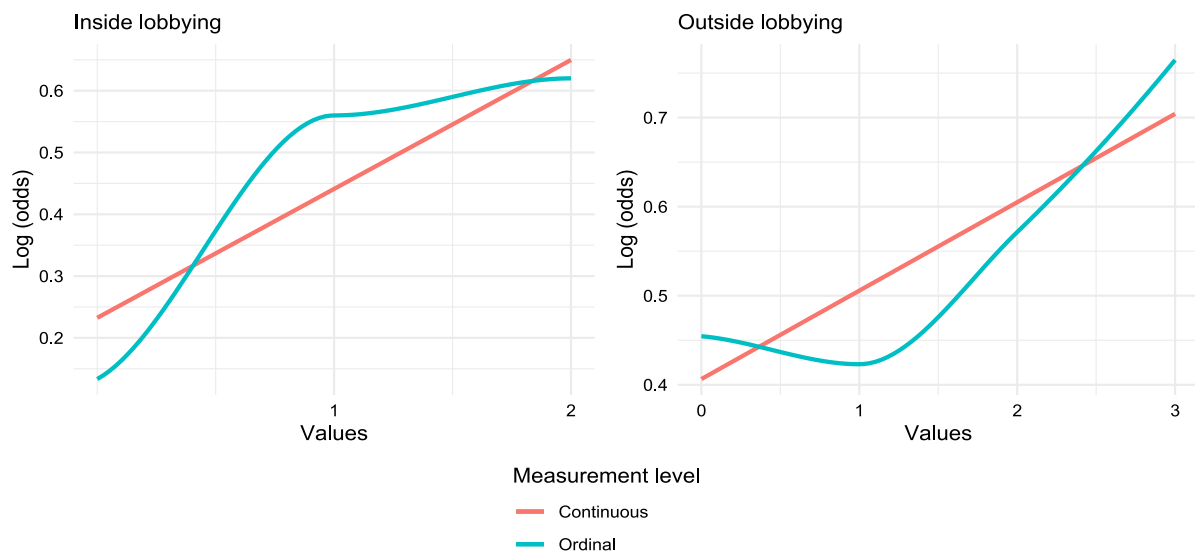
covariates are included in the model. Thus, there are two approaches possible to conduct a multivariate analysis: converting the variables into dummy variables or treating them as continuous variables.

Figure 4.2 – Frequency of inside and outside lobbying efforts.



Source: author’s elaboration.

Figure 4.3 – Effects of inside and outside lobbying on success across ordinal and continuous measurement levels.



Source: author’s elaboration.

The first approach results similar to keeping the variables in their original form, which does not sufficiently address the issue. The most practical solution is to treat these variables as continuous. Although this choice reduces estimator efficiency, it

does not introduce significant bias when the effects for both measurement levels remain in the same direction (WILLIAMS, 2020).

As shown in Figure 4.3, both measurement levels for inside and outside lobbying maintain the same trends. As expected, the estimators also lost efficiency. For inside lobbying, the continuous form overestimates the effect at the lowest value and underestimates it at the medium value. In the case of outside lobbying, the continuous form overestimates the effect at small and medium values and underestimates it at the minimum and maximum values. The R correlations between the log(odds) for both measurement levels are very high, at 0.88 and 0.87, respectively. Therefore, using the continuous forms of both variables is feasible, with only a slight loss in accuracy, particularly for intermediate values.

4.3.3 Independent variables

Lobbying activities typically occur in pluralist political environments, where multiple interest organizations seek to shape policies according to their preferences. As a result, dynamics of cooperation and competition among organizations emerge as strategic responses to each environment (BEYERS; DE BRUYCKER, 2018). These relationships may be formal, forming coalitions (NELSON; YACKEE, 2012), or informal, leading to conflict between opposing sides (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009). Therefore, explaining lobbying influence requires considering both the supportive effects of allied lobbying efforts and the counteractive effects of opposing lobbying.

I designed the following questions to inquire the key informant regarding this collective dimension of lobbying:

Question 10: *In your opinion, how strong was the pressure exerted by organizations (NGOs, associations, etc.) opposing the interests represented by IPA in an attempt to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?*

Options: *Smaller than the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies; Equal to the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies; Larger than the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies.*

Question 11: *In your opinion, how strong was the pressure exerted by organizations allied with IPA to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?*

Options: *Smaller than the pressure exerted by IPA; Equal to the pressure exerted by IPA; Larger than the pressure exerted by IPA.*

The distributions of responses for both variables approximate a normal curve. However, the small number of observations at one extreme of the distribution makes using them in their original form impractical. To address this issue, I converted them into dummy variables. For allied support, the dummy isolates the effect of having smaller support (No: 63 obs.; Yes: 27 obs.). For counterlobbying, the dummy isolates the effect of facing larger pressure from opposing organizations than from IPA and its allies (No: 49 obs.; Yes: 41 obs.).

Public opinion is another common variable in studies measuring lobbying influence (DE BRUYCKER; BEYERS, 2019; RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018; DÜR; MATEO, 2014; MICHALOWITZ, 2007). Traditionally, it is considered an alternative explanation for policymaking outcomes, as it informs representatives about their constituency's preferences. From the neopluralist perspective, public opinion moderates lobbying influence, amplifying its effects when it is aligned with public preferences and weakening them when opposed.

The same form was used to collect data on this variable. For this purpose, the following question and response options were included:

Question 09: *What was the public opinion's stance on this proposition?*

Options: *More opposed than supportive; Neutral; More supportive than opposed.*

Since there were few observations in the last response option, I transformed the variable into a dummy: "yes" for cases where public opinion was more opposed than supportive and "no" for the remaining cases (Yes: 30 obs.; No: 60 obs.).

Another alternative explanation for legislative outcomes is the stance of powerful institutional players. While rarely included in lobbying studies, this variable can play a crucial role in shaping outcomes (BAUMGARTNER et al., 2009). Interest organizations often lobby institutional players outside the legislative arena – such as presidents, ministers, governors, and party leaders – to influence decisions within Congress.

In Brazil, the most significant institutional player is the Executive Branch, particularly the president. According to the Theory of Coalitional Presidentialism,

despite the multiparty system, Brazilian presidents control key resources used to form and manage a congressional coalition. Empirical studies indicate that presidents have a high success rate in passing their legislative proposals and are responsible for most new laws – evidence often cited to challenge alternative theories explaining legislators' behavior based on informational or distributional concerns (AMORIM NETO, 2018; PEREIRA; MELO, 2012; FIGUEIREDO, 2012).

To capture the Executive Branch's stance, the key informant answered the following question:

Question 12: *What was the Executive Branch's position regarding the mentioned proposition?*

Options: *More opposed than supportive; Neutral; More supportive than opposed.*

Due to a high concentration of responses on the “opposed” side, I transformed this variable into a dummy to isolate the effect of governmental opposition to a proposition. The variable takes the value “yes” when the Executive Branch was more opposed than supportive and “no” for the remaining cases (Yes: 52 obs.; No: 38 obs.).

Previous studies suggest that a high level of conflict surrounding an issue reduces lobbying success – evidence that can be interpreted as a weakening of lobbying influence (DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015; MAHONEY, 2007b; MICHALOWITZ, 2007). The degree of conflict reflects the number of interest organizations with opposing perspectives vying to shape a policy. An increase in conflict implies more organizations mobilized in the policy arena, fostering coalition formation, which can balance the dispute, and increasing public salience, drawing public opinion's attention to the issue.

These factors are known to reduce lobbying influence by reinforcing the electoral accountability mechanism and decreasing the informational asymmetry of decision-makers. Here, the degree of conflict serves as an alternative measure for counterlobbying and public opinion variables. The following question was included in the form to assess conflict levels:

Question 06: How would you describe the level of disagreement between IPA and other civil society organizations (NGOs, associations, unions, federations, confederations, institutes, etc.) involved in the legislative evaluation of the

mentioned proposition? (**Refers to conflicts between agribusiness and other segments of society**)

Options: None; Low, Medium, High.

I treated this variable as continuous rather than ordinal to preserve the number of observations. The distribution of conflict degree is concentrated at higher values, with a mean of 2.1 and a median of 2 on a scale from 0 to 3.

4.3.4 Method and model

Since the dependent variable – lobbying success – is binary, the appropriate method for multivariate analysis is logistic regression (GUJARATI; PORTER, 2009; WOOLDRIDGE, 2018). This is the simplest method capable of handling binomial distributions in the dependent variable while also having relatively non-restrictive assumptions to produce efficient estimators.

Additionally, logistic regression allows for predictive effect estimation, which is particularly relevant given the observational nature of this research. However, this imposes clear limitations on the conclusions, as estimators are sensitive to model specifications and potential spurious correlations. Nevertheless, the nested analysis of regression models helps mitigate the risk of misspecification by testing the stability of estimators in the presence of key covariates.

The models evaluated in this study are derived from the following baseline equation:

High degree of lobbying success

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\textit{inside lobbying}) + \beta_2 (\textit{outside lobbying}) \\
 &+ \beta_3 (\textit{less allied pressure}) + \beta_4 (\textit{larger counterlobbying}) \\
 &+ \beta_5 (\textit{opposed public opinion}) + \beta_6 (\textit{opposed government}) + \varepsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

The unit of analysis is the legislative proposition, which includes law projects, complimentary law projects, constitutional amendment proposals, and legislative decree proposals from both chambers, as well as presidential provisional measures or their respective conversion law proposals. Legislative outcomes are assessed after the completion of the evaluation process within the legislature of reference.

Under these conditions, only changes in the size of FPA could affect the general distribution of congressional preferences. However, across a given legislature, the size of FPA remains largely stable. Therefore, it is not possible to include this static factor as a control variable in the models.

The Brazilian Congress has both permanent and temporary committees that may have terminative power over certain legislative proposals. However, the plenary retains the authority to demand a full-chamber vote on a proposal, even after a committee decision. As a result, a potentially disproportionate distribution of congress members among committees does not necessarily bias legislative outcomes, since a majority in the plenary can overturn committee decisions.

To accurately capture the effect of having more or fewer legislators with agribusiness-related interests on agribusiness lobbying success, the research design would need to focus either on committee decisions or on legislative outcomes across multiple legislatures, where variations in FPA size could be observed.

Table 4.2 – Summary of independent variables and related mechanisms.

| Variable | Scale | Causal Mechanism | Expected Effect |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Inside lobbying | Discrete (0-2) | Informational asymmetry and electoral accountability | Positive |
| Outside lobbying | Discrete (0-3) | | Positive |
| Smaller allied pressure | Dummy (0=No, 1= Yes) | | Negative |
| Larger counterlobbying | | | Negative |
| Opposed public opinion | | Electoral accountability | Negative |
| Opposed government | | Legislative dominance | Negative |
| Conflict degree | Discrete (0-3) | Informational asymmetry and electoral accountability | Negative |

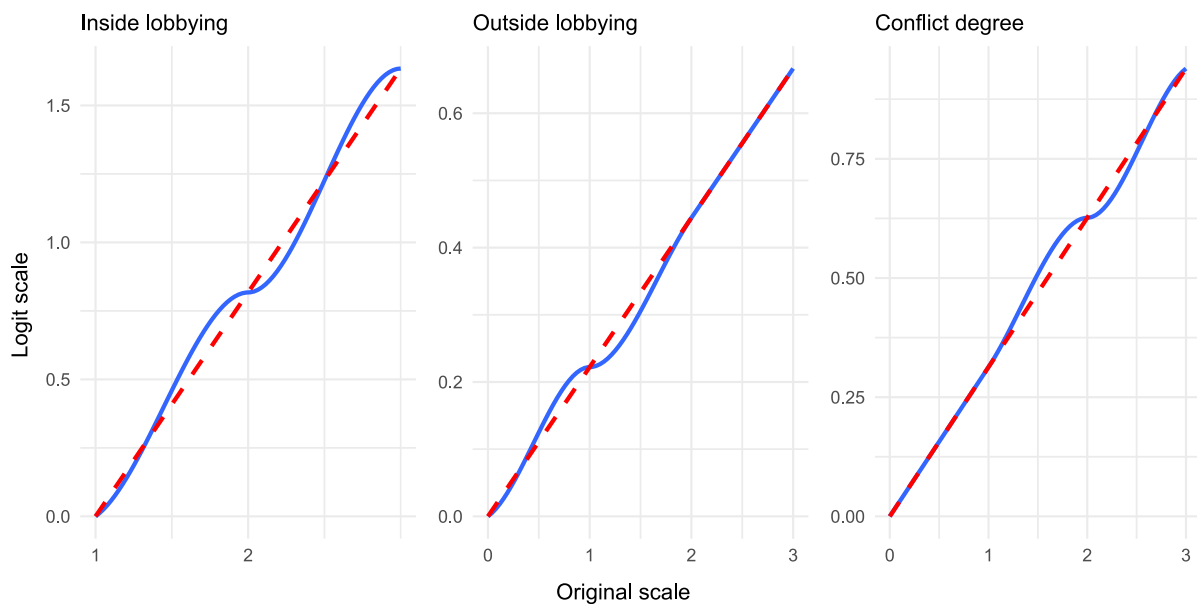
Source: author's elaboration.

Table 4.2 summarizes the independent variables included in the predictive models, highlighting the measurement scales, causal mechanisms, and expected effects. For detailed information on the distribution of both the original and operational versions of each variable, see APPENDIX D.

4.4 Checks and balances of the agribusiness influence in Congress

It is a good practice to verify whether the method assumptions are met before interpreting the results. Although many manuals do not emphasize the assumptions of standard logistic regression – mainly because they are not very demanding (BEST; WOLF, 2015; HILBE, 2016; PAMPEL, 2021) – some critical assumptions require attention: the linearity between the logit and continuous covariates, multicollinearity, and the absence of outliers (MENARD, 2002). The independence of residuals is an assumption necessary for estimating causal effects, which is not feasible in this research design. Consequently, this assumption is irrelevant in this context.

Figure 4.4 – Evaluation of the linearity assumption: logit vs. original scale for continuous variables.



Source: author's elaboration.

I use the most complete model to test whether these assumptions hold. First, there are three variables treated as continuous: inside lobbying, outside lobbying, and conflict degree¹³. Figure 4.4 displays the observed relationship between the logit and the original scale of each variable. Ideally, these variables would be used in their measurement scale, but due to the limited number of observations, this is not feasible. Nevertheless, treating them as continuous does not pose a significant issue. While

¹³ The variable 'conflict degree' appears only in the Model 7. Exceptionally, I used this model to test its effects.

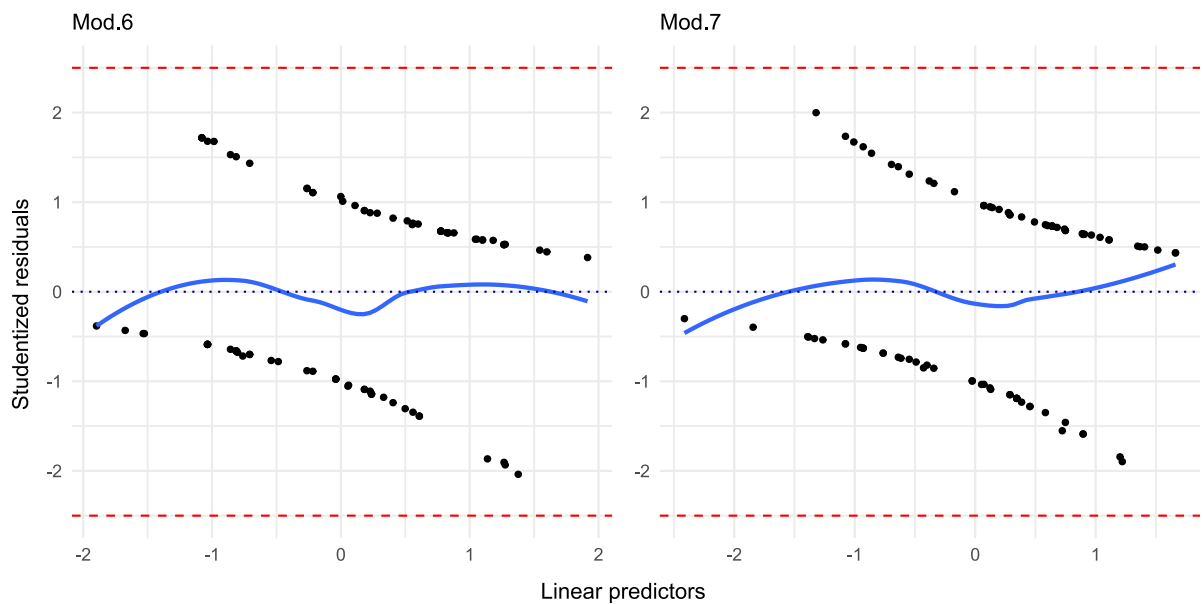
they do not exhibit a perfectly linear relationship, the observed deviations are not significant enough to violate the assumption¹⁴.

Table 4.3 – Variance inflation factor.

| Variables | Mod.6 | Mod.7 |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Smaller Allied Pressure | 1.59 | 1.25 |
| Conflict Degree | - | 1.38 |
| Larger Counterlobbying | 2.07 | - |
| Opposed Government | 1.59 | 1.23 |
| Inside Lobbying | 1.62 | 1.57 |
| Outside Lobbying | 1.43 | 1.26 |
| Opposed Public Opinion | 1.81 | - |

Source: author’s elaboration.

Figure 4.5 – Testing the presence of outliers.



Source: author’s elaboration.

Regarding the multicollinearity assumption, Table 4.3 presents the variance inflation factor (VIF). According to James et al. (2015), a VIF above 5 indicates high multicollinearity. In models 6 and 7, the highest VIF observed is 2.1. Therefore, the level of multicollinearity in these models is not enough to pose a critical risk of estimator bias.

¹⁴ I used inside lobbying in its raw measurement scale to avoid biased estimators, where small is equal to 1 instead of 0. Consequentially, the medium level assumes the value of 2 and the large is equal to 3.

Finally, I plotted the studentized residuals against the linear predictors to analyze the presence of outliers. According to Menard (2002), studentized residuals below -2 or above 2 may raise a concern about outliers but only values about $|3|$ are clearly considered outliers. As shown in Figure 4.5, despite not maintaining a perfect linear relationship, no outliers appear to influence either model. Since they did not violate any assumptions of the logistic regression method, we can proceed with the analysis of the results.

As shown in Table 4.4, both inside and outside lobbying are positively associated with high lobbying success in all models. Inside lobbying has a strong predictive effect on lobbying success. In Model 6, holding all other variables constant, each unit increase in inside lobbying doubles the chances of achieving a high level of lobbying success compared to minimal lobbying (the absolute zero in the variable). Furthermore, an increase of one unit in outside lobbying boosts the likelihood of high lobbying success by 1.25 times, when everything else is constant.

In order to facilitate the interpretation of the coefficients, Figure 4.6 presents the estimated probability of achieving a high level of lobbying success based on inside lobbying, outside lobbying, and allied pressure. The remaining variables are held constant at zero, meaning that counterlobbying is null, public opinion is not opposed, and the government is not opposed. The only deviation from the most frequent data patterns is the preference of the Executive Branch, which is typically opposed and will be analyzed separately.

It is important to note that there are numerous possible combinations of inside and outside lobbying volumes. When the allies exert pressure at the same level or more than IPA, the minimal effort (minimal inside lobbying plus no outside lobbying) yields a probability of success around 0.26, with the maximum effort reaching approximately 0.79. Intermediate lobbying volumes result in probabilities of success between 0.5 and 0.55. From the minimum to the maximum, the volume of outside lobbying contributes an additional 0.14 to the probability of success. Similarly, the maximum increase in inside lobbying raises the probability of success by 0.38.

The predicted probabilities also indicate that the allied pressure plays a relatively important role, adding about 0.1 to the likelihood of achieving a high level of success. As an association of multiple agribusiness representative entities, IPA not only coordinates political agenda articulation and lobbying efforts directed at congress members, but it also facilitates the efforts of its affiliates and ad hoc allies who are

unaffiliated due to the legitimacy the organization maintains. As shown in Figure 4.6, this coordination work performed by IPA yields positive results.

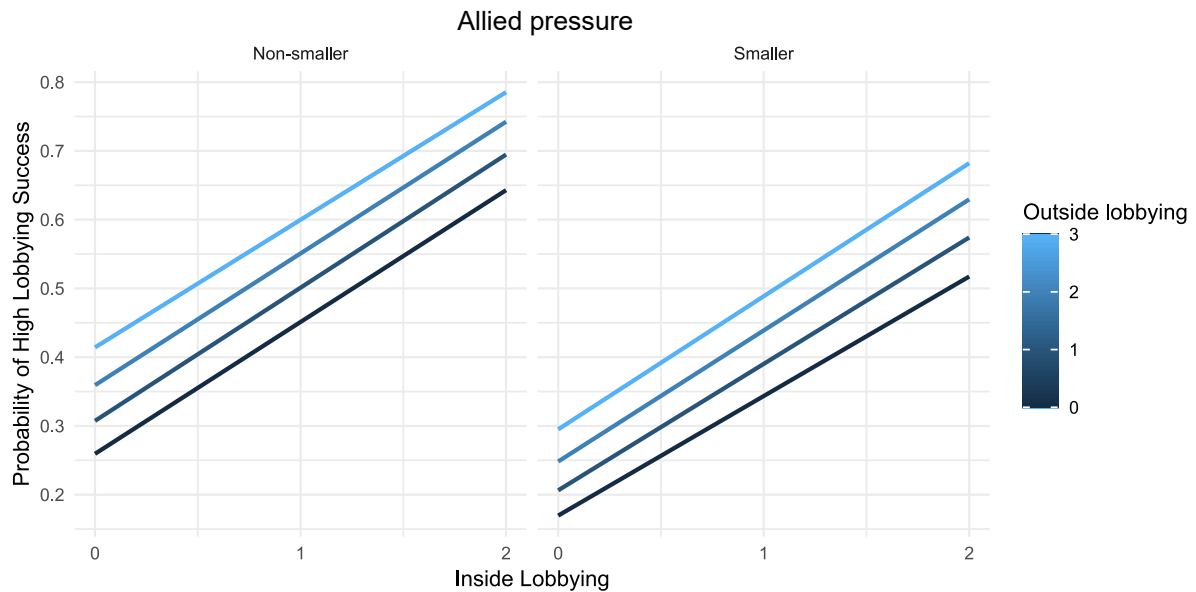
Table 4.4 – Logistic regression coefficients (odds ratios).

| | Lobbying Success | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1= Legislative outcomes address most or all agribusiness demands | | | | | | |
| | Mod.1 | Mod.2 | Mod.3 | Mod.4 | Mod.5 | Mod.6 | Mod.7 |
| Inside Lobbying | 2.44 (0.76) | 2.16 (0.75) | 2.19 (0.77) | 1.89 (0.70) | 1.87 (0.69) | 2.26 (0.91) | 2.31 (0.91) |
| Outside Lobbying | | 1.19 (0.27) | 1.18 (0.27) | 1.26 (0.30) | 1.31 (0.32) | 1.25 (0.31) | 1.16 (0.27) |
| Smaller Allied Pressure (1= Yes) | | | 0.84 (0.41) | 0.53 (0.32) | 0.54 (0.33) | 0.61 (0.38) | 0.77 (0.43) |
| Larger Counterlobbying (Yes=1) | | | | 2.17 (1.30) | 2.55 (1.66) | 2.17 (1.44) | |
| Opposed Public Opinion (Yes=1) | | | | | 0.70 (0.39) | 1.10 (0.71) | |
| Conflict Degree | | | | | | | 1.37 (0.41) |
| Opposed Government (Yes=1) | | | | | | 0.42 (0.25) | 0.46 (0.24) |
| Constant | 0.31 (0.16) | 0.31 (0.15) | 0.32 (0.16) | 0.29 (0.15) | 0.30 (0.15) | 0.36 (0.19) | 0.25 (0.17) |
| Observations | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Log Likelihood | -57.67 | -57.39 | -57.33 | -56.46 | -56.25 | -55.13 | -55.54 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 119.35 | 120.78 | 122.65 | 122.91 | 124.49 | 124.26 | 123.08 |
| Correct Predictions | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.64 | 0.63 | 0.66 | 0.66 |
| McFadden | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.11 |

Source: author's elaboration.

In general, these results reinforce the widely accepted argument in the literature that lobbying plays a crucial role in policymaking (GROSE et al., 2022; STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020; GILENS; PAGE, 2014; LEWIS, 2013; HOJNACKI et al., 2012). In the case of Brazilian agribusiness, lobbying may be decisive for legislative outcomes, even when facing heavy counterlobbying and opposition from public opinion. Thus, the evidence supports H2: there is a positive association between lobbying volume and lobbying success.

Figure 4.6 – Estimated probability for having high lobbying success by lobbying volume and allied support.



Source: author's elaboration.

However, these effects are not uniform across different types of lobbying activities. Unlike most previous studies, I isolated the effects of each type of lobbying and found evidence supporting the traditional perspective: inside lobbying has a much stronger predictive effect on lobbying success than outside lobbying (BEYERS, 2004; DÜR; DE BIÈVRE, 2007; DÜR; MATEO, 2013). The ratio between the maximum probability added by inside lobbying compared to outside lobbying is 2.7. In other words, when both variables are at their maximum values, the effect of inside lobbying is 2.7 times greater than that of outside lobbying on the probability of success. Despite the smaller predictive effect of outside lobbying, IPA has employed it in conjunction with inside lobbying in most proposals, highlighting the complementary role of these tactics.

While both types of lobbying produced the expected results, the coefficients for counterlobbying, public opinion, and conflict deviated from theoretical expectations. The expected outcome, based on pluralist and neopluralist perspectives, was negative coefficients. For example, when IPA faced a larger volume of counterlobbying than agribusiness lobbying, instead of reducing the probability of high lobbying success, it actually increased. The same pattern was observed when facing contrary public opinion and a high degree of conflict.

These contradictory findings raised concerns about the validity of the indicators for counterlobbying and public opinion. To test the consistency of the first variable, I used logistic models with larger counterlobbying as the dependent variable and conflict degree, public opinion, and media exposure¹⁵ as the independent variables. The results confirmed that the counterlobbying variable behaves as expected: the higher the conflict degree, having a public opinion contrary, and the greater the media exposure, the higher the probability that IPA faces more counterlobbying than agribusinesses lobbying on a given proposition.

All models predicting counterlobbying achieved at least an 80% accuracy rate, with conflict degree playing the most significant role. Under conditions of the highest conflict degree, contrary public opinion, and maximum media exposure, the probability of IPA facing larger counterlobbying than agribusiness lobbying reaches approximately 0.91. For additional information on counterlobbying predictions, see Appendix E.

Regarding public opinion, a similar test confirmed theoretical expectations: as conflict degree and media exposure increase, so does the probability of an opposed public opinion. The predictive models yielded accuracy rates between 67% and 72%. In a scenario with the highest degree of conflict and maximum media exposure, the predicted probability of public opinion being contrary is 0.62. More details can be found in Appendix F.

The predictive models for public opinion are not as robust as those for counterlobbying. Despite limitations, which likely stem from measurement errors and the absence of a measure for outside lobbying, the predictions are aligned with theoretical expectations for both variables. Consequently, the unexpected results in Table 4.4 do not appear to be caused by measurement errors or invalid indicators.

An alternative explanation is that the lobbying success and influence of IPA may be an exceptional case. Indeed, this study examines an organization with highly professionalized lobbying, substantial funding, and deeply entrenched in the Brazilian National Congress, operating closely with members of the large FPA. As a result, IPA may be so effective that it achieves significant lobbying success even in a hostile environment.

Furthermore, most previous studies analyzing the effects of conflict, counterlobbying, or public opinion on lobbying success and/or lobbying influence focus

¹⁵ I collected data on media exposure using the same questionnaire submitted to the key informant. It is an ordinal variable with four levels (none, low, medium, high). See question 8 in APPENDIX C.

on different institutional designs. For example, Dür, Bernhagen, and Marshall (2015), Dür and Mateo (2014), and Rasmussen (2015) examine cases in the European Union; Rasmussen, Mäder, and Reher (2018) analyze five advanced European democracies; Mahoney (2007) studies both the US and the European Union. In these contexts, a more accessible decision-making process, more accountable electoral systems, better-funded and more professionalized interest organizations and a more active public opinion may enhance the moderating effects of counterlobbying and public opinion on lobbying success and influence of counter-majoritarian interests.

These results also raise questions about the lobbying influence of organizations that potentially oppose agribusiness interests represented by IPA. The literature widely recognizes that organizations representing diffuse interests tend to be less effective in lobbying due to their predominant tactics, lower levels of professionalization, and limited funding (HOJNACKI et al., 2015; MAHONEY, 2007b; BEYERS, 2004). Although a comprehensive study on this issue in Brazil is lacking, existing evidence suggests that lobbying by organizations representing diffuse interests is less effective than lobbying by business-related organizations.

First, labor unions engage in less professionalized lobbying than organizations representing business interests (SANTOS et al., 2017). Second, civil society organizations have fewer contributions incorporated into regulations by independent agencies compared to business organizations (BAIRD; FERNANDES, 2014; SILVA, 2012). Third, organizations representing diffuse interests participate less frequently in public hearings in the Legislative Branch than business-related organizations (CESÁRIO, 2016; RESENDE, 2018). Although counterlobbying, public opinion, and conflict degree did not exhibit the expected effects, they may still mitigate the impact of inside lobbying on lobbying success. In order to evaluate this possibility, Figure 4.7 presents predicted probabilities of high lobbying success in interactive models¹⁶. First, the interaction between inside lobbying and counterlobbying revealed mixed effects. When facing greater counterlobbying, inside lobbying increases its effects rather than decreasing it. This result likely stems from the low effectiveness of counterlobbying efforts, which generally represent diffuse interests in the National Congress, and from the limited influence of public opinion on congressional decisions.

¹⁶ For more information about the interactive models, check APPENDIX G.

Initially, the predicted effect of contrary public opinion on lobbying success in Model 5, Table 4.4, aligns with theoretical expectations. In this model, having public opinion against IPA reduces the probability of high lobbying success by 0.05 to 0.09, depending on the degree of inside lobbying. However, this effect disappears in Model 6, when the government's position is included. The negative coefficient suggests that the government's position transfers the effect of public opinion, acting as an intermediary variable. This issue will be further discussed later in this section.

Additionally, the interaction between public opinion and inside lobbying follows the same pattern. When public opinion is contrary, the marginal effect of inside lobbying on lobbying success gradually declines. However, this reduction is not strong enough to reverse the probability of IPA achieving a high lobbying success. Both findings indicate that public opinion has only a limited impact on congressional decisions.

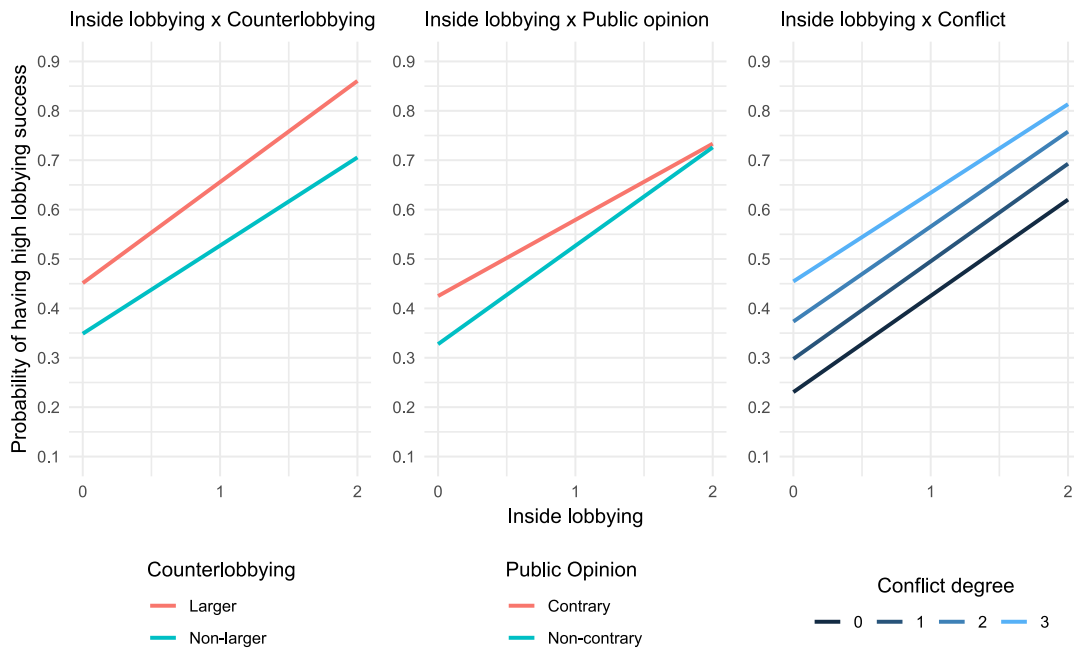
The degree of conflict is another problematic issue. Its predictive effect is positive, contrary to theoretical expectations, as shown in Table 4.4, Model 7. Furthermore, the interactive effect in Figure 4.7 is virtually null. An increase in conflict would be expected to reduce the marginal effect of inside lobbying on lobbying success, but this does not occur. One possible explanation for these inconsistent results is the ineffectiveness of counterlobbying and the limited impact of public opinion on legislative decisions, especially since most of the conflict effect on lobbying success operates through these two variables.

Ultimately, the evidence does not support any of the hypotheses regarding moderating factors (H1, H3, and H4). Counterlobbying is positively associated with agribusiness lobbying success. Public opinion has some expected effects, but they are minimal. Conflict degree does not function as anticipated, instead showing a positive association with agribusiness lobbying success.

Despite these findings, the analysis of the effect of the Executive Branch's position on agribusiness lobbying success revealed some interesting and unexpected results regarding its moderating role. In general, when the government is contrary, the chances of IPA achieving a high degree of lobbying success are reduced to about half of what it would be under a neutral or supportive government. For example, in Model 6, the probability of high lobbying success with minimal lobbying effort, equal or larger allied pressure, equal or lower counterlobbying, and a non-contrary public opinion is 0.26 when the government is not contrary, but it drops to 0.13 when the government is

opposed. When inside lobbying assumes the maximum value, the probability of success is 0.64 under a non-contrary government but falls to 0.43 when the government is contrary.

Figure 4.7 – Predictive effects of high lobbying success with the interaction between inside lobbying and moderator variables.



Source: author’s elaboration.

These results are fully aligned with theoretical predictions, even during a period when coalitional presidentialism was in a deep crisis. This legislature witnessed a presidential impeachment, and both the former president (Dilma Rousseff) and the new president (Michael Temer) were politically fragile and unpopular. Despite facing impeachment proceedings and corruption allegations, Temer managed to maintain a majority in Congress, and the findings reflect his influence in the Legislative Branch¹⁷.

Government opposition not only reduces agribusiness lobbying success but also severely weakens the effect of inside lobbying. Figure 4.8 presents two scenarios: one where outside lobbying is absent and another where it reaches its maximum value. In the first case, government opposition drastically reduces the effect of inside lobbying, even at higher levels. Note that the slope of the line is nearly zero, indicating

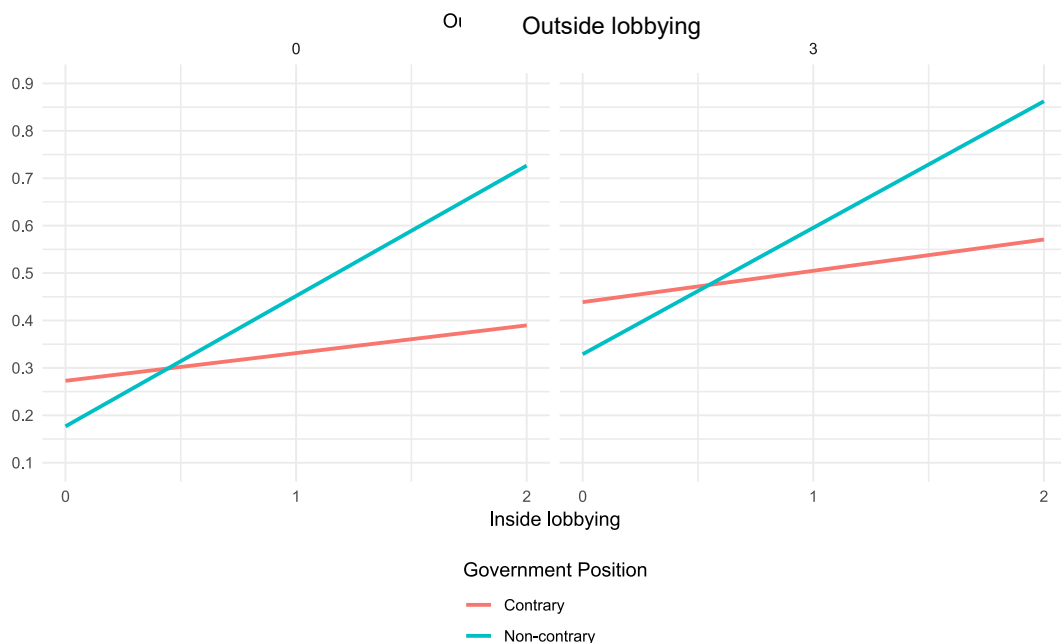
¹⁷ Almost all proposals analyzed here ended the legislative procedure while Temer has governed the country, except for three.

an almost flat trend. When outside lobbying assumes its maximum value, the previous trend remains, though the negative effect of government opposition on the effect of inside lobbying is slightly less pronounced.

Temer met with FPA members at the IPA’s headquarters even before the impeachment procedure against Rousseff concluded (BENITES, 2016). His approximation to FPA aimed to build a stable coalition to support his administration in Congress. However, as the findings indicate, this relationship was not entirely harmonious.

Amidst one of the biggest political crises in Brazilian history, Temer needed to boost his popularity to secure a potential second term (SCHREIBER; FELLET, 2017). Although he ultimately abandoned his re-election bid in 2018, his efforts to regain public support may help explain some of the findings observed here. I tested this guess by modeling the probability of the government being contrary to IPA by public opinion’s position and other covariates.

Figure 4.8 – Predicted probability of high lobbying success considering the interaction between inside lobbying and the government’s position.



Source: author’s elaboration.

As shown in Table 4.5, public opinion plays a crucial role in predicting the government’s position. The coefficient remains above 3 in all models, even when accounting for conflict degree and media exposure. Furthermore, public opinion alone

yields a high prediction accuracy of 71%, while the contribution of other covariates is practically negligible. According to Model 4, when public opinion is contrary, the probability of the government also taking a contrary stance is 0.95. Conversely, when public opinion is not contrary, the probability of the government being contrary drops to 0.44.

Could this be an effect of a president seeking to boost his popularity? Despite Temer's vulnerability in that context, I argue that the institutional design of the political system plays an important role in explaining these findings. Brazilian presidents are elected through a direct, nationwide vote, which makes them accountable to the median voter and, consequently, to public opinion, which reflects the preferences of the median citizen.

Table 4.5 – Predicting government opposition to IPA: logistic regression coefficients (Logit).

| | Opposed Government (1=Yes) | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Mod.1 | Mod.2 | Mod.3 | Mod.4 |
| Opposed Public Opinion (1=Yes) | 3.04 (0.78) | 3.08 (0.83) | 3.18 (0.85) | 3.18 (0.85) |
| Larger Counterlobbying (1=Yes) | | -0.06 (0.56) | 0.06 (0.59) | 0.01 (0.64) |
| Media Exposure | | | -0.18 (0.27) | -0.20 (0.29) |
| Conflict Degree | | | | 0.06 (0.34) |
| Constant | -0.41 (0.26) | -0.39 (0.31) | -0.16 (0.46) | -0.23 (0.61) |
| Observations | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Log Likelihood | -47.73 | -47.72 | -47.51 | -47.49 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 99.46 | 101.44 | 103.01 | 104.98 |
| Correct prediction | 0.71 | 0.71 | 0.71 | 0.71 |
| McFadden | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.23 |

Source: author's elaboration.

For senators, electoral dynamics are centered at the state level. They are elected by direct vote within their states, regardless of local particularities. As a result, they must be accountable to the median voter in their states, which introduces significant variation concerning agribusiness preferences. The economies of some states, such as Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Rio Grande do Sul, are heavily

dependent on agribusiness. In contrast, in states like Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, sectors such as mining, steel industry, finances, and services play a more dominant role in their economies than agribusiness.

For representatives, however, the scenario changes significantly. The proportional representation system, with large multi-member districts at the state level, makes them less accountable to public opinion. Their constituencies vary widely and may be defined by regional, professional, class-based, or thematic affiliations. Consequently, it is not surprising that they are not strongly responsive to national public opinion, as their primary obligation is to respond to the median voter within their specific constituencies.

Therefore, the institutional design of the Brazilian political system may explain why the National Congress is relatively insensitive to national public opinion, creating opportunities that powerful interest organizations can strategically exploit – specially to block regulatory changes. It is important to recall that only 14 proposals were ultimately converted into new laws. In the end, the Executive Branch was the main counterbalance to agribusiness influence in the Brazilian National Congress during the 55th Legislature. No other significant countervailing force effectively constrained the political power of agribusiness.

4.5 Final remarks

In the case of Farming Thinking Institute, the main agribusiness representative organization operating in the Brazilian National Congress, lobbying volume has a strong predictive effect on lobbying success. In other words, agribusiness efforts to influence legislative proposals are associated with outcomes that largely align with its demands. Although this is not a causal effect, the covariance remains similar even when accounting for key covariates such as counterlobbying, public opinion's position, and allied pressure. This suggests that the relationship is not entirely spurious and likely contains a causal component.

This finding is consistent with studies conducted in the European Union and the United States, reinforcing the argument that the group-approach offers a robust explanation for political outcomes, even across different democratic contexts (GROSE et al., 2022; STEVENS; DE BRUYCKER, 2020; HOJNACKI et al., 2015; GILENS; PAGE, 2014; LEWIS, 2013). The growing body of evidence indicating that well-funded

and highly professionalized interest organizations can decisively shape public policies in most cases makes lobbying a crucial factor in democratic decision-making (HOJNACKI et al., 2012; BAUMGARTNER; LEECH, 1998; SALISBURY, 1975). Consequently, any theory seeking to understand, explain, or predict political decisions must incorporate this critical dimension of the political dynamics in democratic regimes.

Additionally, the weaker-than-expected results regarding the moderating factors of lobbying influence – counterlobbying, public opinion, and conflict – raise concerns about the representativeness of political decisions. Although the findings in this study are specific to agribusiness in the Brazilian National Congress, they are not unique to this case. Similar patterns have been observed in US politics, though to a lesser extent (GILENS; PAGE, 2014; MAHONEY, 2007b). In contrast, in the EU and some advanced democracies in Europe, public opinion and conflict play a much more significant role in moderating lobbying influence (KLÜVER; PICKUP, 2019; RASMUSSEN; MÄDER; REHER, 2018; RASMUSSEN, 2015; DÜR; BERNHAGEN; MARSHALL, 2015).

Thus, institutional design and political context may be key factors in balancing the influence of unequal stakeholders in policymaking. This conclusion is supported not only by a cross-national comparison between Brazil, the EU, and the US, but also by two additional findings from this study. First, the Executive Branch's position is highly predictable based on public opinion, indicating that electoral design matters. Presidents are accountable to the national median voter, whereas representatives elected through proportional representation in large-magnitude districts are not. Their constituencies differ from the national electorate and are not fixed, even varying across elections.

Second, public opinion's position, counterlobbying, and conflict degree are highly correlated. However, these three moderating factors fail to influence legislators against agribusiness preferences. Two additional findings help explain this result: (1) the conflict within the interest system of agribusiness stems from the opposition by industry, finance, the government, and diffuse interests, as demonstrated in Chapter 01; and (2) the Farming Thinking Institute sponsors legislative proposals with broad impact on agribusiness while maintaining minimal internal divergence within the segment, as shown in Chapter 02. As a result, the primary opposition to agribusiness preferences comes from the government and diffuse interests. Previous studies indicate that the representation of diffuse interests in the Legislative Branch is weak

(SANTOS et al., 2017; CESÁRIO, 2016; RESENDE, 2018). This limitation may explain the ineffectiveness of public opinion and counterlobbying observed in this study.

Despite the innovative contributions of this research to the Brazilian literature on the influence of interest organizations and its theoretical implications for the group-approach, some limitations affect its internal validity. First, the predictive accuracy of the models is relatively low (0.66), reflecting measurement errors and the inadequate unity of analysis.

Regarding measurement errors, the indicators for lobbying, allied pressure, and counterlobbying proved insufficient to fully capture these phenomena. Ordinal measures with few levels are inadequate. A continuous scale from 0 to 10, reflecting lobbying efforts, would be preferable. For allied pressure and counterlobbying, a continuous measure quantifying lobbying efforts would likely yield more precise estimates in a multivariate analysis. For public opinion, incorporating two dimensions – position and engagement – would enhance measurement accuracy. For instance, even if public opinion is opposed to a proposal, low engagement may reduce its influence on decision-making. A similar refinement could improve the government's position variable, although it already performs as expected.

As for the unit of analysis, using legislative proposals introduces uncontrolled variation, reducing the efficiency of estimators. Proposals differ in the number of issues addressed, leading to variation in lobbying success within the same proposal and in lobbying intensity. Bernhagen, Dür, and Marshall (2014) suggest that using the issue as the unit of analysis provides a more precise measure of lobbying success.

Second, the limited number of observations prevented the inclusion of potentially relevant predictive variables. The findings primarily reflect the maintenance of the regulatory *status quo*, meaning that predicted lobbying influence is predominantly associated with defensive lobbying. In the case of offensive lobbying – efforts to change the regulatory framework – the predictions are less reliable.

In conclusion, this study presents several provocative findings, despite being the first systematic analysis of agribusiness lobbying influence in Brazil and one of the few studies on lobbying influence in the country. It also employs an innovative methodological approach to examining the influence of interest organizations on policymaking. Like any pioneering study, it opens numerous opportunities for further refinement and future research.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Anomie and contraction

The industrialization of agriculture has impacted not only the productive operations but also the entire mode of production. As agriculture has become increasingly dependent on other economic sectors, a set of contradictory economic relations has emerged. In the mode of production of the agro-industrial complex, agricultural profit is shaped by economic relationships with finance and industry upstream, which provide credit and inputs, and with industry and trade downstream, which process raw agricultural materials and distribute them.

The relationship between agriculture, industry, and finance upstream in the production chain is oligopolistic. In this setting, there are far more players demanding inputs than supplying them. Consequently, industry and finance have an unbalanced influence on agricultural profits, driving input prices above what they would be in a competitive market. This dynamic enables upstream players to capture agricultural profits, threatening the economic survival of farms.

Contrastingly, the economic relationship between agriculture and sectors downstream in the production chain is oligopsonic, but the effect remains the same: it allows industry and trade to appropriate agricultural profits, endangering the survival of farms. Since industry and trade are concentrated on a few large companies, while agriculture consists of thousands of producers selling perishable products, the formers have an unbalanced influence on agricultural output prices.

Ultimately, agriculture becomes a sector vulnerable not only to environmental risks but especially to commercial risks, as it operates within a structure that compresses profit margins. Nonetheless, agriculture is an essential sector in any economy because food prices are a primary determinant of labor reproduction costs, impacting the economy as a whole. As a result, a broad set of public policies has emerged to limit the expropriation of agricultural surplus while simultaneously fostering the formation and consolidation of agro-industrial complexes.

Brazilian agriculture underwent its most intensive period of industrialization between 1965 and 1985 under the leadership of the Military Government, which implemented policies to boost agricultural productivity to ensure urban food supply and expand exports, thereby financing the establishment of basic industries in the country.

In the 1980s, with the collapse of the developmentalist policy system, agricultural industrialization largely stalled, only regaining prominence with the commodities boom of the 2000s.

Despite this interruption, by then, most Brazilian agricultural production had already been under integrated or semi-integrated establishments. Soybeans, beef, maize, chicken, sugarcane, milk, coffee, cotton, pork, and wheat account for approximately 90% of the total value of agricultural production. Although thousands of non-integrated establishments still exist, they contribute only to a small share of the total economic output of agriculture.

As a consequence, the structure of interest conflicts in Brazilian agriculture reflects contradictions in the relationship between agriculture and other sectors, particularly industry, as well as with diffuse interests. The first set of interest conflicts encompasses the dispute over agricultural input costs and supporting services, alongside challenges related to price stabilization and market access. The second set pertains to regulatory issues that may restrict land use, such as environmental protection requirements, or operational costs to comply with food safety regulations.

Within this structure of interest conflicts, there are both centripetal and centrifugal forces influencing interest representation. The main centripetal incentive stems from the dependence of agriculture on the national macroeconomic performance, which directly impacts its financial foundation – credit availability and cost. Additional unifying factors include insufficient infrastructure for storing and transporting agricultural production, which largely depends on federal government policies, and broad regulatory frameworks affecting land use and food safety.

Conversely, centrifugal forces arise from the immediate demands from farmers, which are primarily tied to each crop – for instance, input and output prices. These elements are critical to agro-industrial complexes and necessitate crop-specific representation. However, such segmented representation is less effective in countering political pressures from diffuse interests and in lobbying the government for macroeconomic policies favorable to agricultural production.

Ultimately, the critical relationships between agriculture, industry, finance, and trade present the greatest challenge for agribusiness interest representation. While both agriculture and industry have strong incentives to pursue segmented representation, they are also bound by fundamentally opposing interests derived from their economic interactions.

5.2 Making agribusiness political representation work

The IPA's emergence initially challenges the theoretical expectations. The literature would suggest the predominance of *ad-hoc* coalitions in a landscape lacking a peak organization representing agribusiness interests. This prediction found empirical support from the regime transition in 1985 until the end of President Dilma Rousseff's first term in 2014. During this period, all initiatives aimed at representing agribusiness interests failed to establish or sustain an interest organization with national political relevance. This was the fate of the Broad Parliamentary Front in the National Assembly, ABAG, the Superior Council of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, and the Superior Council of Agribusiness.

However, a detailed analysis of the IPA case offers promising contributions to a theory of interest mobilization. The neopluralist perspective on the behavior of interest organizations provides a useful framework for explaining the IPA's emergence. Empirical evidence supports the relevance of factors such as disturbances, critical resource dependency, and the influence market. However, the case also underscores the importance of a fourth factor: political entrepreneurs.

Disturbances stemming from governmental decisions – often made in response to other pressures – triggered mobilization within the most economically prominent agribusiness segments. First, from soybeans and cotton farmers in the early 2000s, reacting to the implementation of the floating exchange rate regime and the unexpected appreciation of the Brazilian currency in the international market. Second, by bringing the agro-industry segment to join forces with farmers to oppose environmental regulations, after the Executive Decree enforced the existing regulation on environmental crimes in 2008.

The critical resource dependency factor found empirical support in the IPA case. The organization brings together entities representing the most economically significant crops in Brazilian agriculture and their related industries. Collectively, the IPA's affiliates account for nearly 90% of the national agricultural production value. These crops primarily operate within agro-industrial complexes, meaning that the economic success of each player in the production chain is heavily dependent on public policies, particularly credit availability and exchange rate policies. Consequently, agribusiness demands continuous political influence at the federal level of government,

not merely reactive mobilization in response to disturbances. In this sense, IPA functions as a coordinative space akin to a neocorporatist concertation arena.

Additionally, the influence market for agribusiness interests in the 2000s had a demand for an organization like IPA. Existing organizations tasked with representing agribusiness interests were either unrepresentative or politically ineffective. For example, CNA struggled to accommodate demands from different agricultural segments; ABAG failed to attract members representing agricultural interests; and COSAG, despite some regional political influence, faced similar difficulties in broadening its membership base.

While these factors contributed to the IPA's creation, the role of political entrepreneurs emerged as a central piece in the explanation. Without APROSOJA/MT and AMPA funding most of the IPA's initial costs, it is unlikely that smaller economic segments would have joined the organization. These political entrepreneurs effectively absorbed the initial collective action costs, sponsoring the participation of other segments within the peak organization.

IPA faced even greater challenges in maintaining itself than it did in emerging. The structural conflicts within agribusiness made consensus-building on critical issues difficult without imposing significant costs on affiliated entities. Furthermore, IPA, like other umbrella organizations, had to navigate the dual challenge of securing political influence while distributing both collective and selective benefits among its members.

Regarding the first challenge, IPA demonstrated institutional resilience by implementing major governance reforms without collapsing. The 2014 statutory reform equalized financial contributions and voting weight among affiliates, ensuring that collective decisions could only be made through majority consensus. This procedure aligned decision-making outputs with the median preference of affiliates.

A second internal mechanism allowed affiliated entities to opt out of collective lobbying efforts without facing sanctions. This provision ensured that entities with extreme preferences were not forced to bear the costs of lobbying against the preferences of their own constituencies.

A final measure to mitigate the negative effect of purposive displacement was filtering the entities eligible to join the peak organization. This filter ensured that the heterogeneity of internal preferences did not reach a level at which entities would prefer to withdraw from IPA. The organization remained focused on attracting and retaining entities that represented major segments of agribusiness.

IPA also established internal mechanisms to ensure that the benefits of collective action remained valuable to affiliates. First, IPA remained as an association of entities rather than farmers or companies, preventing direct competition with the benefits provided by affiliates to their constituencies.

Second, the filter in affiliation limited membership to one major entity per agribusiness segment, preventing overlapping representation and ensuring that benefits were not diluted among competing affiliates. Although exceptions exist, constituency overlap remains minimal.

Finally, IPA offered a valuable selective benefit: all affiliates could mobilize the IPA's expertise, infrastructure, and political network at the federal level to advance their specific demands, provided they did not conflict with those of other members. Since each segment has unique demands, this arrangement enabled affiliates to enhance the benefits they delivered to their constituencies. These measures ensured that the IPA's collective benefits were not appropriated as public goods within the organization, mitigating the classic collective action dilemma.

The final factor explaining the IPA's organizational maintenance was the attractiveness of its political agenda. The mechanisms designed to mitigate purposive displacement played a crucial role in fostering consensus on key agribusiness issues. Additionally, IPA established regular interaction routines among its affiliates, facilitating negotiations, supporting FPA, and coordinating most of the agribusiness lobbying efforts at the federal level. This structure enabled the consolidation of a minimally coherent agribusiness political agenda, ultimately delivering the political influence that was lacking in the agribusiness influence market.

Overall, these factors demonstrate strong explanatory power, validating many hypotheses from the neopluralist perspective on the behavior of interest organizations. In particular, insights from the Ecological Theory proved useful in capturing the complexity of how interest organizations interact with their environment. The formation of a new organization is not merely a response to demand-side factors (such as disturbances and critical resource dependency); it also depends on the behavior of existing organizations competing for the same constituency – the supply side. Similarly, the survival of an interest organization depends on its ability to navigate both dimensions. While agribusiness maintains a constant demand for political influence due to policy dependency, supply-side factors were essential in explaining the IPA's

persistence as the most important organization representing agribusiness interests at the federal level.

5.3 Agribusiness influence in the National Congress

Agribusiness yields significant influence in the National Congress. The IPA's lobbying efforts are strongly associated with ensuring that at least most of its demands are incorporated into legislative outcomes. Even in scenarios where public opinion opposes agribusiness preferences, counterlobbying exceeds agribusiness lobbying, or conflict intensity is high, the IPA's lobbying efforts remain a strong predictor of legislative outcomes. These findings provide empirical support for several hypotheses from the elitist perspective on group behavior, particularly the relationship between lobbying volume and lobbying success.

The traditional pluralist hypothesis, which posits counterlobbying as a countervailing force balancing legislative outcomes, did not find empirical support. However, this result should not lead to the outright rejection of the hypothesis. If agribusiness interests reflect a broad consensus that mobilizes multiple segments, primary opposition would come from diffuse interests. Thus, the absence of a significant counterlobbying effect may simply indicate the weakness of the diffuse interest representation in the Brazilian National Congress.

A similar explanation applies to the neopluralist hypothesis regarding the moderating effect of conflict. Since it is associated with counterlobbying, the ineffectiveness of the latter would naturally extend to the former. Nonetheless, conflict degree is also related to public opinion mobilization, as higher conflict levels tend to increase public engagement with an issue.

Empirical results indicate that public opinion has only a minor direct effect on congressional decision-making but plays a significant role in shaping the Executive Branch's preferences, which, in turn, exerts substantial influence over Congress. Consequently, presidential preferences act as a link between public opinion and legislative outcomes, ensuring a significant countervailing force against agribusiness lobbying influence. This finding does not allow for the rejection of the neopluralist hypothesis regarding the moderating role of public opinion.

Moreover, the results reveal a critical contradiction between the behavior of legislators and public opinion. This contradiction may be explained by electoral design,

particularly the open-list proportional representation system with large districts, which dilutes accountability and allows certain interests to secure direct representation in Congress. Conversely, the institutional design of presidential elections may account for the President's alignment with public opinion preferences, illustrating the classical effect of democratic accountability in liberal democracies.

Finally, the empirical findings highlight an important yet often overlooked aspect of the IPA's lobbying effectiveness: most of its success is defensive. In other words, its primary influence lies in blocking regulatory changes rather than advancing new benefits for agribusiness. Less than 20% of the total success resulted in new benefits for the segment. As a result, agribusiness should be recognized as a powerful veto player at the federal level, but only as one among several competing forces shaping public policy.

Therefore, the elitist hypothesis on lobbying influence found empirical support in the Brazilian agribusiness case. However, these findings do not express the apocalyptic tone common in elitist studies, alarming for the ruin of democracy due to the behavior of interest organizations. Indeed, there is an unequal distribution of power among these organizations, but most of their lobbying effectiveness is linked to protecting the *status quo*, not advancing wildly on public goods.

These findings bring two other elements that shall be considered in future theoretical and applied research. First, the institutional design of a political system matters for balancing the influence of interest organizations. As the Brazilian agribusiness case illustrates, electoral design tends to define the relevance of public opinion for legislative outcomes. Should we expect more relevance in closed-list proportional representation systems? And in single-chair majoritarian systems? For any answer to these questions, solving the problem of unbalanced distribution of power among interest organizations requires considering not only the behavior of interest systems but also adjustments in different political institutions.

Second, this unbalanced distribution of power, yet not entirely critical for democracies, may worsen two other political dilemmas for democratic regimes: leveraging the risk of decision paralysis, which instigates political actors to find solutions out of the current institutionally; and blocking or limiting adaptation of political institutions, increasing institutional sclerosis and leading to the bankrupt of the regime's legitimacy. In any case, the final output is political instability and an increasing risk of

regime collapse. These problems are spreading in democracies around the world and may be related to the behavior of interest organizations.

APPENDIX A – Interview Roadmaps

Roadmap for those who performed executive roles in IPA

Background

- 1) Could you please share some insights on how IPA was established? What motivated its formation?
- 2) At that time, what was the relationship like between soybeans and cotton producers and national representative entities, such as CNA, COSAG, ABAG, and OCB? And with the Lula's administration?

Composition

- 3) Who is the audience that IPA aims to represent? (*Explore the contrast between the domestic and international markets, modernized and non-modernized sectors, industry and agriculture*)

Influence Market

- 4) In an environment where several entities are competing for the national representation of agribusiness, what unique advantages does IPA offer to attract affiliates?

Purposive Displacement

- 5) In general, was there any conflict among the IPA's affiliates regarding the organization's decisions?
- 6) How does IPA manage the conflict between agriculture and agro-industry?

Shared Credit Claiming

- 7) In your opinion, why did agribusiness associations choose to act in coalition through IPA rather than independently?

Agenda Attractiveness

- 8) What criteria are used to select the discussions in which IPA gets involved in Congress, the Executive, and the Judiciary?

- 9) In general, what are the characteristics of the issues that interest IPA? Are there issues that encompass the entire agribusiness sector? Only agriculture? Only agribusiness? Only the most important crops?

Roadmap for those who did not perform an executive role in IPA

Background

- 1) In your opinion, why did soybeans and cotton producers from Mato Grosso create a new national representative entity in 2011, separating themselves institutionally from CNA, COSAG, ABAG, and OCB?

Composition

- 2) In your opinion, who is the audience that IPA seeks to represent? Who does it concretely represent? (*Explore the contrast between the domestic and international markets, modernized and non-modernized sectors, industry and agriculture*)

Influence Market

- 3) In an environment where several entities are competing for the national representation of agribusiness, why did we witness the emergence and significant growth of IPA starting in 2011? What makes it attractive in ways that other entities do not?

Purposive Displacement

- 4) How do you assess the IPA's management of the conflict between associations from different sectors of agriculture and agro-industry?

Shared Credit Claiming

- 5) In your opinion, why did agribusiness associations choose to act in coalition through IPA rather than independently?

Agenda Attractiveness

- 6) In your opinion, does the IPA's political agenda represent the interests of agribusiness as a whole or only part of it?
- 7) In general, what are the characteristics of the issues in which IPA is involved? (scope, impact, conflict)

APPENDIX B – Affiliates with IPA and features of their representation

Table 01 – Affiliates with IPA, the main represented segment, and the entity's range, coverage, and nature.

| Entity | Main represented segment | | | Range | Coverage | Nature |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Agriculture | Industry | Trade and Services | | | |
| Brazilian Potato Association | Potato | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Tobacco Industry Association | - | Tobacco | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries | - | Vegetable Oil | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Fish Industry | - | Fish | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Coffee Exporters Association | - | Coffee | Coffee | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Zebu Breeders | Cattle | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Meat Packers | - | Meat (in general) | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Dairy Industry Association | - | Dairy | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Animal Protein Association | Poultry and Pig | Poultry and Pig | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Agribusiness Association | - | Large companies | Large companies | National | General | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Swine Breeders | Pig | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Cotton Producers Association | Cotton | Cotton | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Corn and Sorghum Producers | Maize and Sorghum | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Soybean Seed Producers | Soybean seed | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Association of Soybean Producers | Soybeans | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Association of Biotechnology Companies in Agriculture and Agro-industry | - | Biotechnology | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Association of Bioenergy Producers of the State of Paraná | - | Biotechnology | - | Regional | Segment | Association |
| Association of Livestock Breeders of Mato Grosso | Cattle | - | - | Regional | Segment | Association |
| Association of Seed Producers of Mato Grosso | Seeds | - | - | Regional | Segment | Association |

| Entity | Main represented segment | | | Range | Coverage | Nature |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Agriculture | Industry | Trade and Services | | | |
| Association of Soybean Producers of Mato Grosso do Sul | Soybeans | - | - | Regional | Segment | Association |
| Soybean and Corn Producers Association of the State of Mato Grosso | Soybeans and maize | - | - | Regional | Segment | Association |
| Mato Grosso Association of Cotton Producers | Cotton | - | - | Regional | Segment | Association |
| National Plant Protection Association | - | Pesticides | - | National | Segment | Association |
| National Association of Citrus Juice Exporters | - | Citrus juice | Citrus juice | National | Segment | Association |
| Association for the Promotion of Forage Improvement Research | - | - | Research | National | Segment | Association |
| Council of Coffee Exporters of Brazil | - | - | Coffee | National | Segment | Association |
| National Coffee Council | Coffee | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of São Paulo | General | - | - | Regional | General | Corporation |
| Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraná | General | - | - | Regional | General | Corporation |
| Federation of Agriculture and Livestock of Mato Grosso | General | - | - | Regional | General | Corporation |
| National Federation of General Insurance | - | - | Insurance | National | Segment | Corporation |
| National Forum of Forest-Based Activities | Forestry | Forestry | - | National | Segment | Association |
| National Sugar-Energy Forum | Biofuels | Biofuels | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Brazilian Tree Industry | Forestry | Forestry | - | National | Segment | Association |
| Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives | Cooperatives | Cooperatives | Cooperatives | National | Segment | Corporation |
| Organization of Sugarcane Producers Associations of Brazil | Sugarcane | - | - | National | Segment | Association |
| National Union of the Beer Industry | - | Beer | - | National | Segment | Corporation |
| National Union of the Plant Protection Products Industry | - | Pesticides | - | National | Segment | Corporation |
| National Union of the Animal Health Products Industry | - | Animal health | - | National | Segment | Corporation |
| Brazilian Rural Society | General | General | - | National | General | Association |
| Sugarcane Industry Union | - | Sugarcane and ethanol | - | National | Segment | Association |

Source: author's elaboration.

APPENDIX C – Full questionnaire applied to IPA's key informant for data collection on legislative proposals

Question 01: How much do you believe the legislative outcome for the mentioned proposition [in the form header] reflected the agribusiness demands represented by IPA?

Options: No demands were covered; A few demands were covered; Some demands were covered; Most of the demands were covered; All demands were covered.

Question 02: In your opinion, how important was the mentioned proposition for IPA during its deliberation?

Options: Not important; Somewhat important; Very important.

Question 03: What was the level of effort made by IPA in direct contact with congress members (e.g., through formal or informal meetings, individual or collective, lunches, dinners, etc.) to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?

Options: None; Small; Medium; Large.

Question 04: In your opinion, what was the level of effort made by IPA to indirectly influence congress members (e.g., through protests, mass e-mails, petitions, press releases, advertising campaigns, among others) regarding the mentioned proposition?

Options: None; Small; Medium; Large.

Question 05: What was the level of divergence between the organizations affiliated with IPA regarding the mentioned proposition? (Internal conflict within agribusiness)

Options: None; Low; Medium; High.

Question 06: How would you describe the level of disagreement between IPA and other civil society organizations (NGOs, associations, unions, federations, confederations, institutes, etc.) involved in the legislative evaluation of the mentioned proposition? (Refers to conflicts between agribusiness and other segments of society)

Options: None; Low, Medium, High.

Question 07: In your opinion, what was the level of difficulty for the congress members in understanding the topic addressed by the proposition?

Options: None; Low; Medium; High.

Question 08: What was the level of exposure of the proposition or its topic in the media during its deliberation?

Options: None; Low; Medium; High.

Question 09: What was the public opinion's stance on this proposition?

Options: More opposed than supportive; Neutral; More supportive than opposed.

Question 10: In your opinion, how strong was the pressure exerted by **organizations (NGOs, associations, etc.) opposing the interests represented by IPA** in an attempt to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?

Options: Smaller than the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies; Equal to the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies; Larger than the pressure exerted by IPA and its allies.

Question 11: In your opinion, how strong was the pressure exerted by organizations **allied with IPA** to influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?

Options: Smaller than the pressure exerted by IPA; Equal to the pressure exerted by IPA; Larger than the pressure exerted by IPA.

Question 12: What was the Executive Branch's position regarding the mentioned proposition?

Options: More opposed than supportive; Neutral; More supportive than opposed

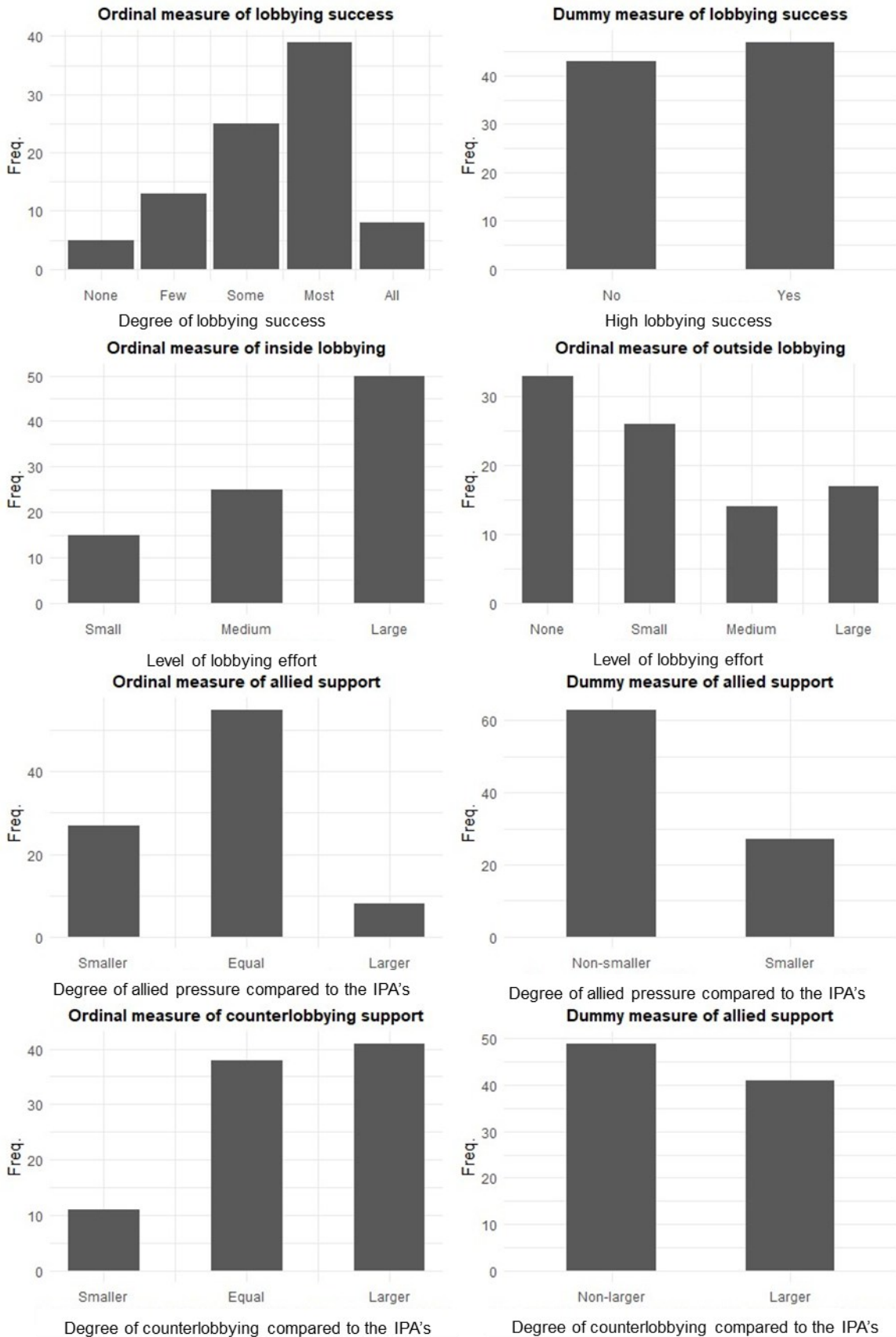
Question 13: In your opinion, how much did the institutional and governmental relations work developed by IPA influence the outcome of the mentioned proposition?

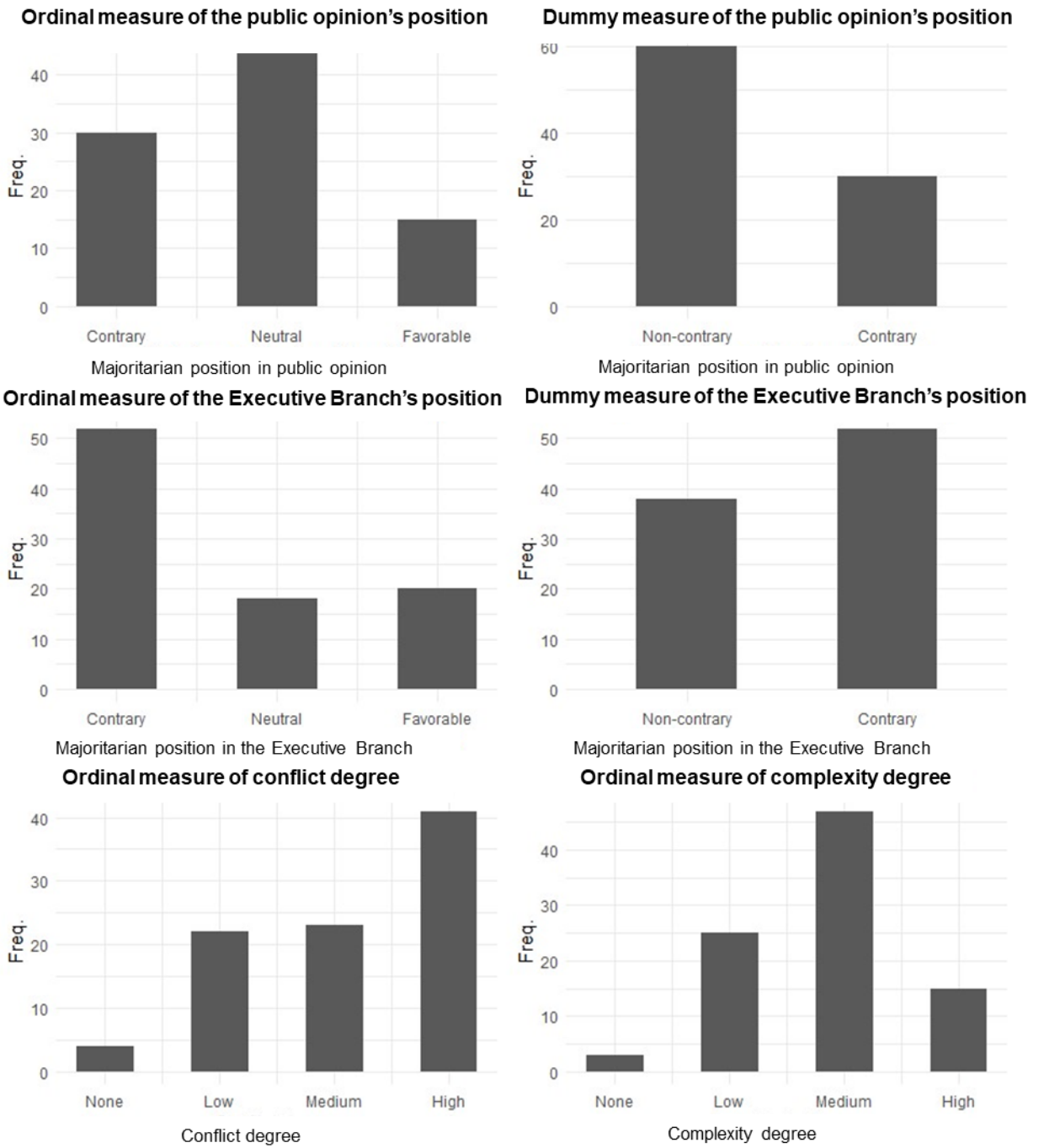
Options: Had little influence; Had some influence; Had a strong influence.

Question 14: Considering the direct and indirect pressure on Congress members exerted by all the organizations involved in the deliberation of the mentioned proposition, would you say that:

Options: The side in favor of the proposition exerted MUCH LESS pressure on congress members than the side opposing it; The side in favor of the proposition exerted LESS pressure on congress members than the side opposing it; The side in favor of the proposition exerted the SAME LEVEL of pressure on congress members as the side opposing it; The side in favor of the proposition exerted MORE pressure on congress members than the side opposing it; The side in favor of the proposition exerted MUCH MORE pressure on congress members than the side opposing it.

APPENDIX D – Frequency graphs of variables in their original and operational versions





Source: author's elaboration.

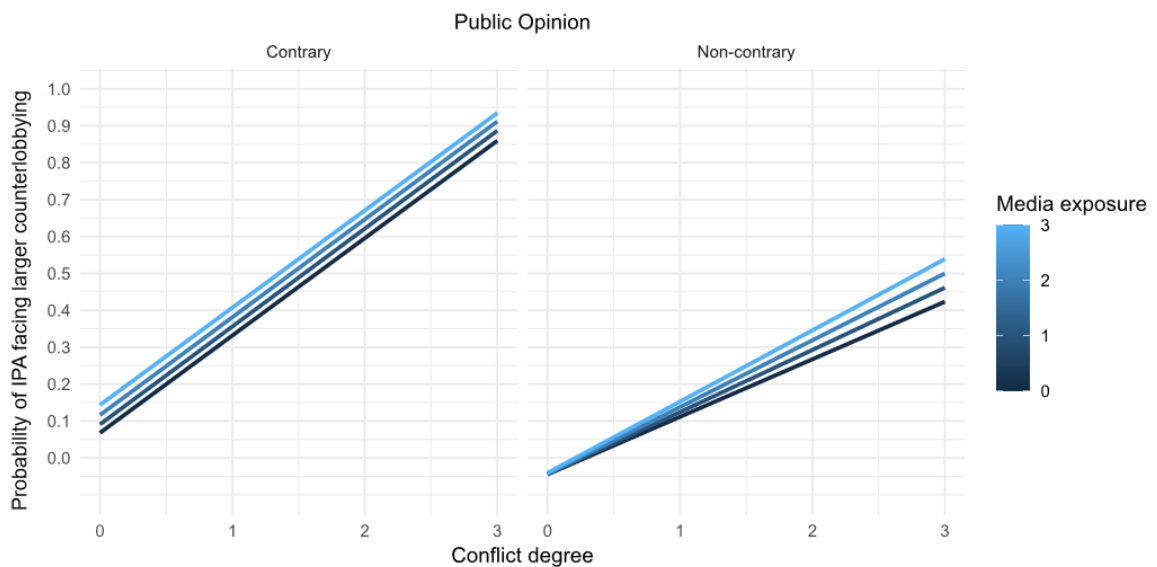
APPENDIX E – Predictive models of larger counterlobbying

Table 1 – Predictions for IPA facing larger counterlobbying. Coefficients estimated by Logistic Regression (Logit).

| | Larger Counterlobbying 1= Yes | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Mod.1 | Mod.2 | Mod.3 |
| Conflict Degree | 1.62 (0.35) | 1.46 (0.38) | 1.38 (0.41) |
| Opposed Public Opinion (1=Yes) | | 1.95 (0.61) | 1.88 (0.63) |
| Media Exposure | | | 0.16 (0.33) |
| Constant | -3.81 (0.87) | -4.09 (0.97) | -4.17 (0.98) |
| Observations | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Log Likelihood | -46.09 | -40.28 | -40.17 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 96.19 | 86.56 | 88.33 |
| Correct Predictions | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.81 |
| McFadden | 0.26 | 0.35 | 0.35 |

Source: author's elaboration.

Figure 1 – Predicted probability of IPA facing larger counterlobbying.



Source: author's elaboration.

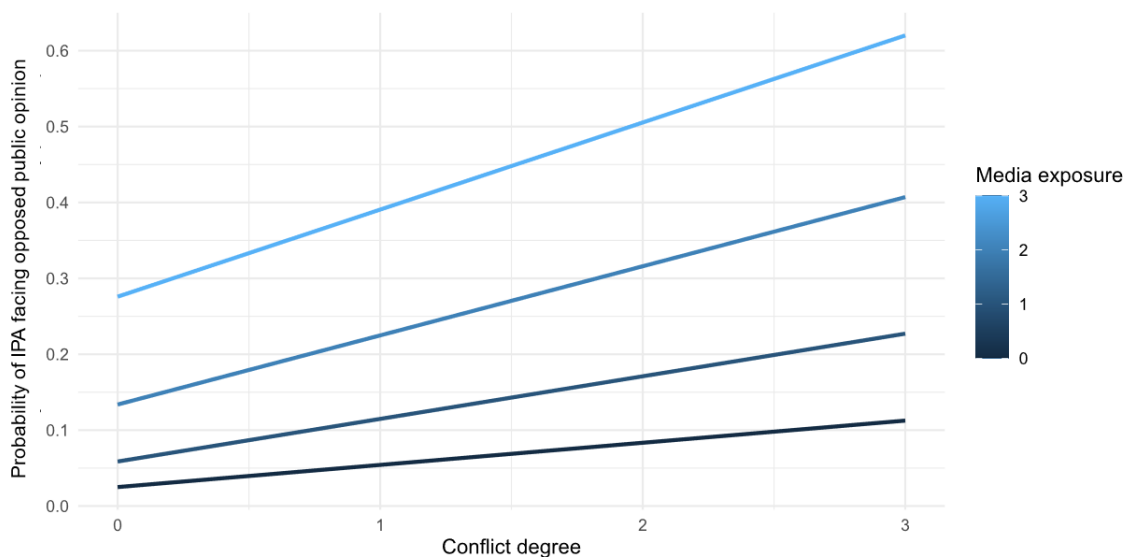
APPENDIX F – Predictive models for IPA facing opposed public opinion

Table 1 – Predictions for IPA facing opposed public opinion. Coefficients estimated by Logistic Regression (Logit).

| | Opposed Public Opinion 1= Yes | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Mod.1 | Mod.2 |
| Conflict Degree | 0.93 (0.31) | 0.48 (0.34) |
| Media Exposure | | 0.84 (0.32) |
| Constant | -2.80 (0.78) | -3.45 (0.86) |
| Observations | 90 | 90 |
| Log Likelihood | -51.58 | -47.80 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 107.16 | 101.61 |
| Correct predictions | 0.67 | 0.72 |
| McFadden | 0.10 | 0.16 |

Source: author's elaboration.

Figure 1 – Predicted probability for IPA facing opposed public opinion.



Source: author's elaboration.

APPENDIX G – Interactive models

Table 1 – Interactive models predicting the IPA's lobbying success. Coefficients estimated by Logistic Regression (Logit).

| | Lobbying Success | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | 1= Legislative outcomes address most or all agribusiness demands | | | | |
| | Mod.6 | Mod.6.1 | Mod.6.2 | Mod.7 | Mod.7.1 |
| Inside Lobbying | 0.82 (0.40) | 0.76 (0.44) | 0.86 (0.44) | 0.84 (0.39) | 0.85 (0.74) |
| Outside Lobbying | 0.22 (0.25) | 0.22 (0.25) | 0.22 (0.25) | 0.15 (0.23) | 0.15 (0.23) |
| Smaller Allied Pressure (1= Yes) | -0.50 (0.62) | -0.47 (0.63) | -0.52 (0.63) | -0.26 (0.56) | -0.26 (0.56) |
| Larger Counterlobbying (1=Yes) | 0.78 (0.66) | 0.40 (1.40) | 0.78 (0.66) | | |
| Opposed Public Opinion (1=Yes) | 0.09 (0.65) | 0.10 (0.65) | 0.42 (1.58) | | |
| Conflict Degree | | | | 0.31 (0.30) | 0.33 (0.62) |
| Opposed Government (1=Yes) | -0.86 (0.59) | -0.85 (0.59) | -0.89 (0.61) | -0.77 (0.52) | -0.77 (0.52) |
| Inside Lobbying x Counterlobbying | | 0.24 (0.77) | | | |
| Inside Lobbying x Public Opinion | | | -0.19 (0.86) | | |
| Inside Lobbying x Conflict Degree | | | | | -0.01 (0.38) |
| Constant | -1.04 (0.52) | -0.97 (0.56) | -1.07 (0.56) | -1.39 (0.66) | -1.41 (1.08) |
| Observations | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Log Likelihood | -55.13 | -55.08 | -55.10 | -55.54 | -55.54 |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | 124.26 | 126.16 | 126.21 | 123.08 | 125.08 |
| Correct Predictions | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.66 |
| McFadden | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.11 |

Source: author's elaboration.

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