

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Dissertations - ALL

SURFACE

December 2017

Limits of Liberation: Youth and Politics in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement

Melinda Gurr
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/etd>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gurr, Melinda, "Limits of Liberation: Youth and Politics in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement" (2017). *Dissertations - ALL*. 827.
<https://surface.syr.edu/etd/827>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the SURFACE at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations - ALL by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

ABSTRACT:

This thesis examines the forces that strengthen and weaken young people's involvement in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement, the MST, during the twilight of the PT years, 2012-2014. The MST responds to displacement, environmental devastation, and capital-intensive development by fighting for land reform and socialist transformation. Although the MST's politics of redistribution have attracted significant attention from activists and academics worldwide, little ethnographic attention had yet been paid to the experiences and subjectivities of rural youth affiliated with the movement. By attending to structural conditions, dynamics of family, sexuality, and gender, and political socialization in three regions of Brazil, this study deepens understandings of youth and agrarian change, as well as the challenges of sustaining intergenerational activism. Bringing scholarly attention to such innovative examples is important, as the future of food and farming depends on the willingness of youth to engage in agriculture as a cultural way of life. Moreover, given the increasingly regressive, authoritarian, and exclusionary national politics that are deepening inequalities and unraveling social protections in Brazil; ethnographic analysis of how political alternatives are generated and sustained by youth, is crucial to understanding emerging inclusionary political projects in Latin America.

LIMITS OF LIBERATION:
YOUTH AND POLITICS IN BRAZIL'S
LANDLESS RURAL WORKERS' MOVEMENT (MST)

BY

MELINDA GURR

B.S., UNIVERSITY OF UTAH, 2008
M.A., SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, 2013

DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
DECEMBER 2017

Copyright © Melinda Gurr, 2017
All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2010, I had just finished two years working at a non-profit in Salt Lake City, where I helped to organize a statewide grassroots organization to fight against the involuntary displacement of residents in urban and rural manufactured home communities, otherwise known as trailer parks. Our ultimate goal was to create a legislative and financial infrastructure that would support collective land tenure and foster asset development opportunities for the poor. Ultimately, our efforts were unsuccessful and I was exhausted. Land politics and organizing for social justice, I learned, were messy affairs.

When I began my graduate studies at Syracuse University, I brought my curiosity about the life course, land conflicts, migration, and social justice movements with me. I also wanted to learn a second language. The MST, an extraordinarily successful mass social movement, with a track record of improving the lives of Brazil's rural poor, captivated my interest. With the encouragement and support of my advisor, Dr. John Burdick, my aspirations became a reality. I will always be grateful to him for his patience and encouraging this Utahn country bumpkin to “dream bigger” and trust in my own capacities. I am committed to following his example of mentorship, scholarly rigor, and community engagement. I am also deeply grateful to my friends, colleagues, and mentors—particularly, Lance Collett, Zac Knowley, Shannon Novak, Lars Rodseth, Azra Hromadzic, Tom Perreault, Philip Roberts, Alex Flynn, Mafe Boza, Karriann Soto, Sean Reid, Nathan Hathorn, Claire Lagier, and Hamza Khalil. I would also like to thank my family members, Gaylen, Carla, and Daniel Gurr, as well as my inspiring grandmother, Florence Stucki. This process would have been much more difficult without you.

Conducting fieldwork with the MST was a complex and transformative experience. I consider myself to be very privileged to have spent a formative period in my life among such thoughtful, generous, and politically committed individuals. Our encounters were personally and professionally significant to me. I will forever be grateful to those who welcomed me into their homes and spent countless hours with me talking, gardening, cooking, playing music, and traveling across Brazil. Like many MST researchers I have come to know, writing this dissertation took considerable time and careful deliberation. As my research took place in the twilight of the PT years, on the cusp of a profound political and economic crisis in Brazil, it differs from much of the prior literature on the MST. Young people, who had become increasingly active and empowered in the organization, challenged me to reflect on the contradictions and paradoxes they navigated as they came of age in the midst of a righteous struggle for social justice in one of the world's most unequal societies. They taught me lessons about hope, optimism, persistence, generosity, and kindness, despite the extraordinarily intractable problems facing the rural poor, their environments, the MST, and Brazilian democracy more broadly. As such, I have written this dissertation in honor of them.

Nego Zé

-Levi de Souza Lima¹

*Injustiça, mazelas, favelas.
Herança maldita me obrigam herdar.
Não canto porque é bonito
A realidade me põe a pensar*

Injustice, ills, slums
Damned legacy I am obligated to inherit.
I don't sing because it is beautiful,
Reality makes me think.

*E pergunto, O que é isso?
Pergunto: como eu vivo?
Percebo que somos ricos
De miséria somos ricos*

And ask, what is this?
I ask: how do I live?
I realize that we are rich,
Of misery, we are rich.

*É o sofrimento ao "pé da letra"
Querem que eu me esqueça
Da dor que tens causado?
Na lucides de um equilibrista
Um olhar fundo me ensina
Como é a vida, como é a vida.*

It is literally to suffer
They want me to forget myself
And the pain that they have caused?
With the lucidity of a tightrope walker
A deep look inside teaches me
How life is, as it is the life.

*E te julgam pelo que tem
Só assim serás alguém?
Mas eu não tenho nada!*

They judge you for what you own
Your possessions are what make you someone?
But I have nothing!

*A troca, a base da vida
Endurecida como o níquel
Que à paga, que à paga
Que a apaga.*

Exchange, the basis of the life
Hardened like a nickel
Got to pay, got to pay,
Until it's over.

*E te julgam pelo que tem
Só assim serás alguém?
Mas eu não tenho nada!*

They judge you for what you possess,
This is what makes you a person?
But I have nothing!²

¹ Militant-musician of the MST.

² I've taken some liberties with the translation, to best convey the sentiment of the song. [See recording of Saci Arte, in rehearsal 10/2/2013.](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I. SETTING THE STAGE	1
Chapter 1. Introduction	7
Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement	9
Research Questions	31
Methods and Data Collection	46
Research Settings and Subjects	50
Dissertation Outline	51
PART II. THE ROÇA: RURAL PRESENTS AND FUTURES	54
<u>Chapter 2. Families and Fields: Production and Social Reproduction in Two Land Reform Settlements</u>	61
Copavi: An Agrarian Alternative	64
Semente: Family Farming	88
<u>Chapter 3. Barracos: Competing Senses and Tenses of Land Reform</u>	112
Land Reform in the Heartland of Brazilian Agribusiness	117
Conflict and Exclusion	127
Return to the MST	135
PART III. FORMAÇÃO POLITICA: MILITANCY	141
<u>Chapter 4. Pilgrimage to Brasília: VI National Congress</u>	146
Recruitment in Central Paraná	149
On the Joys (and Miseries) of Cross-Country Travel	156
Logistics: The Protest Camp	161
Landless Aesthetics: Theatre, Slogans, Speeches	162
Marching for Land Reform: Mobilizing Bodies and Sentiments	170
MST vs. The Military Police	178
Engaging the State?	184
<u>Chapter 5. Celebrating Socialism: Youth, Partying, and Micropolitics</u>	187
Socialist Substances	190
Forró: Everyone Dances Together	196
Ficar: Activist Romance	203
<u>Chapter 6. Discipline and Empowerment? Political Training in Pernambuco</u>	215
MST Political Training	219
Wayward Youth, or Upwardly Aspirational?	228
Social Movement Discipline	234
PART IV. CONCLUSIONS	253
<u>Chapter 7. On Strengths and Limits</u>	253
Youth and Agrarian Change	253
Youth and Activism	257
BIBLIOGRAPHY	261
CURRICULUM VITAE	286

PART I. SETTING THE STAGE



2/2014. *Juventude Sem Terra: Estamos Aqui!* Ebullient youth dance and shout during opening musical performances at the III National Landless Youth Assembly in Brasília. Oliver Kornblihtt/Mídia Ninja.

PRELUDE: LANDLESS YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Bea, Junior, and I attended the third National Assembly of Landless Youth in Brasília at the MST's sixth National Congress in February of 2014. Travel weary, we followed a samba parade from the darkened protest encampment, to the ground level of a huge indoor soccer stadium.¹ Led by two ebullient *travesti* dancers, we congregated in front of an elevated stage, decorated with an enormous banner for the occasion. Large, hand-painted block letters spelled out the slogan: JUVENTUDE QUE OUSA LUTAR, CONSTROI O PODER POPULAR! YOUTH WHO DARE TO FIGHT, ARE BUILDING THE PEOPLE'S POWER! Some waved crimson flags and oversized portraits of leftist heroes Che Guevara, Frida Kahlo, and Vladimir Lenin.

¹ See video, "[Unidos da Lona Preta, no VI Congresso Nacional do MST.](#)"

We numbered in the hundreds, dressed in social movement t-shirts and caps, with name badges that specified our various sub-organizational affiliations.

Once assembled, we watched a collaborative musical performance from Saci Arte,² a country-rock fusion band from Paraná, and Veneno H2,³ a hip-hop trio from São Paulo state. The performers were twenty-something males, rising stars of a new generation of MST militant-musicians. Visually, they did not conform to stereotypes of rustic rural people.

Instead, they reflected both the countryside and the urban periphery, indexed stylistically by their choices of appearance, speech, and song. Levi sported a large “black power” afro, Fi paired a Corinthians soccer jersey with a Palestinian keffiyeh, and John Müller had a shaggy hair cut and was prone to infusing his song lyrics and speech with urban slang (e.g., *ta ligado?* Ya know what I’m saying?). The musicians did not perform selections from the MST’s extensive catalogue or classic *caipira* (traditional rural music). Instead, they began by covering a Brazilian rock classic, Legião Urbana’s “Que País é Este.” Written in 1978, the aggressive, angst-ridden critique of the military dictatorship (Américo 2012) appeared to resonate with youthful activists in 2014. Everyone seemed to know the words and shouted along with the performers:

<i>Nas favelas, no Senado</i>	In the slums, in the Senate
<i>Sujeira pra todo lado</i>	Filth on all sides
<i>Ninguém respeita a Constituição</i>	No one respects the Constitution
<i>Mas todos acreditam no futuro da nação</i>	But everyone believes in the future of the nation.
<i>Que país é esse?</i>	What country is this?
<i>Esse porra é Brasil!</i>	This bullshit is Brazil...
<i>Terceiro mundo se for piada no exterior</i>	The third world, a joke abroad
<i>Mas o Brasil vai ficar rico</i>	But Brazil will be wealthy
<i>Vamos faturar um milhão</i>	Let’s bill a million
<i>Quando vendermos todas as almas</i>	When we sell all of the souls
<i>Dos nossos índios num leilão</i>	Of our indigenous peoples in an auction

² See [videos of Saci Artes’s performances](#).

³ See [videos of Veneno H2’s performances](#).

Que país é esse?

What country is this?

Saci Arte then switched to original rock-rap compositions: call and response chants, replete with choreography. While urban musical genres have historically been marginalized within the MST (McNee 2004; Moscal 2010; Benzi 2014), lyrically, the band's songs fit well with the movement's politics, as they condemned export-oriented commodity agricultural production. Levi's "Funk da Monocultura" (Monoculture Funk)⁴ denounced Brazil's agribusiness complex. Its lyrics were first whispered and the singers' bodies crouched close to the ground. Their postures and gestures mirrored the progressive crescendo of the song, until, by the final lines, all were jumping high in the air, in a sort of pacific mosh pit.

Eucalipto não faz floresta.

Eucalyptus doesn't make a forest.

A cana não encha prato.

Sugarcane doesn't fill a plate.

O gado é pra exportação.

Cattle is for export.

A soja é pra ração.

Soy is for animal feed.

Juventude do MST faz a revolução.

Youth of the MST make the revolution

To counteract the insidious consequences of agribusiness, the singers asserted that young people should be protagonists in a new, more sustainable model of rural development.

Although Saci Arte and Veneno H2 performed these songs dozens of times in MST venues in southern and southeastern Brazil, this was their debut on the national stage. Based on the enthusiastic reception, it seemed that their musical performance may indeed have been useful for "fabricating the social" (Chaves 2000), helping to craft collective identification and belonging among the normally geographically dispersed and internally diverse youth group.

After the opening songs, we listened to political speeches written specifically for the youthful

⁴ Youth from MST-PR, put this chant into into action in the public sphere, in an occupation of Parana's Secretary of Education, check out, [Juliana Adriano's video, "Eucalipto nao faz floresta festival de artes na sed."](#)

audience. We would not be addressed by leaders on a stage, as was customary in most MST settings. Instead, leaders stood on the floor, and spectators sat on the ground, an explicit attempt to foster less hierarchical group dynamics. Miguel, son of MST-spokesperson João Pedro Stédile, was invited to take the microphone first. Unlike the audience members, he was not dressed in social movement-themed attire, and wore a blue button up shirt. Microphone in hand, Miguel spoke slowly and methodically. His words echoed in the stadium, as he emphasized the generational nature of the struggle for land justice in Brazil.

With only black plastic tarps in hand our parents faced the violence of the *pistoleiros* [hired assassins] and built this movement from nothing... They had the privilege to participate in the National March of 1997... This was a big victory for us, as Brazilian intelligence agencies said that no other social movement in Latin America had that kind of organizational capacity. We were and are still proud of that... My generation struggled against unemployment and neoliberalism, and now, your generation has a much larger fight than ever before: against agribusiness. Today, it is more difficult. You do not just face gunmen. With the Internet and new technologies, repression is more sophisticated.

Miguel then assured the youth that they were viewed by national leadership as valued members in their own right.

I am here, as part of the National Direction of the MST, not to tell you what to do, *but to see what you will do*, to construct socialism as a miracle of rebellion... You can and will change this world, and battle against the bourgeoisie. I have no doubt in my mind: you will build the popular agrarian reform and create a new Brazil.

Thais (22/f), the newly appointed coordinator of the National MST Youth Collective, from Central Paraná, then took the stage. She wore an oversized red MST t-shirt and cap, as she stood atop a plastic chair and clutched her notes tightly. Her hands were visibly shaking; she seemed nervous and spoke aggressively.

Companheiros [comrades], I speak to you on the thirtieth anniversary of the MST. We, the youth, have an important role in this struggle, as we always have. The MST was founded by youth, and that is historical a fact, you can look it up. Today, we, as sons and daughters of the MST, must continue to build the movement. The future of the struggle depends on our capacity and ability to organize. It is up to every single one of us. I ask you this: Will the MST be a permanent struggle, or will it be another dusty page in the books of history?

Thais suggested that based on their kin relationships to adult MST members, the youth ought to embrace their radical, revolutionary heritage and become active participants in their own right (Rodgers 2005: 244; Scott and Artis 2005: 56). After all, the future of the MST itself depended upon their willingness to become organized and engaged protagonists, and a source of revitalization. She continued:

The movement is very revolutionary, or is it not? To be revolutionaries, our task is to reinvent the MST and clearly this will be difficult. Maybe we will have to work all day, every day to do this, but we must...We can and must fight on behalf of the working classes, for this is the heart of our country.

As Thais finished her speech, seven other representatives from the National Youth Collective distributed “The Manifesto of Landless Youth” to the audience. The glossy red posters featured a photograph of a smiling Che Guevara and an itemized list of political commitments. Thais called her peers to stand at attention and formally recite a pledge of allegiance to the MST. “Now repeat after me: I won’t give up the struggle.” At first, the audience was slow to respond, but she urged them to participate and lend their voices to the cause.

Repeat it! We promise an intransigent struggle against the enemies of the working classes: the *latifundio* [plantation system], agribusiness, large international businesses, the banks, the media, and the State, which is subordinated to the interests of the bourgeoisie, the owners of the land and of imperialism which causes misery, violence, and the destruction of nature and human life...

They vowed to organize MST youth groups in their respective locales, committed themselves to political training, and promised to cultivate the revolutionary *mística* (mysticism) on a daily basis. These efforts would nourish the best aspects of their youthful personhood as creative, rebellious, and courageous beings. Ideally, they would embody the New Man and New Woman required for socialism (Guevara 1965, cited in MST 2009: 73-87; Ruz 2000: 33; Betto 2000: 63), and become tireless fighters on behalf of working class liberation, in Brazil and beyond.

After the event was adjourned, we were excused from the stadium. Under the expansive night sky of Brasília, I wondered about the significance of the assembly for the young audience members. Having spent time with MST youth in their home settings, this discursive scene seemed to be a universe apart from daily routines and rural realities. How did these teenagers and young adults respond to MST directives to become militants and revolutionaries? Were they interested in devoting their lives to land reform? What did they take away from this musically and ideologically charged event?

INTRODUCTION



3/2014. Rural youth runaway lived at a house in land reform settlement in Pernambuco. In exchange for housing, he cleaned the home and cooked. Here he is butchering a chicken for use in a love magic ceremony.

This dissertation examines the forces that sustain and weaken young adult participation in Brazil's *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers' Movement, MST). In contrast to the poverty, crime, homicide, insecurity, and state-sponsored violence for which Brazil's urban areas are notorious (Goldstein 2003; Holston 2008; Perlman 2010), the MST seeks to create a rural-based alternative that promises full employment, dignity, and social security for farming families (Welch 2004: 108). Present in twenty-four of twenty-six Brazilian states, the MST organizes long-term occupations of land to pressure the state to comply with the provisions of the 1988 Federal Constitution which state that land must

serve a social function. This strategy has brought about land redistribution for more than 400,000 families in more than 3,000 land reform settlements (MST 2014).

The MST's commitment to the transformation of Brazilian society and agrarian relations intersects in complicated ways with the aspirations and trajectories of rural youth. Between 1996 and 2006, an estimated three million individuals under the age of thirty left the Brazilian countryside (Ministério de Desenvolvimento Agrária, MDA 2013: 7). This outmigration has parallels in contexts around the world, as rural populations have aged, while young people have sought work and educational opportunities in urban areas (Katz 1998; Jeffrey 2010; White 2012, 2015). These trends have been attributed to a number of factors, including rural patriarchy (D'Emilio 1983; Brandth and Overrein 2012; Coldwell 2009), intensifying rural immiseration and dispossession (White 2012), and the attraction of urban education and lifestyles (Kaberis and Koutsouris 2012; Katz 1998; Jeffrey 2011; Mains 2012). Fluctuating prices in agricultural inputs have entrapped many farmers in cycles of debt and dependency, which new generations of farmers eagerly seek to escape (Delgado 2010).¹ Hardship, stigmatization, and the draw of urban consumption, education and mobility undoubtedly make the choice of staying in the countryside a difficult one (Elder and Conger 2000; Castro 2008). These trends worry many observers, as the continued flight of youth from the countryside threatens the long-term potential of farming to offer a sustainable future (Ghimire 2002: 66).

Although the big question is whether the MST has helped to organize conditions that may

¹ In diverse contexts throughout the Global South, the growth of farmer suicides has been noted (Lukose 2009). In Brazil, it has been suggested that the use of highly toxic pesticides, associated with neurological and psychological problems, may be to blame (Krawczyk et al. 2014).

appeal to and retain the next generation of rural producers, we know surprisingly little about young adults in the movement (Flynn 2010, 2013b).² This dissertation argues that there is good reason to believe that the story of these young people is far from over. While many young people in Brazil have left the countryside undoubtedly for good, others have placed themselves on the frontlines of struggles for land redistribution. Their ongoing involvement echoes cases described in other settings—Mexico, Egypt, UK, USA, Nepal—where youth have actively sought what some call “re-ruralization” (Edelman 1999; Nash 2001; Ghimire 2002: 65, 47; Lockyer 2007; Van der Ploeg 2008; McNee 2011; Halfacree and Rivera 2012). By attending to the experiences and perspectives of rural youth at home in the countryside, as well as engaged in processes of translocal mobilization, this dissertation addresses the following questions: What forces are currently shaping the participation of young people in the MST? What is drawing them in and pushing them out of the movement? What special challenges does the MST face when it competes for young people’s attention and commitment with the urban labor market, consumer commodities, and higher education? How does the MST, as an organization and as a political project, respond to young people’s specific hopes, needs, and dreams?

INTRODUCING BRAZIL’S LANDLESS RURAL WORKERS’ MOVEMENT (MST)

When tasked with explaining its arrival on the national political scene, MST leaders and spokespeople describe their movement as a consequence of Brazil’s colonial heritage which resulted in still acute rates of land and income inequality (Sauer and Perreira 2012). While this portrayal may be accurate in general terms, Wendy Wolford (2010) has shown that the

² While the English literature refers to MST youth in passing, scholarship in Brazilian Portuguese is much more extensive (see, Vieira 2004; Sales 2007; Feitosa 2007; Lazzarretti 2007; Castro 2007, 2009; Martins 2009; Firmiano 2009; Moscal 2010; Smiric 2000; Rosa 2004; Rangel Loera 2006).

MST was originally a more localized phenomenon of Southern Brazil, a relatively isolated region settled by descendants of European smallholder farmers (Ribeiro 2000) who lived in ethnically-bounded colonies that obtained land by clearing the forest and planting crops. With strong familial and communal ties, they valued land as the unquestioned basis for production and social reproduction (Wolford 2010: 56-57). Later, southern Brazilian rural livelihoods were undermined by a series of policy changes enacted under Brazil's military regime (1964-1985), which incentivized agricultural modernization and export-commodity production. The results were *horroroso* (horrible), one farmer told me, as smallholder farmers were displaced by credit structures, agricultural mechanization, and hydroelectric projects (Stédile and Fernandes 1999; Morissawa 2001; Branford and Rocha 2002; Germani 2003; Wright and Wolford 2003). As young adults grew up, married and sought land of their own, customary strategies to obtain land and transition into socially recognized adulthood were further frustrated by the closure of the agrarian frontier in southern Brazil (Wolford 2010: 62). This created intense pressure on young people, as many lacked formal education and options were strikingly limited outside the agricultural sector. As historian Clifford Welch puts it, "[T]hey could move to cities; look for work in an already saturated labor market; emigrate to Paraguay; or participate in subsidized colonization projects designed to settle frontier areas in Brazil's Central West and Amazonian regions" (Welch 2004: 200).

In the late 1970s, organized groups of farm families refused the narrow options available to them. As the military government began to relax its control, sympathetic clergymen, unions, and others invigorated by liberation theology, supported the rise of a still unnamed movement that insisted that *camponês* (peasant) families had the right stay put in southern Brazil (Martins 2005; Burdick 2009: 99-101; Rubin and Skolof-Rubin 2013). To do so, they

organized massive occupations of unproductive land, known as *acampamentos* (occupation camps). With time, the strategy paid off, as the weakening authoritarian government began to make concessions (Flynn 2010: 21). The resulting rural communities, known as *assentamentos de reforma agrária* (land reform settlements), were administered by INCRA (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) the federal agency that oversees land regularization, infrastructural development, and the provision of governmental resources and production credits (Pahnke 2014: 84).

The movement's early successes in southern Brazil prompted the proliferation of land occupations and demands, and in 1984, the newly founded social movement organization, now named the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* began to export the tactic of direct occupation. Calls for land redistribution resonated throughout Brazil, as between 1960 and 1980, some thirty million people—more than one-third of the nation's population in 1970—migrated to cities (Martine et al., 1998, cited in Dalsgard 2008: 51). The MST's efforts were bolstered by the 1988 Federal Constitution, which included a provision for land reform. Thereafter, property could be considered eligible for state expropriation and compensation at market value if it did not fulfill a "social function," that is, if its owner failed to comply with land, environmental, or labor law. INCRA was responsible for the enforcement of land use legislation and made recommendations for expropriation to the president—who was required to sign off on the development of all new land reform settlements. INCRA partnered with rural social movements, like the MST, to select potential beneficiaries and provide them with necessary resources to make a new start living on the

land, including housing, infrastructure, production credits, and technical assistance.³

Given newly democratic Brazil's supportive legislative and institutional framework, the MST mobilized the landless poor, squatters, smallholders, and slum dwellers on behalf of land reform causes. During the 1990s and 2000s, the MST experienced remarkable growth in membership (Vergara-Camus 2009). Although all of its communities share a generic label as *assentamentos de reforma agrária*, they display considerable internal diversity. For example, productive arrangements differ quite significantly, from individual family farms to industrialized cooperative enterprises. Furthermore, after being settled, individuals may, or may not, remain engaged with the social movement (Wolford 2010; Devore 2015). At the time of my research, MST participation entailed involvement in a seemingly endless calendar of events (meetings, marches, demonstrations, festivals, alternative educational programs) (Martins 2009: 92, 156). Over the last three decades or more, the MST has leveraged recurrent discursive strategies and a rich political culture to promote political action rooted in the *sem terra* identity. In so doing, they seek to harness pervasive dreams for secure land tenure, substantial citizenship, and a good life in the countryside, and put them to work as a powerful force for social protest (Chaves 2000: 11; Issa 2007; McNee 2011).

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Beyond its successes in engendering redistributive politics, the MST has become known as a particularly durable social movement organization, a fixture of Brazil's organized left, and

³ The selection of land reform beneficiaries does not occur on a first-come/first-serve basis, and was less than transparent. Alex Flynn (2010, Chapter 3) was preoccupied with the question of why the MST would mobilize more families than could be settled in a given occupation. He described how this created tensions in MST-SC during the time of his fieldwork.

an active player even in periods of relative political acquiescence. This perhaps can be explained by its centralized structure, dense institutionalization, and legitimation by successive state administrations (Rubin 2017: 221).

Although the MST is a mass-membership organization, it is hierarchically organized. In a political training course in Pernambuco, Lenhilda, a full-time militant, described its organizational structure in detail. According to her, the MST's highest-ranking members comprise a *grupo de estudos* (study group): seven talented male organizers who have been part of the movement since the 1980s. They hold these positions permanently, without elections. Some lead state MST chapters, and frequently travel to movement headquarters in São Paulo. The next tier of leadership is the *Coordenação Nacional* (National Coordination), with an additional two elected or appointed representatives from each state chapter (approximately forty-eight individuals). This body meets regularly to make decisions about political campaigns, priorities, and events. The MST also has National Sector working groups to deal with matters of finance, international relations, political training, production, education, health, gender, human rights, communications and culture. Representatives of these national-level bodies often travel nationally and internationally on behalf of the movement. These sectors publish materials, organize training courses, and deliver sermons on specific topics during political *encontros*, or MST conferences (Harnecker 2002). "Transectorial" issues, such as youth and LGBT, do not have permanent structures, having only been added to the MST in 2006 and 2015, respectively.

This organizational model is replicated at the state level. Each chapter is led by the *coordenação*, with an administrative secretariat and full-time staffers that oversee day-to-day

operations in the areas of production, finances, political training, legal advocacy, education, health, communications and culture, and—more rarely—gender and youth. Militants in Pernambuco, Paraná, and São Paulo explained that the availability of staff depends on funds from the state, NGOs, and contributions from MST members. On the regional level, leaders may be selected elected to represent clusters of settlements and occupation camps. These leaders attend statewide meetings and communicate organizational directives to residents in communities affiliated with the MST. Although collective governance is a cornerstone of the MST's organizational principles, in practice, leaders tend to “rubber-stamp” directives issued from above and pass them downward (Ondetti 2008; Navarro 2010).

Where do youth fit in the MST? Many are the sons and daughters of original land reform beneficiaries and may dwell in occupation camps. Some may rise through the leadership ranks, especially the sons and daughters of established leaders. If so, their militant careers tend to begin in regional or state secretariats or political training centers, where in exchange for housing, meals, and/or a small stipend, they serve the MST in secretarial, administrative, communications, maintenance, cooking, child-care, and security capacities. The most successful ascend even further and are selected to represent their states as professionals at the MST's National School or Secretariat in São Paulo.

Over the last three decades, such a structure has helped ensure that the MST is a resilient fixture in Brazil's social movement scene, and has appealed to a new generation of rural youth. In this thesis I will explore how their involvement with the MST often intersects with personal struggles to obtain the resources of social adulthood, such as land, housing,

employment, and education. However, by the time of my research, MST avenues towards social adulthood had become increasingly risky endeavors. Activists and spokespeople were worried about diminishing rates of land expropriation and declining rates of governmental support, which placed their grassroots project at-risk.⁴ This raises an important question. Given the supportive legislative framework and ongoing social demand for land in Brazil, why did the MST claim that the state abandoned land reform program, and lacked the willingness to invest in retaining the second generation?

NEOLIBERALIZATION OF BRAZILIAN AGRICULTURE

Part of the answer to this question is economic. Although Brazil's national agricultural policies traditionally emphasized domestic production,⁵ as the country transitioned from dictatorship to democracy, it had the largest foreign debt among developing countries (Dalsgard et al. 2008: 52)—with triple digit inflation, economic stagnation, and the implementation of structural adjustment programs. Brazil was compelled to augment its agro-exports, one of its only profitable sectors, to repay its foreign and domestic creditors (Carter 2010: 7; Wolford 2005: 257). To do so, it implemented a package of pro-market agricultural policies, such as: the elimination of export taxes and price controls, deregulation of commodity markets, the reduction of barriers to trade, and the introduction of private instruments for agricultural financing.⁶ Brazilian agriculture experienced a conservative

⁴ According to MST spokesman João Paulo Rodrigues, in 2013, only 159 families were settled on 10 properties. This was far less than was expropriated by the last military government of General Figueiredo, who expropriated 152 properties. *Brasil de Fato*. 12/18/2013. "[2013 é o pior ano da reforma agrária, diz coordenador do MST.](#)"

⁵ From the 1960s to 1980s, the Brazilian government's agricultural policies aimed to promote self-sufficiency and food security. Farmers had access to subsidized credit, price supports, along with the government purchase and storage of surpluses (Chaddad and Jank 2006: 86).

⁶ As a result of these changes, government support currently represents 3% of farm receipts in Brazil, compared with 2% in New Zealand, 4% in Australia, 8% in China, 18% in the US, and 34% in the EU (OECD 2005, cited in Chaddad et al. 2006: 86-87).

modernization of sorts—capital intensive and tightly integrated with upstream and downstream supply chain participants. In the 1990s, encouraged by profits, urbanization, economic liberalization, and competitive access to raw materials, multinational food processors and retailers augmented investments in the Brazilian market, and partially displaced domestic competitors. Such policies helped Brazil become a global agricultural superpower, a world leader in the production of coffee, orange, sugarcane, soy, corn, and meat. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Brazilian farmers were exposed to markets that were increasingly demanding and exclusionary in terms of “food quality and safety, more concentrated and vertically coordinated, and vulnerable to international competition” (Chaddad and Jank 2006: 89).⁷

Alongside these pro-market measures, land reform was viewed as a legitimate policy tool to address rural poverty, as well as pressing urban problems, such as: congestion and unemployment. The administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) claimed to have settled some 500,000 landless families (Chaddad and Jank 2006: 89),⁸ and provided beneficiaries with subsidized credit lines, resources for training, research, and extension services. In 2000, it was decided that two separate governing agencies would oversee Brazilian agricultural development and policy. The Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) would oversee the land reform program (along with indigenous reservations and quilombola communities); while the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and

⁷ One of the structural changes of recent agrifood development in Brazil is the growth of commercial agriculture characterized by economies of scale and capital intensity. The spread of commercial agriculture occurs even in sectors that have traditionally been dominated by small-scale farmers, such as dairy and corn. The dairy sector is illustrative, as the number of dairy producers supplying milk to the top 12 processors decreased from 175,000 in 1997 to less than 70,000 in 2004 (Chaddad 2006: 89).

⁸ According to the 1995 Census of Agriculture, farms with less than 10 hectares (24.7 acres) represented 49.7% of all farms in the country and hold 2.2% of all landholdings. With more than 500 hectares (1,235 acres), the largest farms represented only 2.2% of all farms, but own 56.5% of all landholdings (Chaddad and Jank 2006: 85-90).

Supply (MAPA) would formulate and administer agribusiness policies. Unfortunately, there were lopsided governmental investments and incentives for large commercial enterprises at the expense of the smallholder sector.

Today, Brazilian agribusiness is technologically sophisticated and lucrative—with exports raking in USD\$80 billion in 2010-2011 alone (Mészáros 2013: 13-14). Although its fields are marvelously productive, the Brazilian countryside is sparsely inhabited, ghostly even. Occupied farms and homesteads are rare, but abandoned foundations, boarded-up businesses, closed schools, and shanty camps are not. The polarization of Brazilian agriculture reflected an emergent “duality of farming in the country—related to the skewed distribution of rural income and land ownership” (Chaddad and Jank 2006: 88). Thus, in an analogous way to what has occurred in Brazilian urban areas, the adoption of neoliberal policies consolidated a regime of “stratified citizenship” (Holston 2008). Constitutional promises of equal rights and treatment (in the realm of education, health care, housing, land tenure, etc.), failed to materialize in practice. These contradictions were exacerbated under the two consecutive PT administrations that followed.

PARADOXES AND PROMISES OF THE PT YEARS

In 2003, former union organizer Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula), of the Workers’ Party (PT) became Brazil’s president. Historically, Lula was an important ally to the rural social movements, like the MST, and even started a minor controversy by wearing their red cap in public (Navarro 2010). After assuming the presidency, it was widely thought that he would make good on promises for significant structural change and land redistribution. Yet, results

were by and large disappointing. What might have contributed to the PT's purported loss of interest in land reform?

The PT shall be remembered for its curious amalgamation of neoliberal fiscal policy and neodevelopmentalist programs—the results of which provided dramatic improvements for the working classes, particularly in urban areas. For example, this included the growth in the minimum wage, the “conditional cash transfer programs (e.g. *Bolsa Família*) and pension payments...the expansion of universities and professional schools, the introduction of racial and social quotas for universities and the civil service, public housing programs, lower tariffs, and expanded access to electricity, and so forth” (Boito and Saad-Filho 2016: 12). The *Bolsa Família* program has been praised for lifting millions out of extreme poverty. Meanwhile, macroeconomic improvement and a growing economy resulted in historically low levels of unemployment, increased opportunities for consumption, and unprecedented access to higher education for members of all social classes (Hall 2008: 799).

In this period of economic growth, the PT focused its efforts on the cultivation of Brazilian mega-corporations, the so-called “national champions” in diverse sectors, such as: agribusiness, construction, mining, steel, meatpacking, food processing, beverages, petrochemicals, and telecommunications (Saad-Filho and Moraes 2014: 231; Cuadros 2016; Fernandes 2017). Pro-agribusiness policies included incentives for mechanization, subsidies and tax breaks, the ongoing expansion of the agrarian frontier, and advocacy for biofuels.⁹

⁹ In 2012, the United States implemented the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, Public Law 110-140, H. R. 6., 2007. The law was the fruit of collaboration between President George W. Bush and President Lula. This policy mandates that U.S. fuel-suppliers inject gasoline with “advanced” biofuels (defined as a 60% life-cycle greenhouse gas reduction relative to conventional gasoline). Brazilian sugarcane was the only eligible contender to meet the U.S.’s new standard for “alternative, green energy.” See, [interview with George W. Bush](#)

Federal programs awarded generous subsidies to corporate farmers, which received an average USD \$356,729, per year. On the other hand, family farmers (who accessed MDA-administered programs) got a fraction of governmental support—some USD \$9,079 annually (Carter 2015: 415).

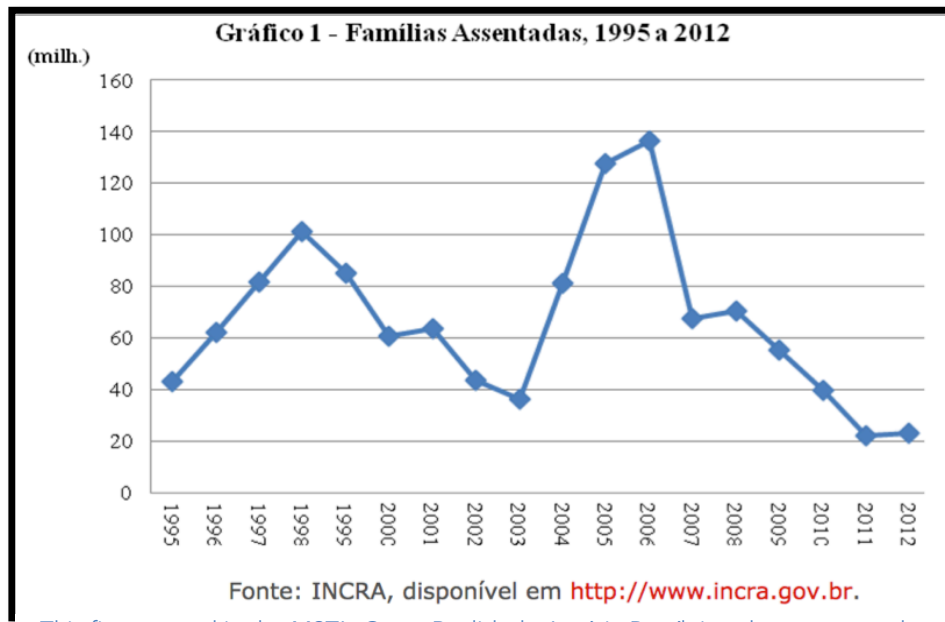
Such inequities in governmental investments were not lost on MST settlers. In 2013, Gringo, an elderly settler in Northern Paraná, said, “land reform was dead.” As he helped his aging neighbors build a chicken coop, with cigarette in mouth, chainsaw in hand, he explained:

Since Lula came to power, land reform is dead. There are no more expropriations, there are no new settlements around here, and there is no credit. It's over... Look around. Only sixteen families still live here [in the land reform settlement], when it was legalized there were fifty-four of us. We just can't make it work, and so we have to choose: go into debt, or move out.

Let's further unpack some of Gringo's concerns. In the 1980s and 1990s, participation in the federal agrarian reform program represented a somewhat reliable means to obtain secure land tenure, after having spent a period (generally 1-3 years) in an *acampamento*. The process has grown increasingly protracted, with families waiting ten years or more for state recognition. For example, even though an estimated 150,000 Brazilians sought to become land reform beneficiaries, fewer than 30,000 were settled between 2011-2014 (Dataluta 2015, cited in Gilbert 2015: 77), as illustrated in the chart below.¹⁰

[and Lula on Brazilian biofuels](#); and “[Biofuels, Brazilian Brew: America opens up to Brazilian ethanol](#),” *The Economist*, 1/7/2012.

¹⁰ This was far fewer than during the administration of right wing Fernando Collor in 1991-1992, where some 37,493 were settled (Dataluta 2015, cited in Gilbert 2015: 77).



This figure, used in the MST's Curso Realidade Agrária Brasileira, demonstrates the declining rates of settlement, from 2007 on. In 2015, no one was settled in all of Brazil.

The causes of institutional failure were complex. The PT administration adopted a conservative reading of the social function clause in the 1988 Constitution (Mézáros 2013). As such, expropriation was pursued when property owners failed to comply with productivity standards. The state turned a blind eye toward violations of environmental and labor laws, even in the case of deforestation and contemporary slave labor (Gilbert 2015: 74). When the state did expropriate land, property owners were compensated at market value. In the context of rising land prices, redistribution became prohibitively costly (Zimmerman 2016: 38; Gilbert 2015: 75). As a result, new land reform settlements were often situated in cheap, isolated regions, with poor quality soils and little access to markets and public services. Disappointment did not end there. For those who were settled, some never received the resources that they were entitled to by law. Between 2004 and 2014, an

estimated 32,500 public rural schools were closed throughout Brazil.¹¹ While municipal and state governments claimed that these closures responded to difficulties in maintenance costs and a declining rural population, MST leaders and educators had their own views. Militants told me that the closures were due either to rampant corruption¹² or represented a deliberate strategy to de-populate the countryside.

Brazil's land reform program requires adequate state investments in land expropriation, education, healthcare, credit, technical assistance, and infrastructure. Even where the federal government approved expenditures for land reform programs, resources frequently and simply did not arrive, or were significantly behind schedule. Thus, while some MST communities survived and thrived (Gilbert 2015: 77), Brazilian land reform initiatives were highly uneven as a whole. Many have been “embryonic, tied up in cumbersome regulations, and short-funded” (Carter 2015: 420; Pahnke 2015). As Gringo pointed out to me, given state neglect and adverse conditions, many of his neighbors desisted from their agrarian dreams. Bea confirmed this sense, as she reflected on her family's situation in the hinterlands of São Paulo state. “It is as if we don't exist out here,” she told me. “We are abandoned. The government has completely forgotten about us.” As a result of these perceptions, I was told that some settlers in MST communities picked up and moved on, and their children opted to migrate elsewhere to build their futures.

¹¹To save money, municipal and city governments often engaged in *nucleação* programs—which consolidated small rural schools (with less than 50 students) and bused rural youth (especially high school students) to larger “escolar-polos” generally in urban areas. This resulted in long bus rides and discouraged attendance. “[Brasil fecha, em média, oito escolas por dia na região rural.](#)” *Folha de São Paulo*, 3/3/2014.

¹² Scandals abound regarding the misuse or diversion of funds from education projects in rural places, as the Federal Government sends funding to these smaller, local entities, which should be (in theory) passed on. For example, I think of the case of the “WhatsApp Mayor” from Maranhão, a 25-year old female mayor who stole some USD\$4 million in state education funds for the local school system. Thereafter, the town's already precarious education system collapsed and teachers went on strike for non-payment. See, “[Brazil mayor who ran town via WhatsApp wanted for corruption.](#)” *BBC World News*. 8/30/2015.

Such trends led Brazilian sociologist Zander Navarro to question the continuing social importance of the land reform program. Considering the “unstoppable pace of urbanization,” he writes, “[t]he result is a pyrrhic victory: when land reform was finally made viable in Brazil, its implementation gradually stagnated, because those formerly interested in it simply left the countryside” (Navarro 2010: 218). For MST spokesman João Pedro Stédile the trend toward settlement shrinkage signaled the emergence of a “grave political and institutional crisis” in Brazilian democracy (cited in Gilbert 2015: 78-79). Even after some three decades of continuous social mobilization for land reform causes, Brazilian land tenure remains highly unequal, exploitative labor relations persist, and indices of poverty are closely correlated with rural residence.^{13 14}

Considering the multifarious challenges confronting family farmers, how have those affiliated with the MST responded socially to perceived threats? As this dissertation will suggest, some attempted to enhance their future prospects by withdrawing themselves and their children from the fields and encouraging them to pursue nonagricultural activities (Jeffrey 2010). Indeed, as I will argue, some MST-affiliated youths were understandably

¹³ With regard to inequality and poverty, for instance, between 1970 and 1980, the number of rural poor rose from an estimated 27.6 to 28.8 million, while the Gini coefficient for land went from 0.85 in 1960 to 0.86 in 1980. As George Mészáros notes, “...in 2005-2006, some 20 years into the redemocratizing process, the Gini index for land had barely changed from its 1985 level of 0.857 to 0.854” (Mészáros 2013: 13). Sauer and Leite (2012) found that farms less than ten hectares accounted for 48% of all establishments but only occupied 2.36% per area. Properties over 1,000 hectares accounted for a fraction, 0.91% of all establishments, but occupied 44% of all arable land (Sauer and Leite 2012, cited in Mészáros 2013: 13). Between 2003 and 2012, Catholic Church’s Pastoral Land Commission identified 63,417 cases of enslaved workers and 2,569 landowners accused of serious labor code violations (Carter 2015: 417).

¹⁴ Many, during this time, were troubled by President Dilma Rousseff’s ardent support of the Belo Monte Dam in Amazonia (see Gobbi 2013), as well as the plight of the “poor Guarani Kaiowa” in Mato Grosso do Sul, whose lifeworlds were under siege by agribusiness interests. Ancestral lands and waters were contaminated with pesticides, indigenous leaders assassinated, and then, in 2012 and 2013, the tribe threatened to collectively commit suicide if displaced from their territory. It seemed that rural Brazilians (indigenous, landless, Afrodescendants) were hurting almost everywhere.

disillusioned with their prospects for remaining rural. Why join or stay in an MST occupation camp if they would have to wait ten years or more to obtain land of their own? Why stay on the family farm, if production lagged and the only certainty was a lifetime of debt and poverty? At the time of my research it seemed that the “emergence of economic alternatives, no matter how fragile or temporary” was correlated with a contraction in the MST’s appeal (Mészáros 2013: 20). With urban unemployment at historic lows and increased opportunities for higher education, many rural young people sought to build their lives and futures elsewhere. There can be no doubt that this trend has introduced major uncertainties into the future of the MST.

‘THE GIANT AWOKED?’ JUNE 2013

Questions of youth and the MST were intensely debated after the explosion of public discontent in the demonstrations of June and July 2013. I had only just arrived in southern Brazil to begin my research, when activists from the Free Fare Movement (*Movimento Passe Livre*, MPL) led a small demonstration to demand the reversal of an increase in public transport fares in São Paulo city. Their banners read: SE A TARIFA NAO BAIXAR, A CIDADE VAI PARAR! IF THE FARE DOESN’T COME DOWN, THE CITY WILL SHUT DOWN! In response to intense police repression, protests swept across Brazil (Cuadros 2016: 232), as hundreds of thousands took to public spaces to advocate on behalf of a wide variety of demands. Leftists called for an improvement in public services like transport, health care, and education, and denounced the misallocation of funds related to mega-event development schemes in anticipation of 2014’s World Cup. Those from the right carried signs that supported proposed legislation that would allow sixteen year olds to be tried as adults in criminal cases, and demanded improvements to public security provision (Saad-Filho and

Boito 2014: 237).

While authorities almost immediately rescinded the tariff hike in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the masses continued to gather. The scores of purportedly apolitical youth on the streets attracted significant attention and commentary. “The Brazilian Autumn” was easily the biggest protest movement since 1992, when millions had marched for the impeachment of then-president Fernando Collor. Some commentators made comparisons with Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, as well as the protests in Istanbul months prior (Cuadros 2016: 232). Even though the Brazilian case occurred during a period of economic growth, not austerity, participants and spectators suggested that a new generation was experiencing their own political awakening. The demonstrations were organized online and attracted large contingents of youngsters. No single social movement or political party could contain them. The causes and consequences of the demonstrations are the subject of intense scholarly debate (see Dent et al. 2013; Holston 2013; Ansell 2013; Ortellado 2013; Burdick 2013; Boulous 2014; Fernandes 2017). Most broadly, they have been interpreted as symptomatic of a crisis of representative democracy in Brazil. They have also been credited for initiating a new generation of Brazilian youth into collective action.

Over the following months, the protests of June and July 2013 hung over my research; they were all anyone wanted to talk about. Within the MST’s social universe, the protests, and especially young people’s involvement in them, were a cause of both hope and concern. They signified that young people weren’t wholeheartedly disinterested in “politics,” but were less inclined to join traditional types of social movement organizations. In an interview about the matter, João Pedro Stédile viewed the protests optimistically, as indicative of a new phase

in Brazilian class struggle.

The resurgence of youth demonstrations had two meanings: First, that the neodevelopmentalist program of the Lula and Dilma governments did not resolve the problems of the people and especially the young (in terms of the universalization of education, housing, and for reasonable public transport), and this is why the youth went to the streets; the other meaning is that youth are always the thermometer that indicates when there is an intensification of struggle, because, as they are excluded from the system of production, they mobilize before others... What we need to do in the next period is to build bridges of unity among the youth and the working classes, to build a united front to demand structural reforms and coalesce our energies in social mobilizations.¹⁵

When the reporter pointed out that the protests of June 2013 did not have a purely “classist character,” and mentioned that they participants articulated significant criticisms of traditional social movements, Stédile responded:

Of course they are the result of class struggle, because of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and multinational capital cannot solve working class problems... [The criticism] is natural. Social movements have their characteristics and specificities, which have come from twenty or thirty years in development. That is, we [of the MST] have a *modus operandi*, we have a methodology to organize the struggle, but that does not mean that we are opposed to the liturgy of youth, that is, even if disorganized, as a class they go to the streets. [The youth] use other forms of advertising, motivation, communication—and the main vehicle was Facebook... So what method is good or bad? Both are good... Different is good; we need not be equal. But the important thing is that we are willing to create conditions to struggle together, because free public transport, decent housing, and universal access to higher education will only be achieved if all forms of popular mobilization are united to confront power.¹⁶

This point was clarified in my interview with a young leader of the LPJ¹⁷ at the MST’s

¹⁵ All translations in this dissertation are my own.

See: [IHU. 5/16/2014.](#)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The Levante Popular da Juventude (Popular Youth Uprising) was founded in 2007. I was told that it was the result of a La Via Campesina initiative of 2005, which directed agrarian social movements to build bridges among rural and urban youth. The MST organized the first encontro between MST youth and urban youth at UNICAMP

National Headquarters in São Paulo city, in May 2014. Carla reflected:

Since June 2013, everything has changed. We have had a deep evaluation about the question of youth... We decided that we must dialogue with youth who have grown up with the contradictions of the PT. Unemployment has fallen, and they have greater access to higher education, but Brazilian society has major problems! And so, in June 2013, we saw that youth are willing and able to fight for their rights, but they don't want to do it in an organized way. How do we move them from spontaneous protest to organized struggle? So, this is our job, to demonstrate the value of social organization. We must rebuild trust with the youth of today, and this is important because so many have lost their faith in social movements, unions, and in political parties... And this cannot stand, because we are all indignant here in Brazil. Nothing works here. Not a single institution works how it should.

After June 2013, I was told that the MST had given the “question of youth” further thought and reflection. The masses of “disorganized” youth on the streets prompted considerable discussion as to how to include a new generation into the ranks of organized politics.

Thereafter, MST leadership increased recruitment efforts and expanded opportunities for youth participation in the social movement organization (MST 2012, 2014).

Indeed, it seems that as the MST seeks to respond to new and complex circumstances, it has recognized that its future is intertwined with willingness and capacity of young people to carry on its political project—as leaders and rural producers. As Wendy Wolford notes, “If the movement’s past is laid at the feet of fallen heroes, hopes for the future are placed in the children” (Wolford 2010: 86). Thus, once again my question: How do rural youth experience the institutionalized political pathways structured by the MST? Are they interested in

in 2005. In 2006, it structured the MST’s Youth Collective, and in 2007, the LPJ was sparked. It is led by coordinating members of the MST Youth Collective, as well as representatives from Brazilian students’ movements (particularly those who study agronomy and biology, and have interests in the MST). The LPJ has grown dramatically, and periodically stages protest camps and *encontros* to solidify commitments. It resembles the MST’s type of social organization, and even shares office space and personnel with them, but is willing to tackle intersectional issues (gender, race, sexuality).

remaining rural? Who are these “landless” youth?



Theatre troupe, Saci Arte, comprised of young people from land reform settlements, perform at MST-PR's II Festival of Arts in Curitiba. 10/2013.

JUVENTUDE SEM TERRA / LANDLESS YOUTH

Since 1984, the MST has officially claimed to include “all members of the family—old and young, men and women” (Branford and Rocha 2002: 23) in its struggle for land redistribution. According to João Pedro Stédile, this decision was strategic. “We realize today that [the family] is our greatest strength, because men, besides being sexist, are conservative. By including all members of the family, the movement acquires a remarkable force” (Ibid). Young people are included in the MST, in both discourse and policy, but on the basis of their belonging to nuclear families—not as individuals. The MST thus discursively contributes to a project of shaping (and arguably simplifying) youth subjectivity and

positionality.¹⁸ During the time of my research, those affiliated with the National Youth Collective periodically traveled throughout Brazil to deliver sermons on the “youth question” in large MST gatherings. From Santa Catarina to Ceará, the same representatives gave the same speeches and referred to landless youth in a way that underplayed their plurality and intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; Yuval-Davis 2006: 193-194). It seems safe to say that the MST has replicated the move of many Marxist social movements, by foregrounding class politics at the expense of a more nuanced analysis that takes other axes of social difference into account when seeking to explain social injustice (Magrini and Souza 2013).

Rural youth themselves often complained about feeling invisible: in the MST, in public policy,¹⁹ and in popular culture (Castro 2008). Their invisibility has been replicated in scholarly accounts, when they do appear there are strong tendencies towards reducing their agency by conflating the individual with the collective (Meek 2016; Wolford 2010: 20). For example, Navarro suggests that the MST offers potentially “irresistible” opportunities for poor rural youth, appealing to their basic desires of social inclusion and mobility.

Socially and economically among the poorest in the Brazilian social structure, it does not take a deeper analysis to see what it means for [rural youth] to leave their communities in order to occupy ‘power positions,’ to take courses, to travel, to benefit from the MST’s public visibility, at first in their own regions, and later possibly at the national level (Navarro 2006: 175-176).

¹⁸ See, “[Juventude MST – A Educação Semeada Na Luta Por Terra.](#)” 2015.

¹⁹ For example, the MDA (2013) admits that federal policies to deal with rural youth and encourage them to remain in the countryside (generally through the provision of funding for land purchase and production credits) have been flawed from inception to implementation, and thus, have been rarely used by the young people for whom they were designed. One might speculate that policy formulation and provision could be enriched by a complex understanding of young people’s particular positions in agrarian structures, with special attention to intersectionality (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity), as affecting migration outcomes.

While Navarro rightly points to potential benefits of MST participation, he doesn't appreciate high rates of attrition (Tarlau 2013) and the fact that most rural youth in MST communities are not full-time activists. More sympathetically, Gabriel Ondetti notes that MST youth "may not receive much in material compensation, but they gain a feeling of belonging, as well as the social prestige associated with being part of an influential, if not controversial organization" (Ondetti 2008: 120). Generally speaking, MST youth have been mentioned in passing, but it seems that little is actually known about them (at least in the English literature, and from an ethnographic perspective). This leads us to an important gap regarding the experiences, aspirations and trajectories of rural youth. This scholarly neglect is surprising, as "intergenerational relationships and tensions have been a recurring theme in studies of agrarian change... but they consistently receive less notice than class and gender relations"

(Hall et al. 2015: 482; see also White 2012; Sumberg et al. 2012).

Meanwhile, MST leaders and older adults had specific complaints about the youth. For example, Paulo, a middle-aged male in Paraná complained, "Youth today may be better off in every respect than their elders. They own things, they go to school... but they know nothing of struggle." Many suggested that relatively prosperous conditions promoted individualism, alienation, and delusion.²⁰ I was often told that rural youth were rebellious and manipulated by the mass media, and had forgotten their "true natures" as productive beings and were resigned to a life of passive consumption (MST 2011, 2014). Thus, they were increasingly drawn to urban places in pursuit of leisure, consumption, salaried employment,

²⁰ I am reminded of journalist Alex Cuadros' musings on rapid generational change in Brazil at-large during the PT years. He writes: "This was the youth of the Workers' Party years... They ate well, they dressed well, they owned things; there were better off than their parents had ever dreamed. *But their status as citizens remained incomplete...* [They] might have smartphones—LGs and Nokias in blinged-out cases—but they have no family doctor. If there was a Brazilian Dream... these kids grasped its shallowest outlines" (Cuadros 2016: 257).

and higher education.

Inspired by Wolford (2010), Chaves (2000), Flynn (2010), and Devore (2014) this dissertation seeks to complicate one-dimensional portrayals of second-generation MST members. I explore the possibility that while the MST may have helped to create a shared vocabulary, symbolic repertoire, and mobilization tactics, there was no prototypical landless youth experience. Many grew up without significant knowledge of the MST at all (Tarlau 2013: 23). As Denise (20/f) explained, “I just thought the MST was something my parents did because they were poor and unemployed.” Others readily pointed to gaps between MST discourse and practice and many displayed “contradictory consciousness”(Gramsci 1971: 335). I was continually reminded of Antonio Gramsci’s warning, that there is no necessary correspondence between sociopolitical position and action (see also, Barker et al. 2002: 2; Mansbridge 2001).

Not all “MST youth” I came to know engaged in agricultural labor or assumed an activist identity. Becoming *sem terra* did not occur automatically (Kaplan 1998). This dissertation documents, instead, how age, gender, sexuality, and familial ties affected youth involvement in the MST. I will argue that engagement was processual, uneven, and often conflictual. As individuals, young people had their own lives, ideas, experiences, and imagined futures—even when deeply involved in land reform politics. I have done my best to represent this heterogeneity, and avoid the temptation to “flatten complexity” (Kaplan and Shapiro 1998). I believe there is value in portraying the pluralism of youth and hope this dissertation helps to contextualize their choices and trajectories during an especially unstable political and economic period.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This dissertation seeks to shed light on what it means to be young and *sem terra* in three geographic corners of rural Brazil. My empirical chapters aim to contribute to literatures on youth engagement in both agriculture and in activism.

YOUTH AND AGRICULTURE

Considerable research has already examined the trajectories of Brazil's *juventude rural* (rural youth), due to concerns about ongoing outmigration. For example, a 2013 report from the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MDA) communicated the national preoccupation:

“[T]he trajectories of youth from the countryside to the city are not good for the nation, for the countryside, or for cities, and possibly not for the youth who had to leave their communities behind. [Between 1940 and 2010] the *favelas* grew in almost every Brazilian city. For the future of family farming, as well as for the Brazilian nation, it would be better if youth could stay and continue working in their own communities, and if there were conditions for them to marry, have families, and live with dignity. This is why rural youth have become an important problem for the government” (MDA 2013: 15).

Based on interviews with rural youth in northeastern and southern Brazil, the authors compared the advantages and disadvantages of living in rural and urban places (MDA 2013: 25). Regardless of the challenges of rural life, in this study, 84% of rural youth interviewed preferred to live in the countryside (MDA 2013: 26). However, young people's decisions to stay or leave were not made lightly or individually. Family relations clearly had an important influence on young people's trajectories. Consider the following testimony:

At home, my father always decided everything—when we would plant, harvest, sell, and buy. My mother didn't have an opinion about anything. When I said I would

plant my own *borta* [garden patch], my father almost had a panic attack. He is the *chefe da familia* [head of the household], not me. This is the reality of the campo until today. Women's lack of autonomy encourages girls to leave, to pursue education elsewhere, or work in other people's homes [as domestic workers]. They often want to study and work outside of farming, and would rather not marry another [male] farmer and go through the same conditions again. In rural families, it is the husband who dictates the rules. Women are first controlled by their fathers, and then by their husbands (MDA 2013: 27).

Another said:

Youth leave the country to study and study to leave the countryside. From childhood, he hears his parents say—go, leave here, study, boy, so you don't have to stay on the land. Life is so hard for farm families, they are so far from everything—from facilities, technology, government support, from being seen in society, so much so that their parents do not want their children to have the same life. They tell them to study in the city (MDA 2013: 27).

With such perspectives in mind, ethnographically, I explore that following questions with youth in MST communities:

- Do they wish to remain or re-become rural? What kinds of futures do they have in mind?
- What kinds of barriers hinder their integration into processes of land tenure, and their participation in farming?
- How does rural patriarchy, particularly gendered and generational dynamics, influence decisions to stay and leave rural spaces?

By highlighting the dynamics of production and social reproduction in three rural communities, I approach young people's position in agrarian structure, and their choices to stay in and/or turn away from farming. I describe how familial dynamics, institutional structures, and environmental factors contribute to rural retention outcomes.

YOUTH AND ACTIVISM

The dissertation also seeks to contribute to discussions about the role of emotion in social movements (Taylor and Whittier 1998; Effler 2010; Jasper 2011; Gardner and Zald 2014), and more specifically, in the MST (Kröger 2011). For example, political scientist Patrick Quirk (2012) argues that by joining the MST, individuals shed their prior selves, and become imbued with a sense of dignity and empowerment. These positive emotions, he claims, spur further activist engagement. Quirk's work is largely based on testimonies with established leaders whose involvement dates to earlier periods of MST mobilization. It thus slips into a fairly homogenizing and static view. I will, in contrast, suggest that beyond a vague sense of empowerment, participation in the MST also often involves what Erving Goffman (1968) has called "the mortification of self," or affronts to personal dignity as individual needs are subjected to centralized collectivities. Moreover, this dissertation sheds light on how the MST responds to increasingly unfavorable political circumstances by appealing to youngsters' emotions in specific registers. This investigation is important, as interactions and (dis)connections between "young people and adults" in the context of social movement activities, remains, for the most part "a social science mystery" (Scott and Artis 2005: 55). My focus on MST-involved youth helps to investigate this mystery by posing the following questions:

- How are political values and collective identities transmitted to these young people? In this process, what are the roles of family, peers, and other socializing institutions?
- What kind of barriers, in terms of gender and generation, hinder young people's integration into the MST?
- How does land justice activism intersect with young people's personal life projects,

aspirations, and trajectories?

By attending to the experiences and perspectives of rural youth, this dissertation suggests that although the MST's central objectives (for land and social transformation) have remained relatively fixed over the last thirty-three years, the meanings of and motivations for landless activism have shifted (Yurchak 2005). In some cases, young people understand the MST to be a preliminary step towards breaking away from rural lifeworlds and livelihoods. In others, they utilize the MST's institutional offerings to redefine and reimagine what rurality might entail. By providing a holistic representation of young women and men, this research seeks to shed light on the ways that prefigurative and personal needs may (and may not) become entangled in the MST's strategic politics of redistribution (Mische 2001; Robnett 1997). Moreover, it reveals how MST political culture discouraged female participation and reaffirmed gender inequities in somewhat unexpected ways (Effler 2010).



9/2013. Women hanging out at occupation camp in Rio Pequeno, Antonina, Paraná, having an impromptu baby shower for baby Luisa's arrival.

'DIFFICULT DIALOGUES': PITFALLS AND PROMISES OF ACTIVIST RESEARCH

all the women. in me. are tired.
 –nayyirah waheed.

As an activist-turned-academic, I wanted to follow the examples of scholars who inspired me. I was convinced that activist scholars have a potentially important role insofar as they work with organized political movements and make themselves useful to social justice causes. Charles Hale, for example, stresses the value of activist research in anthropology, which he defines as a method that requires an explicit political commitment to an “organized group of people in struggle” (Hale 2006: 97). For him, dialogue with such groups should “shape each phase of the research process, from the conception of the research topic to data collection, verification, and the dissemination of results” (Ibid). Others persuasively argued that engagement “opens doors” towards the production of generative knowledge (Goldstein 2012), increases analytical rigor, and produces epistemologically superior research (Schensul 2008: 104; Greenwood and Whyte 1993; Fine and Torre 2007; Hemment 2007; Goodale 2009; Akom 2011; Cammarota 2011). I was open to all of these propositions and sought to emulate them in my own work. I hoped to use activist research, as a methodology and intellectual activity, as a vehicle to nourish “counterhegemonic projects” and contribute to social justice organizing (Mendez 2008: 140).

In spite of my best intentions, I immediately encountered problems rarely discussed by my academic heroes. What, for example, is the novice female ethnographer to do if a particular social movement organization does not take *her* seriously? More complex still, how should *she* proceed if there is a significant disconnect between social movement leadership, and the individuals that comprise it? Where should *her* loyalties lie? These questions impinged upon me from the very beginning, as MST leadership was often unresponsive but the rank-and-file

generously opened their homes and lives to me. For reasons that this dissertation will clarify, my sympathies lie with the latter—and most especially with rural youth, whom I have come to see as particularly marginalized both in the MST and in Brazilian society more broadly. Yet, my stance was problematic. Taking young people seriously, and my decision to prioritize their voices and experiences at the expense of their elders and betters, engendered *divergências* (tensions) between myself and MST leadership, in ways that were both unexpected and uncomfortable—although extremely revealing.

In retrospect, I have been perplexed that the champions of activist scholarship have had relatively little to say about gendered challenges of conducting field research. This is surprising because patriarchy is deeply entrenched, even among progressive social movements (Nelson 1999; Barbosa 2004; Deslandes 2009; Arguelles 2016). I want to share a bit more about my own experience, as it may be instructive for future female researchers. I have included it not in a confessional spirit, but to insist that there is no one template for activist scholarship: the researcher's body and positionality matter. As Rebhun writes in her ethnography on love in Northeastern Brazil, "The instrument of investigation in anthropological fieldwork is the researcher herself. Her data are formed by the places she visits, the people who befriend her (and those who merely tolerate her), and her observations of and reactions to her experiences" (Rebhun 1999: 3).

I begin by describing some of the challenges of conducting ethnographic research with the MST. The MST's *acampamentos*, *assentamentos*, and *centros de formação* are geographically dispersed and outsider access to them is controlled. When foreigners visit, they generally do so under supervision of MST militants. In conversations with activists and academics, I

learned that many visit model communities and take them to be emblematic of the movement at large. Indeed, a specific image of “the base” was curated by MST leaders as they intensely (and understandably) cultivated internal coherence by carefully “representing their members and ‘framing’ their positions” (Wolford 2010: 31) so as to align with official narratives, platforms and politics. As time passed, I came to appreciate how this placed me in an awkward situation, as the objectives of the MST were at odds with my own—of seeking out and portraying complexity.

In 2011, as I was developing the project, simply making contact with the MST’s gatekeepers was a challenge. A wealthy ex-communist militant, a personal friend of my advisor, arranged my first meeting with an MST representative in Rio de Janeiro. In this meeting, I was told to study Portuguese. I did little else during the following year and, with a graduate research fellowship from the National Science Foundation, I returned in 2012 but was anxious, as my MST contact was unresponsive. My expectations were modest for this trip: I hoped to visit land reform settlements, meet interested youngsters, improve my language skills, and learn enough to write a defensible research proposal. Luckily, my arrival in Rio de Janeiro coincided with the *Cúpula dos Povos*, a parallel summit organized alongside the UN’s Rio+20, a sustainable development conference. A large MST delegation was marching in the streets and I had the good fortune to meet a friendly young male militant from Paraná. I’ll call him Adam.²¹ Adam suggested that I attend an MST-PR event, the *Jornada de Agroecologia*.

Some three weeks later, the gatekeepers responded to my requests. I was told to meet Reginaldo, a coordinating member of the MST’s National Youth Collective, in a land reform

²¹Most of the names in this dissertation, of people and of places, are pseudonyms due to the sensitive nature of research findings.

settlement in Santa Catarina state. Simply arriving in the settlement (as a single woman with less-than-stellar Portuguese) was a challenge. Then, I had the misfortune of becoming quite sick after drinking too much *chimarrão* (erva mate tea) and lacking a ride to town. The combination of rural isolation and illness was more than I could bear. Fortunately, a kind man from the settlement took pity on me and gave me a ride to a pharmacy. Sick, confused, and scared, I boarded a bus, and followed Adam's advice. I never returned to Santa Catarina, or any MST community based on advice from strangers.

Two days later, I arrived in Londrina, Paraná for the *Jornada de Agroecologia*, an agroecological festival.²² I was not sure how to walk into the event, but in the hotel lobby I was fortunate to see a group of youngsters wearing MST hats and clothing. I timidly asked them for a ride and happily discovered that they were hip-hop singers from São Paulo state. Upon learning about my research project and fully aware that I was alone and disoriented, they befriended me. We were inseparable for the next month. They were not yet part of the hierarchical structures of MST-Brazil's leadership. Had I not made their acquaintance, I might have given up on the project altogether. The positive relationships I developed with them resulted in a flurry of invitations (via Facebook) to attend political training courses, settlements, and occupation camps. From then on, I spent time in places I was personally invited by friends. These personal relationships were extraordinarily useful as I learned to navigate the competing tensions between myself, MST leaders, elderly farmers, and their sons and daughters.

²² MST-Paraná, MST-PR, throws fabulous events and is renowned throughout the national network as the birthplace of the movement, and for its highly organized character with successful agricultural cooperatives and agroecology programs.

Thereafter, having established a network of contacts within the movement, I decided to forego ongoing communication with the bureaucrats at MST-Brazil. In 2013 and especially 2014 (after having achieved advanced fluency in Portuguese), I continued to learn why MST-Brazil's male leaders did not like me. On one occasion, when I provided translation services for a group of Canadian undergraduate students at the MST's National School in São Paulo, the chief ideologue publicly criticized my appearance, as I am not thin or conventionally beautiful. Others doubted my research credentials because of my visible tattoos, which was somewhat understandable considering the association with criminality and urbanity. Some disapproved of my shabby clothing (I am a poor graduate student!) and found my "comportment" to be offensive. This latter charge I interpreted in a gendered way. I did not conform to expectations for a respectable rural Brazilian woman. I traveled alone, played guitar, smoked cigarettes, asked impertinent questions, and drank alongside men. Although I grew up in an intensely patriarchal rural subculture, and imagined that this prepared me for what I would encounter during fieldwork, I was mistaken. As a female researcher, I could not be categorically placed into socially acceptable roles—as a wife, mother, girlfriend, sister, daughter, or peasant. Among the *sem terra*, I was always first and foremost a woman; my "status" as a foreign researcher was secondary. I could not please everyone, and found myself squarely involved in the "compromised conditions of the political process" (Hale 2006: 98) pulled into conflicts on the micro-political terrain (Mann 1994) regarding youth,



After a day of collective farming, the researcher poses for photograph, and is unexpectedly kissed by research participants. 4/2014.

gender, sexuality, and belonging. These conflicts and my own inability to inhabit a socially recognizable role worked at cross-purposes with my own expectations as an activist scholar or scholar of activism.

I now can appreciate how this research project placed me in an almost impossible situation as I struggled to negotiate competing expectations and demands. The contentious nature of the research topic, coupled with my own positionality as a young, white, single woman put me in spaces where “my respectability and sexuality were constantly scrutinized” (Williams 2014: 216). I was often asked: Where is your husband? Why are you alone? This is but one example of “difficult dialogues” (Williams 2014: 216) that provide a much-needed corrective to the “gender-neutral” or masculine foundations of activist scholarship (Berry 2016).²³

²³ Claudia Chavez Arguelles (2016) reportedly had similar challenges while researching political violence and indigenous land struggles in Southern Mexico. She recalls an occasion when she was called to a meeting with some ten male movement gatekeepers who dismissed her research proposal in decidedly gendered terms because, “collaboration is like courtship.” Arguelles hoped to have been welcomed in solidarity, but was treated

Being a woman “added so many layers of frustration” (Mahdavi 2009: 70) to my experience as a novice field researcher. This was especially apparent in Pernambuco. There, older adults had very specific ideas about how I should spend my time and whom I should talk to. While sharing a roof, I was expected to conform to traditional gendered roles. Domestic friction arose when I tried to leave the house unsupervised. My hostess, Dona Luisa often badgered me about my comings and goings.

Where are you going? What are you doing? *Com mais quem?* Who else is going with you? Don't go there! *Você não pode.* Those people are *sem futuros* [without futures]! No. Stay here... *Oxente!* Help me peel this *macaxeira* [manioc]!

I was an utter disappointment as a pseudo-daughter. Dona Luisa's expectations interfered with what I thought I should be doing: namely, interviewing youngsters and joining them in their productive and leisurely pursuits. When I did go out, Dona Luisa thought that I ought to do outreach or pastoral work with rural youth, a group she viewed as “troubled” and in need of moral rescue. As almost everywhere, rapid social change resulted in generational conflict within Brazil's rural households (Stacey 1998). Dona Luisa was particularly troubled by the increasing visibility of *travestis*, gays, and lesbians, along with the decline in traditional patterns of authority and marriage. “Everyone today just wants their liberty. They are only interested in drugs and partying. No one is interested in working the *roça* anymore.” She implored me to intervene: “If someone would just talk to them, remind them of what is important, this could help. The youth don't have respect anymore.” She hoped I might encourage them to study, work, go to church, join the MST, or do something with their

with caution and distrust. She too carried out her research, despite these complications, but to do so, was forced to naturalize patriarchal microviolences.

lives—but, alas, that wasn't my role either.

Dona Luisa's mobility constraints and expectations, while annoying, were instructive as I discovered the intensely policed gendered world inhabited by rural Brazilians (Rubin and Sokoloff Rubin 2013). My experience echoes that of Brazilian anthropologist, Silvana de Souza Nascimento. Reflecting on her fieldwork on the sertão of Goiás, she said:

Seu Tota, the owner of the house where I lived and a local leader, proposed a test for me, the girl who had just arrived from São Paulo and knew little of the countryside. He asked me to peel a lemon, and stood beside me watching... “This is not man's work,” he explained. He seemed satisfied with my efforts and told me kindly that I was a [female] “worker.” ...The kitchen, one of the principal female spaces, became my place of work in a double sense, as a woman and as an anthropologist. But my participatory position hampered my approach to men, as married men rarely publicly addressed single or strange women like me. This barrier in relation to the male universe proved revealing: it indicated the predominance of a social rule that separated men and women in different spaces and in forms of sociability, especially in collective places shared by all (Nascimento 2012: 372-373).

For the most part, and especially in public, the adult male universe was off-limits to me.

When men spoke to me, they often had amorous propositions in mind. Female interest in male perspectives was often “misrecognized as sexual desire” (Arguelles 2016). Often, I was ignored, as it is considered inappropriate for married males to address single females.²⁴ I tried to stay close to women and learned how to deflect unwanted attention from men.

These women taught me to react through “direct and abrasive verbal (and even physical) gestures to convey a single and forceful message: ‘Leave me alone and go bother someone else’” (Viladrich 2007: 115). But, alas, I was not always successful (Deslandes 2009; Berry 2016; Cordis 2016). After a time, unable to bear the harassment any longer, I put on a

²⁴ See Effler (2010) on painful experiences of being ignored while conducting research among urban social movements in the United States.

wedding ring and did not correct those who speculated that I “must be a lesbian.” The experience was unnerving and destabilized my sense of self in key ways (Kulick and Wilson 1995: 221, 268) but I came to intimately understand the (sometimes dangerous) worlds of my female friends. Socially subordinate, it seemed that women were not considered full persons until they married and became mothers (see also, Hutchinson 1996: 190; Mahdavi 2009); males (and their emotional states) were to be feared. Female status was intimately connected to sexuality, and most importantly, to one’s relationships to men (Rebhun 1999: 119-122; Allen 2011).

These points of contention—between older adults and myself—made me attractive to young people who confronted similar challenges as well. In each of my research locales, I was adopted into friendship circles of the multiply marginal—females, LGBTs, and dark-skinned youth. On a daily basis, they navigated intensely patriarchal and gerontocratic dynamics. They were eager to show me off, bring me into their complex social worlds, and use me in their own projects of self- and subject-formation. As an outsider, some saw me as a potential ally and friend. Having an *amiga americana* was a source of pride and self-esteem, and was explicitly recognized as an opportunity to *quebra aquela rotina* (break with the routine). Youngsters often used my presence to evade ever-pressing social responsibilities, from marching in MST mobilizations to doing housework.

By the end of my research, contradictions and difficulties mounted to the point that I had to disengage. I explain briefly, for the purposes of transparency. During my fieldwork, MST militants were aware of my activities and whereabouts (after all, they were responsible for making appropriate introductions and suggesting research settings). Only in May 2014, did

my foreign, fluent self attract the attention of the MST bureaucrats in São Paulo. A rather flustered representative of CRI (the MST's Sector of International Relations) approached me. How was I completing research without direct supervision of the MST? Was I an infiltrator? She told me (rather paternalistically) that for the purposes of my own safety, I needed to tell her of my location at all times. I complied.

By August 2014, I had grown weary of Pernambuco. After months of harassment and crippling self-consciousness, I decided to return to São Paulo. Having heard about my intent to move on, I was called to a meeting in front of six MST leaders. I was given five minutes to summarize almost two years of research findings. Although I thought I was being complimentary, they took offense. Within days, a letter was circulated throughout the MST network that stated I should be excluded. Unfortunately, I was left on the receiving end of substantial gossip. Rumors of my "misconduct" circulated far and wide and generated disparate responses: laughter, disgust, and disbelief. I was saddened by all of this, as I was deeply invested in the project and left without an opportunity to defend myself.

What might have caused such discomfort with the research project? While in Brazil, I did a number of things that demonstrated my positive intentions: I purchased water filters for land occupiers, tutored children and young adults, provided translation services, and generally tried to reciprocate whenever possible. I only stayed in places where I was invited and developed positive relationships with settlers, occupiers, and militants. What, then, might have provoked such negative reactions from the highest echelons of MST leadership (aside from the fact that they found me unattractive, poorly dressed, and generally offensive)? My friends in the movement speculated that a profound misunderstanding had taken place. The

entire debacle was not unfamiliar to them and I can assure you that I was not the first and will not be the last to be excluded from the MST. After all, the MST is a hierarchical, centralized, masculine setting (not, perhaps, unlike much of larger Brazilian society). Female friends suggested my methodology was to blame. Since my travels had taken me across Brazil, Diane (29/f) mentioned that I had seen more of the MST than most of its members and militants. She apologized, “We get nervous sometimes, because people from the outside don’t always appreciate and value what we have built and what it means to us on the inside... I think they are scared about what you know.” Diane had a point. As a cultural anthropologist, my ethnographic approach was at-odds with the MST’s expectations for foreign researchers. Firstly, I was not interested in taking bus tours to model settlements while supervised by movement representatives. This would have distorted findings. Second, I did not hire MST militants to conduct interviews and/or transcribe them. Third, I lived in the places that I studied and conducted participant observation. I do not wish to romanticize these methods. My experience was difficult, uncomfortable, and placed me at risk. It is worth remembering that staying in isolated rural communities—places that lack reliable access to transportation, security (locks, doors, or police), and/or communication technologies—puts women in tremendously vulnerable situations.²⁵ Immersion, although useful for research purposes, was intrinsically hazardous and should be appreciated as such.²⁶ Although the experience did help me develop a different perspective of the MST and made

²⁵ Because it is difficult to ensure safety and security in the MST’s provisional occupation camps, anecdotal stories, as well as news reports of rape in MST occupation camps abound. For example, *Globo1*, 6/6/2016. “[Mulher é estuproada em Teófilo Otoni diz polícia.](#)”

Official MST communications often suggest that these journalistic stories are mere right-wing attacks on the movement, however, such claims effectively silence victims and foreclose dialogue about how to keep women and girls safe in MST spaces. See MST 11/5/2016. “[Mulheres Sem Terra respondem jornal que acusa casos de estupros em acampamentos do MST.](#)”

²⁶ I discovered (too late in fact) that hazards for females might be minimized by taking certain precautions, such as: wearing a wedding ring, having an escape plan or personal transportation, staying close to women, and *never being left alone with men.*

me intimately aware of facets of rural life that would have otherwise remained mysterious, it has made the difficult work of analyzing and writing this dissertation more painful and complex. My hope is that breaking the silence might help my female friends in the Brazilian countryside and future feminist-activist-scholars. After all, as the MST slogan puts it: *Se calarmos as pedras gritarão*. If we stay silent, the stones will scream.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

This dissertation is firmly rooted in an ethnographic approach and applies a youth-centered framework to the study of second-generation MST members. It provides a timely and original contribution to the already extensive MST literatures.²⁷ Although the MST's politics of redistribution have been well researched, few published works are based on empirical studies or long-term, participant observation (Flynn 2010: 22; Wolford 2009). While some utilize qualitative interviews, they tend to replicate the discourses of leadership at the expense of attending to the rank-and-file.²⁸ This is unfortunate, because despite continuous efforts to forge an image of coherence and unity, the MST is far more complex (Wolford 2010: 31-32). Confusing rhetoric for reality casts a long shadow on the legitimacy of the academic enterprise itself, particularly for those engaged in activist research. Such accounts may fabricate a normative, static, and ultimately uninspiring image of the MST, which performs a profound disservice to those real human beings who, individually and collectively, struggle for land and social justice.

²⁷ For instance, between 1987-2010, almost five hundred dissertations and theses were published about the MST in Brazilian Portuguese (Magrini and Souza 2013: 14).

²⁸ For example, Pereira 2012; Vergara-Camus 2009; Quirk 2012; Arenhart 2007; Robles and Veltmeyer 2015

Over the course of eighteen months, I lived and worked alongside rural families in three land reform settlements and accompanied young adults in spaces and places organized by the MST (occupation camps, political training centers, protest camps). I individually interviewed ninety-seven rural youth, and many of their family members. Research participants were recruited through snowball sampling techniques. I conducted four focus groups in settlements and training centers in Paraná, São Paulo, and Pernambuco. During our discussions, both formal and informal, we talked about experiences growing up, aspirations for work and higher education, romance and family formation, perceptions of the MST, and Brazilian politics in general.

Completing formal interviews with rural youth was not always easy. Out in the countryside, stillness and calm repetition permeated daily life. Sometimes there was little to talk about. As they were most accustomed to interacting with familiars, some individuals displayed “restricted verbal repertoires” (Rebhun 1999). Times of MST mobilization were not ideal for conversation either. We were often exhausted, emotionally on edge, or “out of our minds” (Fabian 1991, cited in Goulet and Miller 2007). I am reminded of Petra Rethmann’s discussion of research with reindeer herders on the tundra of Northern Russia. She asks:

How does one begin to think about silence? And even more difficult, how does one speak about it, about that which, almost by its very nature, is unspeakable. Silence is hardly the sort of thing, if thing it be, that makes for good ethnography... Ethnographies rest on the written word, and everybody wants to know what people said. But why do people remain silent? Especially when there is nothing in particular to hide?... There is a great deal of silence in the North and, as I have said, it is hard to put that silence into words. Silence is never quite empty, and much learning can transpire in quiet moments. So, this is perhaps the misunderstanding, the trap into which ethnographers tend to fall: The only thing worth attending to are worlds of sounds: the barking of dogs, the chatter of people, the noise of the city, and so forth... notwithstanding some of the terrible political and economic

conditions of Native living in the North, there is also a great deal of calmness and peace (Rethmann 2007: 44-45).

Life in the countryside was often quiet. It is difficult to render stillness into ethnography. As a result, many of the chapters emphasize moments of conflict and rupture, what Michael Agar (2005) would call “rich point[s]...the raw material of ethnographic research” (cited in Dalsgard 2016: 2). Instances of contention were extraordinarily revealing.

A related problem had to do with shyness. Especially when we first met, rural youth were surprisingly reticent. This might stem from stigmas associated with being *do campo* (from the countryside), as pejorative representations of rurality abound in Brazil. Country people are often portrayed as the antithesis to modern: backward, ignorant, poorly educated, and dirty (see Amaral 1955; Park 2013: 143; Alves Filho 2003; da Silva 2007).²⁹ When interacting with outsiders, rural youth sometimes said they felt *vergonhoso* (ashamed, embarrassed). Developing rapport took considerable time and care. As Junior explained, on one of my last days in Brazil,

We [rural youth] are shy because we have a different upbringing than most... Add to that the fact that in school, we are trained to be copy machines, not thinkers. Basically, we are raised to obey. To be seen and not to be heard... And so you come, this blond, white researcher from the United States and ask why we are so timid and are afraid to answer your questions. Isn't it obvious?

As a result, the most important sources of information for this dissertation were not semi-structured interviews: they were the ongoing informal conversations that emerged in the

²⁹ Poverty in Brazil is “understood and experienced as a spatial category” (Kolling 2016: 24). In São Paulo and Paraná, youth described a sense of stigma because they were associated with the MST, a group commonly referred to as vagabonds, thieves, and vandals. “Territorial stigma” is powerful. It “adheres” to the bodies of those who reside in these places (Perlman 2010: 30).

course of everyday life. I consider myself fortunate to have encountered sympathetic souls who befriended me, and I remain in contact with many of them today. Their ongoing care, concern, and desire to help indicated that the research was not irrelevant or unimportant to them.

In order to convey the texture of rural living, I have included photographs—taken by myself and young research participants. After having spent three months in rural Brazil in 2012, I was adamant about including a visual methodological component to this research. I sought to elicit the perspectives of less-verbally inclined participants by including them in a photo voice project. While living in land reform settlements, I asked rural youths (aged 14-29) to photograph and video record the people and places that were significant to them. Visual methods seemed to be a particularly valuable means to build trust (Castleden et al. 2008: 1393-1395) and give something back (Razsa 2015; Kolling 2016). I was often asked to photograph and take videos of musical performances, political demonstrations, baby showers, and birthday parties to be uploaded and shared on social media. By the end of the research, the digital cameras I brought with me were broken and, as I had already developed relationships with research participants, I relied less upon visual methodologies. To share young people's accomplishments and support my empirical findings, I have included their photographs and inserted footnotes with links to videos online throughout this dissertation.

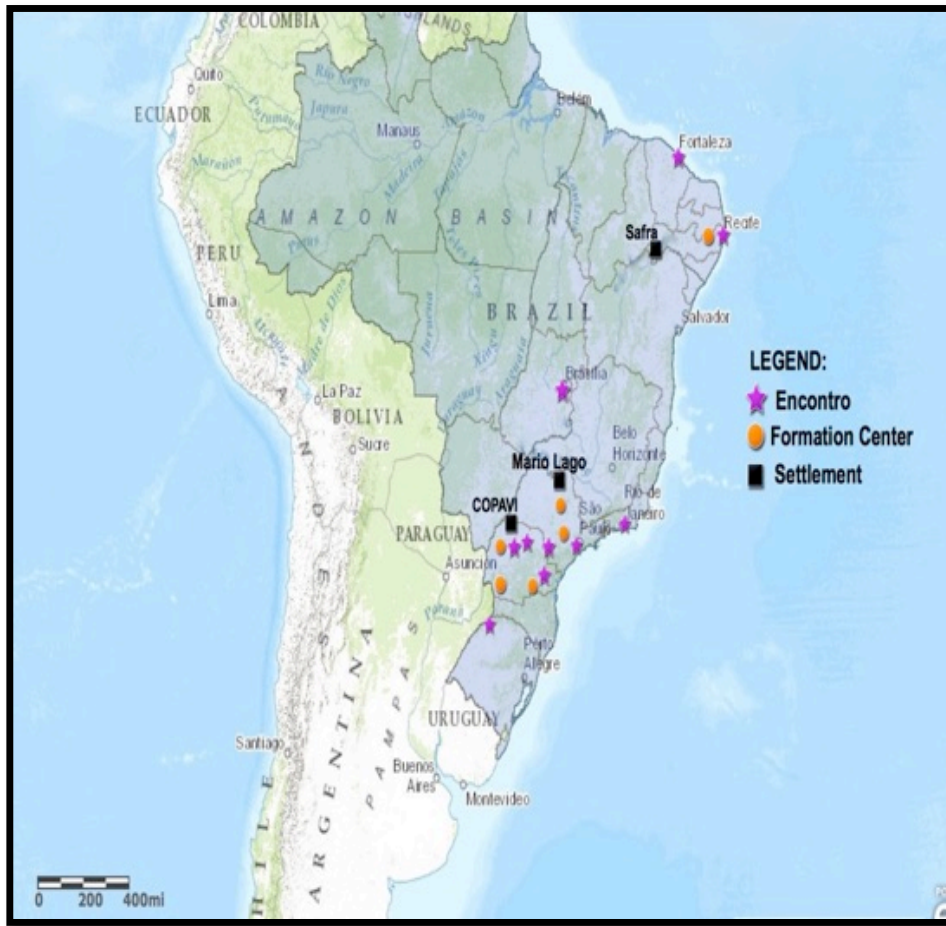


Figure II. Research Settings, 2012-2014.

RESEARCH SETTINGS & SUBJECTS

I originally proposed to work solely Paraná state and examine youth through synthetic attention to key experiential domains. Based on my preliminary fieldwork in 2012, I was convinced that young people lived in worlds filled with intense relations of romance, friendship, family, authority, and interactions with people from other countries, and that understanding these relations and their affects was important in getting why the second generation fell in and out of love with the MST. As my approach was both iterative and inductive, I discovered that young people's experiences did not respect state boundaries or fit into tidy categories. As Tim Ingold wisely notes, "lives are not led inside places but

through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere” (Ingold 2000: 229, cited in Novak, forthcoming). Thus, I followed rural youth through the numerous institutional and non-institutional spaces they inhabited.³⁰ I went to Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Brasília, Pernambuco, and Ceará. The challenge of writing about such diverse locations, each with its own internal multiplicity of experiences and perspectives, has been considerable. This dissertation primarily focuses on youth in Paraná, São Paulo, and Pernambuco states. I lived in each of these places for six months and accompanied young adults in land reform settlements, occupation camps, political training courses, and demonstrations. Where possible, I avoid referring to the “the MST” in the singular, and use state acronyms (MST-PR, Paraná; MST-SP, São Paulo; MST-PE, Pernambuco, etc.), to reflect the diversity of personalities and organizational histories of its state chapters.

DISSERTATION OUTLINE

The research took place in the multiple contexts that comprise the MST’s social universe: occupation camps, land reform settlements, the VI National Congress in Brasília, and a political training course. In order to help the reader understand the connections (and disconnections) between these places and the rural youths that transit between them, I have divided the dissertation into two empirical sections that reflect the differences between home in the countryside and “time in the MST.” Part II, “The Roça,” introduces the reader to the internal variation of *juventude sem terra* (landless youth) by focusing on their diverse home contexts: land reform settlements and occupation camps in Paraná, Pernambuco, and São Paulo states. I provide a cursory introduction to these places and sketch important details in

³⁰ My multi-sited approach has its predecessors. Brazilian anthropologist Nashiele Rangel Loera emphasized its value as an essential methodology for “gaining a wider perspective of [the MST’s] social universe” (Loera 2010: 294-295).

agrarian histories and mobilization trajectories. Chapter 2, “Families and Fields,” compares the experiences of rural youth in two land reform settlements, in Paraná and Pernambuco. It helps us to understand some of the strengths and limitations of Brazil’s land reform program for second-generation members, and foregrounds the importance of agrarian collectivization (particularly the wage-labor relation and communal governance) as providing an appealing alternative to the rural exodus. Chapter 3, “Barracos,” focuses on a young man’s trajectory into an occupation camp in São Paulo state. In spite of severe disappointment and alienation from the movement, his dreams for a home and piece of land in the countryside kept him from giving up. It describes the subjective and contradictory power of the MST’s hopeful politics.

Part II, “Militancy,” fills a major lacuna in the literatures about the MST (which I imagine reflects the difficult nature of conducting participant observation in times and places of mobilization). Collectively, these chapters reveal the importance of political socialization—the ways that the MST attempts to engineer a coherent, politicized social formation: *juventude sem terra*. To processually explore young people’s experiences of political development, in Chapter 4, we hop a bus in Central Paraná and travel to Brasília to attend the MST’s VI National Congress. The chapter sheds light on the pedagogical, corporeal, and affective dimensions of long-distance/low-budget travel, replete with political rituals and an ill-fated demonstration. Chapter 5, “Celebrating Socialism,” describes the informal spaces of celebration that sprung up in the margins of the event, alongside a youth group from São Paulo state. It describes an emergent socialist youth subculture, with its own rituals and practices of dancing, drinking, and hooking up. Chapter 6, “Discipline and Empowerment,” follows young people from the countryside to a political training program in Pernambuco.

There, the youth understood militancy to be a preliminary step in individualized strategies for upward social mobility. Through an examination of the MST's attempt to harness the bodies, minds, and hearts of rural youths in troubled times we further understand the multiple tensions between individual and collective subjects (particularly in terms of gender and sexuality), and the understudied, but very important nonetheless, ludic and erotic dimensions of the MST's political culture. Finally, Part IV concludes this dissertation. I summarize and synthesize major findings and offer reflections on future directions for research.

PART II. THE ROÇA: RURAL PRESENTS AND FUTURES



10/2013. MST-PR'S II Festival of Arts, held in a soccer stadium on the periphery of Curitiba, PR. There are sleeping mats on the left, and on the right young people watch the speech event.

PRELUDE

In October 2013, an estimated 2,000 sons and daughters of MST land reform settlements and occupation camps across Southern Brazil gathered in a soccer stadium on the outskirts of Curitiba, for the II Festival of Arts of the Schools of Land Reform. The event involved four days of artistic performances and political speeches, many of which centered on the *questão de juventude* (the youth question) as understood by MST leadership. On the second day, Tania, an elderly woman, stood on an elevated stage, and spoke down to the youth below, all uniformly dressed in MST t-shirts and caps.

Youth of the MST, I have a few important questions for you. First of all, do you want to stay in the countryside? Do you want to leave the countryside? Why? We of the MST need absolute clarity on these matters. We need to know why the youth are leaving the settlements. *Why?* Is it because you don't have enough teachers in your schools? Is it because you think work in the *roça* [fields] is heavy? If so, I can promise you that working in construction sector is much heavier... Think about it. If

you leave the countryside, whose interests does it serve? Is it in the interest of *do povo* [the people] and your families? Why do you think that your parents camped out for so many years and suffered under the *lona preta* [black plastic tarps] waiting for a piece of land to work? Why have your parents not abandoned agrarian reform?

Tania then warned them about the false prophets and promises of consumer capitalist culture.

What does capitalism want from you, as a young person of the MST? Capitalism wants you leave your settlements, and go to work for money in the city. In the city, you will live for money—because to be included in society, you must consume... And this is what happens to our youth, correct? They leave the countryside and get jobs elsewhere. Why do they do this? To buy a car or a motorcycle, to dress in the latest fashions, to buy a computer. But what is the purpose of all this? What does consumption do for society? My children, youth of the MST, these are the calls of capitalism. Capitalism calls you to consume because it enriches the elite. But what does consumerism do for the people, for the working classes, for the youth themselves? It does not make us happy. It is a lie. You must learn to recognize this. Capital is calling you, the children of peasants, to leave the countryside. Capital wants to eliminate you.

Gerson (19/m) then took the microphone on stage. Addressing his seated peers, he blamed young people's turn away from farming on policies that overwhelmingly favored agribusiness interests.

Agribusiness creates a problem with youth of the settlements... Multinationals arrive and lie to us. They say that they will create jobs and prosperity, but this is not true. What jobs will they let us have? How will we waste our youth? You can drive a tractor or cut sugarcane! For us, youth of the MST, this is not good enough! We refuse this exploitation. We will not be enslaved by our jobs. We demand work that gives us dignity and allows us to fulfill our desires.

For Gerson, agribusiness firms failed to provide decent, gainful employment for the rural population. Indeed, almost everywhere, the ascent of industrialized farming has been credited with environmental destruction and an undermining of local economies—associated

with low wages, impoverished schools, civic passivity, and the siphoning off of local wealth (Elder and Conger 2000: 5). The decline of farming families, moreover, threatens to destroy the fabric of life in rural communities, as “younger members must seek a future outside agriculture, with few exceptions, in distant places” (Elder and Conger 2000: xviii).

In this event, like dozens I witnessed during my time in Brazil, MST representatives lectured youngsters on their parents’ struggles for land. They attributed rural youth outmigration to structural inequities and various socioeconomic ills, such as agribusiness, consumerism, the devaluation of peasant culture, and a lack of educational and employment opportunities in rural places. While such insights were partially true, young people’s input and comments were not solicited. According to Tania, this was neither the time nor place for substantive discussion. MST organizers invited the youth to Curitiba, treated them to an enjoyable (albeit politicized) time, and hoped that the MST might become “something more to them,” as Fela explained. During the lectures, many young audience members (understandably) sat inattentively, whispering, passing notes, or scanning cell phones.

During a scheduled break, I sat with a group of eight teenagers (four males, four females) from a land reform settlement in Northern Paraná. Outside the stadium, I learned that most were on the verge of graduating high school. I posed Tania’s questions to them. Did they plan to stay in the countryside? Did they plan to leave it? Why? Edna (18/f) thought my questions were ridiculous. She looked at me quizzically before responding, resolutely. “*Não tem como ficar no campo!*” There is no way to stay in the country!” She and her peers explained that their community was “very isolated,” more than twenty miles from the nearest municipality. How could they stay in the settlement if they planned to go to college and find

jobs? As Edna put it, “It is impossible.” What kind of professions did these youth wish to pursue? None planned to become farmers. They had ambitions for upwardly mobile trajectories in law, journalism, business, psychology, and engineering. Already more educated than their parents’ generation (Kolling 2016: 39), notions of appropriate adult transitions were strongly inflected by middle class expectations. Ideally, they hoped that growing up would be an unbroken series of transitions from high school, to college, off-farm employment, and then family formation. This short exchange reminded me to de-center the MST’s formal discourse about the structural causes of the “youth problem.” While young people were referred to in a singular way, their conditions and aspirations were much more individualized and complex.

Perhaps a better introduction to young people’s sometimes conflicted feelings about rural living comes from a YouTube video entitled, “*Morar na Roça*,” (To Live in the Country) by Dia Zikado.¹ It is simple—a monologue by a “modern” young man, sitting alone in front of his computer screen. Speaking into the video camera, he justifies his decision to move out of his father’s home and into an apartment in the city.

Today I am living on my own... I used to live with my dad, but he wasn’t in a city, you know, he lives in the *zona rural* [countryside], *e foi ruim pra caralho* [and man was it horrible]. You know why? *Veio*, because young people need the internet: be it for work, for school, for...[pornography]... But, where my dad lives, in the countryside, you can’t pick up a signal at all. You can’t get cell phone service. You can’t get internet. You can’t get Facebook, and you can’t get a phone call. *A unica coisa que pegava lá na roça onde morava era bicho do pé!* [The only thing I got from the country was a parasitic foot worm, endemic to Brazilian farm regions].

¹ [Dia Zikado. “Morar na Roça.” 7/1/2016.](#)

The son continues to presumably shock his viewers with a sordid tale about the four worms that colonized his toes, that is, until interrupted by his old-fashioned father (also played by Dia Zikado), who appears on-screen wearing a leather bowler hat with a soiled agricultural implement in hand. The father's speech is dramatically different: the thick, slow-moving *caipira* (hillbilly) dialect of Brazilian Portuguese, spoken by a man with apparently little schooling. The father is offended that his son would intimate some of the more unpleasant aspects of rural living to strangers.

Son, what kind of story is this? Why are you speaking badly of my place in the countryside? ... Now boy, you are wrong, let me set the record straight. On the contrary, living in the countryside is much better than living in the city. I'll explain the advantages. Number one: you don't pay rent. How much are you paying for this place here? Number two: you don't pay for water or lights. Number three: you live in a place with so many birds, you awake hearing their songs in the morning... I tell you what, there is nothing better in the entire world, nothing better my son...

The father interrupted his son's narrative to authoritatively insist upon the superiority of country living. His logic was identical to what I heard from older folks almost everywhere in rural Brazil. Why live in the city, if you don't need to pay rent or utilities in the countryside? Why purchase your own food if you can grow it? Why subject yourself to claustrophobic urban conditions if you could be surrounded by nature instead? The son, eyes rolling, reappears on screen and seemed exhausted. Trying to explain his preference for autonomous urban residence was impossible. After all, father and son possessed irreconcilable positions, spoke in altogether different dialects, and there was no space for dialogue in between. The son flipped on a *baile funk* song, an urban musical genre almost universally despised by older rural folk, and danced, while the father shook his head in disapproval.

Dia Zikado responded to his father's miscomprehension by turning to an online medium, an autonomous zone, where he could voice his discontent to a potentially unlimited audience of like-minded peers. This was a common strategy among the youngsters I got to know: out of earshot or online, they were able to voice criticism of their elders, and often laughed at their expense. Throughout rural Brazil, they struggled to negotiate with *os antigos* (the older ones), who were often described as conservative, rigid, and set in their ways. Their parents seemed to have come from an altogether different world, marked by intense familiarity, manual labor, and intimacy with non-human species (sometimes to an uncomfortable degree). On the other hand, parents, like the MST spokespeople, often suggested that their children were misguided and materialistic.

Such generational misunderstandings bring us to an important theme of this research, with implications for social movement scholarship in Brazil and beyond. Interactions between young people and adults in the context of social movement activities remain, for the most part, "a social science mystery" (Scott and Artis 2005: 55). The choices of rural youth, whether or not to pursue farm-based livelihoods are also a source of debate (White 2010, 2013). To shed light on this complex domain, the following chapters introduce the diverse home contexts of the rural youth I got to know. Although treated as a fairly homogeneous group in both federal policy (defined as aged 15-29) and MST discourse, my investigation reveals that they were quite diverse with specific sociopolitical positions and intersections. Therefore, the following chapters shed light on the following questions: What is it like to grow up in a land reform settlement? How do rural youth, with enhanced expectations and experiences with "modern" living, negotiate patriarchal familial dynamics? What kinds of institutions support their pathways into adulthood? What kinds of presents and futures do

they have in mind? How does landless activism intersect (or not) with their dreams and aspirations?

CHAPTER 2.



1994. Claudette and Cris at an MST action.

FAMILIES AND FIELDS:
PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN TWO LAND REFORM SETTLEMENTS

[A] place without the young is a place without hope, without future.
—Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (1962: 42).

Any understanding of rural youth's experiences, ambitions, and trajectories must begin at home and attend to their specific social and material environments. This chapter focuses on land reform settlements, the result of an institutional process first refined in Southern Brazil and then exported across the country throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The MST utilizes the 1988 Federal Constitution to pressure for state expropriation for the purpose of agrarian

reform any rural property that is not performing its “social function.”² Leveraging this supportive legislative framework, the MST pressures the state to fulfill its obligations by organizing long-term occupations of unproductive farmland by groups of landless families. They construct itinerant villages of black plastic tarp, and participate in a regimen of communal governance. Once the occupation camp is established, MST activists call upon representatives of *Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária* (INCRA), the governmental agency responsible for the implementation of federal agrarian reform programs. INCRA inspects the property to determine whether the land fits the criteria for expropriation, negotiates the market price with the landowner, and sends its recommendations to Brasília. Negotiations tend to be lengthy. Thereafter, the president must sign a decree of expropriation.

If the process is successful and property is to be expropriated for the purposes of land reform, an *assentamento de reforma agrária* (land reform settlement) is established. The MST partners with INCRA to select beneficiaries (*assentados*, settlers) and determine production plans. Most often, individual families are awarded usufruct rights to land (on average 10-12 hectares) on which to live and plant crops (Flynn 2010: 22). The *assentados* are (at least theoretically) entitled to specific rights, such as credit, infrastructure, technical assistance, education, and health care. The entire process is contentious, but in the late 1980s and 1990s it was quite successful. As Mészáros points out, “[b]etween 1986 and 1997...77% of settlements could trace their origins back to land occupations” (Mészáros 2000: 535).

² “Social function” is defined in Article 186 as: “rational and adequate use, adequate use of natural resources and preservation of the environment, compliance with labor regulations, and exploitation which favors the well-being of owners and workers” (cited in Flynn 2010: 18-19).

For the MST, land redistribution and the creation of sustainable alternatives to capitalist agriculture are foundational to the creation of a more democratic society (Falquet 2006: 215). Although the MST's overarching political goals for land and social(ist) transformation have remained relatively fixed over its thirty-three year history, the proper path toward the realization of its goals has been debated (Wright and Wolford 2003; Wolford 2010; Meek 2016). As such, MST land reform settlements display remarkable heterogeneity, in terms of land use and labor organization: from cooperative industrialized enterprises to individual family farms (Diniz and Gilbert 2013: 24). Generally speaking, however, most settlements are farmed by individual families, which reflects the preferences and customs of first generation settlers. This is problematic, however, as family farming households are often sites of intense patriarchy. Such a productive system exploits the labor of women and dependents and concentrates paternal control (White 2012: 14). Thus, almost everywhere, scholars have noted the proliferation of tensions in rural families, as young people have struggled to obtain the productive assets they need to realize the status of social adulthood (Stacey 1998; Katz 1998; Castro 2005; Quan 2007; Kouamé 2010).

MST land reform settlements are not entirely exempt from this trend. In this chapter, we travel to two settlements in southern and northeastern Brazil. Showcases for the MST in their respective states, both of these communities operated in distinctive political fields, with their own histories, (agri)cultures, and geographies. By focusing on the interface of family and productive arrangements, a comparative approach helps to illustrate how different sorts of agriculture may (or may not) appeal to future generations. It addresses the following questions: Do young adults in MST land reform settlements wish to remain rural, or do they have other futures in mind? To what extent are the pathways they travel towards socially

recognized adulthood gendered? How do young people negotiate patriarchal dynamics at home? Throughout, I will argue that the sexual division of labor provides a powerful explanatory framework for understanding young people's embrace or rejection of farming. Where young people lacked resources for personal autonomy and development, they were most likely to be disillusioned with rural prospects and sought to build their lives elsewhere.

COPAUI - AN AGRARIAN ALTERNATIVE³

Copavi is located on the perimeter of Paranacity, a small, backcountry town in Northwestern Paraná—a place that underwent one of the most frenetic colonization campaigns in twentieth century Latin America (Dozier 1956; Butland 1966; Müller 2012; Tomazi 1997).⁴

Claude Lévi-Strauss visited Northwestern Paraná's "pioneer zone" in 1935 and described the abundance that the new inhabitants encountered:

We saw German farmers weep for joy as they showed us how a whole grove of lemon-trees had sprung up from a cutting or two. For what astounded the men from the north was not only the fertility: it was the strangeness of these crops that they had known only through fairy-tales. As the area is on the frontier between the tropical and temperate zones, a difference of even a few feet in altitude could bring about a marked difference in climate. European and South American specialties could be grown side by side, and the settlers delighted in exploiting this fact—setting wheat next to cane-sugar and coffee next to flax (Lévi-Strauss 1957: 124-125).

Even then, however, prospects for the region did not seem sustainable to the angst-ridden anthropologist, who noted the breakneck speed of deforestation and soil erosion. He predicted that "[i]t would not take long, perhaps ten, twenty, thirty years—for this land of Canaan to turn into an arid and devastated waste" (Levi-Strass 1957: 124). By the time I

³ Copavi has been featured in a number of documentary films, see: [Los sin tierra \(2004\)](#); [Agroecologia: Semente de Liberdade \(2015\)](#); [Em Paranacity o MST dá certo \(2016\)](#)

⁴ A British company led the effort after having acquired some four million acres from the state in return for building a railroad. The developers planned to de-forest and sell individual parcels to the migrants who came in droves from neighboring São Paulo state. Newcomers were lured by promises of untouched *terra roxa* (rich, purple soil), a clement climate, and reasonable financing terms.

arrived, his predictions seemed prophetic. The relatively untouched tropical and coniferous forests had been almost completely cleared—first to make way for coffee, cotton, and then sugarcane monoculture.⁵ Land use change was reflected in the profile of residents—as Paracaty's once rural population moved into town and found jobs in one of Brazil's largest sugarcane ethanol distilleries. The transition was painful from the perspective of laborers. “It isn't like it was when I was growing up,” Fela (26/m), who was from the region, explained:

When I was [a teenager] you would just wake up in the morning and head to the corner, and get a job as a *boia fria*—harvest coffee, cotton, or oranges. There were lots of farms then and plenty of work. But now, there is nothing. You can cut cane, work in a *usina* [ethanol distillery], maybe in a meat packing plant, or sew blue jeans piecemeal... It isn't good. None of these things pay well and the businesses don't treat workers with respect... Yeah, employees get bathroom breaks now, but I don't think the plantation system ever really changed. This is why I think that they should really put more *assentamentos* up there in Northern Paraná.

⁵ Sugarcane's ascent resulted from the confluence of climactic events and government policy. In the 1960s, freezes caused coffee trees to explode, which led to the financial ruination of many smallholder families and the subsequent depopulation of interior towns (Margolis 1979). Then, in the midst of the OPEC crisis of 1973-1974, the Brazilian state sought to reduce its dependence on foreign oil sources and stimulated the organization of what would become a veritable empire of sugarcane-ethanol. Such a transition was quite painful from the perspective of rural laborers, who may or may not have been re-absorbed into other productive sectors (Pereira 1997; Fernandes et al. 2010). Rompaey cites a study by the SNCR, which claims that “foreigners are buying an average of 12 km of land per day for agrofuels production and cattle grazing” in Brazil (Rompaey 2008: 23, 27). The process of land acquisition is often grounded on dubious, if not fraudulent, territorial claims. In response to the recent ethanol boom, smallholders have turned to selling or leasing their lands to domestic and/or multinational corporations, this has led some critics to suggest that the sector has undergone a process of denationalization.



8/2013. Denise and Helena, in Copavi.

A mere five hundred meters beyond Paranacity's urban perimeter, one finds reprieve from the littered, sunburnt streets. On my first visit, I was certain that Copavi had to be one of the most tranquil places that could exist in Brazil—an oasis of trees, gardens, food, and life in sugarcane desert-scape. Based on visits to other land reform settlements in Paraná, I was struck by the presence, dynamism, and energy of Copavi's youth. They could be seen baking bread, processing and packaging organic brown sugar and other cane derivatives, planting and weeding in the vegetable gardens, and working in the administrative offices.

Founded on the ruins of a sugarcane plantation,⁶ Copavi was expropriated in 1992 and distributed to twenty-one families from Southern Paraná (the birthplace of the MST).⁷ Their

⁶ In 1988, INCRA investigated the Fazenda Santa Maria because the owner was delinquent on taxes, failed to comply with federal productivity standards, and was not in compliance with the "social function" statute of the Federal Constitution. To avoid forfeiture of his land, the owner leased the property to the ethanol distillery, a rather common practice (Schimanski 1998).

⁷ Many were descendants of the German, Italian, and Eastern European agrarian colonies that flourished across Southern Brazil in the late 1890s and early 1900s (see Ribeiro 2000; Schimanski 1998). The conflict for the land was not violent, but it was difficult nonetheless. Initially, locals felt that the land ought to benefit someone from the area and many refused to hire them, as it was the MST's first occupation in Northwestern Paraná and the

arrival in the North was novel, as Copavi was the first MST settlement to be established in the region. Denilson explained:

Reforma agrária [agrarian reform] is a *gaucho* thing, like it was foreign to the North... Down in the South, there is a strong tradition of struggle, they are real peasants there, you know, the MST came from the South! But it was different here. This was the land of coffee plantations and big estates, so [the MST] scared people. Get it?

Copavi's founders were emergent MST leaders. Several had long histories of activism, but decided to move to the settlement as it was a stable place where they could raise their families.⁸ The settlement is relatively small, just 252 hectares.⁹ It has flat terrain and sandy soil, connected via asphalt roads to major cities and markets, and has plentiful access to subterranean water sources. Given these factors, it was thought to be an ideal place where the MST's evolving theories of agrarian collectivization would be put into practice. Two of Copavi's founders attended the MST's *Laboratório Experimental* (Experimental Laboratory) in

occupiers were viewed with suspicion. They credit their champion soccer team with helping them earn trust and develop relationships with their neighbors.

⁸ For example, Solange, the president of Copavi's association, had a rather impressive activist history: she was encamped for five years, traveled internationally to represent the movement, and even led Brazil's chapter of *Via Campesina* for a time. Love, however, was the force that brought her to Copavi. She told me of her trajectory over the family dinner table. "We lived in a large MST encampment in [the Southwest of Paraná state]. I met [my current husband] because we were both part of the [MST-PR] militancy. He is six years younger than me, and we worked side by side for five years. I did not know it at the time, but he fell passionately in love with me. Still, he never acted on those feelings, because at the time, I was married to [my eldest son's father]. But, after five years, working side by side, he finally told me how he felt. He said that he could not stand it anymore, and he had to leave [the movement] because of these strong feelings. But, I had fallen in love with him too. I felt strongly about him, and we were invited to be part of the small group that would occupy the land that would become Copavi. I decided to separate from my first husband and we moved here. We lived for a year under the *lona preta*, built our house, and then raised our family together here." Claudette, another founding member, said that the opportunity to engage in collectivized agriculture was strongly appealing. She imagined that the collectivized settlement could offer a different, more egalitarian sort of rurality, when compared to her upbringing. "In the 1980s, when I was a girl, I got involved in women's meetings and groups through the Lutheran Church... It was there that I became politicized. I participated in everything—women's groups, marches, demonstrations—everything. This was good because I have never been the kind of woman who could keep silent. Never. I speak my mind. This is one reason I was attracted to the MST. I was living in an encampment when I was invited to come to Copavi. I really liked the idea of doing something different, and being part of a collective project. So, I brought my eldest daughter. Later, [my ex-husband and his family] came along too."

⁹ Only about 56% was available for regular use, 21% was restricted, and another 21% was unsuitable for agrarian production. The soil was sandy, compacted, and degraded from sugarcane.

the late 1980s. They were taught to structure their community based upon the following principles:

- The collectivization of land. There are no individual inheritance rights. All improvements are held in common.
- Division of labor in specialized productive sectors. Work is designed to maximize efficiency, hours are tracked, and laborers are entitled to an hourly wage.
- Accumulated capital is reinvested in the business.
- Collective organization of life and work activities.
- All communal decisions are to be made in general assemblies, and attendance is mandatory.
- *Asociados* (associates, stakeholders) must adhere to the Cooperative Statute and Internal Regiment.



Satellite image of Copavi, Google Earth, 2016. One can see that the community is relatively small. 23 families live together in one neighborhood (A) and work in collectively in the office/cafeteria (B), agroindustry (C), dairy farm (D), agroforestry system (E). Copavi is located just 500 meters beyond the urban perimeter of Paranacity (F).

MST ideologues believed that cooperatively organized farms would rationalize agricultural activities and ensure that settlers produced commodities on a scale large enough to compete in the agrifood sector, thereby preventing dependence on state assistance (Ribeiro 2007).¹⁰ As a part of the MST's agrarian collectivization initiative, it was thought that close residence in a residential neighborhood, an *agrovila*, would foster positive economic outcomes and dense social interactions. In compliance with these directives, Copavi's founders built their homes along two streets, which were divided into two *núcleos de base* (NBs, small groups) for matters of communal governance. Each NB met monthly to discuss and make decisions regarding maintenance, yard work, and other neighborly concerns. By the time I arrived in 2013, Copavi's homes were relatively large, painted in cheerful hues, and adorned with ornamental flowers, trees, and small gardens. Located near the access road, all occupants lived within walking distance to urban services. No one paid rent. In exchange for housing, residents were expected to work in the cooperative business and required to participate in Copavi's general assembly each month.

¹⁰ At the national scale, MST policies of agrarian collectivization largely backfired and contributed to conflict, defection, and financial problems (Branford and Rocha 2002; Wolford 2010; Flynn 2013; Diniz and Gilbert 2013). By 1994, the MST decided to take a more flexible approach in its promotion of cooperativism and focused its efforts on developing a few showcase examples, of which Copavi is one. The settlement received technical advice from universities, support from foreign NGOs, and training to ensure that they had the expertise necessary to run a viable business.



11/2013. Typical scene in the agrovila after work: Pia sits with his infant son, Dominic, and shares chimarrão with his neighbor, Silvio.

Copavi produces for the market (domestic, national, international) and for the subsistence of settled families. While it was difficult at first, they have developed a complex, durable productive structure over the last twenty years. In 2013, all of Copavi's residents (aged fourteen and older) worked in one (or more) of the productive sectors: agroindustry, bakery, commerce, administration, vegetable gardens, and dairy. Some were involved in the production of primary materials, such as: sugarcane, milk, vegetables, meat, forestry; processing raw materials, such as: baking breads and cakes, cheese and yogurt; refining brown sugar and molasses; packaging products to be ready for market; distribution to customers in nearby cities and the local school system; administration and planning, which involved tracking hours, investments, payments; and finally, others were involved in explicitly political activities.

With so much production, Copavi's daily rhythms alternated from fields, factories, and offices to the cafeteria tables. Six days a week, most residents ate breakfast and lunch together.¹¹ The menu was planned in advance and incorporated as much of Copavi's own produce as possible. I was told that the cafeteria was a response to gendered challenges in workforce participation. As Chicão explained:

Before we had the cafeteria, women were unable to fully participate in the productive process. They would have to go back up to their homes to prepare lunch for their husbands, which took them away from work... Sometimes they would stay up there, and then they wouldn't participate in meetings. We talked about this and decided that it was best if we all ate together, to make sure that [women] were not being discriminated against.

By 2013, women were not just laborers in the cooperative business—*they were leading it*.

Solange was the president and managed the sugarcane processing agroindustry. Claudette was in charge of the bakery. Daniela coordinated the subsistence sector and was in charge of overseeing the vegetable gardens and dairy operations. Women worked in administration and in commerce, occupying spaces generally occupied by men in rural Brazil. They were pillars of communal governance and oversaw general assembly meetings. For those familiar with the MST literature, this is an impressive accomplishment (Deere 2003; Caldeira 2009).

¹¹ The associates determined a formula from which to ascertain the "social cost" of food (based on weight, materials, labor) to be discounted from workers' monthly wages. My food cost about R\$2-4 per day.



10/2013. Solange packages organic brown sugar in agroindustry to be shipped to France.



10/2013. Birthday party at Copavi. Festivities were held in the cafeteria.

Every weekend, Leticia (17/f) visited each of the workers at home and asked them to self-report hours worked. Thereafter, Cristiano (26/m) tallied their earnings in a spreadsheet and posted them in the cafeteria. This ensured transparency among the associates and workers, who were, after all, wage earners. While Copavi stuck with MST prescriptions at first, and implemented a standard hourly rate (despite differentials in productivity), with time, Copavi revised the system to better compensate those who engaged in more “heavy” forms of labor. What I found innovative about Copavi’s indigenous compensatory scheme was that it reversed commonsense evaluations of manual and mental labor. For example, cooks and fieldworkers received the highest levels of compensation, and office staff earned less. On average, associates earned R\$2.50/per hour.

Unlike many land reform settlements, where young people are expected to contribute their labor to the familial plot without compensation, in Copavi, all workers aged fourteen and older are entitled to wages. Those younger than eighteen receive a discounted rate (parents are entitled to roughly 50% of their earnings). Their contributions to the cooperative business are recognized and they have *some* autonomous, discretionary income—which they spend on cell phones, clothing, cosmetics, books, outings, and so forth.¹²

¹² See Diversi (2006) for a powerful discussion about the importance of consumption for self-making practices among low-income Brazilian youth.



7/2013. Ciça teaches Jackie (18/f) and I to make yogurt.

When they turn eighteen, young people are eligible to become full-time associates and stakeholders in the cooperative business, with a majority vote at the general assembly. Once associates, they make communal decisions and painstakingly debate finances, administration, production, visitation, recruitment of newcomers, membership, housing, political activities, parties, and so on. No topic is too large or too small for discussion.

According to Cristiano (26/m), Copavi's unique structure provides an important alternative for young people, as cooperative farming, wage-labor, and communal governance "break open the patriarchal mindset" a bit. For him, such productive relations help to undermine traditional patterns of authority and empower young women and men, at home and in the workplace. As he put it,

I think cooperativism responds to the challenge of *renda* [income]. Like it or not, youth need to consume too. They need to have jobs of their own. This is something that I think is very interesting and important about the MST's cooperative settlements—because collectivization breaks open the family structure a bit. In the individually farmed settlements [where my cousins live], the father decides everything and the family and the home is a patriarchal space. But in cooperatives, youth have their own *renda* and become associates and are on more equal footing with their parents... For example, in General

Assemblies, everyone is welcome to give their opinions—everyone—even if they are not full associates. Sometimes there are difficulties, because the old ones were raised differently and they are less willing to change. They are comfortable with the old ways, with patriarchy... But I think collective organization is important. It interrupts the patriarchal mindset a bit... With time, we hope families can change.

Despite the many economic and noneconomic benefits of cooperativism, trading in the life of an autonomous peasant farmer for a wage-earning associate did not appeal to most of Copavi's founding families, as all but four moved away. When I asked about defection, Carolina (17/f) said:

When you live in a cooperative, it's never just about yourself or your family... The entire community is involved in everything: the way you care for your garden, whether or not you go to work—these become community issues. It is good, and then other times, it is not. There have been lots of fights.

As no one possessed title to land, infractions to the regimen could result in expulsions.

Because collectivized farming did not appeal to everyone, Copavi was in an ongoing state of



2015. Dandara and Leticia in Copavi's agrovila.

transition and chronically short-staffed. As the following stories demonstrate, such vacancies opened space for young women and men. This leaves two main questions to be explored ethnographically: How do teenagers and young adults experience communal life—in terms of residence and labor? To what extent have collectivized relations of agrarian production helped to support second-generation *Copavianos* as they seek to transition into the roles associated with social adulthood? To move forward, I introduce Olga, Jack, and Marta. They were all brought to Copavi by virtue of kinship ties, but at different times and for different reasons. Their testimonies suggest that *renda* (the wage-labor relation) was important force in destabilizing rural patriarchy and promoting youthful satisfaction at home and at work.

YOUTHFUL PERSPECTIVES OF AGRARIAN COLLECTIVIZATION¹³

Olga (17/f) was born in Copavi. Her mother, Claudette was a founding member, community leader, and managed the co-op's bakery. Their family photo album was brimming with yellowing photographs that documented lifetimes of landless activism—occupations, pilgrimages, marches, and meetings. Claudette was invited to Copavi in her early twenties, for her notorious work ethic and volunteerism. While she was an active member of the MST, she knew that it was not always easy and did not romanticize it. Her daughters were raised in a highly ideological context, surrounded by activist adults. Olga recalled the childhood games they would play:

When we were kids, we loved to play *sem terra*. That was our favorite game. We would pretend to build a little huts in an *acampamento* and then we would divide the land. We always finished with a *churrasco* [barbecue], and “roasted” mangos, around a “fire.” Isn't that funny?

¹³ To see the photographs and videos made by Copavi's youth as part of the photo voice project, see, [“Os Jovens do Copavi – 2013/2014”](#)

For a time, Olga attended classes taught by a militant-educator, where she learned about the history of the movement, the struggle for land, and traveled to attend children's events sponsored by the MST. For Olga and her *Copaviano* peers, growing up was often remembered as an “unending procession of people, visitors, conversations, strategies, wisdom, and shared food” (Kaplan and Shapiro 1998: 295). As disclosed in writings on the children of Communist Party members in the United States, such activities “provided additional support to parents who wanted to raise their children to see the world through anti-capitalist eyes” (Kaplan and Shapiro 1998: 6).

When we first met, in 2013, Olga was an attractive young woman, with dark skin and curly hair, tied up in a hairnet while working. I accompanied her during the afternoon shifts at the bakery, alongside her mother Claudia and five other women. The work was repetitive: each day we completed the same series of tasks. We mixed flour, sugar, eggs, and milk into industrial mixers; poured batter into molds for baking; placed bread and cakes onto cooling racks; and packaged them for shipment to the associates, municipal school system,¹⁴ and local stores. Easygoing conversation and female company made it pleasant.

Although Olga was content with her job at Copavi, she was less satisfied with classes at her urban high school. On the day of our first interview, Olga and Claudette had just taken the ENEM (college entrance exams). When I asked how Olga felt about her performance, she

¹⁴ The PNAE or National School Feeding Program was enacted in 2009, and created structured demand for smallholder family farmers' agriculture. The PNAE required public entities to purchase at least 30% of their food from local family farmers—as a means to promote food security, keep children enrolled and performing well in school, and strengthen smallholder family farming. This policy, along with the PAA (Food Acquisition Program) has been credited in promoting food security, supporting the production of food crops, and increasing rural incomes. Together, the two initiatives are believed to be the largest institutional procurement programs in the world that deliberately prioritize purchasing from the most vulnerable family farmers (see ICP and WFP 2013: 6-7).

sharply replied. “It was awful... It was so hot, noisy, and I could not really concentrate.”

What did Olga want to study? “Look, Melinda, I don’t like these questions about the future... I don’t even know what I will wear tomorrow! Besides, there is a big difference between what I want and what I can have.” I continued to press her. “Well, if I had my choice, then maybe literature? I don’t know... Maybe I would study foreign languages, and then I could travel internationally for the movement or contribute here in Copavi, or at least talk to you!”

Olga deferred to Claudette, who was then cooking in the kitchen. “Mom, Melinda wants to know what I want for the future! What do I say?” Claudette remarked kindly, in a way that demonstrates the enhanced expectations of many first generation MST members for their children. “Olga, it doesn’t matter where you build your future—be it here in Copavi or somewhere else. You want a future that will allow you to change and grow and fulfill your potential, right?” Olga was generally happy in the present and unsure about her future. At the time, she was most passionate about alternative rock music, photography, and fiction. While she wanted to go to college, Olga imagined staying in Copavi could also provide her with future opportunities for personal development and growth.

Let’s now turn to Jack (23/m)—a young man whose unusual fashion sense immediately attracted my attention. He sported a pompadour/punk hairstyle—cut high and tight on the sides, with a long lock of hair, straightened and then curled, hung artfully over his forehead. He wore sneaker wedges (which were quite popular among women that year), skin-tight shorts that revealed his thighs, and a loose fitting top that hung around his shoulders. As an

openly gay male,¹⁵ Jack took great pleasure in experimenting with the bounds of gender normativity in his clothing and appearance.

Over the following months, I learned more about Jack's life. The eldest of six siblings, Jack moved into Copavi when he was ten. Ciça, his widowed mother, was invited by a founding member to occupy a vacant home in the *agrovila* after another family moved out.¹⁶ In exchange for occupancy, Ciça would work in the dairy sector (one of the toughest jobs, in my opinion). Each day, she milked sixty cows and cooked large vats of yogurt for sale in the municipality. As Ciça's children grew up, they were put to work in various productive sectors. Because of the emphasis on manual labor, Jack said that he and his *Copaviano* peers had an altogether different sort of upbringing (*um outro formação*) than young people in the city. Jack recalled having worked in the vegetable gardens and the dairy operation before settling for a position as a chef in the community kitchen. "We are not like youth of the city, no. Here, we have to work and we work a lot. We don't think so much of parties and fun, we are much more focused on the future." Indeed, this *Copaviano* cohort did not resemble ideological constructions that conflate "youth" with a life-stage marked by fun, pleasure, and carefree consumption (Bucholtz 2002: 525-527; Dalsgaard et al. 2008: 56-58). Early responsabilization and the lack of leisure opportunities were sometimes a source of dissatisfaction (see also, Kaplan and Shapiro 1998: 9).

¹⁵ There is a major difference between homosexual behaviors and possessing a homosexual identity. Many rural youth I got to know were not willing to deal with the discrimination and risks associated with such an identity. Invisibility was a survival strategy (see, D'Emilio 1983; and Ferreira 2008).

¹⁶ Newcomers were generally indicated by an established member, and given a trial period to adjust to life in the community. After six months, if all had gone well, their permanence in the community was voted on in general assemblies. If someone misbehaved or violated the communal regiment, they could be expelled from Copavi.

When he turned eighteen, Jack was elected by popular vote to become a Copavi associate. Such a position gave him equal voting power within the communal governance body. The next year, he was the first in his family to graduate from high school—not an insignificant accomplishment considering the daily harassment he experienced at school. Around this time, Jack brought his first motion to the floor of Copavi’s General Assembly. Someone had just moved out of the *agrovila* and Jack asked if he could move into the newly vacated home. “I just couldn’t tolerate living at my mom’s house anymore,” he explained. “There are just too many kids in there! Always messing with my things! I need a bit of space, you know!” With the blessing of the collective, Jack moved into the rather dilapidated home. It leaked when it rained and the plumbing was on the fritz, but for the time being, it was *bis*. Jack had his own kitchen, living room, bedroom, television, radio, books, sofa, bed, sewing machine, refrigerator, and stove. As others moved away (on a more temporary or permanent basis), he hoped to ascend Copavi’s “housing hierarchy” (Kolling 2016) and eventually earn the right to occupy one of the nicer places.

When we first met, Jack was somewhat reserved and shy. He didn’t participate in Copavi’s youth group and articulated feelings of marginalization by those who focused on his “deviant” sexual orientation and gender bending aesthetics, instead of what really mattered—the fact that he was honest, hardworking, and dependable. “I get those meals out on time, every time. If I have to cook for a handful of people or hundreds, it will be done, and it will be beautiful.” Six days each week, Jack worked twelve-hour shifts cooking homemade organic meals for seventy regulars and their invited guests (local land occupiers,

university students, rural union representatives, and so on).¹⁷ In exchange for his labor, Jack was one of Copavi's highest-earning associates and had his own home. He didn't necessarily like his job (he suffered from health problems that were aggravated by standing all day). Sometimes, and especially when experiencing pain, Jack thought his life might be easier if he went to college and found a less physically demanding sort of job. "I think I want something that pays better, so I could help my mom, but would be a bit easier on my body. Maybe I could go into fashion design or something?" Rosa, his partner in the kitchen, interrupted his musings and brought him back to his present task—dicing stacks of garlic. "Yes, Jack, that would be nice. But remember, my dear, you live in Brazil. You are black. You are *sem terra*. Even if you go to college you will be poor." With that, Jack returned to his work, slicing mountains of fresh vegetables for lunch—but he didn't stop psychically traveling. Jack turned to the stereo and blasted foreign pop songs—Lady Gaga and Beyoncé. "Music is my escape. With it, I travel so far away." Later, Jack reflected about his prospects and situation:

This is a very tranquil place for me. It is different than the outside because here, we have a different vision, different dreams, and we are planning for the future... Today, I feel accepted in Copavi. I have learned that in the movement we cannot discriminate at all. Based on race, nothing. The older ones, you know, they can be a bit prejudiced, but that is because they were raised differently. We must be patient with them. At least in Copavi, I feel free to be who I am, and this feels good.

Jack's situation was special and he knew it. He reflected on the predicament facing queer rural youth in Brazil,

¹⁷ With such success, Copavi was often visited by outsiders (students, TV crews, politicians, filmmakers, international activists, and researchers) who flocked to learn more about the place where *reforma agrária deu certo* (land reform worked). Each week, buses brought in tour groups to learn about its unusual structure and eat lunch. Copavi was a showcase for the MST's alternative agrarian program and used to advertise potential prosperity through cooperative land and labor regimes. On several occasions I heard land occupiers marvel at Copavi's accomplishments and the fact that residents had "already obtained the good things in life." Sometimes, however, these visits were considered tedious by Copavi's residents, as they were "very repetitive."

I think the matter of youth assuming [a sexual orientation] has a lot to do with parents, because gays are often expelled from their homes, there are lots of risks... There are so many cruel, homophobic people... But I am lucky, if I didn't have this kind of support, I am not sure if I would have been brave enough to assume my identity.¹⁸

As a cook and Copavi associate, Jack was able to make a life for himself in the settlement. His sexual orientation and marital status did not matter. He could cross-dress and bring male lovers home when he wished. As long as he went to work, participated in meetings, maintained his house, and respected his neighbors, Jack's place in Copavi was secure. A lack of fixed tenure and the conditional nature of inclusion opened space in the community for non-heteronormative households. This was also important to Marta, the niece of one of Copavi's founding members.

¹⁸ According to Luiz Mott, a Brazilian anthropologist and founder of the Grupo Gay da Bahia, a non-heteronormative Brazilian is killed every thirty-six hours in Brazil. "[Brazil is confronting an epidemic of anti-gay violence.](#)" 7/5/2016. *New York Times*

Marta arrived in Copavi when she was eighteen years old. Tall and slender, with blond hair, blue eyes, and freckles, Marta grew up in an MST land reform settlement in Southern Paraná. In the early 1990s, her father received usufruct rights for ten hectares in a small settlement that was forty kilometers from the nearest municipality. It was an altogether different sort of place to grow up in. Marta's earliest memories were of milking cows, household chores, school, and catechism at the Catholic Church. "My parents are very old and conservative," she explained. "When I was growing up, I was always told that 'the only time a woman leaves the house is with a husband!'" By this she meant that females were expected to remain virgins until marriage. To do otherwise would dishonor the family name.¹⁹

Although Marta never considered herself *rebelde* (rebellious), she would come to defy



12/2013. Caroline works in agroforestry system on the weekend as part of activity of Copavi's youth group. Photo by Adriano Cardoso.

¹⁹ Such perspectives have led scholars to suggest that Brazilian women are primarily socially defined by their sexuality and relationships to men (Rubin and Rubin-Sokolof 2013; Rebhun 1999; Gregg 2006; Allen 2011).

gendered norms and expectations. When she was seventeen, she stopped attending school and got a job at a restaurant, where she met Bruno (37/m). They went out a few times, had unprotected sex, and Marta conceived. Terrified, she kept the news to herself for three months, until deciding to act.

I called my girlfriend who lives in São Paulo and told her what happened. She invited me to go and stay with her, and she promised to care for me. I bought my bus ticket, and left home without even a *centavo* to my name, with just the clothes on my back, and boy was I frightened... I left because I knew that my parents could not accept the pregnancy. They are very old, religious, and conservative. They thought that I had to get married, but then I found out that Bruno was still married! And to be honest, I was not interested in marriage because I felt that I was too young. What a terrible situation!

After a week in São Paulo, Marta called her parents, who were sick with worry.

My father nearly had a heart attack! He could not stand the idea of me living in the big city with my girlfriend. Then he talked to [my uncle, founding member of Copavi]. They said that a house was vacant in Copavi, and I could have my own place and work in the agroindustry after my baby arrived. Since I had already visited and liked it, I decided to come.

From the perspective of Marta's parents, moving to Copavi, a few doors down from her uncle, afforded supervision of close kin and was therefore a far more socially-acceptable alternative than Marta's moving to the dangerous, impersonal city.²⁰

When she got to Copavi, Marta moved into a cheerful blue home, which was already furnished with the essentials. Marta understood that in exchange for the use of the home, six months after her daughter was born, she would work in Copavi's agroindustry, processing and packaging sugarcane derivatives. At first, she was shy and ashamed of her new social

²⁰ Perhaps it is worth mentioning that Marta was not the first, nor the last young woman sent to live with relatives in Copavi under such circumstances. Generally, parents sent females away, for several weeks or months, in order to interrupt a potentially problematic relationship with an "unfit" partner.

status, as an unwed expectant mother. What would her new neighbors think?

At first, I was so shy. I could not even look anyone in the eye! I would get meals in the cafeteria and walk all the way back to my house to eat alone. Imagine! I was such a *bicho do mato* [beast of the forest, wallflower, shy]. But you know, after that first month, when I gave birth to little Ana, things got better. Everyone was so supportive and welcoming. The other women even brought me meals and helped me with the laundry. I never imagined that strangers could be so kind! I don't think there is a better place on earth to raise my daughter. My experience has also gotten much better since I started working too. I like what I do, and am enjoying it more all the time.

Retrospectively, she found her initial reticence to be funny and realized that her fears were unfounded. Marta was one of four young unmarried, single mothers in Copavi (three were married). In conversations with Copavi's settlers, I learned that most considered it unfortunate for women to have to raise children without help, but single parenthood was far better than marriage to a man who was uncaring, unfaithful, or unreliable. When we first met in 2013, Marta said she was not interested in dating or romance for the time being.

Marta was not the only one who expressed gratitude for the kindness and warmth extended by Copavi's leadership and established members. While living there, I was often reminded of the beloved Brazilian axiom, *gentileza gera gentileza* (kindness begets kindness). Copavi's families took great pains to practice their progressive politics in everyday ways, such as: collective commensality and governance, the inclusion of young people in its wage-labor scheme, subsistence provisioning, and organic farming. "It was *bem impressionante*," as Marta put it, very impressive. She continued:

Before I moved to Copavi, I didn't really know what the MST was. Even though I grew up in a settlement, I thought the movement was just a group of poor people, who went to get a piece of land to work, because in my parent's time, everyone was unemployed. It was so different where I grew up [in the individual family farming

settlement in Southern Paraná]—completely disorganized, *cada um pra cada um* [everyone for himself], poor and ashamed.



12/2013. Denise processes brown sugar. Photo by Adriano Cardoso.

In Copavi, Marta was immersed in an entirely different sort of rural routine. She no longer woke up at 4:30 a.m. to help her mother milk cows and cook breakfast. Instead, she slept in until 6:30, dressed her daughter for daycare, and sent her off with the neighborhood carpool. Marta then walked *em baixo* (down below) to join her co-workers for breakfast in the cafeteria. After having coffee and a bit of bread, she put on her hairnet, white apron, and rubber boots and went to the agroindustry. Marta spent the better part of her day lifting steaming buckets of brown sugar from the baking vats, moving them into ever-finer sifters, until ready to be packaged, labeled, and shipped to domestic markets and exported overseas. Sometimes, Marta bottled CACHAÇA CAMPONESA: PRODUTO DE REFORMA AGRARIA, PEASANT RUM: PRODUCT OF AGRARIAN REFORM. It was noisy, repetitive work, but meditative. Best of all, Marta found a place of work and residence where she could

comfortably raise her daughter alone—not a small feat in rural Brazil. As she told me, “I don’t think I could find a better place to raise her. I feel very fortunate.”

The stories I have shared thus far demonstrate that agrarian collectivization, which generated employment and income for all residents of Copavi (aged 14 and older), promoted youthful satisfaction with the community, regardless of gender, marital status, or sexual orientation.

This is a significant, commendable achievement. Collective land tenure, communal governance, and wage-labor helped to undermine traditional patterns of authority and empowered young women and men, at home and in the workplace. The disruption of gerontocracy and patriarchy is of the utmost importance. This becomes clear in an examination of an entirely different sort of land reform settlement, Semente, on the semiarid backlands of Pernambuco. When I left Copavi and moved to the northeast I was warned explicitly about some of the trouble that I would encounter (in fact, one of Copavi’s associates had even spent several years there). Living at the cooperative farm had not prepared me to navigate the intensely patriarchal world of individualized, family farming.

When I confided my misgivings about the long journey ahead of me, Rosa told me frankly:

You should know the *pernambucanos* are very different from the *paranenses*. You know, in Paraná, we are very calm and relaxed. It’s not the same up there. They have the *sangue febre* [fever blood]... But you will be okay, Melinda. They are still *our* people up there, so you can trust them... But you should know, they are very *machista* [sexist].

This proved to be an understatement.

SEMENTE- FAMILY FARMING

Semente was located deep in the semiarid sertão²¹ of Pernambuco. I traveled there after having been tipped off by militants at the MST-PE headquarters that the region had the largest rural youth population in the state. I took an airplane from Recife to Petrolina and watched as the ocean-front skyscrapers faded from view, morphing into sugarcane plantations, highlands, deep mining scars, and into the formidable deserts. Then, the rugged wilderness was arrested by the enormity of the Sobradinho Hydroelectric project. The dam blocked the waters of the mighty São Francisco River that originated in Minas Gerais in the southeast and reached the Atlantic.²² Along the shoreline, I saw vast plantations of fruits and vegetables for export. When irrigation arrived in the 1970s, it transformed the once backwater region into one of the most dynamic agribusiness poles of northeastern Brazil (Marsden and Cavalcanti 2001: 44; Gomes da Silva 1993: 34),²³ a region known for the production of fruits like mangos, grapes, and bananas, 70% of which are exported abroad (Cavalcanti et al. 2006: 79). From Petrolina, I took a van, bursting with children, men, and women and their possessions to Santa Maria de Boa Vista,²⁴ in the Upper São Francisco

²¹ The term sertão originated during the Portuguese colonization of Africa, as it was used to denote uninhabited spaces in the interior slated for future conquest (Trindade Lima 1997: 57). It evokes typical dichotomies of Western colonization, such as civilization/barbarism and metropole/colony, and had connotations of unknown lands and human and environmental otherness. By the late nineteenth century, its use was largely restricted to the arid interior of the Northeast of Brazil, as it “embodied the greatest risk to the nation” (Anderson 2011: 62).

²² I use the past tense here, because in 2014 and 2016, there were times when the spring of the river dried and a large transposition project diverted its river to such an extent, that it did not reach the sea anymore.

²³ The 1977 damming of the São Francisco River facilitated the introduction of irrigated agriculture and remade it into one of the most productive agricultural regions in the Northeast (Marsden and Cavalcanti 2001: 44; Gomes da Silva 1993: 34). With plentiful sunshine and a hot climate, planters specialized in export-oriented fruitculture—mangoes and grapes, tightly linked to global markets (Marsden and Cavalcanti 2001: 45). By the 1990s, with high rates of land concentration and limited public resources, even smallholding farmers had little “choice but to associate with the large enterprises” in vertically organized, contract-farm schemes (Marsden and Cavalcanti 2001: 41). In these enterprises, wage labor predominated.

²⁴ Rates of socioeconomic inequality were starkly racialized. The majority of the population was black, indigenous, and racially mixed, and their incomes averaged close to twice the national minimal salary, or less. On the other hand, some twenty white households, on the other hand, possessed more than 1,000% of these low monthly incomes (IBGE 2010). Educational scholar, Rebecca Tarlau interviewed politicians, activists, and citizens of Santa

Valley. This was one of the poorest municipalities in Pernambuco state, where approximately 60% of 39,435 residents lived under the poverty line (IBGE 2010). 62.3% lived in the rural zone, many of them in land reform settlements organized by the MST.

The *sertanejo* landscape was thrilling for me—seemingly “undeveloped,” rocky, harsh, and covered by *caatinga* (thorny scrub brush) and cacti. It reminded me of home in the American Southwest. The sertão was rough and tough: the land of thorns, leather, motorcycles, houses of mud, and free-ranging goats. It is legendary as the site of backland prophets, bandits, *forró*, cordel (poetry), and other artifacts of popular culture (Barman 1994; Arons 2004). Despite my enthusiasm, the region had a rather seedy reputation. When I mentioned my travel plans, coastal inhabitants were quick to suggest otherwise. Unlike the interior of Ceará (to the North), which conjures popular images of misery and hunger, in Pernambuco, the backlands are associated with violence and criminality. The São Francisco Valley was at the center of Brazil’s marijuana trade, roadside robbery, blood feuds, and corrupt profiteering politicians. It was not the place where tourists and foreigners typically ventured. I am reminded of Mark Anderson’s reflections on the “peculiar position” of the sertão in the Brazilian cultural imagination:

It is a mythical geography of contradictory fantasies, populated by honest-to-a-fault cowboys and corrupt politicians, Robin Hood-like *cangaçeiros* who rape and pillage without conscience the poor as well as the rich, and penitent religious fanatics cohabiting freely in orgiastic abandon while sacrificing their children to Old Testament gods. Its figurative landscape evokes the uninhabitable abundance of an inclement paradise; it is an isolated wilderness located beyond the reach of history and capital but mired in a precise moment of European feudalism, a hermetic hinterland that exports workers and products to every region of Brazil. For Brazilians, the sertão is a

Maria da Boa Vista and discovered that “only one family held political power since the municipality’s founding in 1872” and the region was marked by entrenched relations of clientelism and patronage (Tarlau 2013b: 410). Lacking industries, “government jobs were the most stable means of livelihood for an average citizen” (Tarlau 2013b: 410).

paradoxical space of irrational cleverness and logical instincts, loyal bravery and bloody betrayal, family life and family feuds with no regard for life, animal sexuality and cloistered virginity, individualistic disorder and rigid patriarchal hierarchies, social solidarity and antisocial chaos, and racial and cultural uniformity rooted in diversity. And somehow all the contradictions hold true. The image is one of fragmented wholeness, a shattered mirror whose reflection is clearer than an unbroken one (Anderson 2011: 56).

For much of recorded history, the semiarid region was home to some of Brazil's largest continuous ranching estates (Marsden 1997: 322; Ribeiro 2000; Anderson 2011: 56)—a dynamic that was partially interrupted by MST-PE's arrival on the scene in August 1995. Activists mobilized some two thousand landless families scattered across Pernambuco state to occupy a bankrupt fruit plantation on the banks of the São Francisco River. Compared with Copavi, it is vast. The 2,204-hectare property was expropriated in 1997 and distributed to 220 families. By the time I arrived in 2014, at least 1,000 people lived there.

Semente was the first MST-PE victory in the region.²⁵ Retrospectively, founding settlers explained that they were unclear as to what agrarian reform meant when they occupied the land, but they were desperate and took a chance. Under the supervision of MST-PE activists, they demanded an agrarian alternative for the São Francisco Valley—replacing large unproductive estates with 12-hectare family-farmed allotments. Unlike Copavi, households were awarded rights to usufruct and inheritance. Farm families lived in two residential neighborhoods, *agrovilas*, and commuted to their plots for work. Close residence facilitated the delivery of services such as electricity, water, and primary education. Although technically illegal, Semente hosts a lively informal real estate market—with a variety of sale,

²⁵ Semente is but one of dozens of land reform settlements along Agrarian Reform Street, which is home to 2,500 families affiliated with MST-PE. The municipality of Santa Maria da Boa Vista has the largest population of settled families in Brazil.

lease, and rental arrangements.²⁶ Each household farmed their plots separately, and some engaged in petty commerce.

Semente is considered to be one of the most prosperous land reform settlements in MST-PE's statewide network. While some families garnered a measure of comfort and prosperity, others remained in precarious economic straits. Household monthly median incomes were estimated to be R\$800 (~USD\$400), just above the national minimum salary. An estimated 60% of settled families also benefited from the federal conditional cash transfer program, *Bolsa Família*.²⁷ With time, significant internal stratification emerged. Families engaged in mixed livelihood strategies, based on a mixture of export-fruit agriculture (mango, papaya, bananas, grapes), fishing, pastoralism, governmental aid, and petty commerce.²⁸

²⁶ While the National MST Coordination denounces these practices (see MST 2014), they regularly occur. The MST does not have the means to oversee or control these transactions.

²⁷ 3/13/2013. "[Água mole em terra dura: uma pequena revolução no sertão pernambucano.](#)" *Reporter Brasil*.

²⁸ I should note that my understanding of Semente's economic activities is only partial. Much of this has to do with its relationship to the illicit economy. As mentioned, Santa Maria da Boa Vista is located in Brazil's "marijuana polygon," a fact advertised by the numerous police checkpoints along the region's roadways. The drug trade had a very palpable presence in the lives of Semente's families. While I was there, three homicides related to illicit activities occurred. Some of the youth I came to know worked on marijuana plantations, but I did not accompany them and did not ask many questions about the drug trade (as per my commitment with the IRB).



Satellite image of Semente, 2016, Google Earth. (A) denotes Agrovila I, (B) denotes Agrovila 2. The school lies approximately mid-way between the villages at marker (C). One can visually see individual irrigated farms, fenced in, that extend from the villages until the São Francisco River (D). The nearest city, Curaça, Bahia is located just beyond the river, and is accessible by motorboat. (E) marks Agrarian Reform Street. Although it

Those who farmed did not prioritize subsistence production. They sold crops to third-party transport companies at reduced rates (e.g., R\$30 per box of mangoes). A few settlers hoped that they would eventually get governmental funds to develop an agroindustry on-site to process fruit pulps. This would allow them to capture value-added income and sell their fruits to governmental entities.

Situated on the banks of the beloved São Francisco River, Semente provided plentiful opportunities for weekend leisure (swimming, fishing, picnics, bars, parties). With such a large population, and dozens of non-farming enterprises (bars, dance club, churches), it was

a lively place to be, with a seemingly endless stream of social activities—rodeos, concerts, circuses, and the traditional dances and rituals associated with major religious holidays. In short, Semente presented me with an entirely different sort of land reform settlement and distinctive MST political culture when compared with Copavi. Some of the variation was superficial. Out on the backlands, it was rare to see MST paraphernalia aside from the occasional sun-weathered red cap with the movement's insignia. Most of the people I met in Semente were unfamiliar with MST rituals, songs, and lore and did not self-identify as active members.²⁹ For them, “going with the *sem terra*” described involvement in very specific activities: setting up a shack in an occupation camp, attending a political training course in Caruaru or São Paulo, or participating in a demonstration in a distant urban center. When I asked young people if they participated in or belonged to the MST, I often got strange looks in response. “No I don't belong to the MST,” Dana (15/f) told me, “I can't get a piece of land until I'm eighteen.” Others seemed to equate movement participation with the scholarships that were generally awarded to the sons and daughters of established leaders. For the *sertanejos*, the MST seemed to be less of an intensely held collective identity (Issa 2007) and was more closely associated with the resources distributed through its institutional channels.³⁰ As a result, in Semente, the topic of my research project had to be modified somewhat, from *juventude sem terra* (landless/MST youth) to *jovens dos assentamentos* or *juventude rural* (rural youth, settlement youth).

²⁹ What constitutes a “member” of the MST is a matter of scholarly debate (Navarro 2010). Some have said that the MST is a “residential movement,” which would imply that merely living in a land reform settlement implies membership (see Sigaud 2005). Others emphasized the importance of collective identity and/or active participation (Issa 2007). Brazilian anthropologist Nashieli Rangel Loera (2010) noted that participants in MST mobilizations in São Paulo state perceived themselves as only *temporarily* involved in the movement, in so far as they were immersed in a network of reciprocal obligations. My experience leads me to think that notions of belonging and participation are regionally specific and correlated with ranking in the MST hierarchical structure.

³⁰ See Tarlau (2013) for a fascinating comparative study of MST educational politics and mobilization in Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo states. She characterizes Santa Maria da Boa Vista, Pernambuco as an antidemocratic context, and describes the dynamics of clientelism and patronage at work in MST contests over control of the public school system.



5/2014. Raquel at the Rio São Francisco.



4/2014. Boys cross-dress and ask for offerings, house to house, for a communal ritual during Easter.

At first, I thought that Semente offered the perfect combination of small town amenities (a lively social calendar, two internet cafes, opportunities for leisure and consumption) in a rural, family-oriented setting. Thus, the negative answer to my question—whether or not youth were interested in staying the settlement and pursuing agricultural careers—caught me off guard. As Dona Luisa put it,

The youth are not interested in working the *roça* anymore. They have lost respect. They are only interested in their freedom—in drinking, drugs, and dating. They are different—you can see it. Look around. There are lots of homosexuals here. No one is interested in marriage anymore. It is not the same as it was when I was growing up, no.

Dona Luisa was concerned by the generational changes she observed, and believed that the young people were rejecting a cherished way of life, based on traditional marriage, the sexual division of labor, and strong ties to the family and the land. On the other hand, Maritza (36/f) hoped for off-farm opportunities for herself and her young children. Over a cup of ice-cold, tasteless beer in her convenience store, Maritza showed me a thick booklet that she had just purchased. It was a study guide for the ENEM (college entrance exam). If she passed, she planned on commuting to a nearby city for night classes. “Today, you have to study a lot to become someone in life, right? It has gotten more and more competitive to find a good job. You don’t just need high school; you need college too.” Maritza then reflected on a television program she watched the night before and described the monumental changes she had witnessed in her lifetime.

You know, last night, on the TV, there was a story about the Indians. When I saw how they live, I realized that I was raised like that too. Just like an Indian. We lived in the middle of nowhere, grew our own food, and were completely isolated from the world. Now, for us, the world has changed. We don’t produce what we eat. What we grow, we sell to outsiders. In some ways, life has become more difficult and is certainly much

more expensive. Most of the youth here don't get it. They live in a dream world, the land of the moon, just waiting for their futures to arrive... The boys are only interested in drugs. The girls are only interested in boys. They don't seem to understand that today, to become someone in life you have to study, and study a lot. Otherwise, you have no future, only struggle. My boys will not have a choice—I will make sure that they are very studious.

These exchanges raised several questions. What was it like to grow up in Semente? Were young people included in familial enterprises—on and off the farm? Did individualized farm allotments reinforce traditional gendered divisions of labor? If so, how did young men and women view their prospects for remaining rural? These inquiries were, in part, prompted by my experiences in Copavi—which was quite different as males and females participated in all sorts of productive activities, including housework. They were also sparked by my reading of the literature on the rural exodus in northeastern Brazil, which calls attention to patriarchal patterns of authority and inheritance, and suggests that these are key factors fueling young people's dissatisfaction and outmigration (Phillips and Cole 2013; da Silva 2009; Leite and Dimenstein 2012). To approach matters of patriarchy, production, and social reproduction, let's begin with an introduction to gendered ideologies and socialization practices that I observed in Semente.

LEARNING GENDER IN SEMENTE

Gender strongly differentiates the life experiences and chances of farm children. While in Semente, I attended dozens of baby showers and had countless conversations with expectant mothers, like Angela (17/f). Three months pregnant, she still did not know her baby's sex. "I hope it is a boy," she confided. "I don't want daughters. The life of a woman is too hard." On the other hand, Aline (22/f) expressed gratitude for the recent birth of her son. "I am so

grateful to have a son. He won't have to suffer as I have—with menstruation, losing virginity, marriage, birth, divorce. I swear, a woman's life is just pain.” She continued to complain about marriage, motherhood, and its onerous demands. “Oh, sometimes it is just nauseating... Once you get married and have children, you stop living for yourself. Life just stops.” Why did so many of Semente's females explain differential life opportunities and challenges in gendered terms (instead of those of geography, race, class, or age)? Aline was emphatic that these problems stemmed from *criação*, how children are socialized within rural families. This seems like a good place to start.

With such different future roles in store for them, boys and girls were raised accordingly. For example, as toddlers, boys played with miniature tractors and shovels and were praised for being “good workers.” They were not expected to do housework and spent their time playing with siblings, cousins, and neighborhood children. Boys attended school and occasionally accompanied their fathers and kinsmen to the fields. As teenagers, they would increasingly help with productive projects, but were not compensated for their work. As a result, many found temporary jobs in nearby commercial plantations (mangoes, grapes, banana, manioc), especially during harvest season.³¹ Males did not experience limits to their physical mobility and were encouraged to spend their free time playing soccer, carousing with friends, and going to bars and parties in town. Their male kinsmen taught them to drive early (around age 10-12), and they dominated the means of transportation. They borrowed horses, donkeys, bicycles, motorcycles, tractors, cars, and trucks. Mobility was useful for their apprenticeships in adulthood—as they could help their kin by running errands and making deliveries. Many hoped to save money, get driver's licenses, and purchase transport

³¹ See [“A Vida na Roça”](#) and [“Macaxeira - Trabalhando nas Roças dos Outros,”](#)

of their own, which in this context should be understood as a means of production. I was often told that temporary migration was the preferred strategy to actualize these desires for mobility. Males married and moved out later than their sisters and often migrated elsewhere on a temporary or more permanent basis. If interested in working the *roça*, they might expect to inherit their father's plot in the settlement; otherwise they would have to save money to purchase or rent space elsewhere. Most circulated in and out of the settlement, returning to help on a seasonal basis.



2/2014. Three generations of men harvest mangos, Semente's top-selling crop.

Childhood and growing up was very different for Semente's daughters. As soon as they were walking, females were being trained for their future responsibilities as *donas de casa*, housewives and caregivers. As toddlers, they played with miniature brooms, received praise for being "good helpers," and kept close to their mothers. Responsibilities increased with age. I saw girls as young as ten standing atop stools, cooking meals for their entire families over hot gas-lit stoves. Their workloads were intense, as most families did not have labor saving devices. They were to care for the home, siblings, gardens, and small animals. Raquel (11/f) did not think this arrangement was unjust. "This is what a family is, right? We all must help each other. It is good this way." Raquel was only allowed to leave her home with parental permission, to complete socially acceptable tasks (e.g., run errands, make household purchases, attend school and church, visit relatives, and participate in communal and familial



6/2014. Lara holds a happy baby Dominic.

celebrations). Otherwise she risked punishment. For example, her neighbor, Talita (13/f), was pulled home by the ear after her older brother tattled on her for hanging out with male age mates at the soccer field when she was supposed to be running errands. After spanking her daughter, Talita's mother turned to me, sensing my discomfort. "I know she wants to go out, but she cannot. She'll end up pregnant that way. She is too young." The activities and whereabouts of teenage girls caused intense worry. "We have to take precautions with our girls," Maritza explained. "They get this shock of hormones, and don't know the risks. If we aren't careful, next thing you know they will be pregnant or worse."

In Semente, girls and young women had limited prospects for physical and social mobility, especially when compared to their brothers. I never met a woman on the sertão who had her own personal vehicle or driver's license. Females were dependent on men. Unattached women and girls were sometimes disciplined if they went out to drink in bars, the predominant form of leisure in Semente. Such behavior was viewed as a sign of promiscuity, *uma coisa feia* (an ugly thing) that could earn a woman a poor reputation.

Given such restrictions, teenage girls and young women were often visible occupying the liminal space of their verandas (Beckham 2011). Technically still at home, they labored on behalf of their families by continually sweeping their stoops. Meanwhile, they watched the passing traffic of animals, humans, and vehicles. Although this was not the most exciting use of one's time or energy, by spending afternoons on the veranda, they pushed back against domestic confinement.

Time at home was often felt to be deathly boring. For example, I asked Bianca (18/f) to tell me about her daily activities. She replied:

What do you think I did today? I did the same thing that I did yesterday, and the same thing I will do tomorrow. I wake up, cook, clean, care for the house, wash clothes, take a shower, and go to sleep. Everyday it is the same.

On other occasions, Bianca used words like *sufocante* (suffocated) in reference to her home life in Semente. She also told me of the “little wars” that limited female sociability and mobility in the settlement. Women employed dense gossip networks to maintain bitterly held rivalries, often regarding male attention. It became clear that it was not only men and older kin who discouraged women and girls from participating fully in social life. As Bianca explained:

You take one step outside of the house, and just put your foot on the street, and the entire village already knows all about it—who you spoke to, who you looked at. Especially if you speak with a man, but even if you just look at him, there are already rumors that you’re [having sex] and trying to steal him from his wife... There is lots of jealousy... This is why I prefer to stay home most of the time. That way I can avoid those who have nothing else to do but speak badly about other people’s lives.

Bianca stayed home most days. She lived with her father a few houses down from mine. Her days were spent cooking, cleaning, and caring for her two-year old daughter. She seemed starved for company. On the eve of my departure (to complete a bureaucratic errand in Recife), she confided how much she would miss me. “What will I do without you? I have really liked having someone to talk to.”

A sense of restlessness permeated Bianca's days. This was not the "situational boredom" that most people periodically endure while "waiting for a bus... or doing a repetitive and undemanding task at work. It was a more existential state of lacking a future and hope, intimately coupled with frustration" (Schielke 2008: 256, 254). Where boredom in Western European contexts has often been attributed to exposure to mass media and the frustration of consumerist desires (Klapp 1986: 117-123), Bianca's problem was entirely different. It stemmed from confinement in the *rotina chata* (lame routine). She described difficulties in "controlling the time." Where Bianca had dreamed of becoming a nurse, such career plans were derailed by the birth of her daughter. Graduating high school and continuing her studies, for the time being, was impossible. While hanging out, I was reminded of C.S. Lewis' essay, *Grief*. "Just hanging about waiting for something to happen. It gives life a permanently provisional feeling... Almost pure time, empty successiveness" (Lewis 2012: 275). In the meantime, Bianca waited: for a party, for a date, for anything to puncture the endless monotony of domesticity. Time was palpable, painful, and present. "I never imagined that my life would end up this way," Bianca confided, recalling Pierre Bourdieu's (2000) observation that "time is really experienced only when the quasi-automatic coincidence between expectations and chances... is broken" (cited in Auyero 2012: 5).

To break up her routine, Bianca occasionally went on dates with her boyfriend, Michel (47/m), who lived in a land reform settlement up the street, with his wife and three children. At first, their relationship baffled me. Bianca was beautiful, young, and energetic. Michel was aging, married, and more than twice her age. Bianca explained the appeal. "He has a car. We go to the river, to town. You know, I am young, and I need to go out sometimes. I deserve a bit of fun!" Obviously, Bianca pined for physical mobility and excitement, and, for better or

worse, sought to actualize her desires through a relationship with an older male and his vehicle.

Bianca's situation was not unusual. Many females in Semente "married" when they were teenagers.³² On a Saturday afternoon, Dandara (29/f) and I exchanged stories about growing up in religious households. She specifically wanted to know whether my parents approved of my tattoos. (*Claro que não!* Of course they did not.) Our discussion of modesty sparked her musings in ways that I didn't expect. Dandara began to reflect about her first marriage as a teenager, and told me it was a necessity. Dandara tellingly put it, "I married for my freedom."

I was first married when I was seventeen. My ex was from [another land reform settlement] and I did not really like him. I definitely did not love him. I married him for my freedom, *sabe?* It was like this: When I was younger, my father was very controlling. My god, was he controlling... For example, I could not wear tank-tops. Everything I wore was baggy and big with long sleeves. I could not leave my house or go down to the river without permission. Sometimes, I would sneak out of my window and hop the fence. But then, my dad put bars on my window and that was that... I was not allowed to go to parties. I could only go if my mother came too. After awhile, she got tired of partying, and then I could only go out if my brother came with me. If I broke the rules, my father would beat me. This is why I married so young. It was for my freedom.³³

For Dandara, along with many young women I came to know in Semente, cohabitation with a male was a pragmatic response to claustrophobic, authoritarian dynamics at home. She felt stifled by the authority her father exercised over her clothing, movements, and behavior.

Frustrated with his strict rules, Dandara married someone she did not like. Thereafter, she

³² In this context, *casado/casada* refers to informal cohabitation (Heilborn and Cabral 2011; Dalsgard et al. 2008; Goldstein 2003).

³³ These discussions of marriage and freedom among rural Brazilian women strongly resonated with Pardis Mahdavi's (2009) account of young women in Tehran. There, marriage was a way to legitimately leave the parental home, improve one's social status, but was costly.

learned a difficult lesson: that release from paternal authority did not necessarily translate into deliverance from male control. She traded one bad situation for another.

After I was married, there were all kinds of new rules and expectations placed on me. My husband was ok. He didn't care what I did. I could come and go as I wished, but I still was not free because women would gossip and say nasty things. For example, they would say, "You are married, you cannot wear that!" "You are married, you cannot go out and dance!" That sort of thing... But as I told you, I never loved my husband. Then, a few years later, I found out he was cheating on me, in our bed, and I couldn't tolerate that. So, I talked to my mother... and I was crazy, very emotional. I threatened to move to Petrolina or something, because I could not return home to live with my father, the way it was before. Well my mother worked it out. She told my dad that I would come home, only if he didn't say a word about my divorce. And today, he still hasn't. The best part is this: I got to keep my freedom. My life is much better than it was before.

After separating from her husband, Dandara (like Bianca) returned home and was completely dependent on her parents for economic support. Unmarried, living in Semente, Dandara was relatively happy, but a sense of restlessness also permeated her life.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Thus far, I have shared insights about gendered socialization and its painful consequences in Semente. Although I got the sense that young women were more dissatisfied with rural prospects than their brothers, everyone seemed frustrated. Consider the following excerpts from a group discussion with nine teenagers and young adults (five females, four males). All had grown up in Semente and none planned on aging in place if they could help it. As Mario (17/m) said, "I don't plan to stay here, no. For me, Semente is not a place of opportunity." Anticipating my surprise, Mario's older sister Gabi (19/f) intervened.

Semente is a good place to live. There is always something going on here, but there is no work for us, there is no future. It is perfect for those who want to care for the house or work in the fields, but that is it.

I was curious. Why, if there were so many fields to tend and stores to manage, would young people feel excluded from productive processes? David (18/m) further explained how patriarchal dynamics at home reduced young men and women to dependent and helper status.

If you live with your parents and work in the fields, come harvest time, you still don't receive any money. All of it goes to the father, the *chefe da familia*... The only income I get is when I work in the *roças dos outros* [other people's fields]... The pay is really low, just R\$25 a day and the work is very heavy. You have to move irrigation pipe, spread poison, pull manioc... It wastes the body, you know. I want a different future you know, to become someone in life. I intend to go to college and become a lawyer or a doctor. I would rather live in a city. I would work indoors, earn a good salary, and help my family that way.

David highlights a very important point. When rural youth share a roof with their parents, they are not entitled to remuneration for their labor—at home, in the fields, or in family businesses. Laura (16/f) confirmed this. After school, in addition to other domestic responsibilities, Laura spent her afternoons stocking shelves and handling the cash register at her parent's small convenience store in Semente. She said:

Yes, I work everyday, but I do not have my own *renda* [income]. Because we share a roof, all of us have to help out. This is what a family is, no? It is good to help, no? I don't really like to ask my father for money.

The others nodded in agreement. Mario continued,

This is why I am studying in the city. If I studied here [in the adult education program in the settlement] it would take much longer to graduate from high school, and I want to go to college... When our parents were younger, they did not get opportunities to study and life was harder for them. Today, we understand that to *ser*

alguém na vida [become someone in life] you must study, and study a lot. We have opportunities to do these things, and so we must run after them.

Gabi then reminded her peers of a tentative proposal for agroindustrialization in Semente, as this might resolve their predicament. With collectivization, they might work for Semente's producer association, instead of for their parents.

The association wants to develop an agroindustry here [to process fruit pulp.] If we had that, the producers could sell to the municipality and this would help us. We would have good technical jobs here in the settlement. This would help the youth I think, because we could stay close to our families, earn our own *renda*, and raise our children in the countryside... But who knows when that will happen.

Although Gabi was hopeful and believed that collectivization might improve the lot of Semente's youth, everyone understood that this possibility was remote, at least in the short term.

Despite being surrounded by the trappings of agriculture and petty commerce, Semente's youth were largely excluded from opportunities for remunerated employment. Although materially better off than their parents' generation had ever dreamed of, they were frustrated.

Jefferson (19/m) said:

I don't need a lot of money, but I would like to buy a car or a motorcycle of my own. With transport, I could drive a moto-taxi and make deliveries or something. Beyond that, I could go to parties, and I could take girls out. It would be fun. Sometimes I think about moving away for awhile, maybe to Goiás, where my cousins are working. That way, I could get some money together, and come back... I also set up my shack in an [MST] occupation camp in case the land is expropriated. That way, I could have something for myself. I don't know. These are things I am thinking of.

MST folk theories about rural youth outmigration often center on the quests for cars, motorcycles, and consumer goods. Older adults were often dismissive of rural youth as being materialistic and individualistic. That said, Jefferson insisted that a car or motorcycle was more than just an artifact of conspicuous consumption. It could improve his situation, socially and financially, and represented an investment in his future. Indeed, a car was a vehicle with which to “move through the public sphere” and conferred a sense of “agency and control” (Mahdavi 2009: 75). Working for free in his father’s fields, on the other hand, would not help him get ahead. Jefferson set up a provisional shack in an MST occupation camp (which was then demolished in October 2016). However, as this route was uncertain and lengthy, he also considered migrating elsewhere for a time. “Semente is a very good place to live,” he assured me, “but in terms of income, it is very weak. There is not a lot of money here.”

Jessica (20/f) wanted to remind the group that life wasn’t always easier in urban places. When she was 15 years old, she married a man in Petrolina (a nearby city) and got a job in town. There, it was “very difficult to get ahead.” After her divorce, she returned to live with her parents in Semente. She reflected:

In the city, life is very expensive. Paying rent, water, and lights was hard. I worked in a cell phone store and it was very hard to advance in that job... As I am a mother, I have to care for my son. My ex doesn’t contribute at all. It would have been impossible for me to support my son on my own and work in town. That is why I came home. At least here, I don’t pay rent and my mother helps me look after my little one.

Juca (22/m) agreed. He mentioned how his social relationships deteriorated while living in Brasília.

Yes, in the city you can go and make money, but that is all that you will do. You wake up, work until you are beat, and then go home, sleep, and do it again. There is nothing for you outside of that run around, you know. Life is not very enjoyable in the city. If you live in the city, without family and friends, it is worse because you will be completely isolated. It is hard to even to go on dates, because the girls in the city don't trust anyone. It is hard.

In contrast to the urban rat race, Semente offered a more relaxed pace of life, but was beset with limits: for personal autonomy, income generation, and professional development. For those with dreams of higher education and “good jobs” (off-farm, indoor employment), Semente lacked the institutional resources needed to make an appropriate transition into idealized adult roles. Urbanity seemed more compatible with their ambitions and aspirations in some ways, but was not wholly embraced as youth possessed strong attachments to place. Weverton (27/m) made this clear.

I love it here. I love working the *roça*. My mom, brothers, cousins, friends, and my children live here. But the thing is, it is hard in some ways... How do I explain it? There are fights, there is intrigue, there is not a lot of *renda* [income]. So, from time to time, I have to move... I just barely got back to Semente. For the last two years, I was working at a Bunge warehouse in Goiás. Man, you have no idea, the money is good—really good. It isn't like I don't have options. I actually graduated from college—did you know that? I studied with the MST to become a schoolteacher, but could not find a job around here. I have an ex-wife and two sons, you know... She doesn't work. She lives here with her parents and cares for them. I have to support them. This is why I moved to Goiás—to avoid her, and make enough money for them. I would stay here, but it is just too complicated.

For Weverton, higher education is not “an unproblematic social good” (Jeffrey 2010). Even though he graduated from college, out in the countryside, a diploma did not translate into upward social mobility and steady work. He loved life on the land and being surrounded by friends and familiars, but Weverton disliked the jealousies, suspicion, gossip, and interpersonal conflicts in Semente. “It is like there are eyes everywhere,” he explained, “my

ex-wife is always trying to start trouble.” He concluded by agreeing with his peers. “Yes, Semente is great—especially to visit. But to live here? No, it is not for me.”

CONCLUSION

This chapter helps us to contextualize the MST’s organizational preoccupation with youthful outmigration. Throughout Brazil, I often heard rumors about land reform settlements almost exclusively populated by older adults and young children. How to sustain the movement’s fragile alternatives to capitalist agriculture if the youth are moving away? Although some older adults in the MST may insist that young people are materialistic, misguided, and have “lost their love for the countryside,” I have argued that this caricature is far too simplistic. Any understanding of rural youth and their future-oriented life projects needs to begin at home, and attend to specific social and material environments. Examining two differently organized MST land reform settlements, Copavi and Semente, indicates that the interface between family, gender, and productive labor provides a powerful explanatory framework with which to comprehend the radically different experiences and aspirations of young people.

To recapitulate, Copavi lacked fixed rights of inheritance and occupancy. There, members labored collectively in the cooperative business and earned hourly wages. All were subjected to an internal regiment of conduct, and participated in general assemblies. In Semente, however, land and residence were awarded to individual families, and households functioned as units of production and consumption (Chayanov 1966). Semente’s firm basis in the patriarchal family exerted profound consequences in terms of the “emancipation” of women

and household dependents (da Silva 2009: 39-40).³⁴ Whereas Copavi's youth had an institutionalized means to transition into adulthood (through wage-labor and communal governance), no such provisions were made in Semente. Even among those who wished to become farmers one day, options were rather limited. While government programs ostensibly existed to provide credit to and land ownership opportunities for youngsters, they were underutilized and poorly designed (MDA 2013). As a result, Semente's youth felt that they lacked opportunities for personal autonomy and development. As household dependents and helpers, they were unable to successfully transition into adult roles while staying in place. As a result, migration, marriage, and (to a lesser extent) higher education were seen as vital strategies, but presented new sets of challenges to navigate.

It is worth remembering that Copavi is a somewhat exceptional case within the MST network as a whole, one of a handful of collectivized settlements (Vergara-Camus 2009: 189). An ethnographic perspective helps to reveal the intergenerational benefits of cooperativism and contextualizes why the MST's solution to the "youth problem" generally entails a degree of collectivization and agroindustrialization.³⁵ This emphasis might surprise the reader who is familiar with the MST literatures. Clearly, the imposition of collectivized farming was traumatic in MST communities, as it was many contexts around the world (Ying

³⁴ Da Silva writes of the young women's journeys from land reform settlements in Northeastern Brazil to university programs, and back again. In so doing, she discovered that although MST discursively promotes gender equality, such principles failed to translate into significant change in rural communities the movement purported to represent (see also, Branford and Rocha 2002, Honório 2005). Similarly, Jules Falquet (2006) found it "surprising that a movement which seeks radical social transformation is blind to the exploitation of women, and defends of a patriarchal family model" (Falquet 2006: 216).

³⁵ I am thinking of the Terra Forte program, launched in 2013, which provided funding for agroindustrialization on MST settlements. Only a handful of communities benefited from these funds. Other governmental programs, such as PAA, only benefited an estimated 5% of settled families (see Carter 2016). See, 2/2013. "[Discurso da Presidenta da República, Dilma Rousseff, durante cerimônia de inauguração da Unidade Industrial de Beneficiamento de Leite e Derivados e de lançamento de investimentos em assentamentos.](#)"

³⁵ "[Programa Terra Forte Investirá R\\$300 Milhoes na Industrialização de Assentamentos Rurais.](#)" *Blog Planalto*. 2/2013.

and Kung 2014; Dipse 2014; Morell 2015). Early MST collectivization efforts largely failed (Diniz and Gilbert 2013: 24), as members lacked knowledge, credit, and capital (Meek 2016: 279). Schimanski (1998) provides a vivid account of conflictual dynamics involved in the development of Copavi, including: autocratic tendencies, schisms, and the marginalization of pre-existing knowledge of experienced farmers (see also Delgado 2009). Similar problems were noted elsewhere. In Pernambuco, for example, MST-style collectivization “provoked extreme objections” among settled families as the model did not resonate with their traditional “moral economy” (Wolford 2010: 188-192). There, farmers complained that specialized labor was repetitive and unfulfilling, and more seriously, as they stopped producing for subsistence, nutritional security was undermined (Wolford 2010: 109-111). Wolford also noted gendered problems in popular participation and a lack of intergenerational ties to the land. This last factor was forcefully communicated to Flynn (2010, 2013) in his examination of an MST cooperative in Santa Catarina. There, farm families strongly rejected such arrangements as they precluded inheritance rights and did not allow settlers to pass tangible assets to their children. Therefore, it is not surprising that the MST rescinded its directives towards agrarian collectivization in the mid-1990s (Wright and Wolford 2003), and advocated a more flexible model to avoid alienating its membership.

That said, my youth-centered account of production and social reproduction in two land reform settlements indicates that collectivized land and labor regimes have the potential to destabilize rural patriarchy and enhance youthful satisfaction. Collectivization promoted personal autonomy and prompted a productive reimagining of the terms of rurality—which proved attractive to second-generation members. After all, as John D’Emilio reminded us long ago: “Socialists do not generally respond to the exploitation and economic inequality of

industrial capitalism by calling for a return to the family farm and handicraft production”

(D’Emilio 1983: 111).

CHAPTER 3.



5/2014. Cleia (18/f) builds her first shack in an MST occupation camp, Pernambuco.

BARRACOS: ON COMPETING SENSES AND TENSES OF LAND REFORM

Making people wait... delaying without destroying hope...adjourning without totally disappointing is integral to the working of domination.

–Pierre Bourdieu, 2000 (cited in Auyero 2012: 5).

My friends tell me that in the city I would have a more comfortable life... that in the city I can live in a house made of bricks with electricity, and not get my hands dirty with the soil working in the fields... However, for me, this is not a comfortable life. If I lived in town, I would have to devote my time only to work, to pay rent and buy food. I do not have a brick house. My house is made of black plastic tarp. I do not have electricity. Yet, it is this life I chose, in the MST occupation camp...

I'm not ashamed to have hands dirtied from working in the fields. I'm not ashamed to live in a poor community with plastic houses, indeed, I'm very proud of it.

–Joelma Gomes, Cascavel, Paraná, 2012.

Over the last thirty-three years, the MST built its reputation and membership by organizing long-term, massive occupations of farmland to pressure for governmental expropriation and

land redistribution.¹ To do so, activists mobilize landless families to construct itinerant villages—clusters of shacks built of branches and black plastic tarp. Often situated along highways, the squatter communities are precarious and isolated—lacking secure tenure, basic sanitation, and infrastructure. MST occupation camps are strikingly variable, from an aesthetic perspective. As examples of “auto-construction” (Holston 1991), *barracos* reflect regional customs, preferences, environmental conditions, and the local availability of construction materials, such as: mud, brick, wood, brush, branches, plastic tarp, construction scraps, and/or existing structures on a given piece of property. Visiting the camps, I was struck by the creativity of occupiers who, by building their shacks, sought to take their futures into their own hands. In addition to differences in construction methods and materials, MST occupation camps are home to diverse sorts of individuals and households—single women and men, grandparents, married couples, teenagers and young adults, and generally, plenty of children.² While awaiting state recognition, occupiers may be subjected to state and landlord violence. In response to such dangerous conditions, the MST requires land occupiers to subject themselves to a collective regiment, with rules for participation, residence, and conduct.³ Those who display proper comportment will be prioritized for settlement, when and if, expropriation occurs. These insulated collectives have been long “privileged as a space for political indoctrination and collective identity building” (Ondetti

¹ Alternatively, although affiliated with the MST, occupation camps might alternatively be understood as “nonmovements,” embodied in the “shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people” (Bayat 2010: 14).

² Generally, I found that the most vulnerable—like women, LGBT youth runaways, and children—lived in the occupation camps full-time, although they were not always prioritized for settlement once expropriation occurred.

³ Rules within MST occupation camps vary tremendously. For example, in Paraná, land occupiers were generally expected to reside (more or less) full-time in the camps, to secure the land and begin to produce. Many people stay in encampments on the weekends and live with relatives in town during the weeks so they can maintain employment (much to the chagrin of MST leadership). In Pernambuco, on the sertão, the rules were much more flexible. If one was not in a coordinating, or leadership role, responsibilities were minimal. They needed to set up a shack, sign up with INCRA, and then “frequent” the camp for monthly assemblies. In some camps, people paid the camp coordinators a small monthly “rent” (R\$25) to maintain their name on the registry list.

2008: 115), and credited as necessary for the formation of new *sem terra* subjects (Kane 2000, Meek 2011). As an “exclusive” social movement (Zald and Ash 1966), the MST’s method of land redistribution entails a “degree of of clientelism” as it lacks transparency and oversight (Flynn 2010: 105).⁴ Although the entire process may take years (if not decades), by building their *barracos* (shacks) in *acampamentos*, individuals place their faith in the MST, with hopes that *vai dar tudo certo* (it will all work out).⁵ The occupiers have reason to believe that their efforts will be rewarded.⁶ Thus far, the movement claims to have helped settle some 400,000 households in more than 3,000 land reform settlements.⁷ The provision of land and housing to the rural poor has helped to dramatically improve the lives of settled families (Wright and Wolford 2003: 152).⁸

⁴ Alex Flynn (2010) was confused by the occupation camps he visited in Santa Catarina, as more people occupied land than could be feasibly settled upon it. He described conflicts and challenges that arose given the lack of transparency regarding MST leaderships’ decisions about who got settled when land was expropriated. In visits to an occupation camp in Northwest Paraná, I discovered the same problem. When the land was finally expropriated, after 14 years, a round of expulsions and evictions occurred. The newly displaced had to move their shacks to an encampment of the *sem teto* (homeless) on the periphery of the nearest municipality.

⁵ MST occupation camps, and the hopeful politics that sustain them, have interesting parallels with cases described in South Africa, see Oldfield and Greyling (2015:1100).

⁶ As Arjun Appadurai discovered in his research on Mumbai’s Shackdwellers’ Association, early victories should be understood as “precedents...value-multiplying chain of examples” that ameliorate the “otherwise intolerable burdens of ‘waiting’ and the constant threat of disposal and de-recognition” (Appadurai 2013: 128).

⁷ Personal Communication, ENFF (5/10/2014). This number is somewhat higher than what is used by most scholars, who cite 2002 numbers as provided by João Pedro Stédile (Diniz-Pereira 2013: 40).

⁸ The PNERA survey was conducted in 2004 and only published in 2007. To date, it is the only available settlement survey and provides a good place from which to examining living conditions and educational access. 79% of respondents said that their housing conditions had improved and 86.61% characterized their homes as “good” or “average” (Valente and Berry 2015: 9).



3/2014. Alessandra finishes giving me the tour of Filhos da Luta, an occupation camp, in Pernambuco. There, homes were made of caatinga (thorny branches), black plastic tarp, palm fronds, and mud. In October 2016, this camp was demolished and burned by private security forces hired by the property owner.



5/2014. Renata's barraco in the Alexandra Kollontai occupation camp, founded in 2005. As the encampment is situated close to Ribeirão Preto, a large city, occupiers made their homes of discarded materials, like signs and construction scraps.

During the time of my field research, I grew increasingly preoccupied with the plight of the *acampados*. Social movements do not operate in isolation from broader society (Tarrow 2011). Alongside macroeconomic stability and increased employment, Dilma’s administration virtually stopped expropriating new properties and focused its limited efforts on cultivating existing land reform settlements.⁹ I often wondered: if the state did not plan to redistribute land, and the MST had relatively limited success in creating viable agricultural alternatives (Pahnke 2015), why would young adults continue to join MST occupation camps? Why didn’t they opt to build their lives and futures elsewhere? According to the MST slogan, the landless did so for a “piece of land to work,” but I came to understand that individual motives were far more complex—and often centered on the urgent need for housing, most specifically, the need to *sair de aluguel* (stop paying rent).¹⁰

To further explore the circumstances that prompt young people to join MST occupation camps in increasingly hostile political circumstances, I share Junior’s story. He grew up in a mid-sized city in Southeastern Brazil. His life was spent transiting between town and country before he finally moved into an MST occupation camp. While I got to know Junior exceptionally well, I insist that his case was not exceptional.¹¹ Throughout Brazil, I came to

⁹ For example, the Terra Forte program, launched in 2013, provided funding for agroindustrialization on MST settlements. Only a handful of communities benefited from these funds. Other governmental programs, such as PAA, only benefited an estimated 5% of settled families (see Carter 2016). Having spent time in land reform settlements where agriculture played a minimal role in subsistence strategies, it seemed that hopes for a small plot and home in the countryside was just as important (if not more so) than successful integration into the small farming sector. Land reform, I was often told, is a rather expensive government program, with only marginal economic benefit (due to a variety of problems). That is why MST militants emphasized that the goal is primarily of social justice.

¹⁰ Some estimates suggest that a full 10% of the Brazilian population fits federal criteria for homelessness (which includes those without shelter as well as individuals dwelling in overcrowded and substandard conditions) (Boulous 2014). These numbers were pulled from a series of reports utilized by the Brazilian government (Fundação João Pinheiro 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2013).

¹¹ I could have included stories from Paraná and Pernambuco as well, that also foreground the ways severe disappointment and alienation from the MST. However, to do justice to my material—and this extremely complex case, I will confine myself to Junior.

know many young people who replicated their parents' strategies and set up shacks in MST occupation camps, as a socially legitimate strategy to plan for the future. Their movements can and should be understood as an intergenerational consequence of Brazil's land reform program—as the state has (unwittingly perhaps) institutionalized a particular track for obtaining the goods and resources associated with social adulthood in the countryside.

Junior's story helps to us to appreciate how the messy entanglements of home, family, and personal biography are inseparable from landless activism. To approach the animating force that sustains Junior's engagement, we must tune into the subjunctive register—that of dreams, possibilities, and the imagination. As we shall see, Junior's experiences in the MST were not empowering in a straightforward sense (Quirk 2012; Diniz-Pereira 2013). Instead, Junior's trajectory involved the “mortification of self” (Goffman 1968)— degradation, humiliation, disappointment, and bitter alienation from the MST. Even so, he was unable to imagine a life for himself outside of its institutional web. Taking his dreams and aspirations seriously reveals the powerful ways in which the MST has taken root in youthful subjectivities and has come to monopolize “politically-organized hope” (Appadurai 2013: 127-128) in certain corners of Brazil.

LAND REFORM IN THE HEARTLAND OF BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS

Due to the sensitive nature of the story that follows, I have chosen to omit details about the location where it transpired and have taken trouble to conceal the identities of those involved. Generically speaking, it was situated in the heartland of Brazilian agribusiness in southeastern Brazil. After the tropical forests were cleared in the mid-nineteenth century, the region became a global leader in the production of coffee, or “green gold” (Margolis 1989).

The local landowners, so-called “coffee barons,” became fantastically wealthy; powerful players in local, state, and national politics (Emboaba 1955: 340; Cardinale 2014: 19; Walker and Barbosa 2009: 29). After the crash of the 1929 stock market, the coffee-dependent economy collapsed. The region’s second boost came decades later, after the OPEC oil crisis, when Brazil incentivized and subsidized sugarcane ethanol production to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Thereafter, vast stretches of southeastern Brazil were converted into sugarcane plantations.

In the 1990s, migrants from Northeastern Brazil arrived, attracted by promises of work in mid-sized cities and in the sugarcane fields. Junior’s parents, Miguel and Riana, were from Ceará. Like most of the newcomers, they settled down in peripheral urban neighborhoods and worked construction and service sector jobs. By the time the MST arrived on the scene in the late 1990s, Miguel and Riana, like many of the poor in the region, were afflicted by the lack of work and affordable housing. MST activists capitalized on popular dissatisfaction and offered prospective members an agrarian alternative (Firmiano 2009).

The MST sought to *conquistar* (conquer) the Fazenda, a rural property located on the urban periphery that was under investigation by INCRA—due to excessive deforestation, agrochemical pollution, unlawful sugarcane burns, and a failure to meet productivity standards. A local environmental group brought attention to its location near the sensitive “recharge” zone of one of the world’s largest sources of fresh water, the Guarani Aquifer. Contamination at the Fazenda had expansive consequences—affecting water quality throughout Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay (Nogueira 2005: 226). Tipped off, MST activists recruited several hundred families from the urban peripheries and occupied

the Fazenda. Riana and Miguel both tried their luck in the MST occupation camp—but only Miguel stuck with it. They divorced, and Riana returned to the periphery with her two young children.

In 2003, INCRA sent its recommendation for expropriation of the Fazenda to Brasília, but the process was delayed. Due to a law passed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, government officials could not inspect any property already under occupation for two years. Local newspapers covered the intense battle for control of the Fazenda over the following four years—with occupations, violent evictions, reoccupations, conflicts, and eventual fracture into three social movement factions.¹² When the property was finally expropriated in 2007, it was one of the most expensive land reform settlements in Brazilian history, with a price tag of R\$23 million.

Miguel was one of 264 families affiliated with MST that received usufruct rights for 1.5 hectares in the Fazenda settlement. By this time, he had already remarried and started a new family. He was hopeful that they would successfully make a living on the land, but development of the settlement was slow and contentious.

Given its location in the heartland of Brazilian agribusiness, MST leaders thought that the settlement should be used symbolically and strategically, as a showcase for evolving theories on the development of sustainable agrarian alternatives. Graciele, a regional leader, told me:

This question of the environment is very strong here... and so the settlement was structured with a Land Commune and Sustainable Development Contracts (TACs),

¹² According to press reports, the splits occurred due to conflicts regarding “discipline.” Numerous families and individuals were expelled for breaking with the established regimen by drinking alcohol.

because society supported the creation of the land reform settlement for environmental reasons. This means that the settled families had to sign agreements to promise that they would build an alternative to agribusiness, produce healthy food of quality, fight against GMOs and pesticides... We want our settlement to not just be a place of production, but a place for life.

In exchange for conditional usufruct rights, Miguel and other settlers agreed to abide by strict land and water use policies.¹³ According to the master use plan, they were to work in communal plots and were committed to the agroecological production of subsistence crops like corn, beans, rice, and manioc, as well as small animals like pigs and chickens. Such an emphasis was somewhat surprising, as half of the Fazenda's settlers had never worked in agriculture before. MST leaders imagined that collective/individual production would promote familial wellbeing and accommodate a not-so-traditional peasantry—recruited from the urban periphery. A sense of optimism was conveyed in official documents, claiming that the Fazenda's sustainable development plan would surely “resolve urban problems,” as well.

Problems like violence, lack of work and income, a lack of space for housing, and a lack of space for social and cultural activities, these will be resolved if the population has other options of work, dignity, and leisure. Creating a peasant economy and community will facilitate the construction of new social ties. This will ensure that people have a place to live, work, produce food, and earn an income, while enjoying space for social and cultural activities. Contact with nature is certainly the dream of many people... The Land Commune is central for people that are different from the traditional peasantry. It hopes to respond to the urban-rural dynamic and include the excluded population of the cities (CONCRAB 2004, cited in Firmiano 2009).

While such plans seemed promising, it was much more complex in practice. New residents encountered problems that were never resolved by state agencies (see also, Kolling 2016: 64-67). Miguel and his fellow settlers only received R\$14,000 of the R\$21,000 promised to build

¹³ The Project of Sustainable Development implemented there adhered to INCRA criteria (agroecology and associativism) originally formulated for Amazonian land reform settlements (Cardinale 2014: 34).

their homes. When I asked where the money had gone, many speculated that it had been vanished in corruption. Electricity finally arrived in 2010. INCRA was supposed to dig wells to ensure that all families had adequate water supplies, but failed to do so. Roads in and out of the settlement were hazardous and precarious. When it rained the children did not attend school. The settlers received some credit to produce, but never had the technical assistance to which they were entitled. This was troubling as they confronted significant environmental limitations, such as: acidified soil,¹⁴ water shortages, and pests.¹⁵ Fazenda's lofty plan for sustainable development seemed to succeed on only one tragic front: although the world's largest source of fresh water was just beneath their feet, half of the settled families could not access it.¹⁶ As a result, many of their start-up projects were misguided and doomed to fail.

¹⁴ When asked about losses and other production difficulties, some spoke of the acidity of the soil, a consequence from fertilizer-intensive monocultural farming. Dona Sueli explained, "You cannot let the land weaken. You always have to help it, because it gets too exhausted, it will ever recover again...But to help it, it is expensive." She complained because the nearby sugarcane plantations bordered her small lot. As the agribusiness firm utilized a hefty package of agrochemical pesticides, it harmed her own prospects for organic production. "Think about it... If we are planting here in the settlement ecologically, naturally, with no chemical defenses, and your neighbors use so many poisons, this affects us too. We have serious snail problems, and we cannot use the poisons. If just one of those beasts gets in, they can eat an entire garden in one night. It is hard to keep up."

¹⁵ Miguel bemoaned the situation of one of his neighbors, who had spent her entire production-credit package purchasing coffee trees. Sadly, she placed them in a shady area and all of them died. Indeed, many spent their funds on misguided enterprises and ended up with considerable debt and few options for repayment. Silvio complained, "If we do not have technical monitoring from INCRA, from planting to harvest, in ten years will we be bankrupt. This is serious, because, as I said, for many people, coming to the MST was rock bottom, the last door that opened. This isn't my situation, because if I ever get out of here I could do something else, find a profession... I come from a farm, and I returned to the fields, but lots of people are here who did not come from the countryside. They have no idea, no knowledge. They don't know that if you plant beans, it will be 90 days until harvest."

¹⁶ Dona Luana explained: "Our water is only from the rain... and what DAERP [a private company] brings us to drink and take a bath, but you really ought to boil that water because sometimes it is very bad, with maggots in it, you know? It makes a lot of work to wash clothes and take care of daily needs." Water access was uneven throughout the settlement, which contributed to internal stratification and social differentiation. Those who received use rights to plots next to the Rio Pardo or the recharge area were able to produce; yet the vast majority did not. They were dependent on the seasonal rains and limited supplies delivered on a monthly basis to aboveground storage containers. Thirty to fifty families had to share these supplies, which were grossly insufficient for covering domestic and agricultural needs. In order to conserve the Aquifer, INCRA promised to dig wells for the families, but had not followed through with its commitments. The settlers were prohibited, per their TAC agreements, from digging water wells, themselves. In 2014, drought exacerbated existing water and infrastructure problems. The adjacent river flowed at an estimated 10% of capacity. In response to the near-loss of crops, some families dug small wells by hand. Although some of the MST-SP's sustainable development communities have experienced modest success in the region, most of the Fazenda's families did not have enough water for farming. As a result, conflicts, suspicion, and intrigue were rampant. Some families were expelled,

Some went deeply into debt and/or abandoned the land. Indeed, as Mônica Dias Martins reminds us, “[o]fficial agrarian reforms designed to establish a capitalist class of small farmers through access to rural property often occur simultaneously with an intensive proletarianization of the majority of rural people” (Martins 2006: 267).

These problems were rather serious during one of my visits. Drought was severe. The river that ran adjacent to the Fazenda was running at 10% of its normal capacity. Fields were brown and parched. The settlement felt abandoned, ghostly even. Ruan (22/m) commented on the scene. “Look at this. No one is planting in the lots; they are not producing anything! This is a shame, *reforma agrária burguesa* (bourgeois land reform)... This is not *reforma agrária popular* (popular agrarian reform).” Junior, Ruan, and I spent a Sunday afternoon visiting Miguel’s lot and having lunch with his family. When Ruan asked about the season’s production, Miguel reflected, despondently:

You know, Lula only made this place worse... He strengthened agribusiness and the workers suffered. Look around. You see all the big plantations—with their tractors, their machines, and all the water they need. These things are not for us, the poor. We don’t have a single tractor in the settlement. We do everything by hand.

The situation at the Fazenda was disturbing. While the sugarcane planters next door farmed with the most sophisticated technologies, comprehensive agrochemical packages, and had plentiful water, those at the Fazenda cultivated their tiny plots by hand. Their only defenses against pests and soil infertility were home remedies: chicken manure, castor oil, eggshells,

others abandoned the land, and very few people earned a steady income from agriculture. In 2014, Nilo confided his concerns to me. “I am about to abandon my lot here, because we don’t have water, and we almost lost everything last month. [DAERP] didn’t deliver water for 17 days! We are barely making it. I am thinking about sending [my daughter] to go to [the nearby occupation camp]. If she got us a new lot, perhaps we could make it work.”

compost, bananas, and circular planting systems. It seemed altogether perverse that rigorous compliance with “sustainability” standards was demanded of these poor families, while the roots of Brazil’s egregious and alarming environmental crises were literally over the fence!

Miguel suggested that their woes were related to various misfortunes: failed production, a lack of popular participation, corruption within the producers’ association (e.g., nonpayment of farmers), and concentrated leadership styles within MST-SP. Indeed, scarce resources triggered interpersonal conflict, expulsions, and contributed to acute senses of insecurity within the community at large. If he had known what lay ahead of him, Miguel said he would have never joined the *sem terra*. He was plagued by troubling questions, and asked:

What is agrarian reform anyway? Is it some kind of a joke? Putting poor folks out here without water, without infrastructure? The rains did not come this year and we almost lost everything! My god, you struggle for so many years, with so much humiliation, waiting for some help. We finally got the land, but it only got worse! What do we have now? Debt.

Although Miguel tended to his crops and tried to work the land, he earned a living as a bus driver for the local school system. His second wife was a domestic worker in town. His eldest daughter worked at a pizzeria and lived in a peripheral neighborhood. Their situation was unexceptional, as most households had more than one member working outside of the settlement. Among them, only Junior didn’t work. He devoted himself to building pilot agro-forestry systems in the Fazenda.

Junior’s mother, Riana, never left the periphery. She remarried Rodrigo, a construction worker, and had two daughters together. Riana was very proud of her only son. Junior was

bright and awarded a scholarship to study at a private Catholic boarding school, but left it after being threatened by another student. Fearing for his safety, Riana sent Junior to live with Miguel in the Fazenda. To continue his education, Junior, like many sons and daughters of MST settlers in the region, studied agroecology at an MST alternative education program. As part of his coursework, he designed a production project and completed the application for PRONAF-Jovem, a specific line of subsidized rural credit designated for sons and daughters of land reform beneficiaries. Junior wanted to start a beekeeping operation on Miguel's lot. Unfortunately, to apply for the loan, Junior needed his father's approval. Miguel believed that his son was too immature and inexperienced, and refused to sign the application.

Junior graduated from high school when he was twenty-one. When we first met, he was unhappily living with Miguel. Junior was dissatisfied with the arrangement as it was crowded with younger siblings and Miguel had *virou crente* (become a devout evangelical). Junior was subjected to paternal authority. As long as he lived at home, he was expected to help plant and weed the family garden, and obey Miguel's rules. Junior resented this situation, as he was not compensated for his labor. His complaints echoed those I heard in Semente. He said, "When I live with my dad I have to help him in the *roça*. Even when I work, he never pays me a cent. I think that this is unjust and that it harms me. I don't need a lot of money to get by, but I need something." Occasionally, Junior took temporary jobs in town, but such work was incompatible with the man he wanted to become.

I have done lots of jobs in the city, yes. I've washed cars. I've done construction work. It is easy, and then it is not easy to get a job there. The thing is, it is easy if you want to wash cars or work in a pizzeria, but I don't like it. These jobs pay nothing and they are really hard. You end up living for work, like a slave. Your only

goal is survival: to pay rent and buy food. You live for this, without any higher objective.

Residues of official MST ideology are palpable in Junior's words, particularly his moralistic rejection of off-farm labor. Although Miguel did not sign-off on the federal loan, Junior still dreamt of becoming a self-employed, organic farmer. He refused to live in the city and tried to distance himself from his peripheral origins. Junior thought that being the son of an *assentado* (settler) was far superior to that of a *favelado* (slum dweller) (Perlman 2010: 29; cited in Kolling 2016).

The *favela* is filthy, noisy, and violent... The drug traffic is always on your doorstep. You end up being imprisoned at home. Completely isolated. Life in the settlement is a little better. It is not perfect, but at least we have contact with nature, we can plant, and we have space to grow.

Miguel was perplexed by Junior's obsession with the MST, agroecology, and his rejection of urban opportunities. Considering the complex challenges facing the settlers of the Fazenda, why would Junior, a high school graduate, want to become a farmer? He often asked Junior why didn't he find a good job in the city, settle down, marry, and start a family of his own?

In 2013, Junior was recruited to help the MST and a local NGO. These entities received funding from an international donor agency to build agro-forestry systems on the settlement. Soon after, Junior moved out of Miguel's home and into the Fazenda's headquarters, which, as in most MST communities, was located in the old plantation structure and repurposed for collective use. According to Junior, this arrangement was more practical as he would not have to commute each day from one side of the vast settlement to the other on foot. That

said, Junior's living there was only ever supposed to be temporary, but after the completion of the project, he never bothered to move out.

While in-residence at the plantation house and out of work, Junior told me that he preferred the ascetic poverty of militancy to urban employment. He rationalized his decision in moralistic terms.

Most people cannot make it work in the militancy because they cannot put up with being broke. But to be a real militant, you have to make sacrifices—personal and collective. As for me, I have found a way to make it work. I refuse to work on the outside. I will sell a few saplings or plants here and there.

Life without money was not always easy or possible. Junior and a few of his politically active peers sold some of the MST collective pots, pans, and books. The sale totaled some R\$75 (about USD\$30). According to him, the items were *estragado* (worn out, neglected) and the activists living at the plantation house were going hungry. Junior wrongly assumed that no one would notice that the items were missing, but almost immediately, rumors about the transaction circulated throughout the Fazenda and reached the highest echelons of leadership. Junior was sharply warned about how the sale of collective goods violated movement principles, as he had treated community property as if it were private. The decision would return to haunt him.

In September 2014, three of Junior's activist friends had also moved into the plantation house. As members of the newly created youth group for the movement, they thought it was the ideal location to coordinate their activities. During the days, Junior gave tours of adjacent agro-forestry systems to urban schoolchildren and took me on long walks to explore the

forest reserve. He was eager to point out the native tree species, medicinal plants, bees that smelled like coconuts, and the formidable webs of colonial spiders. His environmental knowledge was impressive, clearly a source of pride and self-esteem. It seemed clear that Junior had gained a lot through his immersion in the MST: a home, an identity, an alternative lifestyle, and a large social network united in a seemingly righteous mission for land justice. This image, however, was deceptive. Everything was about to change. Junior and his peers were about to be evicted from the plantation house and expelled from the movement.

CONFLICT & EXCLUSION

It was about 8:30 p.m. on a Sunday evening. We started to prepare a meager dinner of rice, beans, and boiled hotdogs (as food supplies were running low). Just as Junior lit the propane stove, a bald, rotund, cross-eyed man limped into the kitchen unannounced. “Oh, you are making dinner at this hour? Junior, come outside. We need to speak with you.” Junior did as he was told and followed the bald man out onto the poorly lit veranda, where Miguel and two representatives of the movement were waiting. An hour and a half passed. When Junior finally returned, he sank dejectedly into a broken office chair. His skin was pale; his hands trembled. “I want to vomit. What anger!” After lighting a cornhusk cigarette, he began to talk.

They accused me of stealing a water pump... They said that someone wants to kill me, that he wants “to break my legs,” and the MST will no longer guarantee my security. They decided to turn their backs on me and I need to move out of this house and leave the settlement... They did not even say who wants to kill me! They also said that if I refuse to leave, they will evict my dad [from the settlement].

We were all stunned by the accusations and Junior’s severe punishment. There was little to do aside from chain-smoke and speculate as to what had motivated the attack. Junior

plunged into paranoid, circular rambling, desperately trying to discern what might have gone wrong.

How could I have stolen the water pump? I could not even move the damned thing if I wanted to! Who would have stolen it? When did it even happen? If I took it, where is the R\$5,000? Man, it was terrible what they did. My dad was there, and he is a simple man. He cannot read. He just believed what they said. God, he was crying.

The entire ordeal was humiliating, upsetting and, according to Junior, violated the principle of collective decision-making. Leadership arrived on the veranda with his fate already decided.

They just came to give me information. I couldn't even defend myself... and now, everything in my life has just fallen apart. This must have been planned, or could it have been some kind of militant test? But what would they be testing? I just don't understand.

After learning his fate, Junior was struck with vertigo—shaking, nervous, unsure of himself. He did not sleep that night or the next. Three days passed until the MST entourage returned to formally evict us. We were told to step outside the plantation house and wait to stand trial in front of the two leaders, on a one-by-one basis. The hours passed slowly, painfully.

Dona Carmen, a new arrival to the plantation house, hadn't been around during the initial confrontation between Junior and MST leadership. She was visiting kin in the city and returned to find her housemates in a state of emotional upheaval. As we awaited judgment, Dona Carmen tentatively suggested that leaving the movement could be the best thing for all of us. "What are you doing here anyway? You are living here locked up in the house. You should all get out of this life while you still can." I found this to be somewhat surprising, as

Dona Carmen had only recently joined the MST. Over the following hours, she continued to ruminate. Her words stuck with me, because she lucidly articulated powerful and painful feelings, doubts, and anxieties that were palpable, but generally silenced. She sketched an image that brought the unenviable predicament of rank-and-file members into stark relief.

When you are part of the MST, you stop living for yourself. They take charge of your life. They dictate everything. What can the MST do for you? My god, if you depend on them you will starve to death. I am serious! Tell me, why would you want land? What is land good for? I joined the MST because I am old. I am from the *roça* [countryside], and have always dreamed of a *sítio* [small rural property] of my own. But, it doesn't work that way with the MST. You know, even once you get the land—it isn't yours! It is [INCRA's] and if you aren't producing like they want you to, they will evict you, and put someone else there in your place.

Her description of residential insecurity was accurate, as usufruct rights did not guarantee definitive tenure in the Fazenda. As mentioned, settlers had to comply with land-use proscriptions and remain loyal to “the previously existing social organization,” as INCRA’s manual put it. In practice, this meant individuals and/or families could be expelled without institutional recourse or mediation.¹⁷ Indeed, during my visits to the Fazenda, people often told me about expulsions in hushed tones—prompted by infractions big and small. For example, a man had been thrown out after beating up his wife. In another case, a young woman was evicted after having managed to beat the odds, graduated from college, and accepted an offer of employment from INCRA. MST leaders thought she had betrayed movement principles by accepting this paid position. More serious still, Carlos, a second-generation settler (and his friends) gang-raped a fourteen-year old girl in the settlement.

Carlos had once been an active militant, and was prohibited from representing the

¹⁷ Highly concerned by what I was observing and horrified that there was no outside agency to pose concerns, I reached out to Zander Navarro, a sociologist and advisor to Brazil’s MDA to get clarity about these matters. Sadly, he confirmed that there was very little in terms of mediation or recourse for MST settlers (personal communication, 9/12/2014).

movement thereafter. For some reason, which was never entirely clear to me, he was allowed to continue living in the Fazenda.

Given such punitive inconsistencies, elderly settlers repeatedly told me, “*No movimento, cale a boca*. In the movement, stay silent, shut up.” Miguel explained,

If [MST leadership] wants you out of here, you will be removed without question. Many families have already been expelled. So, we keep to ourselves and stay quiet. This is what we have learned: in the MST its best to keep your mouth shut. Respond if [leadership] asks questions, but beyond that, don't say a word.

With such pervasive and repressed negative sentiments, demoralization was widespread at the Fazenda. Few people participated in the producer's association meetings and most kept to themselves.

All of these factors made Junior's commitment to MST-SP even more confusing. Why would this young man, able-bodied and educated as he was, *choose* to be involved? Dona Carmen juxtaposed her own situation with his, and expressed her regrets.

Before I joined the *sem terra*, I was a cook in a restaurant, and I made good money. Then, I quit my job and we moved into [an occupation camp a few kilometers away]. It was good to live there and I liked it. I was crocheting a lot and selling my crafts at the fair. But, then, I found out that we moved into the occupation camp too late and had not been registered with [INCRA]. This means that when the land [is expropriated] we won't necessarily get anything. This is why I am volunteering to cook and care for the [plantation house]. I have to contribute to make sure I get a place of my own. But I hate it. It is just awful to be here. To stay here locked up in the house, in the kitchen, without money, without my family.... And why do I do it? Just because of this dream I have.

Dona Carmen articulated rather disturbing feelings. As an aging female with rural roots, she was haunted by dreams of the good life in the countryside. In an attempt to realize these desires, she quit her job and joined the MST, because it possessed a monopoly over the institutional mechanisms that stood between the painful present and her longed-for future. In so doing, she forfeited autonomy over major aspects of her life, like employment and residence. As she repeatedly told me, “They [the MST] use your dreams against you.” Dona Carmen’s words impressed upon me the paradoxical nature of the subjunctive imaginary. Although a powerful and energizing resource for the MST, optimistic hopes for a better future may not always have liberating consequences for individuals, especially in the short-term. While making personal sacrifices was an acknowledged part of MST participation, this didn’t make it easy. By this point, Dona Carmen was in tears. She wiped her eyes with her apron and said:

This is all in God’s hands you know. Mel, I need you to hear me out. Don’t forget this. Unlike what you think, life is not going to get any better. I promise you: this world is only getting worse, understand? Once you realize this, you can prepare yourself.

Dona Carmen’s predictions were accurate and things did get worse. Because Junior did not confess to stealing the water pump, his punishment was both swift and severe. He had to leave the plantation house and the Fazenda immediately. He was to cease contact with all other MST members and partner organizations.

After learning his fate, Junior gathered the belongings he amassed as a volunteer militant (seeds, social movement t-shirts, notebooks), tied them up in a blanket, and deposited them in a spare corner of Miguel’s home. Junior begged Miguel for shelter, but he refused. Miguel

was approaching retirement age and was unwilling to jeopardize his standing in the community, especially for a son who dishonored the family name. As he was no longer welcome at Miguel's, Junior had only one option—to return to his mother's overcrowded home in the favela.

BACK TO THE PERIPHERY

Riana and her husband Rodrigo lived with their daughters in a tiny rented home in the urban periphery. Their house was already at maximum capacity and physically moving through it was a challenge. When one person had to use the restroom, everyone else had to step outside. The entire family slept on two mattresses in one room. Needless to say, there was no privacy.

Riana and Rodrigo were sick and unable to work. They were in an extremely precarious economic position, as they lived almost exclusively from Rodrigo's disability pension, approximately R\$750 per month. This was complemented by the proceeds Riana earned by raising chickens and selling eggs to her neighbors. R\$400, more than half of their monthly income, was destined to pay rent. Somehow, they stretched the rest to pay for food, medications, utilities, hygienic supplies, debts, clothing, and school supplies. There was never enough money, and now, they had another body to house and feed.

Back in the periphery and expelled from the MST, Junior told me that he had begun to “negate and question” everything that he had learned and valued in the movement. His self-esteem was in tatters. I was reminded of Anthony Wallace's (1956) “root shock,” the temporary paralysis in the wake of the ruination or abrupt changes to one's cultural and

physical environment. Junior was an altogether different sort of person. He stopped behaving like an autonomous adult and reverted to a helpless, depressed and sexist juvenile state. Nowhere was this more obvious than at the familial dinner table. Even though he was a talented cook, he stopped serving himself. “My mother knows how much I need.” He never offered to wash a dish. “My mother likes to do the housework by herself. It gives her purpose.” Profoundly disheartened, Junior only wanted to sleep, eat, and watch TV.

As we cleaned up the lunch dishes, Riana and I talked about her life. She was first married when she was fifteen, in a story that echoed those I often heard in the northeast. “I never really liked [Miguel] and got married to escape my father. I think this is the Brazilian way you know. [My eldest daughter] did the same thing.”

Miguel joined the *sem terra* and we separated. Rodrigo also went with the *sem terra* at this time, but it did not work out for him... To be honest, I envy Miguel. Sure, he is poor and has his own problems, but at least he has a roof. As for me, I am sick and getting old, and what do I have to show for my life? Nothing.

Although Miguel’s home was quite modest, when compared with Riana’s rented place, it was palatial—with three spacious bedrooms, a living room, dining room, bathroom, kitchen, garden, and a chicken coop. Miguel had space to host visitors and relatives. They grew berries, bananas, peppers, beans, greens, and manioc—mostly for household consumption. For Riana, life in the tiny rented home in the favela was noisy, dangerous and claustrophobic. She too was haunted by dreams of the good life in the countryside.

For the first few months at Riana’s house, Junior did not bother to get a job. As an active MST participant, he neglected to register to vote and sign up for military service. His

documentation was in disarray. Months after his expulsion, profoundly depressed, he could not muster the energy to take care of these tedious bureaucratic matters.

Junior deflected attention from himself by policing his little sisters. Mariana (11/f) was having a hard time at school and often getting into fights. She showed me the scars she earned in spats with classmates because they “cursed [her] mother.” As a moody pre-teen with very little space of her own, she spent her afternoons sitting on the broken sidewalk in front of their home, listening to *baile funk*, playing games on her cell phone, and chatting online. She made friends with some of her neighbors, who were allegedly involved in drug trafficking and prostitution. All of these behaviors concerned her parents.

One afternoon, Junior told Rodrigo of an unforgivable transgression: Mariana ripped out forty pages of paper from her school notebook. This called for swift punishment. Junior and I were ordered to go outside, as Rodrigo took the remnants of the wire bound notebook and struck Mariana with it, all the while screaming: “*Porque você me faz isto! Why do you make me do this?*” Mariana howled. I had reached my limit. I left their home and went to a bar, where I sat alone for several hours. It was all just too much. Later, Junior found me and tried to justify Rodrigo’s behavior.

Mel, he had to beat her. She wasted that notebook, and they just don’t have the conditions to buy her another one. A notebook like that costs about R\$16 [USD\$8]. Mariana just wants and wants and wants. She does not understand that they cannot buy her everything. They have to punish her. There are limits.

Junior wanted me to understand that his family was in wretched financial straits. Mariana’s behavior was also troubling and the family feared that she was being influenced by a bad

crowd. They were desperate for an alternative.

During my final weeks in Brazil, I forced Junior to get out of the house as the punishing spring sunshine began to fade. We walked through the favela and he narrated its transformation: from rural periphery to its present, dilapidated state. In accordance with election cycles, gardens were cleared, parks condemned, and all that remained was scorching concrete, trash, and shanties. The scene was all the more depressing as Junior continued to search for a bit of nature in conglomerates of cement, broken glass, and rubbish. He squatted on the ground, sifted the refuse, and hunted for seeds. Junior never stopped adding specimens to his collection. Even though there was no space to plant, he continued to lecture me on the scientific names of plants and their potential uses as medicine, food, and fiber. It was poignant, as Junior was unable to envision a future for himself outside of the countryside, and by extension, the MST.

These were some of the final impressions from my field research. Since then, I have stayed in ongoing contact with Junior and his family. From these ongoing exchanges (and a follow-up visit), I learned that Junior did very little at first. I helped him write a resumé, and he found a job as an appointment setter at a real estate firm. Working, he told me, “rescued” his self-esteem and sense of worth. He considered getting his real estate license, but then Brazil’s economic crises worsened. The spike in unemployment, inflation, and increasingly unfavorable credit terms meant that his work, based on commission, vanished.

RETURN TO THE MST

It was around this time that Miguel called Junior with the “good news.” Reportedly, the

conversation proceeded as follows:

Son, there is going to be piece of land for you, right next to the [Fazenda]! The *sem teto* [homeless] were about to invade it, but we got there first! They are going to be giving lots to sons [and daughters] of the settlers [of the Fazenda]. It's your right as my son. I've saved you a place!

Miguel expected Junior to forgive, forget, and return to the fold. Junior was somewhat hesitant, at first, but the prospect of receiving a piece of land and a home of his own was too good to pass up. When he told me about this, I was surprised initially, as years earlier he fiercely rejected the idea of moving into an occupation camp. He feared interminably waiting for an expropriation decree, only to receive a piece of land without infrastructure or the resources necessary to produce a living. "I am not ending up like my father," he explained resolutely. But, in 2015, in the midst of Brazil's economic free-fall, Junior changed his mind. He shifted focus away from contemporary hardships projected his mind forward in time, as a new realm of future possibilities began to unfold. Junior sketched out designs for his dream farm and home. He and Rodrigo scoured the favela for construction scraps and began to slowly build their *barraco*.

Junior told me about his new home over Skype.

I set up a *barraco*! Everyone is coming with me—my mother, Rodrigo, my sisters. The land will very small, but it will be good for us. We will get out of the *favela* [the slums] and stop paying rent. I think by the end of the year, we could have a decent place to live! ... My uncles, cousins, everyone wants to come with me, to get out of the periphery. You know how expensive rents are right now? It's impossible!

He continued, "Going with the *sem terra* is a way to get a roof, *né?*" Just then, Riana came to the computer to say hello. "*Oi querida! Sumiu? Quando você vem? A gente tá preocupada sobre você.*"

Aside from the perennial requests to return, this was the happiest I had ever seen her. She had something tangible to look forward to: a rent-free home of her very own out in the country, space to raise her chickens, and a garden to grow vegetables. “Even though I’ve been living in the favela all these years, I am from the *roça*, I know how to work the land,” she reminded me. Rodrigo’s pension would stretch further there. Moreover, out in the countryside, they hoped that their daughters might avoid getting into trouble.

Over the following months, Junior’s mood waxed and waned. He composed long Facebook messages to me from his cell phone. He was lonely. “I am serious, there is nothing to do! What can you do? Clear bush? But what is the point? There is no water here so you cannot even plant a little garden. I have nothing and I feel depressed.” He vented his frustration with MST leadership, who had insinuated that the expropriation decree would come sooner than later. Junior was discouraged.

The leaders are not open to new ideas: it is always the same thing, the same methodology. Before, the struggle was cool, things happened, they moved... Now, it is just slow, everything stopped... I wonder, why is it so slow? Why do we just keep waiting and waiting? I live in an *acampamento fantasma* [phantom encampment]... I feel like we are stopped in time. It isn’t like it used to be, you know, when I used to participate in every activity. Now, I just keep to myself. I see a friend every now and then, and I go to church... I stay away from the leaders and keep my mouth shut... I’ve been through a lot this last year. I think I have matured.

Considering all that Junior had endured with the MST, his bitter disappointment, humiliation, and the strides he had taken to rebuild his life thereafter, I found his return to the movement to be touching and heartbreaking. Despite his frustration, Junior did not consider turning back on his decision. “Mel, this is to stop paying rent and help my family.”

He continued,

My mom and Rodrigo are sick and they cannot afford rent... What are we supposed to do? I have to help them. They cannot register with INCRA because they are disabled and don't fit the criteria. *It has to be me.* I am the son of a settler and I have the right to a piece of land... Out here, we don't have to pay for utilities or rent... In the future, I won't have to work on the outside. I will produce here and sell the extra in town. There is a lot of demand for organic produce. We just need land and water and we can make it work. This is my dream.

Junior could tell from my tone that I was concerned about this decision. After all, we both knew that the expropriation process was increasingly lengthy. He dismissed my concerns, saying, "To dream for a better future does not harm anyone."

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the interface of the subjunctive, as pertaining to an imagined possible future; and the disjunctive, the practical challenges in materializing such hopes and dreams. Junior's story vividly exemplified these tensions and contradictions. While young people relayed similar experiences elsewhere, I have focused on Junior because I have been well acquainted with his family for five years. Our long-term relationship has given me a nuanced understanding of the emotional dynamics of enchantment and disenchantment, as they played out in MST redistributive politics in hostile political circumstances. Indeed, joining an occupation camp and "going with the *sem terra*" was not a decision that was taken lightly. Many young people were acutely aware of the complications and difficulties involved. It is telling that in spite of extreme frustration and alienation, Junior and his family returned to the movement. Dreams for a good life in the countryside were sustaining forces.

As of now, occupying land seems to have had positive consequences for Junior's family.

When I returned to visit them years later, I was heartened to discover that their life conditions had improved. Their *barraco* was in good condition. It lacked running water, but was considerably larger than their old rented-house in the favela. Riana kept the home immaculately clean and furnished it comfortably. Although her daughters struggled with the transition at first, they seemed to be doing better at school. After they stopped paying rent, Rodrigo's pension stretched further. They purchased a beat-up car—to transport the family to and from town and steadily improved the *barraco*.

Since returning to the movement, Junior resumed his agroecological education with the MST. While studying, the messages he sent online were less fatalistic. Instead of complaining about boredom and a lack of future prospects, he would send me photographs of agroecology textbooks, his classmates, and their latest projects. At home in the occupation camp, he showed me his “coursework,” an enormous, flourishing garden sown with manioc, beans, bananas, and corn. Squatting in the fields he showed me centipedes, earthworms, and the latest additions to his native plant collection. “In three months we will be eating better, too,” he added. When I asked whether he was concerned about the Brazilian political and economic crisis and its potential impacts on the smallholding sector, Junior brushed off my comments.

I cannot think about those kinds of things. These thoughts are not good: What if the budget is cut? What if they won't settle us? What if there is no work for me? I just can't think about these possibilities. If I do, I will fall back into that depression hole again. I won't have any motivation to study, to plant, to move forward. I have to just continue on, as I am, and act as if it will all work out. I hope that it will.

If all goes according to plan, Junior will graduate from the educational institution soon. He is

confident about his family's future and believes that his certificate will translate into future success. He still wants to become a beekeeper. Currently, possibilities for governmental expropriation and state recognition seem all the more remote. In fact, there are plans to eliminate occupation camps as a mechanism for land redistribution altogether.¹⁸ For the time being, however, Junior and his family continue plant their crops, improve their home, and hope for a better life. They stubbornly refuse to give up on their dreams for a rural future.

¹⁸ In response to the ongoing economic crisis facing Brazil, Temer has recently proposed rescinding 2010 legislation that prohibits foreigners from purchasing farmland in Brazil. Temer hopes to attract foreign investors to its agribusiness sector, on the condition that 10% of purchases are destined to "benefit landless farmers and peasants." Under such a plan, there is no place for social movements like the MST: decisions regarding redistribution instead should be devolved to municipal authorities. See, Boadle, Antony and Leonardo Goy. 1/30/2017. "[Brazil to open airlines, agricultural land to foreign buyers: sources.](#)" *Reuters*.

PART III. FORMAÇÃO POLITICA: MILITANCY



10/2013. Rural youth jump with glee and sing along while members of Saci Arte perform, outside an occupation of the Ministry of Education. Curitiba, Paraná.

Our defeat took a huge toll on the subjective disposition of our militants. Several began to question if it was still possible to carry out an agrarian reform in Brazil, under a capitalist state, or under the existing Brazilian state... Even those who were skeptical about Lula had pinned their hopes on some progress toward land redistribution under a PT government... All this disappointment has affected people's beliefs and hopes in a popular project for Brazil. Our activists, after all, need more than food and water to survive. They also need to share a mystique, to believe, to have dreams and nurture a sense of utopia, in order to fight for social change —MST militant (cited in Carter 2015: 420).

During the time of this research, the MST continued to mobilize its members and advocate for structural changes in the countryside. Publically, the movement remained steadfast and active, in spite of disappointment, hardship, and a lack of efficacy. This raises an important question: How did the MST appeal to its membership, and most especially youth, in such troubled times? In order to maintain momentum and secure ongoing commitments, the MST periodically stages times and places for physical co-presence—in encounters, protest

camps, and political training courses. Examining these liminal spaces sheds light on the ways in which the MST attempts to harness the hearts, minds, and bodies of young people, and put them to work on behalf of its institutionalized political project. By traveling alongside rural youth to the MST's formal spaces of political socialization, we discover that the reproduction of landless politics across the generations is fragile and must be carefully cultivated, constructed, and nurtured through ritual and educational initiatives. Therefore, in Part II, we take a break from rural routines and realities. To convey a processual understanding of youthful political engagement, Chapter 4 charts a journey from Central Paraná to Brasília to attend the MST's VI National Congress. It details political rituals, performances, and protest—and suggests that long-distance travel was an important motivational force for rural youth. Collective hardships also contributed to a sense of collective belonging. Thereafter, in Chapter 5, we re-join Junior and his peers for MST dance parties and ludic encounters. This helps to reveal what belonging to the MST means to rural youth—as it provides them with exciting interpersonal opportunities for leisure, pleasure, and romance that were unavailable back home. In Chapter 6, we shall follow a group of youngsters from Pernambuco as they complete a militant training course. Having enjoyed themselves in Brasília, some young people auditioned to join the social movement organization full-time. They understood the MST to be a vehicle for social and physical mobility. Collectively, these chapters indicate that MST activist encounters were intensely emotional affairs and extraordinarily productive—of intense identification, frustration, pleasure, and joy.



Contingent of Sem Terra Youth at Palacio Planalto, Brasília. 2/2014.

PILGRIMAGE TO BRASÍLIA: VI NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Congress is a return to the experiential; a herding together of consciousness in the great pleasure of meeting. The Congress is a congregation, the gathering of desires; it is a party, of tears and sensitivity; it is a moment of renewal... it is a fluttering of hearts that beat ever faster. The Congress is a re-encounter with pleasure and memories of the old days... The Congress is a wake-up call... to get ready for struggle; a rebellious move forward in the same direction... It paints the spirit to go to war... a reaffirmation of utopia, as we pass through the land. The Congress is congratulatory: a piece of the revolution to be achieved. It is an uplifting assembly: to make the discouraged smile... The Congress is affectivity: where the regionalisms lose importance, and our common ground makes us a national force...

—Ademar Bogo, "The Congress," (2007: 200).¹

¹ In anticipation for the MST's V National Congress in 2007, Ademar Bogo published a series of poems and short tracts for reflection, entitled *Cartas do Amor* (Love Letters)—on very eclectic topics (Soccer, the conflict in Israel, Youth, Gender, and so forth).

This chapter explores rural youths' experiences of the MST's VI National Congress in Brasília. Considering the difficult political conjuncture—which included a decline in state recognition of MST land claims, demobilization, and disappointment on many fronts, MST activists insisted that the event, the pinnacle of the MST's multi-year protest cycle, was of the utmost importance. “Who knows,” Claudio (29/m) reflected, “Perhaps this will be the last one we ever have. Things are not looking good.”² Due to budgetary constraints, the VI Congress was smaller than those of the past, with some 16,000 delegates from twenty-four Brazilian states. The colorful and festive event required the mass mobilization of resources, and showcased the MST's expertise in the “craft” of social organization (Ganz 2000). As a space of “affective encounter” (Archaumbault 2016), it was neither the time nor place for decision-making or debate. Instead, it was orchestrated for a various purposes: emotional, identitarian, and instrumental. By assembling its strikingly diverse and geographically dispersed body politic for a time in Brasília, the MST sought to fortify the collective *sem terra* identity (Issa 2007) and promote a “leftist political perspective and loyalty to the goals, mission, and radical purposes of the MST” (Ondetti 2008: 115). In so doing, organizers sought to reproduce the practices, rituals and performances associated with landless politics; and solidify commitments for two upcoming campaigns: *reforma política*³ and *reforma agrária*

² One reason Claudio was worried was economic. After all, large, national events like this one are expensive and resource intensive. The VI National Congress was funded by an assortment of governmental entities. For example, the Caixa Federal (Federal Bank), BNDES (The National Bank for Economic and Social Development), and Petrobras provided \$R1.6 million to cooperative entities affiliated with the MST for the event. See, 2/26/2014. *Folha de São Paulo*. “[Governo vai continuar a patrocinar eventos do MST, diz Carvalho](#),” 2/26/2014. *O Estado de São Paulo*. “[Petrobrás foi a maior patrocinadora do evento do MST](#)”

³ In the aftermath of June and July 2013, President Dilma Rousseff suggested that the solution to popular unrest was political reform—to limit the private financing of Brazilian electoral campaigns. While she almost immediately rescinded her proposal, leftist social movements banded together to collect public's signatures in a popular referendum, *o plebiscito popular* in 2014. Although they collected millions of signatures, this was not enough to avoid the deep political crisis that was to come.

popular.⁴ MST militants also told me that the event was engineered to captivate the hearts, bodies, and minds of the second generation, as it provided them with exposure to the movement and *formação política* (political training).

Interestingly, MST protest camps, long-distance caravans, and *encontros* (political encounters) have been largely absent in scholarship (for exceptions, see Chaves 2000; Castro 2008). Less is known about how young people experience these ritualistic settings. The fact that they comprised a significant proportion of organizers and attendees at the VI National Congress led me to contemplate the importance of such an event for them. How did they experience their inclusion in the MST? To what extent did young people feel included and empowered in Brasília? How did they receive the calls to become *sem terra* and mobilize on behalf of land justice causes? What kinds of subjective consequences were engendered by participation in such an affective encounter? This chapter attends to this gap and provides a multisensorial account of young people's experiences at the VI National Congress in Brasília. In so doing, it highlights the ways that long-distance travel, bodily exhaustion, and exhilarating fellowship were productive of a temporary, yet deeply felt "collective body" (Krøijer 2014) with powerful implications for the formation of youthful subjectivities.

⁴ Popular Agrarian Reform (PAR), according to MST leaders, differs from "classic" or "bourgeois" agrarian reform because it was comprehensively designed not to facilitate further capitalist accumulation and development, but to promote a socialist agenda. PAR involved land redistribution, agroecology, and development of small-scale agroindustries in rural places under farmer control. They also asserted the need to provide health, education, technology, culture, and leisure to rural folk. See: Conceição, Alexandre. 2/11/2014. *O Globo*. "[Opinião: Reforma agrária popular é urgente.](#)"

RECRUITMENT

In January 2014, I was visiting Bea in Central Paraná. We decided to travel to the MST's VI National Congress together. On the verge of our departure for Brasília, there were still abundant seats to be filled on the local MST bus. Past Congresses have become the stuff of legend, as extremely *pesado* (difficult) undertakings that distracted from daily agricultural responsibilities. Some first-generation settlers were either uninterested or unable to make the arduous journey across Brazil. As Dona Claudia (51/f) explained, "Travel with the MST is very hard... Let the young ones do it this time. I have responsibilities here. There is no one to milk my cows if I go." In order to fill their ranks, MST-PR leaders made explicit outreach efforts to youth in settlements and encampments because, as I was told, they believed young people to be essentially more available, energetic, and had fewer place-based obligations (see also, Rangel Loera 2010). Let me sketch the profiles of three young adults I accompanied on the journey: Isabel, Bea, and Davi.

Isabel (17/f) grew up in the expansive Paulo Freire land reform settlement in Central Paraná. Her home did not have cell phone or internet service. The nearby municipality did not have a cinema, shopping mall, and there wasn't regular transportation into town. Isabel's days were spent at school, doing chores, milking cows, and caring for younger siblings. Generally, she conversed with familiars, relatives, neighbors, and schoolmates, and was somewhat reserved in interactions with strangers. When she did leave her home, she did so in a group setting or when accompanied by her elder brother or relatives.

Two weeks before the buses were to depart for Brasília, Elena arrived on Isabel's doorstep

and was invited to sit on the veranda for conversation over a large gourd of hot *chimarrão* (caffeinated erva mate tea). Elena, after all, was a trusted MST leader who helped run a small bakery in the settlement. After engaging in perfunctory pleasantries, Elena extended an unprecedented invitation. “Isabel has been invited to attend the Congress in Brasília next month. She has a specific task, and will perform in the opening *mística* (performance).” Isabel later told me that this suggestion made her heart race. After all, Brasília was a place she only knew from television; it might as well have been Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, or New York City for that matter. At first, Isabel’s mother was concerned, “Isn’t Brasília a dangerous city?” Elena promised that she would personally chaperone, and that her own daughter, Vanessa, would also attend. Reluctantly, Isabel’s parents consented, and she nervously looked forward to her first trip outside of Central Paraná.

Unlike Isabel, Bea (23/f) had more “direct experience” in the MST’s struggle for land. Originally from a settlement in São Paulo state, in 2014 she was studying agronomy at a federal university in Central Paraná, located on a portion of the Paulo Freire settlement. On the days leading up to the departure for Brasília, Bea was indecisive. “It’s going to be heavy. Traveling with the *sem terra* is never easy,” she explained. I trusted her. Bea had a long history of MST participation, as she accompanied her parents on the long institutional process from land occupation to settlement. Bea graduated high school in a special alternative course provided by the movement, worked for a time in the regional headquarters of MST-SP, and had already attended dozens of occupations, protests, and marches. From experience, she knew that participation in the MST was exhausting, exhilarating, and sometimes downright frustrating, and that it also diverted precious time away from her studies. At times, Bea sounded disillusioned with MST-SP, citing antidemocratic tendencies,

pervasive gerontocracy and sexism, and even suggested that the *mística quebrou* (the *mística* is broken) on several occasions. Despite her reservations, at the last moment she decided to go to the VI National Congress, mainly because she could hitch a free ride home to São Paulo after the event.

Although Isabel and Bea were somewhat apprehensive about the journey, Davi (24/m), another native to Central Paraná, was unreservedly enthusiastic. His parents were long-term members of MST-PR. He told me that he was conceived while they were in an occupation camp. They were eventually settled at the Che Guevara settlement and specialized in dairy production. Davi graduated from the settlement's high school. When he was eighteen years old, he married Teresa and they moved to Joinville, Santa Catarina. According to Davi, it was "an adventure." They rented a small home in a peripheral neighborhood and he worked in construction. Life in the city was experienced ambiguously. Like many young adults who migrated to urban areas, Davi liked receiving wages, enhanced opportunities for leisure, and autonomous living, but disliked paying rent, which he considered to be unaffordable, and feared violent crime. Still, the couple remained in Joinville and built a life there until Teresa was badly injured in a car accident. She could no longer care for their three-year old daughter without help. They decided it would be best to move back to the settlement and live with her parents. Only two months had passed before Davi was invited to travel to Brasília, and he jumped at the chance. He told me that he thought the Congress would be an ideal occasion to reignite his militancy, which could potentially translate into other opportunities down the line.

The motivations of my three bus mates differed. Isabel had relatively little exposure to the

movement; Bea had an extensive history of activism; and Davi envisioned the event as a means to re-engage with MST-PR. Their stories help us to understand that many rural teenagers and young adults to hopped aboard the MST bus because they were curious and desired adventure. They were somewhat uncertain as to what to expect, but seized the opportunity to travel. However, it was a bit more challenging than they expected.



2/2014. MST delegations getting ready to depart. Oliver Kornblihtt/[Mídia Ninja](#).

ON THE JOYS (AND MISERIES) OF CROSS-COUNTRY TRAVEL

Before our journey began, some thirty-five individuals met in a community center at the Che Guevara settlement at nightfall. The travelers packed their bags with essential items for MST travel: blanket, pillow, foam mattresses, tent, clothing, plate, cup, fork, hygiene supplies, and perhaps a book to pass the time. Most carried a bit of money for food and showers along the way; meals would be provided for free once we arrived in Brasília.

Despite the guidelines for equal gender representation issued by MST-National, most of the delegates were middle-aged and elderly males. Before leaving, we were briefed by Aldair, a regional leader, who held a large stack of papers and flipped through them hurriedly. He only read fragments to the travelers.

The trip will last three days. We travel in a caravan with five buses from Central Paraná... The bus will stop every 6 to 8 hours for showers and meals... During the trip, you all have responsibilities: cleaning, security, and so on. Ok? You all need to pay for your bus tickets—R\$264 [~130 USD].⁵ Does everyone have the money?

Attendants nodded and made affirmative sounds, Aldair continued.

When we get to Brasília, care for your health. Drink lots of water, the sun is very strong and it will be hot... Watch out for rats, as well. We will be camping out at the stadium, it will be held in the same place as before. Last thing, make sure you always wear your name badge and don't lose it. If you do, you won't be allowed to re-enter. Understand?

We piled our belongings in the undercarriage of the bus and made our way into the vehicle. Isabel's mother shed a few tears and embraced her daughter. Elena again pledged to care for the teenage girls. Isabel boarded and took the empty seat next to Vanessa. They wondered aloud what kind of adventure they had signed up for. Isabel told me about the things she had still never done: ride an escalator, visit a shopping mall, or even travel to Curitiba, the state capital. The days to come were difficult for her. "I am not accustomed to traveling so far," she explained. During the journey, Isabel's face was white as a sheet and she quietly confided that she was nauseated and had motion sickness. She sat next to an open window

⁵ MST chapters pay transportation costs for events. Each settlement association or cooperative pays at least 5% of its monthly income to MST regional chapters. Travel may also be paid for by donations and grants from INCRA or other governmental/NGO entities. In this case, delegate bus travel was paid for by their settlements' associations'.

and feared vomiting and disrupting her comrades, as the bus only stopped during scheduled breaks. “It will be so shameful if I vomit all over this bus. Everyone will hate me!”

Meanwhile, Vanessa occasionally scratched her back and buried her nose into a book,

Another Globalization is Possible.

By the time I got on the bus, most of the seats were filled. I plopped down next to Davi, and Bea sat next to Carol (22/f), a fellow university student originally from a land reform settlement in Minas Gerais. In a spirit of resignation, Bea attempted to make a nest of blankets and pillows, fortifying against others and conserving her strength for the strenuous trip.

The following days, as Bea had predicted, were not pleasant. First of all, the men on the bus were a noisy, exuberant bunch. Although the MST explicitly asked that males and females be equally represented, and special care to recruit youngsters be made, as mentioned, the young and female were significantly outnumbered. Of the thirty-five bus mates, ten were women and six were “young” (aged 15-29).



Figure III. Although google maps estimates the travel time to be 18-19+ hours, because we were on a bus and traveling in a caravan, it took three days.



12/2012. *Mass action through seeing.* MST youth on a 16-hour bus ride, traveling to MST protest camp.



2/2014. *Que monótono!* Endless views of eucalyptus plantations in Minas Gerais. View from the MST-PR bus.

Fueled by gourds of *chimarrão* (I have no idea how they managed to store all the hot water they must have consumed), they chattered ceaselessly over the deafening volume of the speaker system, which Aldair controlled. At all hours, there was a steady alternation between earsplitting *sertaneja universitária* (commercial country music) on the radio and bad North American action movies from the 1980s and 1990s on Aldair's tiny portable television. Although, it was somewhat interesting to see this less-restrictive side of the normally somber, anti-imperialist activists, their choices in music and film both shocked and annoyed me, Bea, and Carol, who moaned sarcastically: "Sertaneja, give me a break, this is *serta-nojo* (nauseatingly bad music)!" In contrast to the rowdy males, women and teenage girls were relatively quiet as they cared for children, napped, or read books.

After the first eight hours or so, our bodies hurt. Bea begged Carol to assist her physically. "Rub my back, will you?" Carol agreed, but only if Bea returned the favor. "Look at the size of my ankles! They are so swollen. I could be pregnant!" Weary, sleep-deprived, and emotionally on edge, our only source of relief was the occasional shower (which cost R\$5) in rest stop bathrooms. As the days and nights dragged on, my female companions became increasingly nauseated, but surprisingly little was said. I checked in with Bea, who became progressively more silent and sullen over the trip. "I can't talk now, Mel. I'm sick. *Estou passando mal...muito mal.*" We were encouraged not to complain. Within the MST, as with leftist movements described elsewhere, there was an ideological valorization of suffering, martyrdom, and sacrifice (Papadogiannis 2015; Barbosa 2004; Manzano 2014). Or, an understanding that there was little one could do aside from grin and bear it. We generally remained quiet about pain and hardship, and were explicitly asked to approach collective activities with a (sometimes feigned) attitude of "passion and happiness." As in Von

Geldern's (1992) account of Soviet tourism, collective travel with the MST seemed to display parallels with other socialist projects, specifically—rural cooperatives, urban industrialization, and workers' clubs. It also revealed broader beliefs in the importance of travel as a means to cultivate the “physical and ideological strengthening” of the body politic (Gorsuch 2003: 763).

One can also interpret long-distance travel with the MST as a sort of “mass action through seeing” (Gorsuch 2003: 763). The cumulative effects of the bad soundtrack and body aches were amplified by the seemingly endless and monotonous views of butchered landscapes outside the bus. Over our long peregrination from Central Paraná to Brasília, we witnessed the same wretched sight almost everywhere: monocultures of soy, sugarcane, eucalyptus, corn, coffee, and cattle estates. The soporific expanses of green were meticulously manicured, with the aid of tractors and crop dusters. The air was tinged brown from particles of desertifying dust that hung lazily over the fields. We passed rivers the color of coffee: soiled by erosion, tainted by agrochemicals and untreated wastewater from towns and factories. In every direction, the scenery had been mutilated until all that remained were stretches populated by machines, the “ghost acreages of the urban hinterland” (Bridge 2001: 759). Davi sarcastically commented. “Behold, what natural beauty! This is Brazilian agribusiness, the motor of capitalism! Lovely, is it not?” Bea affirmed, “*Cana, cana, cana*, all you see is sugarcane. It reminds me of home in São Paulo... You know, until I moved to Paraná, I had never seen a real forest before? I had no idea what one was.” Isabel remarked on the prevalence of huge eucalyptus plantations in Minas Gerais, “I did not realize that eucalyptus is everywhere! I thought it was only in Paraná! They sure are awful trees... Once their roots take hold, it is almost impossible to get rid of them.” Carol confirmed, “Yes, this

is Brazil, my dear.” Occasionally, we saw field workers, with t-shirts wrapped around their heads, wearing tall rubber boots. Armed with gas can thermoses and machetes, they worked relentlessly under the supervision of foremen. Bea remarked, “Boy, they must be very far from home. We passed the nearest town three hours ago!” She speculated that they must have been transported in on the special rural workers buses, which amounted to refurbished cattle cars.

Every eight hours or so, the bus pulled into a gas station for a thirty-minute pause. We tumbled outdoors, stretched our weary bodies, showered, relieved ourselves, and purchased cheap snacks that often wrenched our stomachs hours later. Teenagers and young adults gravitated towards the few electrical outlets, attempting to recharge exhausted cellphone batteries. All the way from the South to the Center-west of Brazil, no matter our location, these hyper-modern rest stops appeared identical: shiny, fluorescent, and sterile. Although we made progress across the backlands, visually and viscerally it felt like we had not moved at all. It was unnerving in a way, and Elena, Isabel, Vanessa, Bea, Carol, and I were quite miserable by the time we arrived in Brasília. The males in the group seemed to do a much better job of hiding their discomfort, and Davi approached the occasion as he might a holiday. “What’s wrong, *gringa*? You tired? You need to understand this, that for us, *this* is like a vacation! A chance to break the routine!” Later he reminded me, “You know, we youth of the settlements don’t get to travel very often... This is very special for us.” This was a common refrain among participants.

On the final evening of our marathon cross-country tour, after having traveled some 1,500 kilometers, I was prodded awake by an elderly, sun-weathered farmer in a straw hat. “Look,

gringa, look! Those are the lights of Brasília!” Such an occurrence led to me think that rural people don’t value sleeping much, or perhaps have chronic insomnia problems. I would have rather rested, as we had another several hours before we would cross the sprawling, spiraling innards of the concrete capital city (as there are no corners in Brasília) to reach our destination: the parking lot of the Nilson Nelson Soccer Stadium, some five kilometers from the Palácio Planalto, the center of Brazil’s federal government.

The place was empty except for the 38,000 square meters of white plastic canopies that had been erected in anticipation of our arrival. As the first delegation to arrive, we were allowed to set up camp wherever we wished and sleep, within the bounds of MST-PR’s camp. With much effort, Carol, Bea, and I pumped up a queen-sized air mattress and placed it on the margins, as far away from our male bus mates as possible. We marveled at the joys of laying flat on the ground, which seemed to be a divine blessing after those three wretched days. For better or worse, within hours, we were awakened yet again, our bodies beckoned into action by the rising sun and the beat of snare drums.

LOGISTICS: THE ENCAMPMENT IN BRASILIA

A few hours later, upon waking, the nearly vacant parking lot had undergone a dramatic transformation as buses from other state chapters had begun to arrive. Aching and lacking patience, I could not quite understand how everyone managed to be so excited. Carol took pains to point out, “We may be tired, but for us, this is a holiday. A chance to get out of the countryside, see Brasília, and re-encounter old friends.” Indeed, the space was a hive of activity, as thousands of individuals went to work organizing the various camps, on a state and regional basis. One of the MST’s many extraordinary organizational capacities is its



Figure from [Mídia Ninja's Coverage of the Event](#): 23 states, 16,000 delegates, 38,000 meters of canopies, 250 international guests, 10,000 tons of food, 300,000 liters of water, 280 showers, 400 chemical outhouses, and 12 small food processors.

ability to colonize a given setting with rapidity. This was accomplished through the delegation of tasks to individuals within organized work groups: for security, childcare, cleaning, and cooking. In the space of a few hours, an impromptu city had been erected, which would be populated by the 16,000 delegates for the next four days. According to Mídia Ninja's report on the event, 280 showers and 400 chemical toilets were installed; 10,000 tons of food and 300,000 liters of water were ready to be consumed.⁶

MST-PR's event planners and hosts of volunteers arrived in Brasília in advance to prepare the infrastructure (canopies, showers, kitchens, sound system), make aesthetic alterations to the space, and assemble the mandatory militant kit for each delegate and guest. For the cost of R\$40 (~USD\$20), all received red plastic messenger bags containing MST t-shirts (which signified state membership), name badge (passport in and out of the event, determined access to particular spaces), MST-cap, MST-flag, reading materials, posters, event schedule,

⁶ 2/11/2014. ["A trajetória e as lutas do MST: Especial VI Congresso Nacional do MST."](#)

behavioral guidelines, MST-notebook, and pen.

The protest camps were organized based on region and state affiliation. Walking through the sleeping area, one could easily perceive the significant socioeconomic differences among the MST's state delegations, dramatized by camping equipment. In the Southern camps, most brought plastic tents, air mattresses, and heavy blankets. Many of those from the more impoverished Northeastern and Northern regions slept outdoors in hammocks, on disintegrating foam pads, or on remnants of cardboard boxes. While plastic canopies had been erected ahead of time, this "shelter" only protected against the caustic sunshine. It was useless against rats and the heavy rains, which punctured the tarps and inundated the encampment in a toxic deluge of rain, sewage, and waste during the final days of the event. Thereafter, most sought shelter near the stadium and hid under the eaves. A few resented



2/2014. I woke up to find Denilson and Rosa at MST-PR's camp, sleeping next to me. Brasília.

the lack of provisions made for the less economically fortunate in the purportedly egalitarian assemblage.

At all hours, the camps were guarded by hundreds of individuals assigned to security duty by their respective brigades. They watched over belongings and monitored for potential infiltrators. Thus, at the VI National Congress, as in most MST events, there was little cause for concern about theft. In the case of lost and found items, an announcer would shout over a community radio to ask the comrades for assistance and remind everyone of our solidary purposes.

Regional brigades took responsibility for feeding their ranks three meals each day. Women and men took turns working in the collective kitchens, cooking and cleaning with stunningly large pots and pans. Cauldrons brimmed with rice, beans, and fragrant meat stews on wooden fires. At the appropriate hour, individuals lined up at their brigades' kitchen, and waited for plates to be filled with vegetables, meats, and grains. One can definitely describe a genre of *sem terra* eating. At least in MST-PR, we consumed foods produced and processed by settlers themselves, which "enforced and reinforced" the ideological bases of the movement (Fabricant 2012: 146). As in MST-Bolivia's National March, as described by Nicole Fabricant, collective commensality reflected a "conscious rejection of the land and labor relations of agribusiness" (Fabricant 2012: 146) and demonstrated that smallholders could feed large groups of people under relatively egalitarian conditions. Everyone received similar portions and everyone washed their own dishes.

While food supplies were generally adequate (at least in MST-PR), the same was not true of

water. Retrospective testimonies of participants often mentioned the dreaded *sem terra banho* (the sanitation and bathing facilities used by the landless). After the first day, the chemical toilets were overfilled. Showers did not provide any sort of privacy, as they amounted to spigots on the wall in gender-segregated tents. This meant that bathing involved standing in long, naked lines, anxiously waiting to rinse off. Making matters worse, water supplies ran out mid-way during showers, which was rather unpleasant. Isabel complained. “The water just shut off mid-way! I still have shampoo in my hair.” Vanessa, on the other hand, unhappily did not get to bathe at all that day. “I don’t like the lack of privacy... I want to go home.” Elena gave a piece of sound advice. “During the lectures, just sneak out and take a shower when everyone else is occupied. I know it doesn’t feel good, but you will survive if you miss a shower for one day.” Unfortunately, trans persons were prohibited from showering with the gender of their choice, and complaints regarding disrespectful treatment were chronicled online.⁷

Beyond these collective spaces of social reproduction, event planners organized a National Agrarian Reform Fair, which brought together the food, drink, arts, crafts, and music to represent rural Brazil’s rich (agri)cultural diversity. Five regional tents were installed around the perimeter of the stadium. It was an incredible experience to walk to Amazônia for açai and browse medicinal herbs sold by indigenous people adorned in traditional attire. From there, it was just a few steps to the Northeast, with an abundance of aromatic fresh fruits, MST artwork, forró, and leather sandals. The Center-west boasted impressive stocks of cerrado fruits, along with crocheted tablecloths and housing decor. The Southeast excelled at

⁷ Tavares, J. (2/19/2014) “[Sem Terra LGBT lutam por uma sociedade sem preconceitos](#).” I was told that in national level mobilizations to Brasília in 2016 (during President Dilma’s impeachment proceedings), the MST’s protest camp included transgender shower facilities.

coffee, *cachaça*, and artisanal cheese. The South was perhaps the most unusual. They installed a miniature grocery store with refrigerators bursting with processed and packaged foods brought from MST agroindustries. Nearby, the *gauchos* sold books and (as usual) chatted loudly and sipped organic *chimarrão*. This was the first National MST Fair of its kind, and, thanks to its stunning success, was replicated in São Paulo city in 2015 and in Belo Horizonte in 2016.

SEM TERRA AESTHETICS

We spent most of our time in the gymnasium, which was decorated to reflect established MST aesthetics. On the ground level, an elevated stage was the focal point of the event. Above it hung a large, colorful banner, painted by a group of artists at the MST's National School in São Paulo. Its centerpiece was an intrepid peasant woman, left fist clenched tightly. Presumably *mestiça* or *branca*, she had curly, flowing hair, and was joined by two males, indigenous and racially ambiguous. Below these figures was a painted depiction of agrarian utopia: with fields, flowers, a guitar, and dancing maidens. The MST's sworn enemy occupied the left side of the panel, embodied in the figure of an overweight male, presumably a plantation owner, surrounded by artifacts and corporate logos of Monsanto and Syngenta. The banner visually encoded a specific ideological message to the audience: an organizational commitment to gender equality, ethno-racial diversity, and belief in eventual victory due to unity forged among all rural peoples against agribusiness and capitalism. The rest of the stadium was decorated with banners used in past MST protests and mobilizations, hung from second story rafters, which added color and historic depth.

Our seated bodies also had a visual effect. Each of the states had been assigned to sit in a

particular section, which made it easy for MST regional leaders to track attendance. All state chapters designed a unique t-shirt for the event (white, red, and black), and when uniformly dressed the bodies sent a message of unity and discipline.



2/2014. MST-PR's opening *mística*. Oliver Kornblihtt/[Midia Ninja](#).

MISTICA: SEM TERRA THEATRE

Once inside the stadium, our mornings began with *mística* pieces performed by regional or state delegates. As a genre, MST *mística* draws on the “charismatic traditions of liberation theology and on 1964-animation committees commonly found in Catholic student groups, particularly in southern Brazil, [which] allows the MST to both celebrate the movement and educate its members through song, dance, theater, chants, and symbols” (Wolford 2010: 87). These performances were sites where “pasts [were] restored, fellowships imagined, and futures dreamed” (Anderson 1983: 154, cited in Wolford 2010: 79).

MST-PR opened the event. According to organizers, the opening *mística* included 1,500 participants and 14,500 travel-weary spectators. The five-part play celebrated the MST's thirtieth anniversary. It chronicled the collective, heroic past in order to channel the emotional energies necessary for future struggle (Eyerman 2005: 44). For Isabel and Vanessa the *mística* was also significant as it provided the two young aspiring actresses with their first opportunity to perform in front of thousands of spectators. Although they were both actively involved in a theatre group at school, this was entirely different. Isabel reflected, "At home, we only get to perform in front of our school or in the community. But here, it is so fun. It also helps us to make friends because after you watch a performance, then there is something to talk about!" Vanessa agreed. "It helps us feel that we are part of the MST, that we have something to contribute!"

MST-PR's *mística* began quietly, with the solemn strumming of the MST's anthem on an acoustic guitar, with later accompaniment by the drums.⁸ The performers began to sing collectively.

Come, let's take our freedom, with strong arms that tear the ground. Under the shadow of our bravery, we unfurl our rebellion, and plant this land as brothers!

A group of mixed-age/mixed gender/multiracial/multiethnic delegates, dressed in the MST-PR uniform (t-shirt, straw hat, long pants, flip-flop sandals) walked in *fileiros* (single-file line processions). Collectively, they circled the stadium floor, armed with hoes, scythes, machetes, sieves, and other agricultural implements, and simulated the perennial search for the "promised land" (Rosa 2012: 108). Meanwhile, the background singing continued:

⁸ See, "[Mística de abertura de VI Congresso Nacional do MST](#)"

With fists raised, come let's fight, with our strength we shall build...Our fatherland, free and strong, constructed by popular power.

Thereafter, a young group of delegates entered the space. They were teenage members of the theatre troupe, Saci Arte from Central Paraná (including Isabel and Vanessa). Dressed in spandex leotards, their torsos, arms, and faces were painted green, white, red, or black: colors that possessed particular meanings in the MST's symbolic universe, which was again explained to me by Carol. Red represented blood, spilt and coursing, and the courage to fight. White symbolized nonviolent struggle and social justice. Green called forth hopes for victory over the plantation system. Black represented mourning and fallen martyrs (Chaves 2000: 79). The volume of the collective voices grew ever louder, as painted bodies circled the stadium floor.

With arms raised, we recite our history, we were suffocated by our oppressors' strength. With uplifted fists, we raise our colored flag. We awaken the dormant homeland, for tomorrow belongs to the workers!

The music abruptly stopped. They dropped to the ground and formed large designs with their collective bodies in time: a seed, tree, flower, and heart. Then, from this corporeal media, they spelled *M-S-T*. The song proceeded triumphantly, asserting their confidence in the eventual triumph for the working classes.

Our strength is rescued by the call, of hope for the coming victory. We go forth and fight with certainty, for a free country for the workers and the peasants. Our star will finally triumph!

Each successful flesh-based formation elicited thunderous rounds of applause. Bea gasped aloud and cried with delight. "Man, in Paraná, the MST is just so organized... Even their *místicas* look different!"

The MST hymn was then punctuated by roughly thirty seconds of simulated gunfire, broadcast at high volume over the sound system. In response, the performers dramatically flung their bodies into cross-shaped heaps, as if tossed into mass anonymous graves.

A young couple appeared on stage to read Mário Bendetti's poem, "Why We Sing." At first they drew the audience in by whispering, slowly and deliberately:

You wonder why we sing, if our warriors are not embraced.
 The nation perishes in sadness. And man's heart was shattered...
 You wonder why we sing, if we are far out on the horizon, distant from trees and sky.
 If every night there is absence, and every morning there is conflict
 You wonder why we sing.
 We sing for children, for everything, for the future, the people.
 We sing for the survivors, and our dead want us to sing.
 We sing because the scream is not enough. The tears and anger are not enough.
 We sing because we believe in ourselves, and we will overcome defeat.
 We sing because the sun recognizes us, because of the fields, the smell of spring...
 We sing because we are militants of this life, and because we cannot and do not want
 to let the song become ashes.
 PATRIA LIVRE: VENCEREMOS! FREE FATHERLAND: WE SHALL OVERCOME!⁹

By the end of the recitation their synchronized voices appealed to the emotions of spectators. The overall tone was complex—simultaneously macabre, indignant, and optimistic (Polletta 2009: 32). Remembrance of the dead oriented the aspirations of participants and spectators “toward the future, as a community of hope” (Bellah 2011: 229). The historical recreation depicted the landless' struggle as eternal and inevitable. As part of this revolutionary lineage, membership in the MST was recast as a privilege and an obligation to one's ancestral kin.

⁹ My translation, as reproduced in *Canta MST! 2014* songbook published by the MST and distributed at the VI National Congress.

Together, the couple shouted: “We are only allowed to tire when the struggle of our dead is completed, for all of them... not just some, for all. FOR ALL! FOR ALL!” The audience responded with adulatory applause. Bea was visibly overcome with emotion and wiped tears from her eyes. Carol affirmed, “What a beautiful *mística*, it was so organized.” When I asked what they found so moving about it, Bea was unable to put it into words. She was tired of my questions. Being moved to tears seemed to be enough. Perhaps, in part, what was emotional for these young women was transcending the feeling of being young, understanding the resonance of the event, and feeling included. For a time, they were valued, equal members, with a critical role to play in the MST’s righteous struggle for social justice.

Thereafter, musical cues signaled yet another shift in register. The band played an up-tempo version of the International Socialist Hymn¹⁰ to highlight the importance of global solidarity. For the finale, all of the MST-PR delegates returned to the floor. Still circling, some carried oversized block letters and spelled out the theme of the Congress: LUTAR, CONSTRUIR REFORMA AGRARIA POPULAR; FIGHT, BUILD POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM. A male MST spokesperson appeared on-stage and addressed the enthusiastic audience, officially launching the speech component of the event.

We are here to commemorate thirty years of struggle, resistance, and victories... We have learned a great deal, as we have fought for land, territory, water, seeds, for national sovereignty against capital, which is ever more perverse and strong with 500 years on its side... But with this VI National Congress, our struggle and our movement shall be reborn!

¹⁰ The song of the First and Second International was written by a transport worker, Eugéne Pottier, in June 1871, after the Paris Commune was crushed by the French government. The song was later used as the first Soviet Union National Anthem and Anthem of the Third Communist International, until 1944 when the latter was dissolved.

The pronouncement was loudly applauded and officially ended the opening *mística*.¹¹ Based on the enthusiastic response, it seemed that MST-PR's performance was an overwhelming—and for Bea and Carol, an explicitly emotional—success. As they watched the MST's thirty-year history unfold, the audience transcended the present moment and felt connected to a larger community and a righteous cause (Eyerman 2005: 51).

GRITOS DE ORDEM – CHANTING SLOGANS

After the completion of the *mística*, a male MST leader led the seated spectators in rounds of *gritos de ordem* (chanting of slogans). Delegates were called to their feet on a state-by-state basis, and each state chapter attempted to out-shout the rest. Upon hearing their chapter called, all jumped to their feet (or were jostled awake by their neighbors), pumped their left fists upwards, and shouted the appropriate response.



2/2014. Chanting slogans. Oliver Kornblihtt/[Mídia Ninja](#).

¹¹ See [CUT's video and description of the *mística*](#), 2/13/2014.

FREE COUNTRY!	WE SHALL OVERCOME!
FIGHT!	BUILD THE POPULAR POWER.
FIGHT!	BUILD THE PEOPLE'S AGRARIAN REFORM!

My favorite slogan, however, was the most disingenuous.

TIRED? OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE NO ONE TIRES.

As any sports fan can attest, there is something strangely pleasurable about unified screaming in an excited crowd. In these moments of “collective expansion” (Effler 2010), I was reminded of Freud’s (1927) “oceanic feeling,” and Durkheim’s (1912) “collective effervescence.” All of these terms, albeit in different ways, describe the ephemeral feeling of belonging to a somehow indissoluble whole, connected to and represented by, and yet being lost in the multitude. “It’s enjoyable to participate, yes. To feel as if you are part of something so big,” Isabel commented. Davi interjected, “It is kind of like being part of a soccer team or watching a match. By being together, we aggregate our forces and get ready for the fight.” Everyone (regardless of rank, age, gender, etc.) was able to participate by merely lending voices to the cause. In the mornings, the shouting of slogans lasted at least thirty minutes. They were initiated several times throughout the day, generally at the end of a speech or song, often an attempt to jolt a wilting audience into an active, attentive state. By the end of the event, throats were left hoarse and raw from so much synchronized screaming.

ENDLESS SOCIALIST SPEECHES

In Brasília, most of our time was spent sitting in bleachers, listening to incomprehensible speeches delivered by leaders and their invited guests. One of the most consistent

complaints I heard from delegates was the inability to discern what was being said, due to the reverb-heavy acoustics of the venue. Clearly, soccer stadiums are not designed for such speech-laden functions, and there was no sort of jumbotron to focalize the spectators' attention. Thus, enduring these speeches was a sort of challenge—as the Congress (not intended as a time or space for decision-making) did not involve workshops or small group discussions. The hours passed watching well-dressed speakers sit on the elevated stage, pontificating to the exhausted, travel-wearied onlookers. Attendance was mandatory, and most complied, at least during the first two days.

At first, I desperately tried to keep up with the white-haired, stern spokesmen on the pulpit. “Agrarian reform has been blocked.... Political reform.... The military dictatorship... We will overcome capitalism!” Splinters of incomprehensible speeches left only fragments in my notes. As senior leaders spoke at length, the audience paid various levels of attention. Some watched, others scanned cell phones, wrote notes, or chatted with neighbors. Most seemed disinterested, emotionally on-edge, and exhausted. The entire experience helped me understand one important facet of participation in large MST gatherings: namely, that within the activist assemblage, our synchronized bodies and voices were important, but not necessarily our opinions, thoughts, and feelings.

By the end of the event, many seats were vacant during the speeches. In response, a female *dirigente* from MST-PE castigated her group. “We have not come to Brasília to party, we came here to work! Keep off the *cachaça*, understand!” She insinuated that poor attendance was to be blamed on excess alcohol consumption and asked the delegates to remember the political auspices for their inclusion in the MST's *feira de socialismo* (socialist celebration). Still,

in such a large event, there was little that leaders could do to enforce their directives, beyond verbal disparagement.

I cannot emphasize this enough, but our bodies still hurt after our long bus ride. Bea, Carol, and I were somewhat irritated. Eventually, Bea stopped attending the lectures altogether. “I’m too tired after the trip. I’ve got bad menstrual cramps, and honestly, I would rather just rest.” Carol questioned my note-taking motives. “Did you not see your kit? They gave you all the materials you need already. Relax, enjoy yourself!” She complained, “These speeches are insufferable... boring... Melinda, you don’t really need to pay such close attention. We have been talking about these things for the last two years.” Then she made a daring suggestion, “Do you want to sneak out to the shopping mall with me? It is not far from here.”

So we did. The shopping mall was a world apart from the protest camp. Comfortably air-conditioned, I purchased a proper camping tent, and we both withdrew money from an ATM. We quickly returned to the camp, however, eager to purchase arts and crafts from the disparate corners of rural Brazil at the Agrarian Reform Fair. We certainly wanted to bring souvenirs home with us.

THE MARCH: MOBILIZING BODIES & SENTIMENTS

On the afternoon of the third day of the event, we were excused from the lecture-laden routine and dispatched to march the streets of Brasília. Kelli Mafort, of the MST’s National Coordination, explained the purposes of the march as follows:

Land reform in Brazil is an embarrassment. In the last year, only 7,000 families were settled, when only the MST has 90,000 in land occupations. In total, there are more than 150,000 families occupying in Brazil, and many of them have been waiting for more than ten years. We are here to denounce the fact that we are not satisfied, and we ask for Popular Agrarian Reform Already. Meanwhile, Dilma doesn't listen to the *sem terra*, and gives money... to agribusiness and FIFA.¹²

Some leaders told me that the MST possesses a unique “culture of marching.” While the MST certainly did not invent marches, they organize them in a peculiar fashion, incorporating seemingly disparate elements, for example, those of a military parade, political rally, religious procession, and party (Chaves 2000: 25, see also Comerford 1999).¹³ A news article captured such creative dimensions and uncanny juxtapositions in its description of the MST’s 1997 National March:



2/2014. Becoming active participants, Copavianos and friends get ready to march. Brasília.

¹² Tygel, Alan and Márcio Zonta. 2/12/2014. “[MST em Brasília: Uma polícia preparada para gerar conflito.](#)”

¹³ See, “[Caravana a Brasília.](#)”

The march was disciplined like a military parade and coordinated like a samba school. The strategy of the leaders was to prevent the *sem terra* from dispersing or reacting to the inevitable provocations along the route. Before they left their camps in the morning, all of the *sem terra* were uniformed with red caps and white shirts with the red symbols of the MST... The majority of the *sem terra* carried the MST's red flag. Whenever the sound car gave an order, the workers shouted slogans, waved banners, as if they were doing some sort of choreography.... There were a few people carrying sickles, machetes, and hoes. The majority were women and the elderly (*O Estado de Minas*, 4/18/97, cited in Chaves 2000: 347).

This, I think, is good introduction to what comes next. However, unlike the 1997 March, which resulted in overwhelming public support for the MST's political program (see Chaves 2000; Navarro 2010), in 2014, our collective promenade had a much different outcome.

Before marching, we were briefed by a representative from the MST's National Security Brigade. He was brawny, muscular, with a shaved-head, dressed in a skin-tight black shirt with sunglasses. He looked less like a peasant or an activist and more like a character from one of the bad American action movies we watched on the bus from Central Paraná. After thanking us for our presence, he warned that MST security guards had successfully apprehended an "infiltrator" in the assembly the previous evening. The outsider was "taking photographs and asking questions" and had been expelled from the stadium. This led MST security personnel to believe that trouble was on the horizon.

If there is an infiltrator among us, they will probably be young people with masks, throwing rocks or something, trying to start a conflict with the police. This is how things work these days. If you see anything like that, just for a minute, find security, ok? There will be seven hundred of us, all wearing specially marked vests. If there are threats, we will take care of them. I am here to assure you that we, of the MST, do not wish to provoke any violence today. Understood? In 2007, we organized a march of 12,000 people here in Brasília, and there was no violence. Let's hope that it stays peaceful today.

After lunch, the 12,000 uniformly-clad delegates dressed in their MST t-shirts, donned caps and straw hats, and began to assemble themselves in single-file lines. All were instructed to leave name badges behind, to avoid being personally identifiable. The bodies snaked and spiraled around the stadium, until one-by-one, state-by-state, we slowly crawled out of the stadium's protected space and made our way towards the Palácio Planalto, some five kilometers away. The objective was simple: to draw public attention to the urgent need for agrarian reform and demonstrate the MST's ongoing relevance. It was, as Frantz Fanon might put it, "a spectacular gathering" (Fanon 1995: 181-182) where the MST exhibited its bodily forces in order to insist that after thirty years it was still a unified force to be reckoned with.



2/2014. View from the overpass, as the ranks marched through downtown Brasília.

Brasília sits on a high plain, some 800 miles (1,288 kilometers) from the sea—and is wretchedly hot. Sweating, but undaunted, the collective body moved at a snail's pace. Deliberate steps maximized spatial coverage, and the four *fileiros* (single file lines) stretched three-kilometers in length. While it was not terribly fun to walk in such a formation (as it impeded conversation and significantly delayed arrival at the predetermined destination) the MST favors this style of marching for strategic, symbolic, and security reasons. By dragging the march out as long as possible, the procession ensured maximum traffic congestion in the urban center. Performed by 12,000 bodies in four single-file lines, it communicated discipline, centralization, and organization—and created a stunning, colorful spectacle for onlookers to behold.

Up to this point, we had seen little of Brasília aside from the stadium. We walked down the freeway bordered by wide green lawns and passed residential apartment complexes.

Journalist Alex Cuadros described what we saw during our stroll through the federal district:

Dated as it looks now, Brasília sprouted from a futuristic vision... When President Kubitschek finally began construction in 1957, promising to advance the country fifty years in five, he hired [famed architect Oscar] Niemeyer and his former boss, Lucio Costa, to design the new city. Costa, in charge of the city plan, imagined a little utopia—except in his utopia, everyone would own a car. Sprawling, full of green spaces, the Plano Piloto is wonderful for the bureaucrats and lobbyists who can afford to live there. Costa never worried much about the workers who came to build Brasília. They settled in favelas on the outskirts, now plagued by violence, a long commute from the city center (Cuadros 2016: 63-64).

Indeed, Brasília is an extraordinarily unequal city, and this was visible during our stroll through it. We walked past expensive private housing developments, open green spaces, and bus stations brimming with the poor workers waiting to embark on long commutes. While

walking, Davi, from Central Paraná, reminded me that Brasília is known for having “the worst public services anywhere in Brazil—in terms of transportation and health care. *Que vergonha, meu*. What a shame, dude.” MST activists from the National Youth Collective arrived in advance and left messages scrawled in black spray paint under freeways along our route, to support the marchers and implore sympathy from the broader public. Posters were affixed to concrete structures with spray adhesive. The messages were simple, done in haste, lacking aesthetic embellishment:

SE O CAMPO NAO PLANTA, A CIDADE NAO JANTA!
IF THE COUNTRY DOESN'T PLANT, THE CITY DOESN'T EAT!

JUVENTUDE SEM TERRA SE FAZ A REVOLUCAO!
LANDLESS YOUTH MAKE THE REVOLUTION!

SE O CAMPO E A CIDADE SE-REUNIR A BURGUESIA NAO VAI RESISTIR!
IF THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY UNITE, THE BOURGEOISIE WILL NOT RESIST!

They also took special care to denounce the United States and scratched out its flag insignia on the embassy's placard.

At the time, it was unclear whether our demonstration was having the desired effect, in terms of appealing to outsiders. Our bodies brought downtown traffic to a halt. Bureaucrats and businessmen got out of their cars and snapped photos on their cell phones, perhaps to explain absences to their superiors. Others were visibly frustrated that the MST used the busy avenue to dramatize and pose oppositional demands to the state. A few spat venomous curses outside windows of their private cars—“*Bandeirnas, terroristas, vagabundos!* Thieves, terrorists, vagabonds!” We passed tired-looking workers and the countless *moradores da rua* (homeless people) who seemed to watch the curious and colorful spectacle unfazed.

Meanwhile, street vendors picked up their carts and took advantage of the mobile mass. They sold water, ice cream, and cotton candy to the marchers.

As we walked, we were urged to maintain the formation by MST-security guards. “*Fica na fila! Fecha burraco!* Keep to the line! Close the hole!” They implored us not to break ranks for any reason. Beyond the aesthetic importance of disciplined marching, at the most practical level our corporeal formation prevented breaches by angry drivers. This was difficult to achieve in a way, “like herding cats,” as one North American solidarity activist put it. Failure to comply sometimes engendered harsh words by leaders and exhortations to get back in line. Meanwhile, the loudspeakers reminded us that we were “not there for tourism, but to work.”



2/2014. The marchers remained joyful and enthused, while street vendors followed the procession. Brasília.

Since it was our first time in Brasília, Davi, Isabel, and Vanessa (along with many others) periodically stepped out of line to snap photographs of the spectacle, along with the many architectural landmarks, designed by legendary Brazilian architect Oscar Neimeyer. We had never seen these structures before in person.

The Central Bank thrust up at the right, a tall obelisk of beige concrete and dark glass reflecting clouds...We made our way onto a fuselage avenue, and on both sides identical squat buildings held Brazil's three dozen government ministries. Their windows, pattern less shades of pastel green, gave them a pixelated look (Cuadros 2016: 63).

Slowly and dutifully, with left fists upheld and crimson flags waving, the colorful caravan inched forward. Sound cars blared strikingly peaceful MST music ahead. Youth from the LPJ people played snare drums, which frightened some elderly marchers, as it reminded them of military parades of the past. Most walked and shouted the slogans that had been collectively perfected over the previous days. Some carried cardboard fragments with hand-painted requests: for land expropriation, support for university access, and the regulation of agrochemicals. Others denounced agribusiness and the closure of rural schools. Despite the heat, many smiled, embodying the “passion and happiness” the MST repeatedly asked of them. Elena commented, “Boy, it is hot outside... but the march is so pretty, don't you think?” Vanessa and Isabel nodded.

We passed a murky pond and inched near our destination—one of Brazil's most heavily policed spaces. There, the atmosphere became increasingly foreboding. Helicopters buzzed dangerously overhead, as if ready to land atop the marchers. There were army tanks on the

streets. “Policemen in chunky black body armor and black helmets tightened into a wall of Plexiglass riot shields, each with the word CHOQUE written on it” (Cuadros 2016: 232). Some began to follow us and pulled marchers from the line for questioning. “*Fica na fila!*” MST-PR security personnel shouted. To overcome our fear, they begged us to remain focused on the mission at hand: to temporarily occupy the Praça dos Três Poderes and build fifty replicas of plastic tarp shanties on the steps of the Congressional building. They hoped to visually remind politicians of the estimated 150,000 *sem terra* families trapped in bureaucratic limbo—living in dangerous and precarious conditions, with the hope that eventually the state would make good on its constitutional commitments to land reform. Although working class Brazilian society had joined the ranks of the emergent middle classes in recent years and enjoyed increased wages and consumer participation, the landless poor of the rural hinterlands had yet to fully partake in such prosperity. Abandoned by an unresponsive state, the MST sought to intervene through non-violent and disciplined collective action. Still, as we learned, even the most meticulous planning and pacific tactics cannot always prevent conflict (Auyero 2007). The landless youth were about to experience the other, more coercive side of the state apparatus up close and firsthand. Some would “feel the state on their skin,” as Maple Razsa (2015) put it.

MST VS. THE MILITARY POLICE

MST-PR was the last group in the 12,000-person march. By the time we arrived at the *Praça*, the other state chapters had already set to work building the mock occupation camp. As I searched for my friends from MST-SP (the *paulistas*), I unwittingly stumbled in the direction of a conflict with military police. As assigned, the *paulistas* were unloading wooden crosses

from a bus/sound-car, when police attacked without warning, bludgeoning their bodies with batons. That is, until the comrades from MST-PE intervened. Their response still shocks my own sensibilities as a (police wary) North American activist. It was altogether surreal to see dozens rushing forward and then chucking hundreds of wooden crosses at policemen.¹⁴ It was a prime example of “forward panic” as described by Randall Collins (2009: 115-130), which typically occurs in conflict scenarios when one side is heavily outnumbered (in this case, the police). Seconds later, “a deep explosion thundered in the sky, followed by a flash of white light, and another—*bombas de efeito moral*, flashbangs” (Cuadros 2016: 232). We were caught off guard and enveloped in toxic clouds of tear gas and pepper spray. Our extensive orientations and handbooks had not approached the topic of police repression or chemical riot control. No one had been instructed to carry vinegar or face masks.

While the use of chemical antiriot control was not unusual (considering the increasingly draconian responses to demonstrations in the years following June 2013 and months leading up to 2014’s World Cup), the response of the MST’s security personnel certainly was.¹⁵ They formed a human barricade between the militants and the policemen, essentially protecting their attackers (and the rest of the protestors) to de-escalate the conflict. It was the only protest that I’ve witnessed firsthand in which policemen sustained more injuries than activists! In total, one MST leader was arrested, two were hurt, and some thirty police officers reported injuries. Some factions of the press commended the MST for its “maturity” and credited them with the relatively few injuries sustained.

¹⁴ See, [“Marcha do MST”](#) (the conflict ~02:37)

¹⁵ As Ron Eyerman points out, “Creating and evoking moral empathy is part of what makes a movement. It is a point of demarcating We and marking off Them. Demonstrators will rush to aid a fallen comrade, but it is unusual and requires a widening of the zone of empathy when they do the same for a fallen policeman in the same situation” (Eyerman 2005: 50).

The entire episode was so odd it seemed simulated, and the results were manifold. The police had dispersed so much tear gas that even after the clouds wafted away, eyes watered and nose and throats felt peppery. On the sidelines, I found Isabel and Vanessa trembling, holding hands, coughing loudly. They were obviously afraid. “I don’t like this, I don’t like this!” Neither of them had ever witnessed state repression firsthand. In fact, this was the first time they participated in such a large political demonstration. Most of my contacts from MST-PR seemed to be just as bewildered as I was, and stood back to watch the chaotic conclusion to what had been such a disciplined march.

After the bombs were dropped and the police backed off, the multitude waited for instructions. After a few moments, a voice over the MST’s loudspeakers announced that we were dismissed from the procession and instructed to return as quickly as possible to the



2/2014. The multitude, post-conflict, Oliver Kornblihtt/Mídia Ninja.

protest camp at the stadium. Our bodies formed a red-clad legion that flooded the streets. Amazingly, even though I was lost in a sea of some 12,000 fleeing strangers, I found Junior from Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo. He was limping and stopped to show me the “souvenirs” he received from the military police—bruises on his ribcage. Trembling, he removed a plastic bottle from his backpack, took a deep swig, and passed it to me. “Drink up. It’s socialist *cachaça* (sugarcane liquor).” Junior buried the clandestine booze deep in his backpack. Speaking in metaphor, he suggested that the march was exemplary in some ways of landless lives. “The life of a *sem terra* is *rapadura*. There are sweet moments, but they are very hard.” Rapadura is a hard candy made from sugarcane juice, which made his comparison rather apt.

Although the marchers were disciplined, jovial, and well within their democratic rights, the conflict provoked unwanted attention and criticism from the mass media. It made front-page news and was hung from the stands at the Agrarian Reform Fair, passed between activists over breakfast the next morning. The *Folha de Brasília* argued that the march was an example of domestic terrorism, as it occurred in the months leading to 2014’s World Cup.¹⁶ Its authors demanded that politicians do something to contain the unruly and anarchic MST. In the months that followed, political elites clamored for new antiterrorism legislation to suppress dissent, which was enacted under President Dilma.

One woman in MST-PR’s camp was upset by the coverage. “How embarrassing this is, to be part of a terrorist organization!” Elena, on the other hand, was undaunted. Gourd of *chimarrão* hand, and Vanessa by her side, she dismissed such concerns.

¹⁶ 2/18/2014. “[Lei antiterrorism: ameaça ao direito de manifestação.](#)”

2/13/2014. “[Video: 17 mil Sem Terra fazem protesto pela Reforma Agrária em Brasília.](#)”

2/13/2014. “[Confusão dentro e for a do protesto dos sem terra.](#)”

You have to fight back. You cannot let [the police] get away with that mess... Don't pay any attention to [the media]. You know, when [my daughter] was in my belly, we were marched to Curitiba and Jaime Lerner [the former governor] sent the military police after us, and killed [our comrade]... The police are better armed than us, they have all the weapons, but we have to fight back. We have the right to be here.

Such informal conversations indicated the stakes involved in protest. While repression might foment collective identification in the moment, it may also promote disaffection, shame, and embarrassment among the rank-and-file (Mansbridge 2001). Even though Elena was ready for a standoff with the police, Vanessa and Isabel were terrified and only wished to escape the confusion.



Newspaper from Jornal de Brasília, hung from booth at Agrarian Reform Fair the morning after the march. Headline reads: "Protests Began Again: Four months until the World Cup, the calendar of demonstrations in Brasília began with the march of the MST and again caused traffic problems and violence between the participants and the Military Police. The population asks: until when?"

In retrospect, the march seemed to represent a tangible turning point in youth subjectivity, as most had never before openly confronted military police or put their bodies on the line for the MST. By the final day of the event, Pedro (22/m) from Pernambuco declared his allegiance, his voice raw and hoarse after so much yelling over the prior week. “I would give my fucking neck for the MST!” Junior (not yet heartbroken by his ordeal and expulsion from the movement) said that he thought it was “important to risk your life” for the MST, to dramatize the seriousness of the struggle for land. Through active participation, youth grew to understand that the MST was not just a group that they happened to grow up around. It wasn’t something just for their parents. Brazilian redistributive politics is a high-stakes game that requires corporeal commitment. Isabel reflected on her experience:

Before, I did not really know what the MST *is*. I thought it was just something for my parents. But this experience, to come to Brasília, to contribute to the movement, this has been very special for me. I have learned what it means to be a militant, to sacrifice oneself for the MST.

ENGAGING THE STATE?

On Thursday morning, the final day of the Congress, representatives from the MST’s National Coordination met with President Dilma. They gave her a basket of food and an itemized list of seven demands. Leadership informed her of the “urgent necessity to make changes in agrarian policy,” and asked that the government settle all encamped families immediately.¹⁷ They went on to demand the demarcation of lands for indigenous people, the provision of credit, and critiqued the bureaucratic obstacles that prevent smallholder farmers from accessing government purchase programs. To placate MST leadership, Dilma promised

¹⁷ The letter began as follows: “The government is incapable of resolving this grave social and political problem. The average number of families settled was only 13,000 per year, the smallest amount after the military dictatorship. It is necessary to settle, immediately, all of the encamped families.” 2/13/2014. MST [“Carta do MST a Dilma.”](#)

that her cabinet would evaluate the potential settlement of landless families in the semiarid sertão of Northeast Brazil; and Pepe Vargas, of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, promised to settle between 30,000 and 35,000 families in 2014.¹⁸

Around noon, while sitting in the soccer stadium, MST leadership told the masses about the “successful” negotiations with the president.¹⁹ MST spokesman João Paulo Rodrigues took the stand and congratulated everyone for their heroic efforts in the march. For him, it was evidence that “Only with struggle and social pressure can we make the changes in society that we seek!” The crowd clapped, whooped, hollered, and began yet another round of *gritos de ordem*: LUTAR! CONSTRUIR REFORMA AGRARIA POPULAR! It seemed the perfect conclusion to a dizzying (and outright exhausting) week of political activities. Thereafter, we ate lunch, said our emotional farewells, and climbed aboard our respective MST buses to disappear into the rural hinterlands from whence we came. It was, as Bea put it, with more than a hint of sadness in her voice, “the return to reality.” Although most people traveled back to their places of origin, a Brazilian researcher convinced me that I needed to visit Northeast Brazil. He asked the coordinator of MST-PE if there was space for me on their bus, and before I knew it, I was traveling to Pernambuco.

CONCLUSION

The VI National Congress was one of six MST protest camps I attended between 2012-2014. In a period of relative rural demobilization, the frequency and care involved in such

¹⁸ 2/13/2014. “Presidente Dilma recebe pauta de reivindicações do MST, mas protela definições.” *Século Diário*.

¹⁹ In retrospect, it seems that the multitude celebrated too soon, believing, as we did, that Dilma, and her administration, might keep their promises. However, by the end of 2014, only 10,000 families received plots of land. Interestingly, a piece of Workers’ Party propaganda claims that this was a “record” for Brazil. See: Ferreira, Guilherme. 2015. “[O Numero de Assentamentos Bate Recorde em 2014.](#)” *Agência PT de Notícias*.

events indicated their value to the MST as a force that animated landless activism and engagement. Even as Fela, one of the event organizers, confided his suspicions that the protest camps were “like a spectacle, a circus really,” they did make the MST seem like something powerful, tangible, and timeless: fueling the elaboration of “strategic essentialisms” (Spivak 1987), the “fabrication of the social” (Chaves 2000), and the objectification the movement (Wolford 2010). Delimited in both space and time, MST protest camps (and especially the VI National Congress), were both emotionally moving and internally persuasive.

Why might such activist getaways be so important to the MST? The MST is comprised of a strikingly diverse and geographically dispersed constituency. Transcending local differences and traversing national territory, for four days, 16,000 representatives gathered together in Brasília. Our journeys from the hinterlands were arduous, but valuable. Especially for young people, with relatively little experience outside of their respective locales, traveling broke with rural routines and conferred a sort of prestige upon participants.²⁰ Being called to participate set young recruits apart from their provincial elders and their politically inactive peers. As Adam (26/m), who had spent the last ten years of his life as an MST-PR militant, told me, “Most of the youth never get to leave their settlements. With the MST, I’ve traveled more in my short lifetime than my parents ever have in theirs.” MST ideologues explicitly recognize the usefulness of politically-motivated travel and consider it to be a preliminary step in *formação política* (political training) (Bogo 2003: 94). As a sort of “mass action through seeing” (Gorsuch 2003: 763), young people got a firsthand look at the scale of socioecological devastation across the Brazilian interior. After three days of being

²⁰ Even though they did not interact much with the non-MST world, in Brazilian Portuguese it is acceptable to assert that one “knows” a place after merely passing through.

surrounded by monocultures on all sides, they began to see their country anew, through “anti-capitalist eyes” (Kaplan and Shapiro 1998). In contrast, small-scale, diversified family farming enterprises looked all the more attractive, alternative, and even oppositional. As Bea told me on the bus, “We of the *sem terra*, those of us who do *agricultura familiar*, it is as if we live in tiny islands... We are almost like an endangered species.”

Once having arrived in Brasília, exhausted and travel-worn, we had little choice but to submit ourselves to the collective schedule and regimen. The MST provided us with security, a place to sleep, food to eat, entertainment, and tasks to perform. Through shared activities, participants experienced a sort of “collective expansion” (Effler 2010), and came to feel as if they were part of a large, translocal family. At the protest camp, our bodies were important—not necessarily our thoughts, feelings, or opinions. While this may seem problematic, it was somewhat liberatory for rural youth. By being present, they participated. Feeling empowered to contribute (via marching, shouting slogans, watching speeches, performing in *mística*, and so on) was critical in motivating young people’s identification with the MST, as they were often excluded from and disadvantaged in its hierarchical institutional structure. If only for a moment, the MST wasn’t just something for their parents. It was properly theirs. Temporarily, they overcame the limits they experienced as young people, and felt themselves to be integral parts of a righteous, united, and timeless collective. Although the MST’s VI National Congress was not a resounding success on many fronts (e.g., engendering significant structural change, pressuring governmental authorities, or garnering sympathy from the broader public), it was subjectively meaningful for rural youth, as a site of embodied learning and personal experience. Positive emotions and memories, in turn, fueled youth participation in the MST thereafter.



2/2014. *Secular Nights*. Parading around the stadium at the dance parties. Oliver Komblihtt/Mídia Ninja

CELEBRATING SOCIALISM: YOUTH, PARTYING, AND MICROPOLITICS

A revolution without dancing is not a revolution worth having.
—Emma Goldman

So long as we confine our conception of *the political* to activity that is openly declared we are driven to conclude that subordinate groups essentially lack a political life or that what political life they do have is restricted to these exceptional moments of popular explosion. To do so is to miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt and that, for better or worse, is the political environment of subject classes. It is to focus on the visible coastline of politics and miss the continent that lies beyond.

—James Scott (1990: 199).

My time with the MST was very festive.¹ MST parties (or *noites culturais*, cultural nights) were held during each political *encontro*, training course, and commemorated important dates in land reform settlements and occupation camps. Brasília was no exception. When we first

¹ I recorded dozens of videos of MST parties throughout Brazil, see: "[Capoeira no Congresso](#)," "[Festa - Jangada de Reforma Agrária 2014, Assentamento Maceió, Ceará, Brazil](#)," "[Festa - XIII Encontro Estadual dos Jovens do MST-CE, 2014](#)," "[Festa de São João, com MST-PE. 2014](#)."

arrived, all delegates received a behavioral handbook in the militant kits. In it, we were reminded of the political auspices of our journey: to mobilize on behalf of *Reforma Agrária Popular*. As I flipped through the booklet, a heading caught my attention: DESEJOS E PRAZERES (DESIRE AND PLEASURES). The MST asked attendees to respect the rule of silence, be cautious, take responsibility for actions, and refrain from violent or discriminatory behavior. Seeing it in writing made it clear that there was a widespread tactical expectation that attendees would engage in ludic and erotic adventures. Away from the social relations of control that typify rural communities, with an ideological justification of building translocal solidarities, rural youth were afforded exciting interpersonal opportunities unavailable elsewhere.

These politicized parties were of the utmost importance to the youth I came to know, a “badly needed social outlet” (Mahdavi 2009: 82), and thus deserving ethnographic attention. Yet, the scholarly literature on the MST hardly touches on this topic.² Is this lacuna perhaps reflective of academic opinion as to what counts as properly political behavior? Barbara Ehrenreich asks similar questions in *Dancing in the Streets* (2007). Drawing upon Max Weber, she claims that the Protestant Ethic is partially to blame for a curious Western perspective of revolution, as a “world turned upside down.” Citing Cromwell’s suppression of festivities among his troops and Lenin’s diatribes against slovenliness, carelessness, and sexual misconduct, such beliefs influenced broader thinking about political change. “Revolution” has too often been imagined to be a “painstaking process... similar to war in its demand for discipline and planning... the task for the ascetic, single-minded, self-denying person” (Ehrenreich 2007: 175). For Calvinistically-inclined revolutionaries, the central “rite was the meeting—experienced in a sitting position and requiring no form of participation other than

² For exceptions, see Chaves 2000; Sales 2006; Moscal 2010; Benzi 2014.

the occasional speech, and conducted according to strict rules of procedure” (Ehrenreich 2007: 176). It seemed that established MST leaders viewed dancing, singing, and merrymaking as distractions from matters of primary importance. While these were tolerable distractions, they were distractions nonetheless. I would like to decenter this perspective and insist that we attend to the festive dimensions of social life in the MST. By neglecting this realm, one risks missing a powerful and humanizing aspect of the MST’s ongoing appeal for many young women and men.

My analysis of MST partying practices has its predecessors. For example, Robin Kelley’s *Race Rebels* (1994) devotes significant attention to the microprocesses and micropolitics of African American leisure and subcultural activities as observed in “dance halls, blues clubs, and ‘jook joints’ in the [U.S.] South.” I quote the following passage at length as it strongly resonates with the ethnographic narrative that follows.

In darkened rooms ranging in size from huge halls to tiny dens, black working people of both sexes shook and twisted their overworked bodies, drank, talked, engaged in sexual play, and—in spite of occasional fights—reinforced their sense of community... I am not suggesting that parties, dances, other leisure pursuits were merely guises for political events, or that these cultural practices were clear acts of resistance... Most people attend those events to escape from the world of assembly lines, relief lines, and color lines, and to leave momentarily the individual and collective battles against racism, sexism and material deprivation. But this is still only part of the story, for seeking the sonic, visceral pleasures of music and fellowship, the sensual pleasures of food, drink, and dancing, was not just about escaping the vicissitudes of Southern life... Knowing what happens in these spaces of pleasure can help us understand the solidarity black people have shown at political mass meetings, illuminate the bonds of fellowship one finds in churches and voluntary associations, and unveil the *conflicts* across class and gender lines that shape and constrain these collective struggles (Kelley 1994: 56-57).

Kelley suggests that much can be learned about the forces animating African American political struggles and internal contradictions by attending to informal spaces of socialization.

While the sentiments nurtured in such spaces do not transfer in a linear way to formal political contexts (Cohen 2004), clearly, the fusion of individual identities and biographies into organized collectivities is a powerful basis for political action (Eyerman 2005: 44-45).

Therefore, this chapter describes the young *paulistas*' nocturnal experiences of leisure and pleasure in Brasília.³ By examining their rituals of drinking, dancing, and hooking up, we can understand how they appropriated MST egalitarian discourse for their own ends, and placed it in the service of a particular socialist youth subculture. Among the *paulistas*, MST parties were an important (although generally unremarked upon) motivational force. Finally, a micropolitical perspective of partying as a major dimension of corporeality and site of political learning and contradiction helps us understand what belonging to the MST means for many rural youth.

SOCIALIST SUBSTANCES: CACHAÇA & CIGARETTES

I would like to return to the conflictual march described in Chapter 4. Recall that after the multitude was excused from the *Praça dos Três Poderes*, I found Junior, who was caught squarely in the fray. Immediately, in the midst of the herd, he offered me a swig of “socialist” *cachaça*, disguised in a plastic water bottle. The offer wasn't unusual. Like partying more generally, *cachaça* has an important (albeit tacit) place in MST demonstrations. MST activism is physically challenging work, and my *paulista* crew justified their copious consumption of sugarcane liquor by drawing on Brazilian folk beliefs in the quasi-medicinal

³ The young *paulistas* were a group of landless peers in their late teens and early twenties. They identified as militants although they were unpaid and lacked formal positions. They grew up in land reform settlements and encampments, studied agroecology, and had completed political training courses through the MST. We first met in 2012, at MST-PR's 2012 *Jornada de Agroecologia* (an agroecological festival). Thereafter, they invited me to visit their families, homes, schools, and places of work in São Paulo state. I hung out with them during most of the MST protest camps I attended.

properties of the stuff.⁴ According to them, *cachaça* energizes the body, sates hunger, and, for better or worse, confers “courageous” qualities on the drinker.

After taking a few swigs of socialist *cachaça*, we returned to the stadium and found his friends, the young *paulistas*, at the protest camp. Sitting on the pavement, physically unable to stand any longer, five females and seven males formed a circle on the scorching pavement. The *paulistas* were shaken up by the brawl and exhibited symptoms of physical exhaustion, dehydration, and over-exposure to the sun. Lucas, John, and Junior trembled as they lifted up their MST-SP t-shirts to demonstrate bruises. “Check out the *lembrancinhas* (souvenirs) that the military police gave me,” John joked. Then, he began to pull out familiar items from his backpack—socialist *cachaça* and hand-rolled *cigarros de palha* (cornhusk cigarettes). These substances were circulated among his peers, hand-to-hand and lip-to-lip, putting the MST’s discursive socialist principles into practice. Junior donated his bottle to the group: “*Venha! Socializar essa comigo!* Come on, socialize this with me.” Lucas responded, “*Claro. Somos todos socialistas aqui.* Sure, we are all socialists here.”

Among the *paulistas*, tobacco and alcohol were palliative and focused mutual attention. Whether at home in the countryside, or in times of MST mobilization, they frequently drank and smoke. After all, they faced harsh realities in terms of unemployment, restricted access to education, and other resources. While in Brasília, the substances also helped them to overcome shyness and fostered social interactions among strangers and friends (Collins

⁴ There are more than 2,000 terms for *cachaça* in Brazilian Portuguese (Cavalcante 2011), including *abre-coração* (heart opener), *agua benta* (holy water), *bafo de tigre* (tiger breath), and *limpa olho* (eye wash). Invented in Brazil in 1532, slaves were reportedly forced to consume it as a means of social control. Until relatively recently, it was almost exclusively drunk by members of the lower classes. It is considered to have diverse qualities, as an aphrodisiac, a medicine, and is used in AfroBrazilian religious ritual offerings.

2008: 306). During the battle, and back at the stadium, we were all equals—just bodies in a sea of red-clad bodies. Choices in liquor and smokes also indexed the *paulistas*' firm rooting in *cultura caipira* (hillbilly culture, from the interior of São Paulo state) and reflected their allegiance to the MST's political principles. They were consciously selected to deter unwanted criticism and attention. For example, diurnal drinking was prohibited in Brasília. We were not there for "tourism" or a "vacation," but had serious work to do. As a result, Junior, John, and Lucas took care to hide the liquor in plastic water bottles. Even though they were technically breaking a collective rule, the young men demonstrated their loyalty to the land and labor relations promoted by the MST by drinking *Cachaça Socialista* and *Cachaça Camponês*, organic brands manufactured by MST settlers in São Paulo and Paraná states.



10/2013. Youth from MST-PR drink disguised liquor at occupation of the Ministry of Education, Curitiba, Paraná.



7/2012. Sharing cigarros de palha at the Jornada de Agroecologia. This was my first substance-sharing circle with the young paulistas. Londrina, Paraná.

The importance of smoking and drinking among MST youth reminded me of *chimarrão* (tea drinking) in Southern Brazil. As Wright and Wolford note, the ritual sharing of drink is “...the physical expression of a deep unspoken agreement... To refuse to share [drink] is to break the fundamental code that says that there is equality among members of the group and that unhurried conversation is an obligation required for group membership” (Wright & Wolford 2002: 10-11). By drinking and smoking together, the *paulistas* constructed a peer group and gender inclusive subcultural world (Douglas 2013: 10). The *paulistas* were proud of this peculiarity, and used it to distinguish themselves from others. As John explained, speaking on behalf of his peers:

The MST has such a beautiful discourse.... They are always going on and on about gender equality but in practice it disappears. Girls are not supposed to drink, smoke, go out, wear tight clothes or lip stick, they are controlled by men... We, the youth, don't like this, no. We are different. We are from the interior of São Paulo state. We grew up in the peripheries and have lived in the country, too. Single moms raised us. This makes a difference. We know that we have to respect women... It isn't the same with the *gauchos* [Southern Brazilians] and the *nordestinos* [Northeasterners]—they are super *machistas*... I don't think you will like hanging out with them. They are very conservative. But, among us in São Paulo, you are okay. You are one of us, because we, the youth at least, are different. We believe that everyone can and should participate, have a good time—women, too.

Just then, Bea interrupted, joyfully: “*A mulher não é obrigada a nada*. Women are not obliged to do anything [she doesn't want to].”

Given their desire to model more gender inclusive attitudes, the *paulistas* welcomed young women and men to join in festive carousing. In so doing, they embodied the MST's slogan, *somos todos iguais*. We are all equals. According to John (an upcoming leader), such behavior was not common within the MST's social universe as a whole, as it broke with traditional

Brazilian conventions. In the countryside, alcohol drinking was typically reserved for males and female drinking could be viewed as a sign of promiscuity (Rebhun 1999). When compared with other youth groups I came to know in Brazil, the *paulistas* were inclusive, open, and fun. While drinking and smoking with their male comrades, young women were also welcomed to share the “attention space” (Collins 2008) of collective conversations.

Still seated on the ground, outside the stadium, there was much to talk about. Luckily, the *paulistas* emerged from the conflict relatively unscathed. Their *cachaça*-filled plastic bottles and cigarettes became figurative microphones and conferred permission to speak. The march aroused complex emotions: it had been exhilarating, frightening, and demoralizing. Bea sighed. “What shit. The march was so beautiful and well-organized and the police just ruined it.” Sabrina replied playfully, “...and this, my friend, is how the revolt of the people began!” I pulled out my camera and showed them the footage of the conflict, at a distance. Lucas complemented my work: “Man, girl, you are brave. Your hands weren’t even shaking.” Then



Xilogravura print by Jose Francisco Borges. It captures the forró scene well. During such dances couples intimately interact, while being surrounded by onlookers.

Ju interjected. “My god, look at the guys from MST-PE, they did not give a shit! Wow, just tossing those crosses... Wow.” Junior responded, “Thank god they were there. Otherwise, I don’t know what would have happened to us... Man, those *pernambucanos* have *sangue febre*. Struggle is in their blood. You know, the Peasant Leagues started up there.” Then the conversation drifted to what came next: flash bangs, tear gas, and pepper spray. They wondered: What were Brazilians to do to be heard given the increasingly draconian police repression of peaceful protest? How to balance power between heavily militarized state forces and the unarmed citizenry? No one had any definitive answers, and the dance parties had just begun.

FORRÓ: EVERYONE DANCES TOGETHER

As the scorching Brasília sunshine began to wane, elderly delegates retired their bodies to camping tents, hammocks, and sleeping mats. The younger folk refused to surrender to weariness. Turning to me, Junior recycled the MST’s *grito de ordem* jokingly, “DA LUTA DE POVO, NINGUEM SE CANSA! OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE, NO ONE TIRES!” We gravitated towards the drums beating across the parking lot from the Agrarian Reform Fair. We circled the stadium a few times and briefly sampled its musical offerings: hip-hop, samba, rock, and *sertaneja*, but decided to try our luck at the Northeastern tent, for *forró*. There, an all-male group played classic selections of traditional songs (avoiding more contemporary commercial styles). Despite the intermittent rains, couples swirled undaunted—bodies entrained and entwined.

Forró, deeply popular among MST youth, deserves explanation. Popularized by migrant-musician Luiz Gonzaga (1912-1989), *forró* was originally used as a generic term for working

class dance parties in Northeastern Brazil (Phaelante 1995). In the countryside, these dances were structured occasions for social and muscular bonding. They were held to commemorate holidays as well as the completion of communal tasks, like planting, harvesting, and home construction (Fernandes 2005: 23). As one would expect at a private family party, respectful behavior was the norm.

Over the course of the twentieth century, *fórró* came to encompass many musical genres (e.g., *xote*, *baião*, *xaxado*, *arraste-pé*, *coco*, *rojão*), but should be recognized first and foremost as a dance style. Quintessentially Brazilian, it combines African rhythms, indigenous foot-dragging steps, and is performed by pairs as in European ballroom dancing. *Fórró* is unique in that it *cannot* be danced individually. Brazilian anthropologist Claudia Matos writes:

...[F]órró (in the broadest sense) can only be danced together... And very much together! The *fórró* is very affectionate, it stimulates dating, close contact, and celebrates the erotic contact of bodies. *Fórró* is the paradise of flirting, the ideal occasion for amorous expression, with smells, sly touches, movement, and play (Matos 2007: 431).

Simplicity and sensuality are clearly part of *fórró's* appeal. This has led some critics to insist that the dance is infused with gender asymmetry. As a performance of hegemonic Brazilian heterosexuality, dancers embody the oppositional axis of male/activity and female/passivity (Parker 1992; Da Matta 1994; Allen 2015: 6). Men initiate dances and women generally accept. As in Argentinean tango,

...etiquette stipulates that women will behave as spectators of the male gaze and therefore will patiently wait to be asked to step out onto the dance floor. This passive role... not only places women at a disadvantage, as they are the ones being sought and chosen, but also makes them noticeable and exposed to social scrutiny

and judgment, particularly if they remain [on the sidelines] for a long time (Viladrich 2007: 111).

Once a *farró* dance has begun, the male leads and the female gracefully accommodates his cadence, tempo, step, and direction. In so doing, her body becomes an accessory of sorts, a fleshly extension of his sexual prowess (Neave et al. 2010). Be that as it may, I witnessed multiple negotiations over physical intimacy on the dance floor. A male might try to close the space between dancing bodies by moving his knee between his partner's thighs.

Positioned firmly against her pelvis, he could assume almost complete control over her body, thrusting and spinning her across the dance floor. A female, on the other hand, might escalate the degree of intimacy by enlacing her arms around his neck and closing the space between their chests (Rebhun 1999). Dancing cheek to cheek, males had relative freedom to explore females' backsides.

How did the young *paulistas*, both male and female, experience MST *farró* parties? In Brasília, performance was mixed. After all, they did not always fit into pre-scripted molds of Brazilian heterosexuality. Males were too poor to comfortably assume the active, virile role of economic provider. Females did not always conform to conventional beauty standards or desire male attention at all.

Helena and Junior stood around shyly, sipping socialist *cachaça*. "Let me get some courage first," Junior countered, when I asked him whether he planned to dance. Helena refused to participate altogether, "No, I don't dance, no. I'm a bit of a *bicho do mato* (wallflower)." Then, Bea arrived on the scene. After the march, she changed into clean clothing and applied makeup. She returned glowing and smiling: perfumed, with lipstick and eyeliner, she wore a

tiny yellow spandex dress. “I have arrived,” she announced, ready to hit the dance floor. She took Junior by the hand and they lost themselves in the crowd, swirling and swiveling in time with the live band.⁵ When I asked her about dance floor etiquette, Bea rejected the idea of waiting passively for a male to ask her to dance. “I have traveled all the way from Paraná to get here... I am not missing out. There is no way. Life is too hard, and so when we get the chance, we have to have fun. It matters!” Later on, after an intense dance, she met me on the sidelines for a smoke and a beer. Bea teased me for not participating. My stubbornly embodied American individualism did not translate into partner-dancing success. “Stop it! Get out there and dance. You know it’s a better party if everyone participates, when everyone dances together.” I didn’t see her for the rest of the evening. She happily disappeared among the masses.

Later, I asked Bea about her obsession with *forró*. What was her favorite dance and what was its appeal?

My favorite dance is the *xote*, because it is best to dance *agarradinho* [affectionately, tightly]... In the embrace, you feel contact with another body, with their energy, the feel of their breath on your cheek, in your ear, their smell, the heat... My God, I love dancing more than anything in the world... I feel many things in this exchange of energy, as positivity envelopes me... all the negativity is freed from your body. It disappears. You fill yourself with desire even if you step on your partner’s foot!

For Bea, the physical intimacy and rhythmic coordination of partner-dancing was incredibly pleasurable. Her experience is not reducible to sociobiological explanations—the release of bonding hormones and endorphins (Tarr et al. 2014, Hagen and Bryant 2002).

Sociologically and phenomenologically, it was altogether more significant. She described an

⁵See, “[Banda de Forró - VI Congresso Nacional do MST, 2014.](#)”

almost “intoxicating urge to hold (and be held)” (Viladrich 2007: 109). Dancing *farró* enveloped her in an almost magical, transcendent embrace that helped her release negative energy and emotions. In Brasília, surrounded by MST comrades from diverse places, Bea could partake of a pleasure denied to her at home. She refused to sit idly on the sidelines and actively pursued both male and female partners. After all, back in the Fazenda settlement, there was very little *lazer* (leisure) to speak of, except for a handful of bars almost exclusively frequented by older men blasting commercial country music. MST dances were entirely different than the urban *bailes* in Ribeirão Preto, which were expensive and exclusionary.

In our conversations about dancing in the MST, I learned that Bea learned to dance and danced most often in movement settings. Whether at political demonstrations in Brasília, protest camps in São Paulo city, political training courses, or in occupation camps, there, among the *sem terra*, Bea obtained the embodied social knowledge and dance skill required to successfully enjoy herself. For her, *farró* became an intoxicating and addictive motivation that fueled ongoing activist engagement, sometimes to the detriment of familial and educational responsibilities.

While dancing, Bea transcended barriers of race, class, ethnicity, and, sometimes, nationality. For example, in Brasília, Bea initiated a dance with an attractive African American activist from Florida. Linguistic barriers alone would not prevent the couple from using their bodies “as conduits to joy” (Allen 2011). While he was not particularly skilled at *farró*, dancing with an exotic male from another country was exciting and memorable. For a moment, “international solidarity” wasn’t just a lofty ideological goal—they danced it. Moreover, such an experience proved to her that, as a member of the MST, she was truly part of something

larger than herself, with a global reach. Therefore it seemed that the time and energy spent at MST dance parties was a means to accrue social capital, and nurtured “social hubs that protect[ed] lonely souls from the hostile democratic anonymity” of their respective locales (Viladrich 2007: 118). As it was performed rather than spoken, *forró* was well suited for facilitating positive interactions across lines of difference. Success in this realm did not require higher education, verbal skill, or the interlocution of translators. Dance was thus a crucial medium that the MST had made available to its youth.

Lucas was also passionate about dancing. In his testimonies, the appeal of MST parties was framed somewhat differently. He was grateful that in liminal MST settings, everyone was separated from material markers of social status (houses and vehicles) and dressed casually. This provided him with temporary respite from the competitive, materialistic norms at-play in Brazilian dating and marriage markets (Burdick 1993; Edmonds 2010). As he put it,

The MST is like a sort of family, you know. Everyone has to be respectful. In the MST, no one cares that I am poor, that I am black, that I am *sem terra*. We are all equals here, and we have a good time!

Having left divisive social markers at home, Lucas and his male peers felt as though they belonged. Out in the parking lot, under the stars, they were more willing to experiment, get out of their comfort zones, and initiate “spontaneous social liaisons” (Viladrich 2007: 121). This was important to Junior, an avid *forró* dancer in MST settings. Among the *sem terra*, Junior was friendly, outgoing, and flirtatious. He was much more reserved at home and never dated anyone in the settlement or in the periphery. “Where on earth am I going to meet someone?” “Why not go to dance parties in Ribeirão Preto?” I asked. This suggestion

seemed absurd to him. “Why would I go to town? There are only playboys in Ribeirão Preto... It was built by the workers, but only serves the bourgeoisie.” When pressed, he continued:

No, I won't go to the *bailes* in town, no. If I did, no one would dance with me anyway. I don't have money to buy the latest fashions. I'm poor, out of style... Girls in the city don't like you for who you are, they like you for what you own... they are only interested in money. I would say 99% of romantic relationships today are like this, based on material interest.

As the night wore on, in a moment of *cachaça*-fueled ebullience, Lucas took a break from dancing to shout into my recorder. “Mel, remember this! The MST is the alternative society! This here is all I want. Us together! Everyone is my friend, my comrade.” Junior agreed and clarified what Lucas meant by the *sociedade alternativa*.

Yes, in the MST we have the alternative society. This, here, this is the society without money because, when you think about it, what is money anyways? It is nothing! The people who have it are miserable and greedy... But not us. We here we are happy. We don't need money and this is our alternative!

Money is desperately important to the rural poor. While in Brasília, however, Lucas and Junior did not have to worry about it. Food, lodging, and transport had already been taken care of. Collectively, we pooled resources for alcohol and smokes. They did not need to dress themselves up and try to “pass” as members of the middle classes in order enter an expensive club only to be rejected by “materialistic” women. Out in the parking lot, surrounded by fictive kin, Lucas and Junior had an extraordinary evening. With the accompaniment of skilled Northeastern Brazilian musicians, they danced. There was no shortage of willing female partners. What a relief!

For the young *paulistas*, MST dance parties were an important part of political participation.

United by their passion for music and dancing, members of the MST's structured social field were invited to experience bodily intimacy, fellowship, and uncommodified interaction with a diverse group of friends, familiars, and strangers. As they chatted, hugged, shared drink, and sweated together, rural youth felt empowered and equal to others. Young women overcame social boundaries and barriers, and in an intimate way felt valued and valorized. *Forró* drew upon the primary instrument of sexuality, the body, but did not reduce the body simply to sex; it was enskilled, the vehicle of a profoundly democratic source of fun. As we shall see, transgressions were not only permitted but were also transposed onto the real (productive) world.

FICAR – ACTIVIST ROMANCE

The sensual proximity afforded by partner-dancing sometimes set the stage for more intimate encounters. Generally, after a series of energetic dances, couples quietly abandoned their peers. They sought privacy in camping tents or in the poorly lit margins of the stadium. Inebriated, exhilarated, and exhausted, sheltered from the eyes of familiars, they were less socially inhibited than usual and most of the *panlistas* engaged in casual sex. Thus, in Brasília, the MST provided a space for amorous experimentation. This is significant as an MDA (2013) report suggested that the lack of suitable partners within land reform settlements was partially to blame for the ongoing youth exodus.

Lucas, for example, had lots of luck in Brasília. Attractive, hardworking, and kind, Lucas was twenty-seven years old and still single. Lucas' love life (or lack thereof) concerned his mother and provoked good-natured teasing from his friends. Lucas was not interested in getting married right away, but he did want a girlfriend. When I asked him why he wasn't dating

anyone, he responded curtly, as if the answer to my question was self-evident.

Mel, I don't have a girlfriend because I am black and poor... It is hard to meet girls in the *roça*. And girls in the favela don't care about who you are, they like you for what you can offer them financially. What do I have? I help my parents in the *roça*. I don't have a car. I have nothing.... This is why lots of guys give up on the *roça*. They leave to work in town to get money so they can get girlfriends.

Lucas rejected off-farm employment and helped his aging parents tend to their plants and animals on their small farm in the land reform settlement. This wasn't an altogether ideal arrangement as he lacked disposable income and domestic power. In our conversations, he resented the indifference of urban women and tended to classify them in very general terms as materialistic and unwilling to recognize his authentic worth. Young women at MST getaways were very different. Lucas was a singer in an MST hip-hop group, and his popularity soared.⁶ It did not matter that Lucas was poor and black, the MST provided him with a classic source of sex appeal—a stage and a captivated audience.

Lucas traveled to Brasília with his mother, sister, and niece, but he did not camp next to them. He set up his tent far away from kin, on a dark grassy lawn. Thus, when night fell, he had a bit of plastic-based privacy and hooked up with several activist women. Casual sex in Brasília stayed casual. It did not entail commitment. There were no mechanisms to enforce fidelity. Everyone (at least in the *paulista* crew) seemed to know that casual sex was common in MST protest camps.⁷ Even though his mother wished he would take matters of courtship

⁶ See [Veneho H2's performance at the VI National Congress](#)

⁷ Such casual relationships seemed indicative of an important shift in personhood and status within Brazil at large. Indeed, almost everywhere, rural places have witnessed broader socioeconomic transformations, which have led to later marriages, increasing education, and the shift away from farming (Comaroff 2006; Katz 2004; Argenti 1997; Jeffrey 2010; Smith 2012). Like their peers in modernizing contexts elsewhere, rural youths espoused notions of courtship that were heavily influenced by ideologies of romantic love and companionship (Ahearn 2004).

more seriously, Lucas was free to participate in a relatively flexible hook-up culture.

Bea also engaged in casual sex, but, unlike Lucas, did not feel comfortable having a new partner every night. Bea, like many of her female peers, feared damaging her reputation in the small world of the *sem terra*.⁸ For instance, our second night in Brasília, Bea danced and hooked up with Fernando, a mutual friend from Rio Grande do Sul. Afterward, he evaporated. The next evening, Bea flirted and danced late into the night with the African American male mentioned above. Although her body craved him, Bea did not give in. She was afraid that Fernando might find out and spread malicious rumors or become jealous and unpredictable.

Bea learned to dance and danced most often in the MST, and the same was true of her sexual history. She lost her virginity at an MST protest camp when she was sixteen years old, and thereafter found most of her lovers in such activist settings. “I feel good when I participate,” she told me. “It is rare for me to find someone to hook up with outside of the MST.” I knew this was true, as we lived together in her home settlement in São Paulo, and later in Central Paraná. At home in the countryside, Bea stayed busy with her family—cooking, gardening, and doing housework. She did not have personal transportation and rarely went out. She knew almost everyone in the settlement and was not attracted to her

⁸ Citing the GRAVAD Study, a multicentric study about youth, sexuality, and reproduction in Brazil, with a sample size of 4,634 individuals in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Porto Alegre, Heilborn and Cabral (2011) suggest that within Brazilian society (as in other western countries) preconjugal feminine sexuality has gained broader acceptance. “Paradoxically, despite an environment of transformations in which sex gains a status among youth as an acceptable behavior, conversations about sexuality continue to be taboo in the family; contraception is not openly discussed in school, and sexual education is a highly controversial theme in Brazilian society. Teen and youth sexual relations have been modified, but these changes were not sufficient to alter the ways in which contraception can be discussed. Women are still considered to be the sole responsible for pregnancy, while men continue being absolved or omitted from their participation in the reproductive event” (Heilborn and Cabral 2011: 2).

neighbors. When I asked why, she seemed repulsed by the mere suggestion. “No, I don’t want to date anyone at home. They are all like my brothers. We grew up together.” When Bea was studying in Central Paraná, finding a decent boyfriend seemed almost impossible.⁹ As a black woman at a predominantly white institution, she did not conform to conventional beauty standards (Edmonds 2010). After running out of money, she stopped chemically straightening her hair.¹⁰ She had never been thin.

Bea never had a “real boyfriend.” Like Lucas, she was not interested in marriage for the time being. Even though marriage provides young women with certain freedoms, it has its costs (Mahdavi 2009: 159). As a result, Bea preferred finding temporary lovers in MST settings. But this strategy was problematic. MST men, she told me, were not very sincere. “I swear to God, they are so sweet and caring in the moment, and then you find out that they have wives and girlfriends back home. It is so frustrating! Why can’t they just be honest? They are so weak!” Given this knowledge, Bea took care not to upset her female comrades or cause problems. She made herself a rule. “I only hook up with one man per [MST event].” This was, in part, a precaution to avoid becoming the target of gossip and the bearer of a bad reputation. Hooking up at MST events was also problematic because males rarely used condoms. “If I happen to get pregnant, God forbid, I need to know who is responsible for it.”¹¹

⁹ Bea was once infatuated with one of her classmates, but he was only interested in sex. Once they fought, and he threw racial insults at her (which left her in tears and prompted a Skype call to her American sister). Bea and I continue to speak monthly about her amorous adventures—and most of them transpire in MST settings.

¹⁰ Bea was highly aware that Brazil is not a “racial democracy,” and that whiteness and its markers were valued over blackness. Before, Bea tried to straighten her “bad hair” to negate the inferior status ascribed to “blackness” (see Goldstein 2003; Burdick 2003; Kolling 2016).

¹¹ Unplanned pregnancy is very common in courses, events, mobilizations, and spaces organized by the MST nationally. Men are generally averse to wearing condoms and women may have challenges accessing emergency contraception.

Bea helps us understand that within the MST's relatively flexible hook-up culture, female behavior was scrutinized more closely than that of males. Rumors about "transactional sex" (Archambault 2016) were rampant within the small world of the *sem terra*. Riquiele (22/f) from MST-PR once cautioned me,

It is very important in the MST that women have one fixed partner. Mixed-gender relationships are tricky. If you just talk to a man, there are already rumors that you are hooking up with him and trying to steal him from his wife.

Lidia (30/f) of MST-CE had already been accused of using sex to ascend the movement's institutional ladder. As she explained, "Whenever I have gotten a new task, or moved up, I have been accused of having sex with a *dirigente* and this is just not true... Yes, some women use sex this way, but I cannot." As I spent time with the *sem terra*, I grew to appreciate that it was a "social milieu where women, more than men, are subjected to subtle rules of inclusion and exclusion" (Viladrich 2007: 112). Female ambition and desires for social mobility within the MST incited suspicion. As a result, some women took great pains to assure me (and others) that although they might hook-up with MST males, they did not do so for instrumental gain. It was about intimacy and pleasure.

While Bea was careful to exercise restraint in Brasília, Ju (19/f) was a bit more adventurous and had a same-sex love affair for the first time. She hooked up with Sabrina (22/f), a law student and activist from the LPJ (the Popular Youth Uprising). The couple's friendship deepened during their journey from São Paulo to the nation's capital. They walked side-by-

side during the march and danced together afterwards. Sabrina dared Ju to defy gendered expectations. Energetic dances evolved into caresses and sly kisses. They eventually excused themselves and retreated to Sabrina's camping tent. Disregarding the collective rule of silence, they made love, loudly, for what seemed like hours. (In case the reader is curious, Sabrina's tent was stationed next to mine). Although they were very audible to their neighbors in the camp, no one, as far as I know, confronted them about it. The next day, Ju somewhat nervously told the *paulistas* about the affair. For them, it was a cause for celebration, not concern. Junior congratulated her, "That is beautiful, *parabéns*."

At the time of my research, nonheteronormative individuals were increasingly visible within the MST, as in Brazilian society more broadly. Rainbow flags were waved at assemblies and during the march in Brasília. LGBT individuals publicly displayed their affections and were even profiled by MST journalists.¹² National-level leaders promised that LGBT issues would be prioritized over the following years.¹³

Supporting LGBT individuals, however, required that the MST re-write its political training manuals (and arguably, re-think its emphasis on *agricultura familiar*, see Magrini and Souza 2013). For instance, "Gender," penned by MST theorist, Ademar Bogo (2006), praised the division of labor as being rooted in a "natural complementarity" between the sexes, based on female childbearing capacities and males' superior stamina and earning power. Drawing upon agrarian imagery, he asserts the importance and naturalness of monogamous, heterosexual unions.

¹² 2/20/2014. "[Sem Terra LGBT lutam por uma sociedade sem preconceitos.](#)"

¹³ For example, LGBT representatives from MST land reform settlements and encampments have, thus far, been invited to complete political training courses at the MST's National School in São Paulo. Bahia and Ceará have included roundtable discussions about LGBT issues in big events.

Being a man or being a woman is not an accident, it is the balance that nature makes... Pleasure is an active force that involves the erotic act; but it can become chaotic... Without pleasure, however, there is no planting. Without harvesting, nothing can germinate in the neurotic heart... No sexual being can exist in isolation; this is the logical destiny. Be it in the ecological environment or in everyday life. To be truly human depends on integrating the part into the organized whole. *So, to be a man is to be complemented with the female part; to be a woman, is to combine with a man; without this union, individuals remain unfinished* (emphasis added; Bogo 2006: 180).

Even still, some homoaffective individuals overlooked such conservative tendencies and were attracted to the MST's oppositional politics. As Paulo (28/f) from MST-CE told me,

The MST fights for a more equal society, a Brazil with space for everyone. That is one reason I was attracted to the movement... Today, we have gotten much more space in the MST. Did you know that there are *thirteen* LGBTs in the National Coordination of the MST? Even though our base may not realize this, we are here.

Despite occupying positions of power within the MST, tolerance towards same-sex relationships was uneven within its ranks.¹⁴ Some who described themselves as *sem preconceitos* (unprejudiced) were uncomfortable by public displays of affection. Carla (27/f), from MST-PE, told me that LGBT exposure in Brasília was “unprecedented.” She confided:

I almost died when I saw gay couples kissing in Brasília. I would not have paid any attention if they were in a gay club or something, if it was in *their space*. But they were not in *their space*. They were at the MST's VI National Congress! *Vixe!*

Historically, the MST has been very timid in addressing issues of internal diversity and inequity among its cadre (e.g., gender, race, age, sexual orientation). These silences, however,

¹⁴ Ana might have been supportive of monogamous, homosexuality, but bisexuality made her very uncomfortable. “It is fine to be gay, but it is not fine to be a bisexual. That is just greedy.” This was confirmed by Leo (21/m) from MST-PE: “I think that out in the countryside, it is very normal boys to experiment sexually with other boys. I would guess that most do. But then, as you grow up, you have to choose sides. Most people are straight because that is easier in society. There is a lot of prejudice.”

may be productive of tremendous pain and suffering. Paulo was convinced that the MST needed to take a more active position on *diversidade sexual*.

The MST fights for this “equal society.” In Brasília [at the VI National Congress] everyone was so nice and I could kiss my partner in public. Great! The problem is that the moment I went back home [to the land reform settlement], these *sem terra* show another face. The same people who talked to me in Brasília won’t even acknowledge my presence in the countryside. It is like I don’t exist. As if they are afraid that if they talk to me, other people will think they are gay, by association. In the country, I can’t even hold my partner’s hand in public. This is so hurtful. Imagine how tough it is for LGBT youth in the *roça*... the pressures they face. Something needs to be done.

In Brasília, Paulo was able to take his private relationship into the politicized public realm.

This was tremendously meaningful to him, but it also made the contradictions and exclusions he experienced back in the countryside all the more painful. He insisted that the MST had a responsibility to break the silence and publicly support its LGBT members.

Long-term MST leaders struggled with this task. When I asked Nadia, from MST-PE, about LGBT inclusion, she said, matter-of-factly:

Yes, there are many gays in the movement. We don’t care as long as they maintain one, fixed relationship. We don’t talk about LGBT issues, but [our silence] is similar in the racial question. For example, even though the base of the MST is predominantly black, race isn’t on our political agenda.¹⁵

¹⁵ When the MST does dialogue with issues of race and ethnicity, it generally does so on the basis of the land question. Magrini and Souza (2013), for example found only one reference on the MST’s website: “We want to have a society that live in harmony, with its diversity (ethnic and cultural), with equal opportunities for all Brazilians, with economic, social, political, and cultural democracy, as is determined in the Brazilian Constitution, but ignored in reality and in the practices of the 3 constituted powers. In Brazil, we know that there is a history of extreme discrimination based on physical types, colors, and culture. The cases that are most severe are in relation to the black and indigenous people. And thus, it is essential that there are public policies that guarantee the lands for the indigenous and quilombolas. We also understand that it is fundamental, the actions to prevent discrimination related to color differences, cultural differences, religious belief, and culture that we must value and respect cultural diversity. For us, it is fundamental that there are affirmative policies that guarantee the inclusion of historically excluded groups” (MST 2011). This leads the authors to conclude that the MST believes that there is a sort of internal racial hierarchy (“relational subordination”) at work in the struggle for land, differentiating between the *sem terra*, indigenous, and quilombolas, and the black population in general (Magrini and Souza 2013: 31).

Nadia's statement was quite revealing and confirmed that the MST was often unwilling or incapable of dealing with matters of intersectionality. Her emphasis on monogamy was consistent with interviews and conversations with militants elsewhere. The sex of one's partner was not important, but individuals needed to have "a fixed partner."

This brings us to a relatively paradoxical point about the MST's sexual subculture: while the movement discursively promotes traditional monogamous families as the basis of family farming (Falquet 2006), it tacitly organizes occasions for experimentation and transgression. Perhaps this was but one of the reasons why sons and daughters of prominent leaders complained that militancy was hardly compatible with familial responsibilities. For example, in Copavi, Dito (22/m) complained:

You know, when people go with the *sem terra*, to an *encontro*, or a course or something, it is almost like they forget who they are... They forget that they have wives and girlfriends back home. I don't think most Brazilian men know how to be faithful. They are *safados* [nasty, incapable of being faithful].

While participating in MST getaways, young people often combined romance and activism. Their activities counter some of the MST's theorizing on the subject. For example, in selections entitled "Passion" and "Desire," Bogo states that romantic love is a "waste of time." He encourages individuals to channel their energies into activism and "fall in love with collective causes." For him, revolutionary passion for socialism and agrarian reform is "the most beautiful and constructive way to apply our emotions" (Bogo 2006: 180). After having learned about the experiences of young women and men in Brasília, such normative

statements seem out of step with the current sensibilities. Young people explicitly understood MST political activities to be ideal settings for hooking up. To paraphrase Dito, individuals often forgot who they were. After all, they were far from the eyes of familiars, separated from markers of social status, and surrounded by fictive, activist kin.

CONCLUSION

Although collectively consuming liquor and cigarettes, initiating a dance, or casually hooking up may not seem to fit classic definitions of radical political action, I have insisted that we take such practices seriously. Parties are a vital and mobilizing resource for a group as internally diverse and geographically dispersed as the MST. Brazilian anthropologist Christine Chaves learned a similar lesson on the sertão of Minas Gerais. “Politics,” she was told, “are made through parties.” A local priest explained:

Parties here are more significant than religion, more than social excitement... parties are the time for politics. The [rural] people are attracted by the flux of people...the people are what is important. Perhaps all year they work in the rural environment, and they have nothing new for life, to give motivation to their lives. The party in this sense becomes akin to social participation... and because there are lots of people, it is attractive (Chaves 1993: 227).

While rural Brazilians may look to collective festivities as a time to leave isolation and labor behind, I suggest that parties were perhaps even more important to youth, and thus contribute to the MST’s longevity. I do not view their partying practices as mere reflexes of hormones and inebriation, or somehow symptomatic of a lack of “discipline,” as some MST leaders suggested. In the interstices of the MST’s VI National Congress, the *paulistas* (along with their *sem terra* peers) found space for subcultural innovation. They creatively

appropriated MST discourse for their own ends, and built horizontal ties in concrete, experientially dense ways.

I have not written about the *paulistas* rituals of drinking, dancing, and hooking up out of some voyeuristic curiosity, but because they cannot be avoided. Even though these behaviors could be viewed as hedonistic, they should also be understood as “necessary parts of constructing a social world over which they had control” (Mahdavi 2009: 97). Their experiences are compelling and help us understand some of the understudied yet deeply meaningful dimensions of MST participation for young people, pointing to generational shifts in sensibilities and behavior. In contrast to everyday life, where the body was primarily experienced as an “instrument of labor” (Gilroy 1990: 274), at MST parties, the *paulistas* (poor, AfroBrazilian, rural youth) “took back their bodies” (Kelley 1994: 57, Mahdavi 2009: 36, Allen 2011).¹⁶ They leveraged dance, music, drink, and romance to find pleasure in lives often marked by hardship and exclusion. Indeed, social gatherings among like-minded youth clearly made daily life less isolating (Mahdavi 2009: 102). Their joyful celebrations should be viewed as a potential political resource and an accomplishment. As Ehrenreich notes, “gratification cannot be postponed until after the revolution... [activists need] the immediate joy of solidarity, if only because, in the face of overwhelming state and corporate power, solidarity is [a social movement’s] sole source of strength” (Ehrenreich 2007: 259). I also have argued that a micropolitical analysis of partying, sheds light on broader negotiations and contradictions regarding youth, gender, sexuality, and belonging within the MST. I insist that scholars take celebratory dimensions of social movement politics and practices into consideration, especially in Brazil. As we have seen, “secular nights” (Kelley 1994) in Brasília

¹⁶See, [“Dancing at Dito’s.”](#)

provided young people with a taste of the promises of agrarian socialism promoted by the MST—an inclusive social order, with enough liquor, smokes, music, dance, and romance for everyone. Parties comprised complex interactional spaces: they are a powerful, albeit partial, reason for the MST's ongoing appeal to young women and men.

CHAPTER 6.



8/2014. Fortaleza. MST youth group stands in single file lines to chant slogans.

DISCIPLINE AND EMPOWERMENT: POLITICAL TRAINING IN PERNAMBUCO

If they had looked deeper behind the veil, beyond the public transcript of accommodation and traditional protest, they would have found more clamor than silence.

—Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels* (1994: 60).

PRELUDE

On a crisp July evening in 2014, in the rural highlands of Pernambuco, some fourteen youth (ages 15-23) and two adults (aged 45 and older) donned their uniforms—collared red t-shirts, long pants, and close-toed shoes—in preparation for their formal initiation into MST-PE. They gathered outside the assembly hall at the Training Center, located on some fourteen hectares of a land reform settlement on the periphery of Caruaru, a municipality of regional cultural significance, known as the heartland for arts, festivals and music of the sertão. The

assembly hall had been decorated with care. Large banners were hung from the ceiling. One declared, CONSTRUIR REFORMA AGRARIA POPULAR—BUILD POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM, while bouquets of dried red and white flowers, agricultural implements (machetes, seeds, sieves), red votive candles were arranged, and a large “sun of socialism” of white sand had been drawn on the floor. One by one, the initiates passed beneath an honorary arch, made by eight young male militants with upheld hoes, to take their places seated in front of ten MST representatives, from MST-National as well as state MST representatives on the elevated stage. About forty other spectators attended the event as well, mostly representatives from MST-PE’s headquarters.

The event began formally, with the singing of the MST hymn and chanting of slogans: LUTAR! CONSTRUIR REFORMA AGRARIA POPULAR! FIGHT! BUILD THE POPULAR AGRARIAN REFORM! Thereafter, seasoned MST-PE leaders took the microphone one-by-one, and stood at the pulpit while giving impassioned speeches. Each detailed the importance of collective struggle, the necessity of *formação política* (political education, training), and the certain (although delayed) victories that awaited the Brazilian working classes, if properly organized. These leaders were renowned for their heroic feats in the 1980s and 1990s (imprisonment, hunger strikes, suffering torture), but on this night their appearance was decidedly professional and polished, even fashionable: in slacks, button-up shirts, modest cotton dresses, and leather shoes. Based on their clothing, they easily could have been mistaken for the pastors from a local church.

After the formal speeches, Filipe (18/m), one of the initiates, was invited to take the stage. He called on his peers, seven males and eight females, to stand at attention. Microphone in

hand, he dramatically read what we might think of as a pledge of socialist allegiance, a vow of loyalty to MST-PE, from a sheet of paper. All sixteen *formados* (graduates) stood erect, with their left fists upraised, and repeated the phrases solemnly.

We, students of [Course A], promise to defend the rural workers, and fight against injustice, against the *latifundio* [plantation]... We promise to keep studying, to increase our knowledge, to improve the working class. We promise to help build the *Movimento Sem Terra*...and fight for socialism. We promise to fight against all injustices, against any person, any people, in any part of the world, and follow the example of Che Guevara.¹⁷

This seemed a rather serious oath for individuals who a few short months earlier had described themselves as “new to the MST,” having known relatively little about the movement, socialism, or Brazilian social justice struggles. Thereafter, each person was called by name to ascend the stage, to be photographed individually with certificates of completion. Then, all were excused to participate in a lively celebration, replete with roasted meats and *cachaça*, accompanied by a live *forró* band. The night passed merrily, with partner-dancing until morning, to commemorate the new cohort of youthful militants now officially prepared to assume responsibilities in one of Latin America’s most important social movement organizations. In so doing, they fulfilled the prescriptions of MST political theorist Ademar Bogo, who writes: “To multiply, we must invest in the formação of all ages, because our descendants... depend on us for their survival... The organization that doesn’t bother to train new leaders will perish with its founders” (Bogo 2003a: 52-53).

¹⁷ See, [“Socialist Pledge of Allegiance.”](#)

INTRODUCTION

We have already seen that dance parties and getaways are important in understanding the MST's ongoing appeal among new generational cohorts (Flynn 2013a: 2). Yet, these ludic and erotic encounters are only part of the story. In the aftermath of the revolutionary fervor of June and July of 2013, the MST expanded its *formação política* courses,¹⁸ tailored for teenagers and young adults. João (23/m) explained,

In Pernambuco, our focus has always been on the occupations... We occupied, occupied, and occupied the *latifúndio* en masse. But June [2013] was like a wake up call. We realized we need to invest more in *formação política*, and this question of youth was taken much more seriously. It prompted a lot of reflection for us [of the MST].

The emphasis on political training was not entirely new. From the 2000s on, in a context of neoliberal economic policies and the general decline of social mobilization, MST leaders suggested that *formação política* was essential, as the continual training of new generations kept possibilities for change alive in adverse circumstances (Martins 2009: 198). One can perceive Gramsci's influences on the MST's tactics (Roberts 2015), specifically, the understanding "that pure spontaneity never exists, for there are always leaders and initiators, even if many remain nameless figures who leave few traces in historical records" (Barker et al. 2001: 2).

In this chapter, we follow rural youth as they made the next step in their militant careers. I examine leadership and political training as important elements in rural youth's experiences of MST-PE. A rich literature argues that the integration of youth into political movements

¹⁸ *Formação política* arguably lacks an equivalent in English. Dawn Plummer translated the term to refer to consciousness-raising work, political education, and leadership development (2008: 2). David Meek's (2011) analysis of MST internal media suggested that it should be understood as a set "of formal and informal pedagogical processes whereby members are 'made human,' and engage in a larger" Gramscian "counter-hegemonic" struggle (Meek 2011: 166). In contrast to Meek's textual-based findings, Brazilian ethnomusicologist Douglas Benzi (2014) claims that, emically-speaking, *formação política* is also a means for ordering hierarchy, influence, and the ability to speak within the SMO. A similar perspectives was articulated by Brazilian anthropologist Grazielle de Lima (2006), who noted the tendencies for MST leaders with *formação política* to monopolize speech, supporting some of the interests of "the people," while silencing others (Lima 2006: 87-88).

requires the provision of opportunities for voice and leadership (Fine 2001; Ginwright et al. 2002; Hall 2006; Mische 2008; Ortero 2004; Susser 2011; Dugan et al. 2015). In order to stay interested and committed, this literature contends that youth need to feel that their voices are heard, their views make a difference, and they can effectively participate in decision-making processes. To what extent were processes of personal and collective empowerment fostered and/or hindered by MST political training in Pernambuco? Moreover, in light of more flexible, networked forms of protest in Brazil and beyond, how do rural youth experience institutionalized pathways towards organized politics? Much recent research has neglected participation in more traditional social movement organizations (see Meyer and Tarrow 1998) and emphasized anarchist youth subcultures of activism characterized by radical decentralization, egalitarianism, and more fluid forms (Graeber 2009; Pleyers 2009; Juris 2008; Razsa and Kurnik 2012, Razsa 2015). Scholars tend to concur that such forms are particularly appealing to new generations given widespread disappointments with representative democracy and profound distrust of centralized organizations (Lukose 2009). Where can we situate young people affiliated with MST-PE in such a dialogue? Clearly, engendering significant social change requires time, dedication, leadership, and thus, one might argue, some degree of centralization. What kinds of tensions, hybridizations, and cross-fertilizations might be occurring between seemingly distinctive modes of youth activism? To what extent can rural youth transform the established MST political culture towards a more inclusive model?

MST POLITICAL TRAINING

In order to ascend the MST's militant ranks and emerge as leaders, individuals must complete formal, in-residence political training courses. The MST's pedagogical approach

draws upon traditions of the progressive Catholic Church and trade unions (Branford and Rocha 2002), the pedagogies of Paulo Freire, Soviet theorists such as Anton Makarenko, and its own brand of ritual practices (speech, music, theatre, arts) (Tarlau 2013; Flynn 2013b; Kröger 2011). In insulated institutional contexts, prospective recruits are subjected to a disciplinary regimen that encourages their identification with the MST and internalization of its “revolutionary” values. Leadership training in the MST is analogous, in some ways, to the citizenship schools and “movement halfway houses” described in the literatures on the Civil Rights Movement (Ling 1995; Hohle 2009). Although relatively isolated from larger society, these institutions were to perform critical capacity-building tasks by fostering new models of social relationships alongside innovative adult educational initiatives (Morris 1984: 139).

While discussions of political training courses have appeared in the scholarship on the MST (Veltmeyer 1997; Kane 2000; Wright & Wolford 2003; Navarro 2006; Plummer 2008; Delgado 2008; Tarlau 2013) such courses have not yet been the focal point of systematic ethnographic research. Thus, some accounts tend to reproduce the perspectives of leaders and pedagogues at the expense of those of the rank-and-file. For instance, Dawn Plummer (2008) argues that *formação política* is a vital sustaining force even as the social movement organization had suffered a loss of efficacy. While this may be true to an extent, hers is a highly cognitive analysis focusing on official principles, and elides the contradictory ways that individuals may experience MST socialist engineering programs. The matter is complex, as, after all, Paul Willis (1977) alerted us many years ago to the complex, unintended consequences of educational initiatives (Saltman and Gabbard 2010). Unplanned outcomes and experiences are also highlighted in Rebecca Tarlau’s (2013) investigation of an MST in-residence center in Southern Brazil. There, young people articulated an array of responses to

political training programs, from “shock, confusion, and negativity” to “personal transformation” (Tarlau 2013: 68, 70). They also noted discrepancies between institutional values of collective self-governance and the disciplinary structure of the school.

Brazilian sociologist Zander Navarro (2006) criticizes MST political training programs for their “authoritarian” tendencies. He suggests that the MST offers “irresistible” opportunities to poor rural youth, capitalizing on basic desires for social inclusion and mobility.

Socially and economically among the poorest in the Brazilian social structure, it does not take a deeper analysis to see what it means for [rural youth] to leave their communities in order to occupy “power positions,” to take courses, to travel, to benefit from the MST’s public visibility, at first in their own regions, and later possibly at the national level. The inevitable result has been the creation of a sizable group of intermediate militants who are strongly disciplined and strictly obedient to the main party leaders, for they run the risk of being displaced in this ascending social process if they hesitate at any time (or if they dare challenge the decisions made by the “high leadership,” something that has been unacceptable in the Movement’s history) (Navarro 2006: 175-176).

While Navarro rightly points to the potential attractions posed by involvement in the MST, he fails to note high rates of attrition (Tarlau 2013) and the fact that such opportunities are not provided to most rural youth and do not necessarily appeal to all of them. Furthermore, he overstates the totalizing influence of the MST, which to my mind is uneven at best.

While the social movement organization certainly does monopolize access to particular resources, Navarro overstates the desperation of rural youth. After all, the MST has existed for thirty-three years, and its members are posed to judge it for its performance as well as its utopian promises (Blum 2011).¹⁹

¹⁹ For a recent analysis of the economic viability of MST land reform settlements and the many challenges of the Brazilian countryside, see Pahnke 2015.

Therefore, this chapter draws attention to the micro-processes of political training and seeks to shed light on the following questions: To what extent and in what ways did MST-PE political training courses appeal to rural youth? How do young people, with limited experience of and identification with the MST-PE, experience these pedagogical interventions? Once trained, what are the concrete contexts and organizational venues where youth exercise leadership and voice their opinions? How does political training intersect with individualized life-projects and aspirations?

Inspired by Alexei Yurchak's (2005) account of the "last Soviet generation," the data lead me to de-center the constative (official, formal) dimensions of discourse, and foreground embodied, performative aspects of political training. Drawing on the insights of speech-act theory, Yurchak argues that in certain cultural and historical contexts, discursive dimensions may "drift"—the importance of the constative may diminish and the performative may grow (Yurchak 2005: 21). For example, in late Soviet socialism, routine rituals such as voting became increasingly meaningless, yet people still affirmatively raised their hands in favor of a given candidate or resolution. Yurchak suggests that such acts were significant as they served to reproduce oneself as a "normal" Soviet person within the

...system of relations, collectivities, and subject positions, with all the constraints and possibilities that position entailed... It would be wrong to see voting as simply constative statements about supporting the resolution that are either true (real) or false (dissimulations). These acts are not about stating facts and describing opinions but about doing things and opening new possibilities... the performative reproduction of the form of rituals and speech acts actually enabled the emergence of diverse, multiple, and unpredictable meanings in everyday life, including those that did not correspond to the constative meanings of authoritative discourse (Yurchak 2005: 25).

In my experiences with MST political training courses, it seemed that there was a salient preoccupation with the proper replication of artifice and form (structure, schedule, rituals) as described in initiation ceremony in the prelude. Simultaneously, the meanings attached to such activities and aesthetics drifted. A major example is the discrepancy between the official, formal rationale for political training programs and the ways it was understood by rural youth. Although MST-PE leaders stressed that *formação política* was a vital weapon to ensure the inculcation of proper cultural practices, political values and cooperativism among members (Meek 2011: 166), I found that for second-generation youth, it was also understood to be a preliminary step out of the countryside, useful for individualized projects of social mobility (Rangel Loera 2010; Mische 2008).²⁰

POL
ITIC
AL
TRA
ININ
G IN
PER
NA
MB
UC
O
MS



6/2014. Caruaru. The old plantation house at a land reform settlement. The space was converted into MST-PE's Centro de Formação in 2010.

²⁰ I do not wish to suggest that these statements apply equally to all political training programs provided by the MST. A number of scholars, after all, have done an excellent job documenting the ways in which the MST reflects the local contexts in which it operates (see Wolford 2010, Tarlau 2013). This example, however, was somewhat crisis prone and bordered on fiasco at times. I have utilized it because I was unable to observe the entirety of other courses I participated in during fieldwork. For example, I spent a few days at MST-PR's Escola de Juventude, but had an unfortunate encounter with a brown recluse spider that resulted in a short hospitalization. That being said, some of the critiques youths raised in this chapter do strongly resonate with other contexts.

T-PE opened its Training Center in 2010, modeled on the MST's National School in São Paulo (see, Plummer 2008). Pulling off the dusty highway, the site was demarcated by a small-hand painted sign that read: "Never again will this land be sold, land is the supreme good of the next generation." Up the dirt lane, lined with *mandacaru* (tall cacti), sat a historic Catholic chapel and ruins of disputed origin. According to young militants, the dilapidated buildings were the *senzala* (slave quarters), adjacent to a cemetery, both of which were reputed to be haunted. A colorful, decaying mansion, the *casa grande*, stood atop the hill. Its second floor was occupied by six militant youth, all in their early twenties. They maintained the institution in exchange for free room and board.

Behind this antiquated structure, new additions had been made to the site. A bust of Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire stood in front of a large, two-story building with gender-segregated dormitories, with space to host one hundred guests. Metal barred-doors (which remained unlocked and open) separated the male and female quarters and lavatories. The



6/2014. View of Dormitories/Classroom Building, with Paulo Freire's Bust (on the Right), Che Guevara's bust was badly damaged and eventually removed.

second floor had a classroom and a dusty library brimming with donated, dated books in various languages on eclectic topics, including: philosophy, political economy, history, agriculture, and new age spirituality.

The Center boasted a large, industrial kitchen and cafeteria that served meals three times per day, free of charge, supplemented with coffee and light snacks. The quality of the food served varied significantly. At the beginning of Course A, when resources were plentiful and *comida crioula* was served—consisting of rice, beans, meat (beef, chicken, pork, or goat), and salads. These meals aligned with MST ideological positions on healthy food and bodies. When resources dwindled, however, the kitchen entered into “crisis,” as some of the activists put it, and official perspectives on appropriate nutrition were left to the wayside. Out of necessity, we consumed highly processed foods and whatever leftovers were available, such as: sliced hot dogs, broth, sardines, and stale bread.

In short, the Center was an important location for MST-PE. It advertised the potential merits of agrarian reform, and was used heavily for multiple purposes: state meetings, political rallies, parties, and a series of social movement courses, offered to MST-PE members as well as their allies in affiliated social movements. The Center combined the advantages of a bucolic rural setting with proximity to urban amenities. It was a lively hive of movement activities, spacious and symbolically dense. For rural youth with relatively little experience with the world outside of their settlements and encampments and little exposure to the MST, the setting was significant as the site of their formal exposure to militancy.



2/2014. Bruna gives me a tour of the “haunted” ruins of the former plantation.

BECOMING A MILITANT: COURSE A

Offered twice each year, Course A lasted 45-60 days, spread over two or three phases, alternating periods of in-residence study with time back at home. Course A’s structure superficially resembled MST political training courses I visited elsewhere, but its coordinators framed it in different terms, as a place of “recovery, recuperation, and rescue” for “rebellious” rural youth. A member of the National MST Coordination explained the importance of the Center, “Before we built the Center, we were just losing the youth... but now, we have seen a big change.” The notion of youth recuperation through citizenship training is especially interesting when considered alongside the treatment of “problem” populations elsewhere (Cohen 1972; Bucholtz 2002).²¹ It aligned with a broader desire, no

²¹ Based on my prior research and experience with private confinement institutions for so-called “troubled youth” in Utah, it seemed very curious that these restrictive total institutions had much in common. Young people were targeted, removed from their homes and communities, subjected to a system of internal evaluation, completed manual labor, and so on. However, whereas North American youth may be subjected to an individualizing regime

the part of MST-PE leadership to counteract antisocial tendencies, which were viewed as direct legacies of plantation slavery (Wolford 2010: 132-133). As one leader told Wolford, “All the values of the people have been destroyed. And so this has consequences when you struggle for land, because we try and deal with other questions. We try to reintegrate people not just economically but also with dignity, and citizenship” (Wolford 2010: 131-132). As we shall see, the MST-PE’s encouraged youth to master a set of embodied techniques and dispositions, that deliberately distanced them from stigmatizing narratives and reinforced idealized notions of citizenship. Before moving forward, however, we need to become acquainted with some of Course A’s young recruits and their motivations.

WAYWARD YOUTH? ASPIRATIONS FOR UPWARD MOBILITY

It was a lazy Sunday afternoon in the Semente settlement, out on the semiarid sertão. I was unsure whether I would attend Course A, as none of the young people I was getting to know indicated that they planned to return to the Training Center in Caruaru. For example, just a few days prior to our departure, Dana, fifteen years old, adamantly rejected the idea. “No. I will not finish [Course A]. Nothing good comes of participating in the MST... You come back smoking cigarettes, drinking *cachaça*, and in love with a woman.” Dana had been going through some very difficult times, with her precocious sexuality embroiled in community scandal. She was drugged, raped and her injured, unconscious body was discovered in the *caatinga* (thorny bush) in the Semente settlement. Thereafter, the incident was widely gossiped about, and Dana felt socially isolated and depressed. Her situation attracted the attention of a regional MST-PE leader, who invited her to travel to the Center and then to Brasília for the VI National Congress as a part of Course A. Her responses to these

and psychological “treatment,” these rural youth were to be recovered through immersion in a collective project for agrarian socialism.

experiences were somewhat unexpected. Her horizons had been broadened. As she put it, Dana came back from Caruaru and Brasília smoking, drinking, and infatuated with a female militant.

Sara, who was twenty-one, also found herself entangled in community intrigue in Semente, as a result of her romantic relationship with fifteen year old Fabio, the son of the *mãe do santo* (Candomblé priestess). Sara's parents were devout Catholics and they strongly disapproved of her involvement with Fabio and *macumba*, a derogatory term connoting witchcraft. With the hopes that participation in Course A might send her on a path towards militancy and social respectability, she was encouraged to go by her parents. Sara only agreed when by the MST-PE dirigente said that Fabio could attend as well. During the first stage of Course A, Sara and Fabio had unprotected sex and conceived. Although condoms were available at the Center, I was told that no one used them. Months later, pregnant, Sara was uncertain whether she wanted to return to Caruaru. After all, it was ten hours away from Semente and she hadn't been feeling well. Fabio's mother, however, insisted that they follow through with their commitments to the movement, and repeatedly reminded them that "the MST opens doors" for future opportunities—particularly in terms of education and employment.

Sixteen-year old Daniel shared this understanding. He resided in an MST occupation camp a few kilometers from Semente. Daniel attended high school in the evenings and worked in the fruit plantations of a prominent local landowner. Daniel's daily routine was arduous, likened by him to a "battle." "No, I don't like working in the fields. Moving water pipes for irrigation, spraying poisons under the sunshine. It wastes the body. It's very heavy work."

When he went to school, Daniel earned between R\$10-12 (~5 USD)²² per day; when he was not at school, he earned R\$25. Daniel spent his money on food and household expenses. As he put it, “I work to eat.” Daniel earnestly wanted a different future for himself. He believed that off-farm employment and urban residence comprised a pathway from drudgery and impoverishment and conferred the means to “be someone in life.” Course A dovetailed nicely with these aspirations. As he told me,

There are scholarships and programs for us to study today. It is easier than it was in the past, but there are still major difficulties. The MST can help us, but to get any of these things but you first must graduate from Course A. Then, if you learn about MST history, do well, respect others, and complete your tasks the MST can help you go to college. That is why I am doing [Course A] now, so, after I graduate from high school, if there is a vacancy or something, perhaps my name will come up. Nowadays, to become someone in life you have to study, and you have to study a lot... It is not easy, but I am preparing for my future now.

Potential opportunities for higher education also figured prominently in the testimony of Layla. Eighteen years old, the daughter of an MST-PE regional leader, Layla grew up in Semente. She recently graduated from high school, was enrolled in a private college in a nearby municipality, and worked occasionally as a substitute teacher in the public school system in the settlement. Layla considered herself to be “new” to the MST, but hoped to study medicine in Cuba or agroecology in Venezuela. She understood the MST’s internal selection process for these opportunities to be rather competitive. As she explained:

To be selected, first I have to graduate from Course A. Then, if everything works out, I will go to another course [at the MST’s National School] in São Paulo. After that, there is an interview where they choose the candidates... I am worried that I will not be selected because I am so new to the MST... I’ve only been participating for

²² These conversions apply to 2013-2014. Shortly after I completed my field research, the Brazilian Real, which had been relatively strong, depreciated significantly.

the last six months or so. I just always don't have time to dedicate myself to the movement... because I am studying and working.

Motivated by her desires to study abroad, in 2014, Layla participated in Course A, attended the VI National Congress, set-up a shack in an occupation camp near Semente, and marched in Recife. In confidence, Layla told me that these experiences were not always easy, and she disliked the occasions when she felt like a number, or as she put it tellingly, “*somente lá pra massificar*, just there to massify it.”

Of the sixteen youth in Course A I interviewed, only Renata (17/f) explicitly hoped to become an MST *dirigente* (regional leader). She lived in a settlement in Northwestern Pernambuco where a lack of water, significant deforestation, and pollution from adjacent mining activities precluded any form of substantial agrarian production, aside from raising chickens. Renata believed that if they had an irrigation system her community could be “the best place in the world.” In the meantime, unable to make a living on the land, each day she traveled to town to work in the house of a wealthy woman. It was a job that she detested but was unable to escape. She put it bluntly. “The life of a maid is the life of a slave. But what can I do? If I stop working, I will starve to death.” Beyond earning very little, Renata said domestic work was humiliating and exhausting.

I clean the dishes, the house, I wash the clothes, I care for the children, I clean up after the dog. I cook three meals a day... and sometimes I feel as if I am punished... In my *patroa's* [female bosses] house, I have to eat after the family has finished. Sometimes my *patroa* asks me to make a special dish for the family, and I am not allowed to eat it. I must eat simple rice and beans. I do all this for what? You know how much I make? I get R\$150 a month [~70USD]. That is it. I generally spend about 50 on hygiene supplies and then the rest goes to buy water and food... So, I go without lots of necessities... I am only seventeen years old, but my body already hurts... But what can I do? I see no exit.

Considering her economic difficulties, Renata's mother, a land reform beneficiary who sold soft drinks and snacks from a cart downtown, strategically suggested that she pursue a romantic relationship with a male provider. Renata's mother made explicit what I had learned on the sertão—that female options for decently paid employment and economic independence were severely constricted. As a result, young women experienced acute pressures in the realm of romance and courtship. When presented with such limited options, one's youth and beauty were precious commodities, as corporeal capital could be leveraged into financial support (Archaumbalt 2016). The situation and stresses seemed more extreme in the interior of Pernambuco, when compared with Copavi, where agrarian collectivization supported gender parity in governance and earnings, and at the Fazenda, where both women and men pursued waged employment in town.

Renata rejected her mother's advice and cohabited with Debora, one of her neighbors in the settlement. Debora was not working at the time, and instead was studying agroecology at a regional public university. The couple's financial situation was rather precarious. Although they had lived together and loved each other for six years, their romantic relationship was not well accepted by others and sometimes generated disapproving comments, especially among older adults in the settlement. As Renata explained,

I feel a lot of prejudice and discrimination. People say really nasty things to my *companheira* sometimes. They say that she is so poor, she cannot afford to buy me clothes, put food on the table. My mother says I need to find a man who can support me, but I think this is stupid. I love my *companheira* and that is what matters, right?

Renata articulated a sense of marginalization within her family, community, and workplace. She characterized her life as “suffocated” and said she felt like it was “too hard sometimes.” In contrast, it is very significant that she felt “good” at Course A and believed MST-PE might help her to improve her lot in life: through professional militancy or a college scholarship. When I asked why she was interested in becoming a *dirigente*, she told me that leadership was synonymous with “respect and social responsibility.” Renata believed she had the necessary aptitudes and described herself as “friendly, caring, and social.” Unlike her present *dirigente*, Renata said that she would prioritize the inclusion of youth and the dissemination of information. In her mind, the current leader was overbearing and thus discouraged broader participation in the movement. Again, Renata’s aspirations were criticized by her mother.

My mother says I need to quit the MST, raise a family, get a good job, and find a husband. She tells me that the movement doesn’t work... She did not want me to come to Course A, but I did anyway, because I cannot give up on my dreams. I will finish this course and, God willing, I will do the next one.

Such descriptions of Course A’s teenagers and young adults do not suggest that they were particularly “rebellious” individuals; rather, they seemed ambitious, thoughtful, and earnestly desired to be part of a broader, collective project. They viewed the MST as a vehicle for autonomous growth and personal development—a means to obtain respect, dignity, and “become someone in life,” as I was often told. Similarly, Anne Mische (2001, 2008) also found that Brazilian youth activism is often as much about “personal mobility and achievement as it is about social change, whether this personal ‘movement’ is explicitly recognized or normatively suppressed” (Mische 2001: 137). Whereas many accounts of urban Brazilian youth suggest that roads to civic activity often begin in religious

organizations (Rizzini and Bush 2015, Dalsgard 2014), MST-PE provided institutional support for young people in a secular framework. This made it appeal to a segment of youngsters (LGBTQ, nonreligious youth, Candomblé practitioners) disaffected with other social formations in Pernambuco's land reform settlements, particularly the evangelical youth groups.

The MST's willingness to include sexually diverse persons in its ranks was a significant part of MST-PE's appeal to Dana and Renata. For example, Renata's relationship with Debora precluded her religious involvement. "I feel good at church sometimes, but I cannot be myself there. This is one reason why I like the MST, I feel good here [at the Center]. I can be myself and realize my potential." Similarly, Dana gave up on Semente's evangelical youth group for similar reasons. We first met in Brasília at the VI National Congress. Dana returned to Semente, enthusiastic about being part of the MST. After a month passed, as she did not have a formal position in the MST-PE, her excitement began to fade. Looking for some kind of collective activity, she started hanging out with the Seventh Day Adventist youth group. For a few weeks, she quit smoking and drinking and went to Bible study. Once a week, Dana donned a fluorescent green t-shirt and walked with six other youngsters through the settlement with a loudspeaker, broadcasting God's message. Then, she dropped out. I asked Dana about her sudden change of heart. "I tried. I really tried, but I just couldn't do it. They won't accept me there, because, you know, I'm a lesbian." Just then, another young man, Silvio, interrupted her. "You aren't a lesbian, Dana. *Você come qualquer um*. You screw anyone." Dana did not correct him and dropped the subject.

DISCIPLINE AND EMPOWERMENT?

Most young people told me they felt valued and valorized in MST-PE spaces, and while in-residence at the Center, they were to subject themselves to movement discipline. Like their counterparts across Brazil, they often described the regiment (as described below) as “*bastante rígido*, very rigid.” They understood that they were being observed and evaluated by elders and superiors. How should we approach “discipline” in such a context?²³ Randolph Hohle discusses discipline in reform-based social movements, and argues that instead of representing an attempt to separate and contain various populations such movements strive to govern behavior in such a way that promotes unity and positive interpersonal relations among diverse actors, and, by extension, produces “new forms of civic inclusion” when taken into the public domain (Hohle 2009: 286). How might this apply to discipline at Course A? Clearly, considering the high rates of attrition (Course A began with sixty recruits, and dwindles to eighteen—nine females and nine males—by graduation),²⁴ let’s examine the daily routine.

The first day at the Center, we gathered for *formatura* (morning political rituals), outdoors, under a waving MST flag. Assembled in three, single-file lines, recruits answered to the coordinator, Zé (23/m). A recent graduate of Course A, Zé divided the recruits into three *núcleos de base* (NBs small, mixed-gender groups) named for revolutionary martyrs. The NBs were to integrate individuals into the routine and structure of collective governance, rooted in study, ritual performances, and chores. Dancing and drinking should have been confined

²³ Foucault’s (1977) best description on this subject comes from his chapter, “Panopticism,” in *Discipline and Punish*.

²⁴ The equal gender ratio of Course A was striking when compared with those I observed in Southern Brazil, where young women were generally outnumbered 2:1, or higher. It remains unclear whether such ratios reflected preoccupation with unplanned pregnancy (which was very common in MST courses nationally), or whether it was more accidental.

to *noites culturais* on the weekends. Participation in all activities was mandatory and individuals were expected to demonstrate their respect for the rules, comrades, leaders, and MST symbolism. Course A was designed to be a microcosm of the movement at-large, hierarchically organized with the base or *participantes* (grassroots members), *militantes* (militants, full-time activists), *dirigentes* (leaders), and the *coordenação* (state and national leaders of MST-PE). Immersed in the insulated milieu of Course A, recruits were well aware that they lacked *formação política* and leadership responsibilities. They understood that satisfactory participation could result in additional opportunities—to coordinate Course A or attend courses at the MST's National School in São Paulo. While in attendance, they were to attune themselves to the collective rhythms of the institution and demonstrate a capacity for discipline and self-control. Although most of their time was spent sitting in classrooms and completing menial tasks, leaders asked them to view such activities as instrumental, a valuable and valued dimension of a much greater project for socialist transformation.

Figure IV. Weekday Schedule at Course A	
6:00 a.m.	Assigned NB prepares breakfast (coffee, tea, bread)
6:30-7:00	Breakfast (Dining Hall)
7:00-7:30	Assigned NB organizes breakfast dishes, dining hall, others complete morning chores
7:30-8:00	<i>Formatura</i> : NBs collectively gather to sing MST hymn, <i>mística</i> , passing of information, <i>gritos de ordem</i> .
8:00- 10:30	Class
10:30-10:45	Coffee break, snack
10:45-12:00	Class
12:00-1:00	Lunch served, NB cleans up
1:00-2:00	Break/rest/chores
2:00-3:45	Class
3:45-4:00	Coffee break, snack
4:00-5:30	Class
5:30-6:00	NB assists with dinner preparations
6:15-7:30	Dinner served, NB cleans up
7:30-9:00	Quiet study, free time
10:00-11:00	Lights out.

STUDIOUS CITIZENS

Let us now turn to the ways Course A attempted to modify youngsters' behavior in specific ways, clearly visible in the emphasis on study. In Brazil, education is strongly associated with politeness, manners, and refinement (O'Dougherty 2002). The MST aims to appropriate education for more emancipatory ends as members are expected to continue to study throughout their lives—to become literate, attend technical school, college, and even graduate school. Although many of the courses they completed did not readily transfer into increased earning power, these were treasured opportunities for youngsters.

The MST's pedagogical approach has been described as necessary to promoting "critical consciousness" amongst the rank-and-file (Bogo 2003a; Firmiano 2009; Tarlau 2016), but to what extent was this actually happening during this preliminary course for potential militants? During Course A, *some* of our days were spent in classes where activists from nearby cities gave lectures about the history of Brazilian social struggles. Theoretically, Course A's curriculum sought to help individuals understand their role as historic agents, heirs to a heroic lineage of struggle for land and dignity, from Zumbi of Palmares to the Peasant Leagues. All of these episodes, as one of our educators explained, "were alternatives for the poor people who had very few options... The MST is just a recent incarnation of this pattern." When I asked youth if they knew about these struggles before the course, some told me that this was very different from what they learned in public school.

That being said, sometimes teaching posed challenges. One example, from a class session, stands out. After giving a brief introduction to neoliberal politics and economics, our militant-educator, Marco, screened a film about Margaret Thatcher, *The Iron Lady* (2011). He hoped that the youth would connect the film with the themes he outlined in his lecture, specifically: the dismantling of public welfare programs and state-led suppression of union activities. Instead, young women of Course A wanted to talk about gender and familial dynamics and, to Marco's dismay, *sympathized with Margaret Thatcher*. When asked for her thoughts, Renata remarked that it must have been difficult for Thatcher, as she had to adopt new manners of speaking and dressing to ascend the ranks in politics. Layla also felt sorry for her, as the quest for political power resulted in familial alienation, alcoholism, and abandonment in old age. Marco had difficulty steering the group back to unionism and cuts to social spending, and became so frustrated that he excused them for a short break. Marco

and I then reflected on what had just transpired. He complained that they had watched the film as they would “a soap opera.” They were unable to break with the habits of “circular thinking” promoted by mainstream media exposure. As he put it:

The youth lack any critical conscience whatsoever... They just watch the *novelas*, their minds have been conditioned by the mass media. They have limited literacy. They are addicted to drugs and alcohol... So, it is difficult but important to bring them here. Here we try to help them concentrate.

Indeed, it seemed that beyond the formal rationale of Course A, to teach youth to become historic agents, the instructor thought it was more immediately important that the recruits master basic classroom skills. After all, repeated interruptions and absences were disruptive and distracting. As a result, he hoped that students would sit still, remain attentive, and demonstrate respect for others. Repetitive performances conveyed a command of the “personal ethics of good citizenship” (Hohle 2009) that deliberately broke with stereotypes of an uneducated, uncivilized, unsophisticated *matuto* (hillbilly).

Regardless of such expectations, attendance and absenteeism—by both instructors and students—was a problem. There were times that no one came to teach the classes at all, likely the result of technical and logistical problems. On such occasions, there was little to do aside from chores. Extraordinarily bored, Daniel begged me to teach them “something, anything.” Daniel’s thirst for knowledge was unusual, however. When an instructor was available, most of the younger students did not wish to attend classes—of the eighteen recruits, less than half participated. As Zé lacked disciplinary mechanisms to enforce the regimen, he complained, “The youth just lay around their dormitories, trying to access the Facebook, drinking *cachaça*! We cannot get them to go to classes! This is hard!”

It seemed clear that course content and the militant's didactic pedagogical style did not always appeal to the youths' intrinsic learning motivations. Most of the students interviewed resented the emphasis on "study" instead of more participatory activities. Sometimes they abruptly left in the middle of a lecture, or asked me to interview them. Dana felt the schedule was "too *puxado* [busy, hard], *né?*" Layla agreed, and reaffirmed a sentiment I had heard dozens of times, from youth throughout Brazil.

The discourse is dated... It is as if they are stuck in 1989 or something. They always want to talk about the military dictatorship, and I don't want to hear about it. I have no interest in that time. I cannot and do not identify with it at all.

Layla's words are reminiscent of Hirsch's discussion of "post memory," indicative of "an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture" suggestive of "a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but... at a generational remove" (Hirsch 2011: 347). According to this reasoning, it is possible that young people at the Center resented exposure "overwhelming inherited memories." Their own stories and experiences seemed to have been overshadowed by those of prior generations (Hirsch 2011: 347). This sentiment was conveyed by Julia (18/f), who said, "I hate history... It is so boring... All we do is study and read. I wish we had time to come up with our own ideas, to make it fun or something." I asked if she had enjoyed any of her classes.

Not really the classes, but I have really liked coming here. What I like best of all is getting to know the others, making friends, going to the São João parties. The parties have been spectacular!

On the whole, the prevailing pattern among the students I got to know at the Center was

boredom, punctured by occasional seriousness. Indeed, few took their responsibilities at Course A to heart. For example, Daniel contrasted his life at home with his “time in the MST” according to the latter’s emphasis on study. Back on the sertão, impoverishment and young people’s need to contribute to household income resulted in low-educational attainment. In general, rural youth and their kin were acutely aware of the importance of secondary and post-secondary education in strategies to successfully transition to off-farm employment. Daniel understood that Course A was an audition of sorts, a demonstration of his seriousness as a student, and therefore of his deserving future opportunities. The fact that he personally knew others who studied pedagogy, agronomy, engineering, journalism, and medicine led him to believe that MST-PE monopolized mechanisms to “become someone in life,” and should be taken seriously. Indeed, on the occasions when important MST-PE leaders came to the Center, the youth tended to be on their best behavior.

DISRUPTING MACHISMO?

Struggles regarding gender relations have been implicated in MST organizing from the very beginning (Branford and Rocha 2002: 23). In place of the traditional division of labor at home in the countryside, Course A involved the collective redistribution of tasks whereby daily routines recreated domesticity in a more gender-neutral way. Zé took care to remind the recruits that all had housework responsibilities. “Here in the Center, you cannot be a *machista* [sexist]. Everyone here must help maintain the space—do chores, wash dishes, and clothes. Understand?” It was thought that such a routine could disrupt machismo as it encouraged new, egalitarian social relationships (Leite and Dimenstein 2012). With strong parallels in Cuban revolutionary education, as described by educational anthropologist Denise Blum (2011), Course A included strong emphasis on moral incentives, a value-laden

curriculum, and manual labor. For Blum, such a “moralization of work” can be understood as a “Cuban revolutionary variant of the Protestant work ethic, stripped of its overtones of salvation by means of privatization” (Fagen 1969, cited in Blum 2011: 9).

Regardless of leaders’ intentions, conflicts over housework at Course A came to the fore. Ideals of gender equality often failed to materialize in practice. Young women tended to fill the gaps left by their male comrades. Eliane (25/f), who lived full-time at the Center explained,

The boys are always ready to go if we have a soccer game or a party, but they suddenly disappear when its time to do chores... It was bad at the [MST’s National School in São Paulo] as well, where you have a bunch of Argentineans, Paraguayans, and the Haitians... The men would suddenly forget their Portuguese! [Laughs]. But what do you do? This is something we work on here. In the Northeast, men are very *machista*, they are raised that way... Clearly, the boys dislike having to do chores! They are used to the ways things are at home, where their mothers do everything... Course A is probably the first time they have had to do housework in their whole lives!

Fabio (15/m), for example, rejected egalitarian domestic arrangements and likened them melodramatically to “slavery.” Although his girlfriend Sara was pregnant and quite ill (and eventually required hospitalization), she doted on Fabio, serving meals in his dormitory, washing clothing and dishes, and taking on his shift in the kitchen rotation. Sara’s actions prompted disapproval from the female militants who lived on site, as the couple disrupted the regime of Course A. Gloria sighed:

My god. Sara has been so much drama since she got here! You know, getting pregnant during the first phase of the course, being so sick... The way she waits on Fabio, it is ridiculous. He did not even try to contact her when she was in the hospital! Beyond being bad for Sara, the relationship is a poor example for everyone.

In Gloria's view, Fabio was an uncaring and undeserving partner, but as Sara enabled such bad behavior she was also to blame. Gloria continued, "What an awful boy! All he cares about is his *vícios*, cigarettes and *cachaça*!" After a few weeks, Fabio ran out of spending money and stole cigarettes from the MST convenience store, a flagrant violation of rules against theft. Fabio refused to sit still in classes, was generally disruptive, and constantly talked over teachers and his classmates. While he was not officially expelled from Course A, both Fabio and Sara opted to leave before graduation. Sara explained their motives:

During the first phase of the course, we each got R\$60 [~30 USD] in spending money from [MST-PE]. This money was supposed to be for buying hygienic supplies, snacks, that sort of thing. But this time, [the leaders] forgot about us. We have no money here and we are going without necessities. It is not so bad for me, but Fabio has his addictions.

Fabio concurred, "If I have to be stuck here, without any money for cigarettes and *cachaça*, just doing chores all day, I would rather just go home." In short, Fabio did not do housework and often disrupted his comrades' studies. Sara was blamed for causing "drama" in the cohort. Eventually they left the Center of their own accord. MST-PE purchased their bus tickets back to Semente.

Fabio was particularly disruptive, an extreme case. However, when speaking with three former Course A participants back in Semente, I learned that young males often viewed cooking for large groups of people and scouring piles of dishes as thankless work. On the other hand, some young women thought full-time residence at the Center was a privilege, earned by successful completion of Course A and demonstration of an appropriate work ethic. These were sometimes coveted opportunities. This was certainly true for Dana. By the final weeks of Course A, she stopped attending lectures altogether and disappeared into the

kitchen. One could interpret her enthusiasm for cooking and cleaning as a demonstration of allegiance to comrades, the Center and, by extension, MST-PE. Yet, behind her ostensibly altruistic behaviors some self-interested motives were at play: she wanted to prove her potential value to the movement, to become entitled to free meals and full-time lodging at the Center. As Course A came to a close, Dana confided her intentions.

I think I want to live here, at the Center. I have been a very good worker and helped out a lot in the kitchen. If I stayed here, perhaps I could finish my studies. I want to ask [the MST-PE leader] if I can live and contribute here.

Dana envisaged her volunteerism as a path to independence that differed from predominant strategies employed by her female peers in the settlement, namely early cohabitation and marriage, and it nearly worked. A few days later, however, Dana approached me in tears.

I have terrible news. I cannot stay here anymore. Last night, it was about 2:00 a.m., and I went to the men's dormitory to borrow a cigarette from Ademar... One of the older men heard me, and was very angry. He started a fight. Today, [MST-PE's coordinator] told me that I cannot stay... It isn't fair is it?

I sympathized with Dana's predicament. Her dreams of leaving a dysfunctional home life behind were abruptly foreclosed due to a relatively minor infraction. Over the last days at Course A, despite her disappointment, Dana continued to labor ceaselessly alongside her kitchen comrades. "Maybe this will convince [the MST-PE leader] that I can be a good militant one day," she explained.

LOOKING THE PART: ASPIRATIONAL AESTHETICS

As we have seen, attempts to inculcate good study habits and volunteerism among the recruits sometimes led to conflicts between course coordinators and young people. Tensions

also surfaced regarding the physical appearances of potential militants. The MST's preoccupation with such matters was clearly communicated in *Arquiteto dos Sonhos* (Bogob 2003b), a publication used in political training courses. It is a fictional depiction of a hypothetical training session between an MST leader and his followers. In a tract entitled, "Care for Aesthetics," the leader dispensed advice on personal style.

Some people have a taste for misery, walk around in torn clothes and worn out shoes. This was never synonymous with militancy: who comports in this way and likes it can be certain that they belong to another world and not ours. It is obligatory that *dirigentes* [leaders] and *militantes* [militants] present themselves as well-dressed in front of the masses, avoiding, however, luxury and indecency (Bogob 2003: 120).

This fits with findings documented elsewhere in the literature on Brazil (Burdick 1998; Edmonds 2010), as vanity or self-care is often considered a moral virtue and indicative of mental and physical wellbeing. Still, such an emphasis on appearances suggested a degree of superficiality that might surprise activist sensibilities in the global North. After all, the MST represents the rural poor!²⁵

Generally speaking, young recruits and their adult leaders did not view aspirational aesthetics to be in contradiction with the MST's socialist values and principles. For example, Layla said:

Certainly, I'm *vaidosa* [vain], yes! I am going to take care of myself and like to look good! We [in the MST] may be socialists, but this doesn't mean we are not going to drive cars, have cell phones, and use make-up. Why shouldn't we have access to these things?

²⁵ I was reminded of a question, raised long ago by the progressive Austrian psychologist Wilhem Reich (1934). "It is very hard to say, for example, whether love of pretty clothes, make-up, etc., which today is a serious impediment to revolutionary thinking and feeling in women, might not have a reverse role to play. It is unlikely that a revolutionary organization will ever succeed in persuading the mass of women to adopt the austere appearance of Communist women. A way has to be found between bourgeois glamour and Communist asceticism, satisfying both the demands of the class struggle and the natural healthy vanity of women. Our political leaders should not dismiss such matters as being unworthy of their attention" (Reich 1934 [1971]).

Layla insisted that her political orientation should not be confused with a wholesale rejection of consumer pleasures or the beauty industry in particular. She did not view it as a contradiction for pledged socialists to paint their nails, arrange their hair, and wear make-up. It was something that made her “look” and “feel” good. This resonates with Daniel Miller’s discussion of female fashion in Trinidad, which suggests that care for one’s visual appearance connotes the upward aspirations of the multiply marginal. He writes:

A person who spends time, money, taste, and attention in creating a look... can be properly discovered in their appearance. Because now one is judging what they have done, not what they happen to look like originally. We are judging them by their labour, not their birth. *One aspires by the act of self-cultivation* (emphasis added, Miller 2010: 20-21).

Let’s consider appearance standards within the MST in general, and in Course A in particular. Within the movement, members generally dressed casually, in board shorts, t-shirts, and flip-flops. In contrast, MST militants adopted more formal, professional styles. Despite the often suffocating heat and the pragmatic challenges of remaining presentable in the midst of mobilization, they dressed in clean MST t-shirts or cotton button-ups, long pants, and close-toed shoes. At Course A, recruits did not have a specific uniform to wear each day, but were expected to dress for the classroom—in pants and clean shirts. Modest cotton floral dresses and artisanal leather sandals were even sold on-site. Reminiscent of Civil Rights activists who deliberately chose to wear their “Sunday best” during desegregation protests (Ford 2013), MST-PE militants were asked to “look the part” as respectable intermediaries between peasant producers and their many patrons (politicians, business partners, consumers, government agencies). I was led to wonder: what, beyond an artifice to communicate unity and discipline amongst the diverse cadre, was the significance of this *sem terra* uniform to youth? How did young people’s aesthetics align or depart from

those of MST-PE leadership?

The young women of Course A learned about these often tacit rules firsthand, when criticized for wearing shorts or clothing that was considered too revealing for a formal, mixed-gender group. On a hot afternoon, Renata found herself singled out by a female instructor who reprimanded her publicly in front of her peers. “You certainly seem to love to show off your legs, don’t you? Shorts are not appropriate here. You are in a classroom, not a dance club.” Renata promptly left the room to change her clothes, thus missing out on the lesson.

In another instance, Mia (19/f) also attracted scrutiny due to her “inappropriate” dress and “comportment.” Mia was a single mother of two and a land occupier on the coast of Pernambuco with a particularly painful biography. As a young woman, she lived on the streets of João Pessoa (a capitol city), was involved in drugs and sex work, and described her integration into MST-PE as a beacon of hope in an otherwise bleak life. Like her comrades, Mia hoped that movement participation might translate into diverse opportunities, specifically homeownership and higher education. Then, during an MST-sponsored party, on the eve of graduation, Mia wore a very typical outfit in Northeastern Brazil: high heels, tiny shorts, and red transparent blouse (which revealed her fluorescent bra). The next day, Mia was taken by surprise when the leader of MST-PE called her name during Course A’s formal evaluation. He spoke matter-of-factly.

Mia, you need to lay off the *cachaça*, you were very drunk last night. Also, you need to care more for your appearance. You cannot dress like that, it gives men the wrong idea, understand? So this means that for now, we [of MST-PE] cannot use you.

Mia's cheeks burned red with embarrassment. I doubt she had fully understood that her choices in clothing and drinking could be so consequential. After all, during the party, everyone seemed to be having fun. *Cachaça* flowed (it was sold by activists), meats were roasted, and she danced with several partners. Like Dana, Mia had attracted the wrong sort of attention from the leader. As a result, her dreams of higher education or working for MST-PE were suspended. These examples highlight gendered forms of pressure within the movement. Again, "women, more than men, are subjected to subtle rules of inclusion and exclusion" (Viladrich 2007: 112).

MST leadership has long been aware of *machismo* within its ranks, as "after all, the movement is not an island within society" (Flynn 2010: 189). Be that as it may, I found it surprising that MST leadership was not more cognizant of the gendered dimensions of *comportamento* standards. The cases of Dana and Mia made such tacit norms explicit. To be eligible for militancy young women were expected to dress decently, modestly, and refrain from excessive alcohol consumption. Obviously, there were gendered ideologies at play that worked at cross-purposes with organizational values of female participation.

Why might leadership of MST-PE be so preoccupied with the appearance and clothing choices of young recruits? Part of the issue might relate to matters of class, specifically the desire to project an image of upward social mobility through involvement in collective action. After all, pejorative rural stereotypes—a rich topic of discussion in its own right—

abound in Brazilian popular culture.²⁶ Although males and females were encouraged to dress the part, young women experienced more pressure in this regard. This perhaps should not be surprising, given the ongoing salience of Brazilian patriarchy. Even as the MST as discursively paid attention to gender inequities, it “does not exist in isolation to Brazilian society and therefore it unfortunately replicates many of the tendencies and behaviors that have historically, been present in the rural communities from which it draws its members” (Flynn 2010: 190). For instance, I am reminded of a survey that aired on *Rede Globo* while I was living in the Semente settlement, that reported most Brazilians supported the following statements: women who wear clothing that shows their bodies deserve to be attacked; and if women knew how to comport themselves there would be fewer rapes.²⁷ My contacts in the settlement agreed. Indeed, as young militants were quick to emphasize, the MST is not isolated from Brazilian society at large.

Young people criticized the hypocrisy of the movement’s political culture, particularly the gap between discourses of gender parity and female empowerment, and the sexualized status of women. For example, Daniel reflected:

Yes, [in the MST] clothing is a big deal, but mostly with the girls. For example, if a girl goes to an occupation camp wearing a tiny skirt, she might be accused of causing intrigue... the other women might think she is trying to steal their husband’s attention and then it becomes a scandal of sorts... Usually, it is the women who say something and start a fight. But why is it like this? It is only skin!

²⁶ For example, annually rural folk are celebrated in Brazilian *Festas Juninas* (June Parties), where partygoers parody country life with square dances (*quadrilhas*), dramatic reenactments of a ‘shot-gun’ wedding, the abundant consumption of alcohol and corn-based dishes, and the use of grammatically incorrect Portuguese. They don “rural” costumes with plaid patterns, frayed straw hats, and overalls. Faces are painted with freckles and grotesque facial hair, and teeth are blacked out. Such costumes play on common notions of country folk as uneducated, poor, ragged, and contrary to a “modern” aesthetic. Such representations suggest a negative, and often parodic, perception of rural places and peoples in the Brazilian cultural imagination.

²⁷ Ramalhoso, W. (3/27/2014) “[Maioria diz que mulher com roupa curta ‘merece’ ser atacada, diz Ipea](#)” UOL Notícias.

Women's appearances and bodies mattered very much. I am reminded of Lidia's (30/f) reflections on her militant experiences over the years.

The MST is a sexist organization. We have been around for thirty years and have still not figured out how to deal with this issue of gender. It's as if the men don't like to see you grow, to get ahead. The men are always throwing little stones at you... When I've moved up and received a new task, some have accused me of having sexual relationships with a [leader], and it's not true! Maybe I've kissed a few, because a kiss on the mouth is always delicious, but I would never use sex that way. Other women certainly do, but not me.

Again, we see how female ambition might incite collective suspicions, specifically of instrumentally using one's sexuality for personal gain (da Silva 2003; Constable 2009). This is troubling because, as this dissertation has made clear, personal and political ambitions clearly intermingle in the activism and aspirations of rural youth. It is telling that although much went wrong during Course A (including shortages of food, medicine, teachers, electricity, water, internet; absenteeism; attrition; drunkenness, and so on), only Dana and Mia were excluded from assuming organizational tasks. All, however, were eligible for graduation, as "the MST had no desire to exclude anyone." Such a contradictory stance perhaps makes sense considering the high rates of attrition, as the cohort began with some sixty recruits but dwindled to sixteen by graduation. While exclusivity might have been appealing to some youngsters, recruitment presented an ongoing problem for MST-PE.

CONCLUSION

Initially, I found Course A to be profoundly ambiguous. It was plagued with organizational and interpersonal crises: most recruits gave up, others only nominally participated, and two of the most eager candidates were excluded for minor gendered infractions. Although I was

aware that this was the first step in their militant careers, I was unsure as to what the next steps in the organization might entail for the graduates. I spoke with Lenilda (21/f), of the Sector of Formação. According to her, “Most of the graduates will return back to their settlements and encampments with tasks, but they will most likely encounter real difficulties participating in the MST.” She continued,

Although the MST values collective decision-making and the division of tasks, we have a major problem with leaders sharing responsibilities, assignments, and information. Many of the leaders do not. They monopolize, and this hurts youth participation... So, in fact, what we are asking of the youth is to remember what they learned here—to study, use our symbols, to become more conscious, not to believe what they hear about us in the media, to incorporate our values, like mutual respect for others, that sort of thing. Then, if we need them in the future, we will call and invite them again.

Lenilda’s frankness caught me by surprise. She plainly articulated a practical challenge facing the movement: the gap between values of collective decision-making and mass struggle on the one hand, and, on the other, and the reality of concentrated leadership. Indeed, one must be “called” to participate in MST-PE. I was often told that MST-PE’s strategy was on the cultivation of “quality” participants, rather than “quantity.” Lenilda admitted to the generational patterns of exclusion within the MST, but did not offer any solutions. After all, she was one of the lucky ones and had leveraged militancy into courses at the MST’s National School in São Paulo, a small living stipend, and independent residence in Caruaru. All of this came at great personal cost, and she often complained of homesickness, lacking autonomy, and chronic rounds of lengthy meetings at the state headquarters. In 2015, she left MST-PE militancy to return home and start a family.

While one might ask why I have included this story in this dissertation, I have chosen to do so as it helps us to appreciate some of the internal complexities and challenges involved in

the MST's progressive politics. Firstly, young people understood political training courses to be a mechanism with which to break with their agrarian livelihoods, via higher education and off-farm employment, most useful for their individualized projects of upward social mobility. Secondly, to compete for opportunities, they had to comport themselves in ways that aligned with conservative notions of respectability—for instance, by demonstrating a proper work ethic, studious demeanor, and a modest personal appearance. Such disciplinary norms and standards tacitly discouraged female participation in less-than anticipated ways, as illustrated by the cases of Mia, Renata, and Dana. This is troubling considering that they understood MST-PE to be a primary provider of scarce opportunities to “become someone in life,” given the significant challenges like violence, unemployment, and impoverishment facing rural girls and women. Thirdly, there was a palpable tension between didactic pedagogical methods and young people's learning styles and present concerns in Course A. Although the MST has taken much inspiration from Paulo Freire (2005), the curriculum did not strongly depart from the “banking model” he so strongly denounced. Therefore, this account has demonstrated the practical challenges of molding rural youth into conformance with idealized notions of citizenship deemed necessary for professionalized militancy. This was but the first in a long series of courses to guarantee youth inclusion in the MST. Further research might examine the variety of political training courses offered by the MST, and help to provide a deeper, processual analysis of what militancy training entails over time.

Although Course A was conflictual and contradictory, I do not wish to suggest that institutionalized political training has no place. It is commendable that MST-PE made efforts to include rural youth into its ranks, and offered them opportunities to see the world outside of their settlements and encampments. Clearly, such experiences contribute to the expansion

of horizons and fuel aspirational imaginaries. However, in remaining honest to portaying the lived experiences of youth, I have suggested that social movement “discipline” may be profoundly ambiguous: both empowering and disempowering, productive of new forms of social inclusion and unexpected exclusions.

CHAPTER 7: ON STRENGTHS AND LIMITS

The young, free to act on their own initiative, can lead their elders in the direction of the unknown... The children, the young, must ask the questions that we would never think to ask, but enough trust must be re-established so that the elders will be permitted to work with them on the answers.
– Margaret Mead, *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*, 1964



2015. Aline at home in land reform settlement, Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo.

Over its thirty-three year history, the MST has become an iconic example of resistance to neoliberalism and a force for land justice in rural Brazil. From its origins in the late 1970s and 1980s, it has spread across national territory by occupying public and private farmland, setting up and maintaining occupation camps, and above all, by demanding state recognition. In so doing, the MST has consistently questioned predominant patterns of rural development and fought to extend tangible benefits of citizenship in traditionally neglected places. Its activists and leaders have created a dynamic and innovative national social movement with global linkages and influence. The MST's accomplishments have rightfully attracted significant attention from academics and activists worldwide. Although much has been written on the movement's politics of redistribution, less ethnographic attention has been paid to the experiences and subjectivities of youth affiliated with the MST, whether in

times of mobilization or in the everyday life in rural settlements. This gap is regrettable given increasingly regressive, authoritarian, and exclusionary national policies that are deepening inequalities and unraveling social protections in Brazil. In this context, ethnographic analysis of how political alternatives are generated and sustained, especially by youth, is crucial to theorizing and emancipatory political projects.

YOUTH AND AGRARIAN CHANGE

The chapters in this dissertation contribute to recent theoretical literatures on rural youth (Katz 1998; Bastian 2001; Mill 2001; Green 2003; Smith 2008; Gray 2009; Jeffrey 2010; Bossenbroek et al. 2015; White 2015; McCune et al. 2017). While classic studies of youth focus on the urban sphere and tend to zero in on one single place and case (Hall and Jefferson 1975; Cohen 1977; Bucholtz 2003; Brake 2003; Fredericksen 2013; Mendoza-Denton & Boum 2015; Cohen 2017), I have tried to provide a glimpse of the practices, creations, and aspirations of rural youth and bring attention to the plurality of their experiences and contexts even within the same social movement.

That being said, a few generalizations can be made. The young people I got to know were keenly aware how their family's lives and circumstances had been influenced by their participation in the MST. Many explained that their parents' entrance into the movement stemmed from a *lack of choices*—they were poor, landless, unemployed, had little education, and working the land was all they knew. Through the agrarian reform program, the first generation obtained secure tenure, food, and employment. As a result, their children had better access to education, health care, sanitation, and were materially better off. But it

wasn't enough. As they came of age, young adults of the second generation wanted to exercise agency in the realms of work, education, leisure, consumption, and romance. They pushed back against the limits they experienced at home, at work, in the movement, and in Brazilian society more broadly.

Youth frustration didn't automatically result in wholesale abandonment of the countryside or the MST. This dissertation has indicated that many rural youths maintained strong attachments to the countryside and articulated earnest desires to "remain... or re-become rural" (McNee 2011). However, they often confronted significant barriers to doing so. Some of their challenges were structural: declining rates of land expropriation, lack of credit, infrastructure problems, and the gradual divestment in the federal agrarian reform program. Others were more intimate, as young women and men struggled with patriarchal and gerontocratic familial dynamics. Where conditions at home did not foster the personal autonomy of youth, tendencies towards outmigration (on a short- or long-term basis) were more pronounced. Such trends were also prominent in settlements where state neglect resulted in infrastructural problems, such as water access. Yet, even in dire circumstances, young people did not always view cities as places of opportunity. While some left the countryside apparently for good, others placed themselves on the frontlines for land redistribution, building shacks of discarded construction materials in occupation camps and, in so doing, refusing to give up on their dreams for agrarian alternatives, even in increasingly difficult circumstances.

Thus, this dissertation counters certain suggestions that land reform is an anachronistic public policy out of step with contemporary realities in Brazilian agriculture (Martins 2000;

Rosenfield 2006; Navarro 2010). It suggests that with adequate government investment and ongoing technical support, MST communities may offer a significant alternative to rural outmigration, by appealing to the shifting sensibilities of the second generation. In this connection, agrarian collectivization has an important role to play in the future of MST farming. Although early collectivization efforts have been described as traumatic and unattractive (Schimanski 1998; Branford and Rocha 2002; Wolford 2010; Flynn 2010), this study argues that such arrangements provide a host of “economic and non-economic benefits” (Gilbert 2015) for young people, and improve the present and future livability of the Brazilian countryside. In particular, I have argued here that collective land tenure, wage labor, and communal governance fostered conditions that disrupted rural patriarchy and empowered youth, whether or not they were part of heteronormative nuclear families. This point may be more critical than is generally assumed for the future of the movement, as many of the young women and men I got to know in the MST were consciously delaying or rejecting traditional marriage and family formation, and did not intend to reproduce the sexual division of labor typical of Brazilian rural households. In light of this finding, it may not be too much of a stretch to infer that different forms of collective agriculture, in Brazil, and perhaps elsewhere as well, may help promote a productive re-imagination of rurality, with positive impacts on youth retention in the countryside. Bringing scholarly attention to such innovative examples is important, as the future of food and farming depends on the willingness of youth to engage in agriculture as a cultural way of life, just as much as on their ability to obtain land, credit, technical assistance, and productive assets (White 2012; 2015). Collectivization, therefore, provides us with an alternative scenario to the supposedly inevitable separation of young people from farming.

Future research on this matter should, in my view, attend to the consequences of the state's further abandonment of the land reform program, and the ways in which rural youth and their families respond to increasingly hostile political and economic conditions. For example, given current plans to restructure and downsize Brazilian agrarian reform, how do young farmers and their families socially respond to threats? To what extent does residence in a movement-established occupation camp provide young families with a measure of security in the context of profound crises in housing, employment, and nutritional security?

YOUTH AND ACTIVISM

If anything, examining the MST teaches us that engendering significant social and structural change in Brazil takes intense collective effort and a long time. As I conducted my research, what puzzled me most was why young people wanted to participate at all. As my dissertation makes clear, MST activism is not easy. Riding on a bus for four days can be pretty miserable. Marching 47 kilometers to São Paulo city is exhausting. Being beaten up by military police is terrifying. Living without clean water and adequate sanitation is dangerous. At times it seemed to be high-risk game with few rewards. These questions were even more relevant perhaps, at the time of my research, because, before Brazil's horrible political and economic crises had set in: unemployment was at historic lows, Brazilians of all social classes had expanded access to higher education, and land expropriation had virtually stopped. This made me wonder: Why on earth would young people get involved, or stake their futures on this social movement? Didn't they have options elsewhere? Furthermore, given the internal ambiguities and contradictions within the MST, why did they identify with it? And why were some seemingly unable to envision their lives outside of the MST? I have struggled with

these questions—and they've been forced to think of youth subjectivity, citizenship, and agency in new ways.

I have documented the movement's careful efforts to sustain the *sem terra* identity and subjectivity across the generations, which is significant in shedding light on the microprocesses and micropolitics of intergenerational organizing. For example, this dissertation began with a description of the MST's III National Youth Assembly, held during the VI National Congress in Brasília. Leaders were careful to tell second-generation members that they were valued and valorized within the organization. In this way, this dissertation supports recent scholarship that indicates that political socialization is a lifelong process with intergenerational connections (Nolas et al. 2017: 6-7) and demonstrates how youth activism cuts across variously connected “mind-body-environment assemblages,” and is simultaneously “public, private, personal, and political” (Ibid).

This brings us to another set of insights at the heart of this study. As MST leadership sought to embrace and mobilize youth as a symbolic and oppositional category, youths took advantage of this opening in ways unimagined by their elders to struggle for space and power within the movement (de Castro 2008: 239). Thus, as they participated in MST-organized events (marches, occupation camps, youth retreats, courses, parties) rural youth were exposed to the movement's political culture; they also put their bodies on the line and discovered within themselves the capacity to transcend the quotidian limits and constraints they experienced both in the countryside and *in the movement*. MST discourses of egalitarianism, collectivity, and social transformation resonated strongly with young people's aspirations for an alternative society and nourished anti-structural imaginaries. Testing the

bounds of acceptable conduct within the MST, they appropriated movement discourses to bolster their own emergent socialist youth subculture, taking back their bodies and using them as vehicles for transcendence and joy. In short, through active participation, the MST *became their social movement too*, in ways unanticipated by the first generation. Engagement in the movement, however, inevitably exposed them to the “contradictions and ambiguities” (Rubin 2017) involved in the MST—as all movements are filled with such ambiguities.

Given their growing sense of potentiality, youth showed themselves willing to articulate deeply felt critiques about age, gender, race, and sexuality asymmetries within the movement, to challenge the movement from within, and thus to be a force that may help the MST to become even more transformative and democratic in the future. If they can carve out and secure the articulatory space, *sem terra* youth may just be able to make fundamental changes to deepen democracy within the movement. Considering the organizing taking place on the national level of the MST regarding these themes, future research might examine how such initiatives translate, or fail to translate, into practices and understandings at a local levels. Such a study would help the MST organizationally respond to challenges promoting racial, ethnic, and sexual diversity and combating rural patriarchy.

The MST continues to inspire hope, determination, and resistance in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Despite the internal and external challenges facing the movement, the MST, and the individuals who comprise it, have much to teach us. The MST is highly organized and its members are extremely committed. It has captivated the hearts, bodies, and souls of thousands of militants who make tremendous sacrifices in the name of land justice causes—and the need is stark! The fact that, against long odds, large numbers of young people across

Brazil continue to identify with the movement and its mission gives us reason to hope for a better future. By illuminating the continuing appeal—again, against long odds—of the MST to young people, this dissertation sheds light on the difficult and important work of sustaining of emancipatory political projects in Latin America—and, by extension, in other parts of the world as well (Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Lee 2016; Negrón-Gonzales 2015; Kang 2017). Even though the MST is currently facing an extraordinarily unfavorable conjuncture, these remain dialectically potent times, during which a variety of futures are being articulated and enacted. It is my hope that new generations of activists transform the MST, make it their own, and help it to overcome the barriers that limit the realization of their political and agrarian dreams. If this dissertation helps make audible even some of those dreams, it will have served its purpose.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramovay, Ricardo, Reginaldo Magalhaães and Mônica Schroder. 2008. "Social Movements Beyond the Iron Cage: Weak Ties in Territorial Development." *World Development*, 36: 2906–2920.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Regi_Magalhaes/publication/222818191_Social_Movements_Beyond_the_Iron_Cage_Weak_Ties_in_Territorial_Development/links/557602db08aeb6d8c01ae991.pdf
- Ahearn, Laura M. 2004. "Literacy, Power, and Agency: Love Letters and Development in Nepal." *Language Education*, 18 (4): 305-316.
- Akom, Antwi. A. 2011. "Black Emancipatory Action Research: Integrating a Theory of Structural Racialisation into Ethnographic and Participatory Action Research Methods." *Ethnography and Education*, 6 (1): 113-131.
- Alemán, Ana Delgado. 2009. *Towards Inclusive Environmental Governance: a Study of the Expert-Lay Interplay in a Brazilian Social Movement*. Doctoral Dissertation, Anthropology. Barcelona: University of Bergen.
- Allen, Andrea S. 2015. *Violence and Desire in Brazilian Lesbian Relationships*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Allen, Jafari. 2011. *¿Venceremos?: The Erotics of Black Self-making in Cuba*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Alves Filho, Aluizio. 2003. *As Metamorfoses do Jeca Tatu: A Questão da Identidade do Brasileiro em Monteiro Lobato*. São Paulo: Inverta.
- Amarel, Amadeu. 1955. *O Dialeto Caipira*. São Paulo: Anhembi.
- Américo, Elisama Bezerra. 2012. "Brock e Democracia: a produção do rock da banda Legião Urbana como forma de contestação no processo de transição política na década de 1980." Gaurabira: Universidade Estadual da Paraíba.
<http://dspace.bc.uepb.edu.br/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1527/1/PDF%20%20Elisama%20Bezerra%20Américo.pdf>
- Anderson, Mark D. 2008. "From Natural to National Disasters: Drought and the Brazilian Subject in Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões*." *Hispania*, 91 (3): 547-557.
- Anderson, Mark D. 2011. *Disaster Writing: The Cultural Politics of Catastrophe in Latin America*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.
- Ansell, Aaron. 2013. "The Vinegar Revolts and the Diverse Faces of Democracy in Brazil." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology website*. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/426-protesting-democracy-in-brazil>
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2011. "Cosmopolitanism from below: some ethical lessons from the slums of Mumbai." *The Salon*, 4. http://jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/salon-volume-4/6_Salon_Vol4_Appadurai.pdf
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2013. *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*. London & New York: Verso.

- Archambault, Julie Soleil. 2016. "Taking Love Seriously In Human-Plant Relations in Mozambique: Toward and Anthropology of Affective Encounters." *Cultural Anthropology*, 31 (2): 244-271.
- Arguelles, Claudia Chavez. 2016. "'Collaboration is like a Courtship: Patriarchal Violence and the Paradoxes of Engaged Research.'" Presented at the 115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis.
- Arons, Nicholas Gabriel. 2004. *Waiting for Rain: the Politics and Poetry of Drought in Northeastern Brazil*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Auyero, Javier. 2007. *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina: The Gray Zone of State Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Auyero, Javier. 2012. *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Balleti, Brenda. Tamara M. Johnson, and Wendy Wolford. 2008. "Late Mobilization: Transnational Peasant Networks and Grassroots Organizing in Brazil and South Africa." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 8 (2-3): 290-314.
- Barbosa, Francisco. J. 2004. "Disciplining a Generation: Sexuality, Gendered Violence, and Revolution in Nicaragua 1959-1979." Presented at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference: Las Vegas.
- Barker, Colin, Alan Johnson, and Michael Lavalette. 2001. *Leadership and Social Movements*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Barman, Roderick. 1994. *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852*. Berkeley: Stanford University Press.
- Beckham, Sue Bridwell. 2011. [1988]. "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space." In *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology, 2nd Edition*. Edited by Carol Delaney and Deborah Kaspin. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Benzi, Douglas. Z. 2014. *Cruzando cercas sonoras, ocupando a música: etnografia musical entre os Sem Terra*. Doctoral Dissertation, Ethnomusicology. Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.
- Berry, Maya. 2016. "When Help Isn't On the Way or Colonial Codes of Flesh or Black Women's Fieldwork." Presented at the 115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis.
- Betto, Frei. 2000. "Um brasil de homens e mulheres novos." In *As Tarefas Revolucionários da Juventude*. Translated by Ana Corbisier and Miguel Henrique Stédile. São Paulo: Expressão Popular.
- Bezerra, Martins and Furtado Velloso. 2014. "Índice e adaptabilidade a economia verde: avaliação da cana-de-açúcar na microrregião de Ribeirão Preto/SP." *Sustentabilidade em Debate, Brasília*. 5 (1).
- Blum, Denise. F. 2011. *Cuban youth and revolutionary values: Educating the new socialist citizen*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bogo, Ademar. 2003a. *O vigor da mística*. São Paulo: MST-Caderno da Cultura 2.
- Bogo, Ademar. 2003b. *Arquiteto dos sonhos*. São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular.

- Bogo, Ademar. 2007. "Ao Congresso, No. 200." *Cartas do Amor*. Setor de Formação Nacional – MST.
- Boito, Armando and Alfredo Saad-Filho. 2016. "State, State Institutions and Political Power in Brazil." *Latin American Perspectives*, 43 (2): 190-206.
- Bonilla, Yarimar, and Jonathan Rosa. 2015. "# Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States." *American Ethnologist* 42 (1): 4-17.
- Bossenbroek, Lisa, Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, and Margreet Zwarteveen. 2015. "Broken dreams? Youth experiences of agrarian change in Morocco's Saïss region." *Cahiers Agricultures*, 24 (6): 342-348.
- Boulos, Guilherme. 2014. *Por que ocupamos: uma introdução a luta dos sem-teto*, 2nd edição. São Paulo: Expressão Popular.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brake, Michael. 2003. *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Branford, Susan and Jan Rocha. 2002. *Cutting the wire: The story of the landless movement in Brazil*. London: Latin America Bureau.
- Bridge, Gavin. 2001. "Resource triumphalism: Global production networks and the extractive sector: governing resource-based development." *Journal of Economic Geography*, 8: 389-419.
- Brown, Gavin and Jenny Pickerill. 2009. "Space for emotion in the spaces of activism." *Emotion, Space, and Society*.
- Bucholtz, Mary. 2002. "Youth and cultural practice" *Annual Review of Anthropology*: 525-552.
- Burdick, John. 1993. *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Burdick, John. 1998. *Blessed Anastacia: Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Burdick, John. 2009. *Legacies of Liberation: The Progressive Catholic Church in Brazil at the Start of a New Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Burdick, John. 2013. "Brazil's June Days and their Aftermath: Tectonic Shifts in Brazilian Politics?" *Mobilizing Ideas*. <https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2013/09/04/brazils-june-days-and-their-aftermath-tectonic-shifts-in-brazilian-politics/>
- Butland, Gilbert. J. 1966. "Frontiers of settlement in South America." *Revista Geográfica*, 93-108.
- Caldeira, Rute. 2009. "The failed marriage between women and the Landless People's Movement (MST) in Brazil." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 10 (4): 237-

Cardinale, Silvia Sabina Buosi. 2014. *Assentados e moradores urbanos: um estudo sobre as representações sociais nas relações entre o bairro urbano 'Ribeirão Verde' e o assentamento rural 'Fazenda da Barra,' Ribeirão Preto—São Paulo*. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília.

Carter, Miguel. 2010. "Landless Rural Workers' Movement and Democracy in Brazil." http://landaction.org/IMG/pdf/Miguel_Carter_-_The_MST_and_Democracy_in_Brazil_1.pdf

Carter, Miguel. 2015. *Challenging social inequality: the Landless Rural Worker's Movement and agrarian reform in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Cassel, Amanda and Raj Patel. 2003. "Agricultural Trade Liberalization and Brazil's Rural Poor: Consolidating Inequality, Policy Brief No. .8." Oakland: Food First: Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Castleden, Heather, Theresa Garvin, and Huu-ay-aht First Nation. 2008. "Modifying Photovoice for Community-Based Participatory Indigenous Research." *Social Science and Medicine*, 66 (6): 1393-1405. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Theresa_Garvin/publication/5659450_Modifying_Photovoice_for_community-based_participatory_Indigenous_research/links/00b7d5265417632939000000.pdf

Cavalcante, Messais Soares. 2011. *Todos os nomes da cachaça*. São Paulo: Sá Editora.

Cavalcanti, Josefa Salete Barbosa et al. 2006. "Novas dinâmicas global/local: trabalho e gênero nos novos espaços de fruticultura no Nordeste do Brasil." In *Agricultura Familiar e Gênero: Práticas, Movimentos e Políticas Públicas*. Edited by Parry Scott and Rosineide Cordeiro. Recife: Editora Universitária da UFPE.

Chaddad, Fabio R. and Marcos S. Jank. 2006. "The Evolution of Agricultural Policies and Agribusiness Development in Brazil." *Choices*, 21 (2): 85-90. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fabio_Chaddad/publication/228617530_The_evolution_of_agricultural_policies_and_agribusiness_development_in_Brazil/links/09e41507c0f457446f000000.pdf

Chase, Jacquelyn. 2010. "The place of pluriactivity in Brazil's agrarian reform institutions." *Journal of Rural Studies*, 26, (1): 85-93.

Chaves, Christine de Alencar. [1999] 2003. *Festas da Política: Uma Etnografia da Modernidade no Sertão (Burtis/MG)*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará.

Chaves, Christine de Alencar. 2000. *A Marcha Nacional dos Sem Terra: Um Estudo Sobre a Fabricação do Social*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará. http://nuap.etc.br/homolog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/a_marcha_nacional_dos_sem_terra.pdf

Chayanov, Alexander. 1966. *The Theory of Peasant Economy*. Edited by D. Thorner, B. Kerlay, and R.E. F. Smith. Homewood: Richard D. Irwin.

Chiariello, Caio Luis and Farid Eid. 2016. "Dinâmica da gestão coletiva em uma cooperativa de reforma agrária do MST: Copavi." In *Questão Agrária, Cooperação e Agroecologia, Volume 2*. Edited by: Angelo Diogo Mazin, Henrique Novaes, João Henrique Pires, and Joice Aparecida Lopes. São Paulo: Outras Expressões.

Chicago Council, 2011. *Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies*. Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/GirlsGrowReportFinal_v9.pdf

- Clark, Alison J. 2004. "Maternity and Materiality: Becoming a Mother in Consumer Culture." In *Consuming Motherhood*. Edited by: Janelle S. Taylor, Linda L. Layne, and Danielle F. Wozniak. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Cohen, Cathy. J. 2004. "Deviance as resistance: A new research agenda for the study of Black politics." *Du Bois Review*, 1 (10): 27-45.
- Cohen, Stephen. 1972. *Moral panics and folk devils*. London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Cohen, Anjalee. 2017. "Youth Gangs, Violence, and Local Culture in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.
- Collins, Randall. 2008. *Interaction Ritual Chains: A Theory of Radical Microsociology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Collins, Randall. 2009. *Violence: A micro-sociological theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Comerford, John Cunha. 1999. *Fazendo a Luta: Sociabilidade, Falas, e Rituais na Construção de Organizações Camponesas*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumara.
- Cammarota, Julio. 2011. "A Sociohistorical Perspective for Participatory Action Research and Youth Ethnography in Social Justice Education." *A Companion to the Anthropology of Education*: 517-529.
- Castro, Elisa Guaraná de. 2008. "Juventud, generación y prácticas políticas: procesos de construcción de la categoría juventud rural como actor político." *Revista Argentina de Sociología*. 6 (11): 237-265.
<http://www.scielo.org.ar/pdf/ras/v6n11/v6n11a12.pdf>
- Coldwell, Ian. 2012. "Hail the modest witness: Masculinity in the ecological crisis of agriculture." *Journal of Sociology, The Australian Sociological Association*, 1-18.
- CONCRAB. 2004. "Novas formas de assentamentos de reforma agrária: a experiência da Comuna da Terra." *CADERNA de Cooperação Agrícola*, 15.
- Constable, Nicole. 2009. "The Commodification of Intimacy: Marriage Sex and Reproductive Labor." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 38: 49-64.
- Cordis, Shanya. 2016. "On Being Able: Reassembling Praxis in the Field in the Context of Racialized Gender Violence." Presented at the 115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. 1991. "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, 43 (6): 1241-99.
- Cuadros, Alex. 2016. *Brazillionaires: Wealth, Power, Decadence, and Hope in an American Country*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.
- Dalsgard, Anne Line, Mónica Franch, and Russell Parry Scott. 2008. "Dominant Ideas, Uncertain Lives: The Meaning of Youth in Recife." In *Youth and the City in the Global South*. Edited by: Karen Tranberg Hansen, et al. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Dalsgard, Anne L. 2014. "Standing Apart: On Time, Affect, and Discernment in Nordeste, Brazil," in *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by: Dalsgard, Anne L. et al. Philadelphia:

Temple University Press.

Dalsgard, Anne Line. 2016. "Time Will Tell: Temporalities of Debt in an Urban Neighborhood in Northeast Brazil." *Ethnos*, 10: 1-17.

Delgado, Ana. 2010. "Activist Trust: The Diffusion of Green Expertise in a Brazilian Landscape." *Public Understanding of Science*, (19)

D'Emilio, John. 1983. [1992.] "Capitalism and Gay Identity." In *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*. New York and London: Routledge.

Dent, Alexander & Rosana Pinheiro-Machado. 2013. "Protesting Democracy in Brazil." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology* website. <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/426-protesting-democracy-in-brazil>

Deere, Carmen Diana. 2003. "Women's land rights and rural social movements in the Brazilian agrarian reform." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3 (1-2), 257-288.

Deliberador, Luizia M. M. Yamashita, & Ana Carolina Rampazzo Vieira. 2010. "Comunicação e educação para a cidadania em uma cooperativa de assentamento do MST." *Comunicação e Educação*, 11 (3).

D'Emilio, John. 1992. "Capitalism and Gay Identity." In *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*. New York and London: Routledge.

Devore, Jonathon D. 2014. *Cultivating Hope: Struggles for Land, Equality, and Recognition in the Cacao Lands of Southern Bahia, Brazil*. Doctoral Dissertation. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Devore, Jonathon. D. 2015. "The Landless Invading the Landless: Participation, Coercion, and Agrarian Social Movements in the Cação Lands of Southern Bahia, Brazil." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42 (6): 1201-1223.

Diniz, Aldiva Sales and Bruce Gilbert. 2013. "Socialist values and cooperation in Brazil's landless rural workers movement." *Latin American Perspectives*, 40 (4): 19-34.

Diniz-Pereira, Júlio Emilio. 2013. *How the Dreamers are Born: Struggles for Social Justice and Identity Construction of Activist Educators in Brazil*. New York: Peter Lang.

Dipşe, Andrei Claudiu. 2014. "Comparative Approach of Collectivization Process in Romania and Hungary." *Studia Universitatis' Petru Maior, Historia*, 14 (1).

Diversi, Marcelo. 2006. "Street kids in Nikes: In Search of Humanization Through the Culture of Consumption." *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies*, 6 (3): 370-390.

Derpsch, Rolf, C. H. Roth, N. Sidiras, et al. 1991. *Controle de erosão no Paraná, Brasil: sistemas de cobertura do solo, plantio direto e prepare conservacionista do solo*. GTZ-IAPAR: Eschborn.

Douglas, Mary. 2013. *Constructive drinking* (Vol. 10). New York and London: Routledge.

Downey, Greg. 2005. *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dozier, Craig L. 1956. "Northern Paraná, Brazil: an example of organized regional development." *Geographical Review*, 46 (3): 318-333.

Durkheim, Emile. [1912] 2008. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. Mineola: Dover Publications.

Dutra, Eder Jardel and Roni Hilsinger. 2013. "A cadeia produtiva do Tabaco na região Sul do Brasil: aspectos quantitativos e qualitativos." *Geografia Ensino & Pesquisa*, 17 (3): 17-

Edelman, Marc. 2005. "Bringing the Moral Economy back in...to the Study of 21st Century Transnational Peasant Movements." *American Anthropologist*, 107 (3): 331-345.

Edelman, Robert. 1993. *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR*. Oxford & London: Oxford University Press.

Edmonds, Alexander. 2010. *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Effler, Erika Summers. 2010. *Laughing Saints and Righteous Heroes: Emotional Rhythms in Social Movement Groups*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2007. *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company.

Elias, Denise. 2003. *Globalização e Agricultura: A região de Ribeirão Preto—SP*. São Paulo: EDUSP.

Elder Jr. Glen H. & Rand D. Conder, (et al). 2000. *Children of the Land: Adversity and Success in Rural America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Emboaba, Osmani. 1955. "História da fundação de Ribeirão Preto." *Revista de História*, 10 (21/22): 339-438. <http://www.revistas.usp.br/revhistoria/article/download/36454/39177>

Estrada, Ruth Velasquez. 2016. "Gender Performance as a Tight Rope: Patriarchy, Academic Research, and the Field." Presented at the 115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis.

Evans, Peter. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Eyerman, Ron and Andrew Jamison. 1998. *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eyerman, Ron. 2005. "How Social Movements Move: Emotions and Social Movements." In *Emotions and Social Movements*. Edited by Helena Flam, Debra King. London and New York: Routledge.

Fabricant, Nicole. 2012. *Mobilizing Bolivia's Displaced: Indigenous Politics and the Struggle Over Land*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Falquet, Jules. 2006. "Três Questões Sociais 'Progressistas': Contribuições da Teoria Feminista à Análise dos Movimentos Sociais." *Lutas & Resistências, Londrina*, 1: 212-225. <http://www.uel.br/grupo-pesquisa/gepal/revista1aedicao/lr212-225.pdf>

Fals Borda, Orlando. 1985. *Knowledge and People's Power: Lessons from Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

- Fals Borda, Orlando. 1987. "The Application of Participatory Action-Research in Latin America." *International Sociology*, 2 (4): 329-347.
- Fals Borda, Orlando. M. Anisur Rahman (eds.) 1991. *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action-Research*. New York: The Apex Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1995. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Feitosa, Sara Alves. 2007. *Televisão e Juventude Sem Terra: Mediações e Modos de Subjetivação*. Master's Thesis. Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.
- Fernandes, Adriana. 2005. *Music, migrancy and modernity: a study of Brazilian forró*. Doctoral Dissertation. Champaign: University of Illinois-Urbana.
- Fernandes, Bernardo Mançano, Clifford Andrew Welch, and Elienaá Constantino Gonçalves. 2010. "Agrofuel policies in Brazil: paradigmatic and territorial disputes." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37 (4): 793-819.
- Fernandes, Sabrina. 2017. *Crisis of Praxis: Depoliticization and Leftist Fragmentation in Brazil*. Doctoral Dissertation. Ottawa: Carleton University.
- Ferree, Myra Marx. 2005. "Soft Repression: Ridicule, Stigma, and Silencing in Gender-Based Movements." In *Repression and Mobilization*. Edited by Christian Davenport, et al. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fine, Gary Alan. 2001. *Gifted tongues: High School Debate and Adolescent Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fine, Michelle. & María Elena Torre. 2006. "Intimate details: participatory action research in prison." *Action Research*, 4 (3): 253-269.
- Firmiano, Frederico Daia. 2009. *A formação cultural dos jovens do MST: a experiência do assentamento Mário Lago*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP. <http://books.scielo.org/id/49yt7>
- Flynn, Alexander James. 2010. *Pluralist Identities and Empowering 'the People': Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (AST) at the Crossroads*. Doctoral Thesis. Manchester: University of Manchester.
- Flynn, Alex. 2013a. "Transformation and 'Human Values' in the Landless Workers' Movement of Brazil." *Ethnos*, 80 (1): 45-70.
- Flynn, Alex. 2013b. "Mística, myself and I: Beyond cultural politics in Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement." *Critique of Anthropology*, 33 (2): 168-192.
- Ford, Tanisha. C. 2013. "SNCC Women, Denim, and the Politics of Dress." *The Journal of Southern History*, 79 (3): 625-
- Frederiksen, Martin. Demant. 2013. *Young Men, Time, and Boredom in the Republic of Georgia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Frederiksen, Martin Demant. 2014. "Heterochronic Atmospheres: Affect, Materiality, and Youth in Depression." In *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Frederiksen, Martin Demant and Anne Line Dalsgard. 2014. "Introduction: Time Objectified." In *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 2005. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. Contiumm: New York.
- Frenzel, Fabian, Anna Feigenbaum and Patrick McCurdy. 2014. "Protest camps: An emerging field of social movement research." *The Sociological Review*, 62 (3): 457-474.
- Freud, Sigmund. 2016. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Translated by Gregory C. Richter. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Gandolfo, Daniela. 2009. *The City at its Limits: Taboo, Transgression, and Urban Renewal in Lima*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Garner, Roberta and Meyer N. Zald. 2012. "Now We Are Almost Fifty! Reflections on a Theory of the Transformation of Social Movement Organizations." *Social Forces*, 91 (1): 3-11.
- Germani, Guiomar Inez. 2003. *Expropriados: Terra e água: o conflito de Itaipu*. Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora da ULBRA.
- Ghimire, Krishna B. 2002. "Social movements and marginalized rural youth in Brazil, Egypt and Nepal." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 30 (1):30-72.
- Gilbert, Bruce. 2015. "Taking Matters into their Own Hands: The MST and the Workers' Party in Brazil." *Alternautas*, 2 (2): 67-80.
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5362250de4b0e6ed7cf86ed1/t/56c54f044d088ef4e8bceee4/1455771399178/6.+v2i2GilbertPAPER.pdf>
- Gilroy, Paul. 1990. "One Nation Under a Groove: The Cultural Politics of 'Race' and Racism in Britain." In *Anatomy of Racism*. Edited by David Theo Goldberg. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Ginwright, Shawn and Taj James. 2002. "From Assets to Agents of Change: Social justice, Organizing, and Youth Development." *New Directions for Youth Development*, 96: 27-
- Gobbi, Francesco Pontirolli. 2013. "Brazil's Belo Monte Project: Financial Impact, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the Environment." *Library of European Parliament*.
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130579/LDM_BRI\(2013\)130579_REV1_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130579/LDM_BRI(2013)130579_REV1_EN.pdf)
- Goffman, Erving. 1968. [2009]. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New Brunswick and London: AldineTransaction.
- Goldstein, Daniel. M. 2012. *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Goldstein, Donna. 2003. *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio de Janeiro Shantytown*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Goodale, Mark. 2009. *Surrendering to Utopia: An Anthropology of Human Rights*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (eds.) 2009. *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gorsuch, Anne. E. 2003. "There's No Place Like Home: Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism." *Slavic Review*, 760-785.
- Gough, Katherine. V. (2008) "Youth and the Home." In *Youth and the City in the Global South*. Edited by Karen Tranberg Hansen, et al. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Goulet, Jean-Guy A. and Bruce Granville Miller. 2007. *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Graeber, David. 2009. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. New York: AK Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited and translated by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Green, James N. 1994. "The emergence of the Brazilian Gay Liberation Movement, 1977-1981." *Latin American Perspectives*, 21 (1): 38-55.
- Greenwood, Davydd. J. William Foote Whyte, and Ira Harkavy. 1993. "Participatory action research as a process and as a goal." *Human Relations*, 46 (2): 175-19
- Gumieiro, A. 1999. "Uma análise das desistências das famílias associadas na Cooperativa de Produção Agropecuária Vitória LTDA. Especialização (Administração de Cooperativas)." CEACOOOP. UnB, UNISINOS, ITERRA: Veranópolis, Br.
- Guevara, Che. [1965]. 2009. "O Socialismo e o Homem em Cuba." In, *Valores de uma Práxis Militante. Caderno de Formação, No. 6*. MST. Guarema, SP: Escola Nacional Florestan Fernandes.
- Hagen, Edward. H. & Gregory A. Bryant. 2003. "Music and Dance as Coalition Signaling System." *Human Nature*, 14 (1): 21-
- Hale, Charles, R. 2006a. *Más Que Un Indio: Racial Ambivalence and Neoliberal Multiculturalism in Guatemala*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Hale, Charles R. 2006b. "Activist research v. cultural critique: Indigenous land rights and the contradictions of politically engaged anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology*, 21 (1): 96-120.
- Hale, Charles. R. 2008. *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hall, Anthony. 2008. "Brazil's Bolsa Família: A Double-Edged Sword?" *Development and Change*, 39: 799-822.
- Hall, Georgia. 2006. "Civic Connections: Urban Debate and Democracy in Action during Out-of-School Time." *Afterschool Matters*, 7: 21-37.
- Hall, Ruth et al. 2015. "Resistance, Acquiescence or Incorporation? An introduction to Land Grabbing and Political Reactions 'From Below.'" *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42 (3-4): 467-488.

- Hall, Stuart and Tony Jefferson. [1975]. 2000. *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. New York: Routledge.
https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/34681481/Resistance_through_Rituals.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1504974432&Signature=SsWyPC03Wffk%2B2l%2BitxWuDudqwU%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DResistance_Through_Rituals_Youth_subcult.pdf
- Harnecker, Marta. 2002. *Landless People: Building a Social Movement*. Translated by Maria Carla Bassegio. São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular.
- Harrington, Michael. 1962. *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*. New York: Touchstone.
- Heilborn, Maria Luiza & Cristiane S. Cabral. 2011. "A New Look at Teenage Pregnancy in Brazil." *International Scholarly Research Network: Obstetrics and Gynecology*.
<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/ism/2011/975234/>
- Hemment, Julie. 2007. "Public Anthropology and the Paradoxes of Participation: Participatory Action Research and Critical Ethnography in Provincial Russia." *Human Organization*, 66 (3): 301-314.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. 1993. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
- Hirsch, Marianne. 2011. "The Generation of Postmemory." In *The Collective Memory Reader*. Edited by: J. K. Olick, V. Vinitsky-Seroussi, and D. Levy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hohle, Randolphe. 2009. "The Body and Citizenship in Social Movement Research: Embodied Performances and the Deracialized Self in the Black Civil Rights Movement, 1961–1965." *The Sociological Quarterly*, 50 (2): 283-307.
- Holmes, Brian. 2003. "Touching the violence of the state." In, *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism*. <http://artactivism.gn.apc.org/allpdfs/346-Touching%20the%20Violence.pdf>
- Holston, James. 1991. "Autoconstruction in working-class Brazil." *Cultural Anthropology*, 6 (4): 447-465.
- Holston, James. 2008. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Holston, James. 2013. "'Come to the street': Urban Protest, Brazil 2013." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology website*. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/458-come-to-the-street-urban-protest-brazil-2013>
- Honório, Renata Gonçalves. 2005. "Acampamentos: Novas Relações de Gênero (Con)fundidas na Luta pela Terra." *Lutas Sociais*, 13/14: 147-159.
- Htun, Mala. 2004. "From 'Racial Democracy' to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil." *Latin American Research Review*, 39 (1): 60-89.
- Hutchinson, Sharon. 1996. *Nuer Dilemmas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ICP and WCF. 2013. *Structured Demand and Smallholder Farmers in Brazil: the Case of PAA and PNAE*. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), United Nations Development Program.
<http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCTechnicalPaper7.pdf>

- IFAD. 2010. *Rural Poverty Report 2011*. Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development.
- IFAD. 2011. *Feeding Future Generations: Young Rural People Today, Prosperous Farmers Tomorrow*. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/feadfaf5-2f97-43fb-bf31-ad8e5a71549a>
- Ihmoud, Sarah. 2016. "Intimacies of Terror." Presented at the 115th American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis.
- Ingold, Tim. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*. London: Routledge.
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). 2008. *Divisão Territorial do Brasil e Limites Territoriais*. [:ftp://geoftp.ibge.gov.br/Organizacao/Divisao_Territorial/2008/DTB_2008.zip](ftp://geoftp.ibge.gov.br/Organizacao/Divisao_Territorial/2008/DTB_2008.zip)
- Issa, Daniela. 2007. "Praxis of Empowerment Mística and Mobilization in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement." *Latin American Perspectives*, 34 (2): 124-138.
- Janvry, Alain de. 1981. *The agrarian question and reformism in Latin America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jasper, James M. 1998. "The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements." *Sociological Forum*, 13 (3): 397-413.
- Jasper, James M. 2011. "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37: 285-303.
- Jeffrey, Craig. 2010. *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Jensen, Steffen. 2014. "Stunted Future: Buryong among Young Men in Manila." In *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Johnson-Hanks, Jennifer. 2002. "On the Limits of Life Stages in Ethnography: Toward a Theory of Vital Conjectures." *American Anthropologist*, 104 (3): 865-880.
- Johnson-Hanks, Jennifer. 2014. "Waiting for the Start: Flexibility and the Question of Convergence." In *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Juris, Jeffrey S. & Geoffrey H. Pleyers. 2009. "Alter-activism: emerging cultures of participation among young global justice activists." *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12 (1): 57-75.
- Kaberis, Nikos, and Alex Koutsouris. 2013. "Under Pressure: Young Farmers in Marriage Markets—A Greek Case Study." *Sociologia Ruralis*, 53 (1): 74-94.
- Kane, Liam. 2000. "Popular education and the Landless Peoples Movement in Brazil (MST)." *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 32 (1):36-50.
- Kang, Jiyeon. 2017. "Igniting the Internet: Youth and Activism in Postauthoritarian South Korea." *Asian Theatre Journal* 34.2.

- Kaplan, Judy and Linn Shapiro (eds.) 1998. *Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Katz, Cynthia. 1998. "Global Economic Restructuring and the Eroding Ecologies of Youth." In *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Edited by: Tracey and Gill Valentine. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kelley, Robin. 1996. *Race rebels: Culture, politics, and the black working class*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Knight, Danielle. 1998. "The poisoning of Paraná." *Against the Current*, 1 (6).
- Krawczyk, Noa, Meyer, Armando, Fonseca Maíra, Lima, Jaime. 2014. "Suicide mortality among agricultural workers in a region with intensive tobacco farming and use of pesticides in Brazil." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 56 (9): 993-1000.
- Krøijer, Stine. 2014. "Aske's Dead Time: An Exploration of the Qualities of Time among Left-Radical Activists in Denmark." In *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kröger, Markus. 2011. "Promotion of Contentious Agency as a Rewarding Movement Strategy: Evidence from the MST-paper Industry Conflicts in Brazil." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38 (2): 435-458.
- Kolling, Marie. 2016. *New Homes, New Lives? Slum Upgrading, Consumptions Dreams and Debt in Brazil*. Doctoral dissertation. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.
- Kulick, Don and Margaret Wilson (eds). 1995. *Taboo: Sex, Identity, and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Laoire, Caitríona Ní. 2001. "A Matter of Life and Death? Men, Masculinities and Staying 'behind' in Rural Ireland." *Sociologia Ruralis*, 41 (2): 220-236.
- Lee, Doreen. 2016. *Activist archives: Youth culture and the political past in Indonesia*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Leite, Jader Ferreira and Magda Dimenstein. 2012. "Relações de Gênero e Diversidade Sexual na Luta pela Terra: a Participação Política de Militantes Mulheres e Gays no MST." *Bagoas-Estudos Gays: Gêneros e Sexualidades*, 6 (8): 187-
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 2012. [1957]. *Tristes tropiques*. New York: Penguin.
- Lewis, C. S. 2012. "Grief." In, *The Quotable Lewis: Encyclopedic Selections of Quotes from the Complete Published Works of C.S. Lewis*. Edited by: Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root. Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Libardi, Diócles. and Paulo Delgado. 1999. "A redução do trabalho agrícola no Paraná." *Revista Paranaense de Desenvolvimento*, 95: 51-59.
- Lima, Grazielle Cristina Dainese de. 2006. *A Experiência Sem Terra: uma Abordagem Antropológica sobre a Vida no Acampamento*. Master's Thesis. Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Ling, Peter. 1995. "Local leadership in the early civil rights movement: The South Carolina citizenship education program of the Highlander Folk School." *Journal of American Studies*, 29 (3): 399-422.

Lockyer, Joshua Peter. 2007. *Sustainability and Utopianism: An Ethnography of Cultural Critique in Contemporary Intentional Communities*. Doctoral Dissertation. Tucson: University of Arizona.

Lukose, Ritty. 2009. *Liberalization's Children: Gender, Youth, and Consumer Citizenship in Globalizing India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lusvarghi, Luiza. 2008. "A Desconstrução do Nordeste: Cinema Regional e Pós-modernidade no Cinema Brasileiro." *Ícone*, 10 (1): 20-38.

<http://revistaicone.hipermoderno.com.br/index.php/icone/article/viewFile/16/15>

Magrini, Pedro Rosas and Lago, Mara Coelho de Souza. 2013. "A incorporação de lutas transversais pelo Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)." *Mal-Estar e Sociedade*, 10: 13-37.

Mains, Daniel.

2012. *Hope is Cut: Youth, Unemployment, and the Future in Urban Ethiopia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Mann, Patricia S. 1994. *Micropolitics: Agency in a Post-Feminist Era*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Mannheim, Karl. 1998. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Taylor and Francis Books.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2001. "Complicating oppositional consciousness." In *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*. Edited by: Jane Mansbridge. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Manzano, Valeria. 2014. *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Cultural Politics and Sexuality from Perón to Videla*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Marcus, George E. and Michael M. J. Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Margolis, Maxine. 1979. "Green Gold and Ice: The Impact of Frosts on the Coffee Growing Region of Northern Paraná, Brazil." *Mass Emergencies*, 4: 135-144.

Margolis, Maxine. 1980. "Natural Disaster and Socioeconomic Change: Post-Frost Adjustments in Paraná, Brazil." *Disasters*, 4 (2): 231-235.

Mahdavi, Pardis. 2009. *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Markowitz, Fran. 2000. *Coming of Age in Post-Soviet Russia*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Marsden, Terry. K. 1997a. "Reshaping Environments: Agriculture and Water Interactions in the Creation of Vulnerability." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 22 (3): 321-337.

Marsden, Terry. K. & J.S.B. Cavalcanti, J. Ferreira Irmão. 1996. "Globalization, Regionalization, and Quality: The Socioeconomic Reconstitution of Food in the San Francisco Valley, Brazil." *International Journal of Sociology and Food*, 5: 85-114.

Martins, José de Souza. 2000. *Reforma agrária: O impossível diálogo*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade

de São Paulo.

Martins, Mônica Dias. 2006. "Learning to Participate: The MST experience in Brazil." In, *Promised Land: Competing Visions of Agrarian Reform*. Edited by: Peter Rosset, Raj Patel, and Michael Courville. Oakland: Food First Books.

Martins, Suely Aparecida. 2009. *A Formação Política da Juventude do Movimento Sem Terra no Estado do Paraná*. Doctoral Dissertation. Florianópolis: Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

Marx, Karl. [1850]. 1987. "Peasantry as a Class." In, *Peasants and Peasant Societies: Selected Readings, 2nd Edition*. Edited by: Teodor Shanin. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Marx, Karl. 1942. *The Class Struggles in France, Selected Works, Vol.II*. London: Penguin Classics.

Marx, Karl. 1990. *Capital: Volume I*. London: Penguin Classics.

Matos, Claudia. 2007. "Namoro e Briga: As Artes do Forró." In, *O Charme Dessa Nação*. Edited by: Nelson B. da Costa. Fortaleza: Expressão Gráfica.

Mauss, Marcel. 1990. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York and London: W. W. Norton.

McAdam, Doug. 1985. *Political Process and the Development of Black insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McCann, Bryan. 2008. *The Throes of Democracy: Brazil Since 1989*. New York: Zed Books.

McCune, Nils, Peter M Rosset, Tania Cruz Salazar, Helda Morales & Antonio Saldivar Moreno. 2017. "The Long Road: Rural Youth, Farming, and Agroecological Formación in Central America." *Mind, Culture and Activity*.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Peter_Rosset/publication/314485124_The_Long_Road_Rural_Youth_Farming_and_Agroecological_Formacion_in_Central_America/links/58c2be24aca272e36dd0055a/The-Long-Road-Rural-Youth-Farming-and-Agroecological-Formacion-in-Central-America.pdf

McNee, Malcom K. 2005. "A Diasporic, Post-Traditional Peasantry: The Movimento Sem Terra (MST) and the Writing of Landless Identity." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 14 (3): 335-353.

McNee, Malcom K. 2011. "Soundtracking Landlessness: Music and Rurality in the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra," In, *Brazilian Popular Music and Citizenship*. Edited by, Idelber Avelar & Christopher Dunn. Durham: Duke University Press.

McNeill William. H. 1995. *Keeping Together in Time*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

MDA. 2013. *Juventude Rural, Agricultura Familiar, e Políticas de Acesso A Terra No Brasil*. Edited by Antônio Maria Gomes de Castro, Suzara Maria Valle Lima, Eduardo Paulo de Moraes Sarmiento, and Luis Fernando Vieira Brasília: Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário.
http://www.mda.gov.br/sitemda/sites/sitemda/files/user_arquivos_64/pageflip-4204229-487363-It_Juventude_rural_agric-2411516.pdf

Medeiros Filho, João & Itamar de Souza. 1983. *Os Degradados Filhos da Seca: Uma Análise Sócio-Política das Secas do Nordeste*. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Meek, David. 2015. "The Cultural Politics of the Agroecological Transition." *Agriculture and Human Values*, 1-16

Melo, Carla. 2010. "Performing Sem-Teto: the Transversal Tactics of Artivismo and the Squatters' Movement." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 19 (1): 1-21.

Mendez, Jennifer Bickham. 2008. "Globalizing Scholar Activism: Opportunities and Dilemmas Through a Feminist Lense." In, *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*. Edited by Charles R. Hale. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Mendoza-Denton, Norma & Aomar Boum. 2015. "Breached Initiations: Sociopolitical Resources and Coflicts in Emergente Adulthood." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 44: 295-310.
https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/44250851/Menodza-Denton_Boum-BreachedInitiations.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1504974878&Signature=8zPuUFiuWsreJWI23ImVEt%2BOOME%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DBreached_Initiations_Sociopolitical_Reso.pdf

Mészáros, George. 2013. *Social Movements, Law and the Politics of Land Reform: Lessons from Brazil*. Routledge: New York.

Meyer, David. S. & Sidney Tarrow. 1998. *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Michels, Robert. 1959. *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Dover: New York.

Miller, Daniel. 2010. *Stuff*. Polity: Cambridge.

Mische, Anne. 2001. "Juggling Multiple Futures: Personal and Collective Project-Formation among Brazilian Youth Leaders." In, *Leadership and Social Movements*. Edited by Colin Barker, et al. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Mische, Anne. 2008. *Partisan Publics: Communication and Contention across Brazilian Youth Activist Networks*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mocelin, Cassia Engres. 2010. "O Programa Bolsa Família Enquanto Principal Estratégia de Enfrentamento à Pobreza Rural no Contexto Brasileiro Atual." *Seminário Interinstitucional de Ensino, Pesquisa, e Extensão*, 15.

Morrell, Asztalos. 2015. "Self-sacrificing motherhood: Reconciling traumatic life experiences with Hungarian collectivization." In, *The Soviet Past in the Post-Socialist Present: Methodology and Ethics in Russian, Baltic and Central European Oral History and Memory Studies*. Edited by: Melanie Ilic & Dalia Leinarte. New York & London: Routledge.

Morris, Aldon. D. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press.

Morton, Helen. 1995. "My 'Chastity Belt': Avoiding Seduction in Tonga." In, *Taboo: Sex, Identity, and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*. Edited by: Don Kulick & Margaret Wilson. New York and London: Routledge.

Moscal, Janaina dos Santos. 2011. *De sensibilidades revolucionárias à revolução das sensibilidades*.

Master's Thesis. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná.

Moura, Iracema Ferreira de. 2006. *Assentamentos Rurais: Agregação de Valor e Comercialização: O Caso do Assentamento Santa Maria, Paracaty-PR*. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná.

MST. 2009. *Valores de uma Praxis Militante. Caderno de Formação No. 6*. Guararema, SP: Escola Nacional Florestan Fernandes.

MST. 2011. *Juventude Sem Terra. Cartilha de Encontro Nacional do Juventude Sem Terra*. São Paulo.

MST. 2014. *Programa Agrário do MST. Lutar, Construir Reforma Agrária Popular! VI Congresso Nacional do MST*. São Paulo.

Müller, Nice Lecocq. 2012. [1956]. "Contribuição ao estudo do Norte do Paraná." *Geografia (Londrina)* 10 (1): 89-119.

<http://www.uel.br/revistas/uel/index.php/geografia/article/viewFile/10658/9346>

Murray, Douglas. L. 1994. *Cultivating Crisis: The Human Cost of Pesticides in Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Nascimento, Silvana de Souza. 2012. "Homem com Homem, Mulher com Mulher: Paródias Sertanejas no Interior de Goiás." *Cadernos Pagu*, (39): 367-402

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Silvana_Nascimento/publication/262661976_Men_with_men_women_with_women_Country_parodies_in_Goias/links/54f7a8cb0cf210398e92cf6a.pdf

Nash, June C. 2001. *Mayan Visions: The Quest for Autonomy in the Age of Globalization*. New York and London: Routledge.

Navarro, Zander. 2001. "Desenvolvimento Rural no Brasil: Os Limites do Passado e os Caminhos do Futuro." *Estudos Avançados*, 15 (43): 83-100.

Navarro, Zander. 2006. "'Mobilization without Emancipation': The Social Struggles of the Landless in Brazil." In, *Another Production is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon*. Edited by: Boaventura de Sousa Santos. London & New York: Verso.

Navarro, Zander. 2010. "The Brazilian Landless Movement (MST): Critical Times." *Redes*, 15 (1): 196-223.

Neave, Nick. et al. 2010. "Male dance moves that catch a woman's eye." *Biology Letters, Royal Society Publishing*.

Négron-Gonzales, Genevieve. 2013. "Navigating 'Illegality': Undocumented Youth and Oppositional Consciousness." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35: 1284-1290.

Negrón-Gonzales, Genevieve. 2015. "Undocumented youth activism as counter-spectacle: Civil disobedience and testimonio in the battle around immigration reform." *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 40 (1): 87-112.

Nelson, Diane M. 1999. *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nogueira, Amauri Tadeu Barbosa. 2005. *Assentamentos Rurais do MST: Práticas Espaciais, Representações e Conflitos*. Doctoral Dissertation. São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo.

Nolas, Sevasti-Melissa, Christos Varvantakis & Vinnarasan Aruldoss. 2017. "Political activism across the life course." *Contemporary Social Science*. 12 (1-2): 1-12.

Novaes, Regina. 2005. "Juventude, percepções, e comportamentos." In, *Retratos da juventude brasileira: Análises de uma pesquisa nacional*. Edited by: Helena W. E. Abramo & Pedro Paulo Martoni Branco. São Paulo: Instituto Cidadania, Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo.

Novak, Shannon. Forthcoming. "Unpacking the Pews at Spring Street: Corporeal Congregations and Asynchronous Lives." *American Anthropologist*.

O'Dougherty, Maureen. 2002. *Consumption Intensified: The Politics of Middle-Class Daily life in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press.

O'Hara, Patricia. 1998. *Partners in Production: Women, Farm and Family in Ireland*. Oxford: Bergahn Books.

Oliveira, Jane Souto de. 2000. "Barreiras, Transgressões, e Invenções de Mercado: A Inserção Econômica de Jovens Pobres." *Anais do XII encontro nacional de estudos populacionais*.
http://www.abep.nepo.unicamp.br/docs/anais/pdf/2000/Todos/trat19_2.pdf

Ondetti, Gabriel. 2008. *Land, Protest, and Politics: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for Agrarian Reform in Brazil*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press.

O'Reilly, Karen. 2012. *Ethnographic Methods, 2nd Edition*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ortellado, Pablo. 2013. "On Processes and Outcomes: Remarks on the Brazilian Protests of June, 2013, and Other Experiences of 'New Movements.'" *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology website*.
<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/434-on-processes-and-outcomes-remarks-on-the-brazilian-protests-of-june-2013-and-other-experiences-of-new-movements>

Otero, Gerardo. 2004. "Global Economy, Local Politics: Indigenous Struggles, Civil Society, and Democracy." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 37 (2): 325-346.

Pahnke, Anthony. 2014. *Social Movement Self-Governance: The Contentious Nature of Alternative Service Provision by Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement*. Doctoral dissertation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
http://docs.fct.unesp.br/nera/ltd/dissertacao_pahnke_2014.pdf

Pahnke, Anthony. 2015. "Institutionalizing Economies of Opposition: Explaining and Evaluating the Success of the MST's Cooperatives and Agroecological Repeasantization." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42 (6): 1087-1107.

Pandian, Anand. 2011. "Landscapes of Expression: Affective Encounters in South Indian Cinema." *Cinema Journal*, 51 (1): 50-74.

Papadogiannis, Nikolaos. 2015. *Militants Around the Clock: Left-Wing Youth Politics, Leisure, and Sexuality in Post-Dictatorial Greece, 1974-1981*. New York: Berghann.

Parker, Richard. 1991. *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Pereira, Anthony. W. 1997. *End of the Peasantry: The Rural Labor Movement, Northeast Brazil 1961-*

1988. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press

Perugini, Mariusa Saboto, Elpídio Serra, & Maria Teresa Nóbrega. 2004. "A Copavi e o Cooperativismo de Produção no Noroeste do Paraná." *Boletim de Geografia*, 22 (1): 21-33.

Perlman, Janice. 2010. *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Persky, Joseph. 1995. "Retrospectives: The Ethology of Homo Economicus." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 9 (2): 221-231.

Petras, James & Henry Veltmeyer. 2001. "Are Latin American Peasant Movements Still a Force for Change? New Paradigms Revisited." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 28 (2): 83-118.

Petrone, Karen. 1994. *Life has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Politics and Culture in Soviet Celebrations, 1934-1939*. Doctoral dissertation. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Phaelante, Renato. 1995. *Forró: Identidade Nordestina*. Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

Phillips, Lynne and Sally Cole. 2013. *Contesting Publics: Feminism, Activism, Ethnography*. New York: Pluto Press.

Pinho, Patricia de Santana. 2010. *Mama Africa: reinventing blackness in Bahia*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Plummer, Dawn.M. 2008. *Leadership Development and Formação in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST)*. Master's Thesis. New York: City University of New York.

Pulido, Laura. 2003. "The interior life of politics." *Ethics, Place and Environment*, 6: 46-52.

Quirk, Patrick W. 2012. *Emotions and the Struggle of Brazil's Landless Social Movement (MST): The Power of Dignity*. Germany: AV Akademikverlag.

Rangel Loera, Nashieli. 2006. *A Espiral das Ocupações de Terra*. São Paulo: Polis; Campinas: CERES.

Rangel Loera, Nashieli. 2010. "'Encampment Time': An Anthropological Analysis of the Land Occupations in Brazil." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37 (2): 285-318.

Razsa, Maple & Andrej Kurnik. 2012. "The Occupy Movement in Zizek's Hometown: Direct Action and a Politics of Becoming." *American Ethnologist*, 39 (2): 238-258

Razsa, Maple. J. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia: Living Radical Politics After Socialism*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Rebhun, Linda-Anne. 1999. *The Heart is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Reich, Wilhelm. [1934] 1971. "What is Class Consciousness?"

<http://edenguard.fr/Docs%20NRJ%20Et%20Cie/Wilhelm%20Reich/What%20is%20Class%20Consciousness.pdf>

- Rethmann, Petra. 2007. "On Presence." In, *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*. Edited by: Jean-Guy A. Goulet & Bruce Granville Miller. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press. <http://14.139.206.50:8080/jspui/bitstream/1/2281/1/Goulet&Miller%20-%20Extraordinary%20Anthropology,%20Transformations%20in%20the%20Field.pdf>
- Ribeiro, Darcy. 2000. *O Povo Brasileiro: A Formação e o Sentido do Brasil*. São Paulo: Global Editora e Distribuidora.
- Rizzini, Irene and Malcolm Bush. 2013. "Affirming the Young Democracy: Youth Engagement in Rio de Janeiro." In, *Citizens in the Present: Youth Civic Engagement in the Americas*. Edited by: Maria De Los Angeles Torres & Irene Rizzini. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Rizzini, Irene and Malcolm Bush. 2014. "Rights and Realities for Vulnerable Youth in Urban Brazil: Challenges in the Transition to Adulthood." In, *Human Rights and Adolescence*. Edited by: Jacqueline Bhabha. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Roberts, Philip. 2015. *The Movimento Sem Terra Beyond Agrarian Reform: Class Struggle and Ideological Formation*. PhD Thesis, Political Economy. Sydney: University of Sydney.
- Robles, Wilder & Henry Veltmeyer. 2015. *The Politics of Agrarian Reform in Brazil: The Landless Rural Workers Movement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robnett, Belinda. 1996. "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership, and Micromobilization." *American Journal of Sociology*, 101 (6): 1661-93.
- Rochadelli, R., Crespo, I., Hosokawa, R. T., et al. 2013. "Environmental Law Restrictions and Impacts in Guaraqueçaba, PR." *Floresta*, 43 (3): 495-502.
- Rodgers, Diane M. 2005. "Children as Social Movement Participants." In, *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*. Edited by: David A. Kinney and Katherine B. Rosier. Amsterdam: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Rompaey, K. V. 2008. *Political Economy of Biofuels in Brazil & The Contested Meanings of Sustainable Development*. http://www.econ.uba.ar/www/institutos/cma/actividades/cursos/La_paradoja_de_los_biocombustibles_y_el_desarrollo_sustentable_en_Brasil_-_working_paper.pdf
- Rosa, Marcelo. 2004. *O Engenho dos Movimentos: Reforma Agrária e Significação Social na Zona Canavieira de Pernambuco*. Doctoral Dissertation. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro.
- Rosa, Marcelo C. 2012. "Reforma agrária e Land Reform: Movimentos Sociais e o Sentido de Ser um Sem-Terra no Brasil e na África do Sul." *Cad. CRH*, 25 (64):99-114. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_pdf&pid=S010349792012000100008&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=pt
- Rosenfield, Denis Lerrer. 2006. *O democracia ameaçada: O MST, o teológico-político e a liberdade*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks Editora.
- Rubin, Jeffrey W. and Emma Sokoloff-Rubin. 2013. *Sustaining Activism: A Brazilian Women's Movement and A Father-Daughter Collaboration*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rubin, Jeffrey W. 2017. "In the Streets and In the Institutions: Moveiments-in-Democracy and the Rural

- Women's Movement in Rio Grande do Sul." In, *Beyond Civil Society: Activism, Participation, and Protest in Latin America*. Edited by Sonia E. Alvarez et al. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ruz, Fidel Castro. 2000. "A grande tarefa da revolução consiste em formar o homem novo." In, *As Tarefas Revolucionárias da Juventude*. Translated by Ana Corbisier and Miguel Henrique Stédile. São Paulo: Expressão Popular.
- Saad-Filho, Alfredo and Lecio Morais. 2014. "Mass protests: Brazilian Spring or Brazilian Malaise?" *Socialist Register*, 50: 226-246. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/ASFLM2014SRMassProtestsinBrazil.pdf>
- Sales, Celecina de Maria Veras. 2006. "Gênero e Juventude Rural: Permanência de Traços da Herança Cultural Camponesa e a Produção de Novos Valores na Construção do Presente." *Anais do VII Seminário Fazendo Gênero*. Fortaleza: Universidade Federal do Ceara.
- Salgado, Sebastião. 1997. *Terra: Struggle of the Landless*. London and New York: Phaidon Press.
- Saltman, Kenneth J. & David A. Gabbard (eds.) 2010. *Education as Enforcement: The Militarization and Corporatization of Schools, 2nd Edition*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Sauer, Sérgio & Sérgio Leite Perreira. 2012. "Agrarian Structure, Foreign Investment in Land, and Land Prices in Brazil." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39: 873-898.
- Schimanski, Ědina. 1998. *Formatos Organizacionais dos Assentamentos do MST-Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra: Al Cooperativas de Produção Agrícola-CPA's. Estudo de caso: COPAVI-Paranacity-Paraná*. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná.
- Schielke, Samuli. 2008. "Boredom and despair in rural Egypt." *Contemporary Islam*, 2: 251-270.
- Schensul, Jean. J. Marlene J. Berg, & Ken M. Williamson. 2008. "Challenging Hegemonies: Advancing Collaboration in Participatory Action Research." *Collaborative Anthropologies*, 1: 102-137
- Scherer-Warren, Ilse. 2012. "Das Mobilizações as Redes de Movimentos Sociais." *Revista Sociedade e Estado*, 21 (1): 109-130.
- Scott, Greg & Julie E. Artis. 2005. "Building Democracy, Promoting Tolerance: Adolescent Responsiveness to Social Movement Messages." In, *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*. David A Kinney and Katherine B. Rosier (eds). Amsterdam: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Scott, James C. 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Resistance in Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Shayne, Julie. 2014. *Taking Risks: Feminist Activism and Research in the Americas*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Shayne, Julie and Kristy Leissle. 2014. "Research, Risk, and Activism: Feminists' Stories of Social Justice." In, *Taking Risks: Feminist Activism and Research in the Americas*. Edited by: Julie Shayne. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Sigaud, Lygia. 2005. "As Condições de Possibilidade das Ocupações de Terra." *Tempo Social*, 17: 255-280.

- Silva, Cristiani Bereta da. 2003. *As Fissuras na Construção do 'Novo Homem' e da 'Nova Mulher'—Relações de Gênero e Subjetividades no Devir MST – 1979/2000*. Doctoral dissertation. Florianópolis: Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
- Silva, Denice Batista da. 2009. *Do Assentamento A Universidade: A Mulher Camponesa no Ensino Superior*. Master's Thesis. São Cristóvão: Universidade Federal de Sergipe.
http://www.reformaagrariaemdados.org.br/sites/default/files/2009%20DENICE_BATISTA_SILVA.pdf
- Silva, José Graziano da. 2001. "Velhos e Novos Mitos do Rural Brasileiro." *Estudos Avançados*, 15 (43): 37-50.
- Silva, Roberto Bitencourt da. 2007. "O Jeca Tatu de Monteiro Lobato: Identidade do Brasileiro e Visão do Brasil." 19&20. http://www.dezenovevinte.net/resenhas/jecatatu_rb.htm
- Smircic, S. C. 2000. *Com a Cara e a Coragem: Etnografia de uma Ocupação de Terra em Pernambuco*. Master's Thesis. Rio de Janeiro: PPGAS, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.
- Smith, Neil. 2008. *Uneven development: Nature, capital, and the production of space. Third Edition*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Smith, Sara. H. 2013. "'In the Heart, There's Nothing': Unruly Youth, Generational Vertigo and Territory." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (4): 572-585.
- Souza, Eduardo Ferreira de. 2004. *Do Silêncio a Satanização: O Discurso de Veja e o MST*. São Paulo: Annablume.
- Souza, Helaine Pereira & V. S. Cavalcanti. 2013. "Histórias & Resistências: Famílias, Sexualidades e Juventudes no Movimento dos Sem Teto da Bahia." *The Post Colonialist*, 1 (1).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1987. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York and London: Methuen.
- Stacey, Judith. 1998. *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Twentieth Century America*. University of California Press: Berkeley.
- Starr, Armory, María Elena Martínez-Torres, & Peter Rosset. 2011. "Participatory Democracy in Action Practices of the Zapatistas and the Movimento Sem Terra." *Latin American Perspectives*, 38 (1): 102-119.
- Stewart, Kathleen. 2007. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2008. "Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination." *Cultural Anthropology*, 23 (2): 191-219.
- Striffler, Stephen. 2001. *In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900–1995*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Sumberg, J. & N. Akua Anyidoho et al.. 2012. "Introduction: Young people and Agriculture 'Problem' in Africa." *IDS Bulletin*, 43:1-8.
- Susser, Ida. 2011. "Organic Intellectuals, Crossing scales, and the Emergence of Social Movements with Respect to AIDS in South Africa, AES Presidential Address for 2008." *American Ethnologist*, 38 (4): 733-

742.

Tarlau, Rebecca. 2013a. "Soviets in the Countryside: The MST's Remaking of Socialist Educational Practices in Brazil." In, *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity, and Uncertainty, Explorations of Educational Purpose*, 24. Edited by: T.G. Griffith & Z. Millei. Heidelberg, New York, London: Springer Dordrecht.

Tarlau, Rebecca. 2013b. "Coproducting Rural Public Schools in Brazil: Contestation, Clientelism, and the Landless Workers' Movement." *Politics and Society*, 41: 395-

Tarlau, Rebecca. 2016. "If the Past Devours the Future, Why Study? Picketty, Social Movements, and Future Directions for Education." *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37 (6): 861-872.

Tarr, Bronwyn. (et al) 2014. "Music and social bonding: 'self-other' merging and neurohormonal mechanisms." *Frontiers in Psychology*, (5)

Tarrow, Sidney. 2011. *Power in Movements: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 3rd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomazi, Nelson Dacio. 1997. *Norte do Paraná: História e Fantasmagorias*. Doctoral dissertation. Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná.
<http://dspace.c3sl.ufpr.br/dspace/handle/1884/31883>

Trindade Lima, Nísia. 1997. *Um Sertão Chamado Brasil: Intelectuais, Sertanejos e Imaginação Social*. Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Universitario de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro.

Valente, Rubia R. & Brian J. L. Berry. 2015. "Countering Inequality: Brazil's Movimento Sem Terra." *Geographical Review*, 105 (3): 1-20.

Valentin, Karen. 2008. "Politicized Leisure in the Wake of Doi Moi: A Study of Youth in Hanoi." In, *Youth and the City in the Global South*. Edited by: Karen Tranberg Hansen, (et al.) Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Valentin, Karen. 2014. "Certificates for the Future: Geographic Mobility and Educational Trajectories among Nepalese Youth." In, *Time Objectified: Ethnographies of Youth and Temporality*. Edited by Anne Line Dalsgard, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Susanne Højlund, and Lotte Meinert. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Vargas, Marco Antonio. 2001. "Forms of Governance, Learning Mechanisms and Upgrading Strategies in the Tobacco Cluster in Rio Pardo Valley-Brazil." *Institute of Development Studies, Working Paper 125*.

Veltmeyer, Henry. 1997. "New Social Movements in Latin America: The Dynamics of Class and Identity." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 25 (1): 139-169.

Vergara-Camus, Leandro. 2009. "The MST and the EZLN Struggle for Land: New Forms of Peasant Rebellions." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 9 (3): 365-391

Viana, Gessilda da Silva. 2003. "O Cooperativismo Como Alternative para os Assentamentos Rurais dos Municípios de Querência do Norte e Paracaty-PR."

Vieira, Rosângela Steffen. 2004. *Juventude e Sexualidade No Contexto (Escolar) de Assentamentos do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*. Master's Thesis. Florianopolis: Universidade Federal de

Santa Catarina.

Viladrich, Anahi. 2007. "Ethnographic Rendez-vous: Field Accounts of Unexpected Vulnerabilities and Constructed Differences." In, *Extraordinary Anthropology: Transformations in the Field*. Edited by: Jean-Guy A. Goulet & Bruce Granville Miller. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Von Geldern, James. 1993. *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920 (Vol. 15)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walker, Thomas, W. & Agnaldo de Sousa Barbosa. 2000. *Dos Coronéis a Metr pole: Fios e trama da sociedade e da pol tica em Ribeir o Preto no S culo XX*. Riber o Preto: Palavra M gica.

Wallace, Anthony. F. C. 1956. "Revitalization Movements." *American Anthropologist*, 58 (2): 264-281.

Watts, Michael J. 2013. *Silent Violence: Food, Famine, and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*. Athens & London: University of Georgia Press.

Welch, Cliff. 2004. "Peasants and Globalization in Latin America: A Survey of Recent Literature." *Revista Nera*, 7 (5): 10-

White, Ben. 2012. "Agriculture and the Generation Problem: Rural Youth, Employment, and the Future of Farming." *IDS Bulletin*. 43 (6): 9-19.

White, Ben. 2015. "Generational dynamics in agriculture: reflections on rural youth and farming futures." *Cahiers Agricultures*, 24 (6): 330-334.

Williams, Erica Lorraine. 2014. "Feminist Tensions: Race, Sex Work, and Women's Activism in Bahia." In, *Taking Risks: Feminist Activism and Research in the Americas*. Edited by: Julie Shayne. SUNY Press: Albany.

Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labor: How Working-Class Kids Get Working-Class Jobs*. Saxon House: Farnborough.

Wittman, Hanna. 2009. "Reframing Agrarian Citizenship: Land, life, and power in Brazil." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 25: 120-130.

Wolford, Wendy. 2003. "Families, fields, and fighting for land: the spatial dynamics of contention in rural Brazil." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*. 8(2): 157-172.

Wolford, Wendy. 2005. "Agrarian Moral Economies and Neoliberalism in Brazil: Competing Worldviews and the State in the Struggle for Land." *Environment and Planning A*, 37: 241-261.

Wolford, Wendy. 2009. "Introduction. Grassroots Voices: Everyday Forms of Political Expression." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36 (2).

Wolford, Wendy. 2010. *This Land is Ours Now: Social Meanings of Land and Mobilization in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wright, Angus. L., & Wendy Wolford. 2003. *To Inherit the Earth: the Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil*. Oakland: Food First Books.

Ying, Bai & James Kai-sing Kung. 2014. "The shaping of an Institutional Choice: Weather Shocks, the Great Leap Famine, and Agricultural Decollectivization in China." *Explorations in Economic History*, 54: 1-26.

Yurchak, Alexei. 2005. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zald, Meyer. N. & Roberta Ash. 1966. "Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change." *Social Forces*, 44 (3): 327-341.

Zeneratti, Fábio Luiz. 2013. "O processo de Recriação Contraditória do Campesinato: O Caso do Assentamento Coletivo COPAVI de Paranacity/PR." *Campo-Território, Revista de Geografia Agrária*, 8 (15).

Zimerman, Artur. 2016. "A Piece of Land or Peace on the Land: How Much is a Peasant's Life Worth in Brazil?" *Journal of Human Security*, 12 (1): 37-51.

CURRICULUM VITAE

MELINDA GURR
 Department of Anthropology
 Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs
 Syracuse University
 Syracuse, New York 13244

Phone: 385.645.9113

Email: mgurr@syr.edu

EDUCATION

2017	Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Syracuse University
2013-2017	PhD, Cultural Anthropology, Syracuse University
2010-2013	MA, Cultural Anthropology, Syracuse University
2004-2008	BS, Economics & Anthropology, University of Utah

AWARDS & GRANTS

2015-2017	<i>Concusión Iniciación en Investigación, Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Científico y Tecnológico, Chile</i> International collaboration on an interdisciplinary project on rural communities, land-use change, and payment for ecosystem services in Araucanía, Chile.
2012 – 2015	<i>National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program</i> Support for graduate coursework, technological equipment, and doctoral field research in Southern, Southeastern, and Northeastern Brazil.
2012	<i>PLACA, Summer Research Award, Syracuse University</i>
2011	<i>Summer Research Funding & Assistantship, Syracuse University</i>
2010	<i>Low-Income Advocate of the Year, Salt Lake Community Action Program</i> Recognition for outstanding performance advocating and organizing for legislative protections in support of Utah's mobile home park dwellers.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (2010-Present)

Completed 18 months of mixed-methods ethnographic research in three regions of Brazil. Examined the experiences, trajectories, and aspirations of rural youth affiliated with the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (the MST). The research integrates several key domains to understand the potential of small-scale farming as a sustainable option for youth: land and labor relations, gender and sexuality, patterns of livelihood diversification, and activist subcultures.

Innovations in Manufactured Housing, CFED, Washington, D. C. (2010)

Research provided a cost-benefit analysis based on an extensive database of manufactured housing law in the United States, and emphasized the qualitative and quantitative impacts of forced relocation in Utah, California, Nevada, Oregon, Minnesota, and Washington states to stress the importance of preserving the largest source of unsubsidized, affordable housing. Makes the case for collective ownership of mobile home park communities.

Department of Economics, University of Utah (2007-2008)

Undergraduate research, conducted under supervision of Dr. Kenneth Jameson

Evaluated the socioeconomic impacts of hostile immigration policy on the local, state, and federal levels. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the costs (in terms of labor shortages, litigation, familial separation) were significant. Resulted in the publication of "The Case for Caution," circulated nationally by the United Way of Salt Lake.

Undergraduate research, conducted under supervision of Dr. Garth Mangum

Conducted 150 interviews with documented and undocumented immigrants throughout the state of Utah. Collected life history narratives and surveys. The research captures the dislocations wrought by NAFTA in Latin American rural communities. Highlights the difficulties faced by undocumented families in Utah.

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah (2014-2016)

Instructor: Advanced Portuguese

Instructor: Introductory Anthropology

Instructor: Biological Anthropology

Bishop's University, Quebec, Canada (2014)

Teaching Assistant: Social Movements & Social Change in Brazil

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York (2010-2012)

Teaching Assistant: People & Cultures of the World

COMMUNITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

MST, Paranacity & Ribeirão Preto, Brazil 2013-2014

Taught conversational English lessons and digital photography/videography to Brazilian children and youth in rural villages.

CFED, Innovations in Manufactured Housing, 2010

Shared the results of research about the national crises in affordable housing, and grassroots strategies to preserve manufactured homeownership.

Salt Lake Community Action Program, 2008-2010

As a community organizer and low-income advocate, led ongoing series of community workshops regarding housing rights, the eviction process, legal protections, how to organize for legislative change, and the importance of tenants unions.

INVITED LECTURES & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 8/9/2017 "Celebrando territorio socialista: juventud, fiestas y política del Movimiento de los Sin Tierra," XI Ciclo de Conferencias sobre Geografía y Teórico Contemporáneo. Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano. Santiago, Chile.
- 11/21/2016 "On Fiascos in Fieldwork," *American Anthropological Association's Annual Meeting*, Minneapolis.
- 5/30/2016 "On the Subjunctive and Disjunctive: Competing Senses (and Tenses) of Land Reform in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil," Latin American Studies Association Congress, New York City.
- 11/20/2015 "Celebrating Socialism: Youth & Politics in Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement," American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Denver.
- 10/22/2015 "Formação Política: Political Training & Sustainable Development," Invited Lecture, Department of Languages and Literature, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- 10/8/2015 "Notes from the Field: Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement," Invited Lecture, Department of Languages, Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah.
- 10/15/2014 "Brazil's Military Dictatorship & Its Ongoing Legacy," Invited Lecture, Latin American Studies Department, US-Latin American Relations Course, International Studies Abroad, Cusco, Peru.
- 2/12/2014 "Juventude Rural e o MST no estado do Paraná," Semana de Educação do Campo, Universidade Federal Fronteira do Sul, Laranjeiras do Sul, Brazil.

- 12/5/2013 "Jovens num assentamento de reforma agrária (COPAVI): conquistas e desafios," X Semana Pedagógica, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1/11/2011 "Raise Your Weapons: Youth & Militarized Discipline on the American Frontier," II Prison Studies Group Conference, City University of New York, NYC
- 11/9/2009 "Wilderness Cures for Affluent Adolescents: Therapeutic Boarding Schools in the Intermountain West," American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California

PUBLICATIONS

- 2017 "Land (In)Justice In Brazil." *NACLA Report on the Americas*.
- 2010 "The Case for Preservation: The Economic Impact of Manufactured Home Community Closures." Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED).
- 2008 "The Case for Caution: The Economic Impact of Hostile Immigration Policies." United Way of Salt Lake City & University of Utah (first author, with Dr. Kenneth Jameson).
- 2008 Mangum, Garth. *Bring Them In; Let Them Stay: The Contributions of Immigration For the United States and Utah*. (Chapters 2 & 3)

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Volunteer Facilitator, Utah Valley University's Honor's Program

In 2015-2016, facilitated student trips to Southwestern Utah and the Topaz Internment Camp, helped to guide conversations about land use change and Japanese Internment during World War II.

Future Professoriat Program, Anthropology Department, Syracuse University

Coordinator 2010-2012, helped to organize and arrange invited lecture series. Chose topics for discussion, and invited faculty and students for monthly events regarding professional development.

Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University

Attended monthly meetings, coordinated visits of potential students and invited lecturers.

Cross-Cultural Communication Training, Workshop Facilitator, Syracuse University

Provided cross-cultural communications training for fifty international students.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Anthropological Association
 Society for Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology
 Association for Feminist Anthropology
 Latin American Studies Association
 Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University
 Future Professoriat Program, Syracuse University

LANGUAGES

English (Fluent)
 Portuguese (Fluent)
 Spanish (Proficient)

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Dr. John S. Burdick, Professor & Chair

Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
 209A Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY
 Email: jsburdic@maxwell.syr.edu Ph: (315) 443-3822

Dr. Azra Hromadzic, Professor

Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
 209C Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY
 Email: ahromadz@maxwell.syr.edu Ph: (315) 443-5782

Dr. Hans Buechler, Professor

Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
 209B Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY
 Email: hcbuechl@maxwell.syr.edu Ph: (315) 443-1194

Dr. Tom Perreault, Professor

Department of Geography, Syracuse University
 529 Eggers Hall, Syracuse, NY
 Email: taperrea@maxwell.syr.edu Ph: (315) 443-9467

Dr. Wendy Wolford, Professor

Department of Developmental Sociology, Cornell University
 263 Warren Hall, Ithaca, NY
 Email: www43@cornell.edu Ph: (607) 255