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The Changing Terrain of Rural Contention in Brazil: Institutionalization and Identity Development in the Landless Movement's Educational Project

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ABSTRACT

Studies of the Brazilian Landless Movement, particularly the MST (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, Landless Rural Workers' Movement), note two periods of collective action: the time when tactics such as land occupations are deployed to acquire land (*luta pela terra*) and subsequent mobilizations to develop territory (*luta na terra*). The latter period, which includes fostering educational opportunities and coordinating economic production, features prolonged interaction with government authorities. Instead of demobilizing during institutionalization, this study argues, postoccupation practices are as contentious as seizing territory. This is apparent in the movement's efforts to influence public policies that lead to the creation of schools where a contentious, movement-centered identity develops. Documenting the movement's efforts in education provides a way to understand how the current moment in rural contention in Brazil—called by some the time to *acumular forças* (accumulate forces)—remains collective and political instead of indicating movement decline.

Present in 24 of Brazil's 26 states and claiming to have mobilized over one-and-a-half million people since the late 1970s, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers Movement, or MST) is best known for its occupations and encampments that pressure private owners and the Brazilian state to redistribute land. As a result, the Landless Movement, which includes religious allies, such as the *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (National Conference of Brazilian Bishops, or CNBB), the rural labor union CONTAG (*Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura*, National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture), small farmer organizations like MAB (*Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens*, Movement of People Affected by Dams), and the MPA (*Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores*, Movement of Small Farmers), has drawn national and international attention to agrarian reform.

Scholars and activists commonly divide the movement's efforts into two phases, the first known as the *luta pela terra* (struggle for land) and the second labeled the *luta na terra* (struggle on the land). Research on the first stage highlights the Land-

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less Movement's expansion, as well as the dynamics of occupations and encampments (Loera 2010; Sigaud et al. 2008; Ondetti 2008; Wright and Wolford 2003; Fernandes 2000). Equally crucial are postoccupation activities, when energies shift to "developing" territory. At this stage, the movement mobilizes to provide education and organize production cooperatives, among other practices intended to ensure that families remain on the land (Carter and Carvalho 2015; Gonçalves 2008; Cristofoli 2000).

Recently, with the center-left government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002–10) and the subsequent election of another *Partido do Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party, or PT) leader, Dilma Rousseff, some observers believe that the Landless Movement is in decline. Occupations and encampments continue, but at much lower rates compared to the past. According to the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (the Pastoral Land Commission, or CPT)—the religious organization and longtime movement ally that collects figures on rural conflict—occupations decreased approximately 60 percent from 2004 to 2014.¹ In 2011, the Brazilian news-magazine *Isto É* published a story titled *O fim do MST* (The End of the MST) that featured a series of comments lamenting the current difficulties faced by the movement (Moura 2011). The newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* noted that the MST celebrated its thirtieth anniversary when areas expropriated by the Brazilian government were at historic lows (Arruda 2014).

Within the MST, concern among leaders led to the issuing of two *Cadernos de Debate* (Notebooks for Debate) in 2009 with the goal of elaborating a way to understand and navigate Brazil's changing political landscape. These notebooks present the term used to define the current period: the *acumulação de forças* (accumulation of forces) (MST 2009a, b).

This study argues that instead of conceiving of this contemporary phase of the Landless Movement's existence as a time of decline, we ought to acknowledge that the movement is continuing and deepening the struggle on the land stage of mobilization when "accumulating forces." To illustrate this point, this article traces the origin and trajectory of the MST's educational initiative, *Educação do Campo* (Education of the Countryside). It highlights how the combination of factors internal and external to the movement provides the means for a collective, antagonist identity to develop. The analysis includes public policies, pedagogy, and school administration, showing how the movement's resistance to inequalities, certain government policies, and corporate actors persists, as well as how the political and economic terrain of rural contention has changed over the last 15 years.

This article is divided into five sections. First, it documents debates concerning institutionalization, identity, and demobilization. Then it historicizes Brazilian education, highlighting the recent attempts by agribusiness corporations and interest groups to implement their own pedagogy—*Educação no Campo* (Education in the Countryside)—which perpetuates historical inequalities and disseminates an individualistic and economic representation of rural life.

External factors—allies and institutions, public policies, and two massacres in the 1990s—allowed movement-led education initiatives to expand. Furthermore,

factors internal to the movement with respect to education—pedagogy and practices of school administration—reveal collective identity development and persistence. The last section explains why the movement has devoted more energy in the 2000s to accumulating forces, privileging education and the struggle on the land.

The primary materials for this research feature interviews conducted with movement leaders and members, as well as with allies, opponents, and government officials, over the course of 20 months between 2009 and 2011. Concerning education, in Brasília and the states of São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and Paraná, interviews were conducted with approximately 40 students in 7 separate focus groups, 11 movement-trained instructors, and 16 government officials. The ethnographic section was mainly conducted in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools also in Pernambuco, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and Paraná. My time at each school varied from three days to one month. At each school, I attended classes, participated in meetings, and cohabitated with students. These states are highly representative of the Landless Movement's practices. For example, many of the schools that I visited, particularly in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, and São Paulo, host students from every state in Brazil.² Furthermore, the initiatives in the southern and southeastern states, especially in Rio Grande do Sul, have become the model for the movement throughout Brazil.

I also analyzed and coded 31 manuals (17 in education, 12 in production, 2 on general movement trends) produced and distributed by the movement for training purposes. The data from interviews, social movement manuals, and participatory observation were complemented with analysis of legal documents and newspaper articles from the early 1990s to 2014. In addition, data were collected and arranged from government institutions, specifically the *Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária* (National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform, or INCRA) and the *Ministério de Educação e Cultura* (Ministry of Education and Culture, or MEC), as well as from the CPT to chart trends over the last 15 years in government spending, mobilization, and school enrollment.

DOES INSTITUTIONALIZATION DEMOBILIZE MOVEMENTS? COLLECTIVE ACTION AND IDENTITY

Social movement participation with formal government institutions has generated extensive debates. The main concerns are how to understand the nature of engagement with public policies and whether protracted interaction with formal authorities leads to demobilization and division or new avenues for resistance. What is at stake is how social movements—collective actors that claim autonomy from government and that challenge cultural, economic, or government power and authority—persist (Tilly 2005; Della Porta and Diani 1999; McAdam et al. 1996). To exist and last over time, social movements must reproduce a collective identity. In addition to being a constitutive element of social movements, theorists note, identities are

acquired in struggles with opponents (Kilgore 1999), allow actors to attribute blame to an antagonist (Taylor and Wirtier 1992), help groups to differentiate between friends, allies, and enemies (Reger et al. 2008), and help leaders craft strategies (Einhower 2008).

Engagement with governments, political parties, and interest groups is unavoidable; the phenomenon is known as institutionalization. Suh defines it as “the process of social movements traversing the official terrain of formal politics and engaging with authoritative institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary, the state, and political parties to enhance their collective ability to achieve the movement’s goals” (2011, 442). Such interaction is apparent in various movement activities, from forming nongovernmental organizations or negotiating with government representatives over public policy to encountering police forces and deciding whether or not to support candidates for office.

Some theorists connect institutionalization to demobilization and fragmentation. An early discussion is found in Michels’s analysis of the development of conservative, deradicalizing trends in early twentieth-century socialist political parties that became involved in electoral politics (1915). For Piven and Cloward (1979), demobilization resulted once U.S. movements in the 1960s and 1970s traded public disruption for involvement in public policy administration. Other analysts have found that coordinated collective action diminished when leaders began dedicating time and energy to work in government institutions (Tarrow 1998; Kriesi 1995). Hellman adds that movements demobilize after their demands are met, they become part of a political party, or they are co-opted by a populist leader (1992). Álvarez noticed that neoliberal reforms increased the professionalization of economically privileged organizations, contributing to fragmentation and marginalization of more disruptive elements in the Latin American feminist movement (1998).

Later studies show how the continuing growth of networks and movement professionalization does not necessarily harm movements. The tendency to produce inequalities and isolate certain voices is held in check by an organizational network that continues to promote a collective identity and channel demands into public policy circles (Thayer 2010; Álvarez 2009). The continuous interaction with government can also help movements achieve their goals. Abers and Keck note how organizations and public institutions partner to deliver services and build state capacity (2009). Fox, in his research on Mexican food policy, notes how work in government can help leaders in civil society to forward movement goals (1993). Adapting Fox’s work to the Brazilian Landless Movement, Tarrow finds that many changes in rural education policy have come from coalition-building practices between movement leaders and government elites (2015).

What warrants further specification is how factors both within and external to movements together contribute to collective identity development and movement persistence. Various studies on the MST have begun this analysis. For instance, Meek offers a rich discussion of the MST’s “critical, place-based learning practices” in a particular school (2015, 1186). Likewise, in analyzing the movement’s internal economic activities, Vergara-Camus illustrates how the MST challenges neoliberal-

ism through promoting peasant agriculture (2014). Focusing on conditions external to the movement, Wolford shows how different prior relationships to land produce meanings for members that in some cases lead to demobilization (2010a). Tarrow’s 2015 study deals almost exclusively with the movement’s successful efforts to mobilize allies in government. What is missing from these studies is how internal and external factors interact to provide the means through which the Landless Movement remains a collective actor engaged in resistance with a coherent identity.

Before detailing how external and internal elements combine to forward the Landless Movement’s educational project, let us trace how educational policy has unfolded in Brazil. Schools, in general, are centers of identity development. Paulo Freire, whose work the MST draws on, recognized how pedagogies that are rooted in the daily experience of students and that address social inequities can potentially galvanize mobilization (1996). Working from a Gramscian perspective, Michael Apple notes how instruction can inculcate nationalism, as well as individualized, economic, and depoliticized forms of behavior (1996). Taking into consideration these divergent perspectives on education, the extended period—over three decades—of interaction between the Landless Movement and government institutions in the area of education provides ample material to discern the effects of institutionalization on collective action and identity development.

BRAZILIAN EDUCATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before the advent of Getúlio Vargas’s *Estado Novo* (New State) in the 1930s, education was an elite privilege, not a right. Government and economic elites secured for their progeny a liberal arts education in secondary schools and universities, leaving everyone else with little to no access to formal schooling (Nagle 1974). The Vargas-era constitutions of 1934 and 1937 replaced elite education with universalizing and homogenizing efforts. As part of nation- and government-building efforts, education became free and a right. Curriculum became rooted in a single national model for every Brazilian in subjects such as Portuguese, science, and mathematics (Freitas and Bicas 2009). To instill a national identity, 800 private German schools were closed and then reopened as 900 public schools with instruction in Portuguese (Dalbey 1970). Homogenization of curriculum design under the banners of “rationality” and “standardization” brought more than 991,000 additional students into a national system to “eradicate separate ethnic, cultural, and national identities” (Souza 2008). Administration was centralized in one singular institution, the MEC, created in 1930.

Rural people were targeted for training on strictly technical aspects beginning in Vargas’s time (Soares 2001). The Catholic Church and large landowners retained control over schools yet gradually ceded authority to government, as mechanization led workers to leave for cities in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s (Marin and Marin 2008). When discussing the history of rural schools with two MEC officials, I was

told that for much of the twentieth century, “a good school was one that received and adapted technology from outside the countryside; it didn’t bring anything really from it” (MEC Officials 2011). Rural people went from total neglect to incorporation into a national project via pedagogies that privileged narrow economic pursuits.

Reforms in the 1990s decentralized administration. The devolution of governmental power to municipalities and states, which was central to democratization in the 1980s, did not deal with education policy (Pierce 2013). In 1996, with the *Lei de Diretrizes de Base* (Law of Basic Directives, or LDB), education reform began. The LDB grants pedagogical autonomy to state-level and municipal governments yet ensures uniformity in instruction through promoting a single national curriculum.³ The legislation recognizes rural education as “distinct” and “particular,” intending it to “complement” national directives. At the same time, neoliberal economic reforms cut resources for literacy efforts, rural schools, and adult education (Di Pierro 2005). The reforms recognize projects—with diminishing resources—concerned with rural people, but subordinate to governmental direction and national forms of identification.

Other recent reforms include increasing vocational education. The Lula administration sought to challenge poverty by devoting resources to technical education (MEC 2006a). MEC documents on this renewed attention to technical education mention the “pedagogical value of labor,” as well as the need for “social justice” (MEC 2010b). The guiding principle in these efforts is to train the Brazilian workforce “to compete in the global economy,” treating students as individuals for the labor market (MEC 2010a). MEC’s efforts, particularly in promoting vocational training in high schools and postsecondary institutions, have been criticized for directing economically marginalized youth into the lower levels of the workforce (Ciavatta and Ramos 2012). Instead of challenging inequalities, the promotion of technical education reproduces class hierarchies throughout Brazilian society.

Various efforts of economic actors and interest groups also exacerbate historical inequalities while promoting individualized and depoliticized identities. The non-governmental organization *Associação Nacional de Defesa Vegetal* (National Association for Crop Protection, or ANDEF), with members Syngenta, Bayer, BASF, Dupont, Dow, and Monsanto, has launched its own rural education campaign. Known as *Educação no Campo* (Education in the Countryside), one of its purposes is to distribute educational materials in schools that emphasize the safety of pesticides and the progressive nature of large-scale agriculture. In 2014, ANDEF began a partnership with 50 elementary schools in São Paulo state. For this effort, the organization created a cartoon mascot—Andefino—a white man in a green shirt and jeans, often pictured in fields and with animals. In one set of materials, *Boas práticas agrícolas no campo* (Good Agricultural Practices in the Countryside), Andefino lays out how pesticides control the spread of pests, as well as outlining do’s and don’ts when handling chemicals (ANDEF 2011).

ANDEF has the support of the government’s public health regulatory agency, the *Agência Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária* (National Health Surveillance Agency, or ANVISA). ANVISA conducts research and publishes findings on a variety of

Figure 1. Andefino vs. Sem Terrinha



Andefino poses alone (left), while the MST’s publication for youth, *Jornal das Crianças: Sem Terrinha* (Youth Journal: The Little Landless), features on its cover a group of children with the movement flag in front of a black tarp tent, which is common in encampments. Source: Andef-Andefino; *Jornal Sem Terrinha*.

issues pertaining to public health, from the potential effects of tobacco use to problems arising from cosmetics. The agency is governed by a four-member board—three pharmacists and one rural extension agent. Concerning agriculture, ANVISA has issued eight publications on appropriate pesticide use, how to identify when someone has been poisoned, and pesticide residue in food.

One publication, *Trilhas do campo* (Countryside Pathways), presents the agency’s program, the Program for the Analysis of Pesticide Residue (*Programa de Análise de Resíduos de Agrotóxicos em Alimentos*, or PARA). The document begins by noting that “Brazil is the world’s largest consumer of pesticides,” and how, given this fact, “store owners and purchasers who sell food must themselves discern whether or not a food item contains the appropriate level of pesticides ... caring for our health is everyone’s responsibility” (ANVISA 2011). In claiming that everyone is responsible, the publication presents consumers and wholesale purchasers as the regulators, which removes the burden from the chemical industry and large producers and presents pesticide use as part of daily life.

Without Andefino, but still utilizing cartoonlike figures to appeal to youth, ANVISA’s *Cartilha sobre agrotóxicos: série trilhas do campo* lays out the appropriate practices when working with chemicals (2011). Directions detail how to handle pesticide poisoning and how to store and transport chemicals. Using chemicals in agriculture is again depicted as natural, not as integral to a form of production that ben-

efits certain companies and large-scale producers. Five of the nine sources in this *Cartilha* are from ANDEF.

The other sources in this ANVISA publication are from the SENAR (*Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Rural*, National Service for Rural Learning) and the CNA (*Confederação da Agricultura e Pecuária do Brasil*, Brazilian Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock).⁴ The CNA has been a longtime opponent of the Landless Movement. In the 1980s, the Confederation assisted in the formation of the militant landlords' association, the *União Democrática Ruralista* (Rural Democratic Union, or UDR), which used violence to intimidate movement members. Throughout the 2000s, the CNA routinely blocked attempts in the Brazilian legislature to ease the requirements for expropriation (Delgado 2015; Medeiros 2015).

Now the CNA is challenging the movement in the area of education. Through SENAR, the CNA has launched initiatives in rural elementary schools with its own notebooks for students that detail how to grow vegetables, maintain tractors, and access credit. In CNA's *Escola Viva* (School Alive) program, created in 2009, affiliated technicians and teachers visit families to improve production capacities while also tutoring children.

Other efforts to promote agribusiness include SENAR's high school and post-secondary education initiatives. In partnership with MEC, the *Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e Emprego* (National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment, or PRONATEC), targets high school-age youth. From 2011 to 2014, this program graduated more than ninety thousand students (Canal do Produtor n.d.). How PRONATEC depoliticizes students is apparent after reviewing its core courses. Students select from 64 different classes while enrolled in the PRONATEC, ranging from bee keeping and tourism to artisanal indigenous crafts and tractor driving.⁵ Missing are classes on politics, history, or culture. The identity promoted in PRONATEC is strictly based in economic production and individualized forms of conduct.

ANDEF, ANVISA, and SENAR privilege an identity based in agribusiness production techniques. Nowhere in their materials are nontechnical elements of rural life present. Students are taught to view themselves as individuals, not as part of an organization or movement. Furthermore, the emphasis on chemical inputs benefits agribusiness companies; the CNA is led by large landowners who specialize in crops that require pesticides. Standard practices encouraged by government and economic elites favor a narrow understanding of economic production that perpetuates inequalities and hierarchies.

ALLIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND *EDUCAÇÃO DO CAMPO*

Despite historical inequities and entrenched economic elites, the Landless Movement's educational project has long involved the Brazilian government. Initial experiences took place at the municipal level. The first school administered by MST leaders emerged in the early 1980s in Rio Grande do Sul, in the municipality of Ronda Alta. Two women who were studying to become teachers negotiated with the municipal government to build a school for the children (MST 1990). Leaders increasingly pressured authorities for schools on settlements to provide education and involve the entire family in the Landless Movement, first mothers and teachers, and later fathers and others (Caldart 1999).

Additionally, when asked why the movement sought to seek formal recognition of their schools, MST members told me, "students were learning to read and write, yet had nothing to prove their skill levels. When they went to state schools, they had to take tests, many times having to repeat grades" (MST Sector of Education 2011b). The need was practical: students, in the event of transferring, had difficulties with paperwork. Since the 1980s, the Landless Movement claims to have pressured the Brazilian government to construct more than 2,000 schools, where more than 350,000 people have learned to read and write; another 350,000 individuals have attended classes on subjects ranging from geography to agroecology, and have been taught by more than 4,000 movement-trained teachers (MST 2009a).

What has become common is that the physical space for schools is included in agrarian reform settlements—part of the struggle for land. Decisions on pedagogy, or rather what is taught, tend to fall to state governments for secondary education and to municipalities for primary schooling.⁶ Interaction with the government on this issue has not always yielded success. In São Paulo state, for example, the MST has never succeeded in gaining resources or acknowledgment for primary or secondary education, while in Rio Grande do Sul, movement gains were thwarted when the administration of Governor Yeda Crusius (2006–10) brought into power public officials who ended collaboration with the movement (Tarlau 2013). When I spoke with one movement activist in the Pontal de Paranapanema region of São Paulo state, I was told how "the materials in settlement schools are often printed and distributed by agribusiness, promoting the use of pesticides and so on. And the director of education in the area, when he hears that we are with a social movement, doesn't even want to talk or listen" (MST Sector of Education 2011c). The director of pedagogy in the Pontal, which has more than one hundred agrarian reform settlements with schools, had never heard of Education of the Countryside (Regional Secretary of Education 2011). Individual allies in government can promote the movement's efforts, while opponents can close doors, for years in some cases.

Contributing to the growth of the movement's educational project, especially at the federal level, was the government's response to massacres of rural workers in 1995 and 1996. Reports triggered widespread sympathy for the movement—domestically and internationally—catching the Cardoso administration by surprise

Table 1. Number of Properties Expropriated for Agrarian Reform, by Presidential Administration

Administration, Years in Office	Number of Properties Expropriated
José Sarney (1985–1989)	748
Fernando Collor (1990–1992)	28
Itamar Franco (1992–1994)	238
Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002)	3,532
Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010)	1,990
Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014)	86

Source: INCRA; Arruda 2013.

and leading it to launch a series of policies dealing with agrarian reform (Ondetti 2008, 173–76; Cardoso 1997). The Lumiar project, for example, featured additional technical assistance for small farmers. The special credit program PROCERA (*Programa de Crédito Especial para a Reforma Agrária*, Special Program for Agrarian Reform Credit) tripled from R\$89 million to R\$250 million in 1995 and 1998. The increase in land that was redistributed and new settlements had no parallel in Brazilian history.

Concerning education, the national march to Brasília in 1997 for agrarian reform featured the first *Encontro Nacional de Educadores da Reforma Agrária* (National Meeting for Educators in Agrarian Reform). At this event, a coalition of Landless Movement members and allies—especially CONTAG, CNBB, and the MST—demanded specific rural educational policies in addition to financial resources and land. One result was the *Programa Nacional para Educação na Reforma Agrária* (National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform, or PRONERA), which began in 1998. Before this time, the movement’s educational project did not have an official name or title. The first reference in movement documents to *Educação do Campo* occurs in *Por uma Educação Básica do Campo* (Toward a Primary Education of the Countryside), a manual published by the movement to disseminate the debates from the first national conference on rural schools and education that took place in 1998 (MST 1999; see also Tarlau 2015). While the Landless Movement has always been concerned with education, Education of the Countryside explicitly started in the late 1990s.

PRONERA functions by granting movements administrative power, mainly for postsecondary courses. To access PRONERA resources—which are distributed by INCRA, the institution primarily concerned with distributing land and credit to agrarian reform beneficiaries—a student must have received land from INCRA or be a member of a family that has received land. INCRA’s role is to provide resources to postsecondary host institutions. Due to the extensive reach of social movements in agrarian reform settlements, members of MAB, MPA, and the MST dominate the management and organization classes.⁷

Given the historical neglect of rural populations, PRONERA is exemplary of how movements use the language of rights and policy to promote local control and inclusion (Molina and Freitas 2011). Since 1997, PRONERA has increased to more than 25 individual courses in areas such as history, medicine, and cooperative management at 82 public and private universities. In 2010 alone, more than 10,000 students from the Landless Movement participated in PRONERA courses (INCRA 2010). In 2010, movement leaders pressured the Lula administration to issue Decree 7352, officially making PRONERA a public policy (*política pública*). When I asked about the decree, I was told that it is a “legal impediment in case someone challenges [the movement’s actions]. Programs (*programas*) do not have this kind of protection” (MST Sector of Education 2011a). As a public policy, funding PRONERA has to be debated annually in Congress. Before 2010, its existence as a program did not require such constant attention from public authorities.

Analyzing PRONERA and INCRA reveals the relevance of government institutions. INCRA, via PRONERA, and MEC craft education policy. When comparing the institutions, I was told, “INCRA has a different nature [than MEC], it allows for public policies to develop that are oriented for the countryside and that provide a place for social movements. In MEC, a policy gets institutionalized, gets framed in a certain way, and then we [the movement] disappear” (MST Sector of Education 2010). MEC is considered an institution with clearly defined roles for officials and movements. INCRA is different. First, the institution been characterized as staffed by social justice-minded, poorly paid officials (Wolford 2010b). In an interview with one INCRA official, the institution was described as a “state within a state” that “does too many things . . . taking on responsibilities other institutions ought to” (INCRA Official 2011b). INCRA better suits the Landless Movement because the institution is characterized by poorly defined roles and a lack of resources. Seemingly negative qualities assist the movement because members can exert their influence in INCRA, which is not possible in institutions with a clear division of labor, such as MEC.

Following the emergence of PRONERA, Education of the Countryside began to appear regularly in laws and government publications in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Of particular relevance is Resolution 1 CNE/CEB from 2002, which recognizes Education of the Countryside and acknowledges that rural life requires a special form of education that features social movements. This has especially affected the movement’s efforts to influence municipal and state governments. Over the last 15 years, 20 of Brazil’s 26 states have passed similar resolutions that recognize the legitimacy of Education of the Countryside.⁸ While echoing the LDB in acknowledging the distinct form of rural education, the resolution differs by favoring social movement involvement. Commenting on the resolution, one movement leader emphasized that it is “an instrument that the movement uses to assert the right to education, as well as something that gives people an increased sense of self-esteem” (MST Sector of Education 2010).

Analyzing government institutions adds an extra dimension to social movement institutionalization. The turnover of individual officials from election to elec-

tion has led some scholars to recognize how expectations about policymaking are difficult to discern (Hochstetler and Keck 2007, 16–18). Focusing on the fluidity of personnel in the Brazilian bureaucracy, at the municipal and state levels especially, also draws attention to how allied individuals can help a movement achieve its goals. The contrary can also be the case, as seen in São Paulo and briefly in Rio Grande do Sul. Furthermore, if an institution lacks resources and clear objectives, then a movement has a greater chance of exerting its influence. The last external factor is found in how the movement took advantage of the increase in public sympathy after the two massacres in the 1990s, making already vulnerable institutions even more susceptible to demands. Unlike the Brazilian feminist movement, the governmental terrain where we find the Landless Movement has allowed, if not encouraged, the movement to retain its collective nature.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN MOVEMENT SCHOOLS

If government institutions, certain allies, and policies are the external factors that facilitate the movement's educational project, then the spaces of instruction and the movement's pedagogy are the actual expressions internal to the movement where we find collective identity development. The MST has a special role within the Landless Movement in terms of creating the documents for educational purposes, which directly contribute to identity development. Many schools and courses attended by the members of the Landless Movement use MST materials.⁹ Understanding how the Landless Movement's struggle on the land perpetuates a collective identity and resistance, especially in Education of the Countryside, requires analyzing the materials used in instruction and practices in particular schools.

A central concept in the movement's pedagogy is *realidade* (reality). One MST text on pedagogy states that "reality is our base to produce knowledge ... it is not only what immediately surrounds us, but is also the world! It is what needs to be known, appreciated, and transformed close and far beyond our settlements" (MST 1996, 167). Another text used to train movement teachers, *Como fazer a escola que queremos: o planejamento* (Making the School that We Want: Planning), provides a list of questions for students to answer concerning the nature of agricultural production in their surrounding locale, the organization of their settlement or encampment, and the nature of local political, social, and cultural relations (MST 1995a). A sense of transformation is embedded in the concept, emphasizing that "labor generates all wealth, making us a class that is capable of constructing new social relations and a consciousness to analyze the labor process" (MST 1996, 169). The movement's conception of reality in its identity work privileges the student as a worker, as well as a producer (Vendramini 2003). Reality draws attention to the constitution of politics, economics, and culture, foregrounding how lived experience produces knowledge.

The concept of reality features a rural worker identity that contrasts with historical and current alternatives. First, the movement is a collectivity that is rooted in

class relations and difference. Roseli Caldart, one of the principal MST pedagogues, emphasizes how

the landless bring different ways to see the world, understand life, conceive of relationships, as well as prejudices ... with their individual pasts, [the movement] constructs a new identity, from a person without land (*trabalhador sem a terra*) to a landless worker (*trabalhador sem terra*), and later landless (*sem terra*), an identity rooted in organization building and collective resistance. (Caldart 1999, 120)

Unlike the individual rural worker depicted by Andefino and agribusiness, the identity featured by the movement is collective and antagonistic. Various past and present government initiatives intend that students will individually insert themselves into already existing modes of production, training people to drive tractors or learn the latest techniques in pesticide management. ANDEF and SENAR continue to promote this kind of subordination. The focus on class and transformation—key to the Landless identity—directly opposes reducing education to the requirements of specific occupations.

One technique used to access reality is the Freirian concept of *temas geradores* (generative themes). Generative themes require students to locate the educational value of their immediate surroundings. When asked for an illustration, one elementary school teacher told me how the content of classroom discussions came from students' own views of the encampment's needs, which at one time concerned access to water, and at another, the need for literacy (Teacher 2011). At a different movement school that hosted an early childhood education training seminar, I spent one day with a group of teachers who were learning how a common Brazilian nursery rhyme, *Escravidão de Jo* (Jo's Slaves), could be used to teach history and geography (Fieldnotes MST School 2009). In the seminar, teachers discussed how the nursery rhyme's content offered a way to explain to children how slavery connects Africa to Brazil, to sugar production, and to land inequality. Local needs and beliefs, as well as class relations and history, determine classroom lessons.

In Paraná, high school students learn how agroecology is a mode of agricultural production that challenges capitalism in a specific pedagogy called the *Diálogo dos Saberes* (Dialogue of Knowledges). Students learn how to persuade others to stop producing with purchased inputs, such as seeds, pesticides, and so on. Additionally, they form groups that guide families in their respective settlements to produce according to agroecological methods (*Diálogo dos saberes* training document 2011). Students are also trained to "socialize," or disseminate without charge, what they learn to families in their home communities (Fieldnotes Escola Milton Santos 2011). In visits to schools in Paraná and elsewhere, I repeatedly heard movement members emphasize the importance of socialization. Decommodifying access to education challenges capitalism by establishing nonmarket ways to exchange knowledge. The pedagogy also intends to create self-reliant producers who resist purchasing seeds, chemicals, or land. The identity in the *Diálogo* is rooted in analyzing and transforming agricultural production as a collective, not by following directions from corporate elites and their materials.

The practices characteristic of how the Landless Movement administers schools further emphasize collectivity over individuality. No matter the school—elementary, secondary, or postsecondary—administrators, students, and teachers form groups that debate, evaluate, and decide on everything from who cleans the classroom to how to incorporate agroecology into a course. In each school, students form *núcleos*, small groups of five or six, to manage affairs. This style of administration is called “ascending and descending democracy.” As discussed in the pedagogical statement of IEJC, “in ascending democracy, each *núcleo* debates and makes proposals at each level ... [while] decisions that are ultimately decided on are implemented, and responsibilities distributed for execution, in descending democracy” (TERRA 2004, 37–39).¹⁰ In allowing students to express concerns in the “ascending” phase, the objective is to decentralize implementation and design by distributing responsibilities through each school’s student body. In the “descending” phase, execution is shared by many members rather than remaining with a few.

Every high school I visited in São Paulo, Paraná, Pernambuco, and Rio Grande do Sul organized daily meal preparation and cleanup according to the *núcleo* mode of administration. Study times and many in-class assignments were also coordinated by groups. In *Instituto Educar* (Educate Institute), I became a member of one *núcleo*, participated in classes as a student, assisted in a class project on local agricultural production practices, served breakfast, and helped in the daily farm chores, where students practiced agroecology techniques. My participation in management included periodically meeting with *núcleo* leaders and the school administration. At one meeting, the topic concerned how to organize the school’s day-to-day maintenance during Holy Week, when many students returned home (Fieldnotes Instituto Educar 2011). Collectives, not individuals, manage school affairs.

Another of the movement’s educational practices, the *pedagogia de alternância* (alternating pedagogy), allows students to incorporate into their studies the concrete needs of the places where they live, and strengthens the sense of collectivity. For the duration of the course, usually two or three years, students “alternate” between three months at school, *tempo escolar* (school time), and three months in their encampment or settlement, *tempo comunidade* (community time). This policy was adopted by Landless Movement organizations to deal with scarce governmental resources (Ribeiro 2008). At one school, students told me that they learn “what it means and how to live in the collective” so that they can later “take that [knowledge] back to the settlements to practice” (Núcleo 1, Escola Milton Santos 2011b). In the movement, the schools function to reproduce the *núcleo* style of administration in spaces of instruction, as well as for the future, when the youth return to their settlements or encampments. During my visits to every school, I also found students elaborating projects for their *trabalho de conclusão de curso* (end of the course project, or TCC), which benefited a cooperative or a group of families from their communities. Examples included an organic milk operation, a distillery for liquor production, and a community garden (Núcleo 1, Instituto Educar 2011; Núcleo 2, Instituto Educar 2011).

The content and practice of Education of the Countryside, which are facilitated by public policies such as PRONERA, government institutions, and allies, involve

students in course design and execution. The Landless Movement’s educational project, with its politicized identity, is not found in the plans proposed historically and currently by SENAR, CNA, and ANDEF. These agencies privilege an individualized, nonconfrontational form of identity, while the Landless Movement emphasizes collectivity and resistance.

MOBILIZING THROUGH GOVERNMENT TO ACUMULAR FORÇAS

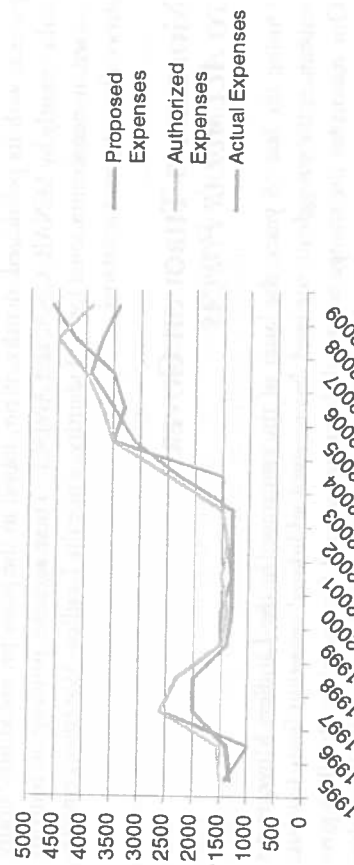
During the last 15 years, the latter of the two stages in the Landless Movement’s resistance, the struggle on the land, has received additional attention from activists. One reason for the change is several changing external factors in the Brazilian government. After creating PRONERA in the late 1990s, the Cardoso administration began cutting programs, such as the rural extension program Lumiar, as well as prohibiting the redistribution of land that had been occupied.¹¹ Occupations declined and governmental support for various public policies was endangered (Ondetti 2008, 192–97).

Conditions changed with the arrival of the new PT government in 2002. The PT, despite deradicalizing in the 1990s, retained social justice themes and movement allies (Samuels 2004). As a result, the party made resources more available and offered greater institutional continuity. Concerning continuity, Rolf Hackbart became the longest-serving president in INCRA’s modern history (2003–2010).¹² The same leadership and staff allowed the Landless Movement to build relationships and programs with government officials for longer periods. INCRA also saw its budget for public policies connected to agrarian reform increase; for example, for officials’ salaries, expropriating land, education, and credit (figure 2).

INCRA’s general institutional directives also changed. In what was called *consolidação* (consolidation), a renewed emphasis was given to building roads, making viable economic production, and establishing working sanitation systems (Oliveira 2010). The credits distributed, as well as the land, were considered *fundo perdido* (lost funds), meaning that families who received the resources were not expected to repay (INCRA Official 2011a). Such changes, in terms of resources and personnel, did not lead to the reification of an institutional division of labor between movements and bureaucrats. In fact, changes during the PT governments have made both the Landless Movement and INCRA stronger.

Lula’s time in office was not universally positive for the Landless Movement. In 2008, the *Ministério Público* (The Public Prosecutor’s Office) and Department of Education in Rio Grande do Sul partnered to end collaboration with the MST because the movement allegedly indoctrinated children and threatened their safety.¹³ At the federal level, congressional inquiries (*Comissões Parlamentares de Inquérito* or CPIs) in 2002, 2005, and 2010 targeted the movement and cut resources for its educational project. Opposition arose from allegations that the movement failed to manage resources, promoted violence, and fostered an anti-democratic ideology.¹⁴

Figure 2. INCRA's Budget, 1995–2010 (in millions of reais)



Source: INCRA 2010.

When Lula came to power in 2002, the MST was also facing a series of internal economic problems. Diniz and Gilbert (2013) highlight the flawed efforts at collectivization initiated in the 1980s, while Cristofoli's 2000 study of four cooperatives in Rio Grande do Sul found member exhaustion leading to demobilization. An assessment conducted by the movement of its cooperatives noted systematic debt and mismanagement (MST 1999).

The problem of debt was due to the structure of PROCERA. This credit program incentivized the formation of groups by dividing funding opportunities into *tetos* (ceilings) 1 and 2 (Souza 2008). To receive ceiling 2 resources, which were double ceiling 1 amounts, someone had to request credit as a group. Since the program's inception in the 1980s and through the 1990s, the MST encouraged members to form cooperatives to receive the additional resources (MST 1995b). Members referred to this period as a time of "easy money" because initial restrictions and requirements for obtaining credit were lax (COPERLAT Director 2011). At one cooperative, I was told that in the 1980s and 1990s, families intended to engage in monocultural production of commodities like corn and soy, which depended on investment in heavy machinery and storage facilities. The goal was "to be like the big ones, you know, like the large landowners" (Fieldnotes COOPTAR 2011). Without training and knowledge of large-scale production, the families' debt accrued and production stalled.

The movement began the accumulation of forces phase of contention to address these political and economic challenges. In 2009, the MST leadership issued for its membership two *Cadernos de Debate* (Notebooks for Debate) on the direction of the movement. The first, *Os desafios da luta pela reforma agrária popular e do MST* (Challenges Facing the Struggle for Agrarian Reform and the MST), begins by noting, "we must confront challenges to building political and economic forces in our settlements and encampments. It is understood that the struggle for agrarian reform today is a process of accumulating forces" (MST 2009b, 13). In the docu-

ment, the movement recognizes how opposition from large landowners and the Brazilian government has changed, especially since 2002. "The agents of repression," it asserts, "have begun to use other spaces and other facets of the state" (MST 2009b, 10). The "other" government institutions identified include the Public Ministry, the *Tribunal das Contas da União* (the State Auditor), and the CPIs.

The movement's second notebook in the series, *Para debater os desafios internos do MST* (Debating the MST's Internal Challenges), brings up a series of internal issues, notably overcentralization, a lack of creativity, excessive attention to economic matters, and an overall lack of learning, debating, and reflection (MST 2009c, 14–18). The accumulation phase entailed devoting time and energy to strengthening the movement internally by helping members to develop the ability to critique themselves and the movement.

Strengthening in the accumulation period also meant shifting energies to regain control over land that had been redistributed to movement families during the struggle on the land phase of resistance. I was also told how the movement was "losing control over the settlements" due to the growing presence of salespeople selling conventional seeds and pesticides to members, who were becoming "small agribusiness farmers (*agronegócios*)" (Ex-MST Director 2011). In one document, *Constituição e gestão de iniciativas agroindustriais cooperativas em áreas de reforma agrária* (Constitution and Management of Agroindustrial Initiatives in Cooperatives on Agrarian Reform Settlements), movement leaders present the successful practices of cooperatives with the goal of "contributing to the process of regaining control over cooperation and cooperatives in agrarian reform settlements" (MST 2010, 8). An additional practice during the accumulation period to oppose individualism was the promotion of informal acts of cooperation in settlements and encampments, such as sharing tractors (MST State Director 2011). Disseminating practical success stories about cooperative management displays how collective production and identity can develop.

Increasing efforts to teach agroecology in schools and production confront *agronegócios* by developing a noninput mode of collective agricultural production. Small, family-centered forms of production have always sat at the center of the MST's struggle for agrarian reform. Embracing agroecology continues these earlier practices. The difference now is the planned attempt to confront current problems in settlements and in economic production by coordinating transitions to collective, labor-intensive technologies, like permaculture, and away from mechanization and debt.

Another element connecting the struggle on the land moment of resistance to the current period of accumulating forces is the attempt to create a new kind of leader, known as the *técnico-militante* (militant-technician). Encouraging leadership development from the movement's own ranks rather than relying on outsiders has long been a staple of the MST's model (Veltmeyer and Petras 2002). The militant-technician is different: in addition to a political commitment to the MST, the movement requires formal training in agricultural production. In a description of the IEJC's pedagogical project issued in 2001, the school's goals include offering professional and high school education and the training of militants and technicians

for work in the MST (ITERRA 2004, 5). A subsequent description of the MST's professional training courses states that they "help to form militant-technicians who are capable of organizing practical issues in settlements, as well as providing political and technical assistance" (ITERRA 2008, 17).

With the militant-technician project, Education of the Countryside takes a strategic place in the Landless Movement. Its current importance for the movement cannot be underestimated; this cadre of leaders must foster a collective, politicized sense of identity while strengthening the movement's membership base economically. The students I interviewed in Paraná and at the other movement schools who were learning agroecological production techniques openly referred to themselves as technical militants. Programs at these schools also functioned with PRONERA resources. In the accumulation of forces period, the movement has used the Brazilian government, principally through education policy, to strengthen itself internally and produce its next generation of leaders.

CONCLUSIONS: FROM THE STRUGGLE ON THE LAND, BACK TO THE STRUGGLE FOR LAND?

While the movement has always been concerned with what happens after gaining land, its practices have increasingly been taken up with postoccupation struggles. A combination of external and internal factors underpins the movement's emphasis on its "struggle on the land" phase of resistance, which it currently refers to as the time to accumulate forces. The Landless Movement's actions in this current phase have a dual quality: on the one hand, the attempt to build capacity for future actions by creating new leaders, revising movement practices, and gaining resources, while on the other, continuing to directly challenge government and economic elites. The pedagogical program Education of the Countryside is strategically crucial to the movement for the initiative's role in creating new leadership and strengthening a collective, antagonistic identity.

The terrain on which agrarian reform is taking place has undergone significant changes in the last 15 years. Land redistribution remains key, but so is the reproduction of the Landless Movement. In reproduction, the movement offers a distinct challenge to standard understandings of economic production in rural areas—exemplified by Andefino and agribusiness firms. Instead of reducing the intentions and practices of actors to narrow, typically commodity-oriented production imperatives, the movement promotes a collective identity rooted in class differences. This has taken place because of the interaction of factors external and internal to the movement. Prolonged interaction with government—that is, institutionalization—instead of leading to demobilization, has engendered movement growth and development.

For the struggle for land to regain prominence, new leaders with innovative tactics and critical perspectives may have to emerge. Through Education of the Countryside, the MST is creating spaces for the next generation of activists to develop.

How and if the struggle for land again becomes viable will be decided by the leaders who are currently learning about their *realidades* in MST classrooms.

NOTES

1. Occupations fell from 496 in 2004 to 205 in 2014 (CPT 2005, 2015).
2. Between 1998 and 2011, five schools hosted movement-led education initiatives in Paraná, along with five in Rio Grande do Sul, four in São Paulo, and two in Pernambuco. I attended courses at three schools in Paraná: the *Escola Milton Santos* (Milton Santos School), the *Centro de Desenvolvimento Sustentável e Capacitação em Agroecologia* (the Center for Sustainable Development and Training in Agroecology, or CEAGRO), and the *Instituto Tecnológico e Educacional de Pesquisa da Reforma Agrária* (the Educational and Technological Institute for Research on Agrarian Reform, ITEPA), and one in Rio Grande do Sul, the *Instituto Educar* (Educate Institute). In Pernambuco, I stayed one week with teachers at a school outside Caruaru. On many occasions, I also visited the *Instituto Técnico de Capacitação e Pesquisa da Reforma Agrária* (Technical Institute for Capacity Building and Research on Agrarian Reform, or ITERRA) and the *Escola Nacional Florestan Fernandes* (Florestan Fernandes National School, or ENFF), located, respectively, in Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo.
3. Article 26 reads, "Curriculum for elementary and secondary education must have a common national base that will be completed in each system and place of instruction. This national common base in each system and place of instruction may allow for a diversified part, given regional and local social qualities."
4. CNA represents agribusiness in Brazil's corporatist system. CONTAG represents labor.
5. PRONATEC's course listing can be found at http://www.senar.org.br/sites/default/files/portfolio_guia_fic_pronatec_2015.pdf. Accessed July 1, 2016.
6. For responsibilities by level of government, see LDB/1996, Articles 8–11.
7. Leite traces the vast majority—about 90 percent of settlements created after 1985—to movement pressure (2004).
8. Education of the Countryside programs exist in Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Maranhão, Ceará, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Alagoas, Sergipe, Bahia, Tocantins, Goiás, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Roraima. Rio Grande do Sul in 2012 formed a committee to discuss the program. Acre, Pernambuco, Espírito Santo, São Paulo, and Rondônia do not have a program.
9. Every organization in the Landless Movement references Education of the Countryside on its website and in demands. Missing are pedagogical materials by movements other than the MST. CONTAG makes available on its website only the relevant legislation, while MPA has materials on agricultural production but not education.
10. The IEJC (*Instituto de Educação Josué de Castro*) is the MST's private high school, physically located within ITERRA.
11. See Portaria-MDA 62, 3/27/2001 and Medida Provisória 2.183-56, 8/24/2001.
12. Before Hackbart, Sebastião Azevedo served from 2001 to 2002; Francisco Orlando Costa Muniz, 2000–2001; Raul Jungmann, 1996–99; Xico Graciano and Brazílio de Araújo Neto split the post in 1995; and Osvaldo Russo was president from 1993 to 1995.
13. See Public Act 1116/2007 from the Public Ministry.
14. Each investigation began by alleging the misuse of funds by MST-created non-governmental organizations, such as ANCA (the *Associação Nacional de Cooperação Agrícola*, the National Association of Agricultural Cooperation), which held *convênios* (contracts) with government institutions. As of this writing, no indictments have been issued.

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Watchdogs in Our Midst: How Presidents Monitor Coalitions in Brazil's Multiparty Presidential Regime

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ABSTRACT

When delegating governing tasks to a coalition partner, the president would like to give a minister ample administrative powers to be able to effectively accomplish the political mission. Due to information asymmetries, the president runs the risk that this discretion might be used to pursue policy outcomes that may harm the president's preferences. This trade-off between delegation and control is key to understanding governance strategies the president chooses to minimize agency risks and coordinate public policies. With Brazil as a case study, this article demonstrates that presidents have strategically made frequent use of junior ministers as watchdogs of coalition partners, especially when coalition allies are ideologically distant from the president's preferences. Yet neither the portfolio salience nor the president's decision to share powers with coalition partners proportionally seems to interfere in such strategic decisions.

Presidents in multiparty presidential regimes face a constant political dilemma: in order to govern and to sustain majority coalitions over time, presidents must allocate cabinet positions to coalition partners, granting them access to the policy and budgetary resources of the executive. At the same time, by delegating such political authority to parties in coalitions, presidents run the risk of being expropriated by appointed cabinet ministers who may not fully share the president's preferences. This is a typical agency problem. Delegating cabinet positions to coalition partners, the president gains legislative support to maintain a successful legislative agenda. However, once in control of a portfolio, the minister may pursue an agenda other than the president's.

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