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Social division of labor in rural spaces in Brazil: memory and  
history of the expansion of rural social movements and  
disputes over hegemony

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## **Social division of labor in rural spaces in Brazil: memory and history of the expansion of rural social movements and disputes over hegemony<sup>12</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*This study presents analysis about the course of the agrarian conflicts that existed in Brazil from the 1940s until 2015, which placed in the political-ideological centrality the forces existing in the Brazilian rural sphere. Two paths were crossed. a) Social division of labor (Mészáros, 2004) in the rural area due the expansion of big rural properties, transforming land of work into land of business, opening a sequence of conflicts with peasants. b) The second path covered refers to the analysis of data collected and organized by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT in Portuguese), identifying agrarian conflicts in Brazil since 1985. The data offered, until the year 2015, served as a meeting point to the history of Brazil, marked by its contradictions and memories, which at the same time, remaining alive, as if it is willing to continue to be an eternal present (Jameson, 1996), through its structures of spoliation and conflict. Brazil entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with large debts to be paid related to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the biggest debits is the land issue. A question derived from these struggles, and not very simple to answer, is: the number of families and areas involved in the conflicts changes the national land structure in its productive and political aspects? Nowadays, these actions are organized by historical subjects, transforming individual demands into collective proposals in which social subjects perceive themselves as a political force and consolidate knowledge in a permanent educational process. Conflict data registered by the CPT (1985-2016) indicate that there was no change in popular demands for land property and use, and this may also indicate that there was no change in the Brazilian land structure.*

**Keywords:** Social division of rural labor; land of work and land of business; Land structure in Brazil.

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## 1 Introduction

"A country without memory is a country without history"<sup>6</sup>

Brazil entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with large debts to be paid related to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the largest, if not the largest, is the land issue. The Brazilian countryside has been the scene of permanent conflicts. In the middle of the nineteenth century (1850), the agrarian elite presented to the country the "Land Law", rendering unviable access to this means of production to the dispossessed population of income, money or wealth. Thirty-eight years later (1888) a significant portion of the population "won" the induct, the "abolition of slavery", or to be more precise, gained the freedom to be workers and not possessors. Without access to the means of production there is no freedom.

Taking a leap in national history to the year 2013, after 163 years of the Land law, the national congress issued Law 12,850, which typifies "criminal organizations" in the country. With this law, any "collective action" (Vakaloulis 2000) that confronts the social order may be prosecuted and its participants arrested. A fact that, incidentally, occurred in some states of Brazil. To cite just one example, in 2016 three peasants and one geographer were arrested in the state of Goiás. First crime: to occupy land, to be dispossessed and to create an encampment named Padre Jósimo in the Southwest region of the State. Second crime: belong to an organization of popular character, the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST, in Portuguese), which develops collective actions seeking the occupation of unoccupied lands. That is, they have no income, money or wealth! They cannot have access to a means of production. They cannot have the freedom to conflict with capital to gain access to work. And even less, participate in movements that can give them consciousness in the conditions of historical collective subjects. We must, in fact, resolve the land ownership problems of the nineteenth century (Barker 2014).

This study presented information about the course of the agrarian conflicts that existed in Brazil from the 1940s until 2015, which placed in the political-ideological centrality the forces existing in the rural space. Two paths were crossed. The first path, social division of labor (Mészáros 2004) in the rural area with the expansion of the large rural property, transforming land of work to land of business, opening a sequence of conflicts with peasants. In this first walk, it was analyzed the historical perspective of social movements and their relation to the construction of a memory of conflict. It was also sought to understand how conflicts over land use and ownership influenced the national context and the interfaces with disputes over hegemony, whether in civil society or in political society, consolidating social actors and identifying protagonists. The second path covered is the analysis of data collected and organized by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT, in Portuguese) in its Documentation Center "Dom Tomás Balduino", which identified agrarian conflicts in Brazil since the year 1985.

A warning is necessary: The data presented up to the year 2015 served as a meeting point between the past, marked by its contradictions and memories, which at the same time remains alive, as if willing to continue in an eternal present (Jameson 1996), with its structures of spoliation and conflicts. According to Millôr Fernandes, "Brazil has a long way to go"<sup>7</sup>.

The actions organized by the diversity of social movements linked to peasant's conflict with the hegemonic forces of agrarian capital, remains not a simple question to answer: the gigantic amount of families and areas involved in the conflicts are able to change in some way the national land structure its productive and political aspects? In modernity and contemporaneity these actions are organized by historical subjects, transforming individual demands into collective proposals in which social subjects

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<sup>6</sup>Sentence extracted from a plate fixed at the entrance of the National Stadium of Chile.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://www.google.com.br/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=Mill%C3%B4r+Fernandes+%E2%80%9CBrasil+tem+um+longo+passado+pela+frente%E2%80%9D>

perceive themselves as a political force and consolidate knowledge in a permanent educational process. The quantitative data of occupations registered in the CPT database in the last thirty years (1985-2016) indicate that there was no change in the popular demands for land ownership and use, and this may also indicate that there was no significant change in the Brazilian land structure. In this field of conflicts the organizational potential of the peasant social movements became a capillary force in the national reality, making itself present in all Brazilian territory. These forces qualifies the conflicts in a perspective of overcoming the conservative roots existing in rural spaces, redesigning the social division of labor, constituting, on the one hand, peasants producing food, whose base is small subsistence agriculture, on the other, those which, at the same time, coexist with unemployment, precarious work and other forms of exploitation, which are what Martins (1986) called “excluded residuals”. At the same time, redesigns the social division of labor, since they put millions of peasants in the productive system producing food (for their subsistence, but also to the market via productive surplus). These millions of arms (labor force) were reinserted into the productive system.

## **2 "Work land, business land": the expansion of capital**

The economic and political development of Brazil is structured by a strong rural attribute. The control of rural spaces gave rise to the big farms and monoculture structure that dates back to the slave-master relationship and also led to the crossing of capital-labor relations during the 20th century (Alves 2010). The centrality of land ownership was consolidated in the Brazilian socioeconomic and political scenario (Prado Jr 1979). In turn, these types of land use and ownership were the scene for confrontations between expanding capital against the peasantry, or between the same capital and the populations extorted from the land in the process of capital expansion (Martins 1986). These disputes can be considered as political actions that highlight the differences, distortions and concentration of wealth in civil society, in addition to establishing ideological conflicts, placing, on the agenda, the consolidation of hegemonies or their possible ruptures.

It is noteworthy that the agrarian ruling class constructed its hegemony in a relation of command and consent derived from the use and ownership of lands, creating coercive conditions of control over peasants, in particular, and civil society in general, from the cultural (ideological) point of view, or political-economic (State and its instances) standpoint. The control of civil society and political society directly interfered with the bloc that exercised hegemony (Gramsci 1979; 2002). These actions, common in a particular social group, but not permanent, of subordination to another group tend to blur the existing contradictions in social and political relations.

The conception of the world imposed mechanically by the external environment of the hegemonic force is devoid of critical consciousness and class coherence of the subaltern bloc, disaggregating it from its own interests. The uncritical adoption of a conception of the world of another social group has resulted in a contrast between thinking and acting and the coexistence of two conceptions of the world which are manifested in words and in actual action. (Alves 2010, p.74).

In this scenario, at least three social actors entered into conflicts over the use and possession of land in Brazil. The peasants (their own and allied organizations), the state (their bureaucratic / legal structures and class alliances) and agrarian capital (their own and allied organizations). These social actors “met” during the years of 1930 to 1960, in the process of the great demography movements, for a new redefinition of the division of labor in Brazil.

The “March to the West” (Lenharo 1986), is the reference in this space occupation gear in the states of the Midwest region of Brazil (Goiás, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul), the occupation was related to the quantitative enlargement of population and also of agricultural system modernization,

including opening the way for the occupation of the Amazon region, the so-called “agricultural frontier”. It was planned during the “New State” dictatorship in the Getúlio Vargas government, starting in 1938. He found in the “empty spaces” of the Midwest the solution to some social problems that pressed him. On the one hand, peasants in southern Brazil demanded agrarian reform and more space to work the land. On the other hand, the emigrants from the Northeast that fled from drought and fence also pressured the government. Another factor, similarly relevant, was the opening of pioneer fronts and agricultural expansion that put millions of hectares of land into activities in the national agricultural production system. It was significantly important for the consolidation of agrarian capital hegemony.

Beginning in the 1950s, the construction of Brasília consolidated this “March” at the same time as it contributed to the attraction of population contingents towards the Midwest. Nevertheless, the “opening of agricultural frontiers” at distinct historical moments, was the main factor of occupation and development of the region, which also had a strong State action to increase this movement (Lenharo 1986; Campos 1983). It would seem strange, to an Orthodox liberal, this “invisible hand of the state” intervening directly in the economic direction of the country.

In a second moment of this “March”, government investments for the creation of infrastructure networks were of vital importance, as well as the development of agricultural research and the granting of subsidized agricultural credit, were decisive in the implementation of colonization and development projects. Intensive agriculture in the region from the 1960s (Pietrafesa 2002; Campos 2012), which can be identified as the second migratory cycle for the region. “The State projected itself as the element with the power of representation, insofar as it sought to promote both territorial expansion and the integration of isolated regions of the wilderness with the ‘modern and civilized’ coastline” (Silva 2004). The project for occupation of the West was not limited to the geographical occupation of the frontier, but to make these areas, then occupied, an effective and productive part of the Brazilian territory, with the control of two social actors: agrarian capital and the State as a cohesive bloc.

It stands out in this expansion of agricultural frontier the possibility of valorization of its lands, mainly driven by the opening of rice and pasture crops, and because it has a relatively flat topography. As prices before the 1960s and 1970s were extremely low, this encouraged the migration of southern populations to the region. Even the most remote areas of the state were an attraction for investments linked to capitalist expansion in the countryside. According to Estevam (1998), several “development corridors” were observed in the Midwest region of Brazil. These corridors were being characterized from the production of grains (soybean, rice), but also incorporated the extension of sugarcane plantations and the opening of sugar and alcohol distilleries (Estavam 1998). The 1960s mark a large fluctuation in the population growth of the Midwest region of Brazil. Inaugurated a second migratory cycle, which we can call a “2<sup>nd</sup> March to the West” (Pietrafesa; Pereira Filho 2007).

This phenomenon, coordinated by political society and civil society, consolidated a bloc of control and coercion that gave the necessary support so that the regional division of labor in Brazil was strengthened, at the same time it reinforced the national agrarian sector in the region. The Midwest of Brazil has become the national “barn”. Export food, import industrialized products.

It is worth highlighting four examples of reflections that identify the priorities actions of the State and actions of agrarian capital in confrontation with the peasants. Prado Jr (1975 1979) pointed out that for Brazil to overcome the delayed development model, socially and politically controlled by the big farmers, state actions were necessary to break with the isolation of the peasants, inserting them into the national economy. Ignacio Rangel, unlike Prado Jr. (1979), identified contradictions in the modernizing and conservative logic of rural space, based on the removal of rural populations from their lands to be cheap labor in the industries. The rural space, for this scholar, generated an idle

capacity, with a lot of concentrated land, little work force, diminishing the production of local wealth, at the same time that its domain increased the social, political and ideological power of the landowners (Silva 2013).

For Ianni (2004) this is one of the periods in which transformations occur in the relations between agrarian capital and the “labor market”. The transit of the “old peasant” was consolidated to the new landless wage-earner. From the 1970s, Martins (1980) identified the transformation of rural land from land to work for business land, a factor that greatly expanded land conflicts in frontier areas.

If on the one side the Brazilian rural space was born in economic and political transformations of State, guided to the development of agrarian and industrial capital (obtaining differential income and also the consolidation of a new bloc of control, cohesion and coercion, formed by agrarian capital and by the state), on the other side the peasants reacted in the most varied ways.

Between the years of 1950-1960 a set of conflicts occurs in the Brazilian rural world, putting in question the hegemonic bloc. These conflicts began after a long process to create the peasant coalitions. In several regions the “boiling” of the “social thermometer” was high. Conflicts in the South of Brazil coordinated by the Peasant Leagues and the proliferation of Rural Workers’ Unions (STR, in Portuguese) were marks of clashes between the expansion of agrarian capital and the local peasants.

In the Midwest region, the conflicts between the 1940s and 1960s were led by the Peasant Leagues. Among the several conflicts that spread throughout Brazil, we highlight two occurrences in the state of Goiás. In particular, the experiences in the municipality of Orizona, known as the “fight of the *Arrendo*” (between 1948 and 1951) involving more than 300 peasants and 80 military soldiers (Guimarães, 2014). And the conflict regarding the Peasant Leagues of *Trombas* and *Formoso* between the years of 1951 to 1964. Another actor was the union organization of rural workers that has significant role in the state of Goiás, since 1963 and 1964, 39 STRs were created, which served as the basis for their post-1964 proliferation.

According to Figueiredo (1978, apud Guimarães 2014), this number of Unions and the actions of the existing Peasant Leagues, placed the state of Goiás among the most organized in the Brazilian rural space. As seen in the case of the leagues, with the civil-military coup of 1964, all were duly persecuted, their leaders dispersed, arrested, disappeared or even murdered.

The resumption of the trade union organization in Brazil, in rural areas, was consolidated after the coup in 1964. In the specific case of the state of Goiás, concomitantly to the “second march to the West”<sup>8</sup>, the beginning of the activities of several Rural Workers Unions, allow the foundation of the Federation of Agricultural Workers of the State of Goiás (FETAEG, in Portuguese) in 1967. The leadership to consolidated the workers’ unions, however, was in charge of a representative of the landlords, which bequeathed a group of union leaders to create the Trade Union Opposition of the Rural Workers of Goiás in the early 1970s (Silva 2001; 2003).

Added to these movements the decade of 1980 also marked the creation of other types of social movements in the rural space. The Landless Rural Workers Movement and its variants such as the Small Farmers Movement, the Movement of Dam Affected, are three examples of the explosion of organizations that emerged in the period, such as if we saw a “peasant rematch” (Pessoa 1999). Ideological disputes in the organizational field between social actors, state and capital did not minimize the conflicts generated by the transformation of labor lands into business lands, and by labor

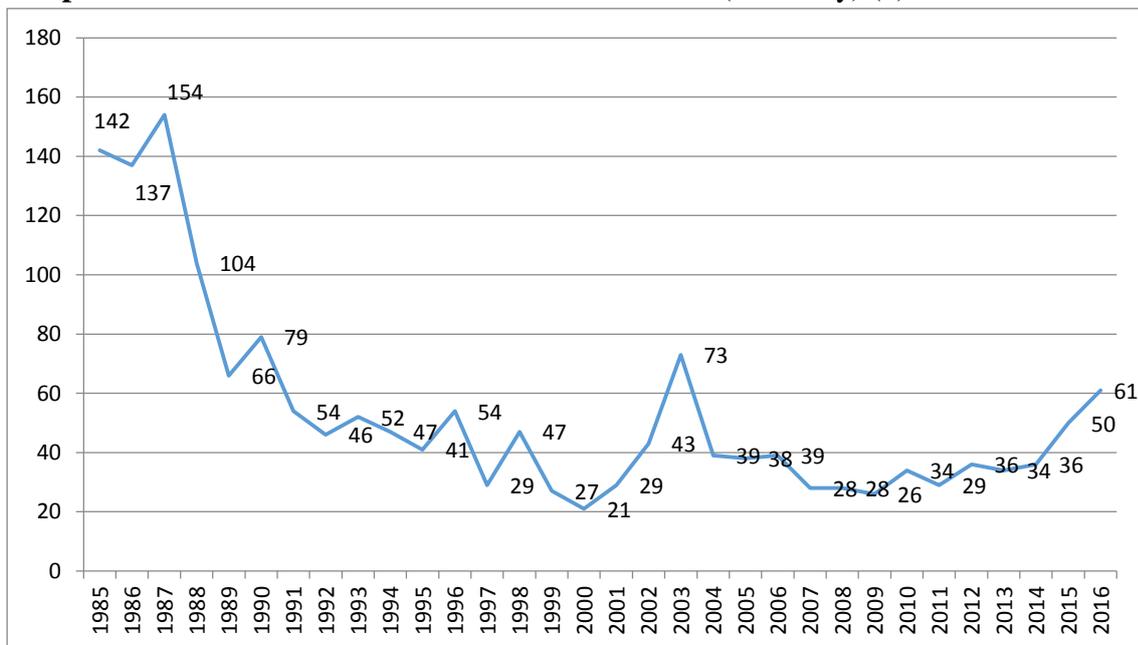
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<sup>8</sup> This second march can be identified from the year 1965 with the implantation of soybean, maize and sorghum crops in the biome *Cerrado* (Brazilian biome), the government implement the *Cerrados* Development Program (PRODECER) in agreement (financing) with the Government of the Japan. This program became known as the JICA Project.

rights of wage earners provoked by the new “march” to the Midwest. Since the 1980s a new outbreak of violence and assassinations of peasant leaderships has been taking place.

The origin of the conflicts concerns the way the state promoted the offensive against the workers, aiming: a) to consolidate the conservative modernization of the Brazilian rural space; b) to consolidate the social division of labor in Brazil; And c) to consolidate the hegemony of the agricultural sector in the economy and in the national central power. Each of these facets (of course there are still many others) finds in its history a hegemonic counterpoint. If the memory of historical facts is dormant or hidden, the basic needs of the human being are not. There is a lot of land, there are spaces not being used by the work force, so [...] the conflict. In thirty years of research conducted by CPT, it was identified 1723 cases of murders of peasants, indigenous people, leaders of social movements, leaders of traditional units, advisors who somehow supported the demands of organized social movements. This number, by itself, recognizes that the issues of ownership, use and division of labor in rural areas continue to have political-ideological centrality proportional to the Brazilian state's debt to peasants. We are closer to the eighteenth century again.

**Graph 1:** Assassinations in the field Brazil 1985-2016 (until July) (\*)



Source: Documentation Center “Dom Tomás Balduino”, CPT National Secretariat.

(\*) CPT research with general data of murders involving conflicts of occupations, camps, evictions, labor, slave labor, water, riverine, indigenous, Afro-Brazilian communities, fishermen, among others.

The Brazilian state, during the 1960s and 1970s, the period of “agricultural modernization in the developmental era” (Bernstein 2011), changed the legal basis for land use and ownership. In a conservative action, the Congress, in its majority formed by representative of the agrarian capital, and in opposition to the actions of the Peasants Leagues, approved the law nº 4504 of 11/30/1964 (Statute of the Land). It instructed standards for the implementation of policies of Rural Settlement Projects, primarily to support the legalization of areas of expansion of extensive plantations. This process has been identified as agrarian reform. It established priorities for research programs and production of agricultural inputs with high quality of added value, as well as funding for the acquisition of equipment that intensify agricultural activities. This legislation opened the rural spaces for the consolidation of the green revolution in Brazil and its consequent implantation of the “chemical, mechanical and genetic” standard (QMG), launching agricultural relations in the submission of

industrial production. (Pietrafesa 2002). The alliances between the agrarian capital and the bureaucracy sustained situations in which "[...] the more land the owner had, the more credit he received and the more land he could buy." (Bruno 1995).

The result of this alliance was perceived by the freezing of rural conflicts through state repression. An example of this confrontation of social classes was the extinction of the peasant leagues and the incentive to the creation of Union of Rural Workers to develop assistance in the health, social and security for rural workers.

Between 1964 and 1985, twenty-five years of civil-military dictatorship, only 77,400 families were settled in rural areas. However, the area was very extensive, 13.8 million hectares (average of 178.8 hectares per person settled). This policy lasted until the government of Itamar Franco (1994), when the Brazilian State settled only 140,500 families in an area of 7.8 million hectares (average of 55.4 hectares per settlement) between 1985 and 1994 (IBGE, 2015). In ten years the government settled almost double of families, but in less than half of the area. That is, the policy of state agrarian reform remained fragile, inexpressive and without meeting the demands of the peasants. It cannot be said that there is a lack of agrarian policy, but rather a vision of a state that is directed towards class interests. Consolidate the transit for an extensive, entrepreneurial and competitive agriculture (Pietrafesa, 2016). During the process of re-democratization in Brazil, in 1985, with more accessible spaces for social movements, there was strong peasant pressure the government perform mediation intervention in social conflicts, implementing settlements in occupied areas or for camped families.

Table 1 below identifies the number of families participating in Settlement Projects. Analyzing the numbers, it is perceived that the actions of the State are always below the demands of the peasants. Number of families in conflict and settled in Settlement Projects is not even close.

**Table 1:** Areas used for Agrarian Reform, settled families and number of conflicts between 1994 and 2014.

President	Period	Area in hectares	Families	Dataset conflict CPT(*)		
				Conflicts	Hectares	Families
FHC 1º	1995-1998	12.389.681	287.994	2.502	13.741.275	387.928
FHC 2º	1999-2002	8.686.045	252.710	2.850	10.828.388	364.194
Lula 1º	2003-2006	31.889.038	381.419	5.249	25.439.224	719.975
Lula 2º	2007-2010	16.402.144	232.669	3.485	43.417.771	346.690
Dilma 1º	2011-2014	2.956.208	107.354	4.127	41.955.104	390.911
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>72.323.116</b>	<b>1.262.146</b>			

Source: INCRA (2015). Available at:

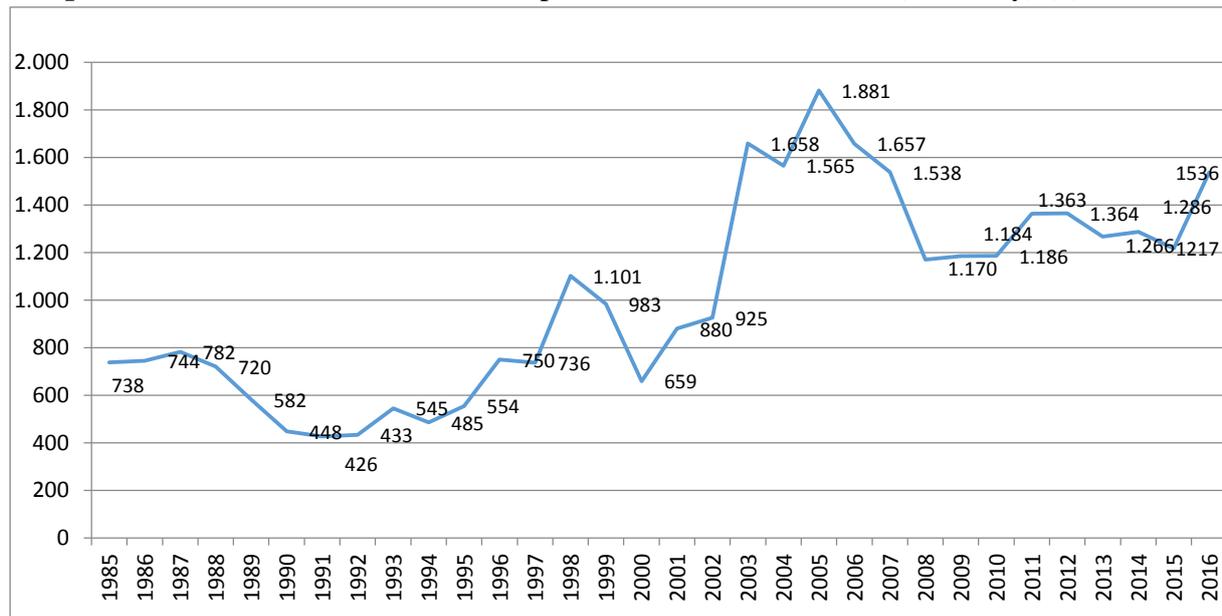
<http://seriesestatisticas.ibge.gov.br/series.aspx?no=1&op=0&vcodigo=AGRO02&t=area-estabelecimentos-ha>

(\*) Source: Documentation Center "Dom Tomás Balduino" CPT National Secretariat. Data on land conflicts (occupations, settlements and evictions)

In order to have a broader view (1985-2015) on the numerical movement of agrarian conflicts, the data in figure 2 below visualize the conflicts from the re-democratization period in which social movements established themselves as a force in the context of social disputes and their "collective actions" gained expression of imbalances of the existing social cohesion (Vakaloulis 2000). If the centrality of capitalist logic fluctuated from the control of the production system (industrial-agricultural) to the financial control of social relations and the globalization of labor, in the case of Brazil, the dispute of land of labor and the land of business (Martins 1986) continued as ever, central to millions of people.

In this scenario, there are the permanent dispute between peasants and agrarian capital, mediated by the State. The latency of conflicts and their historical persistence on the one hand, and the maintenance of the land structure on the other, is only one aspect of the power struggle in social and political spheres. The numbers of conflicts in the period 2003-2016 (President Lula's and President Dilma's governments), for example, are significantly higher than Brazil's previous historical period, losing only in the years 2016 and 2017 (a parliamentary coup that ousted President Dilma from government and returned to federal government the dominant bloc that occupied the government prior 2003). In spite of the state's lack of compliance in meeting peasants' demands, it was noticed that in institutional situations, liberal democracy, the empowerment of social movements also occurred.

**Graph 2:** Number of Conflicts, in rural spaces, in Brazil 1985-2016 (until July) (\*)



Source: Documentation Center “Dom Tomás Balduino”, CPT National Secretariat.

(\*) CPT research with general data of murders involving conflicts of occupations, camps, evictions, labor, slave labor, water, riverine, indigenous, Afro-Brazilian communities, fishermen, among others.

Menezes (1984, p. 33), affirmed that collective memory can support the construction of identity, equally collective of social groups, since this category “[...]is a mechanism for retaining information, knowledge, individual or social experience, constituting an axis of attributions that articulates, categorizes the multiform aspects of reality, giving them logic and intelligibility”. For the author, this process can support what we know and what we agree in social relations, whether through these records that we make of past situations, or actions and conflicts that identify us socially in the present. In this sense, recording and identifying memories makes the reality already lived (past) into a present and available element, placing our memories in the order of the day and at the same time building our social and cultural identity.

Halbwachs (2004) reflected that social memory is always linked to consciousness, and that it is also a social construction. He also identified that the act of remembering and reflecting places us in the condition of being socially located, in this sense, also historically located. The reconstruction of peasant memory from the existence of social movements before and after 1964 places it in the centrality of social actors who experienced conflicts over land ownership and use, but also allows reconfiguring social movements in the present, in a multidisciplinary context. For Halbwachs (1990, p. 36), “[...] we are only able to remember when we stand in the point of view of one or more groups and again find ourselves in one or more currents of collective thought”. For the author the identification

and the search for memories are not reproductions of past experiences, but a set of reflections from the present experience that allows us to reconfigure this present.

To reassemble the past, the memory, the stories of struggles and land conflicts in the rural areas researched is to rethink the present. To search in this historical context, the origin and the confrontations of the time is necessary not to repeat the errors in relation to the forms of violence suffered by the rural people, subjects of histories and forgotten by the State. This search may open future spaces for the construction of a fair, solidary society capable of directing the management of its organizations freely, for the

[...] understanding of memory as a dialogue with another; a conversation that takes place in the present, trying to draw probabilities of the future. It is then linked to the social frameworks of peasant history and struggle, not submissively, neither as repetition, but as rupture. (CNV Report 2014, page 24)

Thus, to retake the past, the memory is also to question the establishment. It is a process of historical and political reconstruction. Moreover, according to Viana (2006, p.9, apud Dias 2010, p.40), memory is also a singular manifestation of the collective and the individual histories and analyzes. Its constitution has social origin.

### **3 When we cross the economic frontiers with the social boundaries: there is where the conflict dwells (past and present in a constant dialogue)**

From the new configurations of agricultural capital and its strategy of expansion, we can see the actions and reactions of the social movements in the current conjuncture. Conflicts over control, cohesion, and social coercion occur in the most diverse configurations, and in the case of class confrontations in rural areas, indigenous peoples seek to demarcate their lands, or to reclaim areas occupied illegally by landowners, not only in areas of capitalist enterprises expansion in the 1960s and 1980s, as identified by Martins (1986), but also in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. They also involve Afro-Brazilian communities that claim legalization of their areas and their respected cultural rights, as if they were retaking their memories; Landless farmers occupy legally constituted areas that do not fulfill their social function, and rural communities also demand public policies (Alves 2010; Sauer; Almeida 2011).

Agrarian conflict occurs when a movement proposes new and different ways to work the space and the understanding of these spaces, different from the rationality of capital regarding nature and workers. These movements seek to accomplish the human work and the goods produced by this work (Foster, 2005). The forms of action of the movements clashed with the secular big farms structures and with the State.

Arroyo (2012, p.85) reflected that it would be necessary to “stop seeing the big farms, agribusiness as the only social actor, and recognize that [...] other actors have resisted and resist the occupation of their territories, their lands, and the destruction of peasant agriculture”.

In order to understand the phenomenon of agrarian conflicts in the light of this set of reflections, the Land Pastoral Commission (CPT) presented in 2016 the results of its research, namely “Rural Conflicts in Brazil” in the year 2015. Specific data of “occupations and settlements” are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below and are references about the struggle for agrarian reform promoted by the rural social movements. Old conflicts with old dilemmas of national “integration”.

In the year of 2015, there were occupations and disputes over land ownership in all regions of the country, in 22 states of the Federation the phenomenon was repeated (there were no occupations and encamps in the state of Amapá, Piauí, Sergipe, Rio Grande do Norte and Rio de Janeiro). In many cases the conflicts occurred in states with business farming and consolidated peasant system, as in the Brazilian regions of South and Southeast. Indicating that this is not constraining factor of confrontations of social movements with agrarian capital. Agribusiness actions have settled in border areas, have consolidated in traditional areas, but have not avoided land disputes on new frontiers.

In a first look at the CPT data, and confirming the reflections presented by Martins (1986), the existence of land conflicts in indigenous areas was identified in eight states (Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão and Minas Gerais). In the history of conflicts, one can perceive “external actions”, the pressure of agrarian capital to take advantage of the areas demarcated or used by the indigenous, which endangers the ethnic-cultural survival of the groups, and at the same time creates in indigenous populations the historical conditions of “internal consciousness” of social actors who conflict, defend their territories and establish themselves as a political force (Gramsci, 1981). In all conflicts occurred in 2015 the most violent case was registered in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul with the death of an indigenous leadership.

In only two states were registered four occupations involving the Afro-Brazilian communities (Minas Gerais with three and Maranhão with one). A warning is necessary. The Temer’s Government revoked in 2016 the decrees of settlements of the Afro-Brazilian communities signed during the course of 2015. This could provoke new areas of friction with these communities. Conflicts over ownership and use of indigenous lands continue to be very significant, in 2015 occurred conflicts in 36% of Brazilian states. In this year, occupations of lands coordinated by the MST with the participation of fishermen were identified in the states of Espírito Santo and Rio Grande do Sul. This phenomenon is very recent, with no records of occupations with this population in previous years. It is important to emphasize that social movements of a diverse nature can develop collective actions that envisage new social identities (Vakaloulis 2000).

The records indicated the participation of 31,293 families in land occupation actions generating a total of 200 conflicts, reaching 583,044 hectares in litigation. This area corresponded to a space slightly smaller than the year of 2014, but was one of the most expressive since 2007. According to the CPT files, in the last decade (2005 to 2015) the actions of occupations and encamps carried out by social movements remained stable. In the years 2005 and 2006 the occurrences were higher, but in the other years it turned around 180 to 250 occupation actions.

The number of encamps (27 occurrences in Brazil in 2015), in the same period followed similar proportions, highpoint for the years of 2005 (90 encamps) and 2006 (67 encamps). In 2015 the amount was higher than the years 2012 to 2014 (25 encamps). The data continue to prove that State policies for agrarian reform are inefficient and social movements are the protagonists that interfere in the potential of changes in the land structure of the country. What can be verified is that the social actors of the countryside (peasants, indigenous and Afro-Brazilians) in confrontation with the agrarian capital and its representative, the State, can change previously consolidated hegemonies (Gramsci 2002).

During the year of 2015, the MST was the most represented movement in occupations. It was present in 17 states (absent only in Acre, Amazonas, Rondônia, Roraima and Ceará) and participated in approximately 100 conflicts of occupations in a total of 200. In nine states there were 27 new encamps. The MST acted in seven of these states and coordinated the actions of 6,055 families, maintaining its strong presence in the actions of agrarian conflicts. The data also indicated that in three states other movements stood out in conflicts by occupations. In São Paulo, the National Front of Fight Rural and City (FNL, in Portuguese) with 11 actions of a total of 21 and in Goiás the FNL coordinated

five actions of a total of 19. In this State, the Free Land Movement carried out eight occupations. And in Alagoas, the Movement Labor Way acted in four of the five occupations that occurred. This fact confirms the pulverization of social movements during the period.

The research indicated the existence of quantitative discrepancies in occupation actions in various regions of Brazil. For example, in the North (new agricultural frontier) there were 24 occupations, while in the Southeast region (land use apparently consolidated) 36 were registered. In the North, the state of Pará can be highlighted because of conflicts, 625 families were involved in fights for land. Regarding areas with litigation, the state of Acre is the leader with 134.8 thousand hectares in disputes. Pará is the place where 52% of encamps in Brazil are concentrated (14 out of 27). It is also the second placed in number of families encamped (1,639). Agricultural capital expands its dominance and control in this space, and the actions of peasants in occupations and encampments reflect these disputes. In previous years, there were cases of conflicts with indigenous populations, but in the year of 2015, the CPT did not identify this type of conflict in the region.

In the Northeast region, six states presented occupational activities, Pernambuco (13 cases), Bahia (34) concentrated 47 incidents of a total of 60 reported. The process of agricultural production is old in this region, but there are new systems concentrating land, for example, the Northwest portion of Bahia moved from the livestock production system to soybean crops, consolidating a new regional social actor, agrarian capital. The pulverization of social movements throughout the region is perceptible. However, the MST was a strong protagonist. In Bahia, it carried out 27 actions, in 34, and in Pernambuco all occupational actions (13). The social movement was present in three other States.

In the Midwest region of Brazil, three states stand out in the national scenario. Mato Grosso do Sul, concentrates the largest number of conflicts in indigenous areas of Brazil (12 actions out of a total of 16). In territorial extension the state of Mato Grosso took the national front, with more than 225 thousand hectares in dispute. And, in the number of families involved, Goiás with 6,850 is the state that involved the largest number of them. It is also the one that had greater variation of actions of the social movements in Brazil (Free Land, FNL, MST and MCP). The actions of land occupations, involving number of families in Goiás, represented approximately 22% of the total in Brazil. Two of them can be underlined. The first involving 3,500 families in an area of 20,000 hectares (considered by the occupiers as unproductive) and the second involved one thousand families, occurred in lands of a sugar and ethanol plant that declared bankruptcy, leaving thousands of workers unemployed and without labor rights. The total area occupied in this region represented 52% of the litigation in Brazil. In Southeast two important elements and differentiator of other regions. In two states (Espírito Santo and Minas Gerais) there were actions of land occupations carried out by specific populations. In Minas, Afro-Brazilian maintained their struggles of previous years, leading three occupations. In Espírito Santo, fishermen commanding occupations. The state of São Paulo, in turn, recorded the largest number of families involved in disputes over land ownership and use in the region, as well as two very strong social actors, the MST carried out 9 actions and the FNL 11, in a total of 21 conflicts in the State.

In the south, the numbers indicate that the state of Paraná remains the place of many conflicts and land disputes with 59% of the records in that region. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul the conflicts with occupations occurred with indigenous populations and fishermen. In Santa Catarina the records indicated occupations by landless. The presence of the MST is very strong, in a total of 27 actions the movement coordinated 18 of them, representing 67% of the total.

**Table 2:** Occupations performed in Brazil in 2015

States and Region	Number of counties	Number of occupations	Total in area (hectares)	Total families	Social movements	Observations
<b>North</b>						
Acre	4	7	134.800	465	Independent organization	5 OI
Amazonas	1	1		40		Social movement name not found
Pará	6	7		625	MST; Union	6 Unions
Rondônia	5	5	43.768	203	LCP; ATR	2 LCP
Roraima	1	1		37	Independent organization	
Tocantins	3	3	2.321	199	MST	
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>180.889</b>	<b>1.569</b>		
<b>Northeast</b>						
Alagoas	3	5	120	270	MST and VT	4 VT
Bahia	31	34	32.098	3.666	Indigenous, MST, CETA	27 MST
Ceará	1	1		65	Indigenous	Indigenous
Maranhão	4	4	12.589	322	MST and Fetaema	1 MS
Paraíba	3	3	1.200	220	MST; Independent organization	1 MS
Pernambuco	13	13	1.000	1.870	MST	13 MST
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>47.007</b>	<b>6.413</b>		
<b>Midwest</b>						
Distrito Federal	3	4	12	560	MST, Independent organization	3 MST
Goiás	13	19	38.254	6.850	Free Land, FNL, MST; MCP; Independent organization	8 TL. 4 MST 5 FNL
Mato Grosso	8	11	225.786	2.235	MST; Indigenous; Independent organization	6 MST, 1 Indigenous
Mato Grosso do Sul	10	16	33.581	2.110	Indigenous, MST; MAF;	12 Indigenous 2 com MST
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>297.633</b>	<b>11.755</b>		
<b>Southeast</b>						
Espirito Santo	2	3	8.415	240	MST, Fishermen	3 MST.
Minas Gerais	12	12	13.450	1.122	MST; Afro-Brazilian; Indigenous; ARPCT	7 MST, 3 Afro-Brazilian
São Paulo	16	21	7.900	1.709	MST; FNL; MPST	11 FNL 9 MST
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29.765</b>	<b>3.071</b>		

South						
<b>Paraná</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10.639</b>	<b>5.403</b>	<b>MST; Indigenous; Union;</b>	<b>9 MST; 3 Indigenous</b>
<b>Rio Grande do Sul</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16.546</b>	<b>2.722</b>	<b>Indigenous; MST; Fishermen; MTEM</b>	<b>7 MST</b>
<b>Santa Catarina</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>MST</b>	<b>2 MST</b>
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27.225</b>	<b>8.485</b>		
Brazil						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>583.044</b>	<b>31.293</b>		

Source: Data generated by the National CPT Documentation Sector (2015)

Elaboration and adaptation of data in the form of a table: José Paulo Pietrafesa

In the year of 2015, as has happened in the last decade, there was a diversification of actions of the social movements linked to peasants (it can be identified in the column “movements involved”). Among several hypotheses we present three for reflection and debates in the spaces of these movements.

First hypothesis: In this last decade (2005-2015) the diversity of the capital action in various fronts of agricultural expansion has provoked organizational reactions of social actors few times seen in the national political scene. In this scenario, for example, Afro-Brazilian communities, the social demands of rural women, indigenous populations and land occupations carried out by fishermen were highlighted. This actions of movements gained strength and new potentialities of hegemonies. But the qualitative transformation of the various quantitative actions of these social actors into a collective will has not yet been perceived (in the recent historical period), unifying a historical bloc of hegemonic disputes with agrarian capital (Laclau; Mouffe 1987).

Second hypothesis, there has been fragmentation in the projects, ideologies, direction, and forms of action of social movements that have emerged since the 1980s, resulting in reconfigurations at the local, regional, and national levels. In this case the peasants have gained in alternatives of actions of confrontation to the capital, but they lose in the unified elaboration of social construction. Third hypothesis: since the territorial extension of Brazil is very large, it is difficult for an organization, or even some organizations, to account for the diversity of conflicts over land ownership and use, since the configuration of capital is also diverse and spreads throughout the country.

The data about encamps, Table 3, followed the same methodological procedures as the previous table. It should be noted that the records are only for the year of 2015, not adding those made in previous years. Nor are calculated the actions occupations removals turned into encamps near these areas.

**Table 3:** Actions of encamps held in Brazil in 2015

States and Region	Number of counties	Number of occupations		Total families	Social movements	Observations
<b>North</b>						
<b>Pará</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>1.639</b>	<b>Independent organization, Union; MST; MPA</b>	<b>7 Union 2 MST</b>
<b>Tocantins</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>Independent organization</b>	
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>1.688</b>		

Northeast					
Bahia	2	2		255	MST; CETA
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>255</b>	
Midwest					
Goiás	2	2		3.500	MST
Mato Grosso	2	2		230	STR; ATR;
Mato Grosso do Sul	1	1		1.500	MST
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>5.230</b>	
Southeast					
Minas Gerais	1	1		500	MST
São Paulo	2	2		75	MST; FNL
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>575</b>	
South					
Rio Grande do Sul	1	1		15	MST
<b>Total in the Region</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>15</b>	
Brazil					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>7.763</b>	

Source: Data generated by the National CPT Documentation Sector (2015)

Elaboration and adaptation of data in the form of a table: José Paulo Pietrafesa

The largest number of families involved in the encampments actions was concentrated in the Midwest region of Brazil (5,308, approximately 70% of the total in Brazil). In the number of encamps by states involved, the state of Pará, concentrated 52% of the total of actions in the Country. It was recorded occurrence of encamps in all regions of Brazil in 2015. But in smaller numbers than in previous years. The diverse of social movements struggling remained the same as the prior period.

But, a little far from improvements in the dispute for hegemony in civil society and political society, then to move in this direction the masses need to go forward on other variables. Among them qualify for the journey from class organization to organized class consciousness (Laclau; Mouffe 1987). Land disputes do not consolidate the necessary developments in the economic field (for example, to contest the control of the agricultural production system) and in the political field (to contest state control at its various levels: municipal, state and national), in this sense, there is a risk of stopping in a first stage (class organization).

In an agglutinative perspective of the categories raised, on social movements and their influences in the construction of historical subjects, Alves, A. R. (2010: 75) reflecting Gramsci's view of hegemony and contradictory movements in civil society, indicated:

For Gramsci, critical awareness is obtained through a dispute of contrasting hegemonies, first in the field of ethics, then in the political arena, culminating, finally, in a superior elaboration of a conception of the real. For this reason, he emphasizes the need to conceive the political development of the concept of hegemony not only as political-practical progress, but also as a great philosophical progress, since it implies and necessarily supposes an intellectual unity and an ethics adequate to a conception of the reality which overcame common sense and became critical, even if within limits still restricted [...].

So we understand that the social movements are not the only responsible to class organization, but the opening of these movements to collective patterns that demand an organized class. As can be seen, capital expand toward the rights of workers, building an economic, political and cultural hegemony, demanded by its agent, the State. Compete to the organized workers to organize an offensive against capital in order to construct a new perspective of society and state, which in fact assumes an isonomic and plural definition

## 4 Conclusion

Analyzing the Brazilian agrarian question requires a careful look at the conflicts in the rural area. As can be seen, the expansion of the big farms transformed labor land into a business space, expelling workers from their lands, creating battles between workers and farmers in conflicts marked by extreme violence, as can be seen in the data presented by CPT.

We understand that memory should not be limited to fulfilling a commitment to the victims of the hegemonic and dominant classes in Brazilian rural space, but also serve to build a future that, from the memory, can heal and overcome the perverse legacy of authoritarianism. Therefore, it is not possible to use instruments of justice, but it is fundamental that the responsibility of the State and its agents be recognized for the violations and damages caused to the lives of so many peasants and injustices are repaired. The sense of memory – apprehended as a future perspective based on broader democratic values – is anchored in its understanding as a clean, cohesive and amplifying memory of truth. Thus, the Brazilian society has the same meanings for the past and the same direction for the future, as a guarantee of justice.

In the context that precede the military coup between 1946 and 1964, the democratic regime did not guarantee the rights of citizenship to peasants and repressed their struggles and organizations, between 1964 and 1985, the civil-military dictatorship suppressed the democratic freedoms of peasants who were persecuted, beaten, tortured and killed.

Studies highlighted the difficulty of proving the State's responsibility for many crimes and violations, since the tendency is to assign responsibilities only to private agents. In the text, we show that the conflicts in the rural space increase, the number of workers affected by the state's truculence, representing the business community.

There are components of approximation between the socioeconomic realities in the history of the agrarian development and these social conflicts occurred in rural space. The influence of “marches” and population displacements changed the local conformations, transforming the ownership and use of land, a sense of production and subsistence for the extraction of land income according to accomplish the interests of capital. The pioneering front that began in Paraná, as well as Goiás and Mato Grosso from the 1940s, through a strong process of industrialization in the Southeast region of the country, transformed the two states into suppliers of agricultural products to the populations and at the same time generated a constant gallery of conflicts.

We saw in the text that many rural areas were occupied by peasants, who developed low-entropy agricultural activities, and other areas considered “without commercial value”, justified, to the eyes of the hegemonic agrarian forces, a redefinition of mercantile use and appropriation of these spaces. As seen in the contextualization, the old pioneer areas were giving way to the areas of expansion of agrarian capital and, at the same time, a series of social conflicts were opened up.

In Brazil, there is a concentrated land structure, a central element in the formation of hegemonies that promotes rural oligarchies that are not very likely to accept agrarian reform policies consistent with the demands of the peasantry. This same oligarchy, in addition, that also concentrate ownership and use of land, began to control the production system beyond pastures and food crops, becoming owners of other production systems (for example, sugar-alcohol, energy, among others).

Cases of violations of peasants' rights also concern the processes of political intervention in the post-64 workers' unions representation structures. In addition to prisons, persecution, torture and forced exile of peasant leaders, the state has been successful in intimidating entrenched workers who fights

against the expansion of capital, the withdrawal of rights and the increase of agricultural frontiers, who expel them from their lands and from the right to work.

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**New Extractivism, Peasantries  
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Perspectives and Debates**

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