

Landscape-innovation-policy: counter-hegemonic practices at the Cícero Guedes Camp (MST)

Paisagem-inovação-política: práticas contra-hegemônicas
no Acampamento Cícero Guedes (MST)

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Abstract

Since colonization in Brazil, populations resistant to its agrarian model have fought for the right to land, alternative agricultural production, and usufruct of the landscape. Such prerogatives indicate the possibility of hybrid landscapes in the rural sphere and show horizons that favor healthy production, non-exploitation of rural workers, and policies that contribute to resolving inequalities in the countryside. The struggle of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) is discussed in this article, focusing on the landscapes they inhabit and on their ways of taking possession of such landscapes. Our reflection is based on the analysis of the Cícero Guedes (MST) camp, grounded on the Performance Assessment of the Built Environment, with readings from the innovation matrix in relation to the territory to see how it can affect the movement's landscapes.

Keywords: rural landscape; innovation; landscape matrix; camp; MST.

Resumo

Desde a colonização no Brasil, os povos resistentes ao seu modelo agrário lutam pelo direito à terra, à produção agrícola alternativa e ao usufruto da paisagem. Tais prerrogativas indicam a possibilidade de paisagens híbridas na esfera rural, mostrando horizontes e favorecendo a produção saudável, a não exploração do trabalhador rural, além de políticas que contribuam para dirimir as desigualdades no campo. Coloca-se em discussão a luta do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), focando nas paisagens que habitam e nas formas de sua apropriação. A matriz da reflexão sustenta-se a partir da análise do acampamento Cícero Guedes (MST), embasada na Avaliação do Desempenho do Ambiente Construído, tendo leituras da matriz da inovação em relação ao território e como pode implicar as paisagens do movimento.

Palavras-chave: paisagem rural; inovação; matriz da paisagem; acampamento; MST.



Between postcoloniality¹ and innovation

The conquest of Brazil's territory by overseas peoples established a long-lasting political, social and territorial configuration that imposed their way of life and ideology on the originary peoples of the *pau-brasil* lands. The fact that this imposition remains to this day reveals a conviction that those overseas peoples brought with them civilization, technology and innovation. They implemented the plantation system, launching an agrarian culture in Brazil based on monoculture, land monopoly and slave labor (Stédile, 2011). This civilizational advancement was characterized by extreme exploitation of the local nature in order to achieve economic goals focused on agro-export for the metropole. Thus, Brazil's rural lands were developed into a system of latifundios, with the 1850 Law of Lands, which established the mercantile value of farmlands and turned them into private property.

The results of such "innovative" processes led to scenarios of struggle and revolt on the part of the peoples who were expelled from their lands and enslaved, as well as to a reaction to a natural landscape exploited and disrespected in its cycles for the benefit of an extraction and export, slavery-based economy. There was no – and there is no – repression without a counterattack.

The peasant class emerged in Brazil with the 1888 *Lei Áurea*, which abolished slavery and freed thousands of landless slaves, who had no means to buy the lands that were made private property by the

Crown. They progressively occupied and territorialized inland regions, forming new, autonomous peasant communities. Due to a combination of extensive advertising in Europe and available land in Brazil in the late 19th century, a mass of peasants excluded from industrialization migrated to Brazil, particularly to the country's South and Southeast regions (ibid.).

With agricultural industrialization in the period from 1930 to 1964, an agrarian bourgeois class gains political and economic power (De Carvalho, 2009; Stédile, 2011), which later resulted in the Green Revolution, a process intended to modernize the countryside between 1965 and 1985. The positions occupied by small farmers were filled by machines and large companies, which furthered land concentration and sparked young peasants' fascination with jobs and wages in the city, in order to expand the surplus workforce for industry (Singer, 1980).

The agrarian question in Brazil is a long-standing demand. The echoes of colonial practices remain to this day as an essential practice in the configuration of the rural environment. In what terms can this affirmation be verified? The large monoculture latifundios, the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few, the focus on export production, the massacre of originary peoples, quilombo inhabitants (*quilombolas*), indigenous and small family farmers are just a few examples which reveal how colonialist practices still mark the social-spatial configuration of the rural environment. It is evident for us that the struggle for land in the country has never ceased.

In the political arena, it is important to observe that social groups and movements demand that the state fulfills its fair dispute-settling role regarding the agrarian question. However, the tensions arising in the countryside show that favoritism towards dominant classes and “rural capitalists” is the rule, not the exception. Such is the case of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), the object of research of this paper. The movement has operated in Brazil since 1985, struggling for popular agrarian reform, agroecology and the economic, environmental and social sustainability of their territories, both in the countryside and the city.

For the movement, the struggle for agrarian reform and land does not end when ground is conquered. It expands to encompass organization, cooperation and constant investment in political instruction and education for beneficiaries regarding professional and citizenship matters. To this end, several measures are taken as developments of the movement such the combat against social inequality, peasant exploitation, nature degradation, as well as efforts for food sovereignty, equal participation of the female gender in the movement, and the permanence of young people in the countryside. With a view to this end, there are three structuring points: (1) connection with the proletarian class struggle; (2) commitment to agroecology as a counter-hegemonic proposal instead of the current production model; and (3) debates and elucidation about subjects pertaining to gender and racism (MST, 2021).

In order to achieve these, the MST’s main struggle mechanism is the occupation of lands whose social function is not being met.²

Today, many properties have a record of debts and lawsuits related with environmental crime and do not produce any food. By occupying roadside land and farms that fail to meet their social function, the movement demands that the state fulfills its role of ruling about the social function of private property, as Fernandes (2001, p. 295) says: “Occupation poses the capitalist property of land as a question, in the process of creation of family property”.

When a land is occupied by the movement, the territorialization phase is launched by means of an encampment, which is the first stage of territorial organization by the MST, preceding settlement. While the settlement is being legalized by the state, thereby granting it right of use to the occupied land, the encampment is a fundamental process in the movement’s struggle for land, which involves occupying unused land that fails to meet its social function. The encampment is smaller in scale than a settlement, since families share a single collective production lot and do not possess individual lots for food production (*ibid.*).

In addition, connecting the countryside to the city is fundamental to make agrarian reform feasible in Brazil. The MST’s struggle is not isolated, it expands across rural areas and into urban centers, after all, “no planting in the country, no dinner in the city”.³ The countryside-city relationship is an important pillar in the struggle for land in Brazil, and it is essential for the MST’s political matrix. As the geographer Ariovaldo de Oliveira (1991) says, the peasant struggle is waged in the countryside, but it is won in the city. Peasant struggles are legitimized with the union of

both poles – rural and urban. One of the MST's mottos is "Agrarian Reform, a struggle of all", emphasizing precisely the expansion of the movement's political matrix beyond the boundaries of rural areas.

Agrarian reform has much to contribute to significantly alleviating the current scenario of urban crisis, particularly in metropolises (Alentejano, 2020). As it reorganizes urban areas by combating unemployment and poverty, "an overarching agrarian reform could reverse this scenario, making housing, work and citizenship possible for this mass of exploited and excluded" (Alentejano, 1998, p. 2), since thousands of hectares dominated by agribusiness latifundios could be used for settling the mass of urban and rural workers, including the necessary support for production and infrastructure.

In establishing our scope of analysis, it is clear that among other existing demands, the struggle for agrarian reform in the country has not been appeased, and old agendas central to these debates have only increased dispute processes and violence. Also, massacres of the peoples who advocate an ideology contrary to that of the agribusiness market are still a fact in the 21st century.

The construction of "other" landscapes that show in their essence people's desire for Being in an environment in a way that is autonomous and in line with their way of existing in the world opens a considerable space for the construction of narratives dissident of those spread by dominant elites, narratives representing concepts that value the integrity of the rural worker, balance between man and nature, and a production that is not

strictly capitalist and guided towards profit, but towards the integration of communities and the land they work in (Oliveira, 2007).

In spite of this, the peasant is a product of capitalism, resulting from the process of transformation from feudal to capitalist agriculture. However, this class fits neither in the category of wage earners nor in that of households (ibid.). Even as it clashes against capitalist ideology, the peasant class is itself a part of this context and, in a way, it needs capital to exchange its production for an income that supports peasant families. A simple way of understanding the non-capitalist peasant relationship is through the capital circulation formula, where $M - C - M^4$ refers to the capitalist production, in which the final goal will always be profit over a commodity. In the peasant production, in turn, the formula becomes $C - M - C$, focusing on the circulation of commodities, and the goal is to transform the commodity into money in order to purchase other commodities necessary to meet their needs (ibid.). Thus, there is a rearrangement, an innovation in the basic way of circulation of the commodity in the capitalist system, and in this process lies the base of peasant innovation, which reflects in their whole way of doing and living.

It is worth stressing that in this context, the relationship with land and nature emerges as a point of convergence for the other activities correlated with the uses of what the natural environment provides, via a movement that chooses actions relying on the pursuit of balance with nature. It is also relevant to note that such motives and practices do not ignore the innovations of contemporary society,

taking into account political, sociocultural, religious and economic factors about the place they are situated in.

Given an agenda that points to the peculiarity of a rural landscape which is essentially fraught with cultural contradictions, one that presents environmental contrasts and reveals a complex tradition of persistent colonialist practices, the interest of this reflection consists in formulating analyses based on the analytical matrix of innovation, which is also in line with studies of built environment performance assessment (POE)⁵ (Rheingantz et al., 2009). Therefore, this epistemological approach aims to understand: I) the organization and construction of elements of the MST's rural political landscape, reflected in the Cícero Guedes encampment, and how that landscape is decoded, considering that there is a thin line separating the urban from the rural in the contemporary world; II) in the sociopolitical sphere, how MST members tend to deal with this disappearance of boundaries between the urban and the rural, and how these members emerge as marginalized subjects for certain social groups; III) by contrasting the debate of innovation based on the propositions of the geographer Tunes (2016) and the questions of territory addressed by the geographer Medeiros (2008), a discussion is presented about the construction of landscapes in the rural sphere under the sign of innovation, particularly considering the sociocultural conducts and habits of the peasantry and the MST's political conventions.

The POE-based scope of analysis points, in the case of this reflection, to a careful examination of the landscape built by the MST in the state of Rio de Janeiro, particularly

the Cícero Guedes encampment in the city of Campos dos Goytacazes, in the state's north. The author joined the CaCi⁶ outreach group in a visit to the encampment for a political rally⁷ at the site. The APO-related innovation matrix helped define the methodology used for reading and analyzing the territory. Therefore, aspects related to the organization of the encampment's territory and landscape provided input for building cartographies that emerge as the final matrix, outlining and enabling a synthesis about the analytical exercise proposed for the Cícero Guedes encampment.

Innovation in territory and landscape

According to the *Michaelis Dicionário Brasileiro de Língua Portuguesa*, the word *innovar* [to innovate] means “*produzir ou tornar algo novo; renovar, restaurar*” [to produce something new or to make it new; to renew, to restore] (Inovar, 2022). By combining that with the definition of innovation discussed by Tunes (2016), which relates the word with the ability to create something new or do something differently, a broad-ranging concept emerges. Also noteworthy is the prefix ‘re-’ in the words *renovar* and *restaurar* which compose the meaning of *innovar*, since this implies something that already exists, something not completely new and original, therefore innovation may occur in what already exists. In this context, the present work is anchored in this view on innovation, emphasizing modes of land occupation that rely on family practices from generations back, but which also propose

a way of rural work and a peasant ideology that counter the pattern that has been in effect for centuries in Brazil, bringing about a new view on things old, building structures anew.

Innovating is also indispensably linked to the territory where these communities settle, struggle and innovate with regard to their labor and production relations, departing from those relations already established and defined by an agricultural system that oppresses and exploits the rural worker (De Carvalho, 2009). This view is contrary to the commonly held notion of innovation linked to the advancement of capitalism, with its new labor and production relations, encompassing technology in the process and accelerating such changes in the country's economic and territorial structure (Tunes, 2016). Confronting this meaning of innovation is, in this work, discussing how to go against that structure, bringing about not only new economic processes and labor relations, but also new ways of occupying a territory, and how innovation, from the ideological point of view, can build innovative landscapes.

Thus, innovating in the formation of a territory can expand into different aspects beyond economy and technology, which are usually linked to innovation. A key aspect concerns identity, involving the social groups who live and develop their economic, political, social and cultural activities in a particular territory. According to the geographer Medeiros (2008, p. 217) "a territory is a space of identity", a space of identification and manifestation of culture by the different social groups occupying it. When innovation is closely linked to a particular territory, especially regarding economic processes, as said earlier, according to Storper (1994 apud

Tunes, 2016. p. 3), an activity is territorialized when it can be performed almost solely in a particular territory, and not in any other. This can strengthen the place's identity factor and also determine its construction both territorially and in terms of landscape.

Indeed, the mode of agricultural production by marginalized peasant groups is critical to define their identity as a community, and it builds a peculiar landscape. Thus, the question of the identity of a group which renews its territory affects directly the way innovation occurs and how it can express itself in the landscape. Therefore, a territory can be innovative not only in economic terms, but also according with dense anthropological questions, such as the culture and identity of the social groups inhabiting it, expressing their ideologies and building their labor relations. Thus, a territory can express space as political power and cultural identity, and while it may possess some political control, it is mainly a symbolic, identity-based, affective appropriation (Haesbaert, 1997).

These concepts can be applied to the territories built and occupied by groups who struggle for agrarian reform and land in the country, having for scenery the rural settlements they build. The territories dealt with in this work are mainly those occupied by the MST, with delimited physical boundaries and strong symbolic appropriation of a philosophy of life and of struggle for a common cause to everyone in the movement. Thus, the land is dreamed of and desired, so that its conquest can materialize through their struggle. Territoriality reflects a multiple dimension experienced by the individuals of a group, who go through the territorial process

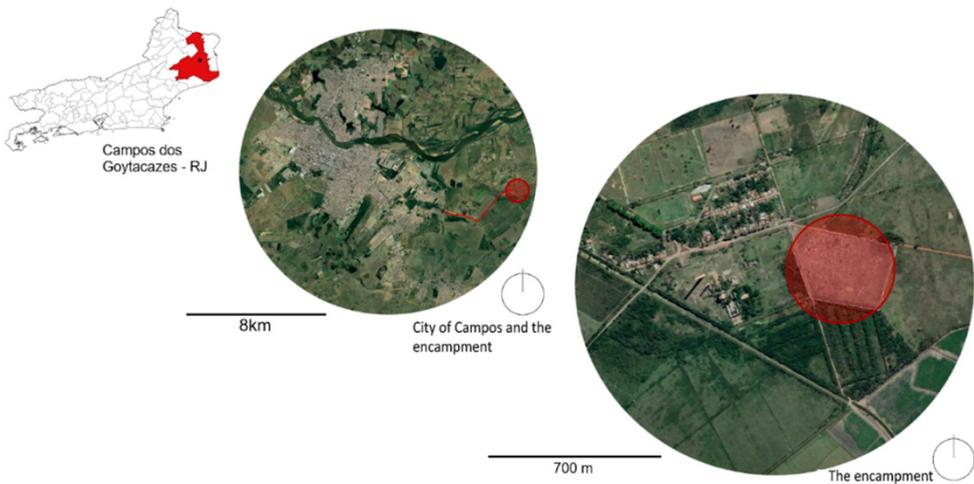
and the territorial product at the same time, by means of their social and production relations (Raffestin, 1993).

The multiplicity involved in the process of building a territory has the space as a set of commodities whose values are determined by society (Santos, 2002. p. 104 apud Medeiros, 2008. p. 221). The MST's identity possesses that multiplicity in the sphere of farming processes, exchanges, and labor organization, whereas the group's identity finds its unity in the sociopolitical sphere. In this context, this work presents the case study of the Cícero Guedes MST encampment, a territory occupied and built by the movement.

The Cícero Guedes MST encampment

The Cícero Guedes MST encampment is located in the municipality of Campos dos Goytacazes, in the north of the state of Rio de Janeiro, as shown in Figure 1. Founded on June 21, 2021, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the encampment was formed by around 300 families who occupied one of the areas of the old Cambahyba farm complex. On May 5, 2021, the 1st Federal Court of Campos declared the area officially seized for agrarian reform and transferred it to the National

Figure 1 – The location of the Cícero Guedes MST encampment on 3 scales: regional, urban and local*



* Scale regional – identifying the city in the state of Rio de Janeiro; Scale urban – identifying the encampment's location in relation with the city of Campos' urban area, showing its closeness to the urban limits; Scale local – delimiting the encampment's perimeter.

Source: cartographies designed by the author.

Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Incra). In spite of this, with their history of erratic repossession procedures, the lands of the Cambahyba farm have now been under dispute for over 20 years.

The MST occupied the farm for the first time in 1998, when the farm was first seized by the government for agrarian reform. Thus, possession of the land was transferred from its former owner Heli Ribeiro Gomes, a politician who became a congressman for Rio de Janeiro in 1958, to the state. In addition, the farm complex has a dark history related to Brazil's military dictatorship. According to the National Truth Commission, it was confirmed in 2014 that the ovens of the sugar complex were used to burn the bodies of political prisoners who opposed the regime. Also, the MST members who occupied the farm repeatedly denounced it for child and slave-like labor in its lands, in addition to environmental degradation, particularly of soil, due to the sugar cane monoculture in the property.

After the recent reoccupation of the farm by the MST, and given the strong opposition to agrarian reform by the federal government's current administration, armed forces reached the encampment to remove the encamped families, since they had not yet been granted use of the land. Part of the families left the encampment, whereas a significant part remained.

The occupation resulting in the Cícero Guedes encampment is not the first in the region of the municipality of Campos dos Goytacazes, which is historically related with sugar cane monoculture. It is based on the history of struggle of one of the first MST occupations in the state of Rio de Janeiro by groups of workers and unemployed from

the outskirts of Campos, the Zumbi dos Palmares settlement, which is now one of the main producers of a range of organic and agroecological products in the region. Prior to this settlement, the Mocotó and Novo Horizonte occupations, between the 1950s and 1980s, marked the beginning of the struggle against the hegemonic agrarian system in the Campos region. The several movements of struggle for land democratization brought social change to the region, a new meaning of hope with regard to land, which contributed to decreasing poverty and unemployment (De Almeida, 2000).

The technical visit to the Cícero Guedes MST encampment was made possible by means of the *CampoCidade* (CaCi) outreach project, which provides advice for the main outlet of MST products in the state of Rio de Janeiro: the *Armazém do Campo* [Countryside Grocery],⁸ which sells agricultural products from some of the MST settlements in the state of Rio de Janeiro and manufactured products made by several MST cooperatives around the country. Located downtown, it is a place where the peasant and urban communities can meet, bringing down the boundaries between both territories.

Since August 2021, several activities were held in collaboration with the MST to improve sales and distribution of products cultivated in the settlements. Besides advisory to one of the movement's outlets, the project is also connected and interacts with other activities of the movement, such as political rallies, events, training programs, etc. Thus, for the celebration of Cícero Guedes encampment's fourth month in existence, which motivated the political rally⁹ in mid-October 2021 at the encampment, the CaCi and Najup¹⁰ groups

were invited by MST officials to attend the rally and celebrate the anniversary, reinforcing the daily resistance and struggle of the encamped families.

Encampment and built environment performance assessment

To achieve the goals of this work, which regard reading and identifying the innovative elements that organize the territory and landscapes built by the MST, the method chosen was built environment performance assessment or post-occupancy evaluation (POE), which focuses on the demands of the users/inhabitants of a building or environment, whether urban or rural, in a multidisciplinary manner (based on related areas such as biology, ecology, geography, architecture and urbanism, among others) (Günther, elali and Pinheiro, 2004). It worth stressing that POE originates mainly in environmental psychology, which studies the human behavior in relation with the environment where people live (Rheingantz, 2000)

The POE methodology is fundamental for this investigation, since the field of study on environment-behavior is anchored in the interaction between individuals and their physical location – the environment –, more specifically the space where a people expresses its identities, traditions and way of life. Thus, the method is employed to examine how the behavior and way of life of these MST members can build the environment, and the

influence of this environment back on them. However, it is important to emphasize that the physical environment is not necessarily a determinant factor of its inhabitants' behavior, though the characteristics of a given environment are strictly necessary for certain behavior patterns (Schoggen, 1989; Bechtel, 1997).

Also, the POE methodology encompasses basics of the experiential approach in order to guide the construction of instruments and the attitude of the observer, who becomes a key element in the perception of the environment by becoming a subject in this experience with the place they are observing and studying (Rheingantz et al., 2009). The attention and perception during observation are key to developing an incorporated observation, which is ultimately an attitude of the researcher which pervades all the other instruments. Unlike the experimental method, in which the researcher creates a scenario for the occurrence of a certain phenomenon they want to observe and study, the observational method unfolds in an unstructured manner, beyond the observer's control, and it may encompass situations with multiple factors and actors (Günther, Elali and Pinheiro, 2004).

The combination of experiential approach and incorporated observation places great emphasis on the researcher's role in observing an environment to understand its qualities and characteristics. Thus, the researcher's social and historical background is of great importance as it will manifest itself in how they read and perceive the space and its inhabitants. Therefore, it is important to understand where each researcher comes

from when applying experiential approach and incorporated observation in order to analyze critically their reading of a particular territory and its inhabitants. Such awareness is also important when observing and interacting with local communities.

Incorporated observation and experiential approach were taken into account in the visit to the Cícero Guedes MST encampment, which included recording the researcher's impressions while she was in the field, establishing connections between her knowledge and the elements she learned about the place. However, because the researcher was part of a large group of visitors who came for a specific event at the encampment – the political rally – the dynamics and cultural expressions of the inhabitants were clearly influenced by such factors.

Arriving at the encampment, the group was received by one of the national officials of the MST in Rio de Janeiro who was at the site. In addition to the whole community of the encampment, the children who played in a water tank turned makeshift pool were the first to salute the group and interact with it. Still, many of them were fearful and looked distrustfully at the arriving party. As for the adults, there was a slight distrustful feeling, and both the inhabitants and the visitors shied away upon the group's arrival.

The feeling of being a "stranger" to that place was clear in that arrival moment, after a four-hour road drive followed by a countryside stretch where the scenery and landscapes were quite different from those seen in the group's city of origin. The encampment's inhabitants were shy and a little fearful

towards the university group, and showed uneasiness about the visitors taking pictures of the place. For this reason, information and images were from then on recorded at longer intervals and at times when the group and the inhabitants were far in order to avoid intimidation in the community and influencing the recording of information.

In order to shorten the distance between the researcher and the environment/group, the former can use the behavioral interpretive approach, where the researcher keeps a minimal distance from the object and studies the results of their observation in a time after the visit and contact. This factor does not eliminate the need for a social-interactive attitude with the place and the people, keeping contact and exchanges throughout the process of visiting and observing a particular community (Rheingantz et al., 2009). Unless otherwise required by the research, the researcher observes from a detached position, as if they were "invisible", in order not to alter activities and processes in a particular environment, while observing the environment's manifestations in their purest form. In the case of this research, a social-interactive approach was chosen as the object of study so required in order to understand layers that can be imperceptible if observed from a certain distance, besides the impossibility of remaining completely "invisible" in the place.

The present work used a POE instrument denominated walkthrough, which resulted in cartographies and images that made it possible to map elements that contribute to building the encampment's landscape.

The walkthrough or walk-through (Bechtel, 1987; Preiser, 1989) originated in environmental psychology and consists in a report on the researcher's course through a particular environment (it may be a public place, like a square, or a private place, like a school) which may be complemented by pictures, croquis, audio or video recordings, interviews, and even the researcher's own subjective impressions. It was created by the urbanist Kevin Lynch to help researchers/observers get familiar with the environments observed (Rheingantz et al., 2009). A walkthrough is usually employed for a first contact with and exploration of the community/building the researcher wants to observe and study. The visit can be – and

usually is – made in company of a key-person who can allow access to the place and take the walkthrough with the researcher. In the present work, this factor was fundamental to enabling access to the encampment, by means of the contact of the group with the MST and its official, the key person at the place.

The starting point of the walkthrough was the meeting with everyone under a big tree – the biggest in the encampment's common courtyard – in the shade of which was a large round table, as shown in Figure 2. It is worth stressing that this space was chosen by the encamped as it was next to the encampment's entrance, to the future school shed, and to the common kitchen and bathrooms, and because of the vast shade of

Figure 2 – The place of debates at the Cícero Guedes MST encampment



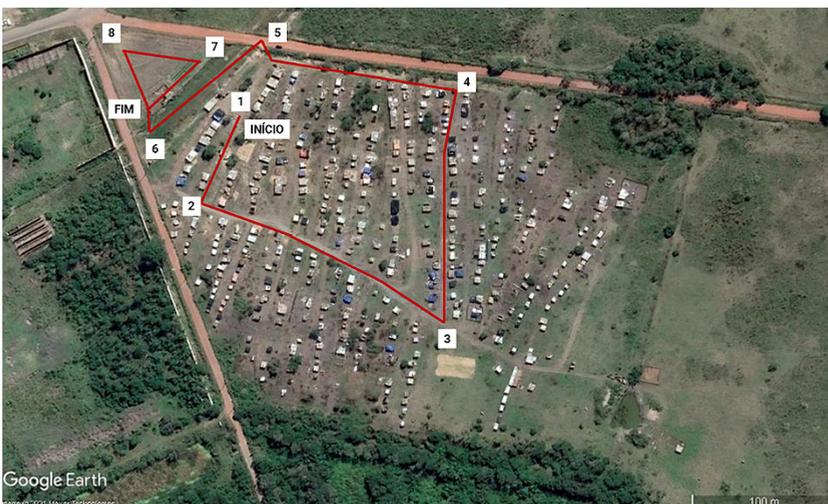
Source: a photograph by the author, 2021.

the big tree. This is where the encamped and officials meet for debates, talks and decision making, and the place became a landmark in the landscape of the encampment. It was at this place that the UFRJ group was split in two: one part would be guided by an official on a visit to the encampment, while the other part would remain at the main complex to prepare the *mística*.¹¹

Map 1 shows the course through the encampment, based on a satellite image. Some relevant points were highlighted in the map and correspond to the author's observations.

Point 1 – This corresponds to the encampment's common facilities: the courtyard; the common kitchen, toilets and showers, as shown in Figure 3; the future school shed, which is currently used for events, a bar and parties, as shown in Figure 4. The expansion of the movement's innovative ideology can be seen in the functioning of the kitchen, which provides three daily meals for everyone. Based on both donations and products planted at the encampment, it is a solution to the hunger of many in the municipality, bringing about food security.

Map 1 – A map developed based on the walkthrough, indicating the order of places visited over the course and the paths taken



Source: a map edited by the author, 2021.

Figure 3 – The common kitchen, sinks and showers built by the encamped using surplus building material from the neighborhood



Source: a photograph and schema by the author, 2021.

Figure 4 – Future school shed, currently used for leisure activities (parties and meetings)



Source: a photograph by the author, 2021.

Figure 5 – The Núcleo de Base 8 (NB 8) sign



Source: a photograph by the author, 2021.

Point 2 – The starting point of the encampment's main alley, which connects the núcleos de base [basic cores] to the rest of the alley grid, as shown in Figure 5. The basic cores are roughly like neighborhoods, organized between a few shacks to facilitate task division between the encamped. To some extent, the way the encampment is organized is similar to the territorial organization of a city: streets, neighborhoods and a central area. However, its innovative way lies in the process of autonomy that the territory achieves through this organizational strategy.

Point 3 – The future soccer field. A place already in use for recreational activities/sports; the place has even housed a soccer championship of the encampment.

Point 4 – The house of prayer, where pastors and priests visiting the encampment conduct religious services. It is worth stressing that the encamped do not call this place a church, but a place of prayer, without a specific religious definition.

Point 5 – The encampment's entrance and disposal site for inorganic waste, which is burned as there is no waste collection by the municipality.

Point 6 – The entrance to the encampment's common vegetable field, as seen in Figure 6. The crops are destined to the encampment as a whole, although each family has a small backyard for its own planting. It is important to note that the income source of most of the families is limited to temporary

Figure 6 – The vegetable field, collectively grown by the encamped



Source: a photograph by the author, 2021.

work in the rural and urban areas, and for this reason there is a high unemployment rate in the encampment.

Ponto 7 and 8 – A fruit grove planted by the encamped when they occupied the land of the Cambahyba farm, in order to recover the soil from the severe degradation caused by sugar monoculture. The place was named Bosque Marielle Franco [Marielle Franco Grove].

It was clear from the walkthrough that the space of the encampment is highly organized, with a space division framework characteristic of the MST, which shows the movement's

unity across the country. Organization and innovation are expressed in the community work of the encamped in the vegetable field, in the grove, in the common kitchen and toilets/showers, and in the organization of alleys and neighborhoods into basic cores. All this shows the various layers of the territory built by the movement. Another important factor noted over the course were the symbologies and cultural features expressed in flags, shack building materials, animals, food, songs, slangs, and activities held during the time the group of researchers was there.

Results and discussions

Applying the POE methodology and its earlier mentioned instruments allowed perceiving the environment based on graphic elements from data collection, such as images, drawings and cartographies, as well as understanding how the group relates to and expresses itself in a particular environment. However, it is worth noting a few limitations, since the collection of data draws from the observer's perceptions, which can make information subjective and often biased, and cause some distortions. Therefore, it is critical that the researcher considers the socio-spatial and cultural context of the community they are observing.

The encampment synthesis map was created by means of a walkthrough and is a development of the experiential approach and incorporated observation used in combination

in the field. Such methods made it possible to create the map with an emphasis on the desires, dreams and organization of the encamped in the territory and in the landscape. Thus, Map 2 outlines the connection between the main points and observations based on the instruments above. Firstly, the organization is defined by the movement by dividing the streets and cores/neighborhoods, each organizing further within its own scope. Besides, taking the walkthrough made it possible to detect the intended locations for future projects and dreams of the encamped, identified in yellow: a soccer field in the area's south, the school and the popular herbal pharmacy in the community shed by the courtyard, next to the encampment's entrance.

The school's project is already in progress and is supported by politicians from the city of Campos dos Goytacazes who are

Map 2 – The synthesis map created from the walkthrough and incorporated observation, on the visit to the Cícero Guedes MST encampment



Source: a map created by the author, 2021.

funding the works and helping the encamped build the school for the *sem-terrinhas* [little landless].¹² The collective field, in green, corresponds to a key space in the movement's philosophy, which consolidates the identity of the landless workers. It strengthens collective work, the struggle for agrarian reform, and reaffirms the identity of both the MST and the peasants, besides furthering a collective work dynamic between the encamped, and a legacy for the land of the Cambahyba farm.

The confluence of innovation, landscape and politics

The images recorded in the field make it possible to perceive different layers emerging from the composition of the landscape at the

Cícero Guedes encampment, and the extent to which it bears the identity of the MST, of peasant struggle and of innovation in its territory. The layers pervade the movement's organization and identity, mainly regarding the restoration and recreation of things.

Some specific points stand out in Figure 4, making it possible to perceive the different layers of the landscape of the encampment emerging from the photograph. It should be stressed that the landscape described here is built by a group and was absorbed by the author from her subjective experience, and will in turn be interpreted by those who will come in contact with this work.

Thus, political representation and identification are visible in the encamped by their red caps and shirts bearing the movement's logo or the logos of some left-wing parties. In addition, some messages in

Figure 7 – A “retelling” of Figure 4, identifying the elements that can make up some layers of the MST landscape at the Cícero Guedes encampment



Source: an image photographed and edited by the author, 2022.

the signs indicate aversion to the Bolsonaro administration, while others promote popular agrarian reform. Even in the architecture of the built element depicted in the image – the “shed” (as the encamped call it) – there is a layer representative of the movement and its marginalization. It is built with materials disposed of or donated, making for a patchy aesthetic, under constant construction and renovation of building materials, ideas and debates. Adding to this, the dirt floor is the great base, bringing up where the root of this landscape comes from: the land.

The images and maps presented in this work make it possible to identify the innovative political aspect strongly linked to the MST and the territories changed by it, such as the Cícero Guedes encampment. The peasant culture and way of life, based on rural family work and on possession of the modes of production, is seen to combine with the political dimension of land struggle to counter still deep-rooted patterns in a context of postcoloniality, driving innovation through the combination of these two factors, as well as producing joint ideologies that rethink the old latifundio-based model.

Also noteworthy is how the ideals and innovations of certain groups can express themselves in a rural landscape, impacting directly the forms of work in the countryside, their output and therefore the social and economic structure of the country. Thus, the innovative landscape of these groups becomes a political and ideological expression, strengthening models which in turn impact the daily life of all Brazilians, not only those living in rural areas, but also in urban communities, which are fed by and rely directly on the countryside's output.

The MST is thus seen to be an innovative movement not only regarding its model of agricultural production and of relationship with the land, but also in the social relations within the territories. Debates on gender relations and their issues are increasingly in the agenda and are put into practice in collective processes, adopting gender equality as a premise, as well as LGBTQIA+ respect, thus fostering equal participation in the organization and production activities within the movement's encampments and settlements (Domingues, 2007; Nobre, 2020). At the Cícero Guedes encampment, everyone works in the collective field, men and women alike, and there is always a male and a female leader at the encampment and at the basic cores. Still, a greater female participation was observed in activities relating with food, education and health care.

In addition, the Cícero Guedes' encamped include in their model of production the renewal of soil degraded by the farm's processes, as well as renewing the history of that ground. By creating new memories and new health for the land, the meaning linked to that territory, which was once the stage of environmental degradation, slave labor, and burning of anti-dictatorship militants, undergoes innovation and is built anew.

Thus, the innovation lies in recreating ancestral and family farming practices, in rebuilding landscapes that encompass the movement's identity and mode of production, and in the rightful retaking of territory. In addition, each territory (and its settlement/encampment community) has its own morphologic characteristics, its knowledge and resource limitations, thereby leading to a way of planning and building the original

and particular territory, as well as bringing up innovation in doing, building and producing things with the peculiarities of each case.

All this makes it possible to understand the importance of reading and understanding the political rural landscape and its spaces of coexistence, expressing its meanings and implications for the different spheres of contemporary society. Also, it should be stressed that it is necessary to understand the differences between the urban space and the space used by the peasantry and by agribusiness structures in the country. After all, such categories produce different landscapes,

whether because of their uses, scales, or forms of appropriating ideological apparatuses that manifest themselves in them, and which oppose aspects related to capital and what it subtracts from those who have a different matrix of beliefs and of forms of collective appropriation and reproduction of space. In the case of the MST, such forms are counter-hegemonic, innovative in the sense of going against the established model and being in line with the way of life of its community and capable of expanding into other territories, thereby creating another, possible path for all, in the face of the system of rural policies in effect.

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Translation: this article was translated from Portuguese to English by Fernando Effori de Mello, email: feffori@gmail.com

Acknowledgements

The present work was supported by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) – Brazil – Funding Code 001.

Notes

- (1) This work considers postcoloniality as a term that refers to the political, economic, philosophical and religious effects inherited from colonialism on the countries that suffered colonization, emphasizing the consequences and vestiges of the colonial system that pervade the sociopolitical dynamics of such countries.
- (2) Under the Law n. 4,504, all land must meet its social function, i.e.: (1) to produce food; (2) to have no record of pollution; (3) not to degrade the environment; and (4) to have no debts with the state.
- (3) One of MST's mottos emphasizing the importance of family farming for meeting the needs of cities with healthy, sustainable food. It also emphasizes the interdependent, inseparable relationship between city and country (Melo, 2020).
- (4) The formula debated by Karl Marx in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. 'M' stands for money and 'C' for commodity.
- (5) The goal of POE consists in providing an overview of how an environment can perform positively or negatively with regard to its inhabitants. Thus, it can drive reconstruction and restoration, bringing about innovative thinking with regard to built environments in society.
- (6) The *CampoCidade* [CountrysideCity] (CaCi) outreach project, which is part of the Technical Solidarity Group (Soltec) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ. The CaCi develops actions connected with peasant movements to provide advice on the management and production of rural settlement groups in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- (7) The political rally was held in celebration of the encampment's fourth month in existence. Politicians from the city of Campos dos Goytacazes and UFRJ groups attended the event.
- (8) <https://rio.armazemdocampo.com.br/>
- (9) The rally brought together groups from the urban community, such as the university and politicians. Music circles and political demonstrations were held which emphasized the importance of the movement and of land reform, as well as a get-together party with the guests and camp members.
- (10) *Núcleo de Assessoria Jurídica Universitária Popular Luíza Mahin* [Luíza Mahin Popular Legal Advice University Group] of the Federal University of Real de Janeiro's Law School.
- (11) The *mística* ritual is essential for strengthening the MST as a collective movement. It takes place at the beginning of each socio-political activity of the group, manifesting itself in practices discursive or not, where the landless identify with the MST's body of knowledge. These rituals symbolize a strong union of the group's desire and goal, actualizing the memories of its struggles (Freda, 2015).
- (12) As the children of the encamped or settled are called.

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Received: April 30, 2022

Approved: July 16, 2022