

## **“LAND, LABOR AND POLITICS: A STUDY OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL”<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:** Since the 1980's, a rural settlement program is being implemented in Brazil, which today involves about 500 thousand families. Despite this effort, the country still has a high concentration of rural property on a national level. These settlements, considered here as “social spaces under construction” have been the subject of innumerable studies, especially in the social sciences. The present study aims at discussing, from the perspective of three main elements: land, work and politics, the existence of specificities in the reconstituted familiar relations in rural settlements. Toward this end, we used data obtained from an empirical study conducted in three settlement areas in the state of São Paulo: Sumaré, Promissão and Araraquara. The questions formulated in this study are: 1) What is the meaning of the conquered land? It certainly does not simply mean an investment or simple means of reproduction. In this relation, there is the conquering and preservation of a family's patrimony. 2) With regard to productive labor, there is a strong tendency to take advantage of manpower that is dosed according to the opportunities lying outside the settlement, but in the vicinity; 3º) With regard to the participation and strength of political organization through associations, cooperatives, labor unions, or even production group, for these reflect the diversity of settlement/settler dichotomy, leading to institutional interaction on a local, regional, and national level. The agricultural policies directed towards this segment of the population are analyzed in the current rural settlement context, in light of the policies directed to the familiar agriculture through our country's history.

**KEYWORDS:** agrarian reform, family farming, social organization, property rights

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The first settlement areas in Monte Alegre, located in the Araraquara-SP region, were created in 1985 and 1986, although their completion only took place almost ten years later. Today, the Monte Alegre settlement project comprises 6 areas, totaling 358 agricultural lots. According to Bergamasco & Norder (1999), the Monte Alegre areas are settled mostly by migrant farm workers, who were formerly seasonal sugar cane cutters.

In the 1940s, the government of the state of São Paulo purchased the Fazenda Monte Alegre, through the collection of taxes, with the objective of producing lumber for

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to be used in the construction of the Araraquarense Railroad Line. Thirty years later, with the creation of the FEPASA (The Paulista Railway SA), the farm became idle and, under the coordination of the CAIC (The Agricultural Property and Colonizing Company), several companies secured federal government loans for the exploitation of lumber in the Fazenda Monte Alegre. In 1984, some workers began claiming rights to some areas of the farm, which had been abandoned by the CAIC. The objective of these laborers was to set up settlements in the area, being successful in 1985 (DANTAS, 1998). The first families that entered the settlement were *ex boias frias* – men and women fleeing from unemployment caused by the mechanization of sugar cane harvesting. Thus, land becomes an alternative to unemployment that affected the region (FERRANTE, 2000). Other families coming from the municipalities of Cravinhos, Urupês and Pontal joined the movement. Nucleus II was created at the end of 1985, and most of the families came from the city of Sertãozinho, who were previously camped out in the municipality of Pradópolis, in an area belonging to FEPASA. In 1986, Nucleus III was created – comprised of migrant salaried families from the state of Minas Gerais – and Nucleus IV of families coming from the municipality of Guariba<sup>5</sup>. (DANTAS, 1998).

In this study, the following areas belonging to the Monte Alegre settlement were studied: area I, set up in July, 1985, with 48 families, comprising 858 ha, and area IV, set up in November, 1986, with 36 families, occupying an area of 576 ha (BERGAMASCO; BLANC-PAMARD & CHONCHOL, 1997).

The Sumaré I and II settlements were created under the Public Land Valuation Program (State Law n. 4957 of 30 December, 1985), during the Franco Montoro government. Participation of the progressive sectors of the Catholic Church was very important for the organizing of families, who would later struggle for the land. At the end of the 70s, in a community assembly held in the outskirts of Campinas, some rural worker families, who had recently arrived to the city, gathered for Bible meetings, oriented by the Liberation Theology, addressing the country's political and economic scenario.

As an initial proposal to reduce the precarious living conditions of the unemployed and retired belonging to the group, community gardens in vacant urban areas were proposed. The income generated from the sale of vegetables was shared among the participants. The success of the project led to other collective ventures, such as the collective purchase of basic foods (BERGAMASCO & NORDER, 1999).

The number of needy increased along with the economic situation that the country was going through<sup>6</sup> and the income generated by the projects (gardens and collective purchases) was not enough to improve the situation of the workers. At that time, with the country going through a redemocratizing period, several social movements made themselves heard, and demanded, besides better salaries and living conditions, access to land.

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<sup>5</sup> The setting up of Nucleus IV of the Monte Alegre settlement project was linked to the Guariba and Barrinha strikes that took place in 1983 and 1984. From the strike a group was formed, which together with the Guariba Rural Workers' Union (STR), began discussing the land issue. This group received the support of the Guariba Mayor's office, of the STR of Araraquara, and of local politicians (FIAMENGUE & WHITAKER, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> In the beginning of the 80s, a period of profound economic crisis, that lasted almost the entire decade, which has been named the "lost decade".

Based on Biblical passages, such as the one mentioning the Promised Land for God's People (Exodus – Old Testament), the Campinas group then begins to believe that agrarian reform is the solution to their unbearable situation. The group then invited the leaders of the Primavera settlement to a debate, to share their struggle experience. The testimonies raised the expectations and hopes of the group, as well as of the region's workers, and 600 families joined the movement.

Since the group had grown in size, it was divided in four sub-groups (Sumaré, Limeira, Nova Odessa and Nova Veneza), organized under a central committee comprised of the leaders of each sub-group (BERGAMASCO et. al., 1996).

The Sumaré group, comprised of 50 families that had already participated in the discussion for a year, decided to occupy the Tamoyo Farm, in Araraquara-SP, which was already being expropriated. After having camped out for three days, and under pressure from the police and hired gunmen, some families gave up. Those that remained left the area and went on to occupy another area, the Horto Florestal in Araras, belonging to FEPASA (The Paulista Railway S/A), where other families had already set up canvas shelters. Six days later, FEPASA reclaims the property, and the families, having no place to go and to put pressure on the State, decide to set up camp along the Anhangüera Highway, in the outskirts of the city of Campinas. After a few months, the State government, through the Land Issues Institute (IAF), sets up a settlement in the Horto Florestal of Boa Vista, also belonging to FEPASA, in the municipality of Sumaré. Twenty-six of the fifty families originally in the Sumaré group are settled. Some gave up, and others were relocated to other settlement areas.

Under the legal form of concession, the Sumaré I settlement was created, comprising 237.59 ha. Of this total, nearly 1 ha was unusable, 18.40 were used for infrastructure, and 31.47 ha were set aside as an environmental reserve. Thus, nearly 187 ha were destined to the 26 families.

In May, 1985, the Sumaré II group, comprising 45 families totaling 250 people, set up camp in an area along an avenue next to the targeted area, located in Vila Padre Anchieta, on the border between the municipalities of Campinas and Sumaré.

The holding of assemblies was a way to measure the level of organization, because it was through these that the camp members could voice their problems and find solutions. This practice served to keep the families united in order to reach their goals.

The Sumaré II settlement was set up in August 1985, and 29 families were settled on an emergency basis. The first two years of this emergency period were spent in an area belonging to Fepasa, being later transferred to a definite settlement, located in the Horto Florestal of Boa Vista (BERGAMASCO, 1993).

Promissão, the third settlement studied, is one of the largest in the state of São Paulo, with nearly 17,000 ha of land, and accommodating 628 families. Most of the studies that tell the story of the settlement have recorded the struggle for the land through the testimonies of the settlers. The settlement's history is based on the life stories of the settlers who constructed and still construct this history, as well as on field observations and interviews conducted with the other agents involved.

This approach, based on the primitive process described by Marx, which is related to the occupation of an area located in the northwestern region of the state, where the settlement is located, was mentioned by Borges (1997). With this analysis, the author shows how the region's history is characterized by violence and expropriation, initially

with regard to the Indians that inhabited the region, and later with regard to the small landowners. In registering the history of the Fazenda Reunidas, Borges (1997) uses the deeds register at the Lins Property Office, as well as interviews conducted with the settlers. She recounts how the farm was created by the expropriation of smaller properties in the region, mostly belonging to immigrants, mainly Japanese. The process was also characterized by the violence imposed by the landowner, José Ribas. By way of threats and harassments, this landowner forced people off their plots, or simply purchased them for symbolic amounts. The deeds analyzed were registered between 1937 and 1963.

This way, the author gives an account, through the personal histories of the settlers, of how these people returned to the land through the struggle for the land. Initially, there were forty-four families that decided to struggle for the Fazenda Reunidas land. In 1983 and 1984, the Land Pastoral Commission becomes active in the region, together with the GLEP (The Linense Popular Education Group). “The creation of the GLEP intensified the workers’ movement in the Lins region, and meetings were held of workers from Lins, Promissão, Sabino, Ubarana and José Bonifácio, aiming at organizing the region’s workers, where agrarian reform was debated, defending the idea that the only way to pressure the government to initiate the reform was to occupy the land.” (BORGES, 1997, p. 150).

The Fazenda Reunidas takeover movement began in 1985, and after a great deal of struggle, it was expropriated in 1986. According to D’AQUINO: “in 1987 an initial settling of 44 families that had been part of the movement from the beginning took place, and in July, 1988, the families were definitely settled in ten agrovillas, on 15 ha. lots” (p. 6).

Of the 140 families that participated in the Promissão meetings, only 32 families remained when the settling began in 1986. Of the 140 initial families, 70 went to the side of the road. Of these, only 31 remained. Some came, others left, and in the end, 45 families decided to enter the farm, after 9 months of intense suffering. At the same time, a group of families from Limeira, organized by the Rural Landless Workers’ Movement set up camp outside the Fazenda Reunidas. Known as the “Campinas group”, it now comprises the Campinas Agrovilla.

Also according to BORGES (1997, p. 159), the “Group of 44” is a very strong reference in the settlement’s history. “Unlike the other groups, this one chose confrontation, opposing those who preferred the normal course of events” – the transfer of property, registry, and the limiting of the corresponding areas.

The expropriation process of the Promissão settlement was characterized by different groups of rural workers that staked claims to the land, because of their origins in struggle for the land. Once property transfers (imissão de posse) were issued, groups of rural worker families from the region’s towns were recruited by the Unions of the neighboring towns, and by the National Colonization and Agrarian Reform Institute (INCRA) – agency that is responsible for the establishment of rural settlements in Brazil –, by signing up and selecting workers. Unlike the forty four families known as the “Group of 44” who had participated in the Land Pastoral Commission and GLEP meetings, and who had camped along the BR 153 highway, on the outskirts of the farm, even before the transfer of property to the Incra. And a third group, known as the “Campinas Group”, which was one of the four groups formed in the Sumaré area, which had also be camped for months. The two latter groups occupied the farm. The group of

families that had signed up with the Unions of the neighboring cities also set up camp on the farm during the months in which the negotiations were held, and later when the lots were divided. However, they set up camp after the occupation, and did not participate.

Little by little, their story is told through the accounts of the settlers and technical personnel that participated in the farm's appropriation process. Each settlement, and each group of settled families has its own story, and transversally, it is through their life stories and the seeking out of pertinent documents that these processes were reconstructed.

In light of the land struggle processes, this study aims at discussing, with regard to three different elements: land, labor, and politics, the existence of specificities in rural settlements. These elements assume fundamental importance both for the rural families, as well as for the rural settlements, since these elements constitute issues regarding the organization of production (MOREIRA, 1998). In this study, the settlements are regarded as "rural spaces under construction". Toward this end, we used data obtained from an empirical study conducted in three settlement areas in the state of São Paulo: Sumaré, Promissão and Araraquara.<sup>7</sup> The questions formulated in this study are: 1) What is the meaning of the conquered land? It certainly does not simply mean an investment or simple means of reproduction. In this relation, there is the conquering and preservation of a family's patrimony. 2) With regard to productive labor, there is a strong tendency to take advantage of manpower that is dosed according to the opportunities lying outside the settlement, but in the vicinity; 3<sup>o</sup>) With regard to the participation and strength of political organization through associations, cooperatives, labor unions, or even production group, for these reflect the diversity of settlement/settler dichotomy, leading to institutional interaction on a local, regional, and national level.

## II. THE ACCESS TO LAND AND ITS MEANING

By recovering the Promissão settlement development process, the different perceptions held with regard to the agrarian reform struggle become clear. The entire signing up and selection episode stands out in the Promissão case, going back to camping period. Many of the settlers were registered by Rural Workers' Unions of the region's towns, being submitted to a classification/selection process, and were then summoned to participate in meetings together with technical staff in charge of setting up the settlement. The settlers of the Penápolis and José Bonifácio Agrovillas participated in this process. Several of the testimonies telling of how they came to know about the settlement and their classification in the selection process, through the unions or announcement aired on the local radio:

*"We heard on the radio that this agrarian reform was going to happen. We had never heard of it before...we had an idea, but not what it was for real.";*  
*"everyday there was an announcement on Radio Bonifácio, calling people to*

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<sup>7</sup> This study, called "The Dynamics of Rural Worker Settlements and their Effects on Social and Physical Spaces", is being conducted by the professors and researchers at the Agricultural Engineering School of UNICAMP in collaboration with researchers from the "Centre de Recherches sur le Brésil Contemporain" of the "École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales" of Paris, with whom said teams have a long tradition joint research.

*sign up because they were going to divide the Reunida Farm for agrarian reform. (...) So, in our town 270 signed up. They called 28, from 28, it went down to 21. The 21 that were drawn went to the meetings.”*

Thus, the selection in Promissão gave priority to the inhabitants of the neighboring towns, and not the group of 44 families that were camped out, who had occupied the farm. It was this priority that sparked the conflict between those who were registered by the unions and the Campinas group that had occupied the area. Due to this, this group was the last to participate in the lot distribution process, requiring negotiation between the Incra and the unions, according to the statements of some of the settlers.

Many of those selected by the unions did not know that they had to set up camp in the area in order to ensure their access to the land. And, due to this, many gave up, and those who were next in line were called. Many of the statements mention the hardships of the camp at the time and the slow pace of the agrarian reform, and the renewed enthusiasm brought about by an emergency area that was liberated for them to plant.

According to the interviewed Itesp technical staff who had participated from the outset of the entire Promissão settlement process, one of the difficulties faced was dealing with the differences among those who demanded land in the region: those who were camped out – the 44 families of neighboring towns and the group of families coming from the Campinas region, especially the latter – and those who had been signed up by the unions.

According to the transfer of ownership to the Incra, and the expropriation of the farm as set forth by Decree nº 92.688 of 19 May, 1986, the Presidency of the Republic declared the rural area of the state of São Paulo as a priority zone for agrarian reform execution and management, and by Expropriation Decree nº 92.876 of 30 June, 1986, the President declared part of the rural property called Fazenda Reunidas/Santa Bárbara or Fazenda Patos, measuring approximately 22,782 ha.<sup>8</sup>, as being of social interest for expropriation purposes.

The demarcation of the Promissão lots was undertaken with the help of some of the settlers, for there were no roads in the area, and pathways had to be opened up. With the measurement and demarcation of the lots, and since the campers selected by the unions were divided into groups of 10 to 12 families – called “sectors” –, the distribution of the lots was frequently done by drawings within each sector, but sometimes was done through agreements among themselves.

The establishment of the rural settlement at Fazenda Reunidas in Promissão was, due to reasons mentioned above, a long and difficult process. The occupation of the lots by the families was also slow due to the lack of infrastructure – in many interviews the settlers mentioned the absence of roads giving access to the lots, as well as the lack of electricity, which only reached the area in the mid-1990s – and slow availability of credit. It becomes evident in the interviews how the conquests with regard to infrastructure were a result of negotiations and pressure by the settlers, and not due to previously structured and planned policy.

In the case of the state settlements, the registry, selection and classification processes are described in State Law nº 4.957 regarding the State Public Land Valuation

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<sup>8</sup> According to the same transfer of property act, the farm was divided into three areas: area I with 1,071.70 ha; area II with 245 ha, and area III with 16,711.40 ha, making a total of 18,028.10 ha.

Plan. The Sumaré I, Sumaré II and Araraquara processes also go back to the land occupation and struggle period.

The registry and selection issues, besides being associated with the establishment of settlements, are still evident in those that gave up in settlement that were already established. In order for a family to leave a settlement, according to current legislation, it is necessary to inform the land agencies so that another family may be designated. However, in Promissão, this does not happen in practice, for the Incra does not have an effective control of the desisting families and the “sale of the right”. In Sumaré, this ends up making it difficult for these families to leave, for, as observed by a settlement leader, *“the selection commission process does solve the problem of those who wish to leave”*. This is a polemic issue among those interviewed, for it is directly related to the relation of the settler with the conquered land and with the difficulties encountered. For most of the people interviewed, *“those who sold out lost everything, and faced a lot of problems”*.

The current definition of agrarian reform considers the use of private property for the setting up of settlements, according to the legislation. Settlements on public lands are part of the land regulation and idle land discrimination actions, and thus are not considered an agrarian reform process.

Basically, there is a difference between perception and conception among the settlers. For some, the issue regards whether or not the settler may sell the lot for which he or she received the deed. In this sense, the opinion is similar to that of the MST (Landless Movement), which defends the concession of individual or collective use as the legal basis which is most appropriate for the settlements.

Most of the settlers interviewed have different preoccupations, but related to issues regarding the autonomy over the lot, the family’s property – some show strong concern regarding debts – and with the definite guarantee to the conquered land with the issuance of a definite deed, entitling them to the land, as true owners. Therefore, many do desire ownership of the land. In studies of rural populations and family agriculture, some authors point out these values as being part of the secular universe of the rural population<sup>9</sup>. However, in the Promissão case, this issue becomes problematic, by the fact that they have pay for the land, as currently required by law. Many fear losing the land and going into debt.

The issue regarding whether or not they feel they own the land, in spite not having the deed, many consider the documents they have of the lot, such as the producer’s receipt book and the rural registry certificate, as well as squatters’ rights, which is not allowed for public land as proof of ownership:

*“Ah, I think, I feel it because, for example, I’ve got my registry number, right? If I want to get a loan, I go to the bank and get one. I won’t get it if my name is dirty, but if I am an honest worker, I get it. I can walk into a store, I use my registration number, so, I mean, I feel like I am the owner, right? Because if I didn’t have the registration number, I would be the owner (...) Then I get my registration number, my social security number, as property, as a property owner, you know. I have one, so I feel like I am the owner, the same thing, right? I am not the owner with the deed, ‘cause I don’t know, I don’t understand the law too well, but there are squatter rights, too, right?”*

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<sup>9</sup> See, among others, Wanderley, 1996.

The differences between being settled on public lands and being settled on private lands also regards the conflicts that took place during the struggle for the land, when the rural workers had to confront the government, in the case of public lands, such as Sumaré I, Sumaré II and Araraquara, or the landowners, in the case of private lands, such as Fazenda Reunidas in Promissão. The occupation experience of the Sumaré I group of families portrays this picture well, and one of the interviewees, telling of the conflicts when occupying the Fazenda Tamoyo in Araraquara, which was private property, demonstrates how the Horto Florestal in Araras, which was a public area, was decisive in choosing the families to occupy the farm in Araras. In the words of one actors, when the Fazenda Tamoyo was occupied, and the debates as to whether or not to abandon the farm ensued, in light of the threats of the hired guns:

*“I don’t know who said it, but it went like this: don’t you have State lands? If you had State land it would be much better than the Farm lands. Because it is tough to take on the landowner, right? The State is better. Then someone else said: ah, I know where there’s land, in Araras. So everyone got excited, tore down their shacks, and the trucks were empty. So we put everything in the trucks.”*

### **III. MAKE THE LAND PRODUCE: LABOR ON THE SETTLEMENTS**

Another important aspect regards the issue of work in the researched settlements. In this study, we obtained information on the work of the settlers before they entered the settlement, and after they entered the settlement. We observed that the great majority of the settlers held some form of occupation before entering the settlement, and the Sumaré II settlement showed that 50% did not work before the settlement. Looking into the background of this settlement, it may be observed that those people that went on to demand access to the land were mostly unemployed in the cities, due to the economic situation of the country at the time. On the other hand, the data indicate a much more important issue: most of the people worked in rural activities before being settled. This information does not differ from the national context, for data obtained from the census, conducted between 1995 and 1996, indicate that the main activity of the families, before arriving at the settlement, was farmer/rural worker (BERGAMASCO & FERRANTE, 1998). In the Monte Alegre IV settlement, the number of people that had worked in rural areas reached 90%, and in the Bonifácio Agrovilla, reached 83% (Table 1). These data support the notion that the settlers already had links to the rural areas, which is quite a polemic issue in the Brazilian press, as well as for those against the reform.

Table 1. Distribution of settlers in relation to work before occupying the land and its origin, and the current percentage of people occupied on the lot (%).

Settlement	Worked before the settlement	Rural Area	Urban Area	People working on lot
<b>Promissão</b>				
Campinas Agrovilla	90.0	44.4	55.6	60.4
Penápolis Agrovilla	91.7	72.7	27.3	72.2
J.Bonifácio Agrovilla	100.0	83.3	16.7	61.7
<b>Araraquara</b>				
Monte Alegre I	85.7	50.0	50.0	57.7
Monte Alegre IV	90.9	90.0	10.0	61.4
<b>Sumaré</b>				
Sumaré I	100.0	33.3	66.7	72.3
Sumaré II	50.0	40.0	60.0	48.7

Source: Research data, 2002.

The data regarding work indicate that most of the people living in the settlement also work there. Family agriculture is the main activity for rural labor, since this type of activity is labor-intensive (GUANZIROLI et al., 2001). The percentage of people living in the settlement, who also work on the agricultural lot reaches 72% in the Sumaré I and Penápolis Agrovilla settlements. Only the Sumaré II settlement presented a percentage less than 50. This may be associated to the fact that this settlement is located quite near to two cities, Sumaré and Hortolândia, possibly indicating easier access to urban services. The same holds for the Monte Alegre I settlement which, in spite of the index being greater than 50%, is located near the city of Motuca, in an orange producing area, and employs most of the settlements laborers at harvest time. On the other hand, the elasticity of the employment options is also due to the fact that the family increases in size – sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law – and thus the availability of activities tends to drop, contributing to the search for employment away from the lot.

Table 2. Distribution of people living on the lot according to place of work (%).

	Total	Sumaré I	Sumaré II	Agrov. Penapolis	Agrov. J. Bonifácio	Agrov. Campinas	Monte Alegre IV	Monte Alegre I
People working on the lot	60.6	72.3	48	71.7	60.9	59.6	56	60.5
People not working on the lot	39.4	27.7	52	28.3	39.1	40.4	44	39.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Research data, 2002

These data demonstrate that the settlement is not only a place of residence, but also mainly of work, for most of the people living on the lots are also employed there. In most cases, the settler's children are the most benefited, since the family members working on the lot are mostly the settler's children. In the rural settlements in the state of São Paulo, the strategy of development and of fixing families in the field is beginning to take hold,

by absorbing a segment of the population, keeping them away from marginalization and underemployment in the cities (CARMO, 2003).

This study also indicates a disturbing fact: a considerable number of children 14 year of age or younger are working on the lots. This is a troubling fact, for child labor is prohibited in the country, besides the fact of being of school age.

With regard to the type of credit received, we observed the predominance of PROCERA. In 1985, the Special Credit Program for Agrarian Reform – PROCERA was created, which a important victory for the settlers, resulting from the pressure exerted by the MST (PEREIRA, 2003). In the Monte Alegre I settlement, the Procera is responsible for 80% of the credit received. By 1989, the Procera had benefited approximately 30,000 families settled by the Incra, thus being a promising line of credit that created strong expectations among those who still had not been benefited (JORGE & SOUZA, 2003). According to the Confederation of Brazilian Agrarian Reform Cooperatives – CONCRAB (1995), 10 years after its creation, the Procera had become a means of social and economic development for the settlements.

This source of financing was substituted by the PRONAF (National Family Agriculture Strengthening Program) in 1996, aiming at supporting rural development based on family agriculture. In 1999, the Federal Government issued the document “Family Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Local Development for a New Rural World” and one of the principal measures adopted for the construction of this “New Rural World” was the merging of Procera and Pronaf actions, with the former being discontinued, and from then on, PRONAF also begins operating with settled farmers (PEREIRA, 2003). Pronaf offers a type of credit directed towards the settlers called Pronaf A. This line of credit was also present in the settlements researched. In the Sumaré I settlement, Pronaf A credit represented 57% of the total received.

Table 3. Distribution of settlers with regard to the type of credit received (%).

	Total	Monte Alegre I	Monte Alegre IV	Sumaré I	Sumaré II	Agrovilla Campinas	Agrovilla J. Bonifácio	Agrovilla Penápolis
Procera	43.0	80.0	54.5	21.4	33.3	37.5	56.8	42.4
Pronaf Costs A	27.9	0.0	27.3	57.1	33.3	15.6	18.9	30.3
Pronaf Investment A	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	14.4	3.1	2.7	0.0
Pronaf Investment B	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0
Institutional credits	15.1	20.0	9.1	7.1	9.5	21.9	18.9	15.2
Other	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0
Do not know	7.6	0.0	9.1	10.7	9.5	9.4	0.0	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research data, 2002.

#### IV. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Different types of behavior were noted among the settlers when their participation in some organizations was analyzed. This is reflected by individual history of each settlement and agrovilla studied. The Campinas agrovilla, and the Sumaré I settlement are the ones presenting the greatest numbers of people belonging to organizations (Table 4). This is not surprising, since several of settlers had gained organizational experience having actively participated in the creation of the Landless Movement (MST), the Rural CUT (Central Workers' Union) and the Land Pastoral Movement (CPT).

During the settlement establishment process the farmers must overcome several challenges. In the Sumaré I and II settlement struggle history, organizations were present, but were permeated by internal disputes, leadership disputes, conflicts and divergences (BERGAMASCO, 1994).

Table 4. Distribution of the settlers, with regard to membership to different organizations (%).

	Monte Alegre I	Monte Alegre IV	Agrov. Campinas	Agrov. J. Bonifacio	Agrov. Penápolis	Sumaré I	Sumaré II
Settlers associations	14.3	0.0	50.0	16.7	8.3	22.2	30.0
Settlement cooperative	0.0	18.2	60.0	8.3	0.0	33.3	0.0
Association outside the settlement	0.0	9.1	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Cooperative outside the settlement	0.0	9.1	10.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Municipal STR	28.6	9.1	10.0	16.7	0.0	55.6	40.0
STR of other municipality	14.3	18.2	0.0	16.7	0.0	11.1	0.0
Union in other municipality	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0
Other union in other municipality	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
MST	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	20.0
Land Pastoral	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	10.0
NGOs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Other organizations	0.0	0.0	10.0	8.3	16.7	22.2	20.0
Does not participate	57.1	54.5	0.0	58.3	75.0	33.3	60.0

Source: Research data, 2002.

Note: Since the choice of more than one alternative was allowed, their sum may be greater than 100%.

On the other hand, when the origin of the settlers, before obtaining a lot, was urban, and, above all, had not actively participated in the settlement's occupation and establishment, the participation of settlers in organizations declines. The Penápolis agrovilla is an extreme example of this situation, where 75% of those interviewed were not associated to any organization. Most of these settlers had lived in urban areas before obtaining a lot, and were summoned, over the radio, by the Rural Workers Union of the municipality of Penápolis. But this is not the rule. Especially in the case of the Sumaré II

settlement, whose members took part in the entire occupation and settlement process, facing greater difficulties during this period in comparison to Sumaré I, 60% of those interviewed were not associated to any type of organization. More than 50% of the settlers in the Monte Alegre I and IV, José Bonifácio and Sumaré II settlements had no link to associations. Sometimes settlers' expectations are based on the reproduction of the land in private terms, corresponding, in a certain manner, to greater autonomy (BERGAMASCO, 1994), since individual labor suggests non-division and individual decision-making, contributing towards making the dream of autonomy come true (COSTA & BERGAMASCO, 2003).

The organization of production is one of the greatest incentives for settlers to join organizations, as was observed in practically all the settlements and agrovillas, and the participation of their members is geared toward administrative issues (Table 5). In some cases, the forms of organization of production allow for better social interaction, frequently addressing their desires and autonomy (COSTA & BERGAMASCO, 2003).

Table 5. Distribution of the activities in which people participate in the organizations (%).

	Monte Alegre I	Monte Alegre IV	Agrov. Campinas	Agrov. J. Bonifacio	Agrov. Penápolis	Sumaré I	Sumaré II
Sports /recreation /cultural	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	75.0
Directors' elections	33.3	0.0	40.0	20.0	66.7	83.3	50.0
Assemblies and meetings	33.3	0.0	70.0	20.0	66.7	50.0	100.0
Collective labor	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	75.0
Manifestations outside the settlement	0.0	0.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	66.7	75.0
None	66.7	80.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0
Others	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Did not respond	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	66.7	0.0	0.0

Source: Research data, 2002.

Note: Since the choice of more than one alternative was allowed, their sum may be greater than 100%.

Another important characteristic that must be pointed out is related to the level of trust that the settlers have in their leaders. Overall, those settlers who participate in some way or other in an organization, whether associations, cooperatives or rural workers' unions, hold a certain distrust of their leaders, and the percentage of settlers (1.2%) who fully trust their leaders is very low.

This distrust is greater with regard to the leaders of associations and cooperatives. This may be related to the fact that the settlers depend directly on the organizations, for

example, for bank loans, for the purchase of machinery, the sale of their products, or the form of production.

With regard to the union leaders, the level of trust is greater, if compared with the other leaders (associations and cooperatives). This trust appears mainly in the Monte Alegre I (28.6%) and Sumaré I (66.7%) settlements.

The level of distrust is also manifested with regard to the MST. In the Monte Alegre I and IV settlements, the level of distrust of this movement is high, and may be due to the fact that these settlements have had, since their inception, a stronger relation with rural workers' unions and not with the MST.

Also in the Sumaré I settlement, the level of distrust with regard to the MST leaders is quite significant (55,6%). The same does not occur with Sumaré II settlement, since 30% of settlers declared having a high level of trust with regard to the movement's leaders.

Overall, with the exception of the Monte Alegre IV settlement, all the others declared having a high level of trust in the institutions responsible for land policies: Incra and Itesp (São Paulo State Land Institute). The Monte Alegre I and IV settlements were created by state policies, falling under the responsibility of the Itesp. These settlements do have their conflicts with local technical staff, mainly with regard to technical assistance, which could be related to the fact that these settlements are located in a modern area, characterized by the sugar cane monoculture. These two settlements differ from the others researched regarding the level of trust in the Incra and Itesp, in which 81.9% of settlers have little or no trust in these institutions.

#### **IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

From the issues arising from the interviews, it was possible to observe settlers' perceptions and conceptions regarding their relation to the land, the policies that orient this relation, and the different ideological proposals. One aspect that must be pointed out is the heterogeneity of the perceptions, with regard to the land struggle experiences, the camp and occupation periods, as well as all related experiences. And, fundamentally, the greatest problem regards the reformulation of policies for settlers, highlighting the issue of settlers' payment of the land.

The "emancipation" policy for settlements is based on the idea that the rural settlements must free themselves of state tutelage. One of the "lines of action" of the new rural world is the "renegotiation of old contracts" so that settlers may rapidly be integrated to the family agriculture system. Alleging the waste of public funds, the existence of injustice regarding the "artificial differentiation" between family farmers and agrarian reform settlers, that tends to consolidate a true privilege for "those family farmers coming from agrarian reform", for receiving "highly" subsidized credits, the new proposal justifies the payment of the land by the settlers, "liberating" them from the tutelage of the state.

For some of the settlers, there is a certain level of uncertainty regarding the right to the land, the possibility of going into debt, and the consequent loss of the lot. Therefore, some settlers may give up their desire for having a right to the land, a "title", an "ownership" of the land, as a strategy for remaining on the land, to ensure property rights.

From these analyses, we perceive by the rapid emancipation policy for rural settlements that the greatest struggle of the settlers is the struggle to remain on the land, given the current crisis faced by the agricultural sector and political struggle for agrarian reform, with State actions, characterized by intermittent, failing, and undefined policies, lacking any type of planning. The current government, of a democratic connotation, in spite of having drawn up a new National Agrarian Reform Plan, based on the access to land issue, has yet to formally address these problems. And, given these circumstances, the settlers are developing strategies to defend their interests, the conceptions, their desires, frequently adoption legal rhetoric, constructing alternative perceptions regarding property rights.

On the other hand, in terms of political participation, we note that a great majority of the settlers do not participate in any organized activity, whether it is an association, cooperative, union or social movement, which could reflect a distrust with regard to these entities. By measuring the level of trust in the different institutions, the high degree of heterogeneity among settlements researched becomes evident, as does the greater distrust regarding the different organizations.

Translated by David Page Haxton Jr.

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