ABSTRACT

Title of Document:	**EDUCATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF A BRAZILIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT**
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For the last twenty-five years, the Landless Worker's Movement (MST) has organized some 1.5 million landless rural workers to claim and occupy unutilized cultivable land to which they are legally entitled under the 1988 Constitution. The movement has been instrumental in the redistribution of unused cultivable land to thousands of landless rural families and the creation of a new positive identity for rural people that values their culture, knowledge, and autonomy. In doing so, the movement has become a global exemplar for a more equitable, just, and sustainable approach to development. A philosophy and practice of education that is democratic and responsive to the social and economic contexts of rural learners has played a key role in the expansion and longevity of this popular movement. My dissertation looks at the ways in which the MST has contributed to improving the quality of education policy and programming for rural children, youth, and adults. My dissertation begins with an examination of the ideologies

and institutional arrangements that have historically shaped the formulation and implementation of policies for rural basic education in Brazil. I discuss relationships between the state, market, and society and, in particular, the construction of alternative policy arenas and discourses by organized civil society that have shaped current efforts by the federal government to develop a national rural education policy. I go on to examine the micro-interactions between the state and the MST in the context of literacy programs for rural youth and adults in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In this context, I discuss the possibilities for expanded participation in policy formulation and implementation for basic education for a) organized civil society, b) rural communities, c) educators, and d) learners. This study has implications for the ways in which we understand and theorize about the role of progressive social movements in opening up new educational, political, and social possibilities for a democratic society.

EDUCATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF
A BRAZILIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT

By

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

Since World War II, dominant international development discourse has regarded education as instrumental to achieving rapid economic growth and modernization of poor nation-states. Dominant understandings of economic growth focus on capital accumulation and information acquisition to strengthen the capacity of industrializing nations to compete in the global informational economy (Castells, 1997). Market-driven educational expansion by governments is increasingly focused on the acquisition of skills and competencies that prepare individuals as workers and consumer-citizens. This model of economic development and educational provision has not, however, translated into resource redistribution. On the contrary, disparities in educational and economic opportunities have expanded at both the local and global level. Furthermore, political alignments in liberal democracies reflect a close association between democratization and the economic aspects of globalization. The withdrawal of the state from economic and social planning and redistribution has been accompanied by a widening gap between formal and substantive democracy (Eschle, 2001).

In 2000, 113 million children had no access to primary education and 880 million adults were deemed illiterate (UNESCO, 2000). Notwithstanding the neoliberal rhetoric of 'development as knowledge' and the promotion of 'knowledge-based societies', the goal of quality, free, and lifelong education for all remains a distant dream for poor and socially excluded populations around the world. Governments controlled by local elites have shown a marked preference for 'band-aid' type social interventions that ignore the structural and historical dimensions of social exclusion, inequality and injustice. Furthermore, global economic restructuring has weakened the economic and

institutional capacity of poor nation-states to deliver social services, including education equally to all (Carnoy, 1999; Torres, 2002; Tomasevksi, 2003).

The erosion of state autonomy and public resources has been accompanied by the growth of a diverse and unregulated nongovernmental education sector to provide educational services to the most disadvantaged and 'hard to reach' populations. However, as with formal and public educational systems, there are significant variations in the substance and quality of the nonformal education that is being provided to disadvantaged children, youth, and adults. At both the national and international levels, we now have multi-tiered education systems that mirror highly stratified global and local economic and social orders (Mickelson, 2000).

At the same time, social movements and networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as significant actors in social organizing and mobilizations for social and economic justice, human rights, and democracy. There is a great deal of heterogeneity within these social movements, CSOs, and NGOs in terms of ideology, grassroots participation, degree of centralization, and the extent to which their internal organization and practices are authoritarian or democratic (Jelin, 1998). What is of interest to me is the ways in which their activities have challenged authoritarian and democratic nation-states for reproducing extreme inequalities of income and opportunity and in doing so reframed understandings of the nature and role of civil society in relation to the state (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

The forms of collective struggle that have emerged out of NGO and CSO networks have succeeded in achieving international recognition for these organizations as legitimate actors and participants in both education policy formulation and

implementation.   These networks and coalitions present an alternative channel for the presentation and negotiation of social demands to the state. As such, they have contributed to the rearrangements of democratic polities which have historically centered on the state and, more recently, political parties. In their role of 'intermediaries', NGOs and CSOs create another necessary layer of responsibility for democracy, but there are few mechanisms that exist to make these organizations accountable to the citizens they claim to represent (Davies, 2002; Jelin, 1998). In addition, the institutionalization of the Third Sector as they are sometimes referred to constrains their ability to challenge hegemonic processes of cultural reproduction that underlie unequal and unjust national and global education policy and practice.

Recent social movements represent less institutionalized forms of collective expression and they enjoy varying degrees of state recognition as legitimate civil society actors. Their social and political practices embody a concern with structural transformation as well as increased agency of individuals and citizens through more participatory forms of collective struggle for equality and social justice. Social movements in Brazil have been particularly successful in enabling cultural and political interaction across class, religious, racial, linguistic, and regional differences, particularly in the social demand for the right to education (Bharucha, 1998).   In this dissertation, I explore the possibilities and limitations for improving public education and strengthening public responsibility for education that emerge out of the work of the Landless Workers Movement (MST, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*) in Brazil. While I pay attention to formal schooling, I focus on youth and adult education.

For the last twenty-five years, the MST has organized some 1.5 million landless rural workers to claim and occupy unutilized cultivable land to which they are legally entitled under the 1988 Constitution. The movement has been instrumental in the redistribution of unused cultivable land to thousands of landless rural families and the creation of a new positive identity for rural people that values their culture, knowledge, and autonomy. In doing so, the movement has claimed the full rights of citizenship of the Brazilian landless which include the right to determine what constitutes development and agrarian reform based on their lived realities and histories of exclusion, exploitation, and deprivation.

The social demands of the MST are predicated on the belief that the nation-state is the only entity capable of extensive redistribution and mediating the crises of capitalism. These social demands also include the right to education which the rural poor and landless have been historically denied, as well as the right to determine the content and processes of their own education. In the course of the struggle, the MST has developed critical and situated pedagogies that are intended to make their diverse constituents - who include children, youth, adult men and women, agriculturalists, and political activists – agents of their own change. Educational spaces are a key site for resistance to the dominant market-oriented paradigm of rural education and development. In addition, they play a central role in the socialization of participants into a deeper practice of democracy based on respect for difference, non-hierarchical participation, and dialogue. The social practice of the MST as constituted by their philosophies of education and participatory democracy has contributed to the national and international popularity and support for the movement.

<u>Overview of Chapters</u>

My analysis applies critical and feminist theories to explore the "cultural politics" of education as manifest in the interaction between the MST and established educational and political institutions in the context of rural education. In the review of the literature, I look at feminist and critical analyses of globalization, the relationship between state, market and civil society, critical pedagogies and popular education, and the cultural politics of social movements to construct an analytical framework for my research. In the methodology chapter, I discuss the ways in which considerations of power, social control, equality, and justice in the work of knowledge production and transmission inform my methods and analysis (Bock and Papagiannis, 1983; Carnoy, 1982; Freire, 1970). Education and development are constructed as material and ideological sites and questions of education policy and educational reform are situated in the context of contested relations between nation-states and civil society in a globalized world (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

In Chapter Four, I make a detailed examination of the ideologies and institutional arrangements that characterized the Brazilian state and central government policies for rural basic education between 1834 and 1988. National education policy and priorities are viewed as complex and conflictual social practice that is shaped by both international and national hegemonic interests (Morrow and Torres, 2003). The historical analysis focuses on the centrality of the state in political arrangements of the time; the imperatives of capitalist development; and the broader non-democratic political culture that marginalized and silenced poor rural populations.

In Chapter Five, I describe the efforts of social movements and organized civil society to pressure the central government to formulate an explicit and integrated national policy on rural education. The power and influence of civil society actors plays an important role in the redemocratization of Brazil, specifically in the ways that their activities have gained new and positive forms of public recognition and to a lesser extent opportunities for expanded participation for historically subordinated groups in the conventional 'public' sphere. I identify the practical, symbolic and transformatory possibilities and limitations for change in the progressive educational legislation that emerged during the transition to democracy in the context of a hostile neo-liberal central government. In addition, I explore the ways in which progressive civil society coalitions challenged neoliberal reforms through the creation of alternative policy arenas and knowledge discourses to promote debate on the questions of rural education and agrarian reform.

In Chapter Six, I discuss the ways in which a radical understanding of participation and democracy informs MST educational philosophy, pedagogy, and the organization of education activities. Education is understood to be inherently political and cultural and the practice of participation in education are shaped through non-hierarchical organizational structures as well as interrogation of oppressive social relations of class and gender. An educational practice that facilitates knowledge production in critical, participatory, and contextualized ways offers multiple possibilities and opportunities for the exercise of agency and transformation of social relations within the movement as well as in presenting their social demands to the state.

In Chapter Seven, I examine the micro-politics of the interactions between the state and the social movement in the context of the educational work of the MST in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The purpose is to asses the opportunities and limitations for expanded participation by the landless at the micro-political level or within sub-national arrangements of the state as shaped by progressive legislation on rural education policy, administrative and financial decentralization, bureaucratic educational systems, public universities, a progressive central government and a hostile state government. For the MST, the dynamics of access to formal institutional arrangements and negotiation with the state play out quite differently in the case of primary education and literacy education for youth and adults.

I conclude by examining the implications for the ways in which we understand and theorize about the nature of the 'public' in public policy and the role of progressive social movements in opening up new educational, political and social possibilities for a democratic society.

<u>The State and Development in Brazil</u>

Brazil is the largest country in South America and the fifth largest country in the world in terms of land mass. It is the largest democracy in Latin America with a population of approximately 177 million people – nearly half of Latin America's total population. It is organized into 26 states, a Federal District (with the capital Brasília) and 5,561 municipalities. It is the world's ninth largest economy. The country derives much of its wealth and power from the agricultural sector. Brazil is the world's leading producer and exporter of coffee. It is the second largest producer of soy and sugarcane and supplies 85percent of the world market for orange juice concentrate. It owns the

largest herd of cattle in the world and exports butter and beef as well as corn, tobacco, cocoa, and cotton. Agriculture accounts for 35 percent of exports and about 9 percent of the total gross domestic product (Pereira, 2004). [1] At the same time, Brazil has the second worst income distribution in the world; the richest one percent receive 10 percent of total monetary income which is the same amount shared by the poorest 50 percent of the population (World Bank, 2004). Social indicators for the poor in rural regions compare with some of the poorest countries in the world despite the fact that the agricultural sector is central to the Brazilian economy and one of the most productive in the world. What kinds of development practices have contributed to these contradictory circumstances?

The history of agricultural development and land distribution is central to the history of Brazil and provides the context for the subject of this dissertation – the struggle of the rural landless for education, land, and agrarian reform. The land and the countryside evoke strong emotions of attachment and love for Brazilian people; many families retain close links to the rural areas where they came from. However, most rural areas in Brazil are places of extreme poverty, deprivation, and exploitation of both human beings and natural resources.

A 2003 joint report by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on "Education for Rural Development" notes that the majority of the world's poor people

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[1] The food production index has doubled between 1979 and 1998 (World Bank, 2001). In 2001, the government estimated a record crop of 91.6 million tons of grain, 10 percent more than the 83 million tons produced in 2000 (Rinelli, 2001 in Pereira, 2004). Scholars estimate that the country has the potential to increase agricultural productivity further (Pereira, 2004).

live in rural areas.[2] The majority of rural poor around the world are landless farm workers and casually employed farm laborers. In Latin America, the poorest rural populations includes rain-fed farmers, smallholder farmers, pastoralists, artisan fishermen, wage laborers, the landless, indigenous people, female-headed households, and displaced people (FAO-UNESCO, 2003). In reviewing the history of rural development in industrializing countries, the report notes that mainstream development approaches that addressed the problem of rural poverty reduction through agricultural growth have been ineffective. Basic education in rural areas has been a declining government priority as urban centers and populations wield increased political power. Governments have been reluctant to invest in recruitment and training of teachers for rural schools in ways that attract skilled and committed educators. Planners have also tended to view rural education and development problems in terms of a 'deficit problem' as if rural areas are lacking in some fundamental respect.

In Brazil, economic policies that favor urbanization and industrialization have contributed to mass migration from rural areas to urban centers and from the North to the Southern regions of the country. Basic services like roads, schools, health, water, basic sanitation, electricity, and marketing facilities remain hard to access in rural areas. Rural families tend to be in the lowest income group. Hunger, fatigue and malnutrition are chronic conditions of poverty that cause early damage to children's development. In addition, educational expansion efforts have largely focused on primary education. There

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[2] The report defines 'rural' in terms of the following criteria: "a space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only a small share of the landscape; natural environment dominated by pastures, forests, mountains, and deserts; settlements of low density (about 5-10,000 persons); places where most people work on farms; the availability of land at low cost; a places where activities are affected by a high transaction cost, associated with long distance from cities and poor infrastructures (FAO-UNESCO, 2003, p.21)".

has also been a general trend towards diversification of secondary and vocational

education to expand the provision of services by nongovernmental actors. Also, state

educational interventions have focused on access over relevant content and quality. In

particular, there has been a tendency to homogenize rural populations in Brazil which

include a rich cultural diversity of social groups and identify themselves variously by

occupation, ethnicity, race etc.[3]   The curricula in public schools (and dominant culture)

continue to implicitly and explicitly affirm urban spaces cultures as a sign of

development and progress. Rural communities and people are often portrayed as

backward, inferior and out-of-date while urban cultures are represented as the only way

forward for development (Ação Educativa, 2004).   Rural development interventions

have not always been supported by local political authorities or communities. The FAO-

UNESCO report (2003) notes that cross-sectoral integration at the central and local level

are key factors in the success of rural education programs.

     In the next section, I will offer an overview the configuration (and

reconfiguration) of the Brazilian state and the ways in which dominant practices of

development and democracy have contributed to the current conditions of extreme

inequalities in terms of educational and economic opportunities between urban and rural

populations (Plank et al, 1994). The chapter will end with an in-depth examination of

quantitative educational indicators for rural education.

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[3] Globally, groups of nomads, refugees and displaced persons living in rural areas are often denied access
to government education because they do not possess the required papers such as birth certification and so
forth. Furthermore, the educational needs of disabled persons, girls, child laborers and children affected by
the HIV/AIDS epidemic have also been neglected (FAO-UNESCO, 2003).

From a Colony to 1930

Brazil was colonized by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The wealth accrued by the Portuguese through exploitative mining and agriculture allowed the colony of Brazil to declare Independence from the Portuguese Empire in 1822 and become a Constitutional monarchy.[4] The 1850 Land Law (*Lei de Terra*) consolidated the power of the landholding classes by putting an end to the practice of rights to land earned by squatting or occupancy. The law ensured that free labor including freed Afro-Brazilian slaves (slavery was abolished in 1888) and poor sharecroppers would remain dependent on large estate owners for their livelihood. For the next century and a half, outright purchase was the only legal means to ownership - an impossible prospect for all save extremely wealthy Brazilians. Brazil became a federal republic in 1899 when the Emperor Pedro II renounced his throne to avoid civil war over a conflict between the military and the Cabinet.[5]

Ever since, the country has been ruled by a series of authoritarian governments (imperial, republican, military and democratic) which have pursued a capitalist model of economic development.[6] The creation and maintenance of the liberal state in nineteenth century Brazil (like other Latin American states) was embedded in an oligarchic political system controlled by land-holding elites. Countries were governed in much the same way as the landlords ran their *latifundios* (estates) with no separation between personal, social, or political power (Alvarez et al, 1998). Favoritism, personalism, clientelism, and

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[4] Prince Regent Dom Pedro I of Brazil who was also Dom Pedro IV of Portugal declared independence from Portugal in 1822 and established the independent Empire of Brazil.
[5] Pedro I was succeeded by his son, Pedro II. The political dispute between the Army and the Cabinet arose after Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay declared war on neighboring Paraguay in 1864.
[6] Until the early 1900s there was no integrated national economy; regional economies exported their special products, primarily coffee, sugar and cotton to European and North American markets. They also depended on these economies to import food grains, factory made goods, and financial loans.

paternalism were considered normal in a configuration devoid of separation between the public and private "where not only the public is privately appropriated but also political relations are perceived as extension of private relations (Alvarez et al, 1998, p.9)." Subaltern, excluded groups were denied participation in politics and the transformation into republics did little to change inequality and exclusion. The phrase *café-com- leite* (coffee with milk) was coined to describe the politics of this period. It refers to the two primary foci of power in the agricultural oligarchy – the state of São Paulo dominated by coffee interests and the state of Minas Gerais controlled by dairy interests. From 1891 until the 1920s, the Presidency alternated between candidates from the two powerful states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. This form of privatized politics endured in the twentieth century when industrialization and urbanization forced the expansion of political space to include the masses and formerly excluded groups.

Over the turn of the century, Brazil transitioned from an export-oriented agricultural economy to an urban, industrial society with a state-led import-substitution economic model. While there were modifications in relations of power - the landlords were replaced by industrialists as the controlling elite group, the state remained an important political actor between the 1930s and 1960s in Brazil and in most of Latin America.[7] In the era of populism that replaced agricultural oligarchy, political participation was determined by access and personal relationships with political leaders. The elite perfected a subordinated form of political inclusion where political leaders were identified as "fathers" and "saviors" (Alvarez et al, 1998, p.10). Consequently, the state

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[7] The demographic shifts were in part due to the economic restructuring which caused unprecedented rural-urban migration as well as mass immigration from Europe and Japan. The Great Depression of the nineteen twenties also contributed to the revolution that replaced 'café-com-leite' agricultural oligarchy with urban industrialists, middle-class intellectuals, and populist politicians.

also came to be seen as a promoter of social change from above even though the populist political culture actually prevented the emergence of politically autonomous subjects (Alvarez et al, 1998).

From Vargas to the Military Dictatorship

The social revolution over the turn of the century led to the military-backed 1930 Revolution which brought Getúlio Vargas, a civilian, to power. Vargas would rule as a populist dictator from 1930 to 1934 and was elected to serve as President from 1937 to 1945. He was a member of the landed oligarchy and an economic nationalist who favored industrial development and liberal reforms. The New State (*Novo Estado*) regime initiated by Vargas would aggressively pursue industrialization and liberal policies in the process restructuring economic and political relations in the country. Despite the authoritarian nature of his regime, Vargas was able to maintain popular support for a time by introducing some social benefits like social welfare, legalization of trade unions, and freedom of organization in ways very similar to the New Deal in the United States. [8] This kind of state-led development resulted in a period of sustained growth and modernization, high spatial and social mobility, and the entrenchment of social inequality (Almeida, 2004).

A brief period of populist democracy under President João Goulart (1961-1964) ended with a US-backed military coup. The military regime would endure for the next twenty-five years mainly due to persistently high economic growth rates that raised standards of living for the politically powerful upper and middle-classes and economic

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[8] Vargas engineered the new 1934 Constitution which reduced provincial autonomy and expanded the mandated rights of workers but weakened trade unions that were independent of state syndicates. It expanded social programs and set a minimum wage but also denied people who could not read and write the right to vote and placed stringent limits on union organizing and "unauthorized" strikes.

and political support from the United States. [9] The military regime would build up a huge

external debt to support grand development projects like building the capital city Brasília,

the Trans-Amazonian Highway and the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the Rio

Paraná and later to see Brazil through the oil crisis. While the judiciary and Congress

continued to maintain some semblance of functioning, the military dictatorship ruthlessly

repressed the Peasant Leagues, other popular movements for land redistribution, and the

unions, which together with the Brazilian Communist Party were considered to be the

traditional domain of the Brazilian Left (Sader, 2005).

The military regime implemented a set of agricultural policies that displaced

hundreds of thousands of small farmers, sharecroppers, and tenants and their families.

The policies benefited large landholders and mechanized farms and ranches geared

towards production for export markets directly through measures such as subsidized

credit, tax breaks, and price supports and indirectly through taking no action to stop

illegal appropriations of public land (Pereira, 2004).   The state-sponsored program of

modernization enabled wealthy landholders to transform themselves into wealthier

agricultural entrepreneurs without having to abide by traditional obligations to take care

of the people who worked on their lands (Pereira, 2004).

The agricultural colonization of the Amazonian Rainforest that occupies the North

and the western regions of the country was part of this aggressive project of agricultural

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[9] The inflow of Eurodollars in the form of loans between 1967 and 1973 supported an economic expansion with growth rates of over 10 percent per year. The regulated growth of the export industry together with high growth rates, tariffs and quotas enabled the growth of the middle class and high levels of domestic consumption (Spanakos, 2004, p. 15).   In an effort to maintain high rates of growth, Brazil borrowed from international capital markets leading to an increase in indebtedness and inflation. Even after interest rates increased during the oil crisis of the seventies, Latin American governments were continued to allow to borrow from international banks and the private sector through the recycling of petrodollars earned by oil exporters (Spanakos, 2004).

development. The government sold unprecedented amounts of public land mainly in the

states of Rondonia, Para and Mato Grosso to the private sector in violation of the rights

of indigenous groups living there and with no provisions to protect the bio-diversity of

the region.[10] Since the scale of displacement and deprivation posed a threat to the

stability of the military regime, small farmers were provided incentives to colonize the

Amazon region in the form of pensions and health programs (Harnecker, 2003; Pereira,

2004). However, the provisions for employment were erratic and the government

completely failed to deliver on roads, means of production, and social welfare. The

'small' colonizers were also soon threatened by big transnational corporations and

property-owners and businessmen from the South who capitalized on the government's

fiscal incentives to buy land in the Amazon region. This led to violent encounters

between small property-owners and corporations who tried to expel them often through

murder and destruction by fire of their plantations and households. There was also

sustained resistance to the colonizers (both to private sector corporations and small

farmers) from the local groups of indigenous people. Despite the efforts of the military

regime, the "Brazilian miracle" could not sustain itself through the seventies. The high

rate of growth seen in the sixties began to fall and unemployment began to rise in urban

centers.

Redemocratization of Brazil

Pro-democracy movements began to grow in the late seventies and the military

regime began a carefully controlled transfer of power to civilians at the local, state and

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[10] The large scale destruction of the Amazon Rainforest began with these government-sponsored policies of colonization in the seventies and eighties. Deforestation rates have accelerated with the introduction of medium- and large-scale cattle ranching managed by agro-business entities.

finally, national levels (Plank, 1990).[11] The transfer of power that began in 1975 and ended with Congressional elections in 1986 and the new Constitution was enacted in 1988. All of the major actors in the pro-democracy movement, including the movements of the landless, contributed to the drafting of the Constitution. The language of the Constitution recognized the contributions of diverse social movements to the re-democratization of the country and emphasized respect for cultural diversity, an active and empowered citizenry, and social justice. Specifically, the Constitution (and later the 1993 Agrarian Law) legitimated the strategy of land occupations (*occupação*) that had been used by movements of the rural landless to resist the dominant model of agricultural development that had destroyed their homes, communities, and means of livelihood. The laws mandated that unproductive estates of over 649 hectares may be taken over by the government and distributed to the landless agricultural workers, and in doing so placed redistribution of land firmly on the Presidential agenda for the first time in the history of Brazil.

The Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB, *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*), the legal opposition party during the military dictatorship governed over the first five years of post-dictatorship democratic Brazil also known as the New Republic (see Table 1.1). President José Sarney promised to expropriate and redistribute unproductive lands. However, neither Sarney or his successor Collor made any substantial advances on these commitments.

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[11] The policies that engineered the political transition are referred to as policies of decompression (*distensão*) and opening (*abertura*)

Table 1.1: Presidents of the New Republic of Brazil (1985 - present)

President	Term	Party	
Tancredo Neves	1985	PMDB	Civilian president elected by an Electoral College. Died before inauguration.
José Sarney	1985-1990	PMDB	Acting president after Tancredo.
Fernando Affonso Collor de Mello	1990-1992	PRN	Suspended from office. Renounced and subsequently impeached.
Itamar Franco	1992-1995	PMDB	Acting President after Collor
Fernando Henrique Cardoso	1995-2002	PSDB	Carried out first and second terms.
Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	January 1, 2003 to present	PT	Popularly known as Lula

The first years of re-democratization were a time of political and economic instability as the country remained on the verge of economic crisis with soaring inflation, high level of debt and fiscal deficits.[12] Between 1985 and 1994, Brazil underwent nine different stabilization programs. They all failed due to lack of support from the public, the political elite, organized labor, and financial institutions (Spanakos, 2004).[13] Tancredo Neves was the first elected civilian president but he died before his inauguration. The transitional government was headed by José Sarney. In 1989, Fernando Collor de Mellor narrowly defeated the current President Lula in his bid for the Presidency. Mellor's plans for reforming the economy were shortlived -- he was

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[12] In the eighties, the U.S. Federal Reserve raised interest rates, the U.S. economy went into recession and the cost of Latin American loans went through the roof. Governments across Latin America including Brazil struggled to meet their interest payments and capital markets finally refused to loan these governments more money. This refusal was triggered in 1982 when the government of Mexico announced that it could not pay the interest on its debt.

[13] In the nineties, several national economies in Latin America would go into crisis as a consequence of neoliberal development policies and rising US interest rates. Three countries came to the point of currency collapse Mexico in 1994, Brazil in 1999 and Argentina in 2001.

impeached on charges of corruption in 1992. President Collor of the National

Reconstruction Party (PRN, *Partido da Renovação Nacional*) was replaced by his vice-

president Itamar Franco who also struggled to stabilize the economy. Franco's fourth

Finance Minister, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, implemented a new currency, the *real*, as

a measure to control inflation. The *Real Plan* succeeded in large part because it was

backed by U.S. dollar reserves held at the Central Bank (Spanakos, 2004).[14]   Cardoso

then ran for President in 1995 with the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB, *Partido

da Social Democracia Brasiliera*). He was elected and served two terms during which he

implemented further reforms in the areas of public administration, politics, economics,

development and foreign policy (Spanakos, 2004). Cardoso supervised a program of

liberalization that deepened the country's dependence in strategic sectors including autos,

banks, food and electronics and placed large amounts of national capital in foreign hands

(Sader, 2005).[15] Social planning was dictated by parameters of macroeconomic stability

and payment of interest on the large debt leading one progressive social scientist, Moacir

Gadotti, to write: "Millions of Latin-Americans children and teenagers are working today

in order to pay the debt. Our important effort to develop educational programs will be lost

if we forget to take into account this heavy millstone around our neck, fruit of the

criminal international division of work (1991, p.4)."

The process of agrarian reform and land redistribution mandated by the 1988

Constitution has done little to enable greater access to land, more equal land distribution,

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[14] Cardoso, a former University professor, also devoted time and resources to discussing the program with
politicians and other political actors. It was imposed gradually giving business and labor time to come to
terms with the impact of the reform. Inflation slowed and Cardoso was able to move revenues back to the
federal government from states and municipalities. According to the World Bank (2004), his Real Plan
ended inflation, brought about a 6 percent decline in poverty in a relatively small period of time (between
1992 and 1996) and kept the poverty rate stable to 28-30 percent.
[15] It signaled the onset of a wave of privatization in which multinational firms were able to acquire or
merge with Brazilian firms in a significant displacement of national capital (Sader, 2005).

protect property rights to the land for poor and small farmers, develop land markets, expand access to credit or stop violence and harassment by police and hired criminals. Large landholders have been able to obstruct and manipulate the redistribution process and continue to enjoy access to a disproportionate share of credit and resources allocated for agriculture. They are also able to default on loans, resist foreclosure and renegotiate loans with greater facility than small and poor farmers (Pereira, 2004). There has been a relative decrease in rural violence but this does not mean that rural people can live with greater safety. Violence and exploitation of rural labor is still common and the perpetrators are rarely held accountable.[16]

To summarize, the agricultural sector has always been oriented towards production of exports and dominated by large landholders. The ways in which economic and technological globalization reconfigured modes of production from labor-intensive to capital-intensive farming practices solely benefited large landholders and transnational agro-corporations. The large estate owners have used their lands to raise cattle or for monoculture to produce export commodities such as such as coffee, sugar, soybeans and oranges (de Siqueira, 2000). More than half of the cultivable land remains unused or undercultivated (IBGE Agricultural Census, 1996). The erosion of public revenue and social safety nets required by neoliberal economic policies of liberalization and deregulation have squeezed growth and employment, contributed to increasing flexibilization and casualization of labor conditions and increased the vulnerability of the poorest and most needy (Commission on Human Rights, 2001; Committee on economic, social and cultural rights, 2001; Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of

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[16] Congress is yet to pass a constitutional amendment proposed by Amnesty International in 1996 which would allow the federal government to intervene when state level officials fail to carry out adequate investigations (Pereira, 2004).

Human Rights, 1999). Since Brazil is an agrarian economy, sharecroppers, small farmers

and day-workers have paid the highest cost for these development policies.

Conditions of Rural Poverty and Development

There have been few initiatives by the state to maximize rural employment,

intensify cultivation of the land, and provide supports that would enable small farmers to

live as independent producers (Pereira, 2004). In 1960, more than half the labor force

was employed by the primary sector[17] which dropped to less than one-fourth of the

population by 1999 (UNESCO-FAO, 2003). The lack of employment in rural areas and

the promise of factory work contributed to a mass exodus to urban centers that began in

the 1930s and only slowed down in the 1980s. Between 1970 and 1996 the percentage of

the total population living in rural areas decreased from 44 percent to 22 percent (IBGE,

1999). The actual number of people living in rural areas varies considerably between the

Northern and Southern regions of the country with the largest rural populations living in

the North and North-eastern states – almost 30 percent of the total population in the

North and Northeast states lives in rural areas (IBGE, 2000).

In a 2003 study on Rural Poverty Alleviation, the World Bank concluded that

regardless of region, rural workers who depend on farming or farm labor for their income

are consistently the poorest group.   According to the Bank study, the average monthly

income for rural families across the country ranges between R$ 186 (Northeast region[18])

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[17] The primary sector includes all production units engaged in exploiting natural resources and farming, forestry, fishing, mining, dairy farming, etc.

[18] The states of Maranhão, Piauí, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, and Bahia

to R$ 518 (Central-East region[19]) while the average monthly income for urban families ranged between R$ 549 (Northeast region) to R$993 (Southeast region[20]).[21]

More than half of the rural population lives below the poverty line (World Bank, 2004). [22] More than half of the population living in poverty is concentrated in the semi-arid Northeast region of Brazil. The majority of rural poor live in isolated and sparsely populated areas and depend on agricultural labor and farming for almost three-fourths of the family income (World Bank, 2003). Agricultural productivity in these areas is low. Small farmers survive on basic staples such as corn, manioc, beans, sweet potatoes and rice. Few farmers have access to irrigation and even fewer have access to any kind of farm machinery. The condition of the landless poor (former small farmers, rural workers and even urban workers) who must constantly seek out employment is even worse. Demographic data also indicates that the heads of poor rural households are more likely to be women and that the average age of household heads is high. The 2003 World Bank report estimates that female-headed households represent an approximate 15 percent of all rural households in the Northeast region and 12 percent in the Southeast region. Table 1.2 compares the household characteristics and living conditions of children and adolescents living in urban and rural families in terms of access to basic services of electricity and sanitation as well as communications. There is a marked disparity between access to essential services like water and electricity between rural and urban

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[19] The states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso, Distrito Federal and Goiás
[20] The states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Espírito Santo and Minas Gerais
[21] The gap in wages is largest in the South-east region where urban workers have an average monthly income of R$ 1000 as compared to approximately R$ 400 for rural workers (IBGE, 2000). The average monthly family income in Brazil according to the 2000 Demographic Census was R$ 760.
[22] The poverty line used by the Bank is equal to a per capita household income of R$ 80 per month (prices of July 2001) in São Paulo.

areas. Access to communications technology is very low across both urban and rural

populations.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of children and adolescents, by household characteristics (IBGE, 2000)
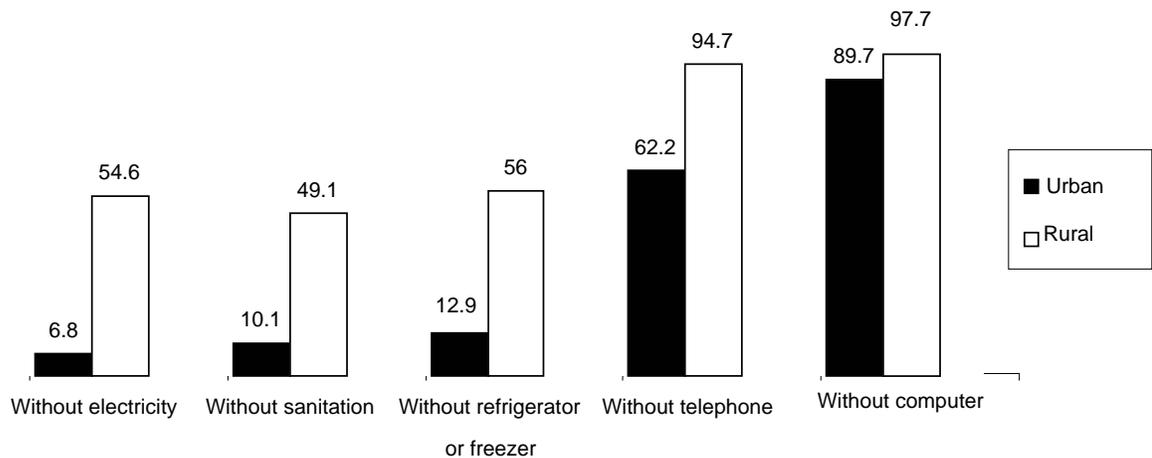
<div align="center">The State of Rural Public Education</div>

There are three levels of education in the public education system. Primary

education (*educação fundamental*) is free and compulsory for children aged 7-14 years

and is divided into two levels: the first level consists of grades 1- 4 and the second level

consists of grades 5 - 8. Secondary education (*ensino medio*) is for three years and for

students aged 15-17 years. It is also free but not compulsory though the 1988

Constitution directed the state to establish its compulsory status. The third level is higher

education (*ensino superior*) which is divided into undergraduate (4 - 6 years), graduate

(Master's and Ph.D.), and postdoctoral programs. Early childhood education or nursery

and preschool is also free but not compulsory for children under the age of 7 years.

Access to a quality education is impacted by a complex web of factors including but not limited to poverty, geography, and age and magnified by rural-urban differences.

Almost ninety – three percent of rural primary schools (Grade 1 – 4) and 78 percent of schools offering grade 5 – 8 are administered by municipalities (MEC/INEP, 2002). The remainder of the schools at this level are either administered by states, private,[23] or federal[24] government in decreasing order.

Sixty-eight percent of secondary schools, rural and urban are administered by state governments (MEC/INEP, 2002). The remaining number of secondary schools are administered by municipalities, private or the federal government again in decreasing order. The majority of secondary schools are located in cities and urban centers. In the case of rural secondary schools that are not administered by either states or municipalities, there is an almost equal number of schools administered privately (68) as there are those administered by the federal government (46).

Number of Schools and School Size

In 2002, the School Census counted 107,432 rural schools which amount to approximately half of all schools in the country (MEC-Permanent Working Group, 2004). Rural schools attend to 15 percent of all students, some 8,267,571 students, most of whom are in the first level of primary education (grades 1 – 4). At least half of these schools consist of only one classroom and offer classes for only grades 1 – 4 (*multisseriadas/unidocentes*) (MEC/INEP 2002). Rural schools tend to be small; more

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[23] In 2002, there were 353 private rural schools (Grade 1 – 4) which are attended by approximately 18,000 students in total (MEC/INEP, 2002). A little more than half of these schools are privately – owned, another 31 percent are administered by companies (*empresas*), 10 percent by nongovernmental organizations, and 8 percent of these schools are run by a combination of trade unions, worker's associations, and cooperatives.

[24] At this level, the federal government administers only 35 schools directly and only 5 out of these schools are in rural areas.

than 70 percent of schools that offer grades 1 – 4 have less than 50 students enrolled

(MEC/INEP, 2002). A report by the MEC Permanent Working Group on Rural

Education observes that between 1996 and 2002 there has been a decline in the number

of rural primary schools (grades 1 – 4). Between 1996 and 2000, the number of rural

primary schools (grades 1 - 4) with less than 20 students declined by fifty percent across

the country - approximately 33,119 schools (MEC/INEP, 2002). Over the same period

of time, there has been an increase (almost by half) in the number of primary schools

offering Grades 5- 8 with more than fifty students (MEC/INEP, 2002). The reduction in

the number of rural primary schools (grades 1 – 4) has mainly occurred to schools that

attend to less than 50 students. This is attributed to the policy of 'school consolidation'

where municipalities have closed down small rural schools as a cost-saving measure. As

an alternative, the municipality either creates one large school in the rural area or the

children are transported to schools in the nearest urban area.

Infrastructure and Resources

The public school system in Brazil is plagued by a shortage of resources and

adequate infrastructure to support teachers and students. Within the system, there are

significant differences in the kind of basic infrastructure and resources that are available

to urban and rural schools. One study described the typical rural school as follows:

> "The rural school is isolated, difficult to access, consisting of one classroom and
> only one teacher who gives classes for the first four grades of primary school,
> without pedagogical supervision and according to a curriculum that privileges an
> urban vision of reality. The poor quality of education produced in these
> conditions reinforces the negative social perception about rural people as illiterate
> or only educated to work on the land (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004, p.6)."

There is a pervasive lack of adequate infrastructure in the public education system. Rural areas frequently lack a school building and classes are held in the teachers' home or in the abandoned structures on the *fazendas* such as stables and sheds (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Only 58.3 percent of rural primary schools (Grade 1 – 4) have electricity as compared to 99.8 percent of urban schools. Almost hundred percent of urban primary schools also have adequate sanitation and drainage facilities; almost, a quarter of rural primary schools still do not have these facilities.   A greater number of rural secondary schools and higher level primary schools (grade 5 – 8) have electricity (99.4 percent and 89.6 percent respectively.

The disparities at the primary school level are even wider in terms of access to resources that can support and enhance the learning experience such as libraries, laboratories, computers, etc. Ninety percent of students in Grades 1 – 4 study in a school without a library and more than 99 percent of them do not have a science laboratory (MEC/INEP, 2002). The numbers are slightly lower for students in Grades 5 -8: 65 percent of students in Grade 5 – 8 do not have access to a library and 95 percent do not have a science laboratory.

Rural Teachers

In 2002, the Census counted 354,316 teachers working in rural areas. The teachers are distributed in the different areas of basic education including preschool and crèches - 13 percent; primary school (grades 1- 4) – 26 percent; primary school (grades 5 – 8) – 32 percent; secondary school – 20 percent; special education – 2 percent; and youth literacy programs – 3 percent. These teachers constitute 15% of all the teachers in the country. They work in some of the most challenging conditions but are the least

qualified and the lowest paid (MEC - Working Group, 2004). The average salary of urban primary school teachers is almost twice as much as their rural counterparts (MEC/INEP-SAEB, 2001). Less than 10% of teachers in rural primary schools (Grade 1-4) as compared to almost 40% of their urban counterparts have a higher education degree. Combined with the lack of infrastructure and support and lower salaries, these conditions contribute to very high turnover for rural school teachers which in turn has an adverse impact on the learning of the children. Generally, teachers with low qualifications are sent to isolated and one-room schools. As soon as they are able to improve their qualifications, they request to be transferred to schools in urban centers (MEC, 2004).

Access to Primary Education

National education statistics suggest that almost one hundred percent of children are in primary school. However, national enrolment statistics show rural-urban disparities in enrolment as well as significant problems of irregular attendance, class repetition, and dropouts that adversely affect learning and the educational experience as a whole. Children from poor families and children in rural areas are less likely to complete primary education.

Children in the age group 10-14 years who are in the lowest 20 percent in terms of family income are likely to receive half as many years of education as children in the top 20 percent of family incomes (IBGE, 2000). Moreover, in the age group of children 7-14 years old, almost three times as many children living in rural areas as children in urban areas are not in school (MEC/INEP, 2000). Furthermore almost three-fourths (72 percent) of rural school-going children across the country attend school with repeated absences (IBGE-PNAD, 2001). There are significant regional differences in the

numbers on school attendance; larger numbers of children in the North and Central-East regions of Brazil attend school with absences. In the impoverished Northeast region of Brazil, 85 percent of children in this age group attend school with absences as compared to 44 percent in the South region (IBGE-PNAD, 2001).

Access to Secondary Education

Secondary school enrolment statistics for Brazil are low (and lower than the average for Latin American countries). Though this number has been increasing, only 32.6 percent of adolescents in the age group 15-17 years were attending secondary school in 2000. Furthermore, the average number of years of schooling of people fifteen years or older in rural areas is 3.4 years which is about half of the average of seven years of schooling for the same age group in the urban population (IBGE-PNAD, 2001[25]).

The 2000 Census estimated that 80 percent of urban adolescents and 66 percent of rural adolescents in the age group 15 -17 years attend school. There is a high rate of age-grade distortion for this age group of students. In other words, larger numbers of children who should be in secondary education tend to be in primary education. In the urban population in this age group, 38.1 percent attend secondary school, 30.7 percent attend the second level of primary school and 5.5 percent attend the first level of primary education. Only 12.9 percent of rural school-going 15-17 year olds attend secondary school. Another one-third attend the second level of primary education (Grades 5 – 8) and 17.3 percent attend the first level of primary education (Grades 1-4).

There are also significant regional differences as well as urban-rural differences for school attendance for this age group. Table 1.3 compares school attendance in three

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[25] The 2001 IBGE-PNAD survey does not include data for rural populations the following states: Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará e Amapá.

regions in terms of the highest numbers of youths in the age group 15-17 years that are in

secondary school. In the Northeast, only 5.5 percent of the rural school going population

in this age group is in secondary school; almost 26 percent of this age group is in the first

level of primary school (Grades 1 – 4), and another 33 percent attends the second level

of primary school (Grades 5-8).   These distortions are not revealed in the national school

attendance statistic for the region that shows that 70 percent of rural youth aged 15-17

years attend some kind of school. The discrepancy between the ages and the grade level

of students is high across the educational system in urban and rural areas. As shown in

the Table, the rate of age-grade distortion is highest in the North and Northeast regions of

the country and uniformly higher in rural areas when compared to urban areas.

Table 1.3: School attendance (percent) in the age group 15-17 year olds, by region (IBGE, Census 2000)

Region	School Attendance		Public school						Youth and adult literacy		Other kinds of school	
			Primary school				Secondary school					
			1 – 4		5 – 8							
	Urban	Rural	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
Northeast	80.3	70.1	10.9	2.6	39.5	33.7	24.4	5.5	1.5	0.9	3.9	4
Southeast	82.1	63.4	3.0	5.4	26.2	30.6	46.7	22.8	1.5	1.0	4.8	3.6
South	77.7	65	2.0	2.5	21.8	23.7	46.8	33.4	1.7	1.1	5.4	4.3
BRAZIL	80.7	66.0	5.5	17.3	30.7	30.8	38.1	12.9	1.8	1.1	4.7	4.0

Youth and Adult Literacy

Literacy data collected by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

(IBGE) defines functional literacy in terms of the number of years of schooling – a

person with less than four years of school is considered to be functionally illiterate by this

measure (Di Pierro, 2003). According to the 2003 Census, 33 million Brazilians over the

age of 15 years, almost 28 percent of the population in this age group, is functionally illiterate. Table 1.4 displays the percentage of non-literates in the population by age group and by gender. There are more than double the number of boys as girls in the age group of non-literate children 10 – 14 years. The same trend is evident in the group of non-literates aged 15 to 17 years old.

Table 1.4: Percentage of non-literates, by age group and gender (IBGE-PNAD 2004)

Age group	Percentage of Population	Men	Women
10 – 14	3.8	5.2	2.4
15 years or more	11.4	11.6	11.2
15 – 17 years	2.1	2.9	1.3
15 – 24 years	3.2	4.2	2.1
18 years or more	12.2	12.4	12.0
25 years or more	14.3	14.4	14.3

There are rural-urban and regional disparities in the level of literacy in the population; at least 40 percent of the population aged 15 years or older in the rural North and Northeast regions were illiterate compared to 19.6, 11.9, and 18.4 percent in the rural Southeast, South and Central-East regions respectively (IBGE-PNAD, 2001). The table below displays the absolute numbers of illiterate children, youth, and adults and their distribution between urban and rural areas. There are larger number of illiterate persons living in urban areas than in rural areas. From a comparative perspective, the rates of illiteracy in rural areas tend to be at least three times higher (Di Pierro, 2003).

Table 1.5: Number of illiterates by age group and urban-rural location, in thousands (PNAD, 2004)

	Total	Urban	Rural
Total	**22 729 677**	**15 114 786**	**7 614 891**
5 - 6 years	4 919 801	3 780 862	1 138 939
7 years	1 085 994	727 578	358 416
8 - 9 years	968 226	557 083	411 143
10 - 14 years	646 520	359 454	287 066
15 - 17 years	227 696	125 933	101 763
18 - 19 years	197 903	112 111	85 792
20 - 24 years	673 171	362 782	310 389
25 - 29 years	868 589	462 439	406 150
30 - 39 years	2 134 211	1 274 012	860 199
40 - 49 years	2 575 399	1 624 717	950 682
50 - 59 years	2 801 868	1 759 538	1 042 330
60 years or more	5 627 648	3 966 423	1 661 225
Age unknown	2 651	1 854	797
Undeclared	**2 360**	**2 304**	**56**

A more nuanced picture of literacy levels among the population comes from a 2001 study by NGOs who have worked extensively with youth and adult literacy, *Ação Educativa* and Paulo Montenegro Institute. The study presents a multi-level explanation of reading and numeracy skills in the population.[26] The study found that years of schooling and family income are related to levels of literacy and numeracy. The number of years of schooling and family income were positively correlated with levels of literacy. Also, the study found that women tended to have better reading and writing skills while men had better numerical skills. In total, the study found that 8% of the population in the

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[26] For literacy: absolute illiteracy, Level 1 – ability to extract explicit information from a short text; Level 2 - ability to locate non-specified information in lengthy texts; and Level 3 – ability to read long texts, locate more than one kind of information, and make connections between different parts of the text. For numeracy: absolute illiteracy, Level 1 – ability to read prices, time schedules, telephone numbers; Level 2 – knowledge of natural and decimal numbers; Level 3 – ability to complete a series of mathematical operations (Di Pierro, 2003).

age group 15- 64 years, fell in the category of absolute illiteracy; 30 percent in Level 1; 37% in Level 2, and 25% in Level 3 (Di Pierro, 2003).

Youth and Adult Education Teachers

According to the Ministry of Education (MEC) (2000), the total number of youth and adult education (EJA, *Educação de Jovens e Adultos*) educators is 189,871 of which 35.9% have completed higher education.[27] The South and Southeast tend to have larger numbers of teachers with higher education qualifications. In the absence of appropriate policy and programs, EJA educators do not receive any particular training to work with youth and adults. There are few incentives for teachers to want to work with this population and teacher training programs do not pay attention to the specific learning needs and realities of this group of learners (Di Pierro, 2003). Many teachers work with children and adolescents in school during the day and with youth and adults at night (Di Pierro, 2003). These kinds of practices and the absence of support has prevented the development of pedagogies specific to EJA. According to the National Institute for Educational Planning (INEP, *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira*), less than two percent of the approximately 1300 courses on pedagogy currently taught in Brazil offer training specific to EJA. Of these sixteen programs, 7 are located in institutions of higher education in the South of Brazil, another 6 in the Northeast, 2 in the Southeast and 1 in the Central-East of the country (Di Pierro, 2003).

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[27] The statistics available only include educators who are affiliated with public or private schools and exclude the vast numbers of popular educators - mainly women – who participate in projects organized through churches, social movements, and other social organizations (Di Pierro, 2003). Youth and adult education programs carried out by social movements rely on volunteers, militants in the movement, and community members with some teaching experience and also provide their own training and development for educators.

National statistics indicate that there are virtually no gender differences in school enrolment at the primary, secondary, and higher education level. In addition, as shown in the table below, there are small gender differences in levels of literacy in the total population (Social Watch, 2004)

Table 1.6: Enrolment rate ratios, by gender

Indicator	
Literacy ratio gap (women/men) (2001)	1.03
Net primary enrolment ratio gap (women/men) (2000/2001)	0.93
Net secondary enrolment ratio gap (women/men) (2000)	1.08
Gross tertiary enrolment ratio gap (women/men) (2000/2001)	1.36

There are equal numbers of non-literate men and women in the population except for the 15 – 24 years age group where there tend to be more non-literate males than females (IBGE-PNAD, 2004).

The Influence of Race

Race is also a factor in the number of years of schooling a child receives. In 2001, in the age group of ten years and older, the white population had an average 7 years of schooling compared to an average of 5 years for Afro-Brazilians (Di Pierro, 2003).   The 1998 PNAD survey counted ten million Afro-Brazilians as illiterate constituting 67 percent of the total illiterate population in Brazil (Roland, 2001). Di Pierro (2003) estimates that the rate of illiteracy amongst Afro-Brazilians is at least twice as high as that amongst the white population. Disproportionate to their presence in the population, less than 2 percent of students in university are Afro-Brazilian (Roland, 2001). Roland (2001) also found consistent income disparities between Afro-Brazilian and non-Afro-Brazilian workers even though the Afro-Brazilian population has a higher rate of

participation in the labor market. She also found disparities in unemployment rates between blacks and white ranging from 45 percent in the Northeast to 17 percent in the Central-East region; and that black youth are forced to enter the labor market at a younger age (Roland, 2001).

The population is classified in five official categories of color or race: *branca* (white), *preta* (black), *parda* (equivalent to brown), *amarela* (yellow), and *indígena* (indigenous). Brazilian census-takers (IBGE) have only recently included race in their survey and the methodology of self classification has generated considerable debate.[28] According to the 2004 National Domicile Survey, Afro-Brazilians constitute 48 percent of the population (5.9 percent black and 42.1 percent brown) – in absolute numbers 87.3 million people divided almost equally in terms of gender (IBGE-PNAD, 2004).[29] There are higher proportions of Afro-Brazilians in the North and Northeast regions but the more industrialized Southeast region has the largest absolute number of Afro-Brazilians.

A 2003 UNICEF report calculated that in the age group of children 7-14 years who are not literate - a black child is twice as likely not to be literate as a white child in this age group. The average number of years of schooling for white and black children in this age group is 4.2 and 3.3 years respectively. In the age group of adolescents 12 – 17 years who are not literate, a black child in this age group is three times as likely not to be literate as a white child in this age group. The average number of years of schooling for white and black children nationally in this age group is 6 and 4.7 years respectively.[30]

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[28] Very few people self-identify as black because of the historical, systemic and internalization aspects of racial discrimination and social exclusion in Brazil. Afro-Brazilian scholars and activists consider the population of African descent to be the sum of *pretos* and *pardos* (Roland, 2001).

[29] By these estimates, Brazil has the largest population of African descent outside of the African continent and the second largest African population in the world after Nigeria (Roland, 2001).

[30] These racial inequalities are also reflected in the age group of children 4-6 years around the country in terms of access to some kind of preschool education.

Table 1.5 below shows the regional and racial differences in the percentages of white and black adolescents in the age group 10 -15 years and youth in the age group 16-17 years who engage in economic activity.   The table shows that greater percentages of non-white adolescents and youth engage in economic activity around the country. The highest number of adolescents and youth - white, black and brown - who work live in the impoverished Northeast and highly industrialized Southern regions of Brazil.

Table 1.7: Percentage of adolescent and youth engaged in economic activity, by region (IBGE, 2000)

	North		Northeast		Southeast		South		Central-East	
	Adolescent	**Youth**	**A**	**Y**	**A**	**Y**	**A**	**Y**	**A**	**Y**
White	**7.6**	**29.9**	**9.3**	**24.6**	**5.5**	**28.5**	**9.9**	**37.7**	**7.9**	**31.9**
Black and Brown	**9.6**	**29.7**	**11.6**	**28.3**	**6.6**	**29.8**	**10.2**	**38**	**8.8**	**35**

Furthermore, in every region of the country, there are at least twice as many black families with per capita family income less than half of the minimum wage (a standard measure of poverty) as compared to white families. In every region, close to 50 percent of black families have a family income less than half of the minimum wage (IBGE 2000 in UNICEF 2003). On the other hand in every region, except the Northeast less than one-third of white families have a family income less than half of the minimum wage.

<u>Discussion</u>

Some of the factors that contribute to a quality educational experience are more and better trained teachers, time spent on learning, emphasis on literacy and reading, language of instruction, quality and availability of learning materials, condition of classrooms and facilities, school leadership, and child-friendly pedagogy (UNESCO, 2005).   Rural schools in Brazil are systematically disadvantaged in all of these

dimensions. Many rural primary schools are incomplete schools i.e. schools that offer a few but not all primary grades. Public early childhood development programs are almost non-existent in rural areas. High rates of repetition and dropouts persist at the primary school level of education. Furthermore, the scarcity of secondary schools in rural areas prevents many children from continuing their education. Children who receive only two or three years of schooling are at high risk of losing the literacy and numeracy skills (FAO-UNESCO, 2003). The opportunity cost of schooling is one of the biggest obstacles to sending and keeping rural children in schools. Rural children participate in economic and non-economic activities that sustain their families. Poor families face the difficult prospect of foregoing the income or other contributions and sometimes paying for school fees, uniform etc. in order to send a child to school. The conflict between the school calendar and the agricultural calendar contributes to the problems of low school attendance and high numbers of retention and dropouts in rural areas. The inability of children to attend school regularly adversely affects their learning. Rural children tend to begin their education later, suffer many interruptions, and are stigmatized by their teachers and fellow students (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Moreover, when school curricula and pedagogy are perceived as meaningless by rural communities, when teachers are poorly trained and disinterested, and when the school calendar is inflexible to the needs of working children, children are less likely to attend school.

The conditions of rural schools are particularly disturbing but the Brazilian public education system is characterized by an almost pervasive absence of quality, administrative inefficiency, and a curriculum and pedagogy that alienates many students. There is a chronic shortage of funds for primary and secondary schools and this results in

poorly paid and inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, textbooks, and teaching materials, and poorly equipped school buildings.   Educational planning is often based on incomplete and inadequate information. At the same time, the formulation of education policies have favored and supported the expansion of private provision of education. The information presented in this chapter makes it clear that there is a structural basis to why rural children are faced with extremely challenging learning conditions. The violation of their right to education as well as their rights in education have been historically and systematically violated. In this dissertation, I will explore the historical processes by which the educational needs of rural communities have been sidelined and silenced by the state and the dominant model of development as well as the role of the MST in re-inserting 'the rural question' into national public discourse and policy.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review has been developed around the question: How do social justice-oriented social movements embody an alternative way of thinking about and doing education? In order to answer this question, I read broadly in critical and feminist theories about the state and education and the purpose and politics of mass education. Critical and feminist theories also inform my understanding of social justice and equality particularly the work of Iris Young (1990) and Nancy Fraser (1997). This literature review considers social injustice along three dimensions - distributive, cultural, and associational (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2002). Distributional injustice is manifest in deprivation and/or low standard of living; exploitative labor practices, and the lack of access to work or access only to low-pay and high-risk work. Cultural injustice is manifest in different forms of cultural domination including hostile interpretative and communicative practices towards a given culture, non-recognition and disrespect in public representations and day-to-day life situations. Associational injustice is manifest in the denial of participation in decisions that affect a cultural group.

A Working Definition of Social Movements

Social movements have attracted a great deal of attention from academics who are interested in understanding different kinds of collective behavior and social organization for collective action and politics of contention. Generally speaking, social movements are seen as separate and even outside the political system constituted by the state, political parties, and political organizations like trade unions (Kane, 2001). Disciplinary analyses of the role and transformatory power of social movements have been shaped by

specific beliefs and understandings about how democracy should work, the role of the nation-state and civil society, the operations of power, the nature of political consciousness, forms of collective action (in terms of both individuals and collective action), and the nature and processes of social change (Eschle, 2001[31]).

Classical social movement theorists located in the discipline of political science have tended to explain different forms of collective action manifest in social movements in terms of rational choice behavior or the assumption that people engage in these kinds of behaviors in order to protect their interests. Scholars have also developed explanatory models for the emergence and sustainability of social movements in connection to the availability of resources for mobilization, modes of internal organization, the nature of the issue and the extent to which the media address the issue, and the relationship between social movements, the state, and other civil society actors (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; McAdam, 1982; Scholte, 1999; Shaw, 1994; Tarrow, 1998). More recently, political scientists have included the role of human agency and the transformatory nature of political participation demonstrating that, as the struggle continues, not only does personal identity change but new groups of social actors emerge, e.g., citizens, feminists, activists, and so forth (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Psychological theories of social movements have variously focused on the irrational and destructive aspects of collective action; later explanations have argued that collective outbursts are a function of frustrated rising expectations or 'relative deprivation' (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

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[31] Feminist theorist Catherine Eschle (2001) organizes her analysis of the role of social movements in global democracy in terms of three broad political traditions – the modernist traditions, new times approaches, and feminist democratic theory. The modernist tradition encompass liberalism, Marxism, Republicanism and Social Anarchism. New Times approaches include theories of associative democracy, radical civil society, radical democracy, and the politics of difference. Under the umbrella of feminist democratic theory, she discusses the contributions of political reformism, social reformism, democratic cultural pluralism, maternalism, and feminist republicanism.

Marxist sociologists have explained social movements as a rational response to exploitation (Morrow and Torres, 2003). In this way, social theorists have variously privileged organizational, psychological, and social structural factors as determinants of why and when social movements occur.

Social theorists have also distinguished between 'old' and 'new'[32] and 'strategic' and 'expressive'[33] social movements and provided us with stage theories about the emergence, existence and end of social movements.[34] This review will seek to avoid the reification of false binaries which detach the struggle for cultural meaning from struggle for structural transformation. For example, it is difficult to define movements solely in terms of what they say they seek to do without considering them as forms of actions that are a part of a process of historical change (Castells, 1997; Touraine, 2002). It is also difficult to make a convincing argument that movements 'end' given the symbiotic relationship between collective social protest and progressive equity policies. Social movements act as catalysts for social justice legislation and in turn, this legislation creates spaces and opportunities for more political mobilization and organization. Many of today's struggles seek to build on the achievements of those who fought before them whether in the realm of popular discourse, legislation, and/or institutional reform/reconstruction. Without a doubt the multi-layered waves of influence generated by these movements provide a beacon light for generations of activists to come.

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[32] Theories of 'new social movements' emerged in the sixties in response to the new types of participants in students movements, the women's movement, peace and environmental movements, etc. It is argued that they are different in ideology, types of support they enjoy, reasons for participation, organizational structure, and political style (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

[33] Strategic movements are those that pursue specific objectives such as housing etc. and 'expressive' movements that work to recognize and claim the rights of marginalized social groups such as indigenous people, women, children, etc. (Kane, 2001).

[34] For example, Cohen and Arato (1992) observe that movements tend to shift from mass protest types of actions to become institutionalized as interest groups or political parties.

This literature review proceeds from the following definition of social movements by Morrow and Torres (2003) which is based on the book Ideology and the New Social Movements by Alan Scott:

> "A social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests, and for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity. Social movements are distinguished from other collective actors, such as political parties and pressure groups, in that they have mass mobilization, or the threat of mobilization as their primary source of social sanction, and hence power. They are further distinguished from other collectivities, such as voluntary associations or clubs, in being chiefly concerned with defending or changing society, or the relative position of the group in society (p.100)."

This definition provides four key themes of discussion for this literature review and the dissertation as a whole. First, social movements have different conceptions of social change; not all social movements are integrally concerned with questions of unequal power, redistribution of resources, and social transformation. This literature review will focus on social movements that have a vision and strategies that enable the creation of an equitable, just, and flourishing human society. [35] Second, the power and legitimacy of social movements derives from their ability to mobilize the masses. Social movements retain both formal and informal elements at the same time and the process of transformation is not limited to formal institutional arrangements or the public arena (Alvarez et al, 1998). The discussion will strive to describe the particular political and

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[35] Social movements can also be conservative or reactionary (Kane, 2001). Manuel Castells (1997) writes about 'proactive' and 'reactive' movements in which proactive movements aim at "transforming human relationships at their most fundamental level" and reactive movements "build trenches of resistance on behalf of God, nation, ethnicity, family, locality, that is, the fundamental categories of millennial existence now threatened under the combined, contradictory assault of techno-economic forces and transformative social movements (p.2)." For example, at least four different forms of social organization have emerged in response to globalization – those who support free trade without qualification, 'regressive globalizers who only favor global integration when it is in their own interests; 'reformers' or redistributive globalizers who approve of global integration that leads to greater equity and fosters the development of international law; and 'rejectionists' who oppose all forms of globalization as infringements on national or local autonomy (Jackie Smith, 2005).

economic contexts in which progressive movements are able to mobilize and emerge as influential actors. Third, questions of identity and therefore meaning and knowledge lie at the heart of the processes by which large groups of diverse people come together to embark on a path of collective action and social protest. Furthermore, this review will discuss the state-social movement connection and ideological factors in movement mobilization – which are not explicitly addressed in the definition used above (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

The first part of this chapter looks at the influence of globalization and educational multilateralism on the formulations of the state. The second part of this chapter looks at shifts in the educational priorities and activities of the state. The third and fourth sections of this literature review examine conceptualizations of alternative approaches to knowledge production and doing politics to create a framework to study a social movement like the Movimento Sem Terra.

Globalization and Shifts in State Power and Influence

In the last fifty years, the shift to knowledge-based modes of production wrought by economic, political, cultural, and technological forces of globalization have contributed to shifts in the role of the state. In the fifties, state intervention in the activities of the market was the rule rather than the exception. This was certainly the case in the region of Latin America where the power of the state accrued in part from the economic conditions created by crises in wealthy industrialized countries that reduced consumption in developed markets. During the Cold War, economies of poor countries were dependent on trade with either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. On the continent of South

America, the countries of Latin America exercised their sovereignty under the supervision of the United States (Spanakos, 2004[36]).

The intensification of capitalist economic globalization after the end of the Cold War has contributed significantly to the weakening of the state system. While not all markets are capitalist, national governments and all of their policies are increasingly dictated by the international market, transnational corporations (TNCs), and external aid agencies (Monkman and Stromquist, 2000). Globally, there has been a shift away from the welfare-state Keynesian model of development to a 'competitive' neoliberal model that is oriented towards participation in the emerging 'global informational economy' and where the capacity for wealth creation is exponentially related to access to new information and 'high technology' (Castells, 1997[37]; Mickelson, 2000). The neoliberal model of development is based on economic rationality and the belief that individuals must act in ways that maximize their own personal benefits (Apple, 2000). The new economic order has reduced the size of the working class (and consequently the power of organized labor to negotiate fair and just economic policies); reduced the need for labor-intensive production methods; and contributed to a large and growing 'marginal', 'underground' or 'informal' labor market that includes everything from self-employment, domestic work, family enterprises to criminal economic activities (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

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[36] Within the new global geo-political alignments, Spanakos (2004) writes that, except for Cuba, "Latin American countries followed policies of independence and sovereignty, as long as the threat to U.S. national security was limited (p.12)."

[37] Castells writes that the global economy with integrated core markets for capital, goods, and services, decreasing social costs have created conditions of 'negative competitiveness' from which only transnational corporations benefit.

The transition to neoliberalism has also been facilitated by international development policies that have made external aid for developing countries conditional on compliance with 'structural adjustment' reforms. The international financial institutions known as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been the primary instruments of neoliberal prescriptions for structural adjustment and development.[38] The Washington Consensus as this set of policies have come to be known prescribe a one-size-fits-all package of economic and fiscal reforms consisting of liberalization, privatization, and deregulation which support an export-driven model of economic development. In effect, they have facilitated the transfer of unregulated power to financial markets and severely curtailed the ability of developing economies to protect themselves against the vagaries of global capital and profit-driven financiers. In every social sphere including education and the labor market, poor people, particularly women and children disproportionately bear the burden of these structural adjustment policies (Marchand and Runyan, 2000; Mies and Siva, 1983; Moghadam, 1995; Sen and Grown, 1987; Kabeer, 1994; Stromquist, 1995; Szanton Blanc, 1997; Walters and Mannicom, 1996).

It is important to note that the level of compliance with neoliberal policies would not have been possible without the collaboration of local elites who were in ideological agreement with the neoliberal worldview, including not just groups on the political right but also former nationalists. In Latin America, neoliberal policies were internalized and

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[38] Specialized agencies of the United Nations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were created as international financial institutions that would fund development and reconstruction around the world beginning with the reconstruction of Europe in the aftermath of World War II. However, on the insistence of the few developing countries that participated in the post-war Bretton Woods meetings, development was added to the mandate of these specialized agencies (Bradlow, 1996). Despite, their mandate as specialized agencies of the UN, these international financial institutions (IFIs) have worked in direct contradiction of social justice and human rights oriented development (FAO-UNESCO, 2003, p.53).

applied by the following regimes and governments: in Chile by dictator Augusto

Pinochet, the Socialist-Christian Democratic alliance, and currently Ricardo Lagos; in

Bolivia by Victor Paz Estensoro; in Argentina under Peronism; in Mexico by the Center-

Left government; in Venezuela under Carlos Andrés Perez; and in Brazil under Fernando

Henrique Cardoso (Sader, 2005).

Neoliberal discourse of democratization

In the 1980s, the neoliberal agenda was repackaged as a program for poverty

alleviation and strengthening democracy in the 1980s and served up with social

conditionalities that focused on eradicating corruption, strengthening the rule of law and

'good governance', and promoting civil society participation. However, the obligations

of the state and basic social entitlements of citizens continue to be formulated in the

language of demand and supply and consumption, enabling the unregulated privatization

of water, electricity, transportation, and to a lesser extent health and education under the

nomenclature of public-private partnerships.

These formulations of social interventions delivered by non-state actors have

contributed to the erosion of state autonomy. In weaker states, the social sector

components of structural adjustment programs have been facilitated by local and

international NGOs and donor agencies in arrangements that sideline governments

completely.[39] Moreover, these programs perpetuate the relationships of dependence

between the poor and privileged even as they are presented as projects to increase

individual autonomy with catchwords such as "personal development", "social

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[39] For example, research in Bangladesh, East Africa, India, and Sudan, has demonstrated that NGOs that
are heavily dependent on external aid reorient accountability to donors rather than to stakeholders (Edwards
and Hulme, 1996). Despite this incongruency, consultation and dialogue with local beneficiaries and even
participatory evaluations are now standard practice and provide the stamp of legitimacy for what in
actuality remain donor-driven interventions.

entrepreneurship", "capacity–building", "participation" and so forth (Alvarez, 1998). In Latin America, these programs have allowed local elite to continue to manipulate the popular classes under the rhetoric of solidarity such as the Solidarity and Social Inversion Fund in Childe (FOSIS), the Solidarity Network in Columbia, and the Solidarity Community Program in Brazil (Alvarez et al, 1998). In all of these ways, neoliberal versions of 'good governance' and social welfare have contributed to the production of exclusionary democracies (Davies, 2002).

The pressure on states for 'good governance' from supra-national institutions and the pressures of fragmentation from below have contributed to the practice of 'decentralization'. In an effort to reassert legitimacy, states have decentralized administrative powers in the name of social inclusion and building local democracy. In practice, decentralization has often taken the form of devolution of administrative responsibilities only -- without increased autonomy in fiscal or decision-making processes. Governments have also failed to take into account local/regional power relationships, the history of the territory, and economic structures (Castells, 1997, p.271). When decentralization does not require the inclusion of marginalized identities, it has had the effect of strengthening communal or ethnic politics to the advantage of local elite. In effect, decentralization has only reinforced a territorial differentiation that permits states to maintain what Castells refers to as "segregated inequality" (Castells, 1997, p. 274).[40]

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[40] Castells writes that when this happens, there are two possible outcomes – inclusive identities use their control of local institutions to "broaden the social and demographic basis of their identity" or local societies retrench and "build autonomous institutions as mechanisms of exclusion" (p.274). In both cases, decentralization has weakened the legitimacy of the state through a centrifugal effect in which citizens feel closer to government but more aloof from the nation-state (Castells, 1997, p.242).

Neoliberal influences on international educational development

Through the work of international financial institutions like the World Bank, the redistributive orientation of educational multilateralism that emerged after World War II has been gradually replaced by neoliberal defensive and disciplinary forms of educational cooperation (Mundy, 1998).[41] The influence of dominant neoliberal discourse has been perpetuated through a combination of the need for external aid, international education conferences, and, more recently,, the establishment of universal standards[42] and entities to determine and manage what neoliberalism considers legitimate and valuable knowledge (Samoff, 2003). The most recent outcome of educational multilateralism is the 1990 Education for All initiative. The 1990 Framework for Action was a non-binding agreement signed by 155 governments, 33 inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), and 125 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide basic education for all by 2015.

The neoliberal approach to developmental problems is informed by assumptions of scientific, technical, and economic rationality and voluntary social responsibility (Chabbott, 2003). Educational discourse is dominated by concerns about developing human capital and privileging individual choice that follow from principles of economic rationality. Human capital theory understands the productive capabilities of human beings as a form of capital – "a produced means of production, and the product of investment" (Harbison and Myers, 1965, p. ix). It requires investments in education

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[41] At the global level , we see supra-governmental institutions like the United Nations system, the institutions of the international human rights legal framework, World Trade Organization (WTO), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Commonwealth. These institutions also exist at the regional level such as the Organization of American States (OAS), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). These institutions were created to facilitate global and regional governance of development, trade, environment, security and so forth.

[42] Scholars of education and globalization have shown that the rate at which education systems adopt common forms such as curriculum and the organization of primary education tends to be faster than other forms of integration into the world economy and society (Meyer and Ramirez, 2000).

which enable people to acquire skills essential for the economic and indirectly social growth (Schultz, 1961; Denison, 1962). [43]

The emphasis on education for competition and economic growth has depersonalized and reduced human labor to an economic resource (Odora Hoppers, 2001). The neoliberal approach to education constructs hierarchies of knowledge that privilege so-called scientific, objective, and impartial forms of knowledge production. Learning is reduced to the dumping of knowledge on passive learners without regard for local knowledge or their particular social and historical contexts. It has contributed to a standardization of educational curricula where learning consists of drilling and testing students in skills and competencies that would prepare them as consumers and workers in the market-driven new informational global economy.

This economic perspective of education has dominated policy talk from the fifties onwards in the United States as well as in developing countries. Educational decisions are made on the basis of efficiency and cost-benefit analyses with the ultimate view to reducing the costs of production. Since the 1980s, neoliberal education policies championed by the World Bank have included the introduction of user fees for primary, secondary and higher education, the concept of output-based aid, vouchers for primary and secondary school, and subsidized education for the poor delivered through NGOs; all of these policies have worked to constrain government spending on education and have widened educational inequalities between public and private schools and within the

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[43] The manpower forecasting approach was one of the models used for decision-making about resource allocation – it is an approach that attempts to predict the types and quantity of schooling/ workers required as the economy grows (Harbison and Myers, 1965).

public school system (Klees, 2002).[44] In effect, they have promoted a political agenda of privatization in the name of economic rationale of 'cost-recovery' and efficient investments.

The Right to Education

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights conventions and treaties are a more positive outcome of educational multilateralism that has contributed to the increase in international influence on national education systems and policies. From a human-rights perspective, the goal of development and development assistance is not wealth creation, and consumption-driven economic growth but the promotion, protection and fulfillment of all human entitlements (Bradlow, 1996; Elson and Catagay, 2000; Skogly, 1999; UNHCHR 2003). Article 26 of the Declaration recognized education to be a fundamental human right and governments that signed the Declaration committed themselves to provide free and compulsory education at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. They also committed to making post-compulsory education progressively available and to make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. The purpose of education was understood to be the "full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." Last but not the least, the Declaration recognized that parents had a prior right to choose the kind of education their children should be given and that the government was obligated to protect rights *in* education. These rights

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[44] In the eighties and nineties, the Bank required governments to introduce user fees for education and health at the primary school level and privatize higher education – a practice it has since discontinued due to mass protest by progressive civil society and human rights organizations such as RESULTS, Oxfam ,and the Global Campaign for Education for All. The efforts of the Bank to privatize higher education have met with less resistance.

included a) protection against 'abusive' education, and b) respect for the freedom to establish alternative institutions of education (Tomasevski, 2003).

The State and Education

The relationship between the state and education at any given time and context has been shaped by the particularities of history, territory, modes of governance, forms of political representation, as well as the structure and organization of the various levels of education (Burbules and Torres, 2000). The state is understood to be 'embedded' in extant social and economic structures – it is a location of concentrated social power and force operating through specialized state apparatuses often but not always in the interests of major social actors (Castells, 1997; Mawhinney, 2000).[45] In Latin America, there have been three primary state formations in the last 150 years interspersed by periods of military dictatorship, intervention, and/or revolution: the 'liberal' state promoting liberal education (approximately between the 1880s until World War II for most countries); the 'developmentalist' state oriented towards modernization in which economics-driven education policies played a key role (approximately between the 1950s and the economic crises of the 1980s); and currently, different forms of the neoliberal state and neoliberal education policies (Burbules and Torres, 2000, p.16). In this section, I will explore the shifts in state power in response to globalization and the capacity and inclination of the state to act as a catalyst for social justice-oriented change.

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[45] Institutionalist, neo-institutionalist, and pluralist theorists differ in terms of how they conceptualize the autonomy of the state. In the Weberian tradition, institutionalists emphasize "the autonomy of state institutions, following the inner logic of a historically given state once the winds of history planted its seeds in a territory that became its national basis (Castells, 1997, p.305)." For pluralists, the state is constantly in the process of formation and reformation through the dynamics of a plural civil society enacting the constitutional process.

In the nineteenth century, public education systems served as ideological state apparatus for liberal states – producing dutiful citizens and diligent workers. Economic restructuring and technological and cultural globalization have reshaped the organization, policies, and priorities of public education systems. These shifts have fundamentally restructured the relationship between the state, market, family, individuals, and education and placed narrow restrictions on what is considered legitimate public space and public responsibility (Blackmore, 2000). Investments in primary and secondary education remain insufficient to guarantee universal access let alone address problems of quality and relevance. Moreover there has been a reorganization in the ways that different levels of education are supported by the government with a significant increase in the use of nongovernmental organizations to deliver education. This section will examine these structural changes in public education and argue that the loss of state sovereignty has not meant a decline in state authority or influence (Castells, 1997). Education remains a key site of state influence and control.

Inadequate public spending on education

As a consequence of global restructuring and liberalization, rich and poor nations have weakened to a point where tax revenues are insufficient to meet their public obligations (Daly, 1996; Greider, 2003; Korten, 1999). In particular, structural adjustment policies imposed on industrializing and poor countries have resulted in drastic reduction of public ownership of social sectors to accommodate the operations of the market (Odora Hoppers, 2001). In Latin America and throughout the developing world, maintaining macro-economic stability and reducing inflation has consistently trumped

social needs; governments have prioritized the repayment of interest on external debt and slashed budgets in areas of social spending like education and health. [46] Neoliberal policies have placed budget caps on social spending and prevented taxation reform and other progressive measures that could support increased public spending on education (Klees, 2002).   More than ever, quality education is only available to the few who can afford to pay for it. Within the public education system, there are extreme disparities between rural and urban populations. Poverty, race/ethnicity, gender, and ability are just a few of the other factors that continue to be significant deterrents to access and successful completion of some kind of basic education.

Restructuring and diversification of basic education

In 1990, the Education for All Declaration adopted a visionary definition of education including the whole range of educational activities that aim to meet basic learning needs which meant not just formal schooling[47] (primary and secondary) but also nonformal, informal, public and private educational activities for people of all ages (FAO-UNESCO, 2003). The goals of EFA were subsequently revised in 2000 when governments withdrew from "meeting the basic learning needs of *all* – children, young people and adults – throughout life, within and outside the formal school system" and prioritized providing primary education for the poorest girls (Torres, 2000).

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[46] They have also privatized state-owned industries and natural resources; made exchange rates competitive; liberalized financial flows; deregulated markets; and promoted exports to bring in hard currency (Williamson, 1990 in Spanakos, 2004).

[47] By definition, the formal education system also includes colleges, universities, and other formal educational institutions that constitute a continuous 'ladder' of full-time education, generally beginning at age five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old (UNESCO-FAO, 2003, p. 20).   In some countries, organized programs of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in regular school and university constitute the upper part of the ladder and have come to be known as the 'dual system' (UNESCO-FAO, 2003, p. 20).

The restructuring of public education systems began three decades ago. Neoliberal educational policies have restructured the education system along entrepreneurial lines with the justification of making education more 'flexible' in responding to new models of industrial production (Morrow and Torres, 2000). Changes have included the privatization and restructuring of post-secondary education as well as the reorganization of primary, secondary and teacher education to streamline curricula and assessment with the skills and competencies required by workers in the informational economy. Public educational systems have been restructured so that the state only retains direct responsibility for four to eight years of formal schooling – what is generally referred to as primary education (Tomasevki, 2003).

The case of adult education

The provision of nonformal education, and literacy or adult education in particular, offers rich insights into the power and knowledge relations that constitute prevailing institutional arrangements between state, market, and society. From a human rights perspective, adult education does not only have to do with adults or with learning to read, write, and calculate:

> "The term "adult" is used here as an all-embracing category that includes youth, adults, and the elderly, thus stressing the meaning and value of life*long* learning, across the life span. We maintain that all people, irrespective of age, gender and of the country and zone where they live, have a right to learn and to continue learning and must thus be considered learners for basic education/ training/ learning purposes (Torres, 2002, p.11)."

However, with the exception of the decade of the seventies, adult education has been given low priority in the current global economic and political model of development. For economic and political reasons, governments and donors have shown a

marked preference to serve children over youth and adults. Literacy interventions for

youth and adults have been dominated by economic imperatives of cost-saving and

efficiency and have tended to focus on 'functional literacy'.

Since the 1970s, governments have strategically withdrawn from the area of

nonformal education (NFE) leaving NGOs to deliver NFE especially for hard-to-reach

populations. The private provision of nonformal education was seen as a targeted, skills-

focused, low cost, and therefore, efficient response to problems of high rates of formal

school dropouts and growing gaps in the wealth-generation capacity and political

participation of urban and rural populations (Bock and Papagiannis, 1983). Other

reasons for 'outsourcing' by the government and external funding agencies have included

arguments that community-based organizations have good networks, credibility with the

community, and even that these programs cost less.[48] In general, teacher training,

support infrastructure, and resource allocation for NFE programs has been inadequate to

meet the existing need. Governments have also failed to develop adequate mechanisms

to establish accountability for NGO programs or equivalency between nonformal and

formal education systems. As a result, nonformal education programs have done little to

change conditions of educational and economic marginalization; a shortcoming in

education policy that remains unaddressed by the recent renewed interest in nonformal

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[48] The formation of NGOs has been enabled by Western philanthropic organizations, official aid agencies based largely in the North, and some governments that sought assistance in meeting the needs of their citizens. The technical rational paradigm of neoliberal development has always viewed NGOs as the most "efficient" way to provide services to the most excluded or 'hard to reach' populations'. In the last decade, neoliberal development planners have stepped up their efforts to promote the delivery of essential public services such as education, health, water, and electricity through NGOs, private corporations, and "public-private" partnerships. The justification for reducing state-supported provisions in these sectors tend to emphasize NGOs (profit and non-profit) as a source for information, expertise, and innovative service delivery.

education and 'alternative delivery systems' emphasized by the Education for All initiative.

At the same time, the withdrawal of the state from provision of nonformal education, particularly in the area of literacy and adult education, has expanded opportunities for radical educators for whom a critical engagement with knowledge is intrinsic and vital to the struggle for social justice. The field of literacy has been called the 'field of revolution' since it was one of the first spaces in which educators began to organize and build advocacy coalitions (Mundy and Murphy, 2001). Youth and adult education activities developed by social movements and NGOs have adopted explicit goals of achieving social recognition, equality, and justice for excluded social groups.

We are currently in the middle of the UN Literacy Decade.[49] At the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (adopted at the 1997 Fifth Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) organized by UNESCO), adult literacy was recognized as a fundamental human right. Literacy was defined as "the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world" and as "a catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities, and for learning throughout life". The Declaration reiterated the linkages between the education of youth and adults and democratic, sustainable and equitable development. However, this understanding has been slow to translate into general adult education practice. Five years after CONFINTEA V, a review of adult education practices in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean by Rosa Maria

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[49] 2003 to 2012 have been declared the Literacy Decade by the United Nations under the banner "Literacy for all: voice for all, learning for all.". The outcome of the Decade is supposed to be locally sustainable literate environments. These environments will give people opportunities to express their ideas and views, engage in effective learning, participate in the written communication which characterizes democratic societies, and exchange knowledge with others. This will include increasingly the use of electronic media and information technologies, both as a means of self-expression and for accessing and assessing the vast stores of knowledge available today".

Torres found that the provision of literacy to youth and adults continued to be hampered by differences in terminology and understanding of what is meant by literacy[50]; the dominance of external funders in setting agendas and practice; and the pervasive lack of information on literacy practices (Torres, 2002[51]).

Decentralization of Education

The diversification of the provision of all forms of basic education is being carried out alongside the decentralization of education systems. At the same time, states have retained control over education systems through different forms of 'centralized-decentralization'.

Educational decentralization is an important part of the rhetoric of democratization, re-democratization (as in the case of Latin American states), and democracy in education. Democratization has been conceptualized variously in terms of social justice, equity, self-determination, and individual freedoms (Stromquist, 1996). Neoliberal policy discourse presents educational decentralization as a means of strengthening democracy through expanded participation of civil society, communities, and citizens in public policy formulation and implementation. However, research on decentralization policies in the context of globalization have shown that while there is considerable conformity in global policy discourse in terms of the intended effects of

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[50] Current usage includes adult literacy (AL), adult basic education and training (ABET), adult basic learning and education (ABLE), adult and nonformal education (ANFE) as well as others.

[51] The report specifically identified obstacles as the reduction of adult education to adult basic education and definitions of literacy that only emphasize reading and numeracy skills; research and visions dominated by the North and by international agencies but gaps between rhetoric and practice particularly in terms of commitment of resources by donors and governments; focus on the region of Africa and attempts to copycat literacy interventions in Africa to other regions; new information but little new knowledge or innovation; increasing focus on youth and/or on younger adults; lack of coordination between adult education and child education advocates; low quality of research about literacy practices both *in* and *about* "developing countries"; little and weak documentation of experiences but promising trends; problems with evaluation of adult literacy programs remain a critical issue; increasing pressure for quantitative research and empirical evidence; and inconclusive evidence, divergent conclusions, and recommendations (Torres, 2002).

educational decentralization, such as local autonomy and expanded popular participation, there is considerable divergence in implementation and outcomes of decentralization at the sub-national and local level.[52]

Historically, educational and social planning has tended to be top-down; centralized bureaucracies have not been responsive to local education problems. Before structural adjustment processes, decentralization took the form of institutional de-concentration in order to improve sectoral institutions at the local level. The consequences were often capture of benefits of decentralization by local elites, the perpetuation of patronizing and paternalistic political and governing practices, continued poverty and financial dependency of municipalities, lack of accountability, and municipal fragmentation (Lindemann, 2005). Decentralization implemented as part of structural adjustment processes have been promoted with the rationale that transferring resources and responsibilities to local and smaller administrative units will make education 'services' more responsive to citizens/ consumers leading to improvement in education quality and responsiveness to local needs (Fischman, 1998).

Meanings and practices of decentralization, local autonomy and political participation differ from context to context (McGinn and Welsh, 1999). In Latin America, decentralization has been implemented widely and variously served the functions of privatization of education, shifting the financial burden for primary education to local governments (in most cases, municipalities), and on a more positive note reducing bureaucratization and inefficient centralized systems (Carnoy, 1999; Diego, 2001; Hanson, 1995; Morales-Gomez and Torres, 1990; Stromquist, 1996). The

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[52] See for instance, the Comparative Education Review issue on globalization and educational change (Vol. 46, No. 1).

critical literature argues that devolution, delegation, and deconcentration-type centralized-decentralization does not necessarily lead to educational innovations, flexible and responsive educational systems, or the use of democratic processes for the local and collective redefinition of the use of resources (Choup, 2003; Fischman, 1998; Grant-Lewis and Naidoo, 2004; Kamat, 2002; Odora-Hoppers, 2001).[53] In short, these kinds of educational decentralization do not automatically enable the transfer of political power to citizens and elected representatives or increase participation by socially disadvantaged groups because they are not accompanied by changes in non-democratic political cultures and institutions. Instead, non-democratic versions of educational decentralization have provided a way for central governments and technocratic elite to retain control while shedding central financial and management responsibility for primary and secondary education (Carnoy, 1999).

In conclusion, the new financing and administrative responsibilities that characterize public education systems ensure that only primary education remains a principal public responsibility. In addition, public education systems continue to be unequal, discriminatory, and non-democratic in their form and practice. The research demonstrates conclusively that both formal and nonformal educational processes have performed functions of social reproduction in terms of socialization and social mobility functions, selection and recruitment functions, exchange value (or the institutional recognition of the graduates of these programs), attitudinal and cognitive outcomes, pedagogy, instructional methods, curriculum, and achievement and technical skills (Bock

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[53] Dennis Rondinelli defines devolution as the transfer of authority to autonomous units such as municipalities to work independently; delegation as the transfer of decision-making authority from higher to lower hierarchical levels; and deconcentration as the transfer of work but not power from higher to lower organizational levels (cited in Hanson, 1995).

and Papagiannis, 1983). Furthermore, the discourse of technical and economic rationality have been used to conceal what are also political decisions that serve particular classes and segments of society (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990). The simultaneous increase in state control over education policy combined with the dismantling of public education systems in market-oriented systems has fundamentally reconfigured individual-state relations (Blackmore, 2000).

<u>Social Movements, the State, and Education</u>

As one of the primary construction sites of identity in industrialized societies, public schools and schooling processes are integrally concerned with social validation and/or exclusion and economic and political participation. The previous section discussed the hegemony of neoliberal ideologies in education and the ways in which they reproduce hierarchies of knowledge and power that privilege science-based rationality and manifest in education as competency-based curricula and pedagogy, individual achievement, and the myth of meritocracy. Critical, feminist, postcolonial, and human-rights based educational perspectives have highlighted and addressed the inherently unequal, discriminatory, and non-democratic nature of neoliberal and liberal democratic approaches to education. This tremendous body of literature has a) identified issues of racialized and gendered power and control in educational institutions; b) deconstructed the practical, symbolic, and transformative functions of education policies and decision-making structures and c) explicated the role of educational processes in the construction, prescription, and circumscription of individual identities, desires, and subjectivities (Achebe, 1958; Anyon, 2005, 1997; Apple, 1982, 1966; Fanon, 1963; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Memmi, 1965;

Hall, 1992; McLaren, 1989; Oakes, 1985; Ogbu, 1983; Popkewitz, 1997; St. Pierre, 2000; Tomasevksi, 2003; Weis, 1990, 1988).[54] These kinds of interrogations of hegemonic educational discourse and practice have been informed by and inform innovative ways to resist the standardization of knowledge, validate local, indigenous, and subjugated ways of knowing, and democratize access to information.

In the previous section, I discussed the ways in which forces of globalization acting through supra-national institutions and global education discourse have transformed the socio-spatial arrangements that constitute the state to provide openings to multiple actors (Kamat, 2002). In the last three decades we have also seen unprecedented instances of local, national, regional, and transnational collective action by large groups of loosely organized non-state actors in diverse areas such as campaigns for human rights, economic justice, environmental protection, and democracy. Advances in communications and information technology have been instrumental to the spread of alternative discourses of education and collective action to resist the impact of coercive and oppressive global forces on local lives and lifestyles.

Within this diverse group of progressive non-state actors, popular[55] or social movements have most powerfully impacted our political imagination and challenged us to critically consider the enclosures established by current democratic formulations of the state and social systems (Eschle 2001).   In particular, Latin America has witnessed a resurgence of popular movements (along with several left or center-left victories in

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[54] The critical literature also recognizes the contradictions in which children and youth are both critics as well as consumers and producers of meritocratic ideology (Fine et al 2004, p. 2204).

[55] In Spanish and Portuguese, 'popular' means of the people', the people being the 'poor', 'peasants', the working class, the unemployed and sometimes even the lower middle class; it stand in contradiction to and excludes the rich. Trade unions, women's groups, human rights groups, neighborhood associations, peasant associations, and cooperatives would all be considered 'popular' organizations (Kane, 2001). Since these associations are not necessarily conveyed by the English popular movements, I will use social movements.

national elections[56]) making it for some the "main locus for resistance to neoliberalism" (Sader, 2005, p.59). In the eighties, these popular movements played an important role in the overthrow of dictatorships in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile and the establishment of representative democracies in these countries. These mass mobilizations have intersected with the field of education in different ways. Cumulatively, they have demonstrated the possibilities for education as a space for deep democratization; not only through demands for self-determination of educational content and autonomous governance but also through progressive efforts in the form of legislation, teacher education, civil society networks such as teachers unions, parent associations, and community-based governing bodies, critical and reflexive research, and partnership between educational institutions that enable self-reliance and regeneration instead of dependency (Davies, 2002; Morrow and Torres, 2003; Odora-Hoppers, 2001).

There are multiple contexts in which social movements intersect with the field of education but there is a paucity of theorization on the connection between the state and social movements in education. In the field of comparative education, Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin were among the earliest scholars to include social movements as significant actors in educational policy in their 1985 book "Schooling and work in the democratic state". Morrow and Torres (2003) argue that that their operational construct of the state, based on social conflict theory, provides a dialectical framework for the analysis of educational change in capitalist society but is limited by the class-based

[56] These victories include the elections of Hugo Chávez (1998) in Venezuela and Nestor Kirschner (2003) in Argentina and the overthrow of Sánchez de Losada (2003) and Carlos Mesa (2005) in Bolivia and Lucio Gutiérrez (2005) in Ecuador. The mass mobilizations that accompanied these political developments are the most recent popular mobilizations on the continent. Scholars distinguish between three cycles of popular mobilizations by Left- affiliated movements and parties. The first wave of mobilizations in which communist parties played a central role occurred in the forties and fifties in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Guatemala. The second wave was triggered by the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 and took the form of socialism and armed struggle against dictatorships.

explication of social movements. This section of the literature review has relied heavily on practice-oriented and relational perspectives in recent social movement theory in the field of feminist theory and cultural studies, as well as comparative education. In my review of the literature, I have focused on the social and educational practice of movements that have challenged hegemonic modes of power that circumscribe and limit what is considered legitimate knowledge, facilitated the construction of heterogeneous subjectivities and agency, and reformulated dominant notions of participation in the public sphere.

Different forms of collective organization and mobilization for social justice - oriented educational reform include but are not limited to:

- Theories of education practice which underly cultural reformist movements that are often linked to broader social movements e.g. the 'modern school movement' and the anarchist movement;
- The university as a site of social movement activity, the struggles for autonomy by university students, and the role of students and universities in the global justice movement (Smith, 2005);
- Social movements for education and economic rights in the United States in the 1980s which have taken separate but interrelated forms of community organizing for economic justice in cities, movements of educators and parent organizers in urban neighborhoods, progressive labor unions made up of immigrant and other minority workers, a living wage movement in municipalities across the country, and a movement of organized inner-city youth (Anyon, 2005[57]);
- 'Critical pedagogy' and 'popular education' practices tied to New Left and women's movements, the 'integral education' movement in India, etc. (Giri, 2005; Morrow and Torres, 2003; Walters and Mannicom, 1996);
- Changing discourse of education in terms of what are considered legitimate issues, particularly in institutions of higher education, e.g., in the form of efforts to push education policy and politics studies beyond elite policy makers to include the experiences of marginalized and disenfranchised groups (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Morrow and Torres, 2003);
- Transnational, regional, and national civil society advocacy networks that promote the right to education such as the Global Campaign for Education for All (Mundy and Murphy, 2001); and

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[57] Anyon (2005) notes that urban schools appear to be a focal point for organizing even though education is not guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

- Education as an explicit demand of social movements, e.g., in the European labor movements in the 19th and 20th centuries; the Zapatista movement in Mexico, the Pan-Mayan movement in Guatemala, the Movimento sem Terra in Brazil (Kane, 2001; Kolling et al. 1999; Warren, 1998).

The new formulations and networks of social justice-oriented policy analysis, organized civil society for educational advocacy, and the use of critical pedagogies and popular education are of particular relevance to this literature review and dissertation. I will briefly review key concepts and issues in each of these three areas and relate them to the construction of an analytical framework to study the educational activities of a social movement in particular, and the democratization of education as a whole.

Social Justice-Oriented Conceptions of Policy

The problems that educational planners and politicians choose to ignore or silence are equally important in understanding the politics of education (Pillow, 1997). Conventional frameworks of education policy analysis are limited in that they tend to focus on conventional spaces of power and those who have power (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). Frameworks that derive from presumptions of 'organized rationality' tend to ignore or underplay the political nature of decision-making about education. The concept of organized rationality presumes that the apparently chaotic process of political action and decision-making is driven by reason-based choices from a range of possible actions that could change institutional rules that regulate society (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). Legitimate and valuable knowledge in these frameworks of public planning have been dominated by positivist and quantitative research and data that meet epistemological criteria such as objectivity, rationality, and generalizability.[58]

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[58] While quantitative data has the potential to expose large, oppressive structures, it is less useful for understanding particular experiences, values and hidden meanings (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

Cultural frameworks which include the analysis of behaviors, norms and values of the different groups that participate in policy-making have provided a more situated and fluid understanding of the process of policy formulation and implementation.[59] They have been helpful in identifying a more diverse group of actors, information, and relations of power, conflict, competition, and advocacy that shape policy-making in existing systems of dominance (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

From a critical perspective, equity of access, opportunity, and quality that are key concerns in education planning and policy-making can only be resolved by political decisions about allocation of resources and so forth. Scientific and technical information has a limited role to play in equity-driven decision-making (Velloso, 1979). Policy formulation processes are viewed as a space of negotiation and contestation between the state and multiple social demands. Not all of these different social demands and actors are acknowledged by the state and therefore may not be expressed in formal policy arenas. Thus, an analyis of the politics of education and education policy requires a political history of not just state and public education systems but also the role of social movements and organized civil society (Torres, 2000).

Civil Society Advocacy for Education Rights

Civil society is a catch-all and contested construct that is used to refer to a very diverse group of entities that are active in international development as well as national and international politics. Mark Ginsburg (1998) identified four broad types of organized civil society activity in the field of development. These include the following

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[59] Cultural processes in policy arenas have been explored through concepts such as – policy streams (Kingdon, 1984), symbolic policy action (Edelman, 1988), as well as models of partisan politics such as pluralism, representation, and interest groups (Dahl, 1961, Wirt and Kirst, 1992 in Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005), and advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

types of institutions and organizations: (1) grassroots operations that are intricately linked to popular movements aimed at radical social transformation; (2) nonprofit businesses run by "experts" and "professionals" that "provide work and income opportunities for the disadvantaged in order to incorporate them into extant political arrangements"; (3) locally-based organizations operating on small budgets; and (4) international organizations (INGOs) amply funded by international donors and governments (Ginsburg, 1998). Organized civil society also includes what Thomas Rochon (1998) refers to as 'critical communities' which are located in modern universities, research centers, and think-tanks.[60] Last but not the least, the concept of civil society covers instances of individual agency and resistance through collective but non-organizational forms as well as groups that represent and promote the interests of particular communities (Barber, 1999).

Historically, participation in development planning by non-state actors has taken the form of outsourcing to nongovernmental organizations to provide basic services for education, health etc. (Kakabadse and Burns, 1994). Both governments and ruling elite have been more hostile towards popular movements of indigenous and other socially marginalized groups around the world.[61] When progressive civil society actors and social movements seek to disrupt and transgress public-private boundaries or public homogeneity, they are seen as destructive of cohesion and agents of destabilization (Eschle, 2001).

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[60] Rochon (1998) argues that these critical communities spawn new ideas and values while movements take these ideas to a wider public. Thus, he arrives at a two-step model of cultural change and the processes through which new values travel through society.

[61] Governments have also been less willing to engage with advocacy NGOs and CSOs – particularly human rights based advocates who raise public policy debates about alternative economic policies (Ackerman, 2004; Fisher, 1998; Rowden and Irama, 2004; Sandberg, 1994).

The growing influence of progressive forms of organized civil society is marked by strategic coalitions and partial alliances between individuals, informal groups, and institutional actors from diverse cultural and ideological communities. Generally speaking, collective struggles emerging out of progressive civil society formulations advocate for educational rights guaranteed by the international human rights framework. They represent a distinct shift from the civil society and nongovernmental organizations that have become substitutes for the state by providing social services that are part of the state's public responsibility (Klees, 1998; Stromquist, 1998).

Transnational, regional, and local civil society networks and coalitions have constructed new collective identities based on solidarity rather than identity politics to organize and mobilize around issues of education, gender, peace, and sustainable development (Grewal, 1996; Mohanty and Alexander, 1997; Mundy, 2001; Naples, 1998; Stromquist, 1998). Their work embodies alternative visions and ways of doing politics for social change through historically and socially situated language and strategies of resistance and contention. They have contributed to alternative language and discourse on education and demanded that the state do more than manage the excesses of the market (Blackmore, 2000). As such, these engagements with the state and the politics of social policy offer new, intersectional, and relational understandings of inequality and injustice as well as social transformation (Dill 2001, 1998). The effectiveness of these movements point to significant shifts in the discourse and activities of CSOs and NGOs from service providers to political actors and advocates for marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Mundy and Murphy, 2001). In this way, civil society advocacy

networks that include NGOs as well as social movements offer new, less institutionalized forms of participation in education decision-making.

A preliminary review of the literature suggest four general strategies, in no particular sequence, used by effective civil society actors in their roles as advocates and activists. First, civil society actors develop innovative alliances and coalitions that maximize their access to information and resources. Next, they set agendas that force leaders, policy makers, and the public to address neglected or suppressed issues. Third, they facilitate a process of negotiation, through a variety of settings and media including conferences, seminars as well as designing treaties and agreements. In doing so, they are able to confer or erode legitimacy and public support for particular institutions, issues, or products. Finally, civil society actors take on the responsibility of implementing solutions and ensure that states and other entities fulfill their commitments.

These advocacy networks have been less successful at generating the kinds of individual and collective agency that constitute 'people power' and compel governments to translate rhetoric into practice, to implement policy, and so forth. Of course, some do not intend to address the structural dimensions of the problem of democratization of knowledge and power and who controls the production of knowledge (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990, p.84). Brazilian scholar Emir Sader (2003) summarizes the limitations of nongovernmental organizations as follows:

> "The very act of defining themselves as 'nongovernmental' explicitly rejects any ambition on the NGOs' part for an alternative hegemonic project, which would, by its nature, have to include states and governments as the means through which political and economic power is articulated in modern societies. They therefore either insert themselves, explicitly or implicitly, within the liberal critique of the state's actions, or else limit their activity to the sphere of civil society—which, defined in opposition to the state, also ends at the boundaries of liberal politics. In fact, the very concept of 'civil society' masks the class nature of its components—

multinational corporations, banks and mafia, set next to social movements, trade unions, civic bodies—while collectively demonizing the state. The leading role of NGOs in the resistance to neoliberalism is a sign of the movement's defensive character, still unable to formulate an alternative hegemonic strategy (p.93)."

For all of these reasons, organized civil society activity has not been as successful in addressing the problematic of changing relations between the individual and the state that have exacerbated the marginalization of historically disadvantaged groups in the post-welfare state context. As such, progressive civil society can be considered both a site and target for radical democratization (Alvarez et al, 1998).

Critical Pedagogies and Popular Education

Critical pedagogies and popular education may be defined as democratic, non-hierarchical learning processes which encourage creative thinking and political action based on what learners know and their social realities (Kane, 2001). The origins of popular education have been traced to the ideals of universal, free, and compulsory education that emerged in revolutionary France around 1789. What distinguishes popular education from 'adult', 'non formal', 'distance' or 'permanent' education, and certainly conventional education, is the belief that in the context of social injustice, education can never be politically neutral: "if it does not side with the poorest and marginalized sectors – the 'oppressed'- in an attempt to transform society, then it necessarily sides with the 'oppressors' in maintaining the existing structures of oppression, even if by default (Kane, 2001, p.9)." Through popular education, the participants, who are also in one way or another oppressed, become the 'subjects' of their own liberation or change. Popular education can be found in three different spaces of institutionalized practice: in the form of small, 'grassroots development projects' , funded by NGOs; in the form of support centers (and in Latin America liberation theologists), again funded by NGOs and

independent of the state; and, in the form of popular education networks that enable all practitioners to share resources and expertise (Kane, 2001). Popular education has also been carried in all kinds of state contexts and states have varied in their attempts to control or suppress popular education movements (Kane, 2001). There have been state-sponsored attempts to promote social change through large-scale projects in popular education.

The practices of critical pedagogy that are often part of popular education were developed by Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire in the 1950s in the course of working with non-literate fishermen, peasants, and workers who were organizing for social change. In his seminal work entitled Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire critiqued the dominant 'banking model of education' that produced students as ignorant, powerless, and passive. Freire argued that education for a free and democratic society must involve the production as well as the transmission of knowledge. His pedagogy centered on a dialogic, non-hierarchical relationship between teacher and pupil which facilitated the process of socially and historically situated analysis of oppressive social structures and collective 'problem-solving'. The role of the educator was to support and facilitate learners in deconstructing or 'decoding' their worldviews and create new understandings and agency. He also argued that science should openly address needs of the popular sector and that public planning should involve community participation.

Critical pedagogies and popular education have been most successful in challenging ahistorical, power-invisible 'meta-narratives' of knowledge – in situating knowing and understanding in social-political contexts. They have come to be regarded as vital to an alternative way of doing politics providing a language and strategies to

construct a 'politics of difference'. At the same time, they have also been limited by the

lack of a historically specific relation to social movements (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

In the next section, I discuss the ways in which social movements and states have

critically engaged with questions of knowledge production and education and the

possibilities embedded in popular education practices for social activism and democratic

organization (Carnoy and Samoff, 1990; Kane, 2000; Walters and Manicom, 1996).

  The social organizational and educational practices of Latin American social

movements consciously or otherwise reflect theories and practices of popular education

and offer new possibilities for popular education and the democratization of education in

general. The key point of divergence is that 'conventional' forms of popular education

are concerned with issues of social and economic class while Latin American social

movements and women's movements have been concerned with consciousness-raising

and political participation around questions of social identity but not necessarily

redistribution (Kane, 2001).[62] There have also been several instances of attempts to

institutionalize popular education primarily in the area of literacy education such as the

Literacy Campaign in Nicaragua and the MOVA literacy initiative in Brazil. I will

briefly discuss educational and knowledge production practices in the contexts of the

Zapatistas in Mexico, the pan-Mayan movement in Guatemala, and in two state contexts

– Nicaragua and Brazil.

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[62] Feminist popular education (FPE) is explicitly oriented towards transforming gendered power relations
using the same methodologies of validation and building analytically and practically on the experiential
knowledge of learners themselves.   Feminist critical pedagogies are also influenced by Foucault and post
structural theory. Along with questions of the construction of gender identities, FPE examines forms of
governance (state and civil society), and the complex relationships between political, economic (the
'market'), and social institutions (Walters and Manicom, 1996).

The Zapatista movement refers to the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) - a guerilla army of indigenous peoples from Chiapas, the poorest state in Mexico, and their non-guerilla supporters amongst the indigenous communities of Chiapas (Esteva and Prakash, 1998; Kane, 2001). In 1994, the Zapatistas captured the town of San Cristóbal de Las Casas and presented a series of demands to the Mexican government for the granting of land, local autonomy, and services for indigenous communities. A ceasefire was declared twelve days later and the Zapatistas have been in negotiations with the Mexican government ever since. The negotiations have proceeded very slowly but the Zapatistas are now in control of 32 autonomous municipalities.

Liam Kane (2001) identifies four aspects of Zapatista practice that resemble the popular education approach. First, the relationship between the Zapatista leadership and the rest of the movement is characterized by constant dialogue and extensive consolations with indigenous communities. In Zapatista discourse, this is called the concept of 'governing or leading by obeying' and mirrors Paulo Freire's recommendations for leadership (Kane, 2001, p.132). Second, the Zapatistas have cultivated a running dialogue with Mexican civil society through national conventions and meetings in order to promote participatory democracy more widely and mobilize the wider population to become agents or 'subjects' of their own change (Kane, 2001). Third, Zapatista popular educators play a key role in facilitating self-management of the municipalities in ways that are both culturally situated and participatory. Fourth, Kane (2001) writes that the organization of the Zapatista movement has facilitated "the socialization of all types of basic knowledge"; the use of the written word; and knowledge of other cultures and

histories within Mexico and around the world. In the absence of government assistance, they have appointed their own school teachers and initiated a conversation on educational practices in Zapatista schools.

Education and the revitalization of indigenous culture in the Pan-Mayan movement in Guatemala

Kay B. Warren has written extensively about the work of educated Mayans to create a pan-Mayan social movement for indigenous cultural revitalization in Guatemala. Since the 1970s, Mayan teachers, development workers, linguists, social scientists and lawyers have debated and conducted research on directions for Mayan nation building including priorities in education, legal issues, and self-administration. Schools and research centers have been created for advocacy on customary law, Mayan rights, reforms needed in language policy, regional administration, military, economics, education, communication, and respect for Mayan ceremonial centers (Warren, 1998). Educational projects include language revitalization, literacy training in Mayan languages, and local language committees; the recreation of a radical historical consciousness through revitalization Mayan chronicles of culture, history and resistance to the Spanish invasion; production of school texts and teacher training materials for use in special programs for high school students and in Mayan elementary schools; the revival of Mayan leadership norms; and the development and dissemination of a discourse of indigenous rights focusing on recognition and self-determination (Warren, 1998).

The Pan-Mayanists have been criticized by the Right and the Left in Guatemala and elsewhere on grounds that the movement fuels separatism, ethnic polarization,

apolitical representation, and for dealing with cultural issues rather than serious problems of poverty and access to land for farmers. Pan-Mayanists have responded that they are willing to work with everybody but will continue with their own agendas. This movement does not fit the dominant paradigm of 'grassroots' or a 'unified' social movement because of the diversity of the class background of activists and histories, agendas, and politics of research centers. Warren argues that it is progressive nevertheless because the Pan-Mayanists seek to expose Guatemalan racism and U.S. neocolonialism; and build a cross-class movement through demands for recognition of cultural diversity within the nation-state, a greater role for indigenous politics in national culture, a reconsideration of economic inequities, and a wider distribution of cultural resources such as education and literacy in indigenous languages (Warren, 1998, p.166-167).

State-supported popular education in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, between March and August of 1980, the Ministry of Education (MEC) of the revolutionary Sandistina government implemented a literacy campaign modeled on Freire's methods of teaching literacy. Voluntary literacy tutors, called *brigadistas*, were dispersed through the country to teach people to read and write, promote discussion on the revolution, and collect the social histories of different communities (Kane, 2001). The Literacy Crusade received the Literacy Prize from UNESCO and has been widely praised for the effective ways in which it brought technical literacy skills to previously neglected communities (almost a quarter of the population at the time), and brought together a nation across social and cultural boundaries of geography, age, and class. But there were also serious problems with the

preparation of inexperienced teachers and the documentation of the project, particularly the statistical data. The project was accused of being too centralized, and of being a propaganda vehicle to spread the popularity of the Sandistinas rather than encourage liberation (Kane, 2001). The persistence of private education which paid teachers higher wages also detracted from the impact of this popular education initiative.

MEC followed up the Crusade with a national program of adult popular education (*Educación Popular Básica*) which was delivered through 'Popular Education Collectives' located in Sandistina mass organizations. The program was intended to consolidate and build on the skills acquired in the Crusade (up to nine further levels in langue, mathematics, arts and social sciences) and reach out to remaining non-literate groups. The war of the *Contras* (counter-revolutionaries) disrupted the program during which 300 popular teachers were targeted and killed.

State-supported popular education in Brazil

In the context of non-revolutionary states, there have been several efforts by the Brazilian central government to implement popular education-inspired literacy campaigns. The central government funded literacy campaign known as the Grassroots Education Movement (MEB, *Movimento de Educação de Base*) was only implemented for one year in 1961. After the resumption of democracy in 1988, the municipal government of São Paulo which was controlled by the Worker's Party (PT, *Partido dos Trabalhadores*) implemented the Movement for Youth and Adult Literacy (*Movimentos de Alfabetização de Jovens e Adultos*, MOVA). It was a program based on a political definition of knowledge and focused on the development of critical literacy skills through the exploration of social inequalities. At one point it reached as many as twenty thousand

students. At the commencement of the project in 1989, Paulo Freire was the Secretary of

Education in the municipality of São Paulo. In 1993, the PT lost the elections to a

conservative political coalition headed by the Social Democratic Party (PDS, *Partido*

Democrático Social) which stopped funding for MOVA and replaced it with more

conventional literacy programs that did not have explicit political goals (Stromquist,

1997). The program ended in 1992 but not before the different chapters of MOVA had

already organized themselves into their own national network – MOVA-BRASIL –

committed to developing processes of literacy with social justice, the exercise of

citizenship and democracy, and continuous education (Sales, 2003).

Identity, Power and Knowledge in Women's Movements

The Latin American social movements discussed in the previous section share

common goals in addressing cultural, distributional and associational forms of injustice

but go about the work of education and political activism in situated ways. The politics

of identity and knowledge are integral to the movement-building process. Social

movements of marginalized groups have reappropriated their subjugated histories and

cultures and also created new meanings, symbols and languages to interrogate structures

of domination and make a material, political and cultural difference in people's lives.

Social movements are in different stages of organizing not only to claim the right

to education but also to determine what kind of education and development is appropriate

for themselves. The development of indigenous forms of popular and formal education

situated in indigenous culture and traditions, political consciousness and participation,

and a rejection of the manual and mental work play a key role in raising awareness,

building political consciousness, and rejecting state- and other hegemonic notions of

'disadvantage' and 'development'. In these educational contexts, differing degrees of emphasis are placed on the operations of classism, racism, sexism and other 'isms' and how movements can create a sense of common purpose across these social cleavages (Warren, 1998).

Critical, poststructural, and feminist scholars have paid explicit attention to power dynamics and how unequal relations of power/knowledge color readings and performance of agency (Benhabib et al, 1995; Foucault, 1979, 1980). Their scholarship shows that not all members of a movement claim or articulate a 'critical consciousness' and/or political identity before they enter the movement. Almost three decades of scholarship and activism by Black and U.S. Third World feminists have developed a situated, intersectional and complicated understanding of the development of political consciousness and the exercise of agency and resistance against oppression. (Crenshaw, 1995; Collins, 1986; Connell, 1987; Dill, 2001; Eschle, 2001; hooks, 1994; Mohanty 2003; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1983; Naples, 1998a; Sandoval, 1991; Twine and Blee, 2001; Weber, 2000; Weis, 1988). Third World and U.S. feminists have outed undemocratic hierarchies and elitist practices that were embedded in second-wave feminist practices that centered around consciousness-raising and speaking out[63] (Collins, 1990; Connell, 1997; Crenshaw, 1995). Another critique of liberal feminism highlights the limitations of the public domain as a site of activism and resistance.

The blurring of public-private boundaries that occurs in the act of organizing has clearly had a 'politicizing' effect on many of the women. However, the reification of the

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[63] Second-wave feminist movements claimed the right of women to speak for themselves as women – without mediation – but failed to acknowledge the diverse experiences of working-class, black, Asian, third world, lesbian, and disabled women (Eschle, 2001). The concept of patriarchy itself was criticized because it obscured the operations of racist power.

public/private divide has consistently ignored black, poor and third world women's resistance and political activity in their families and communities (Lowe, 1996; Naples, 1998a, 1998b; Roberts, 1997). Feminist scholars of color have analyzed women's experiences during participation in community organizing to show that processes of politicization are shaped not just by gender identity but also race/ethnicity, and class affiliations. Women often chose to enter social organizing work through informal ties and for different personal motivations (Blee, 1998; Margolis, 1998). Informal and intimate relationships between people within social movements play a significant role in collective decision-making (Goodwin et al, 2001; Jasper, 1998; Taylor, 1998). Emotions such as anger and love and spontaneity also play a role in mobilization and solidarity building (Robnett, 1998).

Educational and Democratic Possibilities in the Cultural Politics of Social Movements

In this century, economic globalization has been most disruptive of the lives of the rural and urban poor in developing countries and this is where movements for basic educational rights are located. Social movements present the most exciting possibilities for new forms of citizenship and the vitalization of democracy as a whole (Alvarez et al, 1998; Blackmore, 2000). A critical engagement with hierarchical forms of knowledge, through social justice-oriented policy analysis in formal settings, and more broadly through popular education and critical pedagogies, has played a significant role in the ways that these social movements construct new agentic identities and create new spaces for radical participation and exercise of citizenship.

The development of non-hierarchical forms of political and social organization and self-governance situated in lived realities are a common characteristic of effective

social movements. [64] The combination of situated critical pedagogies/ popular education with new forms of organization have contributed to the expansion and longevity of these movements unlike others that have been co-opted by bureaucratic, formal, hierarchical systems. New ways of doing politics that transgress boundaries of public and private, culture and politics, formal and informal have contributed to a reconceptualization of what is meant by 'popular' in popular participation and what is meant by 'public' in the notion of public policy. Increasingly, policy formulation and allocation of state resources are being understood as the responsibility of society and not only the apparatus of the state – leading to different form of popular participation that both complement and question traditional representative forms of participation (Fischer and Hannah, 2002).

However, there are also significant structural obstacles that regulate the influence and vision of social movements. The state and local elite continue to dominate formal centers of power and have proved adept at co-opting progressive elements of civil society. In particular, the feminist focus on the specificity and complexity of oppositional ideologies and sites of collective political action has yielded a powerful exposé of the complex ways in which the state has intervened to regulate collective expression as well as access to basic social services. The apparatus of the state have been revealed as a "a centralized nexus of racial, economic and political power" and for this reason an unlikely catalyst for deep social transformation for marginalized groups such as

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[64] The social anarchist movements of the last two centuries were one of the earliest movements to conceive of democracy in terms of political arrangements that supported participatory, voluntaristic and communal self-government "coordinated by mandated delegates (Eschle, 2001, p.48)." Anarchism relies on multiple, internally democratic movements to effect the transition to collective self-government (Eschle, 2001). However, the discourse of anarchism defines political terrain in terms of social self-organization that bypasses the state.

the poor and women and children of color (Mohanty and Alexander, 1997). Jelin (1998,

p.413) conceptualizes the challenge for progressive civil society as follows:

> "In this new context, social actors and movements have a double role: On the one
> hand, they are collective systems of reciprocal recognition, expressing old and
> new collective identities, with important cultural and symbolic components. On
> the other hand, they are non partisan political intermediaries who bring the needs
> and demands of unarticulated voices to the public sphere, linking them to state
> institutions. The expressive role in the construction and collective identities and
> social recognition and the instrumental role that challenges the existing
> instrumental arrangements are both essential for the vitality of the democracy.
> Rather than interpreting the ability shown by political parties and formal
> institutions to co-opt them as a weakness of democracy, social movements and
> nonpartisan organizations should be seen as a way to ensure a *dynamic*
> democracy-one that includes a self-contained device for expanding its own
> frontiers."

Research Questions

In a time of global privatization and deregulation, there is much discussion about

'weakened' states and influential multilateral institutions and multinational corporations.

There is no doubt that new and complex forms of organized activism involving

transnational, national, regional, and local networks of social movements and other forms

of organized civil society (including NGOs and trade unions) are increasingly influential

advocates at all levels of policy making and implementation on education and other

aspects of development. Specifically, progressive social movements have come to

embody a discourse and practice of bottom-up democratization and empowerment which

relies integrally on alternative practices of education. These changes in the distribution

of influence present fresh possibilities for citizens to negotiate the power of the nation-

state through new political alliances based on a rearticulation of their identity as

individuals and communities (Bharucha, 1998).   In addition, these reconfigurations of

power raise important questions about the role and accountability of social movements in terms of the degree to which the internal and external functioning of these organizations are consistent with spoken ideals of democracy, egalitarianism, and inclusion.

In the context of social movements as an alternative arena of knowledge production and democratic practice, this research inquiry will analyze policies and practices pertaining to rural basic education in Brazil. The objective of the proposed research is to explore the social, political, and economic contexts and forces within which a policy discourse for rural basic education has emerged and been legitimated. Particular attention is paid to the pedagogy and politics of the Landless Worker's Movement (MST, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*). The pedagogy and programs of the MST value and seek to protect rural knowledge, cultures, and ways of life that have grown out of the relationships between people and their social and natural environment. They have helped rural citizens to access and critically analyze information, to claim the right to participate in policy debates, and to organize strategically in order to consolidate their political power. Their practices embody a different understanding and practice of citizenship-building and development – one that recognizes a history of inequality and injustice and hierarchies of knowledge and power, and the exclusionary nature of formal political arrangements which have historically denied particular groups fundamental human rights.

The formulation of research questions have been guided by intellectual themes that are key to feminist, progressive, critical, left scholarship and practice (Mohanty, 2003, p.10).   In the context of rural education and development in Brazil, this study will explore alternative educational and political practices founded in values for agency, lived

realities, and participation in collective struggle for social transformation .   The overall research question is what are the limitations and possibilities of the MST in terms of 'opening up' new educational and political possibilities for a radical democratic society? Specific questions include:

How has global and local policy discourse and practice for rural education and development historically engaged with discriminatory and exclusionary aspects of established economic and political institutions?

What is the philosophy and practice of education in the MST?

How does the MST view and strategically engage with the state to strengthen public responsibility for the provision of basic education? More specifically, how has the MST gained access to participate in policy-making arenas and mechanisms in a decentralized education system? How has the movement advocated for rural education in an education system that is stratified along lines of formal and nonformal education and rural and urban differences?

What can we learn from the MST about progressive education and political practices that would enable redistributive, participatory, accountable, and sustainable development?

Chapter III: Methodology

<u>Conceptual framework</u>

The design of this research study draws upon elements of critical and feminist ethnographic case study methodologies.   The objective of my study was to document and analyze counter-hegemonic practices in the formulation and implementation of policies for rural education through which dominant structures and institutions of education and development are challenged and in some cases transformed (Anderson, 1989).   My intention was to generate insights, explain events and try to understand the consciousness, constructions, situations, and relationships that characterize and create collective struggles for social justice and transformation (Anderson, 1989).   Qualitative ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis were best suited to my research questions that had to do with the politics of education – the fundamental roles of ideology, conventional, and non-conventional organizational and institutional arrangements, and social-political processes in education policy formulation and implementation as well as activism for radical education and democracy practice (Merton, 1998).   As the primary research instrument, I collected data through my own experiences and enquiries as well as through examining knowledge produced by others (Wolcott, 1999, 1994).   My intention was to obtain insights into the conceptions of identity, agency, and participation that underpin the pedagogical, cultural and political practices of the Brazilian social movement known as the Movimento Sem Terra.

Conventional studies of the politics of education and policy-making "teach educators to recognize power and learn how to compromise, survive, and cooperate in a system of dominance (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005)."   A critical feminist

epistemological framework explicitly considers the workings of hierarchies of

knowledge/ power, identity and agency, and the possibilities engendered by radical

political and social activism; hence this was a critical and feminist ethnographic inquiry

informed by Third World feminist and critical theories of education and international

development (Apple, 1982, 1966; Arnowitz and Giroux, 1985; Baca Zinn and Dill, 1996;

Collins, 1986; Enloe, 1990; Fine and Wewass, 1996; Folbre, 1995; Giroux, 1997,1983,

1983; hooks, 1994; Grewal, 1996; Lather, 1991; McLaren, 1995; 2000; Mohanty, 2003;

Reinharz, 1992; Roberts, 1997; Sandoval, 1991; Saunders, 2003; Spivak, 1988; St.

Pierre, 2000; Torres, 1990; Torres, 2002; Trinh, 1989; Weber, 2000; Weedon, 1987).

In keeping with critical, feminist, and other social-justice oriented approaches to

policy formulation and analysis, this dissertation is "openly subjective and politically

strategic in purpose (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005, p.70)." Explicitly political and

empowering theories and methodologies are necessary to re-frame policy possibilities

(Marshalland Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). Third World feminist and critical social theory is

fundamentally concerned with questions about knowledge, relations of power and issues

of justice, the subjective experiences of women and other historically oppressed groups,

and practices of personal and collective activism. Feminist writings on the political and

social marginalization of Third World women underline the interlinked nature of

oppression and the necessity of a (feminist) praxis that addresses "the histories of racism

and imperialism; the crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily

lives and survival struggles; the significance of memory and writing in the creation of

oppositional agency; and the differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to Third

World women's organizations and communities" (Mohanty, 2003, p.53).   From this

perspective, all thought, meaning, and knowledge is fundamentally mediated by power

relations that are socially and historically constituted. Identity is similarly understood as

fluid, intersectional and relational where the agency of an individual was constituted at

the intersections of her multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1995). Consequently, social policy

is understood as a form of structural power – "a constellation of organized practices" in

education and other social sectors including employment, government, law, business, and

housing that work to maintain an unequal and unjust distribution of resources (Collins,

1990). Understanding the politics of policy-making therefore requires focusing on the

processes of legitimized decision-making and 'authoritative allocation of values' that

shape programs and budgets as well as the micropolitics and interpersonal organizational

interaction of activist organization and their politics (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

The study of construction of meaning and legitimacy is therefore central to this

research design. Particular social and political cultures employ particular systems of

meaning based on the forms of knowledge produced in their cultural domains (Kincheloe

and McLaren, 2000, p. 284). Gary Anderson (1989) writes that "for the critical

ethnographer, the cultural construction of meaning was inherently a matter of political

and economic interests" (p.254). More specifically, our ways of making meaning, in

other words, the relationship between subject and object are mediated by social relations

of capitalist production and consumption (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 290). In

the context of policy, the language and symbolism used in policy and politics are

connected to historically situated social and material relations, identities, and ideologies

(Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). This framework facilitates a critical and

interconnected understanding of social injustice and privilege. Critical scholars believe

that certain groups in any society are privileged over others for a range of reasons and that oppression is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, inevitable, or necessary (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000).

Feminist and critical scholarship and praxis studies the construction of social systems with an explicit focus on social justice issues as generated by the intersections of economy, social identities like race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, culture, and other social institutions (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 281). Scholars in this paradigm investigate linkages between relations of power in the political economy and the production of representations, images, and signs of hyperreality (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 284). They also try to understand the ways in which actors make meaning while recognizing that "neither a unified individual nor a consensual society is possible because both inward and outward speech are dialogical and social" (Anderson, 1989, p.261). The intention of this kind of inquiry is to articulate the possibilities for agency and collective action that occur through the foregrounding of subjugated knowledge and a situated critique of dominant, postpositivist, patriarchal, neoliberal discourses of knowledge and development that regulate and maintain social hierarchies and institutions controlled by a privileged few.

Typically, researchers in these traditions have interrogated oppositions between researcher and researched, the concepts of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" and the role of power and authority in knowledge production and transfer. Researchers maintain awareness that language is also a social phenomenon, central to the formation of subjectivity and enmeshed in relations of power (Anderson, 1989). Language operates to produce very real, oppressive social structures but also radical social transformation.

Critical ethnographic researchers excavate, expose and challenge the discursive practices or tacit rules that "regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid, and whose are erroneous and unimportant" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 284). In short, a critical ethnographic methodology allowed me to explore the lived realities, situations, and relationships of civil society actors, as produced by structures and consciousness, and the scope for transformation.

<div align="center">Background Context</div>

In keeping with the characteristics of qualitative research, the research design was contextual, exploratory, emergent, and inductive (Cresswell, 1998; Patton, 1980). I lived and worked as an intern for six months in Brazil during which time I worked with an international agency in Brasilia, UNESCO/ Brasil (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and a university-affiliated research center in Rio de Janeiro – CIESPI (The International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood/ Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquwasas sobre a Infância). Both of these organizations worked with development and education CSOs around the country with the intention of bringing about progressive social change. The two internships provided me with multiple opportunities to connect and dialogue with national, regional, and local NGOs and CSOs and to access the Portuguese-language documents I needed. They also provided me with an understanding of the socio-political arrangements that constitute organized civil society in Brazil and the interaction between state and civil society. This context was necessary to locate my research on the influence and limitations of the Movimento Sem Terra as a radical member of civil society. I found that these

organizations had established themselves as legitimate political actors through different strategies including coalitions with other NGOs and CSOs, promoting research and documentation for advocacy purposes, and an organic relationships between progressive intellectuals in public universities and civil society activists.

In particular, my internships provided me insights into civil society advocacy on issues of children's rights and the neo-liberal economic and agricultural policies implemented by the government of President Lula. Specifically, I inquired into the institutional status and influence of the Children's Rights Councils and the Local Governance Councils (LGC), municipal-level decision-making bodies that were created to oversee the implementation of the education and child welfare provisions made in the 1990 Statute for Children and Adolescents. The Children's Rights Councils comprise of representatives of civil society organizations, government agencies and direct stakeholders and the Local Governance Councils are constituted by members elected from the community. These Councils have become a space for innovative collaboration between the state and civil society in promoting and protecting children's rights. However, many local governments have been slow in creating the Children's Rights Councils and resistant to including their recommendations in their policy and programs. The LGC's have been co-opted by political parties and have become a platform for politically-connected individuals to enter politics. Both the children's rights movement and the landless movements were key actors in the pro-democracy movement. However, they occupy different locations in the fabric of organized civil society in Brazil today. The failure of successive governments to adequately implement the provisions of the 1990 Statute led me to view progressive legislation in a more critical light. It also raised

important questions about legislation and policies for rural education and the influence of social movements of the landless in a political culture where power and resources are controlled by a privileged few.

I also interviewed members of large, established, civil society organizations with global and local networks that had supported the Worker's Party and Lula in the 2002 presidential elections. In 2004, these organizations were beginning to recover from their shock and disappointment over Lula's submission to the neoliberal elements in the Worker's Party and create new ways to engage with the government. One of the few areas of consensus that I encountered was that the federal government had provided a clear directive for sub-national governments to expand civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of social policy. There have been mixed results. The reality is that there are simply not enough civil society representatives to participate in all of the Councils that bring together representatives of government – both politicians and technocrats with representatives of organized civil society to consult on public policy making. Also, local governments are not required to incorporate any of their recommendations. This kind of feedback helped me to think critically about what I was learning about a) the MST's understanding and practices of participation and the extent to which they were inclusive and transformatory, and b) the capacity and the commitment of the state, and progressive elements within the state apparatus, to work for social change.

Sample selection

The principal "criterion" for the sample of progressive civil actors was those who share a common focus i.e. challenging dominant assumptions and developing alternative approaches for addressing inequitable and inadequate education and

development policy.   In the course of my internships, I was able to develop a relationship

with the State Education Coordination of the MST in Rio de Janeiro and decided to focus

my inquiries on the MST in Rio.   The historical and policy-oriented nature of my

questions combined with limitations of time and resources required that the primary

source of data should be documents and a key informant. The State Education

Coordinators in the MST are ideally placed to talk about both the pedagogical and

political practices of the MST and the specific nature of the negotiations that take place

between the movement and local governments. My key informant was Fernanda - the

MST State Education Coordinator for Youth and Adult Education in Rio de Janeiro.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Qualitative data consists of "direct quotations from people about their

experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge obtained through interviews; detailed

descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, and actions recorded in observations; and

excerpts, quotations, or entire passages extracted from various types of documents

(Patton, as cited in Merriam, 1998, p.69)."   Data collection methods used in this study

consisted primarily of textual data complemented by interviews with a key informant.

Interviews with Key Informant

My key informant was Fernanda who is an Education Coordinator for the state of

Rio de Janeiro. I formally interviewed Fernanda three times for approximately two hours

each time over the course of three months.   The interviews were held in the small office

of the State Coordination in downtown Rio de Janeiro. During my visits, I would have

opportunities to talk to other Sector Coordinators informally and visitors to the office.   In

addition, I had the opportunity to travel with Fernanda and another State Coordinator for

Communications as they visited MST camps in the Northeast part of the state. I visited

six camps and one settlement over the course of four nights and days. In the course of

the travel, I was able to meet MST educators for the youth and adult education programs

and observe the interactions between the State Coordinator, educators and the

community. Talking to Sector Coordinators and members of the community gave me a

sense of the concerns, social interactions and realities of life in the camps. I listened as

Fernanda planned lessons and conducted joint evaluations with the educators. As we

traveled between the camps – all of which were situated in remote areas - I was able to

have more informal conversations with Fernanda through which I was able to get a more

nuanced idea of how she perceived her role as State Coordinator in relation to the camps

and settlements as well as local government. I kept a journal during this time where I

described the camps I visited, the people we met, the discussion and meetings that I sat in

on, and my conversations with Fernanda (Patton, 1990).

Fernanda is in her early thirties. Her family are Sem Terra who participated in the

process of occupation and settlement in the state of São Paulo. She has always worked

with the movement. She previously worked in the Sector of Production in Rio de Janeiro.

When she first arrived in Rio de Janeiro, she was responsible for maintaining

communication between the State Secretariat and the Central Secretariat of the movement

in the capital Brasilia. She then worked as Coordinator of Production for the state.

Fernanda has always had an interest in the educational processes of the movement. Her

participation in youth and adult education activities eventually led to her nomination to

State Education Sector. She has worked in two other states where the movement has a

larger and stronger presence than Rio de Janeiro. In addition, Fernanda is an agricultural

scientist by training and her presence in the male-dominated sector of Production allowed

her to compare and contrast gender relations in the movement. As such, she has 'lived

the movement' on a number of different levels and can articulate both the ideological and

organizational aspects of the movement in Rio de Janeiro

Documentary Analysis

Documents and records are an important part of an organization and society's

history and current status (Mertens, 1998).   It was not possible for me to access all of the

situations and people who could give me insights into the questions that this study sought

to explore.   Living and working with civil society organizations in Brazil did give me

considerable knowledge of the research and publication system and access to the

documents I needed – many of which were available in electronic format. I therefore

used a multiplicity of textual sources. MST publications included the writings of

Brazilian academics who are MST supporters, Roseli Salete Caldart and Bernardo

Mançano Fernandes; as well as publications of the MST Education Sector provided to

me by Fernanda including textbooks for primary and youth and adult education, training

manuals for educators, and several issues of the MST Education Journal (*Cadernos do

ITTERRA*) as well as the MST website, the electronic newsletter (*MST Informa*) and the

newspaper (*Jornal Sem Terra*) and magazine (*Revista Sem Terra*). English-language

documents on the MST included Chilean academic Marta Harnecker's book "Landless

People: Building a social movement", articles on Brazilian education and the MST in the

Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS), as well as articles by MST leaders

that were available on solidarity websites such as The Sights and Voices of Dispossession

and *Via Campesina*, as well as research sponsored by interntional organization like

UNESCO and UNICEF.   I obtained quantitative information on Brazilian rural education

along with government policy documents, educational legislation and national education

plans, as well as descriptions of federal programs from the Ministry of Education website

and publications by the Permanent Working Group on Rural Education. For additional

critical research and commentary on rural education and youth and adult education policy

and civil society networks, meetings, and conferences, I referred to the publications and

websites of civil society actors such as Ação Educativa and the National Campaign for

the Right to Education. Finally, I regularly read critical news publications like Brasil de

Fato to obtain a critical perspective on the news and issues that I encountered in

mainstream media.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Interpretation and analysis occur throughout the research process; indeed the

research process is interpretive in and of itself – a "way of seeing" (Wolcott, 1999).

Recognizing that interpretation was inherent to both the act of interpretation and

perception, I have endeavored to provide rich descriptions of the history, meaning

systems, and events that have shaped rural education policy in Brazil as well as the

pedagogical and political processes that constitute the internal workings of the MST

(Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 285).   In keeping with the qualitative research

process, the data analysis process was inductive, flexible, and iterative.   In essence, the

analytical process consisted of dividing the data into small, meaningful units and then re-

connecting these fragments into meaningful narrative(s)/ generalizations with guidance

from the research questions. In the early stages of the study, I recorded impressions,

relationships, patterns, commonalities, and so forth (Stainback and Stainback, 1988).   As

the study progressed, I began to organize and develop the variety of collected data and make detailed notes about similarities, differences, correspondence, categories, themes, concepts, and ideas, and also analyzed the preceding logic and weaknesses/gaps in data (Cresswell, 1998; Rossman and Rallwas, 1998; Wolcott, 1999,1994).

<p style="text-align:center;">Validity</p>

Critical ethnography is what Patti Lather (1986) calls "openly ideological research."   As such, I have not been so much concerned with value-neutral, objective 'validity' but instead with providing the reader with a record of the thought trajectories, beliefs, observations, interpretations, and decisions that produced the final analysis (Anderson, 1989).   I have familiarized the reader with the processes and outcomes of both the data collection and the writing components of the research.   In order to triangulate data, I have endeavored to collect information from more than one data source (publications from different civil society organizations and government agencies) and through different methods (interviews, observations, textual documents).

In addition, I have attempted to maintain the 'validity' of the data collection and data analysis components of the research process through the following measures (Merten, 1998; Wolcott, 1994).   I have:

- engaged substantially with my research over a prolonged period of time ,

- kept accurate records during fieldwork to capture words and events that I observed,

- begun the process of writing early in order to keep a record of first impressions and what I thought I already knew. This has enabled me to move my analysis

forward in "successive approximations" and helped me to identify obvious gaps where more information was needed

- shared my interpretations with participants to see if my analysis recognized the validity of their accounts

- consciously included primary data in my final account so that readers get an idea of what the data was like and also have access to the data themselves.

- sought feedback from my academic colleagues during the process of analyzing and writing. Informed readers have helped me assess the correctness and completeness of my analysis. Less informed readers have also helped me assess the clarity and suitability of analytical concepts and explanations

- recorded my feelings, reactions, and judgments that influence the way in which I "see"

<u>Ethics</u>

The principle of beneficence (DeMarrawas, in press) in the ethics of qualitative research requires that the researcher protect subjects from harm and ensure that the risks do not exceed the benefits of participation. I have made every effort to treat the subjects with respect and seek their cooperation in the research. Ethics in research has been defined as a "lifelong obligation[s] to the people who have touched … [our] lives in the course of … [our] research" (Curry and Davwas as cited in Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p.46). Ethical issues can relate to both the subject matter of the research and the conduct of the research (Kimmel, 1988). Informed consent was obtained.

<u>Researcher Subjectivity</u>

One of the most important aspects of valid and trustworthy critical ethnography methodology is reflexivity or the exploration of researcher subjectivities. This includes reflection on a) the relationship between theory and data, b) the effects of the researcher's presence on data collection, c) the researcher's biases, and d) the dialectical relationship between structural/historical forces and human agency (Anderson, 1989, p.255). Phil Carspecken emphasizes that it is essential that critical researchers recognize "where they are ideologically located in the normative and identity claims of others and at the same time be honest about their own subjective referenced claims and not let normative evaluative claims interfere with what they observe" (in Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 300). Below, I reflect on my assumptions and inclinations with a view to helping the reader understand the values and beliefs that have shaped my data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1995).

This research study was part of my continuing interest in exploring and understanding constructions of social difference and inequality and the ways in which they inform and enable progressive transformation. In the past, I have had opportunities to inquire into individual actions that address conditions of discrimination, neglect, and inequality, and promote situated meanings of social justice. In this study, I have sought to deepen my understanding of the workings of agency, collective struggle, and resistance in the context of education and development. Specifically, I have explored situated formulations and strategies of resistance such as critical pedagogies and participatory decision-making that enable excluded groups to participate in society and challenge the sources of their oppression.

The opportunity to live and work in Brazil for six months contributed to my ability to investigate the research questions substantively. My observations and interpretations were influenced by both "insider" and "outsider" orientations. I expected that my gender, visible ethnicity, nationality, and level of education would all influence my interactions at any given point in the research process and some of these did. I was always taken for a Brazilian until I spoke Portuguese. People then assumed that I was from Latin America. These assumptions about ethnicity were entertaining. It was more difficult for me to address the cultural stereotypes about India that prevailed amongst some Brazilians. These intercultural dynamics played out differently in the context of my research. Amongst the Sem Terra, there was a deep curiosity about social struggles in India, particularly in the area of land reform and the Dalits. During the interviews, we talked about the differences in political organizing and power hierarchies between the two cultures.

As a cultural outsider, I had expected problems in gaining access to people but this never happened. I was able to access people and make appointments very easily through the references provided my advisor and internship supervisors. Last but not least, I formed several friendships with graduate students studying the social sciences with interests and backgrounds very similar to mine. I was able to discuss my conclusions with these friends to help me to see divergence in viewpoints that might be based on culturally different viewpoints (Mertena, 1998).

Chapter IV: Rural Education Policy and the Brazilian State

<u>Introduction</u>

The problems that educational planners and politicians choose to ignore or silence are vital to constructing a political history of education (Pillow, 1997). In their book entitled "Re-framing educational politics for social justice", feminist scholars Catherine Marshall and Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin (2005) write that "policy is what governments choose to do (p.5)." They argue that education policy can be viewed to represent the government's conception and priorities in responding to problems of cultural dominance, social inequity and injustice. This chapter will build on the history of development in Brazil provided in Chapter I to make a comparative and historical analysis of key educational legislation and policy processes related to rural education and development between 1834 and 1988 in Brazil.

Policy is understood as a practice of power and this chapter questions how issues of power influence decisions about educational policy and development (Levinson and Sutton, 2001). A power-blind discourse of policy cannot engage with the reality that most institutions of the state in which policy are formulated are controlled by political and economic elites whose policies regulate the distribution of resources and power in ways that reproduce and perpetuate a stratified society. Thus, this analysis understands the process of policy-making to be conflictual. The purpose of this analysis is not to make generalizations about the policy process but to provide a social justice- oriented and necessarily partial perspective of the role of the state in shaping the conditions of rural education in Brazil today (Kaestle, 1997). I will show the ways in which public

education has functioned as one of the regulatory and governing institutions of the state to direct and control economic and political participation of the different social groups in Brazil. The neglect of rural education in central government policies have been complicit in reproducing a stratified society which prioritized the educational needs of the elite classes and maintained the cultural and political subjugation and exclusion of the rural poor and other socially disadvantaged communities (Foucault, 1980; Popkewitz, 2000). More specifically, I will argue that expansion of access to education in Brazil has occurred as part of the state agenda for economic development and also as a consequence of struggle by excluded social groups. In addition, the expansion of education has taken the form of both formal schooling and nonformal educational programs with mixed implications for educational quality and equality.

The chapter traces the chronological development of the Brazilian state and education system. I focus on three important transitions undergone by the state in terms of institutional and power arrangements and the political culture and the particular ways in which local elite incorporated twentieth century global discourses of modernization, democracy, and social welfare into a model of development that concentrated educational opportunity (and wealth) in the hands of a small group of elites. The increasing influence of international institutions and educational discourse on Brazilian educational development are discussed in relation to the development of an education model centered on urban and industrialized society. Specifically, I discuss the ideological and social contexts that informed policies of educational expansion in relation to educational legislation, resource allocation for education, curricular and pedagogical priorities, governance and delivery structures, and the role and scope for participation of non-state

actors on education policy formulation and implementation during this period.   The

analysis also develops a historical context for the ways in which decisions about

education policy are made.

The presumption of organized rationality refers to the belief that the apparently

chaotic process of political action and decision-making is driven by reason-based choices

from a range of possible actions that could change institutional rules that regulate society

(Marshalland Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).   The discourse of technical rationality excluded the

concerns of parents and local communities on the grounds that the decisions were

informed by objective, scientific research.

<u>Economic Growth, Democracy and Education: 1834 - 1930</u>

The wealth accrued through mining and agriculture allowed the colony of Brazil

to declare independence from the Portuguese Empire in 1822.   Both the 1824 and 1891

Constitutions declared Brazil to be free and democratic but the reality was that

educational, political and economic privileges were accessible only to a small number of

landholding elite.   Despite the fact that that Brazil was essential an agrarian economy,

the first two Constitutions had no specific provisions for state provision of rural

education.   Article 179 of the first Constitution of 1824 included a provision for free

primary education as well as for the creation of educational institutions that would impart

instruction in the arts, letters and sciences. Article 72 of the 1891 Constitution that

established the Republic of the United States of Brazil contained provisions for public

education institutions to be secular and autonomous. In her analysis of the historical

neglect of rural education by the state, Edla Soares (2001) writes that "the absence of a

consciousness about the value of education in the processes of constructing citizenship,

along with archaic methods of cultivation that did not require literacy or any kind of training for rural workers, contributed to the absence of a proposal for education that focused on rural populations (p.9)."

The democratic nation-state of Brazil was in effect an oligarchic political system consisting of loosely connected states each of which was governed by the landholding elite. States and municipalities which were declared autonomous by the 1891 Constitution had few real opportunities for decentralized public policy making. These provisions did little to increase access to education amongst the large and diverse population of rural poor which included small farmers, sharecroppers, indigenous people, and former slaves. In the vacuum that represented national concern for the rural poor and underdeveloped regions, local elites were the primary beneficiaries of moves to increase local autonomy and administrative decentralization. Pressure on the state to expand access to education were mainly shaped by the demands of an emerging middle class who saw education as a channel for social mobility. Education was increasingly necessary for individuals to be able to participate in the ongoing shift to industrialized modes of production.

Access to Education through Struggle

Over the turn of the century, Brazil transitioned from an export-oriented agricultural economy to an urban, industrial society and industrialists began to wield increasing power on the operations of the state. The state would remain central to the political system up till the 1960s as in most of Latin America. The transition to an industrialized society sparked a debate on the role of rural education and what was to be done about the large numbers of uneducated and 'unskilled' rural workers. The

99

emergence of non-state actors were part of a broader social movement of liberal

Brazilian intellectuals and educators to reform education (known as the Brazilian

Education Association, ABE) which sparked a period of intense reform in the structure

and functioning of basic and higher education (Gadotti, 1997). As part of this movement,

regional and national seminars and Congresses on rural development began to discuss

ways in which education could contain rural-urban migration and increase the

productivity of agricultural workers (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).   The debates focused

on how education could maintain social order while Brazil transitioned from an agrarian,

rural economy to an industrialized and urban society. The dominant perception of

education for rural communities as a form of social integration and control would prevail

for several decades to come.

<u>Populism, Labor and Educational Development: 1930 - 1964</u>

A military-backed 1930 Revolution brought Getúlio Vargas who would rule as a

populist dictator from 1930 to 1934 and was again elected to serve as President from

1937 to 1945. Vargas was a populist who used compensatory social policies to regulate

the growing power of organized labor and other emergent actors. The corporatism that

characterized Vargas's efforts to appease the labor force as well as the industrial

bourgeoisie are a distinct characteristic of Latin American capitalism and politics and

contributed to the vertical integration of a society in transition in a way such that the

legalization and institutionalization of workers movements was formed and largely

controlled by the state (Torres, 2000, p. 85).

Under Vargas, the apparatus of the state expanded to include large bureaucratic

organizations and state-owned enterprises which would serve a dual function of

expanding the influence of the central government as well as providing full employment (Spanakos, 2004).   A Ministry of Education was created for the first time after the 1930 Revolution and also for the first time, the 1934 Constitution devoted an entire Chapter to education – Chapter 2 entitled "Education and Culture". Article 156 made specific provisions for education finance and rural education in particular stating that the annual education budget of the federal government should reserve a minimum of 20 percent of resources for schools in rural areas which Vargas failed to implement.

Education for Preparing Workers

The education and training of industrial workers dominated the national education agenda during the Vargas administration and throughout the 1950s. During the two Vargas administrations, primary school enrolment rates actually dropped in the economically and politically poorest states and only rose in the large, industrial states (Plank, 1987).

The 1937 Constitution called for the expansion of professional schools (Article 129) and programs which would allow youth to work for short periods of time on farms and factories (Article 132) (Soares, 2001). Both of these directives were to be achieved through a combination of public and private sector initiatives. In the first instance, industrialists and factory owners were directed to open vocational schools for their workers' children in their particular area of endeavor.   In the second case, civic associations were called upon to organize these internships for youth which would facilitate their moral and physical development and enable to participate as citizens in the economy and defense of their country. Vargas also introduced a national apprenticeship

system[65] and technical education schools which were designed to provide employment and some social benefits to the urban poor.

The reorientation of educational planning towards the training and education of workers played an important role in legitimating and perpetuating the authoritarian regime. An adept and opportunistic politician, Vargas was careful to leave the countryside to the large landholders and intervened only in the 1930s to help sugar barons crush a series of peasant revolts in the impoverished Northeast regions of the country.[66] The new developments in education for workers yielded few benefits for rural workers because the language of the law provided a loophole for large landholders who employed substantial numbers of the poorest rural workers. The legislation also completely ignored small farmers and workers in the informal rural economy.[67] In a deeply stratified society, attempts to direct vocational and apprenticeship programs towards poor rural children and youth also quickly came to be attached with social stigma.

The Brazilian state would continue to expand provision of agricultural and technical education through the 1940s and 1950s. In fact, the federal government would remain the main provider of basic and technical agricultural education until the nineties

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[65] The National System of Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI) was founded in 1942 and funded by a compulsory payroll tax. The creation of SENAI was followed by the creation of SENAC – the National System of Commercial Apprenticeship in 1946.

[66] With the support of the landholders, he was also able to suppress an armed rebellion launched by the efforts of Brazilian socialists, communists and other progressives.

[67] The International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) international symposium on the informal sector in 1999 proposed that the informal sector workforce can be categorized into three broad groups: (a) owner-employers of micro enterprises, which employ a few paid workers, with or without apprentices; (b) own-account workers, who own and operate one-person business, who work alone or with the help of unpaid workers, generally family members and apprentices; and (c) dependent workers, paid or unpaid, including wage workers in micro enterprises, unpaid family workers, apprentices, contract labor, homeworkers, and paid domestic workers. In this sense,, informality characterizes not only the management structure of an enterprise, but also the contractual status and conditions of employment. Self-employed workers, most of whom are own-account and unpaid family workers, are considered the major component of the rural and urban informal sector (ILO, 1999).

when technical and vocational education was handed over to the private sector (Gomes, 2003). In 1946, the federal executive passed the Organic Law for Agricultural Schools (Decree-Law No. 9.613) that was directed towards the training and professional development of agricultural workers. The Law also mandated that graduates of these agricultural technical schools would have the opportunity to enter institutions of higher education to pursue studies in a field directly related to the course they had just completed. The curricula emphasized values, culture and knowledge of scientific information. The same law also decreed that men and women had equal rights to enter these agricultural technical schools (Article 51). However, the law recommended that women should attend all-female schools, only be allowed to do agricultural work suited to their constitution, include content on domestic rural economies, and that the pedagogy should be shaped by considerations for the feminine nature of women and the role of women in the family.

From a critical perspective, the creation and expansion of professional schools restructured the public education system in a way that detracted attention from other areas and contributed to the absence of a coherent policy for the improvement of not just rural education but the entire public education system (Soares, 2001). Vargas chose to ignore the 1934 Constitutional directive which required the Union, states and municipalities to allocate not less than 10 and 20 percent of income deriving from taxation to the maintenance and development of education (Gadotti, 1997; Plank, 1987). When this mandate was implemented in the 1950s (it was reiterated by the 1946 Constitution) - national rates of enrollment doubled (Plank, 1987). However, the 1946

Constitution also displaced much of the responsibility for provision (and financing) of rural education onto the private sector.

Provision of Education by Non-state Actors

Education policies through the 1940s and 1950s also deepened social stratifications through the expansion of private provision of education. The 1946 Constitution stated that commercial and agricultural enterprises/industries which employed more than 100 persons were obligated to maintain free schools for all their officers and their children (Article 168). The same article declared that only factories and commercial enterprises were obligated to provide some kind of education for their blue-collar workers (*trabalhadores menores*); agricultural industries were not required to so by law. These measures along with the direct and indirect transfer of large sums of public money from federal and state governments to private interests as well as the regulation of private school fees by public authorities contributed to a rapid increase in private provision of education (Plank et al, 1994). These policies consolidated social and educational stratification and enabled the survival of private schools and enabled middle-class families to keep their children in private schools through economic fluctuations.[68]

Even after the discourse on education and work shifted to valorize work as a means of 'upliftment' for the lower classes and the worker as a valued member of society, poor and uneducated rural workers continued to be denied access (Soares, 2001). Where it was provided, public education for rural communities was imparted by city

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[68] Today there are two kinds of private schools in Brazil: high-quality, high-cost primary and secondary schools for children from the middle and upper classes and low-cost schools for poor children in urban and rural areas where public provision is inadequate. Both kinds of schools receive public subsidies (Plank et al, 1994).

teachers who had little knowledge or respect for rural cultures and knowledge and were trained to emphasize urban values and culture over rural lifestyles and traditions.

In response to the systematic neglect and marginalization of rural communities, several social movements for education were active in the areas of rural education, secondary education, the eradication of literacy, and expanding adult education between 1946 and 1964 (Gadotti, 1997; UNESCO, 1975). [69] In the brief period of democratic populism during the 1960s, President João Goulart invited Paulo Freire to implement a national literacy campaign that could have enfranchised millions of people (Kane, 2001). Key actors in the Grassroots Education Movement (MEB, *Movimento de Educação de Base*) included the progressive wing of the Catholic Church and the Brazilian Institute of Development Studies (ISEB) – both of whom were influenced by the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004; UIE, 2005). MEB used radio and popular education to bring literacy, basic education, and 'self-improvement' to the rural poor. The main aims of this program were to build non-religious awareness as well as cultivate reading and writing skills, following a syllabic-phonetic teaching method (UIE, 2005). The movement grew rapidly and became increasingly politicized but did not survive the transition to military dictatorship. The military engineered a coup in 1964 and immediately repressed the movement.

<u>The Military Regime and Building Human Capital: 1964 - 1988</u>

In 1964, a US-backed military coup removed democratically elected President João Goulart. For the next two decades, successive military administrations implemented a program for national development centered on economic growth and

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[69] They also included movements for learners with auditory and visual impairments as well as campaigns for school lunch and instructional materials.

modernization which was measured in terms of raising per capita income and gross national product rather than improving the national distribution of income (UNESCO, 1975). Education planning and reform in this era was driven by principles of economic and technical rationality wherein planners concerned themselves with the supposedly most efficient ways in which to expand access to education in order to build human capital to meet the demands of an increasingly global and competitive market economy. The parameters for spending on education were always constrained by the macroeconomic framework for development (Velloso, 1979).

Key reforms included increased investment in expansion of primary and secondary education, increase in the duration of schooling, establishment of new goals for upper secondary schooling so that graduates would be better prepared to enter the labor market, a curricular emphasis on science and technology, and the consolidation of private provision of education (Soares, 2001; Velloso, 1979). The language of educational policy also changed to include 'basic guidelines' as well as quantitative and qualitative targets to guide program implementation (Velloso, 1979). International educational institutions such as UNESCO played a key role in the substantial increase in investment for expanding and decentralizing educational systems in Brazil and across Latin America. [70] Governments were also under internal pressure from the growing awareness within countries about the lack of access for children from low-income backgrounds (Santos, 1993). In the 1970s, responsibility for the provision and delivery

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[70] Discussions about expansion, decentralization, democratization of education, and improving quality entered international education policy discourse in the 1950s. Agencies like UNESCO began to convene Regional Conferences of Education Ministers which focused on how to democratize education and improve quality across the continent. (Santos, 1993). At the 1956 Regional Conference on Free and Compulsory Education in Latin American in Lima, Peru, Brazil was one of the governments that committed to extensive educational restructuring which would extend the duration of compulsory education and divide the secondary education system into two phases (Santos, 1993).

of primary education shifted from the federal government to states and municipalities without significant decentralization in terms of financial resources (Plank, 1987).

Education as Integration of 'Backward' Communities

The economic and rational approach to educational policy failed to connect to the needs and realities of impoverished rural communities undergoing intense economic and social transformation. Policy discourse on rural education continued to refer to rural populations as 'backward' people who needed to be integrated into the national advance towards modernization and progress. The Education Law of 1961 reflected this perspective -- mandating that teachers who would be teaching in rural primary schools should be receiving training to 'integrate' their students (Article 57). The Law also stated that all government institutes should create and support organizations that maintained schools or education centers in rural areas which could adapt and improve rural people (Article 105). In practice, rural children continued to struggle with problems of physical access and under-resourced schools. Despite the extension of the duration of schooling from four to eight years, rural children were receiving an average of only three years of schooling (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

The Education Law of 1971 (No. 5692/71) established new directives for primary education without any consideration of the particular needs of rural children. In fact, the Law directed that rural schools should be closed during planting and harvesting seasons (Article 11-2). Curricular reform focused on science and technology education and the preparation of individuals for a modern society. New topics such as environmental education, population education, sex and family education, and health and nutrition were introduced into the curricula for the first time (Santos, 1993).

Expansion of Private Provision of Education

Rural communities were also adversely affected by the consolidation of private provision of education. The trend towards privatization was in harmony with the human capital approach which essentially viewed the state as a poor arbiter of providing education. Individuals and their families were understood to be the driving forces of the economy and the public responsibility of the state was reduced to merely providing the schooling demanded by the market.

Educational legislation of the 1960s and the 1970s allowed private firms to withhold tax payments under the wage tax in order to maintain their own schools or reimburse the educational expenditures of employees or their dependents (Law No. 4.440 in 1964). Private firms could also route their contributions to private schools through National Education Development Fund to provide tuition scholarships for the children of their employees.

Legislation also required commercial and agricultural enterprises to maintain primary schools for their employees and the children of their employees (Article 170 of the 1967 Constitution). In 1969, an amendment to the Constitution (Amendment No. 1) reduced this obligation of private employers to provide free primary education to only children between seven and fourteen years. The vast majority of rural workers in the informal economy failed to benefit from the directives placed on the private employers to educate their workers and the children of their workers.

At the same time, the military regime implemented a set of agricultural development policies that that displaced large numbers of rural people and ravaged the natural environment. In an effort to ameliorate the effects of these policies, the regime

also undertook a Literacy Crusade to improve their international reputation and maintain popularity with the Brazilian people. Beginning in 1966, the Ministry of Education, with technical assistance from the United States of America, implemented a controversial literacy program called the Brazilian Literacy Movement (MOBRAL). The program was criticized on the grounds that it portrayed illiterate people as socially inferior and backward (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). The pedagogy and curricula were inadequate for the realities on the ground and the program had high drop-out rates leading to its closure in 1970 before it could reach rural populations (UIE, 2005).

Rural School Consolidation

From 1975 onwards, state and municipal secretariats of education began to implement a policy of 'school consolidation' in which small, isolated, and one-room rural schools were shut down and their students were transported to a new 'nuclear' school created specially for this purpose.[71] The policy was presented as a way to improve the quality of rural schools by ensuring access, continuity, an enriched curriculum, improved infrastructure and better-prepared teachers (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Supporters argued that the multi-grade format and concentration of resources would provide a stable and improved learning environment for rural students. Teachers would only be responsible for one class and would be able to concentrate on improving their pedagogical skills. It was also argued that consolidation was a more cost-effective way to provide education to hard-to-reach rural populations.

Other than policies of school consolidation, considerations for rural education only returned to government policy discourse at the end of the seventies (Soares, 2001).

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[71] Other countries that have implemented school consolidation include India, the United States, Iran, Uganda, Ireland, Nepal, Ivory Coast, and Lebanon.

The Second Sectoral Plan for Education, Culture and Sport drafted by the Ministry of Education in the early 1980s proposed to give priority to needy rural and urban populations and the social problems generated in the course of the country's drive for economic development (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). However, the approach continued to be compensatory and minimalist in their conception and strategies for rural education. Despite the fact that the law mandated an obligatory eight years of schooling, the Plan proposed to expand rural primary education to "at least the first four years of schooling". Two of the most important programs created in response to this policy directive, PRONASEC[72] and EDURURAL[73], proved inadequate to the challenge of substantively expanding and improving the quality of primary education in rural areas (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

<div align="center">Return to Democracy: The 1988 Constitution</div>

The 'miracle' of Brazilian economic growth could not sustain itself through the seventies. Over a period of almost ten years from 1975 to 1988, the military regime supervised the transition of power to a democratically elected government. A new democratic Constitution was drafted in 1988 and included several progressive mandates for education. First, the Constitution recognized education as a fundamental and subjective right (*direito subjetivo*). Previous Constitutions had recognized education as a human right but the 1988 language of subjective rights made the law 'actionable' for the first time; by definition, the subject of the right can demand for the immediate realization/fulfillment as a duty and obligation (MEC, 2004, p.33). Primary education

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[72] The National Program for Socio-educational and Cultural Actions for Rural Areas (PRONASEC, *Programa Nacional de Ações Sócio-educativas e Culturais para o meio rural*)

[73] The Program for Extension and Improvement of the Rural Environment (EDURURAL, *Programa de Extensão e Melhoria para o meio rural*).

for eight years was declared free[74] and mandatory and the same conditions were to be

progressively realized for secondary education. The Constitution also emphasized

respect for diversity[75] in education planning which had direct relevance to the ongoing

struggle of rural social movements for expanded and improved provision of basic rural

education.

Second, the Constitutional provisions for decentralization restructured the public

education system by declaring municipal education systems to be autonomous entities

(Article 211). This provision introduced some 5000 new actors into education policy

debates (Plank et al., 1994).   Primary education and preschool education became the

responsibility of local municipal governments while state governments retained

responsibility for secondary education. Third and related to the previous provision, the

Constitution restructured the process of resource allocation to education to ensure that

administrative decentralization was accompanied by fiscal decentralization. Revenues

formerly controlled by the federal government were transferred directly to municipalities

and to a lesser extent state governments. Funding for public education in Brazil relies on

tax revenues and the Constitution mandated that a minimum of 18 percent of federal tax

revenues and 25 percent of state and municipal revenues, including government transfers,

be allocated towards the development and maintenance of primary education (Draibe,

2004). In addition, fifty percent of resources for education were supposed to be reserved

for the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of basic education. The Constitution

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[74] The nominal right to "free" public education was first affirmed in the 1824 Imperial Constitution (Plank, 1990).

[75] Article 206 outlined the considerations that should drive the provision of schooling including equal access, continuity of education, the freedom to learn, pluralism of ideas, democratic governance practices, valorization of teachers, and standards of quality.   The language in Article 208 also provided for inclusion of all those who did not have access to their age-appropriate education. Finally, for the first time directed the government to create a new agency to administer vocational education and training programs specifically for rural workers.

also decreed that should municipalities wish to increase their expenditure on education they could do so by augmenting their revenue by 30 percent either from their own taxes or through tax transfers (Haddad et al 1993, p.3). Fourth, federal and state governments were required to construct medium-term education plans to define policy priorities which would have to be approved by legislators.[76] These three provisions signaled institutional changes by legitimating expanded spaces for consultation and participation with civil society in a space traditionally controlled by presidents and governors acting together with heads of administrative agencies.

Last but not the least, the Constitution legitimated the strategy of land occupations used by social movements of the landless and instructed the central government to reappropriate and distribute unutilized and underutilized cultivable land.

With the resumption of democracy, education became a major factor in electoral politics which was dominated by individual politicians (rather than political parties which remained weak after two decades of authoritarian rule) (Plank, 1990). The Brazilian political culture of *clientilismo* capitalized on the problems of educational inequality and used the education system to dispense political favors and maximize electoral support through the provision of jobs and financial benefits. David Plank (1990) who has written at length about the history of education reform in Brazil writes: "The endurance of personalistic politics and the need to compete for the votes and financial support of key constituencies through the development or defense of public policies favorable to their interests have inevitably distracted the attention of Brazilian politicians from the plight of those who lack significant political resources including especially the rural poor (p.540)."

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[76] Many state constitutions adopted the new guidelines for the education budgeting process wherein a budget resolution defining guidelines for public expenditure is submitted for approval to the legislature prior to elaboration by the executive branch (Plank, Sobrinho et al, 1994).

These clientelistic politics have persisted in the Brazilian educational system through civilian and military regimes and extend to the provision of jobs[77] and contracts to supporters, the provision of public subsidies to private schools and private students[78], and the protection of "free" higher education in public universities (Plank et al., 1994). The partisan nature of the implementation of the 1985 Education for All (*Educação para Todos*) program initiated by President Sarney is a particularly appropriate example of the manipulation of the educational system to maintain political power. The program was intended to increase the quantity and quality of basic education by increasing access, enhancing the status of teachers, and establishing a minimum amount of government spending for education which would address regional disparities. However, the Ministry of Education almost only transferred federal funds to state and municipal governments who supported Sarney (Plank, 1990). In a similar vein, despite the rhetoric of economic austerity (to reduce inflation and restore stability), President Sarney and his successor President Collor continued to subsidize and regulate private schools fees which effectively enabled middle-class parents to continue to school their children privately.

Successive governments adopted the rhetoric on improving primary education and eradicating literacy but continued to allocate the major share of federal spending on education towards elite public universities which enroll less than ten percent of the age cohort. The high rates of illiteracy among the youth and adult population prompted new

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[77] The provision of jobs for clients is known as *empreguismo* or *fisiologismo* and has arguably had the most costly impact on the public education system. In 1994, Plank, et al. (1994) estimated that each new Secretary of Education in the state of Rio de Janeiro alone makes approximately 4000 political appointments. Each new Minister of Education is accompanied by some 300 new administrators. The system of political appointments contributes to high rates of turnover and the impossibility of any kind of continuity in the implementation of policies.

[78] Other public subsidies to private schools take place in the form of tax exemptions for private schools; students receive public scholarships for private school tuition; and private schools are provided with space and teachers from public schools (Plank et al., 1994).

literacy campaigns. From 1986 to 1990, a federal program called EDUCAR provided only financial assistance to agencies and groups that implemented literacy programs. President Collor replaced EDUCAR with the National Program for Literacy and Citizenship (PNAC, *Programa Nacional de Alfabetização e Cidadania*) that was supported by substantial loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Bank. The program was supposed to be implemented through partnerships with more than fifty Brazilian Universities and have wide citizen participation and national mobilization (Stromquist, 1997). However, Collor was impeached on charges of massive corruption and resigned and PNAC ended before it really started. The challenges facing rural learners were almost completely ignored in the nineteen eighties and only restored to public attention in the nineties through the work of social movements and other civil society actors.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

The four decades in the history of Brazilian education between 1930 and 1970 have been characterized by Moacir Gadotti (1991) as a time of 'educational populism' and "the victory of the liberal educational system, still elitist and nondemocratic (p.3)." This chapter has presented a partial explanation for the historical and institutional contexts that shaped the neglectful and selective nature of policy for rural education in Brazil, and on a broader level, the reproduction of an exclusionary democracy (Davies, 2002). It underlines the linkages between poverty, social exclusion and the authoritarian state as manifest in a political culture of corruption and the lack of attention on the part of unelected and unresponsive elite (in this case rural and urban power elites) to the needs and interests of the poor (rural and urban poor). Key actors and ideologies that

dominated formal policy making arenas privileged economic growth and modes of education that would provide workers for the capitalist modes of production. The dominant model of development not only failed to create wealth for everyone but exacerbated conditions of poverty and inequality through regulating access to education. Rural areas and the labor of rural people subsidized the development of urban centers and agro-industries (Harber, 2002).

Educational Legislation as Response to Social Demands

Ideally speaking, laws in a democratic state reflect the norms and values upheld by a society at a given point in time. In practice, progressive laws are typically more advanced than the public institutions that are charged with enforcement and implementation (Gadotti, 1991). National education legislation, including education laws and education plans, are policy instruments that can perform different functions in translating policy goals into concrete actions including acting as mandates and inducements or being directed to capacity building and system changing (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987). They establish rights and powers and provide rules and facts to guide implementation of policy directives (Stone, 1997).

Most of the legislation between 1834 and 1988 constructed the challenge of rural education as one of modernizing and integrating socially backward rural communities. Policy attention to rural education and development has been dominated by concerns of improving the productivity of agricultural workers. The ambiguity of apparently progressive Constitutional language around the idea of education as a fundamental human right has protected the government from being held legally accountable for the rights violation of the millions of Brazilian children and adults who do not have access to

115

education and/or receive low quality education. Educational legislation (including the 1988 Constitution) has been much more specific in protecting the role of the private for-profit sector in education.

When the Constitutions have been vague and flexible in terms of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, they have lacked the political and justiciable power to ensure suitable action to achieve the desired goals. The provisions for administrative decentralization in the 1988 Constitution did not resolve the problem of educational responsibilities between national, state, and local governments with adverse consequences in terms of transparency and responsibility for educational reforms. The increased availability of resources was not accompanied by measures to ensure that the funds reached the most neglected rural and urban schools and communities. The expansion of administrative discretion has done little to interrupt traditional arrangements of *clientilismo* or to facilitate redistribution and justice.

In this sense, the language of political and educational equality in early Brazilian Constitutions speak to the symbolic functions of policy indicating the state's commitment to some idealized future of the country rather than address immediate urgent needs and conflicts that emerged out of the capitalist model of development. They have articulated the dimensions of public responsibility for education in terms of actions that are 'good in their own right'. As symbolic policy devices, the progressive content of these laws were less concerned with the realities of existing government capacity to achieve the stated goals. Central government supported 'campaigns' for literacy have also served a symbolic function of indicating the government's commitment to eradicating illiteracy

while the state transferred responsibility for delivery to under-resourced municipal and state governments.

There are real limitations to progressive legislation but they can also have positive consequences on unequal educational structures. In their more precise form, progressive Constitutions have established a certain uniformity of expectation and provided information necessary for compliance to a decentralized education system. For example, the conflation of the right to social equality with recognition for cultural diversity and particularity of rural communities in the 1988 Constitution marked an important shift in policy discourse which had previously sought to 'integrate' rural communities. Soares (2001) writes that the legislation was innovative because it inserted a new conceptualization of "the social" in not just education but all policy which was free of the exclusionary and fragmented logic that characterized previous discourse.

The history of educational policy demonstrates a persistent lack of responsiveness of the state to the needs of the rural poor – a condition that has persisted through several apparent reformulations of the nature of the Brazilian state – from oligarchy to populist authoritarianism to military regime and now democracy. As such, given the inherent limitations of liberal, representative democracies, it is more accurate to say that legislatures are hegemonic centers[79] of knowledge/power where laws serve the agendas of the ruling elite who continue to dominate social institutions and arrangements.

The idea of subjective rights also reconstructs understandings about who participates in education with far-reaching implications for policy-making and pedagogy. The idea of the right to and right in education requires participatory and democratic

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[79] The phrase 'legislatures as hegemonic centers' is taken from Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin (2005) critique of conventional frameworks of policy analysis.

decision-making about content, pedagogy and resource allocation for education. Historically, educational legislation in Brazil has emerged out of legitimized but not necessarily democratic processes of decision-making in formal, institutional centers of power.

The Influence of Non-Democratic Political Culture on Policy

This analysis has also shown that Brazilian policy makers used dominant epistemologies and values of economic-driven education to frame policy issues, make decisions and respond to policy challenges. This historical analysis also problematizes claims to scientific knowledge which are used to justify policy decisions that are apparently determined by the political rationality of policy actors in positions of formal power.   In other words, policy decisions about access, equity and so forth that appear to be shaped by rational choices about the comparative merits of various administrative and financial arrangements mask real conflicts that continue to take place about control of resources and responsibilities (Plank et al., 1994). The policy of rural school consolidation provides an example of the limitations of policies that are driven solely by criteria of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. In practice, rural school consolidation has worked to a) maintain disparities in access to a quality education and b) exclude local communities from decisions that affect the education of their children. Critics of this practice argue that the low numbers of secondary schools in rural areas act as a disincentive for children to continue their education. Many nuclear schools are located in urban centers and rural children experience discrimination from their peers and teachers. Rural families are often distressed by the fact that their children would be learning in distant, unfamiliar environments.   Even though the transportation is free, children spend

long hours in transit and on dangerous roads leaving them too tired to concentrate on their studies (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).   A 1992 evaluation study found that more than 50 percent of municipal secretariats refused to provide transportation citing poor and dangerous roads as the reason and only 9 percent of the nuclear schools had better teachers (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). In these conditions, the practice of consolidation has only worked to further disadvantage rural schools by making access even more difficult. Furthermore, it has been argued that the cost of transporting students long distances to the nuclear primary schools increase rather than reduce spending (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

Critical scholars argue that policy decisions that appear to be shaped by rational choices about the comparative merits of various administrative and financial arrangements mask the real conflicts that continue to take place about control of resources and responsibilities (Plank et al., 1994, p.3) . From this perspective, the persistence of unequal and unjust educational and social institutions represent policy successes not failures.   These kinds of critique highlight the absence of local control and participation in conventional decision-making processes and arenas of policy.   The rearrangements of the state apparatus which include the devolution of administrative responsibilities to municipal governments have not led to more democratic models of power-sharing and participatory governance.   The Brazilian state remained essentially authoritarian and populist in nature whether under military or civilian government. In Brazil and globally, the state was at the center of the political system and other actors were relatively weak until the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s.

Before the 1970s, shifts of power occurred between those who already had access to centers of power -- beginning with the agricultural oligarchy and military and expanding to include industrialists and movements of academics and the middle-classes. Brazilian scholar Moacir Gadotti describes these power realignments as follows: "The very process of modernization was conceived by conservatives. What can be observed now-a-days is, in fact, a transition representing a new conciliation of the élites, as had already occurred in 1891, 1930 and 1964. There never was a democratic revolution in Brazil (1991, p.4)." Moreover, social unrest was controlled through a political culture of relationships of dependence (of the poor and powerless) and benevolence (of the wealthy and powerful), compensatory social policies, and outright repression of collective protests and opposition.

The role of nongovernmental actors, particularly social movements, in the pro-democracy movement mark the reconfiguration of the political arrangements and the expression of social demands (Jelin, 1998). They also underline that historically access to education for excluded groups has always comes through social organizing and struggle. Gadotti (1991) describes the current condition as "One of the disasters of Brazilian education was caused by the authoritarian governments and was the institution of a centralizing techno-bureaucratic pattern of educational system which deprived the schools and the classrooms of their potential of creativity, subordinating them to central organs for the smallest decisions. Any meaningful change of Brazilian education will have to take its roots in the basis of society itself. Society must become the main protagonist of education (Gadotti, 1991, p.5)."

Progressive changes in education, including legislation, with the potential for immediate and fundamental social transformation have historically come about due to the social pressure generated by social movements and other collective actions for social change. When progressive legislation is passed, it often represent the future aspirations of a society and polity, e.g., to become an equitable and just society (Benoit, 1975).

This chapter begins the work of thinking about the responsibility of the state for public education, the possibilities for democratic decision-making in education, and the possibilities for the state to act as catalyst for social change. Alternative policy arenas and discourses have paid more attention to historical and cultural contexts in which education policies are formulated and implemented. As such they provide valuable opportunities to examine the relations of power/knowledge manifest between the institutions of the state and the non-elite public and the realities of democracy at any given point in time. The role of organized civil society, particularly social movements in including rural education in the national agenda is discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter V: Civil Society Advocacy for Rural Education

<u>Introduction</u>

The state governs through state and administrative policy practices implemented through extent institutions (Popkewitz, 2000). The state also governs through discursive practices of education which "deploy power, distinctions and categories" and determine the place of the individual in the social order (Popkewitz, 2000, p. viii). Social movements along with other members of organized civil society in Brazil are part of a global trend towards the creation of advocacy campaigns and solidarity networks. These new formulations of civil society seek to claim recognition for excluded social groups. More broadly, they seek to raise public awareness and apply pressure on the state to broaden the scope for democratic participation in formal political arrangements (Batliwala, 2002; Edwards and Hulme, 1998, 1996; Kabeer et al., 2003). Representatives of organized civil society have become significant participants in the formulation of public policy through advocacy and mobilization to demand education entitlements from governments, intergovernmental agencies and corporations; monitoring the functioning of education programs and policy; and research and documentation initiatives that support alternative definitions and practices of knowledge production and learning. Much of this advocacy is couched in the language of universal human rights which allows civil society to pressure the state indirectly through new and broad political alliances, and less commonly, through litigation.

These positive developments have taken place at the same time the state has transferred the responsibility for a large part of public education to non-state actors. The central and local governing and regulatory mechanisms of the state have undergone

significant transformation in a globalized world. Education features prominently in the rhetoric of redemocratization as a key mechanism for expanding opportunities for political participation in general and in the formulation of public policy specifically. However, the state continues to maintain control over the public education system through a number of different ways: standardization of curricula and evaluation tied to financing mechanisms; 'managed participation' of critical non-state actors; rhetoric of public-private partnerships; selective investment in the different levels of education; selective compliance with progressive legal mandates; and outright refusal to recognize social movements as legitimate civil society actors.   The relationship between governmental and nongovernmental actors have been further complicated by institutional constraints such as technocratism, and gaps in institutional memory due to the frequent changes in government and NGO personnel (Kabeer et al., 2003).

The relationship between the Brazilian state and civil society presents insights into the possibilities and limitations of efforts to strengthen and deepen practices of democracy *within* existing institutional arrangements.   The 1988 Constitution that marked the redemocratization of Brazil was both the product and the foundation for radical social struggle and a legitimate role for civil society participation in the formulation and implementation of public policy. In this chapter, I will discuss key events and legislation that influenced rural education in redemocratized Brazil during the administration of President Cardoso.   I will show that the application of the dominant ideologies of human capital and technical rationality to education and poverty reduction have effectively translated into universal access to only four years of guaranteed primary education for rural children (the responsibility of municipalities), and some possibilities

of literacy or vocational education (delivered through nonformal education and with or without secondary schooling after eight years of fundamental education). I will also discuss the ways in which social justice- and equity-oriented advocacy for rural education by organized civil society have transformed public policy discourse to include both social rights and technical rationality perspectives. These changes include the construction of new positive identities, symbols and language about rural people and their education that include the culture, emotions, values and insights of marginalized rural communities. In addition to the content and impact of policy instruments such as educational legislation and national education plans, I argue that the creation of alternative policy arenas (such as national conferences and meetings) have challenged conventional understandings of civil society participation. The politics of formal and alternative policy arenas are presented as two partial and complementary sources of insight into the politics of education representing as they do two very different centers and relations of power (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

Along with the role of social movements and other members of organized civil society, this chapter identifies key institutional actors and intra-governmental relations in the central government, particularly the Ministry of Education and the rest of the administration. The purpose is to understand the nature of transformation undergone by the state in terms of its orientation and commitment to public education (Torres, 2000). The discussion will show that the inclination and ability of central governments to plan and implement education reform that address systemic inequality continue to be constrained by a neoliberal macro-economic framework. The chapter is divided into two broad themes for discussion: the scope of progressive educational legislation and

governmental initiatives for rural education and literacy during the Cardoso (1995 – 2002) administration; and the impact of alternative policy arenas created by organized civil society on the national policy development process.

<div align="center">Progressive Educational Legislation in Newly Democratic Brazil</div>

The 1988 Constitution gave rise to two pieces of educational legislation which elaborated on the 1988 Constitutional mandates with potential for far-reaching progressive change in Brazil's bureaucratic and paternalistic education system: the 1996 Education Law, and the 1996 National Fund for Compulsory Education Development and for Enhancing the Value of the Teaching Profession (FUNDEF, *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolivmento do Ensino Fundamental e de Valorização do Magisterio*) – a new mechanism of federal funding for primary education. These two legislations were passed during the administration of President Cardoso but are treated separately because they represent a conception of educational change quite different from the efficiency and human capital driven educational policies of the Cardoso administration.

1996 Education Law

In December 1996, the new Law on the Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDB, *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação,* Law No. 9.394) was officially published. The law addressed rural education as directed by the 1988 Constitution as a matter of respecting sociocultural diversity as well as the right to equality and difference. More specifically, the law provided specific guidelines for the adaptation of organization and delivery of public education including school calendars, and curricula and pedagogy that contextualized learning according to the social realities and cultural diversity of rural communities. Article 23 and 24 stipulated that the school calendar must be organized

independent of the civil calendar and according to local economic and climactic requirements.[80] Article 26 of the law outlined the concept of a common national educational foundation to be developed by primary and secondary schools and complemented by the economic and cultural characteristics of each region and society. The 1996 LDB also declared that education systems should provide courses and educational opportunities commensurate with the interests, conditions of life and work of youth and adults. Furthermore, it placed the responsibility for increasing access and retention of workers in schools on the state *(poderos públicos)*. Four years later, the National Curriculum Directives for Youth and Adult Education would place limitations on the broad LDB provisions for youth and adult education by stipulating that the minimum age for admission to primary level and secondary level programs should be 14 and 17 years respectively.

FUNDEF

The new education law was followed by the creation of the National Fund for Education (FUNDEF). The resources of the Fund in each state consisted of 15 percent of available revenues and fiscal transfers (Draibe, 2004). Based on the amount available in each state, the amount of expenditure per student/year (*custo aluno*)[81] was calculated and

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[80] Article 23 states that basic education should be organized to support the process of learning including where appropriate in the form of class –year (*series annuais*), semesters (*períodos semesters*) , cycles (*ciclos*), and groups of learners organized by age, competency etc.. Article 28 of the law stated that rural schools should organize their own calendars in keeping with agricultural cycles, climate conditions, and the nature of work in particular regions.

[81] In addition, the law included the concept of a per student cost for a quality education (CAQ, *custo aluno qualidade*) which was first mentioned in the 1988 Constitution. The CAQ would be a value corresponding to all the expenses and investments necessary for development of learning processes for every student during the period of one year. The idea was that the annual minimum cost per student should increase progressively until the CAQ is attained over five years. In addition, the CAQ should be calculated for early childhood education (*educação infantil*), secondary school (*ensino medio*), and also higher education (*educação superior*). In 2001 the CAQ was yet to be calculated. It was included again in the 2002 National Education Plan (PNE, *Plano Nacional de Educação*) only to be vetoed by President Cardoso.

funds were allocated to each state in proportion to the number of registered primary school children in grades one to eight (Draibe, 2004). At least 60% of the resources in the fund were to spent on improving salaries for primary school teachers – the minimum salary being equivalent to per capita annual expenditure on students.

Two FUNDEF provisions have direct relevance to rural education. First, LDB stipulated that the provision that the calculation and distribution of resources must be sensitive to differences in the level of education and the type of school including whether the student was in the first or second level of primary education (Grades 1 - 4 or 5 - 8), special schools or rural schools (Article 2). In making this provision, the law acknowledged arguments (made by civil society advocates as well as municipalities) that the cost of educating rural children was higher because of costs of transportation etc. (MEC, 2004).

Second, the LDB instituted a mechanism of 'complementation' (*complementação*) whereby states and municipalities who were unable to meet these minimum expenditures would be compensated the requisite difference by the federal government. The idea was to ensure a minimum level of investment in primary education all over the country. The potential redistributive effects behind the idea of complementation were significant since the poorest states also have the largest rural populations in Brazil.

A third provision that would have restructured funding for youth and adult education (EJA, *Educação de Jovens e Adultos*) by including it in FUNDEF was vetoed by President Cardoso. The provision was intended to address the problem of the steady decrease in funding for these programs through the 1990s. At this time, the distribution

of funding for EJA between the three levels of government placed the major burden on states - 70% from the state, 25% from municipalities, and 5% from the federal government. Between 1994 and 1998, less than 0.5% of the total federal budget for education and culture was allocated to EJA. Moreover, the federal government only spent 65% of the resources allocated for EJA by Congress during this period. Bureaucratic obstacles in transfer of resources and fiscal mechanisms that allowed the federal government to block resource distribution on macroeconomic grounds prevented the utilization of the total resources allocated. The FUNDEF provision would have strengthened the financial capacity and autonomy of states and municipalities to provide the EJA programs that administrative decentralization had made them responsible for.

    After vetoing the provision for restructuring funding for EJA, President Cardoso created a compensatory program for literacy – the Program for Literacy through Solidarity (PAS, *Programa Alfabetização Solidaria*) (Haddad and Graciano, 2003). PAS was created in 1996 under the ambit of another neoliberal social security intervention -- the Council for Community Solidarity which was headed by Ruth Cardoso, the wife of President Cardoso and housed within the Home Ministry (*Casa Civil da Presidência da República*). The program focused on municipalities with the highest rates of illiteracy with the objective of lowering the illiteracy rate in participating municipalities to be closer to the national average (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). It was delivered through so-called partnerships with civil society organizations, corporate foundations, and higher education institutions. It consisted of five-month modules of literacy instruction.

    Though conceived of as a multi-institution initiative, PAS was managed by a civil society organization called AAPAS (Association of Support for PAS) which was

constituted by corporate entities and individuals with political connections to the federal government (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Municipalities, educators, and program monitors located in universities did not participate in the management of the program. Between 2000 and 2002, the resources allocated for PAS from the federal budget increased by 60% (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

The expansion of the program was supported by the provision of financial initiatives through the federal program *Recomeço – Programa Supletivo* [82] which transferred federal funds to 400 municipalities with the lowest human development indicators. The amount of each disbursement was the per student cost multiplied by the number of students enrolled in youth and adult literacy program and took the form of monthly transfers through FUNDEF. Critics of PAS argue that the calculations performed by MEC were arbitrary in nature and largely determined by the availability of funds in the budget and the number of students counted by the School Census (Di Pierro, 2002). The program was also criticized on the grounds that a) five month modules were insufficient to achieve the literacy objectives of the program; and that b) the centralized nature of program administration did not encourage or enable municipalities to expand their own capacity to provide literacy and other continuous education opportunities for their constituents (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

<u>Neoliberalism and Education: 1995 – 2002</u>

Fernando Henrique Cardoso came to office with a neoliberal agenda dominated by economic liberalization through the removal of Constitutional obstacles to the creation of an economic climate that would welcome foreign investors and facilitate privatization; rehauling the decentralized system of governance and volatile coalitions that

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[82] In 2003, the program *Recomeço* was renamed *Fazendo Escola*.

characterized party politics; and trimming the social security system (Spanakos, 2004). Social policy reforms centered on decentralization of governance and transfer of education delivery for hard-to-reach populations on NGOs and the private sector in the name of expanding civil society participation.

Educational planning during the Cardoso administration was driven by the need to make Brazilian workers competitive in the global economy. In particular, strategies for educational reform included decentralization of educational spending and administration, increased allocation of funds for primary schools, free school lunch and textbooks in primary education, the creation of an integrated national educational assessment scheme, and a cash support programs for primary school children in poor families. In the area of basic education, there were three areas of focus. Reforms for primary education focused on administrative and to a lesser extent financial decentralization, curricular reform, and teacher training. The central government withdrew further from providing secondary and technical and professional education. As discussed in the previous chapter, the decentralization of secondary education had begun in the seventies and was made the primary responsibility of state governments by the 1988 Constitution. But this was the first time that technical and professional education was excluded from the portfolio of the central government. This market-driven diversification took the form of programs like PLANFOR[83] and Supplementary Courses (*Cursos Supletivas*) [84] which focused on the creation of workers for the economy. The third reform took the form of a new

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[83] The National Plan for Workers Qualification (PLANFOR) was established in 1995, based on a 1970 payroll tax, and distributed resources to nongovernmental actors including unions, NGOs, private organizations, as well as state and municipal governments to offer training courses for workers (Gomes, 2003).

[84] These were supplemental education courses equivalent to secondary level education – some were offered through distance education programs.

permanent evaluation process for public education based on quantitative and qualitative

data which would be collected by the Ministry of Education through measures like the

School Census, the National Basic Education System Assessment System (SAEB), and

the National Course Examination (*Provão*) (MEC, 2002). This reform allowed the

central government to retain control over basic education without the attachment of

administrative and financial responsibilities.

Initiatives for Rural Education between 1995 and 2002

The government was resistant to implementing the recommendations for the

development of a national policy on rural education as demanded by social movements

and directed by the 1996 LDB. Furthermore, President Cardoso and Education Minister

Paulo Renato Souza refused to meet directly with social movements. Cardoso ceased to

negotiate with the MST completely after the MST refused to meet his condition of

stopping the land occupations (Stedile, 2002).

At the same time, several rural education and development projects were

implemented in partnership with the World Bank. The Bank projects focused on rural

poverty alleviation and land redistribution through the idea of the market-assisted Land

Bank which were widely implemented in the impoverished regions of Northeast Brazil.[85]

Education projects included *Programa Alfabetização Solidaria*, FUNDESCOLA[86],

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[85] The 150-million-dollar pilot project, known locally as 'Cedula da Terra' was implemented in 1997 in the states of Ceara, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Pernambuco, and Maranhao. It is a credit program that makes loans to poor families to buy plots of agricultural land. The project was criticized by a wide range of civil society organizations working on agrarian reform on the grounds that it allowed landowners to choose which pieces of land they would sell to the government and because poor farmers were expected to pay market-rates for the land they purchased. Protests eventually led to a visit by the World Bank Inspection Panel in 1999 which met with the National Forum for Agrarian Reform and Justice in the Countryside. The National Forum criticized the final report of the Inspection Panel and has asked for another evaluation.

[86] The Fund for Strengthening Schools (FUNDESCOLA) focused on improvising the professional development of teachers and generally improving the quality of schools in particular urban and rural areas. In some cases, the Fund also supported the acquisition of equipment and furniture for schools in rural areas

Escola Ativa[87], *Proformação*[88], and the Federal Network of Professional Technical

Schools (*O Ensino Tecnolôgico da Rede Educação Profissional Federal*).[89] These

interventions were mainly delivered through partnerships with municipal and state

governments as well as non-state actors. They were compensatory in nature focusing on

teacher preparation for schools and literacy programs for the poorest regions in the

country.

Other federal policies that directly or indirectly affected rural education that came

in the wake of the LDB continued to disregard or contradict the directives for special

consideration of rural education. They also displayed a tendency to blame all the

including agrarian reform settlements, *quilombolas*, and indigenous communities. Between 1998 and 2001, FUNDESCOLA supported the improvement of school buildings in 162 rural schools – 94 in agrarian reform settlements, 63 in indigenous schools, and 5 *quilombola* schools. It was implemented by MEC in partnership with states and municipalities with money borrowed from the World Bank (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

[87] *Escola Ativa* focused on the development of a pedagogy for rural schools. It was directed towards creating multi-grade schools but otherwise was a departure from traditional, authoritarian pedagogies. It was modeled on the Escuela Nueva project in Colombia and funded through the North-East Project of the World Bank. Starting with 69 schools in 1997, the Project reached some 3609 schools, 4300 teachers, and 96122 students in 558 municipalities by 2003. The majority of schools were in the North followed by the regions in the Central-East and the Northeast. According to the 2002 School Census, the program has reached approximately 13.5 % of multi-grade schools. An evaluation study by the United Nations Development Program in Brazil (PNUD) found that both teachers and students had become more actively engaged in learning activities along with a reduction in rotation of teachers, improved relationships between parents and schools, and increased autonomy for the persons and institutions involved in school administration (Andrade and DiPierro, 2004).

[88] The In-Service Training Program for Teachers - *Proformação* – is a secondary education-level, distance-learning course for teachers in state and municipal schools in the North, Northeast, and Central-east states. The program consists of four modules with collective and individual learning activities delivered over four semesters. It is implemented by state and municipal secretariats of education in partnership with the federal Secretariat for Distance Education (SEED). The program has reached some 27,372 teachers in1107 municipalities in 15 states mainly in the North, Northeast and Central-East regions of the country (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). An external evaluation study reported that more than 80% of teachers reported an improvement in their teaching practices as a result of what they had learned through the program in terms of encouraging student participation and paying attention to individual learning needs, and becoming more involved with the school and the community (Placo et al 2002, in Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

[89] A fourth and long-time actor in the area of rural education comes in the form of the Technical and Professional Education Schools. The Federal Network of Technical Schools created in 1959 was combined with the Federal Centers for Technical Education in 1993 to create the National System of Technical Education. Agricultural technical schools comprise almost a third of all federal institutions and account for 20% of enrolled students (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). In 2003, there were 36 Federal Agricultural Technical Schools in 17 states and offer courses in sustainable agriculture, organization of production such as cooperatives and associations, and agricultural processing.

problems of rural education on the one-room, one-teacher rural schoolhouse (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).[90] The only allowances made were that rural education must be flexible to regional and seasonal particularities in order to ensure access for all students and that special training was required for rural teachers to meet the particular needs of rural students and the rural environment. Two of the most significant documents pertaining to the government's priorities in education, the National Education Plan, and the National Curriculum Parameters reflect these problems.

National Curriculum Parameters

The 1998 National Curriculum Parameters for primary education (PCNs) acknowledged that a significant portion of rural students did not complete basic education (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). The PCNs reiterated that all Brazilian students needed to acquire certain basic knowledge regardless of differences in geography, culture, and socio-economic background but also that these common themes could be adapted to fit local realities as also the methods for evaluating learning. However, Andrade and Di Pierro (2004) point out that the document did not explicitly include rural diversity and particularity as a reason for adaptation and modification of curricula delivery and evaluation.

National Education Plan

During Cardoso's second term in office, MEC developed a National Education Plan (Law No. 10.172/2001) as part of the global Education for All initiative.[91] The Plan

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[90] The policies focused on the reorganization of single-teacher rural schools through increasing the number of teachers progressively and to provide four *regular* years of primary education, keeping in mind regional and seasonal particularities (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004; Soares, 2001).

[91] Brazil is one of the nine countries in the E-9 initiative which grew out of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All– nine countries with the highest populations and poorest education indicators. The E-9 Initiative was launched in New Delhi, India on the occasion of the Education for All Summit of Nine High-Population Countries. It included the governments of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia,

focused on the creation of a 'knowledge-based society' which would be able to keep pace with economic globalization.[92] There was no consideration of an integrated national policy on rural education. Instead, the Plan included fragmented interventions such as better transportation for rural students, distance learning, inclusion of rural culture in teacher training courses and curricula, and the reorganization of agricultural technical schools in response to the challenges encountered by rural learners (MEC, 2002).[93]

Youth and Adult Education (EJA)

The Cardoso administration gave more attention to youth and adult education than rural education in the National Education Plan. Commitments included: to make two-thirds of the illiterate population literate in five years, and eradicate illiteracy within the decade; to ensure access to the first level of primary education within five years for at least half of the population over 15 years of age that had not completed this level of education; to attend to the entire population over 15 years of age that had completed the

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Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan who all pledged to universalize primary education and significantly reduce illiteracy in their respective countries.

[92] The final version of the law virtually ignored the proposals for the PNE submitted by the Worker's Party and civil society. The civil society draft for the PNE entitled "A Proposal of Brazilian Society" was formulated over a series of meetings of the National Congress of Education (CONED, Congresso Nacional de Educação) in Belo Horizonte (1997 and 1997), Porto Alegre (1999) and São Paulo (2002). The PNE released at the Fourth CONED in 2002 also marked the establishment of a new coalition called the National Forum in Defense of Public Education (Fórum Nacional em Defesa da Escola Pública). The CONED meetings were also one of the spaces in which the idea of a World Forum on Education (FME, Fórum Mundial de Educação) came to fruition, The FME was eventually held twice – in 2001 in the city of Porto Alegre under the theme "Education in a globalized world" and again in 2003 in the city of Brasília under the theme "Education and transformation- The construction of another world is possible".

[93] Rural communities were referred to explicitly in the following five contexts (MEC, 2002): the provision of transportation for students in rural zones with financial support from federal, state and municipal governments; the expansion of distance learning courses for youth and adults in primary and lower secondary education; the inclusion of the history, culture and knowledge of rural worker communities in all curricula and training courses for education professionals (as well as Afro-Brazilian and indigenous groups); the re-organization of agricultural technical schools to offer specific and permanent programs which are more responsive to the educational background and agricultural activities of rural workers in the region; and, the development of agricultural courses through partnerships between the agricultural and technical schools and the Ministry of Agriculture to improve practices of agricultural and preservation of the environment.

first level of primary education; and, to increase services (*atendimento*) for youth and

adults in secondary education – double in five years and quadruple the coverage in 10

years (Di Pierro, 2003).

In order to meet the substantial goals for reduction of illiteracy that the

government committed to in the 2001 National Education Plan as well as the 2000

Education for All Dakar Framework of Action, a study commissioned by the NGO *Ação*

Educativa made the following recommendations (Di Pierro, 2003):

- To accelerate the process of 'alphabetization' (or learning to read and write);
- To support EJA programs with incentives for day-to-day application of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy as well opportunities for continuing education;
- To incorporate strategies for 'positive discrimination' that facilitate social inclusion and equal educational opportunities that are lacking in current programs;
- To prioritize the education of youth and adults;
- To ensure that adequate financing mechanisms accompany public provisions for EJA such as including EJA in the resource allocations made by FUNDEF;
- To facilitate greater participation of states and municipalities in the determination of curriculum parameters employed by the national assessment system and in teacher education in order to support sub-national provision of EJA;
- To create an institutional arrangements that support democratic and collective management of EJA by governmental and nongovernmental institutions which would also serve as a way for MEC to reclaim its position of national coordination of EJA policies;
- To establish an inter-ministerial body for integrated planning and sharing of resources that would facilitate the education of youth and adults for all aspects of life and learning include work, health, environmental conservation, human rights etc.

These recommendations were based on the idea that the central government

would lead efforts to increase both levels of literacy as well as retention of literacy skills

through creating environments that supported neo-literates and enabled them continue

learning. It would also provide coordination and financial support to local governments.

The actions of the administration, on other hand, showed that the language of expansion

was part of the agenda to complete the transfer of responsibility for EJA from the central

to state and local governments and nongovernmental agencies. Over the course of the

1990s, the Ministry of Education which had acted as national coordinator of youth and

adult literacy programs had gradually shifted responsibility for EJA programs which were

disbursed through other federal agencies - PAS was administered by the Council for

Community Solidarity, PLANFOR was administered by the Ministry of Work and

Employment, and PRONERA was administered by the Ministry of Agricultural

Development (Di Pierro, 2003).   In addition, the Ministry was restructured such that the

coordination of EJA was shifted from an independent unit in the ministry to become a

sub-unit of the Secretariat for Primary Education. Between 1997 and 2002, the

Coordination of Youth and Adult Education (COEJA) established curriculum parameters,

developed teaching materials, and implemented teacher training programs for EJA

educators in states and municipalities.

The creation of PRONERA

Of direct relevance to rural education was the creation of the National Program

for Education in Agrarian Reform (PRONERA, *Programa Nacional de Educação na

Reforma Agraria*) (Portaria 17/04/98) in 1998. The program was administered by an

agency of the Ministry of Agricultural Development – the National Institute for

Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA).[94] PRONERA was charged with the

development and implementation of educational programs and resources for literacy,

basic education, professional education and higher education, and training for youth and

adults living in the agrarian reform settlements oriented towards knowledge and practices

that would promote sustainable development. The program was to be administered in a

democratic and participatory spirit through a council constituted by representatives of

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[94] Despite participating in early consultations, the Ministries of Education and Work would eventually
decline to participate in the management or financing of the program, citing the interference of social
movements as their reason (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

universities as well as social movements like the MST and CONTAG. However, the program was structured such that only universities could receive and manage public funds. Furthermore, federal funding for PRONERA has steadily decreased while federal funding for programs like *Recomeço* and *Programa Alfabetização Solidaria* have increased (Di Pierro, 2003).

MEC made a short-lived attempt to appear to consult civil society on EJA policies through the creation of the National Commission for Youth and Adult Education (CNEJA) which included representatives from state and municipal governments, universities, churches, unions, and other organized civil society. However, CNEJA was disactivated by MEC in 1997 in the course of disagreements that arose during the consultation process in preparation for the Fifth Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) held in Hamburg, Germany (Di Pierro, 2003). Thereafter, MEC would hold dialogues with other institutions such as the National Council on Education, the Council of State Secretaries of Education (CONSED), and the Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME) in order to claim that civil society had been included in the policy formulation process for EJA. More radical elements of civil society such as the National Campaign for the Right to Education were excluded from these consultations that constituted the 'approval process' for major policies such as the National Curriculum Directives as well as for the institution of the National Examinations for Certification of Competencies for Youth and Adult Education (Di Pierro, 2003).   At the same time, MEC retained control over other EJA interventions by linking federal resources to compliance with the national curriculum directives and competency certification examination (Di Pierro, 2003).

As a result of the lack of federal leadership on national policies for EJA and attempts by the Cardoso administration to 'manage' civil society participation, representatives of organized civil society from Brazil organized themselves into inter-institutional forums and networks such as MOVA and the Network of Support for Literacy Action in Brazil (RAAAB, *Rede de Apoio à Ação Alfabetizadora do Brasil*). These mobilizations led to the institutions of Annual National Meetings for the Education of Youth and Adults (ENEJAS). Six ENEJAS have been held so far on or around International Literacy Day. These networks have supported the shift in the activities of NGOs from providing specialized 'technical' support for EJA to effective advocates with local and international recognition. Their activities now include research, planning, monitoring and program evaluation, training EJA educators, and the production of teaching-pedagogical materials.

<u>Civil Society Takes Steps towards Development Of A Federal Rural Policy on Basic Education</u>

The absence of direction on rural education from the federal government during the Cardoso regime enabled many states and municipalities to postpone any kind of dialogue on policy on the grounds that they have received no "orientation" from the federal government. The combination of neoliberal policies and a stance of non-engagement with civil society was not only demoralizing for public school educators but also cultivated a general inertia in the public because MEC did not encourage any public debate or input from civil society (Haddad, 2003).

One of the sectors of civil society that remained active and engaged were the social movements for land, agrarian reform, and rural education. Led by the Landless

Workers Movement (MST, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra*), social

movements and mobilizations such as the Catholic Church Commission for Land (CPT),

Casas Familiares Rurais (CFRs) and the *Escolas Família Agrícola* (EFAs), the

Movement of Dam-Affected People (MAB, *Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens*),

and *Rede de Educação no Semi Árido Brasileiro* (RESAB) continued to mobilize to keep

attention on the status of rural education. In particular, the MST regularly began to

organize national seminars and meetings to discuss alternative approaches to educating

rural children, youth and adults as well as to debate about educational legislation and

policy articulated in the 1988 Constitution and 1996 Law. Municipal, state, and federal

government representatives sometimes participated in these meetings and conferences.

Table 5.1 on the following page provides a timeline for important meetings and events

that have shaped the current context for the formulation of a national policy for basic

rural education.

Changing Language and Meanings in Policy Discourse

In this section, I will show how these meetings and documents represent

alternative policy arenas in which representatives of social movements and organized

civil society "reconstituted, resisted and strategically used" hegemonic notions of rural

education, rural development, and rural people (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005, p.87).

In particular, I will discuss the 1997 First National Meeting of Education for Agrarian

Reform, the 1998 First National Conference on Rural Education and the 2002

Declaration on Rural Education – all of which contributed to the development of

comprehensive set of recommendations for developing a national policy on rural

Table 5.1: A Chronology of Steps towards a National Policy on Rural Basic Education

Date	Event
1980	Creation of the Sector of Education for the MST
1988	Democratic Constitution
1990	World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand
1993-1994	MEC oversees the creation of a Ten - Year Education for All Plan
1996	New Education Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação*) Article 28 addresses Rural Education
1997	National Meeting of Educators for Agrarian Reform (ENERA, *Encontro Nacional de Educadores e Educadoras da Reforma Agraria*)
27-31 July 1998	*Conferencia Nacional Por Uma Educação Basica do Campo* (National Conference for Basic Rural Education)
1998	Creation of *Programa Nacional de Educação na Reforma Agraria* (PRONERA - National Program of Education in Agrarian Reform)
2000	World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal
January 2001	President Cardoso signs off on the National Education Plan
December 2001	Edla Soares prepares a report entitled "Operational Directives for Rural Basic Education (*Diretrizes Operacionais para a Educação Básica nas Escolas do Campo*) for the National Council of Education - Opinion CNE/CEB No. 36/2001 (*Parecer CNE/CEB No. 36/2001*)
3 April, 2002	MEC publishes the Operational Directives through Resolution CNE/CEB No.1. (*Resolução CNE/CEB No. 1*)
November 2002	Declaration issued at the National Seminar on an Education for the Countryside (*Seminario Nacional por Uma Educação do Campo*)
3 June, 2003	Creation of *Grupo Permanente de Trabalho de Educação do Campo* (Permanent Working Group for Rural Education) through *Portaria* (Order) No. 1.374
February, 2004	*The Working Group releases* Referências para uma Política Nacional de Educação do Campo *(References for a National Policy on Rural Education)*
August, 2004	Second National Conference on Rural Education

education by the National Council for Education. Cumulatively, these activities of civil society put forward an alternative body of knowledge and way of thinking about rural people that countered historical stereotypes perpetuated by assistentialist public policies that portrayed rural people as ignorant, culturally backward, and/or only capable of low-skilled work. These alternative discourses and policy arenas re-centered rural peoples as citizens and subjects of rights which included the right to decide what kind of education they wanted.   They affirmed the role of rural teachers and attributed a central role to them in rural education as well as the broader struggle for equitable and sustainable agrarian reform. The meetings facilitated new forms of collaboration and strategic alliances between the diverse entities that worked in the field of rural education which would lead to the recognition of social movements as legitimate actors on the question of rural education.   Cumulatively, these activities had contributed to the creation of a concrete and coherent set of recommendations for the development of a national policy on rural education which were presented to President Lula when he assumed office.

The First National Meeting of Educators for Agrarian Reform

The first National Meeting of Educators for Agrarian Reform (ENERA, *Encontro Nacional de Educadoras e Educadores da Reforma Agraria*) was held in July 1997 with support from the University of Brasilia, UNESCO and UNICEF.   It brought together almost one thousand educators of the MST from all over the country under the theme "*Escola, Terra e Dignidade*" (School, land and dignity). The 1997 Meeting of Educators is significant for many reasons. The Meeting recognized rural educators and valorized the role that they had played in the struggle for agrarian reform.

This was also the space in which the idea of a National Conference on Rural Education emerged along with the idea of a federal literacy program that would be integrated with the process of agrarian reform. The ENERA meeting was the space in which the MST began to work with the Universities to develop a proposal for the creation of a government agency to expand and oversee the provision of education in the settlements that were a part of federal or state land redistribution programs (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). In the nineties, the MST had begun to seek out consultancies and partnerships with the University of Brasília (UnB) and other federal and state universities as well as organizations like UNESCO, CNBB and CONTAG to train educators and develop teaching materials for their literacy programs for youth and adults. The 1997 ENERA discussions with the UnB Working Group in Support for Agrarian Reform and fourteen other federal universities led to the drafting of a proposal for a national project of education for the settlements in the agrarian reform program. The *Reitor* (Vice-Chancellor/President) of UnB, Professor João Cláudio Todorov successfully negotiated with the Ministry of Agricultural Development for the program leading to the creation of PRONERA in 1998.

First National Conference on Rural Education

The First National Conference on Rural Education was held in Luziânia (in the state of Goiás) from 27-31 July, 1998. It was organized by the MST in collaboration with the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), and the University of Brasília with support from UNESCO and UNICEF. The Conference played a significant role in drawing political and popular attention to the continued failure of post-military democratic governments to address issues in rural education. It demonstrated the scope

and influence of civil society actors in the areas of land redistribution, agrarian reform

and rural education and the need to continue to mobilize on these issues. It also had the

effect of placing rural education on the agenda of social movements and trade unions who

had not previously been active on the question (Ação Educativa, 2004).   A Credo of

Rural Educators for Agrarian Reform emerged from this meeting that affirmed the

humanizing and transformatory potential of critical and democratic education for the

struggle of rural people: " We believe in rural basic education because it revives and

supports the struggle, the culture, the work, the life and the dignity of rural workers (in

Kolling et al, 1999)."

     Bernardo Mançano Fernandes (2002), a professor at the State University of São

Paulo (UNESP) and supporter of the MST declared that the Conference was historical

because it represented a recognition of the different struggles of rural peoples.[95] More

specifically, the First Conference recognized the multiplicity of literatures on rural

education, the realities of rural life and challenges to the dominant technical rationality

discourse which constructed questions of rural poverty and development in terms of the

most efficient way to deal with rural problems like poverty, unemployment, and social

unrest. The Conference contributed to significant changes in the meanings and

representations of rural identities.   It was decided that the word *rural* would be replaced

by the more inclusive term *o campo* to acknowledge the diverse groups and peoples that

make their home in the Brazilian countryside. The Conference also made another

important change in the language and discourse on rural education by differentiating

between schools physically located in the countryside (*escola no campo*) and schools *of*

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[95] Fernandes (2002) is also the head of the Working Group on Social Movements in the National Post-Graduate Association for Research in Education (ANPED).

the countryside (*escola do campo*). This distinction drew attention to the role of education in identity construction and cultural formation and argued for curricula and pedagogy that recognized and valued rural ways of life in all their historic and rich diversity (Fernandes, 2002).

The National Council of Education

Sustained pressure from social movements and civil society to address the question of rural education contributed to two crucial actions by the National Council on Education. At the end of 2001, the sub-committee on Basic Education (CEB) within the National Council on Education[96] released a report entitled "Operational Directives for Rural Basic Education" which was prepared by Professor Edla de Araújo Lira Soares who was at the time the representative of the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME) on the Sub-committee on Basic Education.

2001 Report on Operational Directives for Rural Basic Education

The Report constructed a critical history of the public policies for rural education through an analysis of Constitutional provisions and national education laws. Edla Soares (2001) made a detailed analysis of hegemonic urban-centric notions of development which underpinned fragmented and compensatory development policies for rural areas. She pointed out that the urban bias had contributed to two approaches to rural education. One emphasized the social integration or 'homogenization' of rural peoples in order to evolve into the urban. The second even more exclusionary and

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[96] In November 1995, a National Council on Education was created by Federal Law 9.131. It is constituted by 12 representatives each from the House of Deputies and the House of Senators and divided into two sub-committees – one on basic education (CEB, *Câmara de Educação Básica*) and another on higher education (CES). A list of nominees is developed by MEC in consultation with representatives of organized civil society and submitted to the President. The selection of the President is informed by considerations of Deputies and Senators who would represent regional diversity as well as the different levels of education system.

denigrating perspective, conceived of the rural as everything outside the physical limits

of the city where rural people exist to serve the urban economy. Soares (2001) It

concluded: "It is necessary to emphasize that the intention is not to debate numerical

questions – the indicators on rural education are the worst in respect to education – but to

demonstrate the importance of *o campo* as an inclusive social space and a new vision for

development (MEC, 2003, p.1)."

The report also underlined the need to consider alternative approaches to rural

development which had emerged out of social mobilizations which constructed an

affirmative/positive rural identity and culture, and claimed the right to land, work,

dignity, culture and education. The Report identified key actors to be involved in the

policy formulation process – social movements, state and municipal education councils,

the National Council for State Education Secretaries (CONSED), UNDIME, universities

and research institutions, the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development,

nongovernmental organizations and other entities involved in rural development and

education projects. The 2001 Report to the Basic Education Council of the National

Council on Education was followed by the passing of a resolution by the National

Council on Education in 2002 - a Resolution entitled Operational Directives for Basic

Education for Rural Schools (Resolution No.1, *Diretrizes Operacionais para a Educação*

Basica das Escolas do Campo).

2002 CNE Resolution: Operational Directives for Rural Basic Education

The Resolution consisting of sixteen Articles developed a framework of action

towards developing a national policy on rural education as envisioned by the 1996

Education Law (LDB). The Resolution provided federal, state, and municipal

governments with guidelines to adapt all levels of public education to the particular needs

of rural learners including preschool education, primary and secondary education,

education for youth and adults, special education, indigenous education, professional and

technical education, and the Normal Schools that prepared teachers. The Resolution

affirmed the uniqueness of rural schools and the need for rural basic education to be

responsive to current realities and concerns in rural areas (Article 2). Rural schools were

presented as autonomous entities and active participants in the development and

resolution of the problems of rural communities (Article 11). Specific recommendations

included:

- The development of pedagogy that was respectful of the right to equal and responsive to social, cultural, economic diversities of gender, generation and ethnicity and develops students capacity to learn and grow (Article 5);
- Flexibility in the organization of school calendars and the school year to make schools more responsive to the needs of rural students;
- Participation of rural communities in determining and monitoring the quality of education (Article 8-IV);
- Democratic management of rural schools involving the local community, social movements, government and other members of society as envisioned by Article 14 of the 1996 LDB (Article 10 and11);
- Development of programs to improve training and qualifications of rural teachers (Article 12 and 13); and
- Specific mechanisms for financing rural education in accordance with the provisions of the 1988 Constitution, 1996 LDB and FUNDEF (Article 14 and 15).

2002 Declaration for an Education of the Countryside

The Resolution containing the Operational Directives was an important victory

for those who wanted rural education included in the national development agenda as a

legitimate public policy issue.[97] More pressure was generated by the release of a

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[97] Despite the apathy of the Cardoso government as a whole, he National Council on Sustainable Rural Development, housed in the Ministry of Agricultural Development, would also include the revitalization of rural education as one of four strategic programmes in the 2002 National Plan for Sustainable Rural Development (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Though the plan was not realized, it was a sign that the issue

Declaration in support of basic rural education by a mixed group of nongovernmental and governmental entities in 2002 including rural educators, social movements, unions, university faculty and students, nongovernmental organizations, and federal, state and municipal government agencies. The document entitled "For an education of the countryside: Declaration 2002" (*Por uma educação do campo: Declaração 2002*) emerged out of a National Seminar on Rural Education (*Seminário Nacional Por Uma Educação do Campo*) organized around the theme of "Public policy, political identity and a pedagogy for rural schools" (*Políticas públicas, identitade política e pedagógica das escolas do campo*) which was held as a follow-up to the 1998 National Conference.

The document reiterated and expanded on the notion of a unique cultural and political identity for rural people:

> "The people of the countryside have their own cultural roots, a way of life and work, distinct from urban areas, which includes different perceptions and relationships with time, space, the environment as well as family, community, work and education. Our ways of existence are also our ways of being human...A new generation is being mis-educated for living in the countryside, losing their identity, roots and future. Children and youth have a right to learn the knowledge of their ancestors and to produce new knowledge so that they can remain in the countryside. (Seminário Nacional , 2002, p.139)."

Rural schools were envisioned as spaces of community. The Declaration supported the application of popular education practices and the critical pedagogies of Paulo Freire which placed the learner at the center of all educational projects. They also applied a broad definition of education that linked cultural values and practices, modes of production, work skills, equitable social participation and prevention of racial, gender-based and other kinds of social discrimination. The Declaration also stressed that rural education planning needed to be integrated with broader interventions for rural

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of rural education would remain on the federal agenda and that it was not solely the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

development including freedom from hunger (*de soberania alimentar*), sustainable agriculture and development, environment-friendly energy policies and conservation, and respect for cultural diversity.

The recommendations encompassed the scope and substance of reforms needed to improve the access and quality of rural education and were considerably more detailed than the Directives of the National Council of Education. These recommendations are summarized in Table 5.2 under the themes of teachers, pedagogical and curricular reform, reduction of illiteracy, and infrastructural and institutional development. In particular, the recommendations for infrastructure and institutional development highlighted the need for leadership on the part of the central government and clear definition of financing and accountability mechanisms in a decentralized education system.

The Declaration stated that local governments needed to provide pre-school/early childhood education (*educação infantil*) (0-6 years) as well as primary education (*educação fundamental*) for rural communities. The final years of primary and secondary education could be offered at the state or regional level, but institutions were to be located in rural areas and with guaranteed transport.   In addition, the Declaration presented nineteen specific recommendations for Lula's new government.

Table 5.2: Declaration 2002 - Key recommendations for a national policy for basic rural education

Theme #1: Preparation and valorization of rural educators
Implement a training program for all rural educators, at the level of secondary and higher education through agreements/partnerships with Secretariats, Universities, social movements and rural organizations (Proposal 1)

Special secondary level *Curso Normal* for rural teachers
    Degree courses in pedagogies of the land and alternative pedagogies
    Post-graduate courses in rural education
    Preparatory courses for government agents of rural development to work with communities and social movements

Hold public examinations for the selection of rural teachers (Proposal 6)
Provide all rural schools with the following (Proposal 9):

Libraries open to the community
    Toys and Playgrounds (*brinquedoteca*)
    Reading rooms with current publications that are open to the community
    Internet and video services for the community
    Materials and equipment for sports and leisure

Implement public policy that value the profession of teaching and rural teachers (Proposal 5)
Theme #2: Support for pedagogical innovation and reform
Provide incentives for research on the countryside, rural people, social movements and issues of rural education (Proposal 10)
Recognize innovative practices in *Escolas do Campo* (Proposal 14)
The use of a curriculum that is relevant to the needs and interests of rural students
Produce and edit teaching and pedagogical materials with a view to the diversity of identities in rural areas (Proposal 7)
Guarantee agro-technical schools and methods that are oriented towards the popular project for development of the countryside (Proposal 16)
Provide technical training at the secondary and higher education level that is designed to meet the needs of rural workers (Proposal 4)
Theme #3: Reduction of high indicators of illiteracy in rural areas, particularly among women
A policy on EJA for rural areas (Proposal 2)

MOVA for rural youth and prepare youth to be educators
    Offer EJA through rural primary and secondary schools
    Alternative EJA projects at both fundamental and secondary levels of education
    Offer courses that are responsive to the realities of different groups of people

Theme #4: Infrastructure and institutional development
Disseminate the Operational Directives for Basic Education in the Countryside to all municipalities and rural schools and implementation of policies at all levels (Proposal 11)
Create a Secretariat within MEC for coordination of rural education and to maintain dialogue with rural people and their organizations. Create similar secretariats at the state and municipal level (Proposal 12)
Hold seminars, workshops and study groups about rural education at municipal, regional, state and national level (Proposal 13)
Guarantee democratic management of education (administrative, financial and pedagogical) (Proposal 15)

Create a policy of financing for rural education, in all forms and at all levels, in keeping with the demands of social movements and indigenous people. Guarantee transfer of resources allocated for rural schools (Proposal 17)
Define the specific responsibilities of the different organs of the government (*poder publico*) in relation to finance for rural education (Proposal 18)
Guarantee the maintenance and expansion of PRONERA, including in camps, and with the view of becoming a public policy with its own fund (Proposal 19)

<u>Discussion</u>

This chapter has shown that interventions for rural education (primary, secondary and EJA) in Brazil continue to be fragmented, inadequate and disconnected from other educational interventions as well as from rural development and rural poverty alleviation initiatives in general. Under the administration of President Cardoso, the state directed education primarily towards creating technical competence to train human capital and secondarily towards social integration and citizenship building. The adoption of rights language by the state has not significantly interrupted employer- and market-oriented pressures towards the vocationalization and professionalization of secondary and technical education and privatization of higher education. In the nineties, the government handed over responsibility for skills development for workers and pre-employment vocational training almost completely to the private sector. The state has also almost completely abdicated from its obligations to illiterate youth and adults – the provision of education to this population is now dominated by nongovernmental organizations with questionable results. By focusing on changes in policy discourse and language, I have tried to show how political movements have gained access to power in a hostile political culture and oppressive hegemonic practices.

The Challenges for Civil Society

Social movements and NGOs have accumulated a vast body of knowledge and experience in alternative approaches to rural education, mainly nonformal education

(Ação Educativa, 2004). In different ways, these programs have addressed the challenges

confronting rural learners and to different degrees have incorporated the history, culture,

knowledge, and emotions that contribute to the lived realities of rural communities into

their curricula and pedagogy. This body of knowledge has been crucial in countering

dominant arguments that the problems of rural education mainly have to do with one-

room schoolhouses, inadequately trained teachers, and backward communities.

These civil society actors have also organized and mobilized in innovative ways

to gain recognition and support for a more equitable and participatory approach to

planning for rural education. National meetings and conferences organized by civil

society have de-centered the state in conventional political arrangements. These

alternative policy arenas constitute a new form of 'public space' where actors can

dialogue, debate, and mobilize on questions of rural education in the absence of support

much less leadership from the federal government:

> "The right to education is only guaranteed in the public space. Our struggle is in
> the area of public policy and the State should be compelled to become a public
> space. Social movements should be the guardians of these rights and the State
> should listen, respect and translate the demands of the rural people into public
> policy (Seminário Nacional, 2002, p.139)."

Initial victories for these social movements have come in the form of progressive

legislation. The new legislations acknowledge the body of knowledge that has been

produced by civil society as well as their demand to position education as central to the

political, economic and sociocultural development of rural communities. In turn, this

legislation has created spaces and opportunities for more political mobilization and

organization. In this sense, progressive legislation are a window into what Moacir

Gadotti (1997) refers to as the "permeability of the state".   The shift in political

arrangements means that legislative processes are no longer under the complete control of ruling elite and their supporters. Legislators are essentially politicians who are responsive to shifts in popular perception and discourse which have come about through new forms of collective expression of old and new social demands. The analysis of education reform therefore needs to be situated in the dialectic between the state and civil society (Morrow and Torres, 2003).

The discourse of the right to education has been adopted by some proponents of rural education to argue that rural learners and their communities have a distinct identity and are the subjects of history and rights (*sujeitos de história e de direitos*) and that they must remain central to the creation of a public policy on rural education (Ação Educativa, 2004). The language of rights has been effective in raising awareness and stimulating public debate about the political and ethical principles that underly state provision of education. However, rights language is not sufficient to ensure that states meet their obligations. There is a growing interest amongst education advocates about how to make rights justiciable and thus, enforceable. For instance, in May, 2005, the National Campaign for the Right to Education initiated legal action against the federal government for failure to comply with the provisions of the FUNDEF law. At the time of the action, the government had accumulated arrears in the sum of R\$ 19 billion to the National Fund. The Campaign has asked that the existing policy of calculating the minimum per student expenditure be declared unconstitutional.

In the current structural arrangements, the formulation and implementation of a national policy on rural development must take place under the direction of the Ministry of Education and the federal government. The civil society mobilizations discussed here

have been successful in placing rural education on the national agenda. However, the process of translating these state-civil society dialogues into policies which are then implemented by local governments will generate more challenges.

Policies of Sub-National Levels of Government

Historically, Brazilian governments have been reluctant to provide the kind of leadership needed to transform the deep inequities between rural and urban education and the development of rural education as a whole. In addition, during the Cardoso administration, the central government withdrew from the provision of literacy education and primary education system but continues to maintain control over the system through curricular reform and centralized evaluation (Leher, 2004).[98] The dominant orientation has been to meet the imperatives of economic globalization while maintaining 'conditions of governability' (Leher, 2004).

The lack of explicit direction on rural education has left states and municipalities free to choose whether or not to address rural education. The problems of rural education are conceptualized differently in different state legislation. In one approach, states included reference to local culture, art and environment in their education system without specific reference to rural education.[99] Other state constitutions were more direct and included specific provisions for rural basic education such as adapting the school calendar and curricula to be responsive to the local agricultural calendar as well as cultural practices of rural communities.[100] A few states made plans to expand rural

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[98] Roberto Leher (2004) writes "This is the map of ideas that constitutes a true *planetary educational apartheid*, lead by the World Bank."

[99] The Constitutions of Acre, Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso, Paraná and Pernambuco and not so directly in the Constitutions of Bahia, Minas Gerais and Paraíba (Soares, 2001).

[100] The Constitutions of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Paraíba , Roraima, Santa Catarina, Sergipe and Tocantins (Soares, 2001).

education in order to reach populations in the interior and to improve the status and preparation of rural teachers.[101]   A number of state governments also took on the obligation of providing an education which would professionalize agricultural workers.[102] In general, these provisions continued to be shaped by the dominant urban/industrial paradigm of education and development and were largely compensatory in nature (Soares, 2001). The only exception was the constitution for the state of Rio Grande do Sul which recognized that rural populations were entitled to social equality and that rural workers had equal rights to political liberty, and the right to work, land, health, and knowledge (Soares, 2001). Changes in the language of local legislation reflect the discursive shifts at the center but enforcement and oversight mechanisms for progressive policies remain weak. In this sense, the innovations in administrative and financial organization have done little to build local democracy or change the traditionally adversarial relationship between federal, state, and local departments of education.

Municipalities are exclusively responsible for primary education in rural areas but the Cardoso administration did virtually nothing to strengthen the institutional capacity of local governments to meet their obligations. Interventions consisted mainly of so-called public private partnerships for youth and adult education, and a limited increase in resources because of FUNDEF. The transfer of administrative autonomy to municipalities has been attempted repeatedly at various points in the last century. Without reform in the mechanisms of financial as well as administrative transfer, small, rural and poor municipalities will continue to struggle to provide education to their

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[101] The Constitutions of Amapá, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Sul, and Tocantins (Soares, 2001).
[102] The following states undertook to introduce or expand courses geared towards rural workers in technical, agricultural and commercial schools: Amapá, Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Pará, Rio Grande do Sul, and Rondônia (Soares, 2001).

constituents let alone create mechanisms that support democratic governance, community ownership of basic education, creating school support networks, and so forth. (Generally speaking, schools in large municipalities and large schools in general tend to have better conditions than schools in small municipalities and small- and medium- sized schools in general (Draibe, 1999).

Moreover, only the central government has the resources to address the entire scope of the challenges facing rural education today. For instance, only the central government has the resources to address the problem of insufficient information and continuous monitoring of rural education initiatives which obstruct long-term planning for rural development. Reports and evaluation studies provide education planners with quantitative and qualitative information on basic education activities in rural areas in terms of the diversity of local needs and management experiences as well as identify persistent problems and disparities (Lakin and Gasperini, 2003).

Expanding the Scope of Direct Democratic Participation

The EFA Flagship Initiative on rural education takes the position that policy-making for rural education and development should begin with rural communities and move upwards to incorporate districts, states, and the central government (FAO-UNESCO, 2003). The report states that partnerships at the national and international levels are helpful but the federal government must provide leadership in terms of equity and poverty reduction initiatives and coordination of links between rural education and rural development. NGOs, community associations, institutions of higher education, and the private sector are cited as important collaborators (but social movements are not mentioned).

The political rearrangements that have accompanied the re-democratization of Brazil have increased opportunities for organized civil society participation in policy processes. However, these changes do not necessarily facilitate the direct expression of social demands by excluded groups. During the Cardoso administration, civil society participation in the delivery of youth and adult education increased but was restricted to corporate foundations, public universities, and NGOs. The government was less open to engagement with radical members of organized civil society. The Minister of Education not only refused to meet with the MST but also with the National Campaign for the Right to Education. Neoliberal discourses of decentralization and civil society participation transferred only administrative responsibility for education; the central government did little to

Carlos Alberto Torres (2000, p.98) argues that when education only serves the function of technical competence, there results a "loss of solidarity built through welfare policies". Furthermore, he argues the structural constraints imposed by structural adjustments and policy preferences of neoliberal governments have created policy-making conditions where consensus is more remote and conflict is more likely. This presents problems for democratic theory and practice because "the construction of community in contemporary and fragmented capitalist society, given the exclusionary nature of capitalist development, demands the creation of social inducements – beyond individual ethics – to foster generosity and solidarity (Torres, 2000, p.99)." Current democratic institutions are struggling to represent and mediate the different interests that characterize multicultural societies. While there are problems with the current process of decentralization, it has also facilitated challenges to traditional authoritarianism that

pervade politics and policy making in Brazil and across Latin America. Specifically, the local election of municipal authorities, has created new possibilities for bottom-up democracy, territorial governance, and school autonomy (Gadotti, 1991; Kellman, 2000; Lindemann, 2005).

Critical and feminist scholars argue that social movements are the most vital part of organized civil society because they are both a source and a site for democratization of society as a whole (Alvarez et al, 1998; Morrow and Torres, 2003). In this scenario, the state though diminished remains key to the articulation of social interests and representation of unequal social groups and classes (Torres, 2000). The activities of movements like the MST bear out the fact that the process of transformation is complex and dialogic involving the consolidation of preceding institutional and symbolic victories (e.g. claiming rights guaranteed by laws) while simultaneously mobilizing to continue expanding the scope of progressive policies(Anyon, 2005). In the context of a decentralized public education system, the process of critical engagement with the state can look very different at the federal and local level. The next two chapters will explore the discourse and practice of education in the Landless Workers Movement.

Chapter VI: Practices of Education and Participation in the Landless Worker's Movement (MST)

Introduction

The last two chapters have examined the historical and institutional contexts of

rural education policy in Brazil. The dialectic between state and civil society over

reforms in public education combined with the broader context of the 'redemocratization'

of Brazil have expanded civil society participation in the formulation of education policy.

However, the struggle for a national policy on rural education is part of a larger 'popular

project' that seeks to claim the full rights of citizenship of the landless in the form of

direct and unlimited participation in all aspects of planning and development. Popular

social movements like the MST have asserted the political rights of socially marginalized

groups like the rural landless to participate in society as equals; a necessary component of

social arrangements that might be considered just and equitable (Fraser, 2001). In the

previous chapter, I discussed some of the ways in which these alternative policy

discourses have changed meanings and social understanding about rural communities –

their knowledge, culture and identity. Significant changes have occurred in government

education policy discourse reflected in the language on the right to education of rural

people and their right to construct their own education.

From a social-justice perspective, it is also necessary to include activist politics in

analyses of policy and education politics. The educational philosophies and practices of

the MST are a significant part of the resistance to dominant neoliberal models of

education and development. The alternative vision of development of the MST

encompasses a collective way of life; knowledge that is cultural and political and

integrates both manual and mental aspects of learning; and the construction of a politics

of solidarity based on respect for difference. In the previous chapter, I have explored the ways in which the activism of the MST has engaged with formal political and policy-making arrangements. I explored collective agency and institutional transformation in the context of progressive education policies and alternative policy arenas that explicitly address problems of unequal distribution of resources and social discrimination in public education. In this chapter, I will explore the ways in which the social practice of the MST opens up possibilities to redress associational injustices. Specifically, I will discuss the meanings and practices of participation in the educational arrangements and spaces of the movement and discuss the ways in which they foster individual as well as collective agency within the day-to-day educational and political work of the movement.

The politics of the Movimento sem Terra has been particularly effective in not just claiming the right to participation in education (and other public policy decision-making) but to determine what kind of education the rural landless people want. Along with the occupation of land, education has been a key site of contestation and mass mobilizations that put pressure on the government to comply with the rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

For the MST, the inequalities manifest in rural education are part of a larger set of oppressive practices and relations of knowledge and power that need to be incorporated in the formulation of policy problems. In other words, educational policy needs to be reframed in terms of lived realities of the landless in order to be truly inclusive and democratic. In this sense, the MST demands to be included and indeed to transform what counts as knowledge at the center of formal policy and political institutions (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005, p.74).

The idea of participation is central to the social practice of the MST; participation is a fundamental right for the landless who have been persistently excluded from society. Above and beyond claiming fundamental rights, the movement "aims to enable a still deeper form of participation, one in which the individual and the community have a real influence on the formation of those societal structures in which they are participating (McCowan, 2003, p.2)." The conception of participation here is an 'empowering' participation where "people have a genuine influence on decision-making and develop their own personal capacities in the process" and not an 'instrumental' participation that is used to implement policy without any real sharing of power (McCowan, 2003, p.3). For the MST, equality of participation is central to the work of creating a just and equitable society which is based on the collective production and appropriation of the material and spiritual goods of humanity and justice in the distribution of these goods (MST, 1999b, p.9).

Two processes are considered necessary by the MST to enable participation – the transformation of external and structural obstacles to participation such as institutions of governance and legislation as well as the gradual process of human development which enables people to claim rights and justice (McCowan, 2003). As we have seen in previous chapters, the MST has mobilized successfully in formal political arenas to change legislation and institutions of governance and administration. They have also taken full advantage of the openings created by progressive legislation to push for a more fundamental transformation of political institutional arrangements. Participatory processes are also deeply internalized in the organizational, decision-making, and pedagogical aspects of educational practice within the movement. Participation is also

understood in terms of access to particular knowledge that facilitates human development and understanding of social contexts and the wider world (McCowan, 2003). Therefore, education as a space and process of collaborative construction of knowledge also becomes a key site of radical democratization.

The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the growth, identity, objectives, and strategies of the movement. The second part describes the educational activities of the movement. The third section discusses instances and meanings of participation in the organization of education as well as pedagogy and popular education practices. It will attempt to show the ways in which participatory and critical pedagogies and governance in education lead to the politicization of individuals to act collectively for equality and social justice. The discussion of the educational philosophies of the MST are based on the writings of Brazilian academic and MST activist Roseli Salete Caldart who is part of the National Coordination for Education. Throughout the dissertation and in this chapter, I have also relied heavily on the writing of other academics who are MST supporters. They include Brazilian Bernardo Mançano Fernandes who has written extensively on the MST's struggle for agrarian reform; English scholar Tristram McCowan who has studied questions of participation within the movement; Liam Kane from Scotland who has studied popular education practices within the MST; Chilean sociologist Marta Harnecker who has researched and written one of the most detailed English-language accounts about the movement; Brazilian Júlio Emílio Diniz-Pereira who has studied the teacher education programs of the MST; and Brazilian Fernando Martins who conducted an indepth study of schools in MST settlements in the state of Paraná.

Growth of the Movement

Peasant movements were significant political actors in Brazil in the fifties and sixties.[103] These movements were brutally repressed by the military dictatorships that took power in 1964 and governed Brazil for almost twenty five years. With the decline of the military regime, the south of Brazil became the location for some of the most intense struggles for democracy and the rights of the landless.[104] As the power of the military waned, these movements mobilized and began to occupy unutilized or underutilized agricultural lands on the large latifundios – a strategy used in the sixties by the Peasant Leagues.[105] Intellectuals and leaders in the movement like João Pedro Stedile and Bernardo Mançano Fernandes talk about the strategy of non-violent occupations (*ocupação*) as a 'third solution' following the failure of migration to urban centers and agricultural colonies in the Amazonian regions to compensate for the displacement caused by agricultural mechanization: "This situation generated the need to find a third solution: the attempt at resisting in the countryside and the search for methods of struggle that would allow the peasants to obtain land where they lived. Those peasants who chose this last option became the social base for the MST (in Harnecker, 2003, p. 29)." Between 1979 and 2000, Brazil has witnessed some approximately 5200 settlements of land involving 569,000 families (DATALUTA, 2003) – Banco de Dados da Luta pela

[103] Three important peasant movements to emerge between 1950 and 1964 include the Peasant Leagues (*Ligas Camponesas*), the Union of Farmers and Agricultural Workers (ULTAB) and the Movement of Landless Farmers. The Leagues were the largest and most radical of these movements and employed the strategy of land occupation while the Catholic Church and the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB), also significant actors in the struggle for land, supported a graduate model of agrarian reform based on compensation and property titles. The First National Congress of Farmers and Agricultural Workers was held in 1961 and attended by delegates from the Leagues as well as Masters.   This meeting led to the creation of the national confederation of rural workers – CONTAG.
[104] Other landless movements grew out of communities of indigenous peoples, *quilombolos* and *remanascentes* (descendants of communities established by freed and escaped slaves).
[105] The 1964 Land Law directed the state to confiscate cultivable private property if it was unused, if there was a conflict between the owner and workers, and if there was environmental damage.

Terra - UNESP/ MST).   Of these, the MST has settled some 350,000 families and there

are at least 100,000 more distributed in 500 camps in 23 of 27 states (Harnecker, 2003).

The MST was officially founded in January 1984 in the southern state of Rio

Grande Do Sul at the First National Meeting of Landless Workers which was organized

by the Pastoral Commission of the Land. Two of the most significant formative

influences came in the form of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Commission of the Land

(CPT) and combative rural trade unions (Harnecker, 2003).   The CPT was inspired by

the Theology of Liberation that had emerged as priests and laymen became actively

involved in the struggles of peasants in Latin America.   The progressive[106] section of the

Brazilian Catholic Church was also central to the founding of the Movement for

Education at the Base (MEB) with the active participation of Paulo Freire.   The idea of

'combative rural unionism' emerged out of the dissatisfaction with the 'assistentialist'

nature of rural unions which had been used by the military regime and to a lesser extent

by the Catholic Church to regulate unionizing and pacify the countryside (Harnecker,

2003).   Rural unions had dentists and doctors and also sold seeds and veterinarian

products made by transnational corporations and played a key role in generating support

for the "green revolution" (Harnecker). [107] Rural unions also operated in very

bureaucratic ways with all requests to the government being channeled through INCRA.

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[106] Meanwhile, the conservative wing of the Catholic Church busied itself by organizing the Rural
Assistance Service and rural unions in an effort to stop the spread of socialist ideas about agrarian reform
(Harnecker, 2003).
[107] The military also passed the Statute of the Land which was a federal law intended to regulate the process
of occupation of property and agrarian reform.

Identity: To be Sem Terra

The struggle of the movement is not just for land redistribution and agrarian reform; the MST are motivated by a radical vision of an equal, democratic and sustainable society which requires a fundamental change in social institutions and relations. This is why the movement distinguishes between what it means to be *sem-terra* – a word used to refer to rural workers and the landless and *Sem Terra* – a distinct political and cultural identity that the members of the movement claim for themselves. The term Sem Terra was coined by the Brazilian media as a disparaging reference to the landless struggle:

> "The name was of no great importance, but the press already had a nickname for us. Every time we occupied some land the newspapers would say, 'There go the Sem Terra again'. Fine, since they called us that, we'd be the 'Movimento dos Sem Terra'. We were ideologically more inclined to call ourselves the 'Movement of Workers for Agrarian Reform', because the idea was to build a social force that would go beyond the struggle just for land itself. But history never depends entirely on people's intentions. We got our reputation as the 'Sem Terra', so the name stuck; the most we did was to invent the abbreviation—MST (Stedile, 2002, p.80)."

The MST appropriated the language and imbued the words with new, empowered meaning:

> "Sem Terra is our own name. The name of workers who are organized in the struggle for Agrarian Reform and for social transformation. Sem Terra is a sign of recovery of the dignity of men and women workers who are referred to as vagabonds and pushed around from one place to another. By choosing to enter the struggle, because of the MST, we have conquered this identity: we are Sem Terra – we are respected citizens. And the MST is nothing more than hundreds of millions of Sem Terra."[108]

The movement also supports the active participation of children and youth who

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[108] Translated from MST website - retrieved February 21, 2006 from http://www.mst.org.br/historico/semterra.html

164

have accompanied their families in all aspects of the struggle including occupations, marches and demonstrations. They are seen as subjects in their own right and encouraged to organize themselves and demand their rights particularly in the sphere of education (Diniz-Pereira, 2005). The children are referred to as the *Sem Terrinha* and an annual meeting of the Sem Terrinha and MST Youth has been held every year since 1996. Children aged between 8 and 14 years from camps and settlements around the country come together to study about the struggle for the land and their place in the struggle (Diniz-Pereira, 2005).

Objectives and Strategies for Mobilization

The First National Meeting in Cascavel, Paraná, January 21-14, 1985 was attended by about a hundred representatives from lands occupied by the MST in about thirteen states. The adoption of the term 'rural workers' for the movement was intended to distinguish between the movement of landless rural workers who occupied land to work it and the movement of urban landless people who occupied land to build homes (Harnecker, 2003, p. 39). It also gave the movement a distinct and autonomous political identity based on the idea of mass struggle rather than affiliation with existing actors:

> "Another important decision we took at the National Meeting was to organize ourselves as an autonomous movement, independent of the political parties. Our analysis of the farmers' movements of Latin America and Brazil taught us that whenever a mass movement was subordinated to a party, it was weakened by the effects of inner-party splits and factional battles. It was not that we didn't value parties, or thought it was wrong to join them. But the movement had to be free from external political direction. It also had to be independent of the Catholic Church. Many of the farmers were strongly influenced by the Church and argued that since it had helped us so much we should form a movement of Christians for agrarian reform. Fortunately, some of the most politically aware comrades were from the Church. They had had previous experience with *Ação Católica* or in the JOCs, and they themselves warned us against it—the moment a bishop comes to a different decision from the mass organization, the organization is finished. We

also decided then on the general tactics we would use. We were convinced that the fight for agrarian reform could only move forward if it were a mass struggle, so we had to try to involve as many people as possible. When we set out on a land occupation, we would try to take everyone along—fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, old people, children, the lot (Stedile, 2002, p.81)."

The representatives also adopted the CPT slogan – "land for those who work it"

with the understanding that the struggle for agrarian reform would have to go beyond the

'conquest' of land for individual families. They also articulated the general objectives of

the movement and identified ten main demands (MST, 1999). The primary objective was

to ensure that the land should be in the hands of those who work it but the movement also

committed to fight for a society without exploiters and the exploited. [109]   In the 2000

book entitled *Brava Gente* that consists of a conversation between Fernandes and Stedile

about the formation of the movement, the point is made that the "anti-imperialist

character" of the movement was apparent from the beginning: "It was not considered

right for foreigners to own land in the country if there was just one landless Brazilian left

(Stedile and Fernandes in Harnecker, 2003, p. 40)."

The MST would hold its First National Congress just one year later a few days

after the first democratically elected president in almost three decades - Tancredo Neves

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[109] The objectives of the movement provided both direction as well as strategies for organization and mobilization. Key strategies included to be an autonomous mass movement within the union movement to achieve agrarian reform; to organize rural workers at the grassroots; to encourage the participation of the rural workers in unions and political parties; to develop leaders and to build a political leadership of workers; and to connect with urban workers and workers from Latin America.   The demands included the legalization of the worker-occupied lands; establishment of a maximum area for rural properties; disappropriation of all latifundia; disappropriation of lands belonging to multinational companies; demarcation of indigenous lands, with the resettlement of poor occupants in areas of the region; investigation and punishment of all crimes committed against rural workers; end of government incentives and subsidies to Proálcool and other projects that benefit the landowners; change of government agricultural policies to give priority to the small farmer; immediate extinction of the GETAT and the GEBAM; and end of the colonization policy (MST, 1999). GETAT or the Executive Group of the Araguaia-Tocantins Lands and GEBAM or the Executive Group of the Lands of the Lower Amazon were created by the Brazilian government in the early eighties in response to the intensification of conflicts over land in the north-eastern regions. They were intended to coordinate, promote, and execute the laws necessary for land regulation in the Araguaia-Tocantins region but came to be seen (by the MST and other social movements) as part of the apparatus for the repression of the rural workers' struggle during the dictatorship.

assumed office.   This time there were 1500 delegates from 26 states at this national

meeting, as well as Catholic bishops and archbishops, Lutheran pastors, representatives

from the Central Workers Union (CUT), and the state government of Parana.   Ever since,

the movement convenes a National Congress every five years more or less and has

become a significant actor in the Brazilian political system. Moreover, the movement has

become an exemplar for socially marginalized groups in the region of Latin America and

around the world and received national, regional and international awards including the

Alternative Nobel Prize in 1991 from the Swiss Right Livelihood Foundation and an

education award in 1995 from UNICEF.

The MST vision for agrarian reform is based on a new agricultural model which

prioritizes the generation of jobs, production of food for the internal market, internal

control over the production of food, and the appreciation of life in the countryside.   The

MST has maintained ideological consistency not in small part because it has developed

processes to become self-reliant in terms of resources. The movement does accept

resources from a variety of sources including government agencies, nongovernmental

organizations, and individuals but the primary goal is to be self-sustaining as far as

possible and to use government resources for activities that should be state concerns.[110]

The current objectives of the movement that are stated on the MST website are: to

construct a society free of exploitation and where work is superior to capital; to ensure

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[110] Mass campaigns are regularly organized to solicit contributions from supporters in the urban middle class through shows, bonds, and sale of educational and cultural materials. The national and state coordination bodies are financed by collections from the settlements – each *settled* family is expected to contribute one percent of yearly production to the movement (Harnecker, 2003). The settlements are also encouraged to contribute up to four percent of their production (Harnecker, 2003). The actual percentage of both family and settlement contributions are determined within each settlement based on existing conditions. Settlements and cooperatives also make contributions in kind with food, vehicles and equipment, and liberating militants for other duties in the movement (Harnecker, 2003). Artists regularly donate their work to the Movement as a way to practice solidarity (Harnecker, 2003).

that land is for everyone and should be of service to all of society; to protect and promote the right to work for all with just distribution of land, income, and wealth; to work permanently for social justice and equality in economic, political, social, and cultural rights; to defend socialist and humanist values in social relations; and to combat all forms of social discrimination and seek equal participation of women.[111]

Along with the strategy of non-violent land occupations, the MST employs a range of strategies to put pressure on the government to redistribute land and promote a fair and just model of agrarian reform including land occupations, marches, demonstrations, public petitions, hunger strikes, camping outside government buildings, cultural activities, research, and publication.[112] However, the movement tends to be associated predominantly with the land occupations or 'conquests' where a group of families will occupy a piece of unutilized or underutilized land that can be legally reappropriated by the government for redistribution.[113] Families remain the basic unit for organizing the occupations with a minimum of twenty or thirty families and up to 10,000 people participating in an occupation. These *accampamentos* or camps are often in

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[111] Translated from the MST website www.mst.org.br. Retrieved February 21, 2006.

[112] The first occupations that took place between 1979 and 1985 were driven by the belief that it would be sufficient to occupy the land.   According to MST leader Stedile, this "romantic vision of production" focused on the survival of individual families who produced just enough to ensure their own survival (in Harnecker, 2003).   Peasants were not knowledgeable about the so-called modern production techniques and did not see themselves as part of a larger disenfranchised group or the working class as a whole (Harnecker, 2003).   Since then the movement has come to see the importance of creating conditions for them to work it and live on it through experimenting with different forms of cooperative farming and production.   They have addressed situated responses to the challenges of providing machinery, seeds, credits, technical know-how, marketing their products, and sustainable agricultural practices within a system governed by the rules of profit.

[113] It is important to point out that the strategy of 'occupation' is not unique to the MST. It is used selectively and strategically by many of the landless movements depending on conditions particular to each state including Catholic Pastoral Commission of the Land (CPT) and the Federation of Agricultural Workers (FETAG, *Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura*) and not limited to the MST. Land occupations restarted in 1979, marking a new phase in the struggle of the rural workers. The Ecclesiastical Base Communities (CEB's) linked to the Church were one of the most important entities that provided a space for communication, learning, and collective action for a new kind of social organization (Fernandes, 1996 in de Souza, 2000).

remote areas which are hard to access by road but many are also situated visibly by the

side of major highways. The families usually build and live in temporary structures

consisting of black rubber tenting and bamboo with no electricity, water or plumbing.

They will live in these structures until the government agency the National Institute for

Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) completes the reappropriation process and

'settles' a piece of land on each family. The settled communities are referred to as

assentamentos (settlements). One of the better known members of the MST National

Coordination, João Pedro Stedile (2002) described the complicated process of organizing

and carrying out an occupation of land as follows:

> "For two or three months, our activists visit the villages and communities in an
> area where there are lots of landless farmers, and start work on raising
> awareness—proselytizing, if you like. They explain to people that they have a
> right to land, that the constitution has a clause on agrarian reform but that the
> government doesn't apply it. Next, we ask the farmers if there is a big, underused
> land-holding in the region, because the law is clear: where there is a large
> unproductive property, the government is obliged to expropriate it. They get
> involved in the discussion, and start to become more conscious. Then comes the
> decision: 'You have a right to land. There are unused properties in the region.
> There is only one way to force the government to expropriate them. You think
> they'll do it if we write them a letter? Asking the mayor is a waste of time,
> especially if he's a landowner. You could talk to the priest, but if he's not
> interested, what's the point? We have to organize and take over that land
> ourselves.'
>
> When that decision is reached, we can bring to bear all the historical experience
> we've accumulated—which, from a political point of view, is simply what the
> Sem Terra Movement does: our role is to pass on what we've learnt, as a class. As
> far as land occupations are concerned, we know our business—not everything, but
> a lot. Everyone has to go, all the families together. It has to be done during the
> night to avoid the police. Those who want to join in have to organize themselves
> into committees of 15 or 20 people. Then, each committee—there may be twenty
> or so of them—has to hire a truck, and set up a kitty to buy canvas and stock up
> on provisions. It takes three or four months to get ready. One day there's a
> meeting of representatives from each of the 15-person committees to decide when
> the occupation will take place. The decision has to be kept secret. On the night,
> the hired trucks arrive, well before daybreak, and go round the communities, pick
> up all they can carry and then set off for the property. The families have one night

to take possession of the area and build their shelters, so that early the next morning, when the proprietor realizes what's happened, the encampment is already set up. The committee chooses a family to reconnoitre the place, to find where there are sources of water, where there are trees for shade. There are a lot of factors involved in setting up an open-air encampment. It's better if you're near a road, because then you don't have to carry so much on your back. This sort of logistical experience has a big influence on how an occupation works out. But success really depends on the number of families involved—the more there are, the less favourable the balance of forces for the proprietor and the police; the fewer the families, the easier it is to evict them, and the more limited the political repercussions will be.

By morning, the settlement is established—and the basis for conflict is sprung. It will be covered in the press, and the proprietor will apply to the authorities, asking for the squatters to be evicted. Our lawyers will arrive on the scene, arguing that the property is large and unproductive, and therefore in breach of the constitution. From the Sem Terra point of view, if we win it's because the INCRA makes an inspection of the property and decides to expropriate.[2] If we lose, it's because the proprietor has enough force at his disposal to carry out the eviction. If the police come to evict the squatters, we always try to avoid there being violence. The encampment gets shifted—to the edge of the road, for example— and we go on from there, to occupy another unused property. But the main thing for a group, once it's gathered in an encampment, is to stay united, to keep putting pressure on the government (p.82-83)."

The actual process redistribution process may take anywhere between several months or twenty years depending on the political commitment to the redistribution process in the particular state. Depending on how secure the communities in the camps feel, they may organize cooperative production units and other infrastructure but almost every camp will have one or more church[114] and some kind of educational activity. For the majority of families, the settlement also represents the first chance for access to credit, the banking system, and the financial market.

The MST has been criticized and branded as anti-national and persecuted by local landlords with support from politicians, bureaucrats, and the police. In the eighties, the

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[114] The Christian Church, Catholic, Protestant and other denominations, have a strong presence in rural communities. Fernanda told me about a camp with 70 families and 7 churches. Many times religion can become a factor of division and discord in a camp or settlement (Fernanda, personal communication, January 16, 2005).

landlords created the Rural Democratic Union (RDU) with the objective of defending the interests of large landholders. The RDU, in collaboration with transnational agricultural corporations, wield considerable influence with Brazilian politicians, and technocrats. Since 1980, the MST has counted the murders of 1671 militants[115] and the imprisonment of 2376 more.[116] The repression and the violence peaked in the late nineteen nineties during the Cardoso administration and was the most intense in the Northeast region of Brazil in the states of Bahia, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, and Pará. Mainstream mass media, most notably the magazine *Veja*, has been consistently hostile to the movement by either ignoring or portraying their protests and demands as disruptive and threatening the interests of the ordinary Brazilian (Stedile, 2002). The movement devotes a significant amount of its time and resources to providing its own media coverage through email announcements (*Últimas do MST*), a fortnightly electronic newsletter (*MST Informa*), a monthly newspaper available in print and on the World Wide Web (the 24 year old *Jornal sem Terra*), a bi-monthly magazine available in print and on the World Wide Web (*Revista sem Terra*), and radio programs produced in collaboration with the Catholic University in Santos (*Vozes da Terra*).[117]

<div align="center">Education in the MST</div>

For the MST, cultivating knowledge is a fundamental responsibility - to educate oneself: "To not know is to not see. And who does not know cannot be a leader (MST, 1989 in Caldart, 2003)." The importance of 'study' (*estudos*) was recognized early in the process of developing a philosophy and practice of education. Initial discussions on education focused on traditional classroom-bounded conceptions of what to teach and

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[115] Retrieved February 13, 2006 from http://www.mst.org.br/biblioteca/assassinato/ass89-99.html

[116] Retrieved February 13, 2006 from http://www.mst.org.br/biblioteca/presos/presos8904.htm

[117] Retrieved February 13, 2006 from http://www.mst.org.br/informativos/indice.html

how to teach it. From there, the movement has come to understand the work of 'study' as having to do with creating an interpretation of reality that enables transformation; it is vital to the development and empowerment of the 'social subject' (Caldart, 2003). Schools are important but not the only site of development for the Sem Terra subjects.[118] Caldart (2003) writes that the Sem Terra are wont to say that they would like for their children to learn *in* schools what they themselves had to learn *out* of school and much later in life including what are their rights and how they can organize and struggle to claim these rights.

The MST strives to create a culture of study throughout the movement.   Every aspect of MST practice, including education, is shaped by the desire to politicize, raise critical awareness, and encourage the emergence of 'subjects' of change (Kane, 2000). One of the key characteristics of the movement is the seamless interaction between education, schooling, and training - "... Training in the MST is no longer only the political and ideological training of the young and adult landless activists; education is no longer only schooling of the camped and settled children; training can also take place in the school; education does not take place only in the school; training and education are historical tasks, over a long term, that have in common not only the preparation of people for immediate action but also an horizon of generations (Caldart, 2000, p. 179)."

Democratizing access to information and sharing of knowledge have been concerns from the beginning. Popular education practices were first used in relation to political education of activists, and to train farmers in methods of sustainable and organic agricultural cultivation, marketing, credit etc. Important principles that guide political

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[118] "This kind of study is not always possible in schools but the school can be a space in which to inculcate this habit and discipline for study, especially for the younger generations (Caldart, 2003, p. 68)."

organizing and training include permanent ties with the masses; class struggle; division of work; collective direction; discipline[119]; formation of cadres and the development of a spiritual-cultural ethos - *mística* (Stédile, 1997 in de Souza, 2000). The training courses focus on economic and political analysis, the position and proposals of the MST on questions of agrarian reform and development and are developed and carried out in partnership with university academics who support the MST. Cultural practices and performances – some of which are referred to as *mística*- are an integral part of the process of raising awareness and politicization through the use of music, poetry, literature, documentaries and visual media, and the Theater of the Oppressed.[120]

The earliest efforts to educate children occurred in the 1980s when individual camps created their own schools with whatever resources they had on hand. These early educators were clear that their curricula and pedagogy should reflect the goals of the movement and counter the urban-centric education provided in government schools. Today, there are Coordination Sectors for Education at every level of the organizational structure from the camps and settlements to the National Coordination. The Education Sector works on three fronts – primary education, early childhood education (provided by *cirandas*) and education for youth and adults. It also implements training and continuing education programs for rural literacy educators – programs that integrate teacher education with modes of production, a value for local culture; and to skills to conduct research and scholarship that supports these goals (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

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[119] The idea of discipline include punctuality at meetings, respect for collective decisions, and control of vices such as alcohol which is banned in the camps and settlements (de Souza, 2000).

[120] An excerpt from the MST anthem that reinforces the idea of struggle, participation and conquest – "We are weaving our liberty, strong arms that rip the ground, under the shadow of our courage, we will unfurl our rebellion and we will plant this land as brothers" (de Souza, 2000).

The educational activities of the movement are spread throughout the country. It has 1800 of its own schools with 160,000 students which have been officially recognized and receive state funding (McCowan, 2003). The movement has developed mobile schools (*Escola Itinerante*) which move as the children move with their families. The MST's own Institute for Capacity-Building and Research on Agrarian Reform (ITERRA, *Instituto de Capacitação e Pesquisa da Reforma Agrária*), also provides training and capacity –building for at least 3000 people every year on subjects ranging from teacher training to administration of cooperatives . In January 2005, the movement inaugurated the *Escola Florestan Fernandes* in São Paulo, a national university-style institution which will offer courses in agriculture, political education, and leadership and social sciences. In addition, there is an effort to share information on educational experiences from around the country through annual meetings, pedagogical collectives and continuous development of educators, orientation and training for research, and publications and to keep a continuous conversation going between theory and practice.

Critical Pedagogy and Curricula

The MST pedagogy is constituted through 'praxis' – the combination of theory and practice – about how human beings learn and develop. In the context of the struggle for land, justice, and social transformation, the educational and political work of the MST is situated "at the limit between humanization and dehumanization" because it seeks to transform a long history of oppression of rural peoples (Caldart, 2002). It is therefore a 'pedagogy of social struggle' combined with a 'pedagogy of the land' and a 'pedagogy of history' (Caldart, 2002). Over the course of the last eighteen years, the pedagogy and curricula of the MST has evolved through reflection based on their experiences. Caldart

(2002) enumerates nine pedaogogical lessons on how the work of education is to humanize – to cultivate learning to be a human being:

- People are the greatest value produced and cultivated by the MST
- People are educated by learning to *be*
- People are educated in the actions they perform and the works they produce
- People are educated by producing and reproducing culture
- People are educated by living values
- People are educated by learning how to solve problems
- People are educated by learning from the past to plan for the future
- People are educated in collectivities
- The educator educates by conduct

Class is at the center of social analysis but there is increasing engagement with questions of identity and difference. Issues of patriarchy and gender discrimination have been explicitly addressed in the objectives of the movement and through the creation of a Sector for Gender. These strategies will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. No similar strategies have been developed to engage with the racial and religious differences in the communities which are a source of prejudice and conflict.

The belief that social reality should be the foundation of all knowledge production requires a dialectic relationship between theory and practice – the curricula is constructed out of the realities of the community which include the identity of being landless, agricultural work, and rural values and ways of life. There is an organic link between educational, political, and production processes; a common methodology for 'training' and 'teaching'; democratic management and self-education by learners; and an educator who conveys a love for life – "he/she who does not love life cannot teach how to live" (MST, 1996). In particular, the incorporation of cooperative and manual work underlines the rejection of hierarchies of knowledge that perpetuate manual-mental divides in learning. It is also a rejection of individualistic, dependent, and competitive

environments that dominate formal schooling, and an affirmation of the values placed by the Sem Terra on collaboration, solidarity and autonomy (Diniz-Pereira, 2005).

The MST curricula, pedagogy and assessment is constructed by the learners around 'generating themes' such as: their settlement, the struggle for land, the culture and history of the struggle, their work in the settlement, the relationship with the environment, health problems, and cultivation of the movement's *mística* (spirituality or ethos). These facilitate collective knowledge production which is situated and participatory. (They also incorporate the requirements of the Curriculum Parameters provided by the federal and state government.)

Occupation of Public Primary and Secondary Schools

One of the first challenges facing the national and state level sectors was providing children in the camps some form of basic education (Harnecker, 2003). In some areas this meant access to the first four years of primary school. In others it meant supporting the efforts of the settlement to construct and manage their own school – the earliest schools were formed in 1982 in the camps of *Encruzilhada Natalino* and *Anoni* in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, these schools were intended to be "different" from the beginning and were inspired as much by the ideas of Paulo Freire as they were by the experiences of educators and families living within the struggle for land. In both cases, local communities created their own schools while negotiating with local government for 'official' schools – a process that usually takes years (Harnecker, 2003). This process has come to be known as the 'occupation' of primary schools. If there is a school in or near a Sem Terra camp or settlement, the movement will organize to pressure local government to allow the use of the Pedagogy of the Land in the school. If there are no

schools nearby, the community establishes their own school, and then organizes to pressure the municipality to recognize the school. The effectiveness and significance of these occupations will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Youth and Adult Education

The history of rural education policies presented in previous chapters has shown that the initial focus was on agricultural training institutes and, more recently, on universalizing access to primary education. Neither institutions for rural basic education or traditional agricultural education and training have stepped up to meet the challenges of the new social and economic conditions facing the expanding numbers of 'disposable people' – in large part inadequately schooled rural youth and adults.

Levels of literacy in the agrarian reform camps and settlements

There is a paucity of information on levels of literacy in the population that is involved in the agrarian reform program. Of the approximately five million adolescents living in rural areas, an estimated ten percent live in the camps and settlements created by the Agrarian Reform program (MST, 2003). The MST (2003) estimates that at least twenty percent of the adolescents in their camps and settlements are out of school and the numbers are much higher in the newer and more isolated communities and in the youth population.

In 1996, a census conducted by INCRA found that almost forty percent of the household heads in the agrarian reform settlements had only one year of schooling while another forty percent reported between one to four years of schooling (Andrade and Di

Pierro, 2004).[121] As Table 6.1 shows, less than three percent had any secondary

education and none of the household heads had any higher education.

Table 6.1: Level of education for heads of households on federal settlements (Source: INCRA, 1996)

Level of Education	Absolute numbers	Percentage
Illiterate	46,577	29.5
Partially literate	15600	9.8
Primary School (Grade 1- 4)	61,689	39.1
Primary School (Grade 5 – 8)	16,490	10.5
Secondary education	3720	2.4
Higher education	295	0.0

A 2003 census by INCRA provides more information on the regional differences

in levels of education amongst heads of families in the settlements.[122] As shown in Table

6.2 below, the highest rates of illiteracy can be found in the north and north-eastern

regions of Brazil. Less than one percent of these adults have any kind of higher or

technical education. The table also shows that despite the high numbers of people (more

than 50 percent in all regions) who have received some amount of primary education,

levels of literacy remain very low – below ten percent in all regions.

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[121] The First Agrarian Reform Census conducted by INCRA in 1996 covered 80% of the federal settlement families, approximately 161566 families in 24 states. The Census only had information on the level of education of the head of the household (*titulares*) defined by INCRA as the person to whose name land is allotted.

[122] These statistics are based on a December 2003 survey by the Information System of the Settlement Projects of the Agrarian Reform Program (SIPRA), part of INCRA which counted 502828 families distributed in 6175 settlements.

Table 6.2: Level of education for household heads on federal settlements, in percent (Source: Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004)

Region	Illiterate[123]	Literate[124]	Primary education	Secondary Education	Higher	Technical	Other	Total
North	23.4	7.6	61.8	4.8	0.1	0.06	2.1	100
Northeast	29.2	6.7	58.2	3.2	0.1	0.1	2.5	100
Southeast	16.2	6.6	72.5	7.2	0.3	0.3	3.8	100
South	15.6	2.7	77.5	5.1	0.1	0.1	1.1	100
Central-East	13.3	3.1	66.5	5.8	0.2	0.08	0.4	100

As discussed in previous chapters, the absence of a national policy for youth and adult education (EJA, *Educação de Jovens e Adultos*) has increased fragmented interventions that focused on functional literacy and ignored the diverse challenges and needs of learners, particularly rural youth and adults. Negotiating with the state for a national policy on rural education and a national policy on literacy programs for youth and adults are key issues in the struggle: "When the government does not have specific policies, the MST fights for programs (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2004)."

The MST approach to youth and adult education

The Manifesto of the First National Meeting of Educators for Agrarian Reform held from July 28-31, 1997 in Brasília declares: "We consider that the eradication of illiteracy is the duty of the state and also a question of honor." Social movements and other grassroots based groups like the MST view education and specifically literacy as critical to their struggle to challenge dominant epistemologies as well as to value subjugated knowledge and identities. From the perspective of education as liberation,

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[123] Zero years of formal schooling
[124] Zero years of formal schooling

literacy education for youth and adults go beyond basic skills in coding and decoding (the dominant focus of 'functional literacy' approaches) to engage critically with questions of meaning and interpretation that inform perceptions of learners reality (also referred to as post-literacy) (Stromquist, 1997[125]).

The literacy education programs of the MST have reached an estimated 30,000 youths and adults in 23 Brazilian states (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004). Along with the MST's own Institute for Capacity-Building and Research on Agrarian Reform (ITERRA, *Instituto de Capacitação e Pesquisa da Reforma Agrária*), the federal agency INCRA, and the federal literacy program PRONERA, public universities have played an important role in the development and implementation of their literacy programs. MST educators go through a two-stage training process: the initial teacher training for secondary-level education (*Magistério de Nível Médio*) and then courses in the "Pedagogy of the Land". National directives for youth and adult education within the movement were formulated in 1997 and a substantial body of research and reflection has been compiled by the research and publication wing.

Sem Terra Educators

The work of education begins with the premise that the movement is a collective and that people should be educated in collectivities where everybody is at the same time educator and educated (Caldart, 2002b). Educators are expected to promote participation in education and work collaboratively with the community. In this way, the MST approach to basic education regards both learners and educators to be 'pedagogical subjects'. There have been a number of positive developments from this approach to the

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[125] In the case of MOVA in the state of São Paulo, Stromquist (1997) reports that grassroots groups viewed literacy as an important instruments for their struggle.

training of educators (Caldart, 2000). It has provided rural educators with a new collective identity that recognizes and values the work that they do but also goes beyond their identity as 'teachers'.

Along with recognition and respect, the MST places a great deal of responsibility on the educators that work in Sem Terra primary schools and the youth and adult education programs. The educator is expected to educate by conduct – "to be an educator is, therefore, a way of being, a way of being with the people that is a living message of values, convictions, feelings, of a conscience that moves us and that we claim to defend in our organization (Caldart, 2002b)."

The training of educators is also a highly participatory process. The design and implementation of teacher training courses are the responsibility of the student-teachers. (Caldart, 1997; Diniz-Pereira, 2005). McCowan (2003) concludes that teacher participation serves two objectives – to give the educators a strong sense of identification with the community and the movement and to create a cooperative, efficient and committed body of workers.

Selection and training of EJA educators

The majority of Sem Terra educators work in the areas of preschool and youth and adult education. There is no formalized process of selection of educators: "This process of selection is more or less a process of natural selection. Interested people, people who express interest when the camps are organized or if they organize educational activities by themselves (Fernanda, personal communications, January 6 2005)." Once people from the community come forward and express an interest in being an educator, the state coordination organizes training for educators.

Knowing how to read and write is a requirement for the EJA educators but not for the cirandas necessarily:" For pre-school education – people need to like children, they know how to talk to children [laughs], to negotiate. So there is not much emphasis on their *escolaridade* (level of schooling) (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)." EJA educators have usually completed all or the first level of primary school and less often middle school (*ensino medio*). Teachers who work in the government primary schools must have completed *ensino medio* and go through a teacher training and certification process (*curso normal*). What is absolutely essential for all MST educators is the approval and trust of the community that they work in. "Good relations with the community" are vital and valued over the level of education – "People with a high level of schooling are not always the best people as educators (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)."

The duration of the training is determined by how long educators can be away from their homes and the availability of resources at any given point in time: "For us to do a training where people get some knowledge and leave with motivation to work – we need at least four days. The longer the better but four days are needed to do good work (Fernanda, personal communications, November 11 2005)." The early training focuses on the history and principles of education in the MST and is designed to animate and motivate the participants in a way that they commit to continue to learn through study and research. Theory is introduced later along with planning and research methodology. When there is time there are also trainings on themes or subject areas. There is a loosely structured curriculum based on fixed themes like the history of the MST, mathematics, instruction, environmental education. Educators also discuss about what else they would

like to include in their own training: "Every person invited to participate in the training and courses has autonomy. People are very interested to talk about the environment, the organization of production in the camps, government policies for agricultural reform in general (Fernanda, personal communications, November 11 2005)."

After the initial training the educators continue to study through directed readings where they read and analyze selected texts. These study groups are not limited to the literacy educators but are considered vital for all militants and are present at all levels of the movement. Part of the collective study activity is the keeping of a diary or some kind of reflective writing. The learners also keep a journal about what they are learning.

Educators are also required to write a report on each meeting that describes how they planned and carried out their lessons. This report includes the topic for the lesson (*temas geradores*), how people responded and reflections by the educator on their experiences. These reports and study groups are a part of the system of support and supervision. Educators from different camps and settlements also meet regularly for joint planning and evaluation.

<u>Participation in MST Education</u>

The MST emerged as a response to the systematic and persistent exploitation and exclusion of the landless. The movement slogan "Occupy, Resist, Produce" speaks to the goals of organizing marginalized rural peoples to gain access to and participate in the political, economic, and social arrangements that embody the rights of citizenship. The educational project of the MST is a project of liberation, cultural resistance and transformation into a more radically participatory democratic society. More specifically, there are three discernible dimensions to the educational project of the Sem Terra: the

recovery of the dignity of the rural landless; building a collective identity for political action that is respectful of diversity; and an engagement with knowledge or schooling for all the different generations within the movement that addresses broad concerns of human development and the training of activists (Caldart, 2002). The structures and practices that constitute education in the movement are vital spaces for democratization: "To consider democracy a pedagogical principle means, according to our educational framework, that it is not enough for students to study or discuss it; they need also, and most importantly, to experience an arena of democratic participation, educating themselves for social democracy (MST, 1999a, p. 20)."

The following discussion will show the ways in which notions of radical participation underpin philosophy, pedagogy, and organization of education within the movement. First, I will discuss the notion of subjecthood that centers MST educational philosophy and pedagogy which affirms individual agency and at the same time constructs heterogeneous subjectivities that enable collective resistance and action including the right to determine one's own education. Second, I will discuss the participatory structures and mechanisms for collective-decision-making within the internal organization of the movement. I will describe the internal organization of the Education Sector, democratic processes that embody the selection and evaluation of State Education Sector Coordinators, and the culture of participation that shapes the relationship between the State Education Coordinator, educators, and the communities to show the ways in which a culture of deep participation and collective decision-making pervades all aspects of education. Third, I will discuss the ways in which these notions of

democratic participation have influenced relations of gender within the social spaces of the movement.

Participation as Development of 'Subjecthood'

The Sem Terra are the people who feel the effects of systematic neglect of rural poverty, exploitation and discrimination. It is a reality that they have collectively chosen to resist and in this way they are 'subjects of their own change'. They have chosen to It reject market-defined notions of citizenship, education, and development which support the practice of educational and social security '*pacotes'* (handouts) for rural areas. Caldart (2002) describes this understanding of subjecthood as:

> "The subjects of *educação do campo* are the people who feel the effects of this perverse reality but who cannot resign themselves with it. They are the subjects of resistance in and of the *campo*: subjects who struggle to continue to be agriculturalists despite the agricultural model which is more and more exclusionary; subjects of the struggle for land and for Agrarian Reform; subjects of the struggle for improved working conditions in the fields; subjects of the resistance of the lands of the *quilombos* and their own identity and inheritance; subjects of the struggle for the right to continue to be indigenous and Brazilian, through demarcation of lands and respect for identities and social rights; and subjects of as many other cultural, political and pedagogical resistances (2002, p.29)."

As subjects with agency, the right to education has to do not just with access to educational programs but the "the right to think about the world beginning from your own location/place" (Fernandes, 2002, p.98). As discussed in the previous chapter, *o campo* –literally the countryside- is as much a social location as it is geographical. The subjects of *o campo* are the subjects of the specific social relations that constitute life in the countryside -- "in their different and common identities; these are people of different ages, they are families, communities, organizations and social movements (Caldart, 2002, p.27)."

185

The Sem Terra therefore claim the right to an *educação do campo* – an education of and for the countryside. People have the right to be educated in the place that they live in. In addition, they have the right to an education that is conceived of from their location, with their participation and connected to their culture and their human and social necessities (Caldart, 2002, p.26). Rural schools and rural educators must enable situated processes of human development not just in the school, but in the family, community and movement as a whole (Caldart, 2002).

Subjecthood and collective action and resistance

Another related objective of the movement is to prepare people to live and act collectively for social justice and equality. The individual remains the central focus but learns to think of herself as "the subject of relationships, with other people, with collectives, and with a particular social and historical context (MST, 1999b, p. 23).   It is in this sense that being part of collective action and collective resistance is in and of itself a learning experience because "actions set in motion a fundamental pedagogical element which is the interaction between people, how they behave amongst each other, which is measured by the tools inherited from those who have produced other tools before [culture] (Caldart, 2002, p.3)."

The MST and other popular social movements have begun the work of constructing new, heterogeneous subjectivities that enable the richly diverse communities[126] that locate themselves in o campo to claim a collective identity. It is an

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[126] The groups that comprise rural Brazil can primarily be differentiated based on differences of occupation and geographical location but constitute a rich cultural diversity including: *agricultores* (farmers), *quilombolas* (descendants of farming communities founded by Africans who escaped from slavery), *povos indígenas* (indigenous peoples), *pescadores* (fishermen), *camponeses* (country people), *assentados* (settlers or occupiers of unutilized land), *reassentados* (re-settlers), *ribeirinhos* (riverside dwellers), *povos da floresta* (people of the forests), *caipiras* (provincials), *lavradores* (ploughman), *roceiros* (country worker),

186

understanding of collectivity that is predicated on social difference: "These differences do not wipe out our common identity, we are one people, we are a part of the Brazilian people that live in the countryside and who historically have been victims of oppression and economic, political and cultural discrimination. Our perspective should be to dialogue: we are different and we come together as equals to fight together for our rights (Caldart, 2002, p.31)." A social practice based on conscious and continuous dialogue across social difference is again underpinned by participation.

Participation in Organization and Decision-Making

The MST is organized in 23 out of 27 states in the Brazilian federation. The movement is organized into coordination sectors at every level from occupation camps, settlements, state, regional and national. There are sectors for Political Formation or Training, Human Rights, Education, Culture, Gender, Health and most recently, the sector for Media or Communications, Production, and the Environment (Harnecker, 2003). [127] Formal decision-making bodies within the movement include the National Congress, the National Coordination, Regional and State Coordination bodies for every sector; the National Direction and State Direction bodies; and Coordination bodies for as many sectors as possible within the settlements and camps (de Souza, 2000). The members of each group are elected at the national, state, and regional meetings and their performance is collectively evaluated by their peers as well as communities every year.

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sem-terra (people without land), *caboclos* (literally copper-colored), and *bóia-fria* (agricultural dayworker) (Caldart, 2002).

[127] The Formation Sector works with questions of political organization, training of militants, and struggles for social justice in other countries. Along with the multimedia activities discussed previously, the Communication Sector in the camps and settlements are responsible for the dissemination of information about land conflicts and interacting with visitors etc. The Production Sector is responsible for the organization of community farms, farm credit, and all activities related to agricultural production.
The MST website provides detailed information on the national level activities of most of these sectors - http://www.mst.org.br/setores/setores.html

There are frequent state-level meetings and the National Congress is organized every five years. In the camps and settlements, sector Coordinators meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly depending on the nature of the problems faced by the community.

In the Education Sector, there are four participatory structures/mechanisms at the level of individual communities that have emerged through the experiences of the movement (McCowan, 2003).[128] First, the 'general assembly' is composed of all the members of the community, meets once or twice a year and discusses and approves the overall plan for the school as well as other significant or controversial matters. Opportunities for participation by community members include working on projects for school improvements; helping to maintain the memory of the struggle; inviting teachers to take part in community events; giving technical help to the school; contributing their skills to the learning in school; using the school space for meetings and courses; and adopting the school as part of the community. Parents are more closely involved through the 'school council'. They participate in day-to-day decision-making, regular evaluation of the educational practices; and mobilization to support the school.

In primary and secondary schools, the 'education team' is composed of a representative number of teachers, pupils and community members and meets monthly. This is known as a 'school council' where it is legally possible for the school to be managed collectively through the participation of students and the community. This is the body that is responsible for overall planning and implementation. As is the practice

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[128] This information is in the following MST publications - MST (1995) *Como Fazer a Escola que Queremos: o Planejamento* (How do we create the school we want?: A Plan) *(Caderno de Educação no. 6).* São Paulo MST Setor de Educação and MST (1999) *Como Fazemos a Escola de Educação Fundamental* (How do we create a primary school?) *(Caderno de Educação no. 9). Veranópolis: ITERRA.*

throughout the movement, community representatives are chosen by direct vote by the community as a whole and are accountable to the general assembly. The pupils are generally chosen by their classmates, and teachers are also represented. Third, the 'teachers' collective' involves all the teachers, and usually meets once a week to organize the day-to-day running of the school, including lesson- planning, special activities and the cross-curricular themes of study. Fourth, 'pupils' collectives' contribute to the overall planning and organize tasks for which the pupils have responsibility, such as the school pharmacy, meals, or assemblies. The age of the representatives and the selection procedure depend on the individual community. In addition, regular meetings are organized for educators and sector Coordinators from different states and regions to share their experiences. The National Education Sector is constituted of representatives from each state elected by state Coordinators.

Selection and Evaluation of State Coordinators of Education

State Education Coordinators are nominated by the camps and assentamentos. All the Coordinators in the state meet together once a year to evaluate each other. In these annual meetings, the camps and settlements also indicate their choices for new State Coordinators for each sector. These proposals are then discussed in the bi-annual meeting with the nominees. The nomination and selection process take place every two years at the meeting of the State Coordinators.

Fernanda herself was nominated to be State Coordinator of Education in 2003. She was transferred to Rio de Janeiro in 1996 from the state of Parana as part of an internal reorganization process that was intended to strengthen the coordination of the movement in RJ. At the time of her nomination, she was State Coordinator of Production

for the state of Rio de Janeiro. Though her training and education is in agricultural production she has always been interested in education and worked with programs for youth: "Along with production I have always followed the discussions about education. Directly and indirectly. So it was not very difficult (to become Coordinator). I did not know so much about the technical issues and was not very experienced – so sometimes I would have to ask" (December 2004).

The evaluation process and decisions about changing Coordinators are also closely linked to feedback about the Coordinator from the camp and settlement communities. Coordinators are evaluated annually and biannually at the State-level meetings where decisions are taken about who should continue and be replaced are taken every two years. Fernanda described the evaluation process in the following way (personal communications, November 11 2004): "My evaluation was done by a group that we have – a group where all the Sector Coordinators meet. Everybody evaluates everybody for all the sectors. All the Sector Coordinators – are always in the camps and settlements. So you can see how people think about the work of the Sector and the Coordinator. All the evaluations are done with the person present. You cannot be evaluated if you are not there [laughs]. You have to listen. "

Fernanda could not share any of the documentation process involved but some of the criteria that figured in the evaluation discussion included – the quantity of partners that a Coordinator is able to cultivate, her work as a whole, the effort made by the Coordinator, ability to work collaboratively, and adherence to the principles of the movement.

State Education Coordinators are responsible for local organization of educational activities and to support communities in the camps and settlements to democratically and collectively resolve their problems. They maintain channels of communication between the community, state and national coordination bodies as well as government and other civil society representatives such as unions, NGOs and universities. They usually participate in training courses which prepare them to effectively organize at the grassroots or 'base' of the movement. However their role is best explained by the words "*accompanhar*" which means literally to accompany and "*articulação*" or literally to connect (Fernanda, personal communication, November 5 2004). The word *accompanhamento* (accompanying) figures repeatedly in the MST discourse as well as the discourse of other progressive civil society organizations. For Fernanda, her work as coordinator has to do with everything that brings people to "be together, to participate collaboratively." This includes a number of different kinds of 'articulation' between the movement, representatives of the state, and other members of civil society as well as facilitating this sense of connection and solidarity within the camps and settlements in the state. In relation to the state, the State Education Coordinator negotiates with municipalities for "spaces in which to be heard and to discuss [MST] proposals (Fernanda, personal communication, November 5 2004)." She attends seminars and conferences organized by the government and universities and disseminates this information to the base. This relationship will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The relationship between the State Education Coordinator, educators and the communities provide important insights into the ways in which a culture of deep participation and collective decision-making pervades all aspects of education. A big part of the work of State Education Coordinators is the training of educators for the cirandas, youth and adult education programs and primary schools. It is also the responsibility of the State Education Coordinator to stimulate interest and participation in educational activities. She recruits and trains educators and provides them with whatever support they requires. Educators for the cirandas and EJA come from within the settlement. Thus, in newly-settled camps, educators are likely to be completely new as well. In this respect, Fernanda talked about her work as "always starting": "We are always starting – doing it from the beginning. There are always new camps and so we are always working with people who are entering. The older ones [educators] don't contribute to the training of the newer ones. The older ones take on coordination of the process (Fernanda, personal communications, January 6 2005)." After initial training, State Education Coordinators work with EJA educators and their study groups to work on planning for classes and producing materials. Ideally, she is supposed to visit the camps and educators all over the state at least once a month but resources do not always permit so much travel. Through this kind of regular contact, the State Coordinator ensures that the educational programs are being planned and implemented in participatory ways by educators and that communities have a sense of ownership of the activities.

The formal and informal feedback from the community is given a lot of weight age in assessing the work of an educator as Fernanda laughingly narrated:

> "Usually a good educator has big classes and is able to generate a lot of interest in the settlement. When you arrive in the camps -- – you don't need to ask – its there

– and you know. Even the children will tell you – when its good they bring it to your attention – they say you should know these things – so you find out more than you need to. When an educator is not doing so well the feedback is different – that the educator does not keep regular hours, does not accomplish the objectives she committed to, or she works on topics that don't interest people. Problems with the community outside the group of learners is also often a factor. Religion for example is a factor.   For example the religion of an educator had an impact on how she was received by her learners. Problems can come from personality differences as well. One educator reported that she had been speaking up at meetings about the problem of alcoholism and people did not like her or want to be in her *turma* for this reason. Sometimes educators cannot read and write well enough to instruct others. Sometimes she has a health problem that does not allow her to continue. At other times, the community pressure is so strong that she cannot continue (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)."

In addition, if there is a problem with an educator the State Coordination facilitates the collective decision-making process by which the community takes a position in relation to the problem: " In an open meeting, the community takes a position whether to change [the educator], or not, and if they are going to change, then how, when etc. The idea is that the decision is not ours. Our position is really to arrange and to accompany because this is also an educational process. People learn to contextualize and to take decisions (Fernanda, personal communications, January 6 2005)."

Engendering Participation and the Possibilities For Women Educators

Women are active in the movement and in the majority in sectors of education and health. Caldart (2000) and Diniz-Pereira (2005) argue that the construction of a new collective identity for teachers has been a significant increase in women's participation in the MST which in turn has changed the identity of the movement as well. According to Caldart (2000), "In the same sense that, earlier, [they] were important actors pressuring the MST to struggle for schools, [they] continue on the stage today, pressuring the MST

to create more space for education on its agenda (p. 186)." Most of the Education

Coordinators at the state and national level are women.

The emergence of women as active participants and decision-makers on questions

of education within the movement points to the possibilities that emerge in a culture of

radical democratic participation. Research done on women's empowerment through

literacy programs found that women had limited access to literacy programs and were

slow to respond to conscientization because of a disconnect between the 'emancipatory'

literacy program and the patriarchal social contexts that shaped their lives outside the

literacy class - role expectations within family, within community, sexual division of

labor and so forth (Stromquist, 1997). However, the participatory and political nature of

education in the MST suggests that participation in education work can provide key

formal and informal spaces for women's empowered participation.

Rural women have been active participants in the struggle for land rights both in

the form of autonomous organizations of rural women workers[129] as well as within

landless movements like the MST (Guivant, 2003; MST, 2003b, 2000[130]). The 1988

Constitution guaranteed equality between rural and urban men and women with respect to

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[129] The largest instances of women's organizing are the Movement of Organizations of Rural Women Workers-South (AIMTR-Sul, *Articulação das Instâncias de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais-Sul*) and the National Movement of Rural Women Workers (ANMTR, *Articulação Nacional de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais*) which has a formally autonomous structure for women.

[130] *Landless Women was* compiled by the MST's National Gender Collective and published in 2000 and can be considered the movement's first official proposal for gender-related issues. It proposes a series of activities carried out in monthly meetings that can promote reflection on the reality of oppressive gender relations and the collective construction of alternatives that allow women to live in dignity. The topics are: women and class struggle; gender relations; educating without discriminating; values; culture and leisure in settlements and encampments; women and health; women and the construction of a popular project; and women and agrarian reform. All these meetings are to begin with *mistica* – the cultural rites that symbolize the spiritual dimension of the movement and involve acting, dancing and singing songs written for the movement and distributed on compact discs (CDs), including an anthem, the parading of banners and the wearing of shirts with the movement's emblem.

labor legislation and social rights. The place and experiences of women in the struggle

for agrarian reform have gained increasing recognition across social movements as

articulated by the transnational peasant activist network Via Campesina: "The neo-liberal

economic model, which forces everyone into a global competition, is most

disadvantageous and unjust to peasant women. It strips them of resources to grow food

and forces them into an uncertain struggle for their own and their children's survival. It

leaves rural displacement, family and community breakdown, joblessness, low wages,

and economic slavery in its path. Women suffer the most acute and widespread

impoverishment under these conditions. Because women bear the biggest cost of these

changes, justice demands that they have a larger role in reshaping the economy. The Via

Campesina will lead the way in demanding and demonstrating alternative economic

arrangements which give the needs of women and children first priority, rather than

relegating them to last place as is currently being done (Via Campesina, 2000, p.3)."

There is agreement that the social, land, and labor rights guaranteed by Brazilian

law need to be implemented for women to have their work recognized as a profession, to

have an off-farm life and participate in all aspects of society. However, traditional

oppressive gender relations persist in the MST communities as through much of Brazilian

society: "There is a general culture of machismo where the men think they know more

and better, that women have a particular place or they try to say things that they think

women will like (Fernanda, personal communication, January 15, 2005)." Women are

deeply involved in the organization of land occupations and even more so in the camps

when men have to travel outside in search of work. However, in many instances, after

the settlement has been conquered, traditional unequal gender relations resume and women's participation declines (Guivant, 2003; MST, 2003).

The National Council of Landless Women was created within the MST National Committee in 1996 (Guivant, 2003). In 1998 the council became the National Gender Collective and was made up of three members (two women and one man). Elsewhere in the leadership of the movement, women dominate the coordination of education and health while the Sectors of Production, Organization and Political Training are dominated by men. Guivant (2003) reports that women face multiple types of discrimination within the movement: "Women leaders in the MST have to confront two types of discrimination. One comes from women in the movement who do not easily accept that other women participate politically either inside or outside the settlements. This criticism emerges in the form of censure, jealousies and gossip about the honesty and faithfulness of the leaders. The other comes from the male colleagues within the movement, including some members of the National Leadership, who reject the relevance of discussing gender issues (p.24)."

In the settlement communities, men continue to take decisions about what their wives and daughters may or may not do particularly in terms of activities that require leaving the home and family. An experienced EJA educator and grandmother talked about having to leave the camp if her husband decided to do so. She confided that he had begun to lose motivation after waiting for more than two years for INCRA to complete the re-appropriation process. (The couple had been living in a one room bamboo shack covered with black rubber sheets for a roof. During the rains, their house was flooded and during hot summer days, the house was like an oven.) The same educator regularly

visited and negotiated with municipal officials to demand that the camp be allowed to use the neighboring school building to conduct their EJA classes at night. The three room building that had been constructed as a school for the children of the workers on the *fazenda* had remained locked since the MST occupied the land. Several of the younger EJA educators who were in their teens were already married because of community pressure and the lack of respect shown to unmarried young women, even those who work as educators in the community. When Fernanda broached the subject of their going to ITERRA for further training, the response was that their husbands would not permit them to travel and live on their own for so long. However, since the community contributes to the cost of the training and travel, the final decision would rest there and not solely with her husband.

Addressing gender inequalities and gender discrimination as well as other oppressive social relations within the movement constitute one of the six objectives of the movement -- To combat all forms of social discrimination and seek equal participation of women." Accordingly, the Sector on Gender has formulated several lines of work to facilitate the full and equal participation of women including: the provision of childcare during training courses, events, and meetings at the national, state, regional and local level so that there are no impediments in women's participation; to ensure that there are equal numbers of women and men in all activities of political formation and training; to ensure that the names of spouses are included in the transfer of land and credit in the settlement process; to ensure that all economic decisions (such as investment and lines of agricultural production) involve the participation of the whole family; to ensure that both men and women can become coordinators at the level of the base/grassroots; and to

conduct intensive training on gender themes in all coordination sectors and activities.[131]

The identity construction of women Sem Terra educators is one of the most explicit ways in which the movement has engaged with the gendered dimensions of participation. Caldart (2000) writes that "the condition of being a woman and the whole grid of meanings that this implies from a human, social, political, and historical point of view; second, her professional identity as an educator; and third her participation in an organization that struggles for land and that, in turn, produces new meanings for her condition as both a woman and an educator" (Caldart, 2000, p. 187)."

Confronting gender discrimination is also considered an active component of MST pedagogy and training. The MST's first official publication on gender entitled "Sem Terra Women" provides an outline for engaging with discrimination that includes discussion on the cultural nature of gender roles; the relationship between power and gender relations; and the potential of education by parents, families and communities to put an end to gender discrimination (MST, 2000, p. 19 – 24). The Education Sector is a space in which women take every opportunity to challenge conventional gender roles and division of labor. Some favorites included putting the men in the cirandas and ensure that men share the domestic work like food preparation during Coordination meetings (Fernanda, personal communications, January 6 2005). In Rio de Janeiro, the State Coordination decided to integrate the Sector of Gender with the Sectors of Education and Political Training to ensure that all the work of political development is framed by the lens of gender equality.

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[131] More information can be found on the Sector for Gender on the MST website - http://www.mst.org.br/setores/genero/genero.html

The current advances and transformation of rural Brazil have occurred due to a conjunction of factors most notably the mobilization of rural peoples, the end of the rural exodus, and the unremitting economic crisis (Mançano, 2002). A participatory and situated understanding of the right to education has played a key role in the development of political consciousness and agency which enables the landless to reject the neoliberal approach to education and development that conceives of the individual citizen as a slave to the market in the form of worker and consumer. The dehumanizing influences of capitalist approaches to agricultural development are so strong that the utilitarian perception of the countryside has transformed the language used to talk about rural areas -- o *campo* – or the countryside is often simply referred to as '*aquilo*' which literally means 'that'. It is a form of reference that literally and symbolically empties the land of intrinsic value, as well as historical and current socio-cultural meanings. It also maintains a social fragmentation between the rural and urban which enables and legitimates the exploitation of land and natural resources for profit by large landholders and agro-businesses (Fernandes, 2002). [132]

The MST challenged the deficiency, assistentialist, and predatory model of rural development and has sought to demonstrate that rural and urban development can be complement each other in meaningful ways. The hope is for a mutual reciprocity which can only exist when the people who live and work in the countryside are recognized as subjects in their own right and are able to articulate and influence the decisions that will impact their land and ways of life.

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[132] The widespread nature of illegal land appropriations led to the coinage of the phrase g*rilagem de terra* (theft of property deeds) (Fernandes, 2002, p. 92).

In Brazil, the rights of the landless have been recognized and guaranteed but institutional arrangements have been slow to change to implement new rights- , equality- and participation-oriented policies. The Brazilian state has increased dialogues with organized civil society but still retains control over which of their recommendations are included in the final product – policy, program, etc.   In this sense, the potential of expanded civil society participation has been limited by representative democratic arrangements. It appears that all groups in society have equal representation in decision-making but greater representation does not necessarily expose oppression or lead to acceptance of difference. Democratic decision-making spaces within formal political institutional arrangements do not always provide space for critical discussion (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

Peter Easton (1996) defines participation as the "process by which given individuals (or groups of people) assume a new level of responsibility for decision-making and action about goals, methods and resources in some realm of organized social activity of immediate concern to them, and through which they acquire or produce the new knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to play these enhanced roles." If we understand participation to be determined by knowledge about one's social context as well as the wider world, we begin to see the relevance and effectiveness of a conscientizing and politicized pedagogy such as that of the MST (McCowan, 2003). Having provided primary education to nearly all of the children, one of the biggest challenges the movement faces is providing secondary-level education, and keeping adolescents and youth in the settlements.

The ideals of participation, critical and situated education, self-reliance, collective struggle, and resistance to neoliberal ideologies that I have described in the preceding pages are not necessarily present in every camp and settlement within the movement. The MST is a fluid and complex entity; every community has its problems and disagreements about the 'collective life' and local leaders (Carter, 2003).

Unequal social relations based on religion and race affiliations are yet to be addressed explicitly within the movement. As elsewhere in Brazil, there is a tendency to deny the existence of racism: "A sector for issues of Race does not exist – it is not felt to be necessary (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6, 2005). João Pedro Stedile (2002) argues that there are not enough Afro-Brazilians in the movement to make racism an issue:

> "Our relations with indigenous peoples start from the recognition that they are the original inhabitants of Brazil. There is no discussion about that—all the land they claim as theirs is theirs, and they should do with it as they wish. In terms of ethnic composition, it depends on the situation of the farmers in each state. There are very few blacks in the MST, and very few Sem Terra farmers in the areas where they mainly live—Bahia, Pernambuco, Maranhão. Pedro II's Law 601 of 1850 was designed to prevent freed black slaves from becoming landowners; as soon as they got their formal freedom, they had to migrate to the ports, and work in the docks. Blacks were excluded from the formation of the Brazilian farming classes, and that's had a lasting influence. To this day, the farming layers are composed mainly of *mestizos* in the Northeast, and European immigrants in the South. This is clearly reflected in the composition of the MST (p.88-89)."

The Sem Terra also claim a number of religious identities – both Catholic and Protestant. Fernanda told me about one camp in the state with 70 families and 7 churches where religion was a serious factor of division and discord. Some EJA learners had refused to be taught by an educator from a different church. The Catholic Church has

had a strong influence on the spiritual ethos of the movement but religion is also becoming a factor of division.

The vertical structure of organization has led to criticisms of hierarchical leadership and the imposition of the socialist and Liberation Theology influenced values of the leaders on educators and learners. However, the model of leadership encourages debate, dialogue, and collective decision-making and constant communication between all levels of coordination and the base. The movement also collaborates with supporters outside and has openly acknowledged problems such as the gap between rhetoric and practice (Kane, 2000).

Important questions remain about the degree to which the participation of the Sem Terra has increased in Brazilian society outside the movement. The movement has a strong critical perspective on formal political processes including elections. The movement has not yet attempted to enter formal electoral politics but settlements do nominate individual candidates for positions as local councilors and MST supporters from outside the movement have participated in elections under the banner of the Worker's Party (McCowan, 2003). The construction of the Sem Terra identity has given the landless a sense of dignity and power but it can create distance between the movement and the rest of society. This is a question that the movement struggles with – whether the Sem Terra are really being prepared to participate in society outside the movement. McCowan (2003) notes that the movement is becoming less insular and developing links with other regional and global movements for social justice.

From a critical perspective, these inconsistencies and contradictions are part of the challenge of constructing an oppositional imagination (Slater, 1998). They do not detract from the potential that lies in the radical notions of participation that inform the educational conceptions and practices of the Sem Terra. Education is not just a space for 'simple' reform but deep structural transformation in order to respond to the structural nature of the exclusion of rural communities from their land as well as basic rights of citizenship (Diniz-Pereira, 2005). In this sense, the movement is the 'school' in which popular education takes place (Kane, 2000).

What has emerged and continues to evolve as education within the MST is a process of "collective learning about the possibilities of life (Pedro Tierra in Caldart, 1997)." Valued knowledge within the movement ranges from local culture and 'popular' knowledge to academic and scientific knowledge. Liam Kane (2000) describes the MST educational practice as a powerful combination of "open-ended educational inquiry and the politically and culturally radical environment." This discussion has shown the multiple spaces, practices, and possibilities that embody a radically participatory democracy premised on individual agency, collective action, dialogue across difference – vital components of a politics of connection (Eschle, 2001). The MST schools, pedagogy, and programs are a product of the struggle and they in turn "create the movement of the future (McCowan, 2003, p.11)." The movement in its entirety is, in this sense, both a site and source for radical democratization.

The cultural politics that characterize education in MST reveal the effectiveness of radical democratic participation in materially and psycho-socially improving the

conditions of the most vulnerable people as well as a strategy for social change (Cleaver, 2001). The MST have gained access to formal policy arenas, claimed their rights and entitlements in relation to land, credit, and education and built a new positive identity for themselves. These are all important dimensions of individual and collective agency and participation in a democratic and just society.

The 'opening' of institutional arrangements in the state apparatus and changes in discourse (mainly at the federal level) have largely been limited to organized civil society who the state recognizes as a legitimate political actor. The changes in policy discourse have not necessarily led to interaction and dialogue with representatives of popular social movements, particularly at sub-national levels of government. The deep practice of participation within the movement and the belief in the individual as an active citizen rather than the individual as consumer has contributed to its social appeal, growth, and longevity. It is these practices that have enabled the landless to overcome their exclusion and demand their right to participate in policy formulation and society as a whole. They have taken on the formidable challenge of negotiating with the complex and hierarchical apparatus of the state at every level of governance - national, state, and local. This is a significant achievement in a political culture where federal governments maintain control through devolution-type decentralization – the decentralization of financial and administrative responsibility without autonomy to take decisions. The 2002 elections of President Lula and the Workers Party to head the central government have influenced the interaction between the state and social movement at all levels of government. In the next chapter, I will discuss the micro-interactions between the movement and the state in the context of the educational activities of the MST in the state of Rio de Janeiro. These

macro- and micro interactions offer insights into the possibilities and limitations in social

movement activity for the democratization and reform of public education.

Chapter VII: The MST and the State in Rio de Janeiro

<u>Introduction</u>

A review of Brazilian educational development suggests that legal mandates to decentralize power and resources have not been able to overcome the "political and administrative advantages of centralized control (Plank, et al. 1994, p.8)." The dominant neoliberal approach to educational expansion has promoted changes in the provision of education without increasing public spending or sharing real power with local governments (Haddad, 2003). The central government handed over administrative responsibilities to municipalities while retaining control over curricula and evaluation. Neoliberal policies also encouraged an increase in private providers of education, particularly in secondary and higher education. The focus on measurable outcomes created a system of teacher evaluation and rewards that fostered a culture of competition rather than collaboration. There was a significant expansion in primary education between 1997 and 2002 but little progress was made in addressing problems of educational equity and quality. The drastic increase in enrolments seen in the impoverished North and Northeast parts of the country can be attributed directly to the creation of FUNDEF which increased average spending per student in these regions by increased by almost 90% (Draibe, 2004). FUNDEF also increased teacher salaries across the board and most drastically in municipal school systems (Draibe, 2004). The redistributive potential of FUNDEF was only partially realized because the Cardoso

administration defaulted on its obligation to complement the resources of poorer states as required by FUNDEF. [133]

Cardoso also vetoed nine articles in the PNE which would have effected more widespread education finance reforms. The constraints on educational spending were imposed with the rationale of maintaining fiscal stability and responsibility.[134] The vetoes were proposed by the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoF, *Minesterio da Fazenda e do Planejamento*) with the justification that five of the nine articles were against the public interest. The rationale for the vetoes were examined and refuted by the Budget Consultation Committees for both the Congress and the Senate but the vetoes were not reversed (Draibe, 2004). When Cardoso left office, at least 2 million children in the age group 7-14 years were estimated to be out of school and some 60 million adolescents (14 years and older) and youth were either illiterate or had not completed eight years of schooling (Haddad, 2003).

In 2002, the people of Brazil elected trade unionist and metal worker, Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva of the Worker's Party (PT) to the Presidency in a landslide victory. Lula was elected President in October 2002 after four bids for the presidency. There were high expectations that Lula and his government would articulate and implement education policies in a very different manner than the previous neoliberal regime (Ação Educativa, 2003). During the campaign, Lula and the Worker's Party promised to encourage a more participatory and substantively democratic political culture with

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[133] Between 1997 and 2002, the default on the complementation payments increased from 21% to 40% of the value calculated by FUNDEF (UNDIME/National Campaign, 2005). By the time Cardoso left office, MEC had accumulated was in debt to FUNDEF in the amount of some R$ 4 billion.

[134] Specifically, the federal government argued that the proposals for increased spending on education advanced by both civil society and the Worker's Party would compromise the Law of Fiscal Responsibility (*Lei de Responsabilidade Fiscal*) and because they were incompatible with the multi-year plan of development (PPA, *Plano Plurianual*).

expanded opportunities for participation by the public as well as organized civil

society.[135] In contrast to Cardoso, the Worker's Party (PT, *Partido dos Trabalhadores*)

has maintained close ties with social movements and civil society networks like the MST,

the National Campaign for the Right to Education and literacy networks. Lula enjoyed

tremendous personal popularity amongst the people and the PT had acquired a solid

reputation for progressive policies such as participatory budgeting, MOVA etc,

implemented by state governments headed by the PT in the south of Brazil:

> "Lula enjoyed a degree of domestic and international support that would have
> enabled him to create the conditions for a departure from the neoliberal model,
> inaugurating a transition to a system in which social priorities were central, as he
> had promised during his electoral campaign. He could have renegotiated Brazil's
> debts, subordinating financial targets to the need to tackle the social deficit-citing
> as his justification, his own manifesto's commitment to ensure that all Brazilians
> can eat three times a day (Sader, 2005, p.78)."

In short, supporters of Lula were expecting radical changes in social policies and

presented him with comprehensive proposals for educational reforms that would improve

quality as well as access. Unfortunately, Lula chose to appease international capital and

prioritized macroeconomic stability over social reforms. [136] His administration has

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[135] Lula also promised to transform the traditional way of doing politics. Specifically he promised to stop
the bargaining, vote-trading, and party-switching that dominates political activity between the thirty-seven
political parties. He also promised not to misuse the immense powers placed in the office of the President
and refrain from using Presidential Acts to push through reforms that Congress would not support and so
forth. Little progress has been made on political reforms. Since the Worker's Party came to power on a
coalition ticket, Lula has had to share key positions in his ministry and administration with coalition
members. The choice of ministers and other political appointments has taken place through the same kind
of bargaining and horsetrading in Congress. Lula himself has used the Presidential Act as an instrument to
push forward reforms that did not receive support from Congress, most notably his scheme for reforming
the pension system for civil servants.
[136] In Congress, Lula's government depends on a coalition that includes the centrist PMDB, smaller parties
of the Left, and recently the right-wing Popular Party (*Partido Popular*). His cabinet did not include a
single economist from the PT or any other left force. Key appointees in the areas of finance, industrial
development, and agriculture have close ties to international finance capital, agrobusinesses, and
institutions like the IMF. They are Minister of Finance Antonio Palocci, the Central Bank president,
Henrique Meirelles, Minister of industrial development - Luis Fernando Furlan and Minister of Agriculture
– Roberto Rodrigues. Moreover, the PT under Lula would go on to expel three deputies and a senator who
protested against the move to cap public-sector workers pensions and levy a new tax on the retired with the

continued interest payments on debt, implemented massive budget cuts, and focused on attracting foreign investment.   Relevant to this discussion is the law passed by Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) that removes any obstacles in the use of genetically modified seeds for the cultivation of soybean by transnational agribusinesses. The law proposed by the MoA prevailed over the law proposed by the Ministry of Environment and widespread popular protest that called for restrictions on the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Lula's social programs also do not address the structural dimensions of inequality and the concentration of wealth and income.[137]

In sum, the direction of Lula's reforms appear to be targeted towards removing all impediments to private sector participation by changing infrastructure regulations and the antitrust system, revising tariff structure models and pricing rules, etc. enabling 'privatization without risk'.   Private corporations have been encouraged to adopt schools and the much vaunted higher education reform –PRONUNI- essentially consists of federal subsidies for private higher education institutions.   Lula maintains that he is not continuing in the steps of Cardoso but implementing reforms that are necessary to rebuild the economy and strengthen institutions.

There are two areas in which this administration has had some positive impact on rural education. First, the federal government has begun an unprecedented level of consultations with civil society and set the example by holding consultations on the four-

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rationale of reducing the social security deficit. After the expulsion of the deputies, several more militant PT members left and founded the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL, *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade)*.
[137] They include commitments to create youth employment (*Primeiro Emprego*) and family-based social transfer programs to reduce poverty (*Bolsa Família*). One of the most wellknown social welfare measures is the campaign to eradicate hunger (*Fome Zero*) - a program transfers cash to targeted poor families through a Food Card Program. Rural populations, such as the landless, indigenous, and quilombolas, in which poverty tends to be concentrated are targeted for emergency interventions for specific groups. Other measures include literacy courses, construction of water tanks and small scale irrigation, support for family agriculture and documentation issues (World Bank, 2004).

year Multiyear Plan (PPA, *Plano Plurianual*) entitled "A Brazil for All". However, civil society was only asked to respond to the social policies in the plan and were prevented from discussing budgetary components. Nevertheless, state and municipal governments are now under pressure to similarly expand opportunities for civil society participation in policy making. Second, the Ministry of Education has taken important steps towards the development of a national policy for rural education.

These educational developments at the central government level provide another lens through which we can examine the politics of rural education and the scope for democratization of education as a whole. In Chapter Five, I discussed the ways in which educational legislation pertaining to rural education had been implemented and the kinds of policy slippage that have occurred due to a combination of opportunistic or selective adoption of policies by the central government. In this chapter, I will examine the interpretation and implementation of federal mandates by local government, and the extent to which they contribute to the democratization and improvement of rural education (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). I began this chapter by outlining the ways in which macroeconomic priorities place boundaries on the overall scope of education policy. Now I will examine the micro-interactions between local governments (both state and municipal) and the MST in the state of Rio de Janeiro. I will look at how local political culture and dynamics of conflicting values and unequal power alignments shape the educational work of the MST in the state. Particular attention is paid to the difference in attitudes towards social movement activity in formal versus nonformal education.

The first part of the chapter discusses educational policies of the Lula administration which affect the struggle for rural education and the activities of the MST.

The second part of the chapter describes the scope of the MST EJA program in the state

of Rio de Janeiro.   The third part of the chapter discusses specific aspects of the

connections between the state and the social movement. Particular attention is paid to the

the provision of EJA with specific reference to the sub-national implementation of federal

policy directives for expanded civil society participation in policy formulation and

implementation; problems of certification of MST EJA programs; and the public

university as a mediator between state and civil society. The chapter ends with a

discussion of the significance of occupying schools for the MST and the ways in which a

conventional political arrangements can regulate institutional actors who are sympathetic

to the movement.

<u>Lula's Initiatives for EJA and Basic Rural Education</u>

The agenda for the Ministry of Education under Lula included the expansion of

FUNDEF to include early childhood and secondary education to improve access for rural

and urban secondary-level students; improvements in teacher preparation and pedagogy;

measurement of school quality against standards; directing capital spending and teacher

training to struggling schools; and expansion of subsidized preschool programs for low-

income families.   In its first year, the Ministry of Education, headed by respected

intellectual Cristovam Buarque, spent much of its time creating commissions and

working groups that consulted with teachers unions, academics, and researchers amongst

others to articulate new educational policies.   Other educational activities were largely

populist in nature such as distributing uniforms and text books and the minimal increase

in the budget for the School Lunch program and one of Lula's biggest populist projects –
University for All (PROUNI).[138]

A New Literacy Program

The Ministry of Education did however create the Special Secretariat for the
Eradication of Illiteracy (SEEA, *Secretaria Extraordinária de Erradicação do
Analfabetismo*) to accelerate efforts to achieve the goals for illiteracy eradication
included in the 2001 National Education Plan.   SEEA initiated a new program called
Program Literate Brazil (BA, *Programa Brasil Alfabetizado*) which would support state
and municipal governments, universities and NGOs initiatives for literacy.   In 2004, BA
planned to spend R$ 168 million (US$ 56 million) in 2004 - 2005 across 3000
municipalities to reach 1,600,000 persons.   The program currently has 634 partnerships
including 23 state governments and 380 municipal governments as well as through
agreements (*convenios*) with state and federal universities and supports 95,688 educators
(MEC, 2003). BA includes a project to develop literature and distribute books to newly-
literate persons called Project Literature (*Projeto Leituração*).   The government
presented BA as a collective campaign for literacy where all methodologies and
approaches to 'alphabetization' would be supported by the federal government.   It is
administered by the National Council on Alphabetization consisting of representatives of
diverse social organizations and communities.   For these two reasons, the program is

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[138] PROUNI subsidizes the private provision of higher education with the rationale of creating more seats
and therefore greater access.   It places public school students whose family income is less than the
minimum wage and from elementary schools with teachers with no higher education into some of the
550,000 openings in private higher education institutions.   It also proposes that philanthropic and private
institutions of higher education that provide some scholarships for these students should be exempt from
taxation. These 'reforms' are related to a recent financial assistance "package" negotiated between the
Bank and the Brazilian government that has as conditionality the end of public higher education (Leher,
2004).

considered a definite improvement on previous federal literacy initiatives (Di Pierro, 2003; Haddad and Graciano, 2004).

Changes in Federal Funding for Basic Education

The expansion of FUNDEF to the National Fund for Basic Education (FUNDEB, *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolivmento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação*) was intended to include support for expansion in not just primary but all basic education services. It was proposed that FUNDEB would include preschool, secondary and youth and adult literacy education; training and professional development for teachers; as well as support the continued expansion of primary education. The FUNDEF program reached 32 million children and it was estimated that FUNDEB would reach out to an additional 15 million children (Haddad and Graciano, 2004).

FUNDEB was debated in the national legislature and by civil society for almost two years. The draft constitutional amendment (PEC 215, *Proposta de Emenda Constitucional*) was finally submitted to the National Congress on June 14, 2005. A number of stages remain after approval by Congress before FUNDEB is implemented.[139] However, PEC 215 has already been criticized by the National Campaign for the Right to Education because it does not include funding for preschool education and creches. Like FUNDEF, FUNDEB has incorporated a stipulation that the *custo aluno* for rural schools should be calculated differently but does not provide any guidelines for doing so. The draft law for FUNDEB also does not include mechanisms that assure medium- and long-term resource allocation.

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[139] The document will pass through the Commission on Constitution and Justice and will then be debated by a Special Commission at which point it can undergo more amendments by parliamentarians before it is voted on by the Congress and the Senate (Ação Educativa, 2005).

The scope of FUNDEB appears to be broad but the redistributive impact will eventually be determined by whether the federal government meets its obligations to commit more resources to basic education. The central government under Cardoso defaulted on this commitment. Lula has not kept his campaign promises to repay the FUNDEF debt accumulated by the Cardoso government (Manifesto 2002). [140] Even worse, MEC has continued to violate the FUNDEF law to the extent that the federal government now owes approximately R$ 19 million to FUNDEF.[141] The defaults on payment by the federal government punish the poorest states who are most in need of 'complementation' in order to redress inequalities in educational spending.

The Creation of a Permanent Working Group on Rural Education

In January 2004, Lula began his second year in office by sacking Buarque who had publicly criticized the lack of federal funding for education. Buarque was replaced with Tarso Genro, former mayor of Porto Allegre.[142] The Ministry of Education was restructured to reflect the priority accorded to the expansion of basic education, eradication of illiteracy and the reform of higher education. The restructuring involved the creation of four new secretariats, and a redefinition of the goals and objective for three secretariats that were retained from the Cardoso Ministry.[143] The new Secretariats included the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (SECAD,

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[140] He also promised to overrule all of Cardoso's vetoes to the National Education Plan and take concrete actions to expand literacy programs.

[141] MEC minimally increased the amount the federal government paid as 'complementation' to needy states but these amounts continue to be less than the value calculated by FUNDEF. In 2002, 2003 and 2004, the default on payments (in terms of minimum per student expenditure) amounted to 40.8, 44 and 37.7% of the required amount (UNDIME/ National Campaign, 2005). The National Campaign protested repeatedly to MEC and received assurances that the debt would be redressed (Arrais, December 2004, personal communication). The first Minister of Education in Lula's administration Cristovam Buarque even issued a Technical Note that took a public position on the PNE vetoes and the FUNDEF debt.

[142] Lula also sacked other members of the cabinet who had voiced criticism - the head of the Fome Zero program and the Science Minister.

[143] These were the Secretariats for Higher Education, Special Education and Distance Education.

Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização e Diversidade), the Secretariat of

Basic Education (SEB, *Secretaria de Educação Básica*[144]), the Fund for the

Development and Maintenance of Basic Education (FUNDEB, *Fundo de Manutenção e*

Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica), and the Secretariat for Professional Education

and Technology (SETEC, *Secretaria de Educação Profissional e Tecnológica*[145]).   The

creation of FUNDEB is of direct relevance to EJA and rural education.

SECAD was created with the express objective of expanding access to education

for socially excluded populations, to include families and society in the process of

education inclusion, and to create respect for sociocultural diversity.   According to MEC,

the restructuring addressed the need for implementing education policies that "respected

diversity and different experiences in education development, in all the regions of the

country, as a way to expand education for youth and adults as well as basic education in

rural areas".[146]

In June, 2003, MEC created a Permanent Working Group on Rural Education

(*Grupo Permanente de Trabalho de Educação do Campo*) through legislative order

(*Portaria*) No. 1.374.   The Working Group was constituted by governmental and

intergovernmental agencies as well as representatives of organized civil society.   It was

constituted with the intention of constructing a national policy on rural education.   In

2004, the Working Group released a policy document entitled References for a National

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[144] Recognizing education as a social right, the key challenge for SEB was to work with school systems and organized social movements to promote access, retention and democratization of basic education (MEC *Noticias*, 2004).

[145] SETEC was charged with improving the level of schooling and educational qualifications of youth, adult and workers as well as to make the programs for professional education and technology more democratic and transparent (MEC *Noticias* , 2004).

[146] Translated from MEC-SECAD website
http://portal.mec.gov.br/secad/index.php?option=contentandtask=viewandid=38andItemid=165.
November 16, 2005.

Policy on Rural Education (*Referências para uma Política Nacional de Educação do Campo*). This document was intended to guide states and municipalities implement the provisions for rural education in the Operational Directives for Basic Rural Education published by the National Education Council in 2002. The report provided a statistical overview of the conditions of rural education and provided detailed recommendations to support policy formulation by local governments. These recommendations focused on universalization of access to education in rural areas, improvement of salaries and training for rural teachers, and improvement of the quality of rural education based on respect for cultural diversity and the experience accumulated by non-state actors in rural education. It also identified four immediate areas of work for the Ministry of Education (MEC, 2004):

- To work with state and municipal secretaries of education to disseminate and comply with the 2002 Operational Directives;
- To incorporate a discussion on rural education into FUNDEB, specifically pertaining to the calculation of per student expenditure and teachers salaries;
- To create a Coordination Group on Rural education within MEC and to maintain the Working Group with increased participation from UNDIME and CONSED;
- To develop a national plan for the training of rural teachers

MEC created the Coordination group for rural education within SECAD and directed all states to hold a series of seminars with both government and civil society representatives. These seminars were called Seminars on Diversity and Education and Diversity and the Countryside (*Seminarios Estaduais de Diversidade de Educacao e Diversidade de Campo*). The objective of these seminars was to debate and discuss the 2002 Operational Directives in order to develop national, state and municipal policies on rural education. Fourteen states held seminars in 2004 involving some 2300 people and another 13 meetings were held in 2005.

These federal initiatives have been welcomed by organized civil society as a sign

of the government's political commitment to confront the challenges of improving rural

education (Ação Educativa, 2004). However, the efforts of the Lula administration in

regards to rural education remained largely disconnected with the larger project of

agrarian reform. These concerns and criticisms were voiced at the Second National

Conference on Rural Education held in Luziânia (GO) from 2-6 August , 2004, which

brought together some 1100 participants from around the country including

representatives of social movements, trade unions and rural workers organizations,

Universities, NGOs, the Family Centers for the Development of Alternatives

(CEFFAs)[147], state and municipal secretaries of education, rural workers, teachers,

students, indigenous groups, *quilombolas*, and other government agencies. The

Conference called for the needs and development of rural education to be considered in a

context of a larger popular project for agrarian reform and without perpetuating the

historical dichotomies embedded in rural development discourse and planning -- urban

and rural, city and farm and modern and out-dated. The Conference Report stated:

> "The right to education can only be guaranteed/fulfilled if it is understood as the
> right to land, the permanence of the "campo", of work, the different forms of
> production and social reproduction in life, as values, identities and diversities
> (Report on the Second National Conference on Rural Education, 2004, p.2)".

Language such as this signaled renewed determination on the part of civil society

to take the dialogue on rural-urban educational inequalities beyond the realm of the

symbolic. The Conference culminated in a Declaration that identified five goals and two

immediate lines of action. The goals included universal access to quality basic education

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[147] CEFFAs are part of a Brazilian social movement called the Association of Families, People, and
Institutions that seek to create alternatives for sustainable development through education. It is part of an
international network of similar movements of agriculturists and originated in France in 1935.

for Brazilians who live and work in rural areas; expansion of access for rural students to higher education and support for their retention; valorization and specific training for rural teachers; training and professionalization of rural workers; and respect for the particularity and diversity of rural communities topics (Ação Educativa, 2004).   The two primary areas of action were to work in partnership with the federal government to develop a national policy on rural education and the creation of a specific financing mechanism for rural education.

The central government has embarked on a very slow pace of change on questions of rural education. Even so, the creation of the federal funding program *Brasil Alfabetizado* for youth and adult education (EJA, *Educação de Jovens e Adultos*) along with the dissemination of the 2002 Operational Directives are legitimating new actors and institutions in formal policy arenas. In the next section, I discuss the opportunities and persistent obstacles that shape the interaction between the MST and state and municipal governments of Rio de Janeiro.

<div align="center">The MST in the State of Rio De Janeiro</div>

The MST has been present in the state of Rio de Janeiro since the middle of the nineties. In 2005, the MST website reports that there are 1091 families distributed in 19 camps around the state which is a very small number compared to almost 31,000 families in the north-eastern state of Bahia and a total of 124,000 families around the country. The oldest of these, *Campo Alegria,* which has been in existence for twenty years and is yet to be 'regularized' to a settlement.[148] Only seventy settlements have occurred in the entire state in the last three decades of which 17 are affiliated with the MST. Many of

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[148] MST Informa No.   69 July 23, 2004.   Retrieved February 15, 2006 from http://www.mst.org.br/informativos/mstinforma/mst_informa69.htm

these settlements came about through occupations that took place in the eighties before the movement became active in the state. Notwithstanding the low number of occupations and regularizations, 38 activists were murdered in the state between 1980 and 2003.

Education for youth and adults along with the introduction of MST pedagogy in government primary schools are the two priorities for the MST State Coordination for Education. The movement has been more successful in providing EJA than it has been in the occupation of primary schools located in or near their camps and settlements.

MST-EJA

In 2003 – 2004, the MST organized thirty study groups or *turmas* and fifty educators for EJA with the support of the federal literacy program created by the Lula administration - *Brasil Alfabetizado*.[149] The size of the study groups varied but the maximum number of students is kept to fifteen. The classes met for about 8 to 10 hours every week. They were held in the camps – in homes, churches and school buildings. The actual schedule of classes is decided by the learners in discussion with their educator. Fernanda noted that experience has taught them that the duration of a class should not exceed three hours at one time. The schedule for class meetings can be flexible but educators also try make sure that classes are not so far apart that learners loose information. In Rio, the groups of learners include adults, youth as well as adolescents who are out of school. In general, efforts are made wherever possible to group learners by age and level of education: "It depends on the reality. Sometimes it is not possible. Sometimes they are separated by age, sometimes by level of knowledge. When the

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[149] In other states, the MST receives funding from both federal and state literacy programs.

group is very small it is not possible.   It is heavily dependent on the reality (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)."

The majority of the EJA educators are women and they range in age group from fifteen to fifty years old.   Thirty of the educators work in the EJA programs and fifteen work in the *cirandas*.   Some have prior teaching experience and teacher qualifications but many do not have any experience at all.   Fernanda noted that the experience of an educator usually depends on the age of the camps or settlements and how many EJA programs had been held there.   In a newly-settled camp, educators are likely to be completely new as well.   In this respect, Fernanda talked about her work as 'always starting': "We are always starting – doing it from the beginning.   There are always new camps and so we are always working with people who are entering.   The older ones [educators] don't contribute to the training of the newer ones.   The older ones take on coordination of the process (Fernanda, personal communications, January 6 2005)."

Funding for EJA in 2004-2005 in the state of Rio de Janeiro comes exclusively from the federally funded Brasil Alfebetizado program.   Learners and their families also contribute to the best of their ability in kind. BA supports thirty MST EJA groups for a period of eight months.   Each group has a maximum of fifteen participants.   The actual amount of disbursement is calculated on the basis of the number of students.   Depending on this number, BA will provide between R$ 120 to R$ 225 per month per study group or 15 reais per student and 80 reais for training each educator.   The amounts are far below what is needed.   In an ideal world, Fernanda would like to have enough money to "help everybody" and to not have to choose between supporting the educators, the camps, coordination of the project, teaching materials and so forth.   She would like to have at

least 20 more EJA *turmas*, ensure that each camps has a school, and have money left over to have regular seminars and meetings for educators within the state as well as to send them to the national training events and meetings.   Additional resources would also allow her to plan more activities for the *Sem Terrinha*.

Fernanda spends much of her time on training and supporting the EJA educators. Considerable time is also spent on preparing proposals for federal funding from PRONERA and *Brasil Alfabetizado* – the two federal programs for literacy. More time goes in preparing reports and evaluations for the funds they have received. The overall scarcity of funds for youth and adult literacy in particular have limited Fernanda's ability to make long-term plans for the EJA program.   She is compelled to prioritize activities based on estimates of the resources they expect to receive each year through *convenios* (partnerships) with public institutions and nongovernmental partners. In response to my question about the education budget for the state of Rio de Janeiro, Fernanda laughingly explained to me that it pained her to think about the resources she needed: "We don't have a budget. We try to estimate that there should be an amount that we have a good change of getting. So what we always do is to have priorities and we try to get resources for these (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)."

There is little time left over for the State Coordination to maintain regular documentation and systematization. Fernanda did not have the exact number of people who have gone through the EJA program in the state.   However she estimated that since her arrival in 1997 they have had one or two projects every year, each project having about thirty *turmas*.   In a first step towards this addressing this problem, the State Coordination has begun to ask educators whenever possible to type up their lesson plans

and reflections. The next step will be to organize the typed reports so that they can inform future practice. The absence of systematic evaluation is part of a universal challenge for resource-strapped literacy programs. There is usually insufficient funding to support evaluation which prevents regular and formative monitoring and evaluation.

Partnerships with Public Universities

The MST has always sought out collaborations with public universities in several states to develop and conduct research and documentation about its educational activities: "Since the first partnership we had for literacy, we looked to the universities for support to reflect about the process, to discuss our practices and to theorize our practice (Fernanda, personal communication January 6 2005)." I have previously discussed how public universities became "interlocutors" between the government and the MST during the Cardoso administration and the way in which these collaborations became institutionalized partnerships through the formation of PRONERA – the National Program of Education in Agrarian Reform in 1998.

These partnerships between different civil society actors have not always been easy. PRONERA was structured to only permit public universities to receive and manage public funds. In order to access public funds, social movements would have to enter into partnerships with the universities participating in the program. State and federal universities manage the disbursement of funds, provide pedagogical support, and monitor the educators. The social movements worked with the settlement communities by identifying potential participants (students and teachers), training educators and holding the study groups. Theoretically, the Regional Superintendents of INCRA and

state and municipal secretariats of education also have a role to play in the identification of educational needs in the settlement communities as well as the delivery of programs.

In comparison to *Brasil Alfabetizado*, PRONERA has more resources available for dispensation and will usually cover transportation for coordination as well as money for teaching materials and educators for a period of twelve months.[150] However, the application process is complicated and time-consuming requiring that the university submit the project proposal to INCRA with a 'letter of acceptance' from the MST (or whichever civil society entity will deliver the education).

In Rio, the MST has worked with state and federal universities through PRONERA on a number of occasions. Problems have arisen when there are different understandings of the purpose and scope of EJA between university faculty and the Sem Terra. While the following account was narrated with humor, it is clear that a tense relationship between the university and the movement has an adverse effect on the educators and learners and slows down the implementation process: "There was a professor at a federal university who used fairytales to work with one of our study groups. She said that the pedagogy that we proposed is authoritarian – that we didn't encourage participation – that we didn't cultivate dreams (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005).

The *Brasil Alfabetizado* Program is less bureaucratic than PRONERA but also has fewer resources to dispense. The slow dispensation of funds after the project is approved

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[150] The program also disburses funds to universities that are used for assistants/university students; payment of the university-affiliated 'monitors' (a minimum salary); a stipend for the regional education coordinators of the MST; didactic materials, travel expenses for the monitors and teachers; and expenses related to training/schooling courses (where all the monitors in the state convene for a one week course) (de Souza, 2000).

is another obstacle in delivering programs to learners.   In the case of *Brasil Alfabetizado*

funds are supposed to be released in May every year.   Accordingly, the MST State

Coordination visits the camps and talks to the communities to raise interest and makes

sure that the study groups are organized by March and April.   Then the government may

often delay the release of the funds till September: "So we loose six months of works

during this time.   Many study groups disintegrate – people lose interest – it is very

complicated (Fernanda January 6 2005)."

<u>The State-Social Movement Connection</u>

The MST became more active in the state in the nineties after internal

reorganization of the leadership.   According to Fernanda, it is currently the most active

landless movement in the state; other prominent landless movements like *Via Campesina*,

the anti-dam movement (MAB, *Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens*), Rural

Women's Movement (*Movimento do Mulher Camponesas*) are not present here – "They

[the landless movements] do not look very important from the point of view of society

(personal communication, January 6, 2005)."   The low presence of other movements for

land redistribution has prevented the formation of state-level civil society networks that

are common in other states and a key space for organizing by advocates for rural

education.   Generally speaking, the state government has been hostile to the MST.

<u>The History of Engagement with Local Government</u>

The dominant influence in state development policies is the State Secretariat of

Agricultural Development that has close ties to landlords and agro business.

The autonomy of municipalities in the decentralized education system has meant

that the MST must present its demands and negotiate individually with each Municipal

Secretariat of Education.   While some have been receptive, others have not and the process of dialogue and relationship – building starts afresh after every election when the Municipal Education Secretaries change. Hostile municipal governments have even closed down schools in settlements using the rationale of school consolidation. Currently, there are 70 agrarian reform settlements (not limited to the MST) with only 6 primary schools between them.[151]   In these schools, the Sem Terrinha often experience teachers who are hostile to the MST and/or ignorant of the educational philosophies of the movement: "The current teachers all have some kind of municipal network certification – but its not important to their hiring whether they like MST children or not (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)."

The movement has some supporters in the form of local bureaucrats and school principals but they have not been able to organize and 'occupy' the schools in the camps and settlements.   The small numbers of the Sem Terra in the state and the low degree of mobilization has prevented the movement from using political strategies that elsewhere have effectively pressured local government officials to change their policies: "In the regions with strong mobilization, we would occupy the *Prefeitura* (Municipal Secretariat premises), make public protests (*passeatas*[152]) but its not easy to do something here (Fernanda, personal communications, November 11 2004)."

Moreover, morale is very low in the MST camps in Rio de Janeiro because people have grown tired of waiting to be settled.   The people are suspicious of local INCRA officials, police as well as the judiciary who are considered to be corrupt and in collusion

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[151] The settlements with the schools are Free Earth (*Terra Livre*), Zumbi dos Palmares (named after an African slave who escaped and led an army of slaves to fight against the Portuguese), Victory of Union (*Vitória de União*), Victory of the People (*Vitória de Povo*) and Capelinha.
[152] The protests consist of a march through city streets culminating in speeches in front of the target institution.

with large estate-owners.   After the election of President Lula and the Worker's Party,

the Sem Terra were confident that the redistribution process would be accelerated.

Instead, the pace of land redistribution was so slow that the National Direction of the

MST presented a letter of protest to Lula in a face-to-face meeting in July of 2003.   The

demands pertaining to land redistribution included: "To speed the elaboration and

implementation of a National Land Reform Plan to benefit the settlement of 1 million

families of rural landless workers between 2003 and 2006", and "To assure the

immediate settlement of the 120 thousand families that are in encampments throughout

the national territory.[153]

In this context, negotiations over using the MST Pedagogy of the Land in

government primary schools in the settlements mainly take place between the State

Coordinators and Municipal Secretariats.   The communities are less involved.   This

combination of factors has led to an emphasis on EJA programs in the state: "We

prioritize what we know more about or where we have more activities.   Today it is

education of youth and adults (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11, 2004)."

In the case of youth and adult education, the state government blocked efforts to

provide certification for MST graduates through state public universities which provide

other kinds of nonformal education.

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[153] MST'S proposals for agrarian reform. João Pedro Stédile MST National Direction Brasília, July 2nd 2003. The document was delivered by the MST to President Lula on their July 2, 2003 meeting. Other demands focused on the condition of the settlements, rural education, and the continued violation of human rights of the Sem Terra by police. The letter also stated the MST's position against the planting and selling of GMOs and the implementation of Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Given the federal policy vacuum on rural education until 2004, the MST has been hard-pressed to gain access to local government officials let alone begin a dialogue on the possibilities of introducing MST pedagogy in schools attended by the Sem Terrinha. The State Coordination has attempted to dialogue with municipalities about how they intend to guarantee education for the children in the agrarian reform settlements: "We have asked them - how are they going to construct the missing schools? How are they going to guarantee the training of teachers? The construction of a curriculum that is relevant to the children's lives and reality How will they guarantee that people from the communities work in their own schools? (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)." District and school administrators have refused to make any changes in primary schools on the ground that they had no policy directives on rural education from either MEC or the State Secretariat of Education. The implementation of the federal mandate for a dialogue between the local government and civil society on rural education has created new openings for the movement.

No more excuses

The state of Rio de Janeiro held the federally mandated 'Seminar on Diversity and Education and Diversity and the Countryside' during November 4 -6, 2004 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. According to Fernanda, the meeting was badly coordinated with insufficient representation from representatives of the municipal governments. The MST had hoped to be able to begin a conversation with municipal secretariats of education at the seminar itself but this did not happen: "Last week's event had the objective of having a meeting with the Municipal Secretariats. But this was not possible. Why not? Because

we just had Municipal elections and who is secretary of education today will not continue after January.   So we have to organize these discussions again.   Because primary education is a Municipal responsibility not the State.   So the State government organized the seminar but we could not achieve the primary objective of promoting discussion with the municipalities (Fernanda, personal communications, November 11 2004)."   She also noted that important members of civil society such as public universities and the National Campaign for the Right to Education were not invited to the seminar. With all of these limitations, she felt that the seminar would lead to new possibilities for dialogue with local government: "The Directives will not bring any radical changes but they will at least require local administrators to look for new excuses for their inactivity. It is not going to be much easier but MEC has provided the orientation to the state government and it has told the states to provide orientation to the municipalities. So at least there won't be any more of these excuses and apologies (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)." In this way, the actions of MEC in disseminating the 2002 Operational Directives for Rural Basic Education developed by the National Council on Education provide one more layer of institutional legitimating to social movements of the landless like the MST and their vision for an alternative approach to rural education.

New mechanisms for state-civil society dialogue

The November meetings also resulted in the creation of two inter-institutional study groups on rural education policy.   One group consisted of representatives of civil society and representatives of municipal and state government. The other group is an Internal Group with representatives from all of the different sectors within the state government.

The creation of the Internal Study Group is particularly helpful to the MST because it will require government agencies across the different sectors to reach some agreement before they sit down to talk with civil society and other representatives. It is now the hope of the MST that the internal group will serve as a check on the power of the Secretariat of Agricultural Development which has historically obstructed the process of agrarian reform and land redistribution in the state: "It is because of their perspective about development. The discussion about *o campo* is basically a discussion about development and the role of education, isn't it? The conception of development of the Secretariat of Agriculture is one that is very mistaken from our point of view. They favor agribusinesses and have strong ties to landlords (Fernanda, personal communication, November 11 2005)."

Building civil society

The MST State Coordination also intends to build on the momentum generated by the seminar by creating a network of organized civil society. This network will provide a space independent of the government where civil society that represents rural workers can dialogue and organize to influence rural education policies at the state level. A state level forum on rural education would include civil society organizations such as the Catholic Church linked Pastoral Commission of the Land (CPT), the Federation of Agricultural Workers (FETAG, *Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura*), the Association of Quilombolas, and communities of fishermen that have begun to mobilize in the state. These are CSOs that the MST has previously engaged with during consultations with the RJ government for the State Plan for Agrarian Reform that represent agricultural workers and are engaged in the question of land redistribution.

The Forum would also invite participation from state teachers unions, other organizations that work in the area of education and allies of the MST.

These are all important changes with the potential for institutional change given the history of the relationships between state and social movements.

Limitations in the Scope of Federal EJA Programs

The advantage of current federal funding programs is that they permit the freedom for the MST to apply their own pedagogy and curricula which are located in the broader struggle for agrarian reform, justice and social transformation. The disadvantage is that these programs do not provide adequate certification which would allow people to continue their education at the next level. Fernanda pointed out that the persistence of programs dominated by concerns of functional literacy perpetuates a 'cycle of illiteracy-literacy' because learners lose their skills when they are unable to apply them on a day to day basis and to continue their education:

> "I think one of the big problems for illiterate people in Brazil is that if a person is illiterate today - she could spend one year in an EJA class – she will learn to read and write. But since there is no provision for continuity – she will return to conditions of illiteracy after five years. If there were a policy of continuity, they would return to learning not illiteracy. They could do three consecutive years then take a break. Return after five years. Isn't it? But there is no instrument in the government for certification. It depends on the negotiations with each state because there is no legal instrument to do this. Each state must create their own and that will depend on the will of those who are responsible (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)."

This is consistent with a universal deficiency in governmental planning for literacy – the absence of consideration for impact and application in terms of what is taught and the day-to-day lives of youth and adult learners. In the current neoliberal approach of public-private partnerships for delivery of literacy services, governments

continue to retain overall control of planning and management while civil society actors

are responsible for adaptation and implementation.

Peter Easton (1989) names four essential components of a literate environment:

reading materials of interest to the neo-literate (such as books, brochures, newspapers,

magazines, messages, letters, and other practical documents); the availability of

continuing education either through formal schooling or organized non formal training;

opportunities to assume new functions in existing organizations or institutional structures

that require and exercise literate skills; and opportunities to start and help manage new

business or nonprofit endeavors that likewise require and exercise literate skills. *Brasil*

Alfabetizado begins to address the first two components but has failed to establish

systems of equivalence that would improve access to formal schooling for graduates of

nonformal education programs.   Currently, the government evaluates EJA programs

using the measure of attrition (*evasão*) or the difference between the number of people

who start and finish a course.

In this area, the State Coordination of the MST has achieved a significant victory

through negotiation with the state government.

Certification of MST EJA in Rio de Janeiro

The absence of a certification system for EJA speaks to the unresolved tensions

between formal education and literacy and underlying problems of hierarchies of

knowledge that are perpetuated by formal and nonformal education systems.

> "Why is EJA considered informal education? Because it is knowledge that is not
> recognized.   One of the big advances for youth and adult learners would be this
> [EJA] certification.   The formalization of this knowledge.   This is a big demand.
> In fact it makes sense.   Its important not just for the learners but also because if
> you want to create a   serious policy for EJA you have to create serious legal
> instruments.   If not we will never end illiteracy in Brazil because the students

study for six months then leave then come back again later.   So you are in a cycle that never ends.   You are never going to reduce illiteracy. Maybe it will diminish statistically but not practically (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)."

Fortunately, the State Coordination negotiated successfully with a sympathetic official in the RJ State Secretariat of Education and reached an agreement that the state will administer exams that will grant MST EJA graduates certification equivalent to eight years of primary education.   This is a step in the right direction but a small one. The MST is currently working on developing a multi-level approach to literacy.   Few Sem Terra in the state of Rio are ready to take this examination: "It is impossible [to provide an education equivalent to eight years of primary school] with the resources that exist today.   We should have instruments that make it possible for people to receive certification so that they can advance in small steps.   Like we have for children - but this does not exist (Fernanda, personal communication, January 6 2005)." At the same time, the agreement with the state of Rio de Janeiro has created an opening for the MST to negotiate with other state governments to create similar certification systems.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

The absence of direction from the federal government until 2004 has allowed local policy-makers to use 'bureaucratic myths' such as the need for federal guidelines to disguise political agendas (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). While the movement has found individual supporters in government school principals and teachers, as well as in municipal and state education secretariats, it has been severely constrained to bring about the kinds of institutional transformations that have taken place in other states. The movement does not have the presence and level of political organization in the state necessary to carry out the kinds of occupations of formal schools that have occurred

elsewhere in the country. However, the new federal directives have legitimized the participation of social movements in formulating government policy on rural basic education and provided the movement with fresh opportunities for negotiation and organizing. In the case of EJA, the State Coordination has been able to create a more positive dynamic and negotiated with a state government official to allow MST EJA graduates to take the school-leaving certification examination.

A strategy that has worked is the partnership with higher education institutions to develop and conduct research on the MST's educational programs. In many developing countries, institutions of higher education remain an untapped resource on questions of rural education and development (FAO-UNESCO, 2003). They receive higher per capita funding than other levels of education but do not serve the vast majority of the poor. Historically, only agricultural higher education institutions and individual academics have participated in basic education interventions. These partnerships within civil society are necessary to strengthen and vitalize civil society. They also sometimes run the danger of reproducing non-democratic hierarchies of knowledge and power and being co-opted by the state as 'intermediaries' to avoid a direct relationship with the movement (De Souza, 2000).

My conversations with Fernanda underlined the influence of local government and 'street-level bureaucrats' in determining which issues are important and which can be ignored or dismissed as irrational or unnecessary. The Sem Terra must continually negotiate access to formal decision-making spaces even as their legitimacy is undermined by the dominant political culture. The examination of local contexts also underlined the absence of reforms that would support democratization of education at the level of

municipalities; reforms such as taxation and financing to augment fiscal resources for municipalities; expansion of the national fund for primary education - FUNDEF - to include all basic education; increase in the percentual spending on federal spending for education; transfer of teachers wages directly to municipalities according to the number of registered students in the school system; and the gradual municipalization of primary education since most of the physical and professional infrastructure remains with states (UNDIME, cited in Lobato, 2002).

These local dynamics offer insights into two different problems of democratization of education. First, the strengths and limitations of MST practice in enabling individual and collective participation by the landless in the construction of an alternative educational paradigm within the public education system. The challenges and achievements of the MST in Rio de Janeiro highlight the educational and political significance of occupation of schools for the movement. Second, they help us to identify structural obstacles that limit the efforts of social movements to radicalize the process of democratization or redemocratization of a society (Jelin, 1998). I will discuss these two topics in detail in this section.

The Significance of 'Occupation' of Schools

The educational activities and mobilizations of the movement have been most successful in increasing access of poor rural children to the first four years of primary education. While the *cirandas* and programs for youth and adults are mobile and can go anywhere, the 'occupation' of the second level of primary schools and secondary schools continues to challenge the movement.

The MST uses the term "school occupation" because the strategy landless people employ to force the state or the municipality to provide schools for their children is very similar to the one they use in order to get land. The movement knows from experience that negotiations with local government for establishing a school in the settlement (or re-appropriating unused cultivable land for redistribution) may go on for months or even years often with no conclusive results (Caldart, 2000; Harnecker, 2002). Despite difficult material conditions, the landless have learned that creating schools and doing the work of formal enrollments which they know are mandatory will initiate the negotiations with the government in order to legalize the school (Caldart, 2000).

The movement has settled approximately 350, 000 families and built 1500 public schools; only 200 of these schools provide the full eight years of primary education and there are less than twenty secondary schools (MST, 2003). The fact that the MST had about the same number of schools in 1990 underlines the fragility of these victories. The movement cannot prevent local governments from closing these schools if they choose to and many of their schools have been closed as part of 'school consolidation' discussed previously (MST, 2003).

The struggle does not end with government recognition of the schools. Since the MST does not have fiscal or administrative responsibility for the primary schools, they are constantly in the process of negotiating for control over school schedules, curricula, and hiring of teachers. In this sense, occupation of schools is a continuous process of struggle to expand possibilities for direct participation in all aspects of the education process (Caldart, 2000). First, the occupation of schools is an act of participation that enables the landless families to claim their right to education. Second, the occupation of

schools enables the landless to decide what kind of education is most appropriate for them. Third, the occupation and conquest of schools links the 'pedagogical project' is systematically integrated with the 'popular project' of achieving direct and democratic participation in agrarian reform and all aspects of the nation's development.

Occupation of primary schools

Primary education is important because access to primary school heavily influences how long families are willing to live in the camps. The land redistribution process can take up to twenty years when local governments and INCRA bureaucrats are hostile to the movement. Access to primary education within the settlement heavily depends on relations with local municipal governments. When local officials are hostile to the idea of funding a school in the settlement, children must travel to outside schools.

'Outside' schools and teachers are considered a major challenge for the movement. The working conditions in rural schools have contributed to a high rate of turnover among rural teachers – many leave as soon as their probationary period is over (Diniz-Pereira, 2005). Some teachers teach in two or three schools on the same day because of low salaries. Outside teachers are very different from the Sem Terra educators who work mainly in the *cirandas* and EJA and to a lesser extent in the government primary schools located within the settlements. Most of them are part of the movement and live in the camps and settlements and have received political and professional training from the movement. 'Outside' teachers do not understand the objectives of the movement and the concerns of the settlement communities. They are resistant to using the pedagogy and teaching materials developed by the movement because this knowledge is either considered not legitimate or subversive (Diniz-Pereira,

236

2005). Outside teachers are also not used to working in partnership with the community while the MST emphasizes democratic governance of schools by parents and the settlement community.

Occupation of secondary schools

The absence of secondary schools in rural areas compels adolescents and youth to leave the settlements if they wish to continue their education. Currently, Sem Terra adolescents have the following opportunities to continue their education. These include (but are not limited to) (MST, 2003, p.10):

a) Adolescents leave the camps and settlements to study outside in:

- city schools (the predominant alternative)
- city schools with significant numbers of students from neighboring agrarian reform settlements
- 'magnet school' (*escolas-pólo*) in another settlement
- Escolas Família Agricola (EFAs)[154]
- Schools in rural communities close to the settlements
- Schools of the Casa Familiar Rural[155]
- State or federal technical-agricultural schools

b) Municipal and state primary and secondary government schools that have been 'conquered' by the settlements that include:
- Only adolescents from the region
- Adolescents from neighboring settlements
- Adolescents from both settlements and nearby rural communities
- Primary and secondary schools that are extensions of city schools
- Technical schools and schools associated with agricultural projects
- Escolas Família Agricola (EFAs)

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[154] EFAs were started in the south of Brazil by Jesuit priests from Italy in the sixties. Initially, they consisted of nonformal education programs to provide agricultural training to youth.   It has expanded to include the provision of *Supletivo* courses – a course equivalent to Grades 5 - 8 (the second stage of primary school) for those who successfully completed the first stage of primary school (*Grau 1*).   Students alternate between school and community, families participate in school governance and the curricula is oriented towards the needs and realities of agricultural communities.   EFAs are present in 17 states and work with approximately 13,000 adolescents and their families and communities (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).   The website for UNEFAB – the National Union of EFAs is http://www.unefab.org.br/2005/principal.asp

[155] These schools were introduced in Northeast Brazil in the eighties as a result of an agreement between the French and Brazilian government. They are modeled on the French *Maisons Familiales Rurales* where curricula and pedagogy are shaped by the needs of agricultural communities. There are 97 functioning institutions distributed in 14 Brazilian states (Andrade and Di Pierro, 2004).

- Some magnet schools that provide primary education in settlements that only offer classes on certain days of the week

c) Youth and adult literacy education programs that are similar to formal primary, secondary, and technical schools. They are modeled on supplementary or alternative programs developed by the MST in partnership with universities and/or Secretariats of Education with support from PRONERA/INCRA. These programs are primarily directed towards youth and adults but can include adolescents.

d) The José de Castro Education Institute, a school for secondary and professional education administered by ITERRA, based in Veranópolis in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. The Institute was created primarily for youth and adult learners but has recently begun to attend to adolescents in the age group 15 – 17 years old.

e) The Mobile School of the Settlements (*Escola Itinerante dos Acampamentos*). Only one Mobile School has been legally recognized. It is located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and works with adolescents in MST settlements throughout the state.

Access to secondary schools located in or near urban centers does not resolve the pervasive problem of low quality education. Statistics indicate that the practice of transporting rural students to urban schools has reduced the number of rural students in secondary education (MEC, 2004). Furthermore, as with primary schools, the curricula and pedagogy of secondary schools conflict with the educational paradigm of the Sem Terra. The MST has adopted the principle – 'Schools need to be where the people are' - in order to break the vicious cycle which requires adolescents to leave their families and communities in order to continue their education. Moreover, Sem Terra adolescents should have the right to construct their own schools and educational processes which are situated in the reality and history of rural people and free of discrimination and urban bias (MST, 2003, p.12).

The struggle to 'occupy secondary schools' and create more appropriate alternatives is relatively recent and very small in scope. In 2003, the MST National Education Sector conducted a comparative study of five schooling alternatives for Sem

Terra adolescents that have been attempted by different settlements. The report comes to the conclusion that the movement needs to prioritize activities in this area of education given the high numbers of adolescents in the movement and the expressed need for education (MST, 2003).

Fernando Martins (2004) identifies several factors, both internal and external, which influence the struggle for the occupation of primary and secondary schools. First, he notes that the MST Pedagogy of the Land is only partially used or completely absent from most of the schools located in MST camps and settlements. A large number of these schools use conventional teaching materials produced by large textbook companies especially for preparation for the university entrance examinations. Second, the level of parental and community involvement in these schools varies considerably even when MST pedagogy is in use. The distance between the school and the community can be assessed in terms of the linkages between the school and other activities of cooperative production, manual work, and community organization. This points to one of the major challenges that the movement confronts – raising levels of awareness or conscientization about the larger project of social transformation within the movement. A related factor is the change in attitudes of the Sem Terra once they have been officially settled. There is often a decline in the feeling of collectivity once individual families own their own land. This phenomenon presents another constant challenge for the movement – the creation of collective modes of production and social relations within a society that remains capitalist (Martins, 2004; Stedile, 2002).

This lack of awareness is also widespread amongst teachers in MST schools who continue to use conventional, 'banking' and 'punitive' modes of teaching. These

practices are more prevalent in teachers who do not live in the camps and settlements. The MST recognizes that there is a clear need for more training of educators in areas of pedagogy as well as the broader objectives and history of the movement. Another related factor is the lack of interaction between the MST schools and local governments agencies that are responsible for education. MST schools tend to be isolated, geographically and otherwise, from the public education system as a whole. Martins (2004) argues that alternative pedagogical projects that do not engage with established educational methods and standards, limit the possibilities of change within the formal educational system. There is also a lack of openness on the part of local government representatives to engage meaningfully with the wide range of MST educational practices. The absence of dialogue perpetuates the hierarchies of knowledge and social participation that are constituted by the gap between formal and nonformal education as well as rural and urban educational systems.

The Non-Democratic Nature of Conventional Political Arrangements

The current formulations of representative democracy encourage a form of democratization that does not require commitment to particular values such as social justice and equality (Abrahamsen, 2000, cited in Jelin, 1998). The operations of the central and local governments discussed in this chapter exemplify this 'shallow' practice of democracy. Moreover, the entrenchment of neoliberalism with its focus on individualism and participation-as-consumption has contributed to the weakening of the basis of collective action and the postponement of social demands (Jelin, 1998).

Even though the MST played a key role in the pro-democracy movement of the 1980s, the movement was ignored and persecuted by the governments of President Collor

and Cardoso. Collor tried to crush the MST through the use of violence; the federal

police raided MST offices, used force to evict the landless from camps, and imprisoned,

tortured, and assassinated activists with impunity. The Cardoso administration took more

action on the question of agrarian reform than any of his democratic predecessors.

Relatively more land was redistributed[156] and violence against the rural poor

decreased[157]. Equally important, the land redistribution process only accelerated in 1995-

1996 when the unchecked violence against the landless by the police and the private

armies of the landlords created a public outcry. On August 9, 1995, ten landless people

were murdered by military police in the state of Rondônia. Less than a year later,

nineteen landless persons were killed and sixty nine injured on April 17, 1996 in the

neighboring state of Pará.   These massacres were instrumental in changing public

perceptions of the landless movement (Stedile, 2002; Pereira, 2004). Moreover, the land

redistributions that occurred were viewed by Cardoso and his supporters as a social

welfare measure.[158] The government argued that redistribution of ownership of land

would not increase output or raise rural incomes substantially. Instead, they implemented

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[156] Land reform was high on Cardoso's pre-election agenda. After taking office, Cardoso focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability which in turn depended heavily on the professionalized and mechanized agricultural sector (Pereira, 2004).   According to government statistics, 585,683 landless families were settled during the seven years of the Cardoso land reform program; and approximately 20 million hectares, mostly from private holdings were acquired for redistribution (Ondetti, 2001 in Pereira, 2004). The MST puts the actual number much lower – 160,000 families and 8 million hectares acquired for redistribution (Pereira, 2004).   The Cardoso government also implemented a 'market-assisted' land reform program with the help of the World Bank and market-driven reforms that addressed agricultural credit, taxation, and payments for expropriated land.

[157] A judicial reform that has rarely been implemented required that military police charged with committing intentional homicide stand trial in civilian courts with a jury was passed in 1996. This reform along with a gun control law passed in 1997 was intended to control the violence against the landless.

[158] In fact, in 1996 President Cardoso admitted in a newspaper interview that his policies would favor the most advanced capitalist sectors of the economy instead of the prevailing "monopolistic and bureaucratic capitalism" and "corporatists" of the old patrimonial state (Cardoso, 1996 in Pereira, 2004). Moreover, his policies would not be able to benefit everyone "I am also not going to say that it [my government] is of the excluded because it cannot be… Certain sectors are not a part of this dynamic segment of the economy. And then what?….I don't know how many excluded there will be (Cardoso, 1996, p.6)."

programs for creating rural employment and poverty alleviation that focused on providing credit to small farmers and providing training and skills to build human capital of rural workers (Pereira, 2004). Cardoso's macro-economic policies also allowed transnational agrocorporations (TNCs) to consolidate their presence in Brazil. They were able to purchase large amounts of land and implement agricultural production technology that harmed the environment and the people who worked the land.

There was widespread hope that Lula would alter the direction of development for Brazilian society. In reality, Lula's administration appeared to be controlled by the Ministry of Finance and the central economic team. It is the Ministry of Finance that controls educational decision-making by setting the parameters of educational spending and consequently the scope of policies for redistribution and equity. Haddad and Graciano (2004) point out that Brazil's economy has been registering a progressive increase in its primary surplus beyond the target agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of R\$ 56,9 billion (US\$ 19 billion). This amount would be enough to multiply the Education Ministry's budget, reviewed for 2004 at R\$ 6 billion (US\$ 2 billion) and budgeted at R\$ 7,6 billion (US\$2,5 billion) for 2005.

Unlike Cardoso, Lula and his Ministers have met repeatedly with the MST since assuming office. However, there has been little action on the promises that he has made during these meetings. Lula has contradicted his campaign promises on agrarian reform which include the acceleration of land redistribution and an increase in funding for rural education through FUNDEB and PRONERA.[159] The neoliberal slant of his policies

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[159] When he assumed office, Lula promised to settle 430 thousand families in the next three years, with priority given to families in encampments. In 2003, 14 thousand families were settled and in 2004 less than 50 thousand were settled. MST Update # 87, April 1, 2005 Retrieved March 29, 2006 from http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=mstupdate87. The government has also failed to keep other campaign

shocked and immobilized many of his supporters for the first two years of his

administration. When I arrived in Brazil in the middle of 2004, progressive civil society

was still at a loss as to how to engage with a government that they had thought would

support their endeavors. While a cause for disappointment for many on the Brazilian

Left, the shift in attitude towards economic reform did not come as a surprise to others. In

his assessment of Lula's Brazil, Emir Sader (2005) points out that the Worker's Party

participated in the 'Buenos Aires Consensus' in the mid-nineties which modeled itself on

the Third Way government of Clinton and Blair that advocated fiscal adjustment and

monetary stability with add-on social policies. Through the nineties, the position of the

PT on the question of external debt also shifted considerably from suspension to

payments to Lula's eventual commitment in 2002 to repay all debts.

After his third defeat in the Presidential race, Lula and his advisers created the

Institute of Citizenship, a think tank outside the organizational structures of the PT.

According to Emir Sader (2005) the think-tank was instrumental in formulating Lula's

campaign program for 2002; it also focused on expanding Lula's already considerable

public personality independent of the Worker's Party. Reviving an economy that had

failed to respond to Cardoso's war on inflation was a key objective. In June, 2002, Lula

issued a 'Letter to Brazilians' following the attack on the *real* by international finance

capital. The letter was drafted by Antonio Palocci, who would become Ministry of

Finance and promised to meet all of the Brazilian government's existing financial

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promises to protect the land owned by indigenous peoples. The rate of deforestation of the Amazon has
increased. Local and federal governments continue to pursue hydro-electric and mining projects that have
been contested on grounds that they are likely to cause environmental destruction, displace indigenous and
other peoples from their homes, disproportionately reduce access to energy for those who are unable to pay
the rising costs , and, in brief, only appear to benefit transnational energy corporations.

commitments. The letter reassured foreign investors and along with a carefully managed presidential campaign that emphasized Lula, rather than the PT, contributed to his victory in the second round of elections. Stedile (2004) described Lula's 2002 campaign as: "In the elections people voted for Lula, but really they were probably voting against neo-liberalism; in terms of articulating a positive program it was a very de-politicized campaign, based on gringo political marketing strategies that prioritized television advertising (p.12)."

Towards the end of 2004, social movements and civil society had recovered from their disappointment. When I left in January 2005, the MST had begun massive preparations for a 17-day march on the capital city of Brasília. In May, 2005, the MST twelve thousand Sem Terra and their supporters converged on the capital city to demand that Lula keep his promises. The movement has come a long way and is still growing and learning from the experiences of mass struggle:

> "The MST started as a struggle for land. When we began our struggle we believed that land alone would be enough to get people out of poverty. We were wrong. We learned that the enemy was not just the large estates. We learned that there are other fences besides the ones that kept campesinos off of the land. We learned that the lack of capital is a fence. We learned that ignorance, a lack of knowledge, is a fence. We learned that international capitalism and its multinational corporations are fences as well (Stedile, 2004)."

The Sem Terra have demonstrated a capacity for reflexive social practice, resilience, and a capacity for innovation that has made them most powerful social movement on the continent of Latin America. Their struggles in the area of rural education are based on the belief that while education cannot solve all of the problems, it is a key space in which they can gain recognition as legitimate actors and advocate for

fundamental changes in social structures of unequal distribution and democracy. This discussion has tried to show that the strengths and the limitations of the MST in 'opening up' new educational and political possibilities for a radical democratic society centers on their ability to organize people and raise levels of political consciousness.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation is concerned with identifying the potential and practices of social-justice oriented education and politics as embodied in the social activism of the Movimento Sem Terra. In order to understand the possibilities and limitations of activist politics, I have explored education policy processes around questions of rural education in Brazil. There is a pervasive absence of quality education in the Brazilian public education systems; the challenges to learning are even larger for poor rural children, youth, and adults. When policy analysis is conducted from a historical, comparative, and localized perspective, we can see the ways in which hierarchy-driven policies ignore, deny, and/or silence the marginalized social groups for which they are intended. It also becomes possible to see how social movements can use social contradictions as an impetus for radical action (Anyon, 2005). In the case of rural education in Brazil, organized and collective struggle for recognition, redistribution, and justice by social movements like the MST disrupt and de-center authoritarian state-driven policy processes and give meaning and reality to radically democratic forms of participation.

Central Arguments and Themes of Discussion

The literature review discussed the reconfigurations of the relationship between the state, society, and the market in terms of understanding and planning for public education. The provision of public education in a particular context is shaped by conflicting ideas about the scope and purpose of education and the role of the state in education. Conflicting ideologies that were discussed include education as a fundamental human right that the state is obligated to provide; mass public education as an instrument

that enables the state to maintain social control and order; education as a process of preparing individuals to participate as workers and consumers in market-driven development projects; and education as a site of resistance, contestation, and liberation. Critical, post-colonial, and feminist theories inform the frames of top-down and bottom-up globalization that I use to examine changes in the nation-state and public responsibility for education. Global influences on education reform take the form of the forces of capital- and market-driven growth, as well as discourses of human rights and democracy. Local influences take the form of sub-national government institutions that implement education reform as well as popular mobilizations for equality and justice in education.

I go on to argue that progressive social movements have been at the forefront of exposing the inherent inequity and exploitation embedded in capitalist models of development. A critical, historically situated, and participatory engagement with the politics of knowledge have played a key role in the educational activities that underpin organization and mobilization of socially disadvantaged groups. Under-resourced and discriminatory public education systems and the reduced responsibility of the state for education feature predominantly in the critique of social institutions that perpetuate exclusion and injustice. Alternative educational practices, including critical pedagogies and popular education, have been instrumental in the construction of new positive identities, political consciousness, and a commitment to collective action for social transformation. They also illuminate the hierarchies of knowledge that underlie politics of education and policy-making within the formal institutional arrangements of state administrative and governance apparatus. They have mobilized public pressure to

demand the right to participate in formal decision-making structures, created their own

alternative policy arenas, and compiled alternative body of knowledge informed by their

conceptions of an equitable, just, and radically democratic society. In doing so, these

social movements have re-situated the politics of education at the juncture of the state and

civil society and it is these intersections and the implications for educational reform and

societal change that I have explored in my research.

Public Education and Underlying Ideologies

In Chapters Four and Five, I examine the underlying ideologies as well as the

impact of hierarchical and de-humanizing education policies that are dis-connected from

the lived realities of the rural poor and landless in Brazil. Policy silences and denial of

the realities of structural inequalities point to the limitations of the Brazilian state to act

as a catalyst for radical social change. An examination of historical trends and priorities

reveal a public education system that is subordinate to the interests of local political and

economic elite and the globally dominant capitalist model of development. Historically,

the extreme inequality in the distribution of resources and power have perpetuated a

political culture based on relations of patronage and exploitation. The Brazilian state and

power arrangements between elite have undergone several reconfigurations which

include the incorporation of twentieth century discourses about modernization, human

rights and democracy into the rhetoric of development. In reality, Brazilian society

remains deeply stratified; access to quality education (and other basic social services) and

opportunities for political participation are limited to a privileged few. The mechanisms

and processes of representative democracy have been subverted to the interests of the

elite through a political culture of clientilism and corruption. In particular, the state has

maintained control over education through devolution-type decentralization where local governments are given more administrative responsibilities without additional financial resources or the ability to make decisions. Organized efforts to promote a more equitable and just distribution of resources have been either ruthlessly repressed or appeased with state-controlled civil society participation such as Vargas's support for workers unions and fragmented social programs for the most needy.

The political nature of making decisions about access, equity, and distributing resources for education has been masked by the language of policy making based on rational choice and legitimate scientific knowledge. Economic- and technical rationality-driven educational planning are a hallmark of neoliberal thinking about development and have been effectively used initially to prevent local democratic participation, and, more recently,, to regulate local control and decision-making in education. Successive governments of Brazil have accumulated a huge external and internal debt which has been accompanied by the implementation of macro-economic structural adjustment policies – another hallmark of development as envisaged by neoliberal international financial institutions and development agencies. The neoliberal paradigm privileges the market over the state as arbiter of distribution of resources and individual notions of economic and civic participation. As such, the rationale of economic efficiency and cost-effectiveness in a context of limited public resources has been used to legitimate investments in public primary schools and the maintenance of a small number of elite public universities over other sectors of education. The state has almost completely withdrawn from providing education to so-called hard-to-reach populations such as illiterate youth and adults and rural populations as a whole. The unmet social demand for

education has been relegated to the private sector in the form of private businesses, private for-profit schools, and nongovernmental organizations amongst others.

Civil Society Involvement in Rural Education

The discussion of educational legislation and government education policy in Chapter Four has identified the multiple ways in which the dominant political culture and agenda have affected the lives of poor rural populations. The model of capitalist exports-driven development has promoted the exploitation of Brazil's considerable natural resources including the human population living in rural areas. In what is primarily an agrarian economy, traditional rural cultures have been undermined and poor rural people termed ignorant and backward. These discourses of subjugation have worked hand-in-glove with development policies that have concentrated cultivable land and wealth amongst a privileged few with fragmented social interventions to alleviate the effects of mass displacement, extreme poverty and unemployment. In the case of rural education, early educational legislation amounted to little more than symbolic policy devices. In practice, state planning for rural education has perpetuated the prevailing culture of discrimination and negation through urban-biased curricula and industrial-type organization of schooling for rural children. Other educational interventions for rural communities have been limited to improving the productivity of agricultural workers constituted by poor rural youth and adults. In sum, the dominant model of education has failed to address the widening disparities between formal and nonformal education and workers in the formal and informal economy.

In the last hundred years however, public education has also become a space for contestation and expanded participation by relatively state-autonomous and social-justice

oriented members of organized civil society including but not limited to the middle-class led education movements of the 1920s, the social mobilizations of the landless that have persisted since the 1950s, and the popular education and literacy campaigns of the 1970s. Progressive educational legislation that has emerged out of the broader social project of redemocratization has contributed to the opening of conventional, political, and institutional arrangements to some civil society actors. In Chapter Five, I discuss the ways in which civil society participation was legitimized by the progressive legislation (constructed through wide-ranging civil society participation) that accompanied the re-democratization of Brazil in the 1980s. Formal and informal policymaking arenas are presented as two different centers and relations of power which provide partial and complementary sources of insight into the politics of education policy.

The 1988 Constitution recognized the legal and not just idealistic right to education for all Brazilian citizens; the need for education to be responsive to local contexts and needs; complete autonomy of municipal governments in providing primary education; and the role of federal funding in correcting regional and state-municipal disparities in educational spending and therefore quality. The neoliberal regime of President Cardoso selectively complied with the mandates for educational equality and redistribution and completely ignored rural education. The restructuring of educational finance mechanisms substantially reduced the disparities in primary school enrolment. However, local decision-making about the content and process of education was further constrained by the federal government through measures such as the standardization of curricula and evaluation systems. Cardoso and the Ministry of Education consistently refused to dialogue with progressive civil society advocates for public education and the

landless movements. Interventions for rural education during this period were fragmented and geographically targeted (the impoverished Northeast) and variously focused on improving the training and pedagogy of rural teachers, some improvements in infrastructure, and the provision of literacy for youth and adults in the poorest municipalities through public-private partnerships.

However, the progressive mandates of the 1988 Constitution that were elaborated on by the 1996 Education Law and FUNDEF had legitimized calls for a comprehensive national policy on rural education that was integrated with agrarian reform and rural development as well as civil society as legitimate participants in the formulation of education policy.   These directives supported the efforts of civil society advocates to recognize the rights of rural people not just to access to education but a situated and locally meaningful education.

Despite the silence of the federal government, the Movimento Sem Terra, other landless movements, and members of organized civil society including the Catholic Church, public universities and unions persisted with the work of identifying the necessary components of a national rural education policy with support from inter-governmental organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF.   I have argued that the national conferences, meetings, and mobilizations on basic rural education organized by these entities constitute an alternative policy arena which were more inclusive of the diverse perspectives and experiences of rural education accumulated by educational work of NGOs and social movements.   They also reflect the shift in roles of civil society organizations from delivering education services to organizing and advocating for the right to participate in education policy-making.

An alternative understanding and approach to addressing problems in rural education was constructed at these meetings starting with the premise that rural people have equal rights as other Brazilian citizens. These rights include the right to construct their own educational processes that reflect their lived realities, traditions, and values for the land, and natural environment. They also recognized the historical and systemic nature of the neglect and exploitation of rural populations which were reflected in the condition of rural schools and education as a whole. The recommendations that emerged out of these meetings exposed the fragmented and inconsistent nature of state interventions to improve rural education. Last but not the least, they raised awareness and maintained popular attention on the legal mandate for a national policy on rural education and legitimated the struggles of the landless.

When President Lula took office, his Ministry of Education could call on a significant body of debate and reflection on the question of basic rural education policy. In Lula's administration however, the Ministry of Finance dictated the parameters of social policy, placing severe constraints on progressive members of the Lula government. Supporters of Lula in organized civil society were at a loss during the first year of his Presidency to respond to his breach of promises pertaining to education, land redistribution, agrarian reform, external debt – to name just a few. However, two years into the Lula administration, progressive activists began to organize on how to hold Lula accountable to his more radical promises.

The Movimento Sem Terra

Organized civil society *was* successful in capitalizing on the openings created by progressive legislation despite the context of the hostile Cardoso administration. The

strategic partnership between the MST and public universities which led to the creation

of the federal program PRONERA (the National Program for Education in Agrarian

Reform) is one such instance. When the Cardoso administration refused to dialogue

directly with the MST, the movement engaged the state through allies in the public

university system.   The release of the Operational Directives on a National Policy for

Rural Basic Education by the National Council of Education is another example of the

innovative ways in which organized civil society has learned to negotiate formal

institutional arrangements to maintain pressure on the state. The CNE is constituted by

Senators and Congressmen as well as representatives of Brazilian civil society such as

UNDIME. It is in this sense that social movements can be viewed as what Jean Anyon

(2005) refers to as 'catalysts' for progressive legislation, court decisions and other equity

policies in education.   The ways in which the MST has organized and mobilized public

pressure reflect a deep understanding of the language of power – a language that the state

can understand (MST, 2003). The political-educational beliefs that underlie these

mobilizations are centered in the belief in the landless as 'thinking' and 'acting' subjects

and not those who are thought about and acted upon (MST, 2003).

Chapter Six explores the ways in which the internal arrangements and practices of

the MST constitute a culture of resistance and action. The exploration of the workings of

activist politics, both the personal and interpersonal organizational aspects of power, as

well as, the challenges made to conventional political arrangements are an important

component of social-justice oriented policy analysis (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005).

I discuss the ways in which education within the MST is a space for individual

politicization and movement-building through radical democratic processes in ways that

resist the "reification of divisions between inside and outside the state and between the public realm and private life (Eschle, 2001, p.80)." Specifically, I look at the different forms and transformatory aspects of critical pedagogies and participation in education through which people come to be involved in the political struggle. Critical pedagogies facilitate collective de-construction of oppressive social systems by marginalized social groups and ways to find power 'within' to resist oppression and act for social transformation. The strategy of 'occupation' -- of land and schools – is an outcome of this kind of transformatory process when people are able to reimagine oppressive situations as changeable and useful. Organizing on the issue of primary and secondary schools is one way the MST works towards to realize the overall 'popular project' of direct and unlimited participation in all aspects of planning and development. Social movement theorists refer to this process of becoming involved in political contention as 'attribution of opportunity' (Anyon, 2005).

Identity, Agency and Participation in the MST

The process of radical democratic participation is essentially a process of engaging with 'hidden power' and mechanisms of control that are embedded in decision-making structures predicated on representative participation, lines of communication, and the rules and norms that define any political culture. In the MST, participatory processes facilitate an understanding of structural inequality and injustice connected to individual experience in ways that enable subjecthood and agency. The MST has successfully challenged the discriminatory and disempowering labels imposed on rural people and re-appropriated the rich diversity of traditional cultural forms and practices that are a source of positive identity for the landless.

The internal organization of the movement is also designed to facilitate individual and collective participation at all levels from the family, to camp and settlement communities, to state, regional, and national coordination bodies. The Coordination and Direction bodies are constituted by militants who have participated in the struggle and have been nominated by their communities.   The absence of boundaries on legitimate spaces for political action and social transformation have contributed to a radical political culture and process of politicization that is particularly significant for women within the movement. While the movement has not explicitly addressed the unequal social relations constituted by race and religion that are also pervasive, it has taken actions to facilitate a situated engagement with oppressive gender and age relations and to provide forums for women, youth and the elderly to participate and develop as leaders.

The 'signifying' work of social movements like the MST is clearly evident in the social construction of new identities through participation in as a key factor in involvement in political contention (Tarrow, cited in Anyon, 2005). The participatory, critical, and non-hierarchical processes of knowledge construction and collective decision-making that define the social practice of the MST have contributed to the formation of a new category of social actors – the Sem Terra – landless citizens who are entitled to rights and possessors of legitimate knowledge: "Through their struggles, they seek to trample other fences beyond those of the *latifundium*. Knocking down the invisible yet powerful fence around knowledge, through an ambitious educational project, is another challenge facing the MST (Diniz-Pereira, 2005, p.3)."

The construction of individual and collective agency through critical pedagogies provides the inspiration for the innovative and non-violent action repertoires' that have

enabled the Sem Terra to reappropriate and reconsitute understandings of 'popular participation' and meaning of 'public' in public education and policy. These strategies include the 'occupation' of land and schools; the physical occupation of public buildings; marches; conferences and meetings; letters to the government and to the public; as well as, the MST flag, hymn, and slogans. These innovative strategies emerge out of a politics of identity that constructs new empowered identities and heterogeneous subjectivities that enable the movement to retain autonomy but develop strategic partnerships and solidarity with individuals and groups as diverse as artists, university students, and faculty, as well as international organizations such as UNESCO, organizations affiliated to the Catholic Church and Liberation Theologists, and trade unions.

The Micropolitics of Education

In the seventh chapter, I examine the micro-politics of the interactions between MST and government in the state of Rio de Janeiro as constructed through the perspective of one of the State Education Coordinators who is responsible for youth and adult education. In the current formulation of decentralized education systems, local educational contexts are shaped and constrained by regional and federal directives. At the same time, local political contexts offer new opportunities for participation and negotiation for educational reform. President Lula and the Worker's Party are the first federal government to explicitly support and collaborate with the MST. Many of the MST's most significant victories have taken place in states and municipalities governed by the Worker's Party. However, the Rio de Janeiro state and local governments have historically had close ties with large landholders and agro-business. The delays by INCRA for land expropriation in the state are amongst the longest anywhere in the

country as a result of the nexus between government and large estate owners. Yet it is the state and local governments that are responsible for implementing federal policy directives. What are the dynamics between the movement and sub-national levels of government?

In Rio de Janeiro, the politics of education between the state and the social movement have played out in different ways for EJA and primary education. From the perspective of the state, primary education is the responsibility of municipalities and secondary education is the responsibility of the state government. In practice and in planning, youth and adult education is not included or takes secondary priority in state policies for basic education. Governments tend to be more open to the possibilities of civil society participation in literacy education as compared to formal primary education. At the same time, there are few mechanisms and little inclination towards post-literacy planning beginning with the establishment of equivalence between formal and nonformal education systems to prevent continued social and economic exclusion of the graduates of nongovernmental EJA programs.

The State Coordination of the MST in Rio de Janeiro has engaged with state and municipal governments on issues of primary education, EJA, and most recently, the federal mandate to states to consult with representatives of civil society towards the formulation of federal and state policies on rural basic education. Local governments have also been hostile to the MST's demands for the inclusion of MST pedagogy in the primary schools but have been more open to participation and dialogue on reforms for youth and adult education.

This discussion has shown that the process of social transformation is a process of continuous struggle and incremental victories. Research has an important role to play in the documentation, dissemination and analysis of social movements. There is a need for more research on the democratization of education that is situated at the intersection of the state and social movements.

Questions for further research

This dissertation has explored the ways in which social movements constitute a space and source of radical democratization. Specifically, I have argued that the participatory and critical educational practices of the MST challenge conventional hierarchical policy-making arenas and arrangements, and give rise to new forms of individual and collective agency for the reform of rural basic education. Questions for further research include:

- How do the strategic coalitions between the MST and other members of organized civil society enable a politics of connection based on solidarity and recognition of difference rather than shared identity?

- What strategies have social movements and organized civil society developed to engage with sub-national (state and municipal) policy arenas in industrializing and poor countries?

- Public universities have been positioned as mediators between the state and nongovernmental providers of literacy education in Brazil. How do university-based intellectuals understand their roles and responsibilities in this complex arrangement?

- As social justice-oriented researchers and analysts, how can we reframe policy problems to counter the rationale of inadequate resources and economic efficiency used to justify state withdrawal from education for hard-to-reach populations?

- How do popular educators engage with oppressive social relations in intersectional ways that simultaneously address oppressions of gender as well as race, class, age etc.?

- Youth and adult education has historically been the 'field of revolution' in international education development (Mundy and Murphy, 2001). There has been a new surge in interest and funding for literacy under the aegis of Education for All. How do progressive advocates for literacy, lifelong, and continuing education address the problems of equivalency between formal and nonformal education systems?

Conclusion: Energizing the 'Public' in Public Education

The analysis of state-social movement intersections in the context of primary and youth and adult education in the state of Rio de Janeiro provides a situated insight into the nature of political struggle and the responsiveness of the state to challenges from social movements. It also highlights the ways in which the demands for direct and unlimited participation in all aspects of decision making structures can strengthen a public education system that has been systematically undermined by neoliberal policies. In exposing the exclusionary and discriminatory nature of rural education, and presenting new possibilities for educational practice, the educational struggle of the MST has provided a new identity not just for rural schools but Brazilian public schools (Caldart, 2000). Liam Kane (2000) writes that MST practice "throws out a challenge to the state regarding the purpose of education and highlights state inadequacies of scale and quality of provision (p.9)." It is in this sense that the MST is a social movement because it is

geared to influence state policies and shape social alternatives – not capture state power (Carter, 2003).

Like progressive educators elsewhere, the MST believe that the only way to make education universal is through state policies. Very few of the problems currently facing rural schools originate in the schools or local communities. These problems occur due to a combination of inter-related factors that include budget cuts and neoliberal policies directed towards reducing the role of the state in education; the systematic neglect of infrastructure and working conditions for teachers; rural poverty; lack of non-exploitative employment opportunities; housing or land; transportation, etc. The improvements that have taken place are largely in response to the activism by rural social movements which have re-constituted schools as spaces of solidarity and democratization.

The MST intends to implement its vision of educational transformation – what rural education *should* be and what participation in education should be – within the parameters and institutions of public education: "We have learned that the State is losing power and control over what should be public. The public is becoming private. Social movements are a force that work with the established powers of the State in the struggle for rights and for social transformation. In this case, schools, for the Movement, are public, and therefore, of the people and for the people. Of the countryside and for the countryside (MST, 2003, p. 151)."   The movement has also learned that when the state recognizes one right such as the right to unused cultivable land, the state must recognize other rights as well (MST, 2003). In this sense, the human rights discourse of the movement is based on an understanding of rights as 'contested extensions of political struggles' that are situated in the lived experiences of the landless (Rocco, 2005).   The

idea of struggle is as strong as the idea of entitlement in the conception of rights and the movement works to both claim and protect the rights of the landless. The work of the MST also demonstrates that the need for organized struggle is constant – permanent engagement is necessary to protect the rights have been conquered.   At the same time, each conquest creates new opportunities and spaces for struggle - "one victory is the beginning of another (MST, 2003, p.150)."

The educational work of the MST is part of a broader vision for the transformation of Brazil into an equitable, democratic and sustainable society. Social movements like the MST reject the populist, 'trickle-down' social measures that have historically been used to appease marginalized groups in Brazil while the neoliberal model of development concentrated vast amounts of wealth in the hands of a few. These populist measures have contributed to low political consciousness and participation amongst these groups. The construction of critical consciousness and individual and collective agency are key strategies in resisting political apathy and mediated political engagement and transforming oppressive social relations of gender, race, age etc. The movement has only recently begun to engaged with issues of discrimination against women and is yet to address questions of race and religious differences. Considerable structural obstacles prevail in the form of historical and institutional arrangements that constitute the state and practices for democracy. In Brazil, these obstacles take the form of a well-organized and resource-rich constituency that supports neoliberal development with supporters in the legislature, judiciary, and executive arms of the state, and the media. Neoliberal policies have contributed to the accumulation of a huge debt which are used to justify budget cuts on social spending leading one scholar to

write that "Millions of Latin-American children and teenagers are working today in order to pay the debt. Our important effort to develop educational programs will be lost if we forget to take into account this heavy millstone around our neck, fruit of the criminal international division of work (Gadotti, 1991, p.4)."

This constituency has also attempted to suppress the movement; initially through violence, and now through sophisticated forms of surveillance and control created during the Cardoso administration. In a 2002 interview, MST leader Stedile described these new forms of repression below:

> "Our form of mass organization protects our members and activists, our committee structure and collective leadership shelters our leaders, and deters assassinations. This has been an important factor for the drop in the number of killings during Cardoso's second term. Instead, they've taken up cannier, more disguised forms of repression, linked to the intelligence services. Firstly, Cardoso has reorganized the Federal police, setting up new departments specializing in agrarian conflict in each state, with inspectors who are experts on the Movement — they've read more of our literature than most of our activists, since it's their professional duty; they're Sem Terra PhDs. This is basically a reconstruction of the rural DOPS[160] of the dictatorship years. Their officers keep opening inquiries on us, so the MST's energies are constantly being wasted on protecting its activists from the Federal police. They listen in on our phone lines and they've stepped up surveillance on our leadership. The ranch-owners are no longer at liberty just to have us bumped off, but there are men following us like shadows. Our leaders have to be rock-solid in their beliefs, because it's a terrible drain on their energies.
>
> The second form of repression we're facing is through the judiciary, where the PSDB government and the land-owners have a lot of influence. They use the courts as a way to grind us down. Last week I spent a day in the prison in Mãe do Rio, a small municipality in Pará, where fourteen of our comrades have been held for 31 days, without charge, in a cell measuring 4 by 6 metres, while the judge systematically denies them the right of *habeas corpus*. They were in a group of three hundred families, occupying unused ranch-land belonging to Jader Barbalho.[161] It's clear the local judiciary is under Barbalho's influence, and he's openly told the newspapers that the MST should be taught a lesson: 'They'll see

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[160] DOPS - Department of Political and Social Order.
[161] A key Cardoso lieutenant in Congress, president of the Senate, forced to resign after corruption scandals.

who they've got mixed up with.' So the fourteen comrades have been held for a month, and the movement's energies have been spent on getting them freed instead of going towards the struggle for land. The third form of repression I've already mentioned: the concerted use of the media against us, the attempt to stigmatize us among broad layers of society, and especially among the least politicized sectors of the urban lower-middle class—the readers of *Veja*, which is very heavily biased against us.[162] Fortunately, the impoverished working class don't read *Veja*. But the way the media are systematically ranged against us by the Palácio de Planalto [Presidential Palace], in order to conduct a permanent campaign against us, is no less a form of repression (2002, p. 97 – 98).

The state and local elite have also been adept at regulating and co-opting the influence of progressive political actors – in both civil society and political parties. The dominant approach to civil society participation is limited to dialogue and consultations that do not necessarily impact policy content. This kind of civil society participation has not increased citizen involvement in policy processes, increased transparency and accountability, or democratized the broader political culture and associational life in any substantive way (Philips and Orsini, 2002). Therefore, an important dimension of the role of 'guardian of rights' for the MST is the need to engage with conventional institutional arrangements and power-brokers to implement these progressive laws and strengthen the capacity for participation at local levels of governance.

With these intentions in mind, the movement is currently seeking out new ways to expand and energize conceptions of the 'public' and to reach out to depoliticized people (Stedile, 2002). The movement has participated in national and transnational social mobilizations that have led to the creation of alternative policy arenas and new and progressive federal laws for rural education and agrarian reform. It is currently working on strategies for broad political collaboration with poor, urban communities and university faculty and student populations (Carter, 2003). Social movements like the

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[162] *Veja* is the largest circulation news weekly in Brazil.

MST and progressive civil society as a whole have been more successful in gaining

recognition for marginalized groups. They are yet to find effective ways to challenge the

neoliberal macroeconomic framework and counter the influence of international capital

that constrain redistributive and social justice-oriented social policies that would effect

real transformations in the lives of marginalized people. The first steps in this direction

consist of the development of an "internationalist consciousness" that could yield

concrete ways to counter the domination of capitalism: "You know right now what our

movement is against, what we are all against, but pretty soon we are going to have to

propose an alternative (Stedile, 2004). These limitations notwithstanding, the educational

and political work of the Movimento Sem Terra offer valuable insights and concrete

strategies for the kinds of public contestation that can fulfill the redistributive potential of

democracy and public education (Anyon, 2005).

> "The struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil—and the growth of the Sem Terra
> Movement itself—can't be measured solely in terms of numbers of families
> settled on land. Our struggle is a social and political one: sometimes we win
> victories that can't be measured in terms of hectares, and sometime we occupy a
> lot of land but the cumulative political effect is not so great…The only force that
> can bring social change is the organized mass of the people, and that people
> organize themselves through struggle, not through the vote. A vote is an
> expression of citizenship, not a form of struggle (Stedile, 2002, p. 103)."

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