

**AGRARIAN GEOGRAPHY AND RURAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THEORIES,
METHODS AND CONCEPTS**

***GEOGRAFIA AGRÁRIA E MOVIMENTOS SOCIAIS DO CAMPO: TEORIAS,
MÉTODOS E CONCEITOS***

***GEOGRAFÍA AGRARIA Y MOVIMIENTOS SOCIALES RURALES: TEORÍAS,
MÉTODOS Y CONCEPTOS***



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ABSTRACT: This article is the result of our post-doctoral studies on the theoretical and methodological production of Agrarian Geography concerning rural social movements, within the framework of Critical Geography. The objective of this article is to reflect on the dialectical method in understanding Agrarian Geography, considering the theories, methods, and concepts applied in the study of rural social movements. We adopt a qualitative approach of a historical, analytical-interpretative nature. To this end, we examine the studies of Professor Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira, PhD, and Professor Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, PhD. They share a critical background influenced by Marxism, agrarian conflicts, and the struggle for land. While Oliveira develops an interpretation oriented by political economy, emphasizing land tenure structure and the reproduction of capital, Fernandes proposes an approach centered on social subjects and territory production. It is concluded that understanding rural social movements requires the articulation between structure, territory, and social action.

KEYWORDS: Agrarian Geography. History of Thought. Social Movements.

RESUMO: *O presente texto é fruto dos nossos estudos de pós-doutoramento sobre a produção teórica e metodológica da Geografia Agrária concernente aos movimentos sociais do campo, sob a Geografia Crítica. O objetivo deste artigo é refletir sobre o método dialético na compreensão da Geografia Agrária, considerando as teorias, os métodos e os conceitos aplicados nos estudos dos movimentos sociais do campo. Adotamos uma abordagem qualitativa de caráter histórico, analítico-interpretativo. Para tanto, apreciaremos os estudos do Prof. Dr. Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira e do Prof. Dr. Bernardo Mançano Fernandes. Eles compartilham uma base crítica influenciada pelo marxismo, pelos conflitos agrários e pela luta pela terra. Enquanto Oliveira desenvolve uma interpretação orientada pela economia política, enfatizando a estrutura fundiária e a reprodução do capital, Fernandes propõe uma leitura centrada nos sujeitos sociais e na produção do território. Conclui-se que a compreensão dos movimentos sociais do campo exige a articulação entre estrutura, território e ação social.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Geografia Agrária. História do Pensamento. Movimentos Sociais.

RESUMEN: *Este texto es el resultado de nuestros estudios postdoctorales sobre la producción teórica y metodológica de la Geografía Agraria en relación con los movimientos sociales rurales, dentro del marco de la Geografía Crítica. El objetivo de este artículo es reflexionar sobre el método dialéctico para comprender la Geografía Agraria, considerando las teorías, los métodos y los conceptos aplicados en el estudio de los movimientos sociales rurales. Adoptamos un enfoque cualitativo de carácter histórico, analítico-interpretativo. Para ello, examinaremos los estudios del Prof. Dr. Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira y del Prof. Dr. Bernardo Mançano Fernandes. Ambos comparten una base crítica influenciada por el marxismo, los conflictos agrarios y la lucha por la tierra. Mientras que Oliveira desarrolla una interpretación orientada por la economía política, enfatizando la estructura de la tenencia de la tierra y la reproducción del capital, Fernandes propone una lectura centrada en los sujetos sociales y la producción del territorio. Se concluye que la comprensión de los movimientos sociales rurales requiere la articulación entre estructura, territorio y acción social.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Geografía Agraria. Historia del Pensamiento. Movimientos Sociales.

Introduction

The objective of this article is to reflect on the dialectical method in the understanding of Agrarian Geography, considering the theories, methods, and concepts applied in the studies of rural social movements. To that end, we will appreciate the professor's studies. Dr. Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira and Prof. Dr. Bernardo Mançano Fernandes. Both authors share a critical foundation influenced by Marxism and recognize the centrality of agrarian conflicts and the struggle for land. However, despite these similarities, their approaches diverge regarding their analytical focus and privileged categories.

Oliveira (1978) develops an interpretation oriented by political economy, emphasizing land tenure structure and the reproduction of capital, strongly anchored in Marxist political economy, with an emphasis on the structural determinations of the capitalist mode of production. Fernandes (1994, 1999) proposes a reading centered on the protagonism of social subjects, on the territorial dimension, and on the production of space.

To this end, the contributions of Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira and Bernardo Mançano Fernandes are taken as a reference, whose choice is justified not only by their centrality in the debate on Brazilian Agrarian Geography, but, above all, because they represent distinct analytical perspectives within the critical tradition.

In this sense, the choice of these authors allows for the exploration of relevant theoretical-conceptual and methodological tensions, especially regarding the understanding of the peasantry, territory, and the possibilities for social transformation in the Brazilian countryside.

In this context, historical materialism constitutes a method of interpreting historical and social reality that stands in opposition to positivist and idealist-based approaches. According to Chauí (2000), such a perspective breaks with naturalizing conceptions of society, by understanding it as a historically and socially determined construction.

The critique of the capitalist mode of production is guided by the analysis of the spheres of production, circulation, distribution, and consumption, understood as moments of an organic totality in process, whose historical concreteness manifests itself in the relations of production of a given society.

Thus, from the perspective of the mode of production, especially the capitalist one, in which the social organization that engenders economic activities is more complex and has a more voracious dynamic than previous ones, "Social relations are intimately linked to

productive forces” (Netto, 1989, p. 32, our translation). That is, its laws of production and productive forces, of the relations of production, of social institutions and ideological formations, under the mediations of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption. This, viewed as a whole, “are elements of a totality, differences within the same unit” (Netto, 1989, p. 11, our translation).

The organic totality produces and reproduces special moments of each phase that makes up the mode of production; thus, from these moments in their reciprocity, taking into account their contradictions, the totality realizes itself and shapes social formations. “a theoretically unitarily articulated structure from the perspective of the fundamental category of social reality, the totality” (Netto, 1989, p. 32, our translation).

Method and investigation are inseparable; they produce, on the ideal plane, the totality of the systematic movement of the real itself. Thus, the objective of the method is the unveiling of the movement of reality in the search for historical concreteness. In this sense, as Harvey (2013) argues, Marxist analysis requires the understanding of social phenomena as interrelated moments of a whole in permanent transformation.

But the concrete and articulated totality that is bourgeois society is a dynamic totality; its movement results from the contradictory character of all the totalities that compose the inclusive and macroscopic totality. Without contradictions, totalities would be inert, dead totalities, and what analysis registers is precisely their continuous transformation (Netto, 1989, p. 17).

From the perspective of the Marxist method, the aim is to understand how the parts articulate to produce an intimately related whole.

The elements that are neither general nor common must be separated from the range of characteristics common to all production as such, so that in their unity, which already arises from the identity of the subject, humanity, and of the object, nature, their essential difference is not forgotten (Marx, 1975, p. 85, our translation).

In this sense, production is a social activity that can take many forms or modes, depending on the prevailing forms of social organization and the technical correspondences of production; thus, it is not possible to fully understand a part of the capitalist system if that part is not inserted into the appropriate context of the entire system. It is from this intellectual movement that both Oliveira (1978) and Fernandes (1994, 1999) anchor themselves in Marxism and produce their theoretical and methodological analyses based on the production of the

material conditions of social life under materialism, and ultimately propose a research/investigation method for Agrarian Geography.

The category of land rent, articulated with Oliveira's (1978) effort to reorder this concept from political economy into the field of Agrarian Geography, was fundamental for the insertion of this problematic into the Critical Geography strand. Such an analytical movement highlights the relationships between private property, technology, industry, and agriculture, which allows for a more complex understanding of the mediation of the economic sphere in peasant production.

Unlike this structural emphasis, Fernandes (1994, 1999) shifts the analytical focus from land rent to the production of territory, privileging socioterritorial dynamics and the action of collective subjects. This distinction reveals two forms of apprehension of rural social movements: one oriented towards the social construction of space and the other centered on economic structure.

Now, one is faced with a distinct process in agriculture: the process of the subjection of land rent to capital. This is the basic mechanism of the capital expansion process in the countryside. This process occurs either through the buying and selling of land or through the subordination of peasant production (Oliveira, 2007, p. 12, our translation).

By stating this, Oliveira (2007) makes explicit the central mechanism of capital expansion in the countryside, highlighting how peasant production is subordinated to capitalist logic. In contrast, Fernandes (1994, 1999) interprets this same dynamic not only as subordination, but also as a field of dispute and resistance, in which social subjects produce alternative territorialities.

According to Oliveira (2004), the capitalist system organizes, reorganizes, and moves itself through socioeconomic inequalities, which, in turn, sediment the dynamics of the incessant expansion and accumulation of this system. This is a contradictory and articulated process of the capitalist mode of production that, in turn, repositions both the social class of large landowners and the peasant social class in the Brazilian countryside.

Capital strategically articulates these issues in the countryside, recreates itself, and defines how social relations take place in geographic space. It is understood, therefore, that through the production/reproduction of capital, the generation of surplus value, and the reproduction of human labor, the transformation of the territory occurs. In the Brazilian countryside, this capitalist movement enabled the industrialization of agriculture, allowing for the appropriation of land rent (Oliveira, 2004, p. 15, our translation).

This means that this movement is not spontaneous and independent, but a movement orchestrated by the economic structure of the current system, which reduces everything and everyone to objects, to commodities to be exchanged in the market. Thus, both the large landowner and the peasant find themselves caught in the webs of social relations of production, placing both on opposite sides, that is, in a class struggle with one another. This dispute is shrouded in a set of contradictions, the ultimate destination of which is the subjection of land rent in favor of the large landowner.

Thus, for Oliveira (2004) to incorporate Agrarian Geography into the analysis of land rent, it became necessary to articulate the relationship between the real production linked to price determination and the total production, which encompasses the entirety of socially produced labor, as well as the restrictions and contradictions inherent to this process.

Thus, land rent becomes a relevant instrument for the research of Oliveira (1978, 2004), as it enabled his understanding of the foundations of the Brazilian agrarian structure, and, consequently, the movements of organization and reorganization of the agrarian territory, whether at the local scale or at the global scale.

In Oliveira (1978-2004), land rent occupies a central position, constituting a fundamental category for understanding the agrarian structure and the forms of territorial appropriation under capitalism. In the case of Fernandes (1994-1999), this category does not play a structuring role, being shifted to an approach that privileges territory as a product of power relations, political disputes, and the action of social subjects. Thus, while Oliveira emphasizes the economic determinants of agrarian space, Fernandes highlights the sociopolitical dimension of the production of territory, evidencing an analytical tension between structure and action.

This perspective of Oliveira (1978), anchored in political economy and grounded in the category of land rent, allows us to argue that, under capitalism, land ceases to be merely a means of production and also becomes an asset for appreciation; in this way, the author redefines territory as an integral part of the logic of accumulation.

The concept of Territory, proposed by Oliveira (2003), takes the category of territory as the central theme of its investigations, making it a reference for the field of agrarian studies: “My works reflect this current that has the study of territory as the central theme of investigation in Geography” (Oliveira, 2003, p. 13, our translation).

Oliveira (1978), just as in Marx (1973), takes capital as an instrument of production; in this way, it enters the process subsumed within the general relation, metamorphosing into rent, which unfolds into political and social power. In this specific case, landowners control this process, which intensifies through the unification of industry and agriculture.

This process of unification, in turn, concentrates wealth, creates a special social class, and recreates the expropriation of the peasant on strictly capitalist bases. Thus, in Oliveira (2003), territory is translated into the conflict of social classes, under the contradictory and dialectical unity of the relations of production.

I start, therefore, from the conception that the territory must be apprehended as a contradictory synthesis, as a concrete totality of the process/mode of production/distribution/circulation/consumption and its superstructural articulations and mediations (political, ideological, symbolic, etc.) where the State performs the function of regulation. The territory is thus a concrete product of the class struggle waged by society in the process of the production of its existence. Capitalist society which is based on three fundamental social classes: proletariat, bourgeoisie, and landowners (Oliveira, 2003, p. 13, our translation).

Oliveira (2003) explores the capitalist contradiction of the appropriation of rent, profit, and surplus value, demonstrating the strategy of the special social class, which combines the globalization of capital and the nationalization of land, in its eagerness for expansion and enlargement.

We therefore work with the contradictory principle that at the same time as capital has become globalized, globalizing the capitalist territory, land has become nationalized. It is, therefore, also from this contradiction that the historical possibility arises of understanding different and unequal territorial formations and regions as concrete territorialities, historical totalities, and, therefore, of the contradictory spatialization of capital (expanded production/reproduction) and its articulations with landed property, that is, the land. So, I return to insist that capital is in its essence international, however the logic that involves land is in its essence national (Oliveira, 2003, p. 13, our translation).

This unification, which presents the landowner as a producer and possessor of capital, expands the capacity of this special social class to generate profits; in turn, it produces a relationship in which the peasant is subjected through their labor in production for industry.

In Fernandes (1999), the peasantry assumes centrality as a sociopolitical subject, whose action materializes in the production of territories through social struggles, especially those linked to socioterritorial movements. Thus, while Oliveira (2003) emphasizes the peasant's

insertion into the structure of capital, Fernandes highlights their capacity for action, resistance, and territorial production, evidencing an analytical tension between structural determination and political agency.

In Oliveira (2003), the peasantry is understood based on the structural determinations of the capitalist mode of production, being analyzed as a category inserted into the relations of production and subordinated to the logic of land rent and accumulation. In this sphere of production, both find themselves in conflict, where the former is able to connect at any stage of this production process for economic expropriation, while the latter is connected involuntarily and segregated from the product of their labor.

This unification is being made possible because the capitalist has also become a landowner, a latifundist; therefore, this has also occurred because capital has developed bonds of subjugation that function as shackles, as ties to the peasantry, causing it to produce, at times, exclusively for industry (Oliveira, 2003, p. 14, our translation).

This moment in which capital organizes itself, swallowing the bonds of subjection into its center, is impacted by the way in which the expansion and enlargement of capital occurs.

However, this process in the countryside is also contradictorily marked by the process of expansion of peasant agriculture, where monopoly capital has developed ties to subordinate/appropriate peasant land rent, transforming it into capital. Here, capital does not territorialize, but monopolizes the territory marked by peasant production (Oliveira, 2003, p. 14, our translation).

Following this line of reasoning, we can understand the two dimensions of territory coined by the author under the territorialization of monopoly and the monopolization of territory, in the first:

The territorialization of monopolies in agriculture acts simultaneously in the control of private land ownership, the productive process in the field, and the industrial processing of agricultural and forestry (silviculture) production. In other words, the owner of the land, the agricultural capital, and the industrial capital is the same natural or legal person. Therefore, there is no merging of two distinct social classes, landowner and capitalist, into one, as many intellectuals think. In fact, this is why slave-like labor does not disappear in the Brazilian countryside; it is a trait of the condition of the capitalist landowner in the country (Oliveira, 2014, p. 286, our translation).

According to Oliveira (1990), what determines an economic organization, and what defines agrarian territories under the territorialization of capital, and which refers to the

insertion of the creation of instruments that engender capitalist laws, such as the hiring of workers where the separation of wage labor, combined with a fixed workday, and land ownership are combined in the hands of the capitalist, conform to this territorial dimension.

And in the second, the monopolization of the territory:

The monopolization of the territory is developed by companies involved in the commercialization and/or industrial processing of agricultural production, which, without producing in the field, control peasant and capitalist rural producers through mechanisms of subordination. Monopolistic companies act as players in the futures market of the world's commodity exchanges, and sometimes control the production of pesticides and fertilizers. This process generates monopolistic control of the territory, that is, companies monopolize the circulation of goods without needing to territorialize the monopolies. This also means that possibilities are opened for the establishment of class alliances between those who actually produce, generally nationals, and those who make these goods circulate around the world (Oliveira, 2014, p. 291, our translation).

Based on our analysis, we can assert that Oliveira's concern, when thinking about the concept of territory, is to resolve the materialist-based mediations in the movement of immediate territorial disputes, observing the mediate repercussions, within the process of production and reproduction, of the productive forces and social relations engaged in the Brazilian countryside. Thus, from this movement derive the analytical categories of territorialization of monopoly and the monopoly of territorialization.

In Oliveira (2014), territory appears more associated with power relations mediated by capital and the State. This definition reinforces the structural nature of the territory, linked to the reproduction of capital and to landed property. Land concentration, in this context, appears as one of the main mechanisms of territorial organization, revealing the unequal and exclusionary nature of Brazilian agrarian development.

In Fernandes (2009), the territory is not limited to the economic structure, but is also the result of the intentional action of social subjects. For Fernandes, the countryside is not just a space for the reproduction of capital, but also a contested territory, in which different projects for society confront one another. Thus, the concept of territory becomes fundamental, understood as an expression of power relations and as a result of the collective action of subjects who resist and produce alternatives to the dominant model.

Thus, the concept of territory proposed by Oliveira is a social product that emerged from the analysis of economic structures to interpret the reality of the Brazilian countryside.

The concept of territory developed by Fernandes (2009) is based on the power relations that traverse political and ideological disputes, as well as social and production relations, taking shape within class conflicts. From this perspective, the territory expresses multiple functions, such as organization, delimitation, domination, subordination, exploitation, appropriation, resistance, and emancipation, revealing its dynamic and conflictual nature.

By emphasizing this relational character, the author states that “social relations produce territories and are produced by them” (Fernandes, 2009, p. 17, our translation), understanding them as multidimensional spaces in which the diverse dimensions of life are realized, provided they are guided by political projects. Such a conception allows us to grasp the territory as a contradictory and unequal process, in which multiple determinations materialized in geographic space are articulated.

Unlike Oliveira’s (2014) approach, which privileges structural determinations, Fernandes (2009), emphasizes the active role of subjects in the construction and transformation of the territory.

The governance space, from the perspective of Fernandes (2009), corresponds to the State’s territory in its multiple national, state, and municipal scales, structured by institutions such as government bodies and multilateral agencies, and associated with the idea of sovereignty. Restricting territory to this dimension obscures its complexity, for, as Fernandes (2009, p. 4, our translation) warns, “territory, understood only as a space of governance, is used as a means of concealing the various territories and ensuring the maintenance of subalternity between dominant and dominated relations and territories”.

This, in turn, is singular and reductionist, as it does not allow for difference, since it is organized as an instrument of domination by the interests of capital, in its project of appropriation and expansion.

Fernandes presents a variable of the governance space, that is, a space pressed by differences that contains a multiplicity of possibilities for territorial compositions that go on to shape the diverse governance space.

Another understanding is the one we are proposing regarding the typology of territories. We start from the territory as a space of governance, but we recognize the other types of fixed territories and flows, material and immaterial, formed by the different social relations and social classes, which we will address in the following parts of this article. For now, to clarify the differences between these two understandings of territories, we will refer to the understanding of territory solely as a space of governance as “unitary

territory,” and the understanding of the typology as “diverse territory” (Fernandes, 2008, p. 5, our translation).

This movement, which is multiple, diverse, and divergent, entails a territorial dispute between capitalists and peasants, at various levels and scales. For Fernandes, this is termed as the first and second territories:

The first territory is formed by governance spaces at different scales: national, regional, state, municipal, district. The second territory is formed by the different types of private properties. For example: the second territory is a fraction of the first territory, that is, the different types of properties are fractions of the municipal territory, which is a scale of the first territory. This is a fraction of the state territory, which in turn is a fraction of the national territory (Fernandes, 2009, p. 6, our translation).

In other words, for Fernandes (2009), these models outlined above encapsulate a dispute between development models of agribusiness and the peasantry, with the former organized according to the market and its dimensions of production, circulation, and consumption, and the latter organized according to its existence and its dimensions of sociability, maintenance, and reproduction of life. This process is related by the political dimension that engenders both with sense and meaning.

Fernandes (2008) introduces the category of intentionality as an interpretive axis of territory in its diversity. In this sense, intentionality refers to the capacity of collective, individual, or institutional social subjects to assign meanings and guide practices that produce and organize space. Thus, the territories, whether they are material or immaterial, manifest themselves through these intentionalities, being continuously delimited, identified, and demarcated in geographic space (Fernandes, 2008, p. 8).

This means that, in the shaping of the territory(ies), a game of conflicting interests among the participants is established, stemming from class position, which is revealed through the intentionality of each social subject involved in the process. “Intentionality expresses, therefore, a political act, an act of creation, of construction” (Fernandes, 2008, p. 3, our translation). This, in turn, is a product of social relations, which coordinate, organize, produce the directions, the positions, and project reality. In this sense, the intentionality proposed by the author contains a class-based political position.

Fernandes proposes a typology of territories that distinguishes between “unitary territory” and “diverse territory.” This typology expands territorial analysis beyond economic

structure, representing a departure from Oliveira's (2014) perspective, which is more focused on the mediations of capital and land ownership.

Fernandes (1994), when analyzing in *Spatialization and territorialization of the struggle for land: the formation of the MST, Landless Rural Workers' Movement in the State of São Paulo*, proposes a reflection on the notions of social space and social place, fundamental for understanding the process of construction of the forms of organization of social movements.

To understand the emergence of new social movements, it is essential to consider the existence of a new reality materialized by the experiences constructed in the everyday lives of these subjects. It is this form of development of the process of construction and transformation of reality, produced by the materialization of social existence, that we understand as social space (Fernandes, 1994, p. 1, our translation).

Therefore, the author highlights the centrality of these categories by stating that "to carry out this work it is indispensable to study the notions of social space, social place, and social movements in their interactions" (Fernandes, 1994, p. 2, our translation), underscoring the need for a relational approach in the analysis of social movement organization processes.

This praxis of the collective subject MST, which unfolds into experiences of struggle such as occupation, reoccupation, marches, walks, assemblies, meetings, coordinations, sectors, committees, encampments, and others, has enabled the spatialization and territorialization of the MST in the state of São Paulo, and these are spatialized throughout the Pontal do Paranapanema. This process, in turn, is founded on the struggle for land and is what produces spatialization and territorialization.

To spatialize is to register a process of struggle in social space. It is the multidimensionality of the space of political socialization. It is writing in space through concrete actions such as demonstrations, marches, walks, occupations of public buildings, negotiations, land occupations, etc. It is in the spatialization of the struggle for land that the workers organized in the MST conquer a fraction of the territory and, in this way, develop the process of territorialization of the MST (Fernandes, 1994, p. 113, our translation).

The author treats the conquest of the settlements as a fraction of the territory by the MST.

The settlement is the conquered territory; it is, therefore, a new resource in the struggle for land that signifies part of the possible achievements, and it represents, above all, the possibility of territorialization. The territorialization of social movements in the struggle for land is understood here as the process

of conquering fractions of the territory by the Landless Rural Workers' Movement and other social movements (Fernandes, 1994, p. 181, our translation).

And the author adds:

In this process, the fraction of the territory is conquered in the spatialization of the struggle, as a result of the work of the Movement's formation. Thus, the conquered territory is an asset and a possibility for its territorialization in the spatialization of the struggle for land (Fernandes, 1994, p. 181, our translation).

For Fernandes (1994), territory is an active political and social construction, the result of struggle. This definition highlights the practical and political dimension of space, articulating time, action, and the social. He emphasizes the procedural dimension of the struggle and the active construction of territories by social movements. While Oliveira (2014) tends to interpret these dynamics from the structural logic of capital.

From this perspective, Fernandes (1999), in his doctoral thesis, expands his studies on the formation of the MST in the national territory. With his research titled Contribution to the study of the Brazilian peasantry: formation and territorialization of the Landless Workers' Movement – MST – 1979-1999, Fernandes states that in the last 20 years, land occupations have become one of the main forms of access to land; he also highlights that the Landless Rural Workers' Movement, since its genesis, has been the main organization in the development of this form of struggle for land.

According to the author, the movement is spatialized and territorialized in twenty-two states of the federation, as follows:

The occupation is a determining reality, it is space/time that establishes a rift between large estates and settlements, and between the past and the future. In this sense, for the landless, the occupation, as a space of struggle and resistance, represents the frontier between dream and reality, which is built in the daily confrontation with large landowners and the State (Fernandes, 1999, p. 01, our translation).

The movement, through its organicity, has accumulated experiences such as the mysticism that is the fruit of the memories of the struggles of the landless. The territorialization of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement is the process of building the MST throughout Brazil. Based on the experiences of struggle, confrontation, occupations, resistance, and achievements, the movement generated a popular methodology.

This learning enabled territorialization in the Brazilian Northeast in cities like Salvador, where the creation of the MST study booklets, with illustrations, began, and has as a milestone in 1986 the First state meeting, where the first occupation was decided. In Sergipe, around 1985, due to land conflicts, the movement occupied the Barra do Onça farm in September in the municipality of Poço Redondo, and the following year, in 1986, they occupied the Borda da Mata farm in the municipality of Canhoba, which allowed them to gather experiences, organize the First National Meeting, and grant autonomy to the MST in the region.

During this period, the experiences were multiple and provided the origin of various sectors, nuclei, teams, commissions, collectives, congresses, and meetings, which are results of the spatialization and territorialization of the movement; it is a form in motion.

We would like to note that occupation in Fernandes' research serves as a key concept for thinking about the MST and, consequently, contemporary rural social movements, as it interprets occupation geographically in a dialectical manner by uniting time and space under the content of class struggle in the Brazilian countryside. What allows agrarian geographers, above all, to think about the category of territorialization and spatialization engendered in social occupation.

For, occupation is a form of struggle, it is a popular action that encompasses time and space in the transformation of reality. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish the act of occupying from the process of occupation.

The act of occupying is a moment in this process, which begins with the formation of family groups, the carrying out of grassroots work, and develops in the encampment, in negotiations, in confrontations, in demonstrations, in the conquest of land, and in the struggles that follow. It is contained in what I conceptualized as the spatialization and territorialization of the struggle for land (Fernandes, 1999, p. 165-166, our translation).

Occupation is a form of access to land; it is a way to question agrarian reform and place expropriation, spoliation, violence, and the recreation of the peasantry on the agenda. Occupation is a complex socio-spatial and political process that needs to be understood as

form of popular resistance struggle of the peasantry, for its recreation and creation. The occupation develops within the processes of spatialization and territorialization, when the experiences of the landless are created and recreated (Fernandes, 1999, p. 277).

Land occupation, for Fernandes (1999), constitutes a fundamental socio-spatial and political process in the struggle for agrarian reform. This approach contrasts with Oliveira's

reading, which interprets the process primarily as a result of the structural contradictions of agrarian capitalism, highlighting different levels of analysis of the same phenomenon.

Another important aspect raised by the author in his reflections is the negotiations that take place during the period of struggles for land. The author draws attention to the dynamics of the subjects' participation, which takes on its own forms according to the political situation throughout the country where the MST has its bases. This moment is what the author calls *meanwhile*, according to Fernandes "in the meanwhile of this process they seek to negotiate with the State the settlement of the families" (Fernandes, 1999, p. 281, our translation). The negotiations range from drinking water and basic food baskets to schools, buses, health clinics, and other needs.

When defining the concept of "*entretanto*" [*meanwhile*], Fernandes (1999, p. 287, our translation) understands it as "an important interval of time, when in the midst of one struggle another begins to be born," evidencing, in our view, a concern with the preservation of occupation as a spatial dimension. Thus, territorialization and spatialization gain prominence and materiality, since both the occupation and the "*meantime*" are understood as expressions of struggle practices.

According to the author, the movement's land occupation takes two forms: one is the occupation of a specific area, and the other is massive occupation.

The main difference between these types lies in the fact that in the first, the size of the area is the criterion for the mobilization and organization of the families, and in the second, the mobilization and organization have as their criterion settling all landless families by occupying as many areas as necessary (Fernandes, 1999, p. 288, our translation).

Thus, in this process of, however, the movements that the author calls isolated are being defined, which according to Fernandes are those that organize themselves in a municipality or in a small group of municipalities, to carry out an occupation, without overcoming the actions these movements are extinguished, whereas territorialized movements are those that have two forms of structures trade union movement and social movement.

The territorial or socioterritorial movement is born from one or more isolated social movements, and it is organized and acts in different places at the same time; its actions allow it to spatialize itself.

Territorialized movements are built by workers, and their structures can take two forms: social movement and trade union movement. These movements

receive support from different institutions, either jointly or separately. I understand as isolated the movement that organizes itself on a determined territorial basis. Which has its territory of operation defined by circumstances inherent to the movements. In other words, they arise in different points of the geographical space, in struggles of resistance (Fernandes, 1999, p. 284, our translation).

This is another important point of his analysis, where the author reworks the concept of social movements originating from sociology and takes it on more concrete, spatial grounds. In this sense, one seeks a conceptual constitution that is properly agrarian-geographical and extremely significant from a methodological point of view. This proposal by the author, which would become the central theme of his investigations, had not yet been addressed by Brazilian agrarian geography with such magnitude.

Final considerations

The analysis developed throughout this article has made it evident that the contributions of Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira and Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, although anchored in historical-dialectical materialism, unfold into distinct theoretical-methodological paths within Agrarian Geography.

Thus, Oliveira's thought was being produced during the transition of the modernization of the Brazilian countryside, which was suffering the impact of the internationalization of capital and placing the peasant on a collision course with this modernization.

One of Oliveira's main contributions lies in the interpretation of the Brazilian territorial formation and in relating Marxist categories, above all, land rent which, once laid bare, allowed the author to rethink the territory and imprint upon it a meaning that enabled the understanding of the micro and macroeconomic foundations in its territorialities, in its stratagems, and in its strategies of involving surplus value and stripping the productive structure of the possibility of peasant reproduction.

Their approach favors the structural determinations of the capitalist mode of production, highlighting how land ownership, capital accumulation, and class struggle make up the territory. In this sense, the author offers a reading that allows for an understanding of the economic foundations of socio-spatial inequalities in the countryside.

And, consequently, unveiling the economic explanation of static data that obscured the reality of the rural world in its social and spatial inequalities, under the process of

modernization, territorialization, and the monopolization of capital, enabled Agrarian Geography to take shape as Critical Agrarian Geography. That is, it committed to a theoretical, methodological, and ideological rupture.

From this perspective, the thought of Bernardo Mançano Fernandes was formulated in the context of the political, economic, and social transformations that marked Brazil from the 1980s onwards, especially during the period of redemocratization and the emergence of new rural social movements.

Fernandes' concern with social movements compelled him to take another path, for, upon reflecting on the terms, notions of social space, social place, and social movements, in their interactions, he introduced other associative methodological elements between these terms.

These terms draw from the content embedded in the separation of the spaces of production of the conditions of material life and the means of production of existential life, under the social relations, the economic and social structure of society. The author captured the ongoing reorganization in the production and spatial reproduction of the peasant, who is cleaved by the movement of capital that develops within the movements and the circuit of exchanges of the capitalist economy.

From this dialectical articulation, the author seeks to understand the nature of the space in which the social classes in dispute organize, move, and appropriate this space. "To spatialize is to register a process of struggle in social space" (Fernandes, 1994, p. 113, our translation). This set of elements drove Fernandes to seek a method that would allow him to explain this transformation.

The comparison between the two authors demonstrates that, while Oliveira privileges a structural and macroeconomic reading of the agrarian question, Fernandes emphasizes the procedural and socioterritorial dimension of the struggles in the countryside. This difference does not imply mutually exclusive opposition, but rather reveals complementary perspectives that, when articulated, allow for a more complex understanding of the Brazilian agrarian reality.

Thus, it is concluded that the dialogue between these approaches contributes significantly to the advancement of Critical Agrarian Geography, by integrating the analysis of economic structures with the understanding of the social and political practices that produce the territory. Such articulation proves fundamental for interpreting the conflicts, resistances, and transformations underway in the Brazilian countryside, reaffirming the relevance of the dialectical method as an instrument for investigating social reality.

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