

Posseiros in the middle São Francisco: state planning and labor mobility¹

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Abstract

This article deals with recent aspects of labor mobility of *posseiros* (peasant settlers) and the territorial perspective of the state planning on the region of the middle São Francisco River, the Identitarian Territory of “Velho Chico”, in Bahia state. Transformations currently under way in this area involve a process in which the State, equipped with the territorial perspective of planned actions and other measures (such as provision of benefits, incentives, subsidies and land regularization), disseminates and promotes several programs increasingly decisive in the reproduction of labor among peasant settlers, including their transformed, more monetized permanence. On the other hand, these peasants come under strain when state actions increasingly make available means that facilitate business actions, such as energy production, mining and large-scale farming, which consistently threaten the territories of these communities (prompting labor mobilization). Both kinds of action “elect” the territory as the core of contradictory State practices in this area. Revealing the empirical development of such contradiction is the core of this article.

Keywords: Peasant settlers; State; work mobility, middle São Francisco; territory.

Posseiros no médio São Francisco: planejamento estatal e mobilidade do trabalho

Resumo

Este artigo trata dos aspectos recentes da mobilidade do trabalho dos posseiros e do planejamento estatal de perspectiva territorial no Médio São Francisco baiano, Território de Identidade do Velho Chico. As transformações atuais nessa área envolvem um processo no qual o Estado, munido da perspectiva territorial da ação planejada e por meio de outras ações (como a disposição de benefícios, incentivos, subsídios e regularizações de terra), dissemina e estimula uma série de programas cada vez mais determinantes na reprodução do trabalho dos posseiros, incluindo sua permanência transformada, mais monetarizada. Por outro lado, esses posseiros se veem tensionados, quando as ações estatais viabilizam também os meios facilitadores das ações empresariais, ameaçando constantemente os territórios dessas comunidades (impulsionando a mobilização do trabalho), voltados à produção de energia, mineração e agropecuária comercial. Ambas as formas de ação “elegem” o território como cerne da prática contraditória do Estado nessa área. Mostrar o desdobramento empírico dessa contradição torna-se o cerne desse artigo.

Palavras-chave: Posseiros; Estado; mobilidade do trabalho; médio São Francisco; território.

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Posereros en el medio San Francisco: planificación estatal y movilidad del trabajo

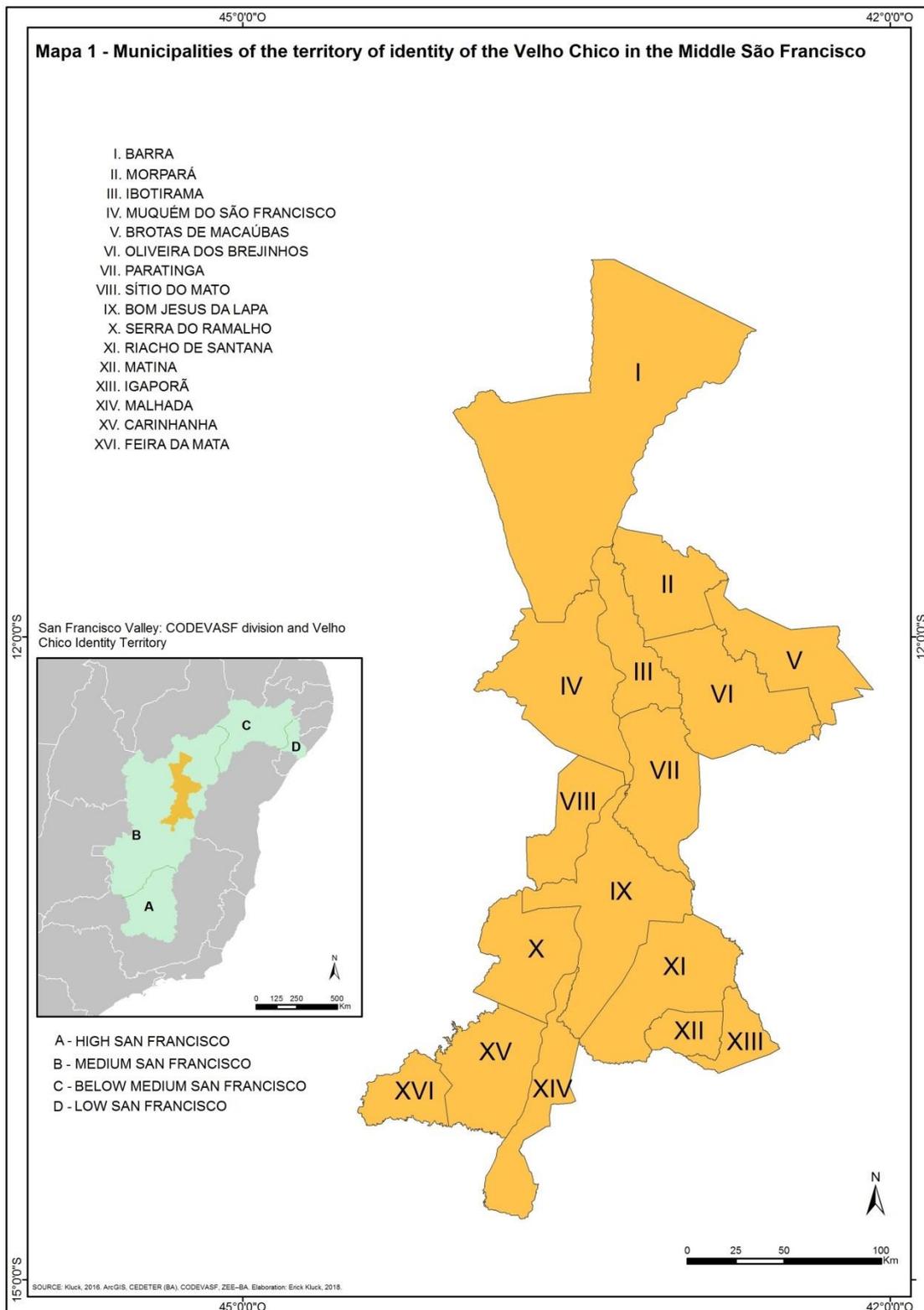
Resumen

Este artículo trata de los aspectos recientes de la movilidad del trabajo de los posereros y de la planificación estatal de perspectiva territorial en el Medio San Francisco bahiano, Territorio de Identidad del Viejo Chico. Las transformaciones actuales en esa área involucra un proceso en el que el Estado, provisto de la perspectiva territorial de la acción planificada y por medio de otras acciones (como la disposición de beneficios, incentivos, subsidios y regularizaciones de tierra), disemina y estimula una serie de programas cada uno en lugar más determinantes en la reproducción del trabajo de los posereros, incluyendo su permanencia transformada, más monetarizada. Por otro lado, esos posereros se ven tensados, cuando las acciones estatales viabilizan también los medios facilitadores de las acciones empresariales, amenazando constantemente los territorios de esas comunidades (impulsando la movilización del trabajo), volcados a la producción de energía, minería y agropecuaria comercial. Ambas formas de acción "eligen" el territorio como núcleo de la práctica contradictoria del Estado en esa área. Mostrar el desdoblamiento empírico de esa contradicción se convierte en el núcleo de este artículo.

Palabras clave: Posereros; Estado; movilidad del trabajo; medio San Francisco; territorio.

Introduction

This article addresses some aspects of the current debate on territory with regard to State actions directed, on the one hand, at generating income and assuring the permanence of peasant settlers on the land, in the state of Bahia, while, on the other hand, at fostering mining enterprises, wind power generation and agribusinesses, which steal the conditions of labor reproduction of these settlers. The approach to this issue was based on the observation of the daily activities of these peasants, through field work in some rural communities in towns located within the Identitarian Territory of Velho Chico, in the middle São Francisco River region in Bahia (map 1).



Source: Kluck, 2016. ArcGIS, CEDETER (BA), CODEVASF, ZEE-BA. Elaboration: Erick Kluck, 2018.

Historically, some areas in the middle São Francisco give grounds for the public discourse on backwardness, making the need to mobilize the workforce and the land one of the main motivations for state actions. This has also been the argument for providing state incentives to private enterprises, which has for long been the basis of certain discourses and practices presented as the solution for the evils of the so-called lack of development. However, although some recent State actions are aimed at assuring the permanence of settlers, increasingly mediated by money and credit subsidized by the State as part of territorial development projects and programmes, it also happens that some State actions have contributed to activities that result in peasants losing their lands.

This fact becomes crucial for observing the functioning and the problems involved in the implementation of such actions. For instance, many of these settlers have left their communities seeking either to improve their “schooling” or technical capacities, or to get work in the cities, be it as salaried employees or as day laborers, in jobs more or less distant from their agrarian practices. Nevertheless, some of them do stay with their families in ever diminishing plots of land, performing various activities including animal breeding and agro-extrativism, sometimes as members of rural workers associations, which are also changing, acquiring machinery and supplies aimed at increasing productivity and reach markets, especially by taking part in food acquisition state programs. This article will focus on the nuances that contribute to these “choices”.

Methodological procedures

Recent state planning has aimed at adjusting social relations of production considered to be archaic or sparsely modernized – for example, where typical wage labor (Martins, 2010) is not the predominant form of social relations –, which are seen as obstacles to the extended reproduction of capital. To this end, subsidies and tax incentives are territorially allocated, rather than in a “neutral” or “revolutionary” way (Oliveira 1977, p. 23).

If, in the 1970s, these actions aimed at restructuring the relations by mobilizing land and labor, leading in many cases to the migration of masses of people (usually settlers or *agregados*²) to urban centers, from the 2000s on, this planning model based on tax incentives and subsidies to companies for production restructuring acquires a new design: the territorial allocation of state credits, subsidies and incentives aiming at more localized development of both production and trade, that is to say, without the need of displacing settlers. This allows their reproduction in the established territory, by means of activities as artisanal production of *cachaça*, ceramics, sweets and tourism, among others.

² *Agregados* are unpaid workers who hold a small plot of land for farming in a large property in exchange of services and/or the provision of part of their produce to the owner.

Such dynamics led to a raise in the number of peasant settlers who joined associations of producers, which sometimes seek support of the State to purchase equipment for increasing production and take part in state food acquisition and school feeding programs. Together with subsidies and state incentives aimed at improving incomes, this dynamic has contributed to the increase in the number day laborers, making these activities, fulfilled mainly by youth, an important component of family income.

These relationships are observed not only in Bahia but also in other contexts, in much of the Brazilian Northeast. Some authors refer to ancillary relationships (Tavares dos Santos, 1984), multiple or diverse relationships, peculiar to peasants, components of a *peasant flexibility* (Shanin, 1980). Generally, they also ground their view on the dimension of land tenure as central for assuring reproduction (land as the place of work), which enables the subsistence of a peculiar, non-capitalist way of life called peasantry. According to them, this way of life would be put in a tense relationship with other forms of land ownership given by the capitalist mode of production, which sometimes monopolize, other times become territorialized in contact with the peasant reproduction. Rather than a simple antagonism, this is about a contradiction, a constant and necessary resetting of the contradiction between those non-capitalist relations and the capitalism in the countryside. Such contradiction would find in the territory its place of expression. This interpretation would emerge from theories of sociology and agrarian geography (Martins, 2010; Oliveira, 1991).

To think of two forms of territorialisation – that of the *posseiros* and that of capital – suggests a look into the opposing social relations of production. Thus, the predominance of one of these forms of territorialization would put the other in a critical situation. If the territorialization of capital has led to the direct expropriation of the settlers or to the cooptation of the product of labor, rendering precarious the social relations of peasant production, there would remain nothing else but to make peasant territorialization prevail, thus resisting the impositions of monopolistic capital. This is what suggests the theory of peasantry and, in another way, the recent discussions on the valuation of territorial practices as cultural and traditional, which would be able to guarantee reproduction in possession of the land, ownership of a piece of land by associations, partnerships, among other forms of organization of practices defined as cultural identity, which have a territorial expression.

On the other hand, although in dialogue with these propositions, the researches and studies of Raffestin (1993) and Haesbaert (2013) deal critically with the issue of the territory, in whose core lie the interpretations of power (domination), symbolic appropriation and economic relations in space. The latter author stands out for his wide literature review on different concepts of territory and their variations (*territoriality*, *territorialization*, *detrterritorialization* and *multiterritorialization*). Haesbaert identifies two approaches that guide the interpretation of this concept: the materialistic and the idealistic ones. In view of this, he

proposes that the territorial dimension cannot be restricted to these approaches but rather should overcome them both. According to Haesbaert, if in the past the notion of region has been central to geography, today the territory and its conceptual derivations are the ones that guide the discussions on spatial appropriation and domination.

Not without contradiction, the territory has been placed by state planning as capable of encompassing different independent spheres, including cultural, economic, political and social spheres. Such approach is close to the understanding of Santos (2007) regarding this concept. For him, territory can only be understood as used territory, a category that would be defined as the basis of labor and identity (belonging), that is, territory as "the place where all actions, all passions, all powers, all forces, all weaknesses flow into, that is, where the history of man is fully realized in the manifestations of his existence [...] the basis of the work, the place of residence; of material and spiritual exchanges and of the exercise of life" (Santos, 2007, p.13-14).

Differently from these propositions, but in dialogue with them, we approach the issue from the point of view of the reproduction of social categories of capital, that is, as an extension of the modernization of these areas, either based on state planning actions, or on the dynamics of the relations of production.

Modernization here is understood as a generalization of both production of goods and labor – the formation of a national market for labor and land – in which labor mobility contradictorily manifests a double determination of worker's freedom (Gaudemar, 1977). According to this author, the double determination of work refers to the positive freedom of work, meaning that the worker can freely use his workforce as a commodity that belongs to him; which, in turn, leads to a negative freedom, when the worker has no choice but to sell his workforce, making it available in the market, since in this process he does not have direct access to the means of production for his reproduction. This double determination, as explained by Gaudemar (1977), is socially constituted, historically determined and, thus, co-constitutive of modernization, i.e., is a modern social category of mediation and crisis, just as money and goods, still connecting the processes of labor reproduction by the peasant settler.

These processes of labor reproduction are complex, insofar as, for example, this labor is not explicitly salaried. However, when fulfilled through modern social mediators, including money and goods, they denote a character that is not limited to the actions of these individuals. However, by appearing as typical of them, contradictorily, they cloud the character of being social relations posed and presupposed by the capital as a social relation (Marx, 1988).

Facing the risk of overlooking the fact that this reality is mediated or, more precisely, is the fruit of social relations involving more total categories - and even connecting ourselves, while researcher-worker, to the developments occurring in these places – we focused,

whenever possible, on critically analyzing mediations against the context in which they develop. Because the scientific, conceptual and categorial approach for interpreting the reality as an object, also needs to be problematized, together with that it calls object, by means of the criticism of the categories and concepts that are concealed or even naturalized in this social relation.

Therefore, even based on fieldwork, in the scope of which we interviewed and observed settlers in their communities³, it is important to emphasize that the challenge is not limited to present the current reality, concrete totality, as if it were a final stage of a completed process, but rather, based precisely on the concrete totality of each moment, to try to expose the contradictions that have been and remain obscured.

All of this brings the need for a critical understanding of the observed reality, i.e., without separating it from the social relations placed by modernization and proposing the analysis of its practical development as planning. Because what appears as separate and autonomous spheres of reproduction, territorially localized (among them the social relations of partnership, mutual aid and common use of land), still carry the total formal connections (such as money, credit, labor and commodity) of the relations of production.

Modernization is the process by which the forms commodity, money and labor (Marx, 1988, book III) became categorially autonomous, both enabling and being made possible by their other, the State. In this process, which constitutes the capitalist social relations of production, the State is an important critic of its own state practice (established by means of planning), which, by doing this, re-poses the postulates of the social process (Oliveira, 1977). If, in the past, the State planning was aimed at modernizing the social relations of production, carrying out the mobilization of labor, the constitution of a national labor market against the background of the State and the very dynamics of the country's industrialization, today, having completed much of this process, and faced with a crisis in production process on a world scale, the State planning changes its focus towards the development of productive forces (Marx, 1988). Such development of productive forces suggests an important critical character: the elimination of labor from the general production process and its surplus in the form of superfluous labor, concretely expressed in a disposable population (regarding the production process, as an aspect of the labor crisis),

³ It remains to be discussed whether these peasant communities would comprise traditional communities. In fact, there is a reproduction of the social form of production of relations, which refers to a set of community norms, constituting a tradition that involves territoriality, identity and self-recognition, the life in the *Brejos* (swamps), perhaps as *Comunidades de Fundo de Pasto**. This can be evidenced as the focus of the struggle for remaining on the land and guaranteeing state regularization. However, it can also be a means for the State to restrict and impose norms by qualifying them. Therefore, as we will argue later, the territoriality and the constitution of these settlements as traditional communities are not separated from the territorialization of the more general social forms of mediation by the capital (money, commodity, labor) and, thus, this is not restricted to an identity character without contradiction with the State – the constitutional form of the monopoly of violence. (*) *Comunidades de Fundo de Pasto* are collectively cultivated areas located in the semiarid of Brazilian Northeast, whose communities preserve a particular and traditional way of life (TN).

although without preventing work from still being the form of social mediation. It is a dialectical constant between incorporation and disposability, a central character of the social form of reproduction capital / labor, posed and violently imposed, but also naturalized in the social relation. This is the contemporary form of modernization, one in which both state and private credits (as future money) are paradoxically made possible as territorial profusion of production arrangements and other forms of investment.

Hence, the implementation of a territorial dynamics, triggered by the advancement of state planning, required an identitarian connection to be established between social relations of production and the culture, by means of which, the contradictory critical character of the categories work, goods and money (as credit), the total forms of capital in process, is obscured in territorial arrangements. According to Heidemann (2004), there are other critical connections to the precariousness of work, focused on the categories that underlie social relations of production as socially constituted and historically determined. Thus, this is not merely a matter of precariousness of work, but of a more critical process that affirms its crisis by presenting historically determined labor simultaneously as obsolete, and yet able to socially mediating value (Heidemann, 2004). In this sense, we understand that the peasant settlers carry out their labor reproduction activities in the scope of this state planning and recent territorial policies.

The empirical labor experiences, as social relations of reproduction, are forms given by objective relationships (or social categories) perceived as subjective ones and, thus, obscured in practice. Therefore, in our view, the analysis cannot halt at this practical, empirical, or concrete aspect, but rather should ask about the social mediations and categories involved in them, such as labor, commodity, and money, since these are present in the construction of energy and water infrastructure, in state credit (state subsidies to small and medium enterprises and minimum income programs) and private credit (personal loans by financial agencies and private banks) all these as aspects of a single process.

Reflections on the territorial dynamics of reproduction of peasant settler's labor

Our inquiries about state planning and other measures stem from the observation of processes related to labor reproduction of the *posseiros* in rural communities in the region of Middle São Francisco. The transformations in labor relations and land tenure, both generally and in particular cases, i.e., as established by these peasants in labor reproduction, are understood here as modernization and not as the lack of it.

In these communities, land use and the relations established among the *posseiros* comprise the agricultural production, animal breeding and gathering and extractive activities,

as well as processing and marketing. According to them, this way of labor organization is a "local tradition". Each family holds a plot of land and is entitled to share with other families the use of an area adjacent to their plot.

The first plot, owned by the family, is the wettest portion of the lands (near the banks of streams), has on average less than 1 ha and is called *brejo* (swamp). In this plot, they have their dwelling house and grow corn, beans, banana, watermelon, small vegetable gardens, sugar cane and cassava, varying in quantity and diversity. Also in this plot, the family grows fruit trees as coconut, mango, orange, lemon, pineapple, among others. Depending on the economic conditions of the family, betterments are made in the land: installation of troughs, sugar cane press, flour workshop, alembic and sugar mill (made either of wood or iron, powered by electricity or not). In addition, they develop in their land handicraft activities and processing of sugar cane, cassava, *buriti* (moriche palm), *pequi* (souari nut) and chestnut, as well as animal husbandry, such as chickens, and sometimes pigs.

The second area of land is the portion collectively occupied, that is, the land that belongs to all families living in the community. Its size in comparison with the individual family plots is very large (generally more than 3,000 ha per community), and it is called *caatinga* – an area in which they mention subdivisions such as *chapadas* (plateaus) and *tabuleiros* (tablelands). This area can be used by all residents of the village, insofar as they follow customary rules as to the form and intensity of its use. In this land they raise cattle, mainly bovine, and other animals, and occasionally hunt to eat animals as deers, lowland pacas, *tatupeba* (armadillo), *cutia* (agouti) or *cinglinguelê* (Brazilian squirrel), birds and others; they harvest woods, *caroá* (a kind of bromeliad) and medicinal herbs, extract honey, and resins, gather firewood and wild fruits as *pequis*, *tucuns*, *mangaba*, *jenipapo*, among others.

Among these, in the *caatinga* cattle breeding is the main activity, in which they invest money (a kind of savings), so as to guarantee resources for future needs such as: land purchase, marriage, medical treatment in another city, or even to endure long periods of drought. They usually buy the so-called *garrote* (bull calf) releasing it in these areas of *caatinga* and plateaus, where these calves can feed and grow. Thus, almost without any effective expenditure for raising the bull, some time later, it can be sold for a higher price as compared to that of the calf.

The settlers of the *Brejos* – the *brejeiros* – resort to the work of family members to farm; when this is not enough, they establish other relations that, except for migration, involve their neighbors. Among these relations are: the "partnership", the "obligation", the *mutirão* (collective mutual aid) and the sale of the day of service. The other way they use to supply the demand for work with neighbors, in the cases of intense activity associated to the lack of family members able to work, is paying a per day laborer.

This characteristic of per day work, necessary when family members able to work are not enough to meet farming needs, must be considered in relation to some important aspects: the decrease in the size of the landholdings, the migration and seasonal dynamics of the *brejeiros'* activities. Also, in regard to the increased mediation by money (currency), which defines a greater monetization of the social relations, due in part to state incentives, subsidies (for production), benefits (allowances and retirement pensions) and access to credit.

We observed these relationships in the field: on the one hand, there was an increasing need for per day labor, by sugarcane and cassava producers, due to young members of the family being absent – either to study (encouraged by family allowances or by the wish of a better life) or to do salaried work outside the *Brejos*. On the other hand, peasant settlers could not use this labor, since per day pay rate has increased progressively and disproportionately in recent years, greatly increasing the costs of its use. According to the settlers, as many workers have access today to Government Programs (*Garantia Safra, Bolsa Familia, Pronaf*), nobody wants to work for little money, since even peasants with very small plots of land, who would be more willing to work as per day laborers to supplement their income, have guaranteed by the State the minimum of their daily reproduction.

This contradiction within the process emerges against a backdrop of increased monetization. The still present *mutirões* and obligation could be an alternative, but they have become less and less significant. That is, they do not replace the per day labor relationship, and money becomes increasingly central. According to Mr. Domingos, from Brejo do Barbosa, this happens because people want to use the time previously destined to mutual aid or to obligation, to get money, usually outside the *Brejos*, aiming to buy motorcycles and cell phones, go to parties, reform their house.

However, despite the slight increase in the monetization of peasant settlers' relationships, we noticed in the visited *brejos* that, in general, the families' members continued to develop many farming activities (of greater or lesser intensity) of extraction, collection, processing and marketing, among which:

- a) Sowing, taking care, harvesting and processing sugar cane, for producing *rapadura* (whole cane sugar) and *cachaça* (distilled spirit);
- b) Sowing, taking care, harvesting and processing cassava for producing *biju* and cassava flour and starch;
- c) Mango and coconut gathering for selling to middlemen;
- d) Processing of the fruit of the *buriti* (moriche palm) for producing flour;
- e) Collection, extraction, hunting and processing of products of the *caatinga* (plateaus and tablelands): chestnut, *pequi*, *tucum*, *mangaba*, firewood, wood, resins, honey, deer, armadillo, among others;

- f) Breeding of animals as pigs, goats, chickens, donkeys, mules and horses;
- g) Tasks related to cattle breeding, as providing the drinking and salt trough, driving them from the *caatinga* (collective area) to the corrals (small enclosed pastures) in the swamps or to the banks of the São Francisco river, at certain times of the year for fattening;
- h) Fertilizing and composing the soil to cultivate the crops;
- i) Cultivating and harvesting vegetable gardens;
- j) Less frequently: repairs and construction of houses, sheds, fences, workshops, kitchens, bathrooms, cisterns, wells, pathways, work tools (mills, workshop components etc.);
- k) The search for school education (sometimes directly associated to the access to benefits) along with technical training aimed at entering the labor market, generally, outside the Brejos;
- l) Salaried or per day work outside the Brejos, for improving family income;
- m) Enterprises such as the transport of passengers and students, bars and although still rare, grocery stores.

As it can be seen, in this set of labor activities carried out during the year, the uses and appropriations of the two previously mentioned areas are inseparable: the family private land and collective land (*caatingas*, plateaus and tablelands). One occupation depends very much on the other, they are interconnected, and the removal of one of these areas would prevent these peasants from reproducing their work in the way it is organized.

This general description, although showing a great diversity of activities of the work reproduction of the peasant settlers, is only a slight approximation. Their everyday reality is even more complex, given the relationship of this wide range of activities with recent changes in its dynamics: the expansion of consumption and monetization; transformations in energy, transport and educational infrastructure; the reduction of the settlement areas; and the tensions with large enterprises that attempt to expropriate the settlers from their collective and family private lands.

In recent years, such transformations have been significant and had a strong state contribution, engendering increased monetization and modifying the access of settlers to the consumption of goods, what entails qualitative changes in their daily life. Access to money, the construction of roads and electrical grids has greatly transformed the relationships among the *brejeiros* and that between them and the nearest commercial areas, especially for increasing the frequency of their trips aiming at buying or selling goods.

In general, increased monetization "facilitates" access to "new" consumer goods, according to them, making their daily lives more comfortable: refrigerator, television, radio,

stove, sofa, bed, among other utilities like water pumps. A very important aspect, besides comfort, refers to a marked decrease in infant mortality and malnutrition associated with the implementation of the state programs. In addition, many *brejeiros* have repaired their houses, installing bathrooms and applying ceramic tile to walls and floors. The greater number of bars, in which prevails the sale of beer and cognacs, besides tickets for games like billiards and foosball, is remarkable.

Different devices, especially among youths, are also more common: cellular telephones (despite lack of network coverage in the Brejos), used to listen to music; "mini-radios" with memory cards; besides accessories as caps, sweatshirts and sneakers. There was also an increase in the number of vehicles in circulation – such as motorcycles and vans (for transportation of students and teachers to schools and other passengers to the fairs in the cities)⁴.

These transformations are not dissociated from a more general process of reproduction of capital in the present time, which involves everybody. After all, changes in access to certain consumer goods and to credit have been provided to all of us, *brejeiros* and researchers, and even entrepreneurs. Therefore, this "integration" of the *brejeiros* into this "new consumer market" is not exclusive to their status as peasant settlers but is put as a possibility for many in the society. Thus, we cannot help problematizing it as a "two-way street", full of contradictions.

For being settlers, besides keeping the family land (even if this has drastically decreased in size), they still have assured the access to some benefits or subsidies, which are used in their reproduction of labor, as well as the little money saved from salary. All of this reflects an increase in monetization and the different forms undertaken to meet various needs – which increased in recent years, including electronics, motorcycles, home repairs, "fashionable" clothing and footwear, among others.

These aspects of increased monetization affect the *brejeiros* in different activities, leading them to painful experiences. For example, migration alone represents a painful moment as an aspect of labor mobility. The work carried out in these jobs despoils the farmers due to overtime required to compensate for low wages and high costs of the food available in the workplaces.

This process is usually related to the individual search for improving income, training and professional qualification, increasing consumer satisfaction and, a more frequent and increasingly central aspect, to the decreasing in size of the land plots and farmlands. This decrease is a crucial aspect, because it leads to a reduction in cultivated areas and is

⁴ By problematizing the increase in consumption, we are not romantically defending its stagnation, a return to the past, since it is directly associated to the guarantee of access to food, contributing to the reduction of malnutrition and infant mortality.

related to internal dynamics of inheritance. For example, if initially a first generation holds 100 *braças* of land (one *braça* is 2.2 m) and each generation has, say, 5 children, the third generation of heirs will only have 4 *braças* each. And, a fourth, if there will be no increment through purchase, will hold less than one *braça* of land per heir. This is not, however, the only reason, since other factors prevent the community from expanding their lands, such as business projects (mining, wind energy and large-scale agriculture) in the surrounding area, which occupy the better lands and, sometimes, even the collective lands that belong to these communities. Despite their very small plots of land, these settlers, in general, do not abandon their lands, which provide them with a small produce and entitles them to state benefits – something less painful than the definitive migration to the cities that are no longer able to accommodate them.

In this context, the State plays a fundamental role: to guarantee the permanence of the settlers in their lands by means of these benefits and other recent measures as implementation of productive arrangements and (in some cases) land regularization. However, contradictorily, it conforms with the general capitalist process, which hinders or even prevents the settlers' possibilities of reproduction. So, these latter, with their diminished land holdings, become increasingly dependent on the State – which, by means of those actions, either prevents or leads to a critical situation, although always painful, to which it fundamentally contributed. Hence, it shows a contradictory relationship with the territorialization of capital (including agricultural enterprises and the State), as a process of double character: the constraint and the territorial confinement of peasant settlers. Double because, despite contributing to the reduction of the land and sometimes the displacement of the settlers, also is the one that enables them to stay, by means of subsidies and incentives.

This implies a discussion on the increasingly central territorial perspective in state planning and in demands from civil society (including associations and social movements), as an aspect also derived from the critical reproduction of capital, which presents as a possibility to the peasants the territorial confinement. If, in the struggles for land involving calls for public policies and land regularization, several entities base their claims on the concept of territory, on the other hand, this same concept becomes state programs and actions. In this game, both resort to the characterization of the peasants and their territories – an aspect that conveys a simulation of territorial autonomy, in which the categorial fundamentals that should be criticized are obscured. This relationship is traversed by another: the State with its actions, including support for entrepreneurial initiatives, is responsible for territorially constraining the peasants, despite being, on the other hand, increasingly the primary enabler of their reproduction by means of public policies.

These current aspects of labor reproduction among peasant settlers, from a more theoretical point of view, are related to other features observed in the field, which allow to

problematize the reproduction of the State, at different levels of organization and action, in ensuring the capitalist reproduction, as its current form. The territorial constraint links labor mobilization (as double freedom of labor) to the transformation in land ownership (territory), merging the two processes into one. This latter also carries objective-subjective aspects of labor reproduction. Constantly changing, this territorial character increasingly entails territorial confinement, encompassing the incentives to permanence put in the contradiction between preservation of tradition and heritage versus decrease in conditions for reproduction resulting from constraint and labor crisis, based on the State, on state contribution, with the fictitious capital.

However, this permanence is not a gift, but has become a necessity of the capital and a mode of the State, highlighting the tensions and violence of this contradictory and essentially unequal social mode of reproduction. Thus, social movements fighting for land and for permanence on the land enter recurrently into conflict with both the State and landowners or companies, struggling to ensure that part of the public fund is directed to these people in the countryside, including land as a public fund.

It is in this sense that we examine the present moment of reproduction of the social form of capital, in which State actions, including planning, impel transformations: incentives and subsidies to the constitution of food production chains, to craft and culture, benefits, new roads, electrical grids, greater monetization and increased consumption are some of them. These transformations involve the modified dynamics of labor reproduction among the *posseiros* (mutual aid or obligation, partnership, ancillary work), increasingly complemented by subsidies, incentives and state benefits, that form the particular character of the settlers' labor reproduction, in the guarantee of their permanence in their increasingly smaller land at risk of being taken out, what contributes to the migration of peasants.

The reduction in the size of land plots seems to contradict permanence. However, permanence, transformed by subsidies and benefits – that expand the traditional notion of permanence (based on family heritage and, even, way of life) – emerges as a possibility in view of the difficulties faced by the settlers in finding other means and places for the reproduction of labor. So, property made small and work made obsolete have, nevertheless, in the capitalist reproduction and, thus, in the State, a contradictory link.

With funding widely available for investments in infrastructure and energy production, provided by the government program aimed to accelerate economic growth (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento – PAC), financed by the National Bank of Economic and Social Development – BNDES), mining, agribusiness and wind energy sectors have expanded in recent years, especially in Bahia. Particularly this last branch, which links the State and the power concessionaires, reveals more contradictions of the State territorialized planning and action.

Some wind power companies have offered payments in cash to people in the communities in exchange for using their collective areas – a potential slice of profit related to the virtually free of charge use of these lands. This attitude avoids contact with associations, in which the companies would face a minimal organization in opposition to their interests. They generally argue that plateau and mountain lands are public lands, vacant and without owner. These lands, however, for the most part, serve peasants in extracting, collecting and cattle breeding activities, comprising the collective areas of these communities. Therefore, despite being public lands, they constitute territories of the peasants.

In Bahia, various entities struggling for the land have denounced the overwhelming process of land grabbing that causes the dispossession of peasants' lands and territories, through large projects such as mining, railroads, dams, wind and solar energy production, besides the very expansion of agribusiness. Many of these promoted, encouraged and financed, both by companies and by the State itself – a controversial process that can lead to the vanishing of several peasant villages and communities.

Such state-planned or state-funded projects – among which, irrigation poles, wind energy production, dams, railroads construction – and private ones, such as mineral production and large agricultural and livestock farms, seem to be those responsible for limiting the territories of peasant settlers, causing the reduction in size of land plots in the communities. In most cases, settlers had been constantly pushed towards these places, either directly or indirectly, insofar as the best soils were occupied, as a result not only of the initial expansion of cattle breeding, but also of government incentives to large irrigation and agriculture enterprises. Occupying the worst soils, these settlers are increasingly limited and confined to a territory, dividing and subdividing their already small land plots. The Sobradinho dam and the irrigated perimeter of Baixio do Irecê and Gentio do Ouro are sad examples of public-private enterprises that limit and control some of the best soils, for producing energy and growing irrigated fruit trees, even displacing settlers.

Final remarks

The peasant settlers have been frequently included into state projects and programs, which have given them some hope of getting to reproduce their labor, in view of an increasingly adverse context for its accomplishment without such support of the State. This is a feature of the territorial confinement, that is, of incentive through financing and money, of territorially allocated labor mobilization.

This social policy included in the framework of territorial planning, although more redistributive than others, is not without contradictions, situated beyond communities and the State itself, relegated to the universe of money and the valuation of value in the market.

For example, working time allocated to sugar cane processing, increasingly fostered by the market, means that the family devotes a greater emphasis to its production,

transferring part of the working time previously directly dedicated to consumption, to the production, aiming at the resource (money) with which they get to reproduce, in an even more mediated way.

As a general dynamic, peasant settlers often use money from the production of *cachaça*, *rapadura* and cassava flour, for the purchase of livestock, tools, motors, water pumps, household appliances, furniture and, if possible, motorcycle. However, this whole set comprises part of the reproduction, and is increasingly dependent on the money originated from public policies. Most of the interviewed settlers declared to have access to policies as Pronaf (in support of family farming), Garantia Safra (harvest guarantee), Bolsa Família (family allowance), thus ensuring their permanence on the land. They say that it is common for many to use Pronaf's money to buy cattle (as a form of saving) or even motorcycles, among other things, thus not allowing to reinvest it in a productive enterprise. This fact, along with another, related to the low prices achieved by their produce, which often provide insignificant returns, makes it difficult to pay off their debt and, therefore, prevents access to other government loans.

The money from family allowance is used by most families to guarantee staples (such as rice, beans, salt, oil etc.) bought at fairs and markets in the city. Activities related to the production of these foods do not provide money and tend to consume much of their time.

Therefore, claiming that this production would demand too much energy and time from them (coupled with the need for workers) in relation to its low market price (and since the benefit has somewhat increased their purchasing power), they justify acquiring it in the city. In addition, they mention the decrease in the size of the family's plots of land, which implies the reduction of croplands. Previously, most of the crops cultivated in family areas was destined for the family's own consumption, producing what now is bought in the markets and fairs of the cities.

At the same time, increasing portions of their lands are destined for sugar cane and cassava, which they process to obtain *cachaça*, *rapadura* and cassava flour. According to them, these products provide the earnings that allow for buying, for example, household appliances, furniture (usually by installments) and, also, implements and part of the payment of day laborers or contractors. Sugar cane and cassava provide relatively higher earnings (in cash) when compared with other activities such as collection / extraction carried out during the year.

To the extent that they have enough money, the purchase of staples (beans, rice, salt, oil) and other food supplies as canned food, soft drinks, crackers, pasta, salty snacks etc. becomes more common. To afford this, they must have an income source, such as retirement pension, salary out of the Brejos, benefits, allowances, per day work pay, and/or they need to impel production so that to get some money in the market – both with the

produce of sugarcane and cassava and with products obtained by extraction and collection, whether or not processed.

As currently observed, the consumption of products that they don't produce has increased, and, to afford that, they must engage in activities that earn them some money. All produce, apart from their own consumption, is destined for sale, due to increased expenses.

By abandoning growing staple food, they end up promoting the production and/or consumption of commodities. This is one of the aspects of changes in the relationships between peasant settlers. However, it is not the only one, since it overlaps with others: the general decrease in the size of peasants' lands and the shortage of people to work in the fields – because part of them migrates seeking to obtain money in view of the growing demand for consumption, and part receives state benefits being not willing to carry out certain jobs as day laborers.

This feature, relative to the peasants' opportunity to facilitate their work and to acquire goods, which at a first sight seems only subjective, is in fact both socially objective and connected to the needs imposed by the market.

All these forms of reproduction of the peasants' labor are, therefore, either directly or indirectly related to the rise (and, thus, a possible fall) in the availability of money in general. This availability is linked to land tenure or to household income – in the form of state benefits, subsidies and incentives – and, also, to the implementation of roads and electrical grids, i.e., a multitude of state actions. In this sense, it is a modernization process that contributes to freeing both land and labor to activities aimed at allowing other forms of consumption, and to intensifying production restructuring that will seek to establish a relationship in which money also becomes central. That is, in a very particular way: contributing to a mobilization of labor (Gaudemar, 1977).

At the core of this process, is the development of a production chain in which the presence of the State is needed in two stages: in financing production inputs and in the purchase of produce. Thus, State funds promote the dynamics of the market, seeming to be in force in these territorial initiatives that lead to the transformation of the territorial base of communities. These initiatives, together with other state actions that shape the reproduction of labor among settlers (incentives, benefits and allowances), show the significant role of the State in the reproduction of settlers in the Brejos. Nevertheless, despite importantly making investments, subsidizing, financing, expanding credit to certain activities, it still contributes, paradoxically, through similar initiatives of financing (but on a larger scale) to exacerbate a sad situation, already experienced by several peasants in Brazil, imposed by private initiatives, related to seizure of vacant lands for purposes of land speculation and wind energy production. That is why movements struggling for land question such state planning

that, according to them, emphasizes identity and territorial aspects associated with production, to the detriment of initiatives that guarantee land tenure and regularization.

The analysis of relationships present in the daily reality of settlers of the Brejos tried to show that the reproduction of labor among these settlers is not dissociated from the reproduction of capital, by demonstrating that current state actions carry a double aspect: the incentive for settlers to stay in their lands, although, contradictorily, supporting initiatives that lead to seizure of lands occupied or used by these settlers. Both aspects, that mobilize labor, are directly related to the reduction in the size of settlers' lands, the transformations in labor relations (including migration) and to increasing monetization of life among peasants of the Brejos.

This labor mobilization intertwine objective with subjective aspects, in the sense of the double freedom of labor (in which the worker can freely use his own workforce as a merchandise, to satisfy his needs, although this increasingly becomes his only option, as he loses direct access to the means of production, even though the process as a whole denies it, because it is also increasingly critical) shaped in the State-Market contradiction through state actions.

The actions of the State (whether planned or not), of business groups or even of movements struggling for land produce the tensions around the State-Market contradiction of capitalist reproduction that gains territorial status, based on which it is politically sought to promote or guarantee the social reproduction of the interest group. At the same time, this territorial character, claimed as the locus of social reproduction and autonomy (in capital, only relative), seems to impose itself as a mode of the State – transformed into the social process of capital reproduction that entails the territorial constraint and confinement.

If planning, in its beginnings, by means of regional development policies, expropriated large areas and mobilized labor by reducing or extinguishing land tenures, today, it proposes a further orientation, i.e., the “stimulus” (for some) to stay in the land either by means of land regularization and access to public policies, or through territorializing actions involving local productive arrangements, boosting competition around public bids for financing activities related to territorial belonging. This “stimulus” does not stem from benevolence, but from demands and struggles with large owners and companies supported by the State. Thus, it is also a struggle over land (and territory), as a dispute over resources of the public funds.

This change in state planning and action reflects the current moment of the general reproduction of capital, in which both the mobilization of labor and the stimulated territorial identity and monetization of the territorial basis are products of the same process – modernization. Modernization involves both state and non-state actions, development and generalization of social relations mediated by historically determined social categories such

as money, labor, commodity, land (territory), leading to the reproduction of unequal and violent relations of the contradiction State-Market. Also, as a contradictory process of capital, it is currently increasingly critical, thus expressing its crisis.

One of the ways to deal with this crisis lies on state actions, ascribing some validity to labor mobility, increasingly anachronistic in the social process, by means of incentives, benefits and credit subsidies in different spheres, whether seizing the means of production or shaping labor reproduction. This aspect or character assumed by the State, therefore, is not simply due to politics, but involves other paths related to the very dynamics of capitalist reproduction, which nowadays becomes, by its own means, increasingly critical and demanding of these actions, for eroding its own ground while advancing. In other words, it lies in the fact that, today, the development of the productive forces increasingly expel labor from the production process, as a paradigm of modernization in which the State simultaneously territorializes actions towards “rooting” or confining (through access to public policies) part of the population in certain territories of private reproduction, as if they constituted autonomous groupings, simulating a territorial autonomy as a way of dealing with the general crisis.

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