



**Paid Labour and Peasant Strength: Survival and Emancipation
(A Case Study of the Settlement of São Joaquim / MS)**
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Introduction: In the past 10 years the landscape of the rural micro-region of Três Lagoas has been changing, especially with the expansion of eucalyptus plantations. Large farms in the region are being acquired by or leased to the two pulp and paper companies operating in the region, namely FIBRIA (resulting from a merger of Votorantim Celulose e Papel (VCP) and Aracruz Celulose) and Eldorado Brasil (a merger of Florestal Brasil and Eldorado Brasil, with the JBS group). With the lack of public investment in rural settlements of the region, peasant families are divided between living in the countryside, precariously continuing their agricultural activities, and working on the eucalyptus plantations, being their only means of remaining on the land. This research seeks to understand how this paid work can be interpreted for the strength and survival of the peasant families of the São Joaquim settlement in the municipality of Selvíria in Mato Grosso do Sul. **Methodology and Development:** As well as reading and maintaining records, field work will also be carried out and interviews with farmers and settlers to interpret this relationship between work in the eucalyptus monoculture and the influences that affect life both inside and outside work. **Final thoughts:** The thought that this paid labour is a condition of remaining permanently on the settlement becomes clearer when we go to the field and discover that this development contributes to the maintenance of the family as well as the acquisition of equipment, animals and improvements around the lot, such as fencing, and house improvement. Not to mention that, in most cases, the whole family is not working on the lot. We saw that becoming an employee did not mean that the worker stopped being a peasant; he continued to help around the lot in slack moments or after work. Families were well aware of the harmful effects of eucalyptus in the settlement, principally concerning environmental issues, but at the same time see the work as a good thing as policies owed by the State to the settlement are not performed. Hence the State itself is forcing peasants to work off their lot in order to earn sufficient income to maintain the family and the lot.

Key words: Peasants; labour, eucalyptus monoculture; strength.