An initial evaluation of market-based land reform in Brazil: Can it create sustainable communities?

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AN INITIAL EVALUATION OF MARKET-BASED LAND REFORM IN BRAZIL:
CAN IT CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In
Natural Resources and Environmental Studies
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This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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Date: May 9, 2010
DEDICATION

In Memory Of
Nequinha, Orlando, and Zé Alegre
companions in
the struggle for land
Tocantins – 1985-92
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the settlers in the seven communities we studied in Bahia, who opened their homes to us and shared with us their thoughts and feelings. Also the technical advisors who so ably support those settlements and who provided us with valuable insights and information: Maria Djalma Andrade de Abreu, Sergio Ricardo Matos Almeida, Edna Moreira de Brito Batista, José Eduardo Rocha Reis, and Rafael and the team at CELANOR.

I also deeply thank the following people:

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Daniel Carvalho, former Director of CARITAS Bahia and the son of a small farmer in the Bahia semi-arid region, who aided us in our field research, providing much insight and wisdom.

Brenda King-Powers; my wife and partner in research, whose years of experience working with Brazilian farmers and women’s groups helped me to see many things I might otherwise have missed, and whose moral support made this project possible.

Dr. Mimi Becker, my advisor, who untiringly encouraged and oriented me, and whose patience was admirable.
This dissertation is the fruit of forty years experience.

In 1969, following my first year of law school, I joined the Peace Corps and was sent to the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. After training as a community organizer, I was assigned to a rural electrification cooperative, where I worked for nearly two years.

Espírito Santo in the late 1960s was classed as the second poorest state in Brazil. Yet it did not have the wide-spread miserable poverty\(^1\) that one saw in other, supposedly richer states. The answer to this apparent contradiction, I came to realize, was that Espírito Santo was a state of small farmers. The people, while having less per capita money income than in most other Brazilian states, had land, food, work, family, and dignity, and the wealth of these things was more evenly distributed than was generally the case in Brazil.\(^2\) I learned a lesson and filed it away for future reference.

In 1978 I returned to Brazil as a lawyer for a large international law firm, working in Rio de Janeiro and representing multinational companies. The experience was, for me, a radicalizing one. As a Peace Corps Volunteer I had seen poverty but had accepted it

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\(^1\)That which Brazilians refer to as *miséria*.

\(^2\)This kind of wealth formed the basis for further development: the sons and daughters of many of these farmers went on to become teachers, accountants, and university graduates. Sadly, however, large scale development funded by outside forces, which has turned Espírito Santo today into one of the wealthier per capita Brazilian states, also brought the problems of inequality and *miséria*. By the end of the century, Vitória, the formerly quiet capital of the state, had the highest murder rate in Brazil.
more or less as the people themselves did -- as an unfortunate reality. As a lawyer in Rio de Janeiro I realized that poverty did not just happen but was the result of -- or, at least, was aggravated by -- a legal and economic system that largely worked to the advantage of the rich.

This realization was particularly brought home to me by an assignment I had in 1980. A large Canadian company had taken advantage of the government FISET program to invest in reforestation projects. As was the case with most multinationals, the company did not run the reforestation projects itself but invested the money through independent reforestation enterprises established to capture such funds. The Canadian company had heard reports that one of the enterprises receiving its funds was engaging in *grilagem* and the Canadians were genuinely concerned. A Canadian lawyer and I were sent to Santa Catarina to investigate.

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3 Many of the people, indeed, went further, accepting poverty fatalistically as *a vontade de Deus* - the will of God. It was in part to change this vision of “the will of God” that the Church became so actively involved in promoting base community groups which helped the poor analyze the socioeconomic causes of poverty, engage in self-help projects, and view God as a God of justice rather than accept fatalism. This was the practical side of the “Theology of Liberation.” I have long contended that the translation of this theological approach - *Teologia de Liberacao* - as “Liberation Theology” was unfortunate -- the term “liberation” in American English had come to be identified with Communist movements. “A Theology of Freedom” would have been a more accurate translation.

4 This is not to deny that there were and are validly populist elements within the Brazilian legal system. The labor courts, for instance, generally favor the rights of workers over employers. The OAB - the official Brazilian Bar Association - has been a strong advocate of human rights, as are many judges and members of the *Ministério Público* (the prosecutors in the Justice Department). Brazil is a complex and multifaceted country. However all of these populist forces are aware that they are working within a system that generally favors the ruling classes. It is still too early to judge the long term impact of the Workers’ Party (PT) and the Lula government.

5 The program, which allowed companies to use funds that would otherwise be paid for taxes to invest in reforestation, is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

6 The illegal or unethical seizing of land.

7 Although there is a great deal of valid debate about the role of multinationals, it has been my experience that multinationals (I have worked principally with American, Canadian, and British ones) are honest in
We found no evidence that grilagem had occurred. In retrospect, I realize that we were very naive; to this day I do not know whether or not we were hoodwinked by the local company. However, even though we found no evidence of illegality, the process I saw in practice forced me to think about the negative effects of government policy. As I later wrote:

Brazilian ecologists were concerned about deforestation, so the government instituted a program under which companies received a tax break for investing in reforestation. The companies bought rural land from subsistence farmers; assuming the companies paid market value for the land, or at least the price the farmer asked (to a subsistence farmer who has never had to pay for food or rent, $1000 seems like a fortune), the farmer received enough to support his family for a few months in the city. After that, the former farmer, without trade skills and in an overburdened job market, ended up unemployed in the slums. Meanwhile, his land, which formerly produced food for his extended family and a little extra for the local market, was taken out of food production and food shortages began to increase... Finally, the company planted trees, but varieties which it could harvest most quickly, such as Pinus Eliotis, which ruin the soil. Thus in place of one problem – deforestation – several were created: family displacement, unemployment, urban slum growth, food shortages, soil denutrition (Powers 1987b, 288-289).
It was also around this time that I became deeply interested in the response of the Catholic Church to the Brazilian agrarian question. In 1980, the Brazilian Catholic Bishops published “The Church and Land Problems.” This document, which was adopted by a nearly unanimous vote of the bishops at their annual assembly, took a strong stand in favor of land reform.\(^8\) I was impressed by the logic and strength of the bishops’ stand.

In 1985 my wife and I, with our two daughters, went to work for the Franciscan Friars in the northern part of the state of Goiás, a region which in 1989 was formed into the new state of Tocantins. We worked with the Catholic Church in Tocantins for seven years. In addition to pastoral duties, we helped to organize base ecclesial community groups (CEBs)\(^9\), rural workers unions\(^10\), and groups of small farmers who were struggling to stay on their land. Our work involved not only legal rights, but helping to organize small scale production and looking toward rural development in general.

Tocantins is a frontier area in the southeastern corner of legal Amazonia, an area primarily of savanna land of limited fertility. In the 1980s it was a region of violent land conflicts (as it continues to be, to some extent, today). The 1986 murder of Father Josimo Tavares, a priest actively involved in promoting land reform, was only the most

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\(^8\) *Igreja e Problemas da Terra*, Document approved by the 18th Assembly of the CNBB, 2/14/80

\(^9\) In CEBs neighbors gather to pray, read scripture, and discuss the issues touching their lives in light of gospel, seeking to understand the socio-economic and political factors which affect them and to find viable means of resolving common problems. The movement started in Espírito Santo in the early 1960s and spread throughout Brazil, having the greatest impact in rural areas and urban slums.

\(^10\) The *Sindicatos do Trabalhador Rural*; their membership includes not only salaried workers and day laborers (*boia-frios*), but also small landowners, share croppers, and *posseiros*.
visible of many acts of repression by landowners and speculators. In Tocantins we witnessed *grilagem* on virtually a daily basis.\(^\text{11}\)

As a member of the Church’s statewide land commission (CPT), I was able to examine not only the conflicts that our team was directly involved in but those throughout the state and in neighboring states.\(^\text{12}\) We soon discovered that, in areas where small farmers won their battle to get or retain land, they needed support in learning how to make the land more productive. Through working with small scale production, appropriate technologies, and organization of family and community based agro-industry, we became increasingly involved in what would now be called sustainable agriculture (although the term “sustainable” was not widely used at the time).

My experience with sustainable rural development increased when, in 1992, I became director of Catholic Relief Service’s program in the drought-ridden Brazilian Northeast. The key elements of CRS’s program were legal rights for small farmers (principally through the CPT\(^\text{13}\)) and projects to help subsistence farmers in the semi-arid

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\(^{11}\) In our region, *grilagem* followed a fairly standard procedure. Agents of interests trying to seize the land would arrive with pieces of paper they claimed to be titles, would show these to the *posseiros*, telling them that the *posseiros* were invaders without any right on the land. They would then offer an “indemnification” if the *posseiro* would sign a waiver of his rights and leave peacefully, saying that, if this were turned down, the *posseiro* would receive nothing. Many would succumb to this. Pressure on those who remained would then escalate with police threats, court orders, burning of crops and houses, and killing of one or two key leaders; by that time, most *posseiros*, even if they knew their rights, abandoned the area.

\(^{12}\) Due to geographical affinities and ecclesial politics, our state commission included not only Tocantins but the Prelacy of São Felix do Araguaia in Mato Grosso (whose bishop, Dom Pedro Cassidaglia, was highly respected throughout Brazil for his strong positions on social justice) and the Diocese of Conceição do Araguaia in the state of Pará (whose bishop, Dom Patricio Hannahan, courageously supported land reform efforts despite frequent death threats). Pará was, and continues to be, the single most violent region of land conflicts in Brazil. It was there that Sister Dorothy Stang was murdered in 2005.

\(^{13}\) CRS provided support to CPT Regional Northeast I (Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, and Alagoas) and, to a lesser extent, CPT Regional Northeast III (Bahia and Sergipe). We also worked with three diocesan CPT groups (Cajazeiras and Campina Grande in Paraíba and Mossouro in Rio Grande do Norte) and with CETRA, an organization in Ceará formed by Catholic lay people to support agrarian
zones better catch, store, and use water.\textsuperscript{14} Shortly thereafter my wife became director of GARD Brasil, an NGO working with rural cooperatives, community-based cashew nut processing, and rural women’s groups. Together, and in conjunction with such groups as the World Food Program, Oxfam, and a number of the best Brazilian NGOs, we became actively involved in working toward sustainable rural development in the semi-arid Northeast (see, e.g., Jordão; Forum Nordeste).

The situation in the Northeast was different from Tocantins. The region is one of the oldest in Brazil, and the rural population is dense. Repression of rights of small landowners and farm workers tended to be (with some exceptions, such as the state of Alagoas) subtler and more sophisticated than the gunmen used in the Amazon region. The presence of large irrigation and development projects pressured small farmers economically, pushing them onto marginal lands. The richest lands near the coast have been held as large sugar plantations since the 16th century.

This is the experience I brought to my doctoral studies. Research during those studies allowed me to more fully place my experience within the context of a larger Brazilian legal, cultural, economic, and political structure. The research has not been easy – the materials, though voluminous, are often hard to come by, and vary widely in quality. However, preparation of this dissertation is one step in an ongoing process and, while far from definitive, has enabled me to gain insights and confirm or question conclusions originally drawn on the basis of my experience.

\textsuperscript{14}We had water projects with MOC in Feira da Santana, Bahia; CAATINGA in Ouricuri, Pernambuco; PATAC in Campina Grande, Paraíba; the Institute of Human Ecology in Recife, and Caritas Ceará.
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CAR – Companhia de Desenvolvimento e Ação Rural – Development and Regional Action Company – a state-owned development company in Bahia

CDA – Coordenação de Desenvolvimento Agrário – Agrarian Development Coordination – an state agency in Bahia responsible for land reform projects

CEB – Comunidades Eclesiais de Base – “Base Ecclesial Communities” – a grassroots movement started by the Catholic Church in the late 1960s, in which small groups (usually in rural or poor urban neighborhoods) gather to discuss local problems in light of Church social doctrine, and work toward addressing those problems (through local self-help projects, petitions to local government, etc.); there are an estimated 100,000 CEBs in Brazil.

CONTAG - Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura - National Confederation of Agricultural Workers - the federation of rural workers’ unions.

CPT – Comissão Pastoral da Terra, an ecumenical agency within the Catholic Church created in 1975 to deal with land issues.

CUT - Centro Único dos Trabalhadores, an activist national organization of labor units.

GoB – Government of Brazil

INCRA – Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária, the Federal Government agency responsible for land reform activities.
MST – *Movimento Sem Terra*, Landless Movement – the primary Brazilian non-governmental group organizing landless workers to seek and obtain land.

NGO – Non-governmental organization

PRONAF – *Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar* – National Program to Fortify Family Agriculture – a Federal Government program of financing for family farms

SAT – *subprojeto para aquisição da terra* – land acquisition subproject: funds allotted for purchase of the land, administered through the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil

SIC – *subprojetos de investimentos comunitários* – community investment subprojects: funds allotted to *Cédula da Terra* land settlement communities for post-purchase investments in community infra-structure, administered through the Banco do Brasil

STR – *sindicato do trabalhador rural* – rural workers unions, established pursuant to law; these are formed at the level of the *municipio*, but are associated through state and national organizations.
GLOSSARY

Assentamento – a land reform settlement (the same term is used for MBLR programs and for traditional expropriation programs)

Bolacha – a cookie or cracker (depending upon whether made with sugar or salt); Boa Vista III has a small manioc flour bolacha factory.

Casa de Farinha – a facility for processing manioc into manioc flour.

Coronelismo – a system of local leadership, especially in rural areas during the first half of the 20th Century, in which a local political boss (“coronel”) exercised effective control of local voting power; the coronel was often a large landowner himself and, even where he was not, was usually allied to the large landowners.

Feira – open air market, held in most Brazilian towns either daily (in large towns) or twice weekly (in smaller towns. Saturday is the key market day in most small towns. Many settlers sell some of their produce in their local town feiras.

Grilagem – the seizing of land via illegal or extra-legal means, often involving fraud and violence.

Município – the local government unit in Brazil. It is roughly equivalent to a county in the United States, except that there is not separate incorporation or government for the towns and villages within a município. The largest population center is almost invariably the seat of the município, and they bear the same name – thus, for example, the town of Olindina is the seat of the município of Olindina. A município may have administrative districts for the smaller villages and rural areas.

Nordeste (Northeast) – the nine states of Northeastern Brazil, the poorest region of the country and the region with the highest rural population. The nine states are Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Piauí, and Maranhão.
Norte (North) – the Brazilian states making up part or all of the legal Amazon (most of the Amazon basin). The seven core states classed as “Norte” are Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondónia, Roraima, and Tocantins. However Maranhão is often included with the Northern states, and Mato Grosso (officially part of the Central-West) is largely in the Amazon basin.

Posse – an untitled landholding, the holder of which is called a posseiro. Currently this is usually used for small-scale subsistence farmers (squatters), but large landholdings have historically been held (and are sometimes still held) through total or partial posse.

Prefeito/Prefeitura – the prefeito is the elected executive of a município. The prefeitura is the government of the município.

Quilombo – a community of escaped slaves

Sesmaria - a form of land grant arising in Portugal in the 13th century and existing in Brazil throughout the colonial period.

Tarefa – a traditional measurement of land. A Bahian tarefa is 4,356 M2, a Sergipano tarefa is 3,052 M2. Each of these are used in the area we studied, depending on local tradition.

Técnico or Técnica – person responsible for providing technical assistance to the settlements.
ABSTRACT

AN INITIAL EVALUATION OF MARKET-BASED LAND REFORM IN BRAZIL:
CAN IT CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

by

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Land reform is a burning issue in Brazil. Redistribution of land through government expropriation has proven to be difficult and expensive as unwilling landowners can hold up the process for years, or defeat it, in the courts. In 1997, the World Bank, at the request of the Brazilian Government, approved Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation Pilot Project 4147-BR – known in Brazil as the Cédula da Terra. This program instituted a market based approach to land reform through which eligible agricultural workers could form associations and obtain subsidized financing to purchase land from willing sellers. As there was no previous work that comprehensively brought together the historical and legal roots of land in Brazil from a land reform perspective, this study initially sets out that history. It then asks the question: Is market-based land reform potentially an effective instrument to redistribute land to working farmers in a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable manner? In order to answer that question, case study research was carried out in seven Cédula da Terra land reform settlements in northern Bahia. Sustainability was defined as land reform settlements being socially, economically, and environmentally viable for a minimum one generation. Data from the case studies was analyzed and placed in the larger context of Brazilian land reform history. The primary finding is that viable settlements can be developed through market-based land reform where sufficient support is provided. Additional recommendations are provided as to factors that tend to increase the success of such settlements.
CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Introduction

Land reform is a burning issue in Brazil. Hardly a week goes by without a significant land reform story appearing in newspapers and on television. It is discussed by political parties during elections, by social and developmental organizations, by the public at large.

It is an even more pressing issue to the large number of landless farmers, to the multitude of farmers with too little land (*minifundistas*), to young adult children of small farmers who would themselves like to have land, and even to a certain sector of the urban poor who envision returning to the land. And it is perceived as a threat by some large and medium-sized landholders, and even by some small landholders who fear it may touch their own land holdings.

Discussion of land reform in Brazil can be traced back to the 18th Century. The issue became more vital as population grew and frontier lands diminished, reaching a peak in the 1950s and 1960s. The *Estatuto da Terra*, a good land reform law, was enacted in 1964.

But despite the ongoing discussion, a good law, and repeated favorable declarations on the part of academics and politicians, actual land reform in Brazil has
been disappointing. Up until the 1990s, political, social, economic, and legal (and illegal!) factors had combined in such a way as to keep land reform programs at a minimal – almost token – level. The number of families settled on the land was minute in comparison with the number of families needing land, or the number leaving the land due to economic or other pressures – some of which involved fraud and violence (grilagem). Expropriating land – except where the landowner wished it to be expropriated – became an expensive, extended process that could be stalled for years.

Then, in the mid 1990s, with the support of the World Bank, a new approach was tried. What came to be called “market-based” land reform (MBLR)\textsuperscript{15} was experimented with in the Northeastern State of Ceará and quickly expanded throughout the country. The essential principal of this approach was that, rather than the government expropriating land for distribution to landless farmers, the government financed the purchase of land (from willing sellers) by groups of landless farmers.

The approach almost immediately became controversial. It was viewed by some as being too closely tied to the capitalist system, as unduly burdening the farmers with land payments, and/or as an attempt by the Cardoso administration to undermine the power of the land reform movement – most notably the Movimento Sem Terra (MST). Some feared that it whittled away the underlying concept of land reform as seeking justice, undermining the concept that the landless have a right to land, and unduly rewarding large landholders who sold their land under the program. Others feared that the associations of landless workers required to be formed by the program would be non-authentic, paper groups established by politicians in their continuous effort to corral the

\textsuperscript{15} Borras Jr. (2003, 1) and Wolford (2007, 244) prefer the term “Market-Led Agrarian Reform” (MLAR), distinguishing it from “State-Led Agrarian Reform” (SLAR); Domingos (2002, 3) prefers “Market-assisted agrarian reform” and Pereira (2007, 1) calls it “‘Market-Assisted’ Land Reform” (MARL).
rural vote. Opposition to the program reached such a pitch that, in 2002, a conference organized by NGOs in Washington D.C. to discuss market-based land reform was required (in order for key land movements to participate) to change its title from an International Seminar on World Bank Market-Based Land Reform to an International Seminar on Negative Impacts of World Bank Market-Based Land Reform. It became almost de rigueur in center-left circles to be opposed to the World Bank approach.

The objections set forth by opponents of the program, although often politically or ideologically driven, were not without basis. They will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter. At the same time, one would occasionally encounter field workers who had a highly favorable impression of the market-based approach. An essential question thus arose: Is market-based land reform potentially an effective instrument to redistribute land to working farmers in a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable manner?

This is the primary research question posed by this study.

**Theoretical Context: Policy**

Policy may be very roughly divided into stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. In this sense, the current study primarily deals with the implementation stage of market-based land reform. This is useful, but also somewhat artificial.\(^{16}\) Planning, implementation, and evaluation are deeply interrelated. Increasingly it is recognized that the three must take place as part of a whole process and not linearly or even, necessarily, divided by time (e.g., Layzer 2002, 15-16). A series of feedback loops are created: thus we plan (often in a participatory manner with the target population), begin to implement,

\(^{16}\) Patton & Sawicki (1993, 366) suggest that separating the planning and implementation processes too greatly can lead to serious dysfunctions in implementation.
do initial monitoring/evaluation, modify the plan, implement, monitor/evaluate – as three aspects of the policy process. This, at least, is the ideal. In practice, the need for governments and donor agencies to approve detailed written projects prior to funding and implementation, as well as other internal dynamics of governments and donors (discussed below), can seriously limit the ideal model.

Policy sciences have been compared to trying to change a tire on a moving vehicle. Unlike laboratory sciences, or natural sciences dealing with a slower pace of change, policy sciences seek to examine, propose, plan, evaluate in the midst of rapidly ongoing and changing human society. Furthermore, the policy process itself is likely to – indeed, intended to – have an impact on the very movement of the object (society) that it is examining. The policy scientist is thus required to help study, plan, and implement in a moving, open-ended, and highly complex situation with many players. Almost all planning and implementation will have unexpected spin-offs, both good and bad; poor planning or implementation is likely to have very negative impacts as well.  

All of these factors are considerably increased in the ‘third world’ for several reasons. Policy has been defined as “a social process of authoritative decision making by which the members of a community clarify and secure their common interests.” (Clark 2002, 6) In the ‘third world,’ those who are the target population of the policy process may be less able to fully participate or make themselves heard for a number of reasons: lack of organization, inexperience in dealing with policy questions, limited ability to articulate their needs, vast differences between policy makers and target populations in

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17 Clark (2002, 33-34), based on Lasswell (1971, 14-33), sets out a useful process for mapping this complexity, including seven categories: participants, perspectives, situations, base values, strategies, outcomes, effects.
terms of education, wealth, world view, power.\textsuperscript{18} There may be, as in Brazil, a history of the more powerful and educated planning on behalf of the poor – with a mixture of motivations, not all of them benign.\textsuperscript{19} Tremendous inequalities in the society lead to distortions in implementation, so that policies often unintentionally end up benefiting those who are better off due to the underlying socio-economic dynamics (it is like trying to row a boat in a straight line with all the weight on one side of the boat). Finally, because target populations often live very close to the edge of survival, policy errors can have a much more serious negative impact on them than might be the case in more affluent societies.

None of this is intended to denigrate the intelligence, capacity, or resilience of the ‘third world’ poor – all of which are, in my experience, tremendous. However, the policy and development games were invented by the formally educated classes, and the poor are therefore playing in our court. It is not surprising that they do so at some disadvantage. This is part of the background within which this study is carried out.

\textbf{Notes on Implementation}

Based on work by Laswell (1971, 27-29), Clark (2002, 59-70) presents seven decision functions of the policy process: intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation, application, appraisal, termination. Of these, invocation has most to do with the implementation stage.

\textsuperscript{18} Regarding rural development, there may also be urban bias: “...most [development planners] have only a very shaky understanding of rural life in... developing societies.” (Gardner and Lewis 1996, 63)

\textsuperscript{19} When international experts or donor agencies are involved, there is an additional cultural gap (beyond that between the target population and the educated elite) between countries and languages.
Prescription is the stage that sets forth the rules under which a policy will be carried out. Invocation is the first step toward acting in accordance with that prescription to carry out the policy: setting up administration, allocating people and resources, deciding who will be accountable and who will enforce the prescriptions. Arrangements for invocation should be

…effective, practical, and complete ways of executing the prescription. Do the arrangements make adequately clear exactly what the invocation activities will be in different contexts or under different contingencies and who will be held accountable to follow the rules? … Are the people who carry out invocation adequately skilled, and do they receive ongoing training? Are the organizations adequately staffed, and do they have sufficient resources? To whom should they turn… if they run into problems in carrying out their invocation activities? How can the invocation function be appraised as a basis for improving it? (Clark, 65-66)

While offering insights into implementation, invocation is really more concerned with the decision process leading to implementation than with implementation itself.

In the United States, implementation may depend largely on government bodies and elected officials (Sargent. et al. 1991, 42-43; see Clark, 65-8). Formal procedures take on a highly significant role.\textsuperscript{20} While formal rules, roles, and regulations are certainly

\textsuperscript{20} For Sargent, et al. (43), implementation includes three essential steps “The first and most important is identifying and adopting specific implementation procedures. The second is for the appropriate jurisdictions to enact bylaws or ordinances…. The third is delegating the responsibility of evaluating implementation to the planning commission, a citizens advisory group, or a community organization.”
a factor in Brazil, they are not the mainstay of implementation. Implementation involves (but is not limited to) whether, to what extent, and how these formal factors are actually carried out. This may be due to a cultural practice of treating written rules as an ideal somewhat divorced from practical life (see discussion in Chapter III). In any event, in Brazil the essence of implementation is, I believe, in the key factors which I have developed and set forth below (see Table I-A).

Implementation can be many layered. In the market-based land reform program, for instance, an international donor (the World Bank) developed the basic methodology that it intended to try out in several countries. It then approached the Brazilian Government, first via a pilot program, then a fuller program, which was designed without significant civil society input; in a sense, this stage was beginning to implement the World Bank program. The Brazilian Government then began implementation (invocation and application) by enacting regulations, empowering the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, making arrangements with financial institutions, etc. Then the program was moved out to the states that were to help administer it, and state technical units (STUs) were selected. Finally, at the local level, individual land reform projects were carried out. There are therefore at least three layers (federal, state, local) of implementation involved, each with its own issues, opportunities, and problems (World Bank 2000).

**Key Factors**

21 In my experience, the following are key factors in program implementation:

Authenticity of participation. Almost all commentators recognize the role of participation in successful implementation. A World Bank study showed that “...two

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21 These Key Factors are revisited in light of the Cédula da Terra program in Chapter VI.
thirds of projects that included significant participation of the local population were successful, in accordance with Bank criteria, and only one tenth of projects without participation were successful" (Stiglitz 1998, 12). In an increasingly complex society, participation of the target population and others can help provide a wider range of talents and knowledge for making implementation more effective. In situations of rapid change and/or instability, a good participatory and collaborative base can help manage that uncertainty and reinforce the ongoing capacity to adapt to change (Wondolleck & Yaffee 2000, 15-6, 19, 29).  

Concepts of participation range from it being the essential first element, as in Escobar's “unmaking” development (1999), the politics of place (Gibson-Graham 2004) or the Brazilian Base Community movement (e.g. De Gregori 1971), to being a useful tool for carrying out donor agency policy (see Stiglitz; Gardner & Lewis 1996, 110-13). It has been suggested that both top-down and “strictly bottom-up” approaches are prone to failure and that the best approach is to gear participation to intended results, possibly through use of backward mapping (Patton & Sawicki 1993, 307). In order for participation to be meaningful, it “requires a larger context of trust” between the target population and those working with them (Tendler 1997, 6). However, pseudo-participation – i.e., projects in which the implementers go through the motions of participation without being willing to significantly modify programs in light of participatory input – can be counter-productive, increasing stakeholder resistance and

22 Mention of change should not obscure what Layzer (348) has referred to as “remarkable persistence of the status quo.” The two are not necessary contradictory: plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose. The tendency of essential power structures and patterns of distribution to endure is indeed remarkable.

23 Wondolleck & Yaffee (6-7), noting the negative impact on project implementation of a growing distrust of government and institutions, have found that participation can also help to create and/or increase trust.
dissatisfaction (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 102).

Participation can also be more or less authentic. While lack of authenticity often arises from “top-down” agency or government approaches, it is not limited to these. Third parties (politicians, irresponsible NGOs) can create less than authentic community groups to seek funding or to hasten implementation, and even community or association leaders can intentionally or unintentionally misrepresent or pass misleading information to their groups for a number of reasons, such as political or ideological differences with the government24 (Valadez & Bamberger 1994, 176-7; see Martins 2000a and 2000b).

Some essential questions with respect to participation include:

- When does participation start? Generally, the earlier, the better (e.g., Wondolleck & Yaffee, 103). Participation at the design stage is often ideal,25 bringing target population and other impacted party input to bear early on, and helping them to feel they have a stake in the project (see below). This is not only a design question, but an implementation one as well – participation facilitates subsequent implementation. The market-based land reform program requires target population participation at the very beginning of the local implementation stage – the first step in the actual land reform process is target population identification of the land to be acquired (World Bank 2000). However, failure to have civil society participation at the national design stage was one of the factors that created strong resistance to the program.

24 In the case of market-based land reform, something like this may have happened between MST leadership and its followers. In my own experience, the CPT worker who followed us at our site in Tocantins discouraged settlers from participating in a favorable government financing program because she was ideologically in conflict with and distrusted the government (her advice, possibly erroneous, was in good faith).

25 “Community development has a tendency to become largely cosmetic unless it involves the active participation of the community in the planning stages of the project.” (Gardner & Lewis, 121)
• Whom does participation include? This study focuses primarily on target population participation, but successful implementation also includes participation of other stakeholders, including those responsible for implementing the program,\textsuperscript{26} members of the community surrounding the program,\textsuperscript{27} and other people who may be impacted by or have an impact on the program.\textsuperscript{28} In the market-based land reform program, this is recognized at the state and local levels through expressions of hope that rural workers unions and NGOs will actively participate (World Bank 2000).

• How is participation achieved? This will vary with the size of the project and target population, the number and diversity of groups involved,\textsuperscript{29} etc. Whereas in a local land reform area, all of the target population is able to participate actively, this would not be true of programs that operate on a larger scale – in which some type of representation must be called for.\textsuperscript{30} However, at the back of the

\textsuperscript{26}“Zeleny suggests a process of formulating alternatives, reassessing goals and objectives, and involving the people who will implement the final decision in the decision-creating process. This potentially time-consuming work aims at gaining a consensus on a decision so that fewer people have to be convinced to implement it. Zeleny believes there is little advantage in making fast, efficient, optimal decisions that require such enormous effort to implement that they become obsolete or suboptimal before they are put in place.” (Patton & Sawicki: 366)

\textsuperscript{27}An excellent example of this was provided by Pe. Anibal Gil, a Catholic priest who opened the first AIDS hospice in Brazil. Knowing that such hospices often encounter resistance from neighbors, he spent considerable time visiting and talking with neighboring residents and businesses before opening the hospice. As a result, the community not only tolerated the hospice but actively supported it, providing donations, visits, and volunteers.

\textsuperscript{28}However, there may be potentially impacted groups whose participation might be counterproductive. In land reform projects, for example, certain landowner groups may be hostile to the basic goals and may try to sabotage them through participation. However, my tendency is, at least initially, to try to be inclusive to the degree practical. One sometimes finds allies in surprising places.

\textsuperscript{29}Clark (39-40) distinguishes between issues that impact only one group (singular) and those that impact more than one (plural).

\textsuperscript{30}There are excellent materials available on actual techniques of participation. Wondolleck & Yaffee (168-171) note the importance of fun, hope, hands-on activities (rather than mere abstractions), and non-
implementer’s mind, it is good to remember the doctrine that has emerged out of politics of place – nobody has a right to ‘speak’ for other groups. (Gardner & Lewis, 23-24)

- Is participation authentic? This is a multi-faceted question. Are the representatives and organizations what they claim to be – do they really speak for their constituents or are they essentially a fiction or a front (either intentionally or unintentionally)? Even if they are not such a front, has the group represented really gone into the matter in enough depth so that the constituents understand the issues and have expressed their real feelings and thoughts? Key at all stages is the need to assure that no group is (inadvertently) dominated by those who are most informed, most powerful, or most articulate (Valadez & Bamberger: 176).

Rural Brazilians tend to defer to people who are more educated, urban, or locally influential; even among themselves, those who are more timid or less experienced tend not to participate. Patience, knowledge of the community, and structured group dynamics can help to remedy this (e.g., De Gregori 1971).

Ownership. Closely related to participation, is the important factor of whether the target population takes ‘ownership’ of the program – whether the beneficiaries really feel, believe, and act as though the program is their own. King-Powers (1975) relates an incident that illustrates this. In her community, the local priest decided to start a water filter campaign to counteract the constant problem of intestinal parasites. The people humored the priest, engaged in the campaign, and then used the clay water filters to store beans. Where the target population does not take ownership of the program,
implementation – even, as if in this case, it appears to be successful – is not likely to attain stated goals.

Ownership becomes even more important in dealing with holistic local programs and the increasing trend toward local management of environmental resources\(^{31}\) (Ascher 1995, 10-12; Camarotti & Spink 2000, 8-10). This aspect was well considered in the market-based land reform program where, in addition to actual land ownership, the landholder associations were given considerable responsibility for selection of land, negotiation of purchase, and administration of the settlement areas (World Bank 2000).

**Adequate statement and communication of goals.** This is a very tricky issue, aspects of which will be discussed in more detail below in the section on internal dynamics of the aid industry and governments. There has been a strong move in recent years to results-oriented or performance-based management (used synonymously). In the positive sense, this approach seeks to focus government agencies and NGOs on their objective (the results they wish to obtain) rather than on simply inputs (i.e., the budget) and the administrative process (Wholey 2003, 44-55). The danger of this approach is that it can push toward simplistic or checklist objectives, and that these can override the qualitative and organic aspects of the program\(^{32}\) (Mark 2003, 185-6). The former director of World Food Program in Brazil, Mark Latham, frequently commented that it is unfortunate that donor agencies have to work with the project format at all, as it would probably be preferable to simply accompany the evolving situation, placing resources

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\(^{31}\) "The rural community is seen as the conservator of its own resources, habitat and culture. Local citizens are directly involved in the control of community assets as they plan for the retention, enrichment, and equitable use of those assets for present and future generations." Sargent, et al.: 5

\(^{32}\) This is particularly the case when management models are imported from the business sector which, almost by definition, has much more simplistic goals.
strategically in small increments where they would help influence the organic social process in positive directions.

But clearly some objective must be kept in mind. Even the Latham approach presupposes an objective – in his case, food security. The overall objective of the Base Community Movement, for instance, was very broad – to enable neighbors to form community groups in which they would discuss issues and take action based on their felt needs. But even there, when an action was to be taken, a more specific objective needed to be stated by the group.

Participation, then, again becomes key. If results-based management is to work, the desired results have to be in tune with the needs and thoughts of the target population, especially, and of other key stakeholders (See Wholey, 44, 46). Communication among implementers, target population, and other stakeholders is vital.

**Adequate time frame** – Also closely related to the question of participation is the time frame the development agency allows for the project. Authentic participation, especially among relatively uneducated rural populations, requires considerable time and patience to develop. A rule of thumb in Brazil is that it takes three years to develop an authentic community organization capable of carrying out a major project. Many NGOs and church agencies respect this time frame, allowing projects to develop at an organic pace that may go more or less slowly, depending on circumstances. These agencies allow the project funding and objectives to be led by the community growth pattern, waiting as the community takes each step in the process. Government and major donor agencies, on the other hand, tend to be budget and statistic driven, pushing for results within a preset time frame, and the end product is often unauthentic community groups and statistical
results that, in practice, leave much to be desired. Note that time frame may not only be related to participation (although this may be the single most important factor), but also to other factors: agricultural, education, and health projects, for instance, may take longer to successfully achieve than originally contemplated, as all are, at least in part, dependent on organic processes. Even projects that lean toward the technical end of the spectrum may be delayed due to social, political, or economic issues, on the one hand, or technical and logistic problems, on the other.

**Awareness of local social, cultural, and political complexities.** "Local categories and contextuality are central to problem solving" in the policy sciences (Clark, 118). Programs can fail because implementers are not fully aware of the complexities of the local situation. Gardner & Lewis (63) tell of a fish-farming project that, while technically sound, nearly failed because the first world technicians did not understand the network of family and commercial ties that surrounded the project. The network of family, friends, and feuds in a rural community – including a land reform settlement – can take outsiders unaware. Outsiders often mistake those who enthusiastically support their program for leaders, whereas they may be innovators, eccentrics, or sycophants. And program managers may mistakenly rely excessively on those locals who share their political or ideological views (Valadez & Bamberger, 177).

The extent of local knowledge needed may depend on project objectives. In Tocantins, as church workers involved in agrarian reform and also responsible for promoting many aspects of community welfare, our knowledge of these local

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33 “No administrative system is capable of representing any existing social community except through a heroic and greatly schematized process of abstraction and simplification.... There abstractions and simplifications are disciplined by a small number of objectives....” (Scott 1998, 22 –23). Clark (3) notes the tendency of problem solvers to “simplify, misconstrue, or overlook…”
complexities had to be extensive. Land reform settlements – being relatively holistic – would require nearly the same depth of knowledge, but other types of programs – for instance, a vaccination campaign – might be carried out with more limited knowledge of specific local contexts. This being said, there is a growing awareness that all programs should be approached within a holistic context.\textsuperscript{34}

Unawareness leads to surprising results. When, as part of an emergency community-based anti-drought program in the Northeast, we encouraged the formation of seed banks, we generated an unexpected reaction (unexpected because we were unaware they existed) from regional seed salesmen, who sought to undermine the seed banks by offering farmers free seeds. In this case, in part because of prior participatory groundwork with farmers discussing economic issues and the value of organization, the dynamics of the situation worked out relatively well.

**Internal workings of aid industry and government.** As noted above, the dynamics of the “aid industry” and government tend to drive project time frames.\textsuperscript{35} This can be due to a number of factors. Bi-lateral agencies such as USAID often have budgets that, if not used in a certain time frame, are lost. Development contractors of the beltway bandit variety usually contract to perform a task in a fixed time period and, especially where they have won the contract on the basis of bidding, have tight budgets. Government agencies often wish to implement projects prior to elections or during the term of the

\textsuperscript{34} Kathy Kohm and Jerry Franklin (quoted in Wondolleck & Yaffee, 15) speak of “Appreciating the complexity of systems and managing for wholeness rather than for the efficiency of individual components…”. Although they were speaking of forestry, the quote also applies to social and economic undertakings.

\textsuperscript{35} Gardner and Lewis (68-75) provide a useful discussion of aid industry dynamics.
administration.\textsuperscript{36} Where projects are financed by foreign entities such as the World Bank, the government may be concerned that delays may affect foreign loans. Where staff salaries are involved, delays may lead to significant cost overruns. Delays may also affect equipment obsolescence, quality, maintenance, and warranties (Valadez & Bamberger, 19-20).

Furthermore, agencies are often accountable to groups (first world donor countries and taxpayers, congressional committees, corporate and private donors) that have a limited understanding of development issues and/or require quantitative results. The pressure to “show results” is often reflected in project implementation. Depending on how this pressure is handled, it may exert a negative impact on the quality of implementation (see discussion of monitoring below).

It is not surprising, therefore, that NGOs and Church groups are often much more able to take a more patient and organic approach to implementation. They usually have highly committed, relatively low-cost staff, who are not paid on a per-project basis. They also have a sense of mission, and mission statements, that include mention of the type of patience and organic approach needed, and to which their donors (often individuals or similarly minded groups from the first world) fully subscribe. Frequently, church groups and NGOs such as Oxfam and Save-The-Children enjoy the implicit trust of their donors, who prefer qualitative results in accordance with the entity’s mission to time frames and statistics. Finally, such groups tend to work on a smaller scale than the larger donor agencies, and thus can more fully accompany projects at a less demanding pace.

\textsuperscript{36} Ascher (1999, 18-19) correctly points out that governments do not have motives – government officials do. These may be a mixture of personal, economic, and political, and the motives of one person or group in the government may conflict with those of others.
Resources – Human, Technical, Financial. This point is, perhaps, so obvious that it should not need mentioning. Yet programs continuously fail due to inadequate resources. “Inadequate” may or may not mean “insufficient” in terms of quantity – often there are sufficient but inappropriate resources. For instance, in Brazil, many agricultural extension workers have been trained and are oriented toward working with large commercial farms; assigned to work with land reform settlements, they are almost completely unprepared. Local program managers may be untrained, uninterested, understaffed. For instance, INCRA – the Brazilian Government’s Agrarian Reform Agency, was throughout the 1970s and 80s used as a place to find jobs for people with political connections who were of no particular use elsewhere; when we were working in land reform in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was very difficult to find INCRA staff seriously interested in land reform, yet the agency was in charge of administering land reform projects (it improved notably under the Cardoso and Lula governments). In the Brazilian Northeast, state governors have similarly used government social agencies for patronage jobs (Tendler, 8).

In terms of financial resources, excess funding can be worse than insufficient funding for many community-based projects. Funding received too early, too easily, or in too great amounts can drown the natural growth process of a community organization, lead to dissention and/or the attempt to carry-out inappropriate projects, and attract outside opportunists. Part of the negative reaction to market-based land reform on the

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37 Tendler (1997, 74-101), in her case study of agricultural extension service in Ceará, points out the value of customized, user driven technical service over “top down” standardized service. Interestingly, in that case, it was the state extension workers who provided the customized service, and NGO-Cooperative workers who took a more standardized, top-down approach.
part of the MST and CPT was based on a fear of incipient community groups being
overwhelmed by resources.

**Ongoing monitoring.** Monitoring is a vital element of implementation (Wholey
2003, 43-44; Valadez & Bamberger, 18). Sargent et al. (73) include evaluation as one of
the three essential steps of implementation. Wholey (45-46) notes that, equally important
to monitoring, is using the results of that monitoring to improve program implementation.
When this is done, monitoring allows implementers both to continuously refocus program
efforts to better achieve goals and to better adapt to changing situations.

The criteria by and way in which monitoring is done is extremely important.
Approaches taken reflect, to some extent, the split mentioned above between those who
seek formal or statistical objectives and those who seek organic and qualitative
objectives.\(^{38}\) In my experience, the most effective monitoring is done by those who have
an underlying sympathy with program objectives and experience in the area, but stand
enough outside the program to be able to see it with fresh eyes and ask outsider
questions. The evaluator also needs to be able to review objective criteria in light of the
people and communities participating, appreciate qualitative differences, and recognize
positive and negative spin-offs. It is important that the evaluator be viewed by program
implementers and target population as a resource and not a threat.

In addition to outside monitoring (and where outside monitoring, for budget or
other reasons, is not available), implementing staff, target population representatives, and
other stakeholder representatives, need to engage in self-monitoring of the program. This

\(^{38}\) This is, of course, not a pure either/or question. Almost all programs and evaluators seek both. Although
I favor the more qualitative/organic approach, an evaluation that ignores objective measurements altogether
would, in most cases, be inadequate. Certain types of programs, however, such as human rights initiatives,
are very hard to measure or evaluate quantitatively in any meaningful way.
can be done through regular reviews of process, and review of interim steps or objectives to be accomplished, with a discussion of whether and how they have been achieved or not achieved.

**Provisions for maintenance.** In Brazil maintenance is a major problem. This is true of simple maintenance of buildings and machines – throughout Brazil one encounters hospitals that were never staffed, school buildings inadequately staffed, machines in storage rooms because nobody knows how to maintain them or find spare parts. It is also true at a more sophisticated level of providing (or not) continuity and sustainability for programs beyond the donor stage. Implementation that does not include plans and provision for maintenance or continuity is inadequate and is likely to result in projects that begin to unravel shortly after the implementing team leaves the area. The sense of ownership, mentioned above, through creation of a genuine participatory process, is certainly the first step to building a constituency that will insure program maintenance (both on the more sophisticated level and, consequently, on the simple maintenance level). Additional steps can be taken to assure this process, such as through institutionalizing or encouraging replication of these participatory processes. (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 115-7)

**Concluding Thoughts On Theoretical Context for Policy**

Clark (118) provides a wonderful table of the skills and talents needed by the policy-oriented professional. Among these are an ability to deal with uncertainty and “an open learning process,” an interdisciplinary and integrative approach, a holistic view, an

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39 In Tocantins, we used to say that it was easy to be a rural pastoral worker. One only had to be an agronomist, medical doctor, theologian, community organizer, psychologist, educator, mechanic, lawyer....
ability to solve problems in a manner that is “process-like, yet empirical, systematic.” I would add humility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Factor</th>
<th>Advantages if present</th>
<th>Dangers if absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity of Participation</td>
<td>Basis for most of the factors below; opens possibility for</td>
<td>Irrelevant projects that will meet indifference or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>project reaching felt needs of target population; secures</td>
<td>resistance from target population &amp; other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stakeholder support</td>
<td>stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Program effectiveness and continuity vis-à-vis target</td>
<td>Project not internalized by target population, likely to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>population</td>
<td>end when implementers leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Statement &amp; Communication of goals</td>
<td>Implementers, target population &amp; stakeholders work together</td>
<td>Confusion, conflicts, misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Time Frame</td>
<td>Program allowed to fully develop in accordance with target</td>
<td>Truncated programs with partial, inadequate, or merely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>population needs</td>
<td>formal results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Local Social, Cultural, &amp; PoliticalComplexities</td>
<td>Program integrated into local reality</td>
<td>Blindsided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Internal Workings of Aid Industry &amp; Government</td>
<td>Implementers and target populations aware of factors</td>
<td>Target population and implementers likely to find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that can influence the program – can plan accordingly</td>
<td>themselves in conflict with donors and funders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources – Human, Technical, Financial</td>
<td>Ability to carry out well-rounded implementation</td>
<td>Inadequate or inappropriate personnel or technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>input; shortage or excess of funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Monitoring</td>
<td>Ability to continuously adapt implementation to ongoing reality</td>
<td>Walking in the dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions for Maintenance</td>
<td>Program will carry on after initial stages</td>
<td>Program will begin to unravel once implementers leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This discussion emphasized participation. This is in part due to my experience as a community organizer. But, in an increasingly complex world, where people are dealing with potential conflict over limited natural resources, I firmly believe that participatory solutions offer the best road to meaningful design and implementation of programs, as well as for their adaptation to changing circumstances and endurance over time. Only if we successfully learn to work in participatory and collaborative manners will we be able
to create the social structures necessary to deal with complex human and environmental issues, and avoid the choice between self-seeking individualism or collective repression posed by the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin 1968).

**Theoretical Context: Development and Land Reform**

**Background**

As will be discussed in Chapter III, the 1950s and early 60s witnessed an active campaign in Brazil for agrarian reform. Large landholdings and “backward” agriculture were seen by opinion leaders as constituting a barrier to modernity and progress. However, the land owning classes continued to be powerful, and reaction to the agrarian reform movement was one factor which led to the military dictatorship of 1964-85. The military dictatorship promoted the modernization of agriculture.  

Thus it has been said that “...the so-called ‘conservative modernization’ of agriculture was born with the defeat of the movement for agrarian reform” (Delgado 1996, 218). Ramos (1999, 189) quotes Alberto Passos Guimarães: “…there are only two options for market economy countries: agrarian reform or the strategy of ‘conservative modernization.’ Brazil chose the latter.” As Griffin (144) phrases it, “The green revolution represents an attempt to substitute technical change for institutional change.”  

Certainly the military government opted for modernization and, despite enactment of a model Land Statute in 1964, made no serious move toward agrarian reform.

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40 Defined as the growing use of industrially manufactured inputs (Powers 2006, 7)

41 The pattern of attempting to avoid agrarian reform by effecting technical agricultural reforms is long standing in Brazil, dating back at least to the 1780s. See Chapter III.
Twenty-one years of military rule changed the climate for agrarian reform in three important ways: (1) suppression of active agrarian reform movements cut off advocacy for over two decades; (2) subsidization of urban elite purchase of rural land removed pressure from that sector for agrarian reform; (3) the modern agriculture model convinced the great mass of society – including most decisions makers – that the small farm was a relic of past eras, thus turning agrarian reform into a peripheral issue as opposed to a basic step necessary to remove barriers to development (Powers 1999).

By the late 1980s, interest in land reform seemed to be limited to the Church, a few academics, and the Workers’ Party; the still incipient Movimento dos Sem Terra (MST) – created under the wing of the Church – was just beginning to be heard. But by the mid-1990s, interest in agrarian reform revived – including on an international level (SDDimensions 2000). Fernandes notes (1998, 224) that in each decade different aspects of the agrarian question emerge; he saw the question in the 1990s being the democratization of land holding, with the government pressured on one hand by the powerful ruralista bloc, on the other by the growing actions of the MST, which undoubtedly kept (and continue to keep) the issue in the public eye. In economic terms, the fall of land prices – brought about in part by stabilization of the economy and the possibility of greater returns from other investments – was a major factor favoring

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42 de Janvry (3) provides a summary of the dominant approaches to rural development up until 1980: in the 1940s, community development programs to mobilize rural people toward democratic forms of government; the 1950s, diffusion of technological knowledge through extension workers; the early 60s, land reform; the late 60s, new technologies of the Green Revolution; the 70s integrated rural development seeking to democratize the new technologies to smaller farmers while preserving peasant structures. "As the limits of dealing with poverty via rural development became increasingly evident, the strategy of basic needs was put forward as an instrument to improve welfare among the masses of dispossessed peasants and the rapidly rising numbers of rural workers."

43 Landowners and their allies in the Brazilian national congress.
agrarian reform. Fear of MST land occupation is another “cost” to landowners and, given low land values, might reduce their resistance to land reform, making expropriation by the government an attractive alternative. Serious enforcement of the Rural Land Tax (an unrealized goal of Lula’s government) could also make large landholders more amenable to land reform (Fernandes, 225-227; Alston, et al., 1999, 202). Other tax incentives can be considered that encourage sustainable agriculture and land distribution (Graziano da Silva, 67-68).

Also favoring a new attitude toward agrarian reform was a growing sense that highly mechanized, commercial agriculture can result in environmental problems and can, in the long run, prove to be expensive. The system demands large amounts of capital while producing often beyond the capacity of the market to absorb, making the system very vulnerable (Powers 2006). Mechanization also reduces jobs, displacing or marginalizing rural workers. (Benjamin, et al., 1998, 82-84)

At the same time, the viability of small farms gained more recognition in Brazil. For instance, Barros, et al. (2000), in an extensive analysis of 1985 agricultural census data, show that in the Northeast – with the exception of very small minifundos, profits

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44 The government was known as paying well for land, and is required to indemnify the landholder based on the value of the land and improvements. Clemente (5) quotes César José de Oliveira, director of INCRA in Rio Grande do Norte: “The methodology for appraising real property in this country has to change. It is absurd. Do you think that, in this country, the legislation was enacted to benefit the worker?... Who buys land in this country is INCRA because the market for land is inactive. Imagine the bargaining power of who has R$ 1 million in hand to buy a farm. But when INCRA appraises it, everything enters in. It is the rigor of the law. The legislation very much benefits the landowners, and this is the problem.”

45 There have been numerous reports in the press of landowners arranging with the agrarian reform agency – INCRA – to purchase their land, and allegations of inflated prices paid. INCRA has been accused of using outdated appraisal methods, such as paying more for deforested land “as if this were an improvement;” the Lula administration is seeking ways of changing these policies (Clemente 5). MST land invasions increased 62% during the first six months of 2003 (Marques 2003a).

46 However, per recent negotiations regarding tax reform, the levying of rural land tax may be passed to the municipio. (Lyra 2003). In many localities where landowners are powerful, this may militate against serious collection of the tax; it would seem to considerably reduce the utility of the tax as a policy tool.
per hectare decline as rural properties grow larger. In addition, attention was drawn to other positive economic aspects of small farms:

Even if the productivity of family-based agricultural work were inferior to large-scale mechanized production — which is not the case — there are other advantages... the concentration of income being less, consumer expenditures tend to be distributed throughout the population, increasing the market for commonly used goods, produced internally, often locally... (Tubaldini 1998)

It seemed as though many factors were coming together to make land reform once again an attractive policy.47

But there were still issues, not least of which was that many land reform projects have not been successful. This is partly because land reform had been carried out on poor quality land and/or lands located far from markets, this latter pattern being one which even the well-intentioned Lula government found itself forced into (see below). Also contributing to failure has been lack of infrastructure, technical support, financing, and the broader supports (education, health, etc.) which help families to function.

**Alternative Modes of Development**

Given the current situation, what paths are open to Brazil for future agricultural and rural development? Critiques of Brazilian modern agricultural have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Powers 2006), and are summarized here. These include claims that the

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47 Claims were made that more land was distributed between 1994 and 1998 than in the entire proceeding 30 year period (Helfand and Rezende, 256-257). These figures have been widely questioned, the main critique being that they represent in large part recognition of land rights of posseiros (squatters) who were already on the land. Even if these figures are correct, however, they — as well as the stated goals of the Lula government (see below) — represent only a small fraction of the 2.5 to 5.3 million families who need land (World Bank 2000, 2; Stedile c. 1999, 2; NEAD 2001)
modernization of agriculture and the growth of “agro-industrial complexes” has displaced many small farmers (including renters and share-croppers), marginalized others or subjected them to the domination of agro-industrial companies, reduced the bargaining power and earnings of farmers, distorted community life and work relations, disvalued traditional rural life and knowledge, maintained (if not increased) land concentration, pushed small farmers into marginal lands with negative ecological consequences, led to anti-ecological practices of mechanization and use of chemicals, promoted monocultures, made agriculture at the same time over-productive and highly vulnerable to market changes and pests, promoted oligopolies in the input and output sectors, and led to treating land as a commodity to be used rather than as a resource to be nurtured and husbanded.

While it is tempting – and sometimes useful – to focus on fertilizers, pesticides, and machines, it is really the underlying mentality behind them that is of concern. Placide Rambaud noted that agriculture is evolving toward a “dictatorial regime of numbers” (Almeida 1999, 32). Not only are these the numbers of accounting and management, but the very mentality of GDPs and markets – the mentality that sees economics as an end in itself, with people serving economics rather than vice versa, or – at best – as the most important discipline in ordering human life. Questioning this mentality is one of the basic tenets of the movement(s) toward alternative development:

First, alternative development is formulated based on a fundamental critique of the strict economic rationale that inspired the dominant thoughts and policies regarding development. Against the idea that economy is an independent sphere of social life, whose functioning requires the sacrifice of non-economic goods and
values – social (e.g., equality), political (e.g., democratic participation), cultural (e.g., ethnic diversity) and natural (e.g., the environment) – alternative development underlines the necessity of treating economics as an integral and dependent part of society, subordinating economic objectives to the protection of these goods and values. (Souza Santos and Rodriguez 2002, 46)

Insofar as different social groups and actors question modernization, both in the agricultural sphere and in society as a whole, the precariousness and fragility of the system appear with greater clarity, tending toward a reevaluation of the social responsibility that touches upon the construction of the future. (Almeida, 32)

But where does this questioning lead us? Asking his key question, “alternative to what?”, Graziano da Silva (1999, 55) states:

There is an almost general agreement that the value of the movements for an ‘alternative agriculture’ is in creating a new social conscience about production in its widest sense.... Unfortunately, it is here that the waters begin to part....

A myriad of proposals for rural development have been put forth, ranging from almost complete negation of and resistance to the modern agricultural system, on the one hand, to substantial integration of small farmers into that system, on the other. The very term “development” – even “sustainable development” – has been rejected by some due to their identification of that term with concepts of economic growth. Noting that infinite growth is not an ecological possibility, they prefer to speak of alternatives to development rather than of alternative development (see, e.g., Souza Santos and Rodriguez 2002, 53-54; Escobar 1995; 215).

Where does one start amongst this myriad of proposals? One starting point is
suggested by Jalcione Almeida (1999, 151 et seq.). Modern economy, in Brazil as elsewhere, is given to periodic crises – and these crises have tended to be magnified in Brazil by the contradictions and vulnerabilities within the national economy. Almeida notes “…the capacity that certain marginal regions and small units of agricultural production have to resist the crises with a [relatively] small social cost…” He attributes this to the flexibility of small family farms in seeking out alternatives:

…to the extent that one increases the range of possible choices within a productive structure (it is clear that those choices are intimately linked to the possibilities of the market, whichever that may be), the degree of autonomy also increases. Thus, the greater the number of activities in which the farmers engage (up to a certain limit, obviously)... the more one can admit the hypothesis that a great level of autonomy is attained, at least in the case of family structured [farms]... as long as the equilibrium among activities is one of the conditions of the stability of the microsystem. (152)

This ability to survive – born out in the statistics that show a continued presence of small farmers – is a real starting point for examining possibilities of rural development. Focused on this, there are those who advocate a resistance to the modern system to the point of having been accused, often unfairly, of wanting a virtual return to romanticized historical patterns of rural life. More often what such groups advocate is a revaluing of small-scale traditional agricultural experience, preserving and revalidating traditional knowledge and insights (which are often viewed as being more ecologically sound than modern ones), but also incorporating new “appropriate” technologies and techniques that

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48 “One of the implications of uneven development is the continuous recurrence of crises....” de Janvry (2)
can facilitate work, helping farmers and land to be sustainably more productive. Much valuable and creative work has been done in this area, especially by the NGOs loosely associated in the PTA system.

But such small farming does not come without a cost. Moreira (1999, 30-31, 120, 189) points out that the modern small farmer often works with a theoretical profit of zero, and that the ability to reproduce this way of life is threatened. There is an implication here that, as the present generation of farmers dies off, it will be more difficult for their children to follow in their footsteps – or even to want to follow in them (see, e.g., Carneiro, 1999). Noting that small-scale agriculture entails “...high risk... with very low profitability and frequent bankruptcies” (188), Moreira is skeptical about how far the alternative agriculture movement can really change Brazilian agriculture:

We will be challenging the notion, currently diffused, that ecological sustainability tends to revalidate “peasant” knowledge and practices, guaranteeing to the family forms of agriculture better competitive conditions and better conditions of life. We will be formulating the argument that the owner-worker (family agriculture) in contemporary intercapitalist competition has a restricted space for technical progress and for economic and cultural valuing. (181)

49 Escobar (219) notes that creative use of hybrids of traditional and modern technologies, techniques, organizational methods, and skills has helped “many ‘traditional cultures’ survive through their transformative engagement with modernity.” He also (96-97) provides an excellent description of the peasant model of human-land relationship that can serve as the basis for such hybrids.

50 Much of the literature generated originates in the South of Brazil, where there is a strong pattern of relatively successful small family farms. However, in the more difficult, semi-arid climate of the Northeast, groups related to PTA such as CAATINGA in Ouricuri - Pernambuco, PATAAC in Campina Grande - Paraiba, and MOC in Feira de Santana – Bahia, do outstanding work in helping small farmers survive and thrive, both through use of appropriate techniques and technologies and, perhaps even more important, use of appropriate organizational, management, and educational skills.

51 In other words, that there is little or no profit or land rent as such, and the return may not theoretically compensate the value of the family labor expended; however, the family produces its subsistence.
He argues (197) that market forces tend to push non-modernized family farms towards low returns. Even in the case of reduction of mechanical and chemical inputs due to ecological factors, "...the dynamics of operation of the (imperfect) markets do not guarantee that the benefits of these new practices will be allocated to the family farms."

In the case of non-modernized family agriculture, its permanence in the market is attributed to an economic irrationality on the part of the small [farmer], due to a supposed "peasant" culture, that does not expect profit or return on the land.

Moreira also indicates (190) that, with adequate capitalization for tools and infrastructure, this very willingness to work without profits or land rents can provide a competitive advantage to the family farm. But he see the emphasis on appropriate technologies and traditional knowledge and folkways as tending to discourage small farmers from focusing on the larger political and social critiques necessary to bring about more substantial change (e.g., 194-195).

Similarly Graziano da Silva (1999) argues that focusing on appropriate technologies is not enough. He agrees that, even where such technologies result in savings, these may not accrue in the long run to the farm families:

...a certain technique X or Y, appropriate (or not) to a certain social class... does not absolutely guarantee that the surplus retained by the members of that class be greater or lesser. It can... cause a greater surplus to be generated.... But as the distribution of this surplus within the capitalist system necessarily involves relations of exchange with other economic agents... what generally occurs is an increase in the degree of exploitation in measure as there in an increase in surplus generated. (58)
While acknowledging that technology affects human and economic relationships, he does not believe that it is the primary cause of those relationships and that there is no way to “think about technological policies in the abstract.” The use of alternative technologies as a “strategy of resistance” may have some short term success for individual farmers, but in the long run it will lead to the impoverishment of rural families.

The road of “technification” necessarily puts small producers into the intercapitalist competition, as much in the market for [their] products as that of inputs. Their capacity to survive comes to be determined by the intercapitalist competition in these markets. It is a “race” whose rhythm is produced by accumulation and, no matter how one runs, there are few who manage to at least survive as small producers. The majority, in a situation which is unfavorable from the start, go on falling relatively behind until they find themselves obliged to abandon the race, thus confirming the excluding nature of capitalist modernization in the countryside. (59)

The key, he believes, is “organization of the campones sectors in a manner that permits them greater bargaining power vis-a-vis large-scale capital and ...appropriation of at least part of the greater surplus which they come to produce.” (169-179)

De Janvry (1981, 263) believes that rural development programs “implemented within current agrarian structures can have only an extremely narrow clientele of upper peasants.” Even this depends on favorable trade terms, which he thinks are difficult to

52 Regarding technology, Graziano da Silva (167-169 ) notes that two general approaches are usually thought of: (a) developing adequate technologies for small farmers or (b) “adequatting” the condition of small farmers so that they are able to absorb available technologies. On an official level, Brazil has generally opted for the latter, by trying to provide subsidized rural credit to small farmers.
achieve “because unfavorable terms of trade are directly linked to the structure of disarticulated accumulation through cheap-food policies and the lack of effective demand: the one a prerequisite for cheap labor, and the other its immediate consequence.” Writing in 1981, he believed that the focus of development had shifted from rural to urban areas and that it is necessary for small farmers and rural workers to forge alliances with urban workers in order to work for changes in agriculture and elsewhere. (267-268)

Souza Santos and Rodriguez (47-51) emphasize that alternative development should have its collective beneficiaries as primary actors, being essentially a bottom-up, rather than top-down, movement. They outline six factors which they feel to represent basic currents of alternative development:

- associative forms of production
- ecological awareness and focus on sustainability
- inclusion of women
- financial resources for peripheral populations, e.g., micro-lending
- access of these populations to resources such as land and housing
- a focus on local action

On this last aspect, while respecting the need for local action, they believe that it is not sufficient and that meaningful action should be “ambitious in terms of scale” – able to act locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Solidarity generated in one community should reach out to other communities. They cite the Mondragón network of cooperatives in Spain as an example of such interconnection. (37-41, 53) Among their

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53 The Brazilian sociologist, José de Souza Martins (2000), criticizes MST leaders, most of whom are not small farmers, for claiming to speak for small farmers.
conclusions (64-67), two are particularly worth noting:

Alternatives of production are not only economic: their potential for emancipation and their prospective for success depend, in good part, on the integration they achieve among processes of economic transformation and cultural, social, and political processes.... The success of alternatives of production depends on their insertion in networks of collaboration and mutual support.

They also note that alternative forms of development must be judged according to gradualist and inclusive measures. “If the only criterion for evaluation of success of non-capitalist alternatives is the short term radical transformation of society... then none of the alternatives we have examined is worth the effort” (72).

Paul Singer (2002, 83-87) further elaborates the concept of solidarity economics. A solidarity undertaking “negates the separation between work and instruments of production” – i.e., is worker owned. He is strict in his interpretation, stating e.g. that a cooperative that employs non-members cannot be considered a solidarity undertaking. However he notes that, in practice, many entities (e.g., cooperatives) born in solidarity may evolve out of it, or may vacillate in the degree of real self-governance by workers, or may – by implication – be more or less authentically self-governing. He attributes these difficulties in part to the fact that such undertakings are inserted into the capitalist system, capitalism being not only the largest current mode of production, but its principles “molding the legal and institutional superstructure in accordance with its values and interests.” Nevertheless (86-87),

Even being hegemonic, capitalism does not prevent the development of other modes of production because it is incapable of inserting within itself all of the
economically active population. Solidarity economy grows in function of the social crises that the blind competition of private capital causes periodically in each country. But it only becomes viable and a real alternative to capitalism when the majority of society, who are not owners of capital, become conscience that it is in their interest to organize and produce in a manner in which the means of production belong to all those who use them to generate a social product.

With respect to Brazil, Singer discusses the efforts of the landless movement (MST) to implant collective land holding through agricultural production cooperatives (CPAs). He concludes that the CPAs “show themselves, as a form of organizing the economy of land reform settlements, superior to small property holdings,” with greater income, an average of 10% greater capitalization, and a better standard of living. Nonetheless, most CPAs failed “possibly because the majority of land reform settlers prefer small scale production... even when it results in a lesser standard of living and greater risk....” As of 1997, only 1.21% of land reform settlements were in the form of CPAs. (103-105, 115)

Interestingly, Singer seems to consider this decision on the part of the land reform settlers to be essentially irrational, the final implication of his chapter being that a younger, less culturally bound generation will find collective production more acceptable.

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54 This seems to contradict the theory that capitalism’s internal dynamic, causing it to seek to continuously expand, ultimately destroys all noncapitalistic modes of production (de Janvrey, 9-12). However, I believe that Singer is not so much questioning the overall expansionist dynamic of capitalism as stating that, in practice, the capitalist system leaves gaps (due, in part, to internal contradictions and to disarticulations with social and environmental reality) which can be filled by alternative modes. Moreira (193) makes much the same point.

55 These experiences on land reform settlements are illustrative but not representative. Moreira (157) correctly notes that “...family agriculture and rural land reform settlements presuppose distinct social processes. Whereas the first refers to social forms already constituted and, as such, already integrated and subject to the competitive logic of this integration, the notion of rural land reform settlements is associated with the social and political process of access to land and the constitution of new social forms of productive organization and social integration.”
It is ironic that we have here an echo of the skeptical Moreira’s statement that small farming is economically irrational, especially as alternative development – or alternatives to development – are supposed to consider non-economic values to be at least equal to economic ones in structuring society. In fact, family ownership as a non-economic value may be very rational indeed. One is reminded of G. K. Chesterton’s quip that “Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly” – i.e., that there are certain things one wants to do for oneself or one’s family, even if someone else could do them more efficiently – and of Samuel Popkin’s (1979, 267) insistence that small farmers do indeed make rational decisions:

Why do good fences make good neighbors? One answer is that building a good fence requires collective effort, and sharing the effort with neighbors helps to develop workable patterns of interaction which lead to sustained interaction and collective benefits. Good fences also make good neighbors because they establish precise boundaries, and thus ease the difficulties of accounting between peasants and help settle the conflicts which need to be resolved for cooperative patterns to develop between peasant households.

It is my experience in working with the landless that owning their own parcel of land is a fundamental value and goal for the vast majority of them. The studies Singer cites, and others (e.g., de Janvry 267), verify this. In practical terms, therefore, any economic plan for small farmers in Brazil needs to respect the basic underlying premise of family-owned and operated farms.

Based on this premise, three elements seem to me to be essential:
1) Psychological reinforcement of small farmers as a class. “I don’t know anything” is a comment one frequently hears from subsistence farmers when one starts working with them. Such farmers as a class have tended to be looked down upon by Brazilian society, which sees them as archaic, marginal, uneducated. Only those who can’t do anything else would be subsistence farmers. Carneiro notes that it is not the modernization of agricultural, per se, that is largely responsible for young people leaving farming, but the confrontation with modern values generally, in which small farming is not seen as an option that can help them reach their goals. In order to survive as a class, small farmers need a sense of their importance, their role in society – of being essential (as they in fact are) rather than marginal, of possibilities of success.

2) Appropriate education. The best strategy for small farmers in Brazil is the growing recognition that small farms are, at least in some areas, more efficient than large ones – even in a strictly economic and agricultural sense (e.g., Barros, et al., 2000; Tubaldini 1998; Netting 1993). When environmental and social costs are taken into account (and Brazilians in general are increasingly aware of both), the degree of this efficiency increases even further – e.g., small family farms tend to better nurture the land and provide more jobs.\(^{56}\) While I am a great advocate of appropriate technologies, they really make sense only in terms of what Brazilians might call appropriate “capacitation” – a term that implies something more holistic and integral

\(^{56}\) “My contention is that smallholder intensive systems achieve high production, combine subsistence and market benefits, transform energy efficiently, and encourage practices of stewardship and conservation of resources.” (Netting 1993, 320)
than mere training, an education—whether for youth or adults—that helps the learner to more fully realize his or her potential in his or her undertakings. If small farms are in fact to be more productive and sustainable than large ones, small farmers have to have access to information, skills, techniques, technologies, etc. (i.e. know-how).

3) **Organization.** Almost all commentators mention the need for organization, both on a production-marketing level (e.g., associations, cooperatives) and on a socio-political level. The former is very difficult; anyone who has seriously worked in community organization in Brazil knows that it takes at least three years of solid effort for a community to reach a level at which serious association work is possible, and that such work is fraught with problems. Political organizing—at least on the level of marches and protests—is easier, the problem arising of creating and maintaining viable long-lasting political groups that can work within and, when the opportunity presents itself, administer government positions.  

Important here is the building of a consensus that questions the ultimate efficacy of the currently dominant schools of economics and recognizes the importance of social, cultural, and environmental values that are being distorted by policies arising out of the current economic mindset. Brazilians are already far closer to questioning these values than are, on the average, Americans—so the building of such a justification, based in part on a realistic analysis of the strengths of family agriculture—is not a mere pipe dream. There is, among other things, a growing recognition that legal structures need to, and in

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57 When working with land issues in Tocantins (1985-92), we found that leaders—once they showed their potential—were often co-opted by the landowning class through offers of political jobs, favors, etc.
fact do, allow for the protection of values (e.g., the social value of property) not
necessarily advocated by the modern economic schools, and that they can and should be
used to protect those values (Sodré de Carvalho 2003).

It is also important to avoid certain fetishes. While it is positive to recognize the right
of people to express their needs and desires, and while landless workers and small
farmers are intelligent and rational beings, pure bottom-up development very rarely
occurs. It is almost never the “poorest of the poor” who organize for change, but those
poor who have something to gain or lose. And they almost always require a catalyst –
often in the form of a church or movement organizer – who has had an opportunity for
training and study. Furthermore, one of the reasons the poor are poor is that they lack
certain forms of know-how needed to effectively operate in the world. Manipulation of
the poor by movement leaders interested in their own ends must be avoided. But
development needs to be seen as a synergy among the poor, middle-class workers and
trainers, intellectuals, development agencies, and others acting in good faith.

The type of rigidity reflected in Singer’s definition of solidarity should also be
avoided. In every community I have ever known, there are some people more interested
in issues, more willing to assume responsibility, than others. Not everyone wants to be a
small farmer, some would rather sign on as hired hands. Not everyone wants to be an
active participatory member of the cooperative, some would just as soon be hired to do
their job and go home at closing time. At least in Brazilian culture, these options need to
be recognized and taken into account when considering forms of alternative development.

Any realistic scheme for small scale farming must also deal with markets. “The
essence of the difference between small and large farmers is in the market opportunities
they confront.” (Griffin 142)

“Small farmers often find it more difficult to market their output. Because the marketable surplus is low, they are more likely to have to use middlemen to transport, process and sell their produce. Their costs of marketing therefore tend to be higher and the prices they receive at the farm gate lower. Of course where they are able to sell their produce directly to the final consumer, small farmers may receive a higher price than the larger farmers.” (ibid.)

Direct marketing – e.g., through farmers’ markets – is thus a very viable option where possible. Cooperative transport, processing, marketing, and even exporting can be undertaken.\textsuperscript{58} Organization of producers to negotiate and/or compete with processing and marketing oligopolies is also vital.

Finally, it must also be noted that rural development is not limited to agricultural activities. The growth of non-agricultural rural employment is a factor of tremendous importance, to the extent that it has been stated that “... increase in opportunities for income generation in rural areas [is] the central challenge of any poverty reduction project” (Vieira 2000, 106). Demand for such non-agricultural rural labor – and for government incentives to increase such opportunities – has increased. While it is evident that non-agrarian activities will not, in and of themselves, resolve the problems of rural development, they are a factor that needs to be contemplated in rural development programs as both a potential supplement to agricultural family incomes and as a way of decreasing migration, especially among the young. (Forum do Nordeste 1993; Bacelar de Araújo 2000, 303; Graziano da Silva 1999; Carneiro 1999, 113-114; Jank 2000, 124)

\textsuperscript{58} MOC in Bahia has done this successfully for small-scale sisal producers. GARD in Recife actively promoted family and community based cashew nut processing.
Applying Development Theory

A statement quoted earlier in this chapter warrants repeating: "... there are only two options for market economy countries: agrarian reform or the strategy of 'conservative modernization.' Brazil chose the latter." (Alberto Passos Guimarães, quoted in Ramos 1999, 189; see Escobar, 114)

Failure to have carried out an agrarian reform is undoubtedly one of the root causes of the economic disparity and poverty in Brazil today.

... where the evidence exists, the persistence of poverty does indeed correlate with the unsatisfied land-hunger of the rural population. In Brazil... rural poverty is seen as the end-product of the inability to ensure sufficient access to land in order to make possible an adequate livelihood. (Sobhan 1993, 104)

Indeed, as mentioned above, due to the close interaction of rural and urban economies and the anticipated displacement of workers from the countryside into the cities, the failure to carry out agrarian reform not only is a cause of rural poverty but of urban poverty as well, creating barriers to development in both sectors (Sobhan 1993). Tania Bacelar de Araújo (286 et seq.) places land concentration as the first of five major factors causing poverty in Brazil.59

Griffin (1999, 16) notes that income inequalities are increasing in developing countries, and that they especially do so in situations of significant economic growth. He believes that highly concentrated land holdings are an important factor.

The balance of recent evidence suggests that the degree of inequality is not closely related to the level of income per head, as we once thought, but to factors

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59 The others are the strong oligopolies in the urban economy, the government's economic orientation and policies, the precarious level of education, and the tax system.
dependent on the strategy of development that is followed. These factors include the distribution of productive assets (particularly land). It is possible to prevent large income disparities emerging... by adopting a development strategy that places high priority on an equal distribution of agricultural land, universal access to primary and secondary education, labour-intensive methods of production and a pattern of international trade that reflects the relative availability of resources.

De Janvrey (1981, 7) believed that the agrarian question “is but a symptom of the nature of the class structure in the periphery and of the particular process of capital accumulation it undergoes.” Rural development programs, if involving adequate technology and remunerative market practices, can help the upper elite of small (“peasant”) farmers. However, “For the majority of semiproletarianized peasants, rural development could be effective only after implementation of massive redistributive land reforms.” In 1981 he wrote a statement that could be a summary of the MST’s position today: “...redistributive land reforms and rural development programs conducted by (and not for) peasants can be useful departing points in a struggle for democracy and articulation.”

However, a large scale agrarian reform in Brazil is hardly conceivable without government action. José de Souza Martins (2000, 22) has stated – I believe correctly in the current context – that those who would negate state administration of agrarian reform are essentially negating the possibility of that reform occurring.

Such a large scale land reform is not likely to happen in Brazil in the near future.

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60 Escobar (130) explicitly goes beyond what he feels to be de Janvry’s overly functionalist view.
While the Lula administration has taken significant steps to help small farmers and is strongly committed to land reform, it is caught in the network of political, legal and economic forces which have inhibited land reform by prior governments. The announced goal of the government for 2004, for instance, was to locate 60,000 families on the land - little more than 1% of those who need land, and the budget for 2004 would permit the settling of only about 27,000 families. Like prior administrations, Lula’s administration is finding itself pushed toward colonization of the Amazon as an answer: the government has made available federal and state company lands for land reform settlements, but most of the lands are located in the North (i.e., the Amazon), whereas the landless are seeking land in the South, Southeast and Northeast (Taves 2003).

At the rate land reform is currently being carried out, social and economic pressures pushing toward reconcentration of land holdings may well cause there to be little or no net change in the overall structure of landholding (Martins, 23).

De Janvry (3) noted that, when the complexity and limits of rural development strategies become apparent, governments and development agencies tend to turn toward basic needs approaches to development, assuring basic food, clothing, and shelter. It could be argued that the Lula government’s Zero Fome program - a commitment to end hunger in Brazil - is just that: something of a retreat from the complexities of issue such as land reform to an issue which is less controversial. On the other hand, Zero Fome can be seen as a potentially brilliant strategy which unites and motivates Brazilians behind an

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61 “No planner begins with a tabula rosa.... Policymakers are surrounded by constraints.” (Griffin, 25)

62 The goal for the 2004-2007 pluriannual plan was settlement of 148,000 families on the land; these are the families already in landless “camps” (acampamentos). It is contemplated that 0.6% of available funds will be spent on “agrarian reorganization” - those funds come from the projected government budget (73.6%), the official banks (10.5%), state companies (8.5%), development funds (4.2%), contributions from private enterprise (2.1%), and other sources. (Breve 2003)
issue on which virtually all agree (that hunger should be eliminated), leveraging past work that was done through the Citizen’s Anti-Hunger movement founded by the late, almost legendary, Betinho.\textsuperscript{63} The \emph{basic needs} can be extended to health care and education, and beyond to work and production.

Implicit within [the \emph{basic needs} approach] is greater economic and political power in the hands of the poor. This, it is thought, often requires a redistribution of the ownership of productive assets, and in particular land reform. (Griffin 1999, 30)

The \emph{basic needs} approach allows the achievement of “a widely agreed upon, high-priority objective in a shorter period, and with fewer resources...” (Paul Streeten, quoted in de Janvry, 256) and, as such, may be exactly what Lula needed to establish credibility in the social field as a basis for further action.\textsuperscript{64}

In any case, large scale land reform in Brazil will depend on the development of a national consensus in favor of such a change.\textsuperscript{65} Thus the importance of the “new consciousness” which, as noted above, so many of the students of this area of discussed (e.g., Graziano da Silva; Souza Santos; Vieira).

\textsuperscript{63} Betinho – Herberto de Souza, a sociologist, with impeccable leftist credentials, who was dying of AIDs contracted in a blood transfusion (he was a hemophiliac), was a widely-loved, charismatic leader who did much to heal wounds between conservatives and leftists. Together with the Catholic Bishop, Dom Mauro Morelli, he was a leader of the movement to impeach President Collar (1993); following the impeachment, rather than disband the movement, they decided to focus the movement on ending hunger, encouraging the formation of thousands of local end-hunger groups and, with the support of Lula and of Itamar Franco’s government, the founding of a national food security council. One of Betinho’s great contributions to Brazil was his insistence that there is no conflict between helping the poor (formerly viewed as a conservative response) and helping the poor fight for their rights (formerly viewed as a leftist response); he noted that hungry people are seldom able to successfully fight for their rights.

\textsuperscript{64} The importance of this approach in practice is noted in our case studies with reference to the \emph{bolsa escola/bolsa familia}. Martins (91-92) criticizes those who point out that distributing basic essentials to the poor would be less expensive than carrying out land reform. He notes that this ignores both the dignity of the poor (who would be turned into a beggar class by such a program) and the need for true social transformation.

\textsuperscript{65} At the 45\textsuperscript{th} Assembly of the CNBB in 2007, Bishop Mauro Montognoli of Ilheus, in an official statement, noted that “The political will is lacking to carry out [agrarian] reform......” (Canção Nova Notícias 2007)
Escobar (1995, 56) deals with this aspect of development most fully. He notes (5) that discourse about development essentially builds the world in which development takes place: "... a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible." 66

Development relies on setting up the world as a picture, so that the whole can be grasped in some orderly fashion as forming a structure or system.... The need to compose the world as a picture is central to all theories of economic development.

Thus it is essential to build new terms of discourse – "...changing the order of discourse is a political question that entails the collective practice of social actors and the restructuring of existing political economies of truth." This can be a slow process, or it can happen rapidly. Changing the underlying structures is, of course, more difficult. "The process of unmaking development... is slow and painful, and there are no easy solutions or prescriptions." (Escobar, 216-217)

According to Escobar (216), the first step in effecting this transformation "is the breakdown of the basic organization of the discourse...." The title of José de Souza Martins’ book (2000) might, therefore, be taken as a sign of hope: "Agrarian Reform: The Impossible Dialogue."

Martins’ thesis is that communications between the various social movements, the government, and other players with respect to agrarian reform has broken down largely

66 "...discourse results in concrete practices of thinking and acting through which the Third World is produced." (11) “Social power of this kind has an insidious way of encroaching upon the most recondite corners of social life, even in conspicuous ways. This is no less true in those arenas in which life itself is at stake, such as in the arena of food and hunger.... I will examine... how today’s practices in nutrition, rural development, and health care came into existence not as a result of improved consciousness, scientific progress, or technological refinements, but rather as effects of power brought about by the problemization of hunger in the context of the pervasive economization of subsistence.” (101)
because these groups have (to borrow Escobar’s terminology) different ‘pictures’ of what agrarian reform is or should be. He sympathetically critiques the Catholic Church’s view of agrarian reform (noting that the Church’s primary interest is a pastoral one) because the Church has not fully realized that its picture of agrarian reform is based on what he calls a “simple mercantile” economic system (others, he notes, call this ‘subsistence’ agriculture, but this he thinks a misnomer):

This is a terminal economy that survives in some societies, and also in ours, in a residual manner only because it has become irrelevant to modern and global economy.... Although it is fundamental for the survival of hundreds of thousands of persons who at this time have no alternatives for survival.... It is a contradictory survival whose drama and whose relevance a parish or grass-roots pastoral religious worker can understand, but a government economist generally cannot, at least without great effort and fatigue.67 (32)

Noting that the Church rightly sees a link between this type of agriculture and community/family structures which are supportive of human dignity, Martins acknowledges that these structures – and the concern with reaching out to those excluded by the modern process – are significant values. However he critiques the Church – and even more so the MST – for at times developing this moral question into a degree of Manichaeism through which modern agriculture is viewed as evil, leading toward an attitude of negation to all that is modern.68 He believes that the appropriate response is

67 Although Martins was writing during the Cardoso administration, relations regarding agrarian reform between the Lula administration and the MST and certain wings of the Church are not necessarily better (e.g., Pereira 2003; Marques 2003)

68 During the nine years I spent working for the Church in land reform and rural rights, I myself at times experienced this negative reaction to modernity; although it needs to be transcended, it arises out of a
an attitude that seeks transformation "...that would insert the poor into the new economic order and, at the same time, preserve for them the dignity and way of life, gradually adding to and fortifying it, getting them out of poverty and cultural deprivation." (32-35)

Martins is a brilliant writer and an insightful, balanced thinker. His comments – as they were intended to – have provoked controversy. In places he overstates his case. Yet most observers would agree with the essence of what he says: that a new consciousness must be a process of transformation and not simply a retreat into old patterns.

The greatest importance of the movement for a sustainable agriculture is not in its ‘production for production’ but in its ‘production for a new conception’ of economic development. The principle contribution of this movement is... in the creation of a new social conscience with respect to relations between humans and nature, in the production of new philosophical, moral, and even religious values, and in the nurturing of new legal concepts, in short, in the production of new political and ideological forms.... (Graziano da Silva, 65)

Souza Santos and Rodriguez note that the movement toward alternatives to development has already made significant contributions in working toward a new discourse, having managed to impact World Bank and even IMF policy.

A new consensus cannot be woven out of thin air. Thus the importance, mentioned above, of developing and diffusing serious data which shows that small farms are viable and – in certain respects – superior. The possibilities for making society aware of the advantages of small agriculture are very real. Thus Tania Bacelar de Araújo, a highly respected economist from the Northeast, states:

history of experience of that which Griffin noted: that modernization and technological advances in a highly unequal society tend to further marginalize the poor. The Church is therefore suspicious of modernity with some reason.
Some day Brazilian society will understand that, even the questionable (financial) allocative efficiency of business agriculture cannot compensate for its absurd distributive inefficiency. Brazilians will perceive that, in all developed countries, rural economy and family agriculture had and continue to have a socio-economic and political importance that is greater than business agriculture that is based on salaried workers. (303)

Similarly, Netting (1993, 323) thinks the evidence indicates a probable increase in small-scale farming because:

(1) Historically... the denser the population becomes, the smaller and more numerous the farms become. (2) Financially, the economics of scale... do not really apply to any sustainable kind of food production – when you count all the costs, it is cheaper to raise a zucchini in your garden than on your megafarm. (3) Socially, people are beginning to understand that they really are what they eat, and we are demanding quality foods that megafarms can’t supply.

Netting’s comments on farms and population have an empirical basis. Large farms tend to have a higher output per worker and are, thus, labor saving. Small farms, however, as noted above, tend to have a higher output and a higher profit per acre.

The agronomic reasons for this are by now pretty clear. First, small farmers use more labour-intensive methods of cultivation for any given crop. They devote more time and are more careful in land preparation, weeding and harvesting.... Small farmers cultivate a higher proportion of their land.... The cropping ration tends to be higher on small farms. That is, because of greater use of multiple cropping techniques, small farmers obtain more harvests per year than
large farmers. (Griffin, 141)

At an earlier period in Brazilian history, these factors were seen by some as militating against small farms – Brazil, it was argued, has an abundance of land and therefore cannot be expected (as is the case with, e.g., Holland) to be concerned with production per acre. But such an argument is no longer convincing, especially in light of the growing realization of the social and environmental elements of the issue.

Development and Land Reform - Conclusion

When I first came to Brazil in 1969 as a Peace Corps Volunteer, an older ex-pat told me that, if I were thinking of ever writing a book on Brazil, I should do so during the first six months I was here. After the first six months, he said, I would realize that Brazil is far too complex to ever put adequately into words.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the six-month book was never written. Forty years later, I find myself struggling with trying to capture at least a small portion of the dynamic of the country. Part of the ‘picture’ (Escobar’s picture) for me, however, is undoubtedly based on my first experiences as a community organizer among small-scale farmers in Espirito Santo (no doubt building upon Jeffersonian values I brought with me) – I was deeply impressed by their dignity, self-sufficiency, and sense of community. Yet I have known Brazilians of good faith who have another picture of rural Brazil – of sweeping fields of soy or rice and large harvesters saving the back-breaking work of hand-harvesting (I have harvested rice with a scythe, and it is very hard labor).

Within the complexity of Brazil, it is important – as Escobar (98) puts it – “to
make explicit the existence of a plurality of models of the economy.” But, he notes, this in itself is not enough.

What needs to be studied... is the mechanisms by which local cultural knowledge and economic resources are appropriated by larger forces (mechanisms such as unequal exchange and surplus extraction between center and periphery, country and city, classes, genders, and ethnic groups) and, conversely, the ways in which local innovations and gains can be preserved as part of local economic and cultural powers.

This is a process that is currently ongoing in Brazil – seeking to make possible the “impossible dialogue” – in a manner that will give voice and opportunity to the rural population, especially the rural poor. There is urgency here – yet there is also a rhythm to rural life in Brazil, an “historic” patience that has outlasted predictions of the demise of the small farm and, I suspect, will continue to do so for a long time. The dialogue on development is an important one but, while it is ongoing, millions of small farmers and thousands of union leaders, pastoral workers, extension workers, and community organizers keep making the decisions which result in the hybrids and transformations needed for small farms to survive and thrive.

Note On The Economic Paradigm

Redistributive Paradigm – Background

Griffin (1999) describes six basic economic paradigms: monetarism, open economy, industrialization, green revolution, redistributive strategies, and socialist
In this section we examine the pros and cons of land reform within the most applicable of these, the redistributive paradigm. We will then critique that analysis from the point of view of discourse analysis, especially as developed by Escobar (1999).

In the 1950s, development was largely associated with growth. It was assumed that economic growth would benefit the population at large. However, in the wake of the dramatic growth made possible through the green revolution, it was discovered that such growth tended to widen the gap between the wealthy and the poor. Furthermore, there was evidence that, at least with respect to large sectors of the poor, growth negatively affected their welfare in real terms. (Griffin 164-6)

Typically, during the 1960s, the poorest 20-40 percent of the rural population was found to be worse off than previously. And the decline in real income was found to be concentrated on particular classes or occupational groups, namely landless farm workers, small peasant cultivators who supplemented farm income by off-farm employment and plantation workers. (Griffin 166)

The development community therefore began to focus on the effects of growth and on the distribution of benefits. One of the positive results of this focus was recognition of the “heterogeneity of poverty” – i.e., that not all the poor are alike. It was noted that much poverty is rural,\(^ {70}\) that there can be an “urban bias” in development,\(^ {71}\) and that certain groups, regions, family profiles, etc., tend to be negatively impacted by growth.

\(^{69}\) Brazil has experimented with four of these – monetarist, open economy, industrialization, and green revolution. It has not seriously attempted either redistributive or socialist strategies.

\(^{70}\) “Poverty in Brazil has a strong regional and rural dimension. About 48 percent of the Brazilian poor (16.5 million people) live in rural areas, and the incidence of rural poverty is more than double that for large cities and other urban areas.” (World Bank 2000, 3)

\(^{71}\) Urban bias has been a definite factor in Brazil (e.g., Graziano da Silva 1999, 123).
The challenge thus became to design poverty alleviation policies in which the proposed action would rationally connect with the target populations. (Griffin 166-7)

Within the rural sector attention tended to focus on land tenure arrangements, the role of co-operative institutions and the organisation of large scale, labour-intensive public works projects. Once these topics began to be probed, however, it became impossible to stop because the analysis inexorably raised questions about the equity of existing arrangements, the degree of inequality in the distribution of income and the extent of concentration in ownership of productive assets. (Griffin 168)

In the 1970s, the World Bank Development Research Centre analyzed several models of development, including two redistribution strategies: redistributing 2% p.a. of total income for 25 years (a) directly to the poor (consumption redistribution) or (b) into investment projects to benefit the poor (income redistribution). The models concluded that consumption redistribution would, in the long run, actually significantly decrease the per capita consumption of the poor, whereas income redistribution had “considerable potential for raising income in low-income groups... [and] can achieve substantial improvements in patterns of asset concentration over time.”

Griffin points out, however, the high political cost of the income redistribution model, which required long-term action during which the per capita consumption of middle and upper income groups would decrease significantly. Furthermore, he notes that, as much of the planned investment would be in terms of public investment (roads,  

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Significantly, a third redistribution strategy, asset redistribution, which the Bank planned to analyze in the 1970s, “was quietly forgotten.” (Griffin, 168)
irrigation, drainage), the redistributive effect might not be as planned:

In practice... the non-poor often gain disproportionately from public investments because the distribution of benefits reflects not the distribution of population but the distribution of ownership and control over economic resources. (Griffin, 170).

Furthermore, market forces work so that “Following intervention... distribution of income tends to return to the pre-intervention distribution.” (Griffin, 171, quoting Irma Adelman).

These evident fragilities in the income distribution approach led the development community to seek more effective strategies. In the mid-1970s, the ILO, based on earlier work by the Indian Planning Commission, pioneered a redistribution strategy known as the “basic needs” approach.73

Basic needs is not really about things at all.... It is about giving priority in development to the needs and desires of poor people. This is reflected in three features of the approach which effectively convert it into a strategy: a preoccupation with ensuring that essential public services are available to the

73 de Janvry (1981, 258): “The basic-needs approach... has absolutely no theoretical foundation; nor does it really need one, being, as it is, nothing more than institutionalized charity....” Yet, later (262) he admits that it can be seen according to one of two “diametrically contrasted interpretations,” either “…constraints on growth imposed fundamentally for purposes of political legitimization – itself legitimized as humanitarian concern – and hence to reproduce class positions, or they can be seen as [having] the objectives of social and structural changes aimed at reconciling growth and distribution.” In other words, the basic needs approach can be essentially charity aimed at easing and legitimizing the existing structure, or structural change aimed at changing it. This distinction is important now in Brazil, as Lula’s “Zero Hunger” program follows a basic-needs approach; there seem to be elements of both the charitable (humanitarian) and structural (including proposed land reform and basic education), although the latter is less stressed publically (perhaps for political reasons). Under the important unifying work undertaken by Herbetto de Souza (Betinho) and the anti-hunger campaign in the early 1990s, Brazil (including the left) rejected the dichotomy between charity (assistancealism) and structural change, recognizing that hunger and other basic needs must be dealt with through a combination of immediate relief and medium-term structural change. Betinho’s argument is, inter alia, that hungry, destitute people are not able to fight for their rights as citizens.
poor, an emphasis on the participation of the poor in the development process and recognition of the centrality of a major redistribution of income and wealth in favour of low-income groups.” (Griffin, 172)

There is, however, a chicken-and-egg problem here. The necessary elements of the basic needs approach are most difficult to achieve in countries where there is great disparity of power and wealth. Participation of the poor in public policy making, for instance, is difficult in rural communities dominated by wealthy landowners.

Redistribution of assets thus becomes important. And, particularly because so much poverty in third world countries is generated by rural poverty, land is key.

The unequal distribution of productive assets is a major cause of widespread poverty and it is for this reason that strategies that give priority to the satisfaction of basic needs tend to emphasize land reform and other measures to improve the distribution of income and wealth. It is possible to imagine alternative ways of reducing mass poverty and satisfying basic needs within a reasonable period of time, but historical record indicates that the countries which have been successful in this respect have in common an equitable distribution of productive assets, especially land. (Griffin, 177)

Griffin believes that an incremental approach to redistribution (such as the World Bank’s income redistribution approach), based on redistribution of the increments of growth, will not produce substantial development. Redistribution of assets, and especially of land, is required. It is best that this happen at the beginning of the economic growth cycle, as growth without redistribution tends to increase disparity and worsen the position of the poor. Adelman summarized the ideal here as “redistribution before
growth." (Griffin, 171, 179; see de Janvry 1981, 257)

Taiwan and South Korea are cited as countries in which redistribution occurred prior to growth. In both, land was largely owned by the Japanese prior to World War II. Upon removal of the Japanese, land was redistributed in a relatively egalitarian, small peasant system. Subsequent growth promoted equality, so that the Taiwan household income Gini coefficient fell from 0.558 in 1953 to 0.289 in 1976. (Griffin 179-81).

Griffin’s analysis is supported Rehman Sobhan’s (1993) study of the impact of agrarian reform in 27 countries. Sobhan distinguishes among (a) radical land reform, usually resulting from revolution (e.g., China, Cuba, Vietnam) or war (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea), (b) non-egalitarian land reform effecting social transition (e.g., Mexico, Bolivia, Peru), and (c) non-egalitarian land reform without social transition (e.g., Honduras, Panama, India, the Philippines). Brazil, quite correctly, is not on his list.

Non-egalitarian land reform effecting social transition may have a significant impact on the country yet not really provide balanced rural development.

The insufficiency of this redistribution has permitted differentiations within agriculture to persist.... In the case of Mexico, Bolivia and Peru, despite the degree of social upheaval, the end-product of their agrarian reforms appears to be a class of impoverished minifundist farmers and another of landless agricultural workers providing cheap labour on capitalist holdings which have become

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74 De Janvry (1981, 207-8, 263) refers to all land reforms that expropriate some land as redistributive, and radical land reforms as “massive.” His conclusions with respect to the capacity of land reform effecting broad-based change are similar to Sobhan’s – only massive land reform would achieve this.
dominant throughout Latin America outside Cuba. (Sobhan, 41)\(^75\)

The only countries where the rural economies have diffused technology, maximized use of the rural labour force, provided virtually universal access to the usufruct of the land, achieved sustained and equitable growth and provided an expanding market for rural and modern industry are those which have effected radical agrarian reforms. (Sobhan, 115)\(^76\)

But such radical agrarian reform can generally occur only where imposed by the government (de Janvry, 257; Schematic 2000, 4). It “can succeed only where the power of the existing rural-based elite is either transferred or eliminated.” (Schematic, 4)

**Pros and Cons of Brazilian Land Reform within the Redistributive Paradigm**

By the redistributive criteria set forth by Griffin and Sobhan, it would hardly seem worthwhile to undertake agrarian reform in Brazil. A radical agrarian reform or general displacement of the landowning class is not going to occur. With the possible exception of the most radical wing of the landless movement,\(^77\) almost all proposals for Brazilian

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\(^75\) It is important to make at least a passing mention here to de Janvry’s insightful analysis of the problems of “social disarticulation” (final goods go to exports and luxury goods for the elites, and market expansion is therefore divorced from real wage increases) and “functional dualism” (the goal of cheap food requires cheap agricultural labor, made possible through an abundance of minifundistas and landless agricultural laborers who can be hired on an as need basis; such labor is cheaper than slave or serf labor, but requires state action to keep labor from organizing. However, such a labor system keeps the rural poor from entering the consumer class and therefore decreases potential markets).

\(^76\) De Javry (263) agrees: “For the majority of semiproletarianized peasants, rural development could be effective only after implementation of massive redistributive land reforms.”

\(^77\) José de Souza Martins (2000 [1], 25) notes that some of “Those who fight for the rural workers want an agrarian reform that is confiscatory and punitive for the latifundio,” a position he thinks is pointless and ahistorical. He notes the danger of thinking of the land struggle as “a holy war,” the “manicheism” of
agrarian reform are based on the redistribution of unproductive or saleable land, and few propose widespread expropriation of productive large landholdings, much less complete elimination of the rural elites. “The era of radical agrarian reforms... is over.” (Kay 1998, 28; see de Janvry, 222)

Are there, then, reasons within the redistributive paradigm for carrying out non-radical land reform in Brazil?

Sobhan would probably, reluctantly, say that there are not. He recognizes the enormous need for land reform in Brazil (127). He also notes that, as in Latin America generally, large landownership has become intertwined with urban commercial and political power interests, and that “Agrarian reform would thus demand a social revolution hitting not just at the balance of power in the countryside but also at the prevailing configurations of state power.” The only attenuating factor is that, due to the presence of huge landholdings and relative abundance of land, even a radical reform could allow for farms of up to 500 hectares, permitting capitalist agriculture to continue.78 “Latin America ... thus emerges as perhaps the only region where agrarian reform is still feasible within the prevailing relations of production.” (128)

However, he notes that the “political mobilization to realize radical reforms... seeing it as a struggle between good and bad ([1], 25), and the mistake of not seeing the inevitability of government management of agrarian reform (2000 [2], 22).

78 Kay (1998, 27-8) believes that non-radical land reforms in Latin America, by “hastening the demise of the landed oligarchy and clearing away the institutional debris which prevented the development of markets and the full commercialization of agriculture,” have most benefited commercial farmers. Escobar (1995, 126) notes that Columbian land reform in the 1960s “had the primary objective of compelling landowners with large plots to adopt more efficient forms of cultivation.” Similarly de Janvy (202): “All twentieth-century land reforms in Latin America except the Cuban and possibly the Nicaraguan ones have had the ultimate purpose of fomenting the development of capitalism in agriculture.” There is also a long-standing argument that agrarian reform, by weakening the power of the large landholders, benefits the urban financial sectors in the “intercapitalist” struggle with urban financial and industrial elites (e.g., Moreira 1999, 162-3)
remains elusive.” Rural workers are now a minority in Brazil. The social dynamics for mobilizing to carry out radical reforms are probably not present. (133-34)

Development programmes may continue, with perhaps more effectiveness to reach out to the poor than hitherto demonstrated. Where surplus land exists, as in parts of Latin America… these may be incorporated in land distribution as distinct from agrarian reform, though limits to this will obviously be set…..

This study remains at its conclusion firmly committed to its central premise, that if the goal is to eliminate rural poverty and accelerate all-around economic developments, there is no alternative to a radical agrarian reform which redistributes land widely enough to incorporate the bulk of the landless and land-poor… and which thereby totally eliminates the current as well as any potential new dominant class in the countryside.” (138)

Griffin believes that “Redistributive strategies… represent a genuine alternative to growth-oriented strategies in countries which attach priority to reducing quickly the most acute forms of poverty and to creating an egalitarian society.” Redistribution of productive assets, “particularly land,” is only part of a five point approach that includes (ii) creating institutions that allow local people and active role in planning and managing social and economic programs, (iii) investment in education, nutrition, health, social services, and infrastructure, (iv) opting for employment intensive development, and (v) “sustained rapid growth of aggregate income per head.”79 (188-89)

79 See also Kay (20): “While agrarian reform may be a precondition for sustainable development, it is not a sufficient condition.”
But, even with rapid growth, Griffin believes that redistribution has to take something from the more affluent classes: “a strategy which places the entire burden of redistribution on the margin is likely to fail.” (179) He notes that the political pre-conditions necessary for taking such measures cannot be ignored (188); in Brazil they would be enormous.

Thus, as Sobhan stated, absent radical agrarian reform, there may be other reasons for land reform, but these do not fall within the strict redistributive paradigm. However, a possible exception to this statement will be discussed in the conclusion below.

**Escobar’s Discourse Analysis**

In *Encountering Development* (1995), Arturo Escobar critiques development theory, a dream, as he puts it, that “progressively turned into a nightmare” (4). Essentially, his position is that the ‘first world’ (and, to some extent, ‘second world’) invented the very concepts of the ‘third world’ and ‘development.’ Speaking of the period of the 1950s – 70s, he notes:

Even those who opposed the prevailing capitalist strategies were obliged to couch their critique in terms of the need for development…. In short, one could criticize a given approach and propose modifications or improvements accordingly, but the fact of development itself, and the need for it, could not be doubted. Development had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary. (5)

Building on concepts developed by Michel Forcault, Escobar focuses “on the dynamics of discourse and power in the representation of social reality… [and] unveiling the
mechanisms by which a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible.”

Thinking of development in terms of discourse makes it possible to maintain the focus on domination... and at the same time to explore more fruitfully the conditions of possibility and the most pervasive effects of development. Discourse analysis… gives us the possibility of singling out ‘development’ as an encompassing cultural space and at the same time of separating ourselves from it by perceiving it in a totally new form....

To see development as a historically produced discourse entails an examination of why so many countries started to see themselves as underdeveloped in the early post World War II period, how ‘to develop’ became a fundamental problem for them, and how, finally, they embarked on the task of ‘un-underdeveloping’ themselves by subjecting their societies to increasingly systematic, detailed, and comprehensive interventions. As Western experts and politicians started to see certain conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a problem – mostly what was perceived as poverty and backwardness – a new domain of thought and experience, namely, development, came into being, resulting in a new strategy for dealing with the alleged problems.(5-6)

Discourse – the way we envision and talk about things – not only builds a model of reality but, in turn, helps to create that reality (130). Like its predecessor, colonial discourse, development discourse “created an extremely efficient apparatus for producing
knowledge about, and the exercise of power over, the Third World.”\(^{80}\) “The fact that most people’s conditions not only did not improve but deteriorated over time did not seem to bother most experts.” (5, 9)

Citing a number of statements and actions by the World Bank and others, Escobar (162) shows how First World standards and values are presupposed in development theory and programs. He notes that talk of “Extending the benefits of development’ to rural areas overlooked the fact that a majority of the people in the modern sector – the poor urban classes – did not enjoy the fruits of development.” Development experts “would not entertain the idea that too much interaction with the modern sector was the source of peasants’ problems.”

The rural development discourse repeats the same relations that has [sic] defined development discourse since its emergence: the fact that development is about growth, about capital, about technology, about becoming modern. Nothing else.

More recently, Escobar (2004, 15-16) briefly sketched how the development ‘dream’ became a nightmare:

The development project was an invention of modernity. What was called modernization was precisely the process to bring about modernity – the ensemble of values, institutions, economic systems and social relations that originated in Europe in the seventeenth century... to... the ‘Third World.’ Development was the name given to the strategy of modernization. This... was commonly

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\(^{80}\) Of course, colonial and first world powers are not the only ones who may be guilty of intentional or unintentional manipulation of discourse. José de Souza Martins (2000 [1]), a highly respected Brazilian sociologist, believes that middle class leaders and pastoral agents in the MST and other movements tend to ideologize the land struggle in a manner that is alien to the way the workers themselves think. He criticizes the MST and CPT for failing to dialogue with the government and recognize the plurality of post-dictatorship Brazil. [Martins [2] 13-15, 22]
presented as a benign process. While it was believed that it entailed a certain level of dislocation and destruction of traditions, in the long run development was seen as inevitable and beneficial.... My argument is that modernity is essentially about displacement... and that displacement, to put it bluntly, has grown out of hand.

In the 1980s, the response to development theory appeared as recognition of the multifaceted voices and realities of ‘third world’ people themselves.

[A] relatively coherent body of work has emerged which highlights the role of grassroots movements, local knowledge, and popular power in transforming development. The authors representing this trend state that they are interested not in development alternatives but in alternatives to development, that is, the rejection of the entire paradigm altogether. In spite of significant differences, the members of this group share certain preoccupations and interests: an interest in local culture and knowledge; a critical stance with respect to established scientific discourses; and the defense and promotion of localized, pluralistic grassroots movements. (Escobar 1995, 215)

However, Escobar takes this a step forward, citing the need for a breakdown and restructuring of the discourse itself.

[C]hanging the order of discourse is a political question that entails the collective practice of social actors and the restructuring of existing political economies of truth.... This transformation demands not only a change in ideas and statements but the formation of nuclei around which new forms of power and knowledge might converge.... Social movements and antidevelopment struggles may
contribute to the formation of nuclei of problematized social relations around which novel cultural productions might emerge. The central requirement for a more lasting transformation in the order of discourse is the breakdown of the discourse… that is, the appearance of new rules of formation of statements and visibilities. (216-17)

He views local communities, operating in light of worldwide phenomenon, as vitally important. But he notes that “unmaking development… is slow and painful, and there are no easy solutions or prescriptions.” (217)

Thought along these lines by Escobar, Wendy Harcourt, and others, has led to interesting concepts of the “politics of place” which “gives priority to the local level without abandoning other scales of activism and organization. What one might say about the global scale of their activities is that it exists to facilitate success at the local level….” They speak of “…extending the idea of a politics of ubiquity by emphasizing its ontological substrate: a vast set of disarticulated ‘places’ – households, social communities, ecosystems, workplaces, organizations, bodies, public arenas, urban spaces, diasporas, regions, occupations… connected through webs of signification.” (Gibson-Graham 2004, 31)

Discourse Analysis, the Redistributive Paradigm, and Land Reform in Brazil

One of the reasons I chose to discuss the redistributive paradigm is that it is, in some

81 Interestingly, one of the places this happened earliest in Brazil was in the Catholic Church, through a myriad of local groups, communities, etc., notably including the Base Community Movement. Starting in the late 1960s, the movement developed into an estimated 100,000 autonomous base community groups by the mid-1980s.
senses, one of the standard development paradigms that least suffers from the discourse
related domination critiqued by Escobar. The paradigm calls for radical change which
can, at least in theory (the land reforms in Mexico, Cuba and Nicaragua might be cited),
emerge from grassroots movements for change. It seeks to empower the poor by handing
over to their control productive assets – especially land. As presented by Griffin,
especially in his discussion of the basic needs approach, the input and participation of the
poor is essential to the process. \(^\text{82}\)

Yet there is a marked difference between the redistributive paradigm and “unmaking
development” as conceived by Escobar. Partly it is scale: the redistributive paradigm
contemplates changing national economies on a macro-economic level, either through
foreign intervention (Japan, Taiwan, Korea) or state action, whereas the unmaking of
development focuses on local communities working out their own destinies within the
global context. Partly it may be displacement: Escobar criticizes development for its
dislocation and destruction of tradition, and indeed, as noted above, he and other
commentators have found that, in Latin America, land reform has often served to
destructure traditional patterns the countryside and open it to commercial farming. \(^\text{83}\) But
mostly the difference between the two concepts is the underlying assumption: the
redistribution paradigm essentially relies on economic growth; the alternatives mentioned
by Escobar cast significant doubt on this assumption. \(^\text{84}\)

\(^{82}\) “Basic needs is not really about things at all…. It is about giving priority in development to the needs
and desires of poor people.” (Griffin, 172)

\(^{83}\) It can, of course, be argued that – by placing and/or preserving small farmers on the land – redistribution
also avoids dislocation.

\(^{84}\) On this point, I have considerable sympathy with Escobar. When I first moved to Brazil in 1969, I was
assigned as a rural cooperative worker in the state of Espirito Santo, then considered (per GDP) the second
The difference in practice is even greater. The concept of 'participation' used by entities like the World Bank is, in practice, deeply different from that envisioned by Escobar.

In the World Bank we drew up meticulous and systematic studies of evidence of the importance of participation. The results were surprising. In one study, of 121 rural water storage projects, financed by the Bank, two thirds of projects that included significant participation of the local population were successful, in accordance with Bank criteria, and only one tenth of projects without participation were successful. (Stiglitz 1998, 12)

It is my experience that, while large development agencies recognize the value of participation and that “changes cannot be imposed by external agents” (Stiglitz, 13), participation is basically seen as making more effective programs which the agency itself judges to be valid. This can be accomplished on a more or less authentic level – i.e., the agency can (or not) be genuinely open to community input and the organic pace of development. Even in the best case, however, this is not the grassroots, local development Escobar is talking about. And generally the ‘best case’ does not prevail: projects tend to be driven by agency (or government) goals, budgets, and time frames.

Certainly an initial review indicates that this was the situation with the Bank financed

poorest state in Brazil. It was a region of small, independent farmers who had little money but abundance of food, dignity, and family comfort. It is now a relatively developed state, has far more “miserably” poor (to use the Portuguese term) people than before, and has the highest murder rate in Brazil.

85 I have retranslated this passage from Portuguese, but I believe it captures the essence of his statement.

86 In 2007, I was contacted by a development company (beltway bandit) bidding on a USAID project intending to establish thirty fully representative community (town level) councils in the interior of Angola in a period of 15 months (including program start-up and wind-down). I told them I thought this time frame highly unfeasible.
Brazilian market-based land reform project that is the topic of this study. It is widely recognized that the program was almost entirely developed by the World Bank and the government, and presented as a fait accompli. This is not only true in Brazil – Kay (28) notes that market-based land reform has generally “...been much driven from above by the State and international agencies.” Furthermore, while the program sought to incorporate, through the settlement associations, the type of participation Stiglitz wrote about, the time frames and processes tended to create associations of highly questionable authenticity.

Economic Paradigm - Conclusions

Where does this discussion leave us with respect to the value of agrarian reform in Brazil? The reality is, of necessity, more complex than any single development model can portray.

It is the very movements that Escobar speaks of that succeeded in putting land reform back on the government and World Bank agendas. “First and foremost land reform is back on the agenda because rural populations have put it there.” This expressly includes the MST. “The world’s rural populations will continue to force land reform on the development agenda because it is necessary if they are to meet their food and development needs.” (SDdimensions, 1-2, 10)

While, as Martins notes, it is unrealistic to believe that land reform can take place without the government, and the revolutionary land reform still envisioned by some activists is not likely to occur, land reform can help produce spaces of the sort that
Escobar and Gibson-Graham write of. Cristóbal Kay (22-3), in his evaluation of Latin American land reforms, notes, with respect to non-radical reforms, that their “greatest contribution... may lie in the stimulus given to institution building in the countryside.... [A]grarian reforms encouraged a greater organizational and participatory presence for the peasantry in local and national affairs.

Thus grassroots movements can make use of government and World Bank programs to help create the spaces they need and the power to include themselves in local and national dialogues. The reality of the situation, however, is likely to emerge as a surprise to the movements as much as to the government: while the ideologies and values of the movements are undoubtedly formative for the people involved in the land struggle, it is highly doubtful, and indeed not desirable, that the small farmers emerging after the struggle will simply reflect those ideologies and values. Rather, spaces will have been created in which those farm families will be able dialogue in new ways regarding their future. The results may be, in some respects, more “conservative”87 than some current leaders of movements may expect.

The criteria for judging the results of these spaces created by agrarian reform should be gradualist and inclusive, especially insofar as they truly represent alternatives to development. In other words, success will not be immediate, and the standards of success should be varied and broad. Sustainability is an ongoing process that requires not only change on the farm but synergy with other sustainable efforts and structures.

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87 This is an ambiguous term, and may include positions that are or are not politically conservative, e.g., regarding family structure, property rights, approaches to change, conservation of land. Small landowners are capable of organizing radically to defend their rights (e.g., the U.S. Grange movements), often engage in cooperative action and sustainable land practices, but also have an ownership stake in society and often resist radical change. But the key is that they enter into the socio-political dialogue, are more able to look after their interests, and are less open to political manipulation (by right or left) than the landless poor.
Finally, as indicated above, there is an aspect in which even the redistributive paradigm may be applicable to land reform in Brazil. This is not at the national level, but at the local level, where whole communities and regions may be impacted by agrarian reform.

One of the findings of the study was that, despite the logic of isolated expropriations that characterized Government intervention during the post-1985 democratic period, there turned out to be a concentration of land reform settlements that, even though not necessarily in contiguous areas, caused the regions studied to come to hold one third or more of the settlements and of the settlement population in their respective states. The study showed that in 89% of the settlements studied, the initiative for the expropriation request came from the workers and their movements in the context of “crisis,” such as that of the cocoa crop in southern Bahia; of the sugar crop in the Northeast Zona da Mata (closing the sugar refineries); of the cotton crop in the interior of Ceará (intensified by the occurrence of major droughts); the bankruptcy of the large state subsidized undertakings in the south of Pará; the great increase in land value and strong migratory flux around the Federal District; the crisis in the reproduction of family agriculture in the South of the country. In these contexts, which provoked the outbreak of conflicts over the possession of land, the first expropriations carried out stimulated the pressure for new expropriations, culminating in the creation of various settlements in the same municipality or in neighboring municipalities, causing the formation of ‘reformed areas’ that serve as a counterpoint to the logic
of isolated expropriations and end up creating a new dynamic in the regions in which they are found. This, in itself, is one of the impacts that the settlements have provoked. (Leite c. 2001, p. 2)\textsuperscript{88}

We have here an interesting blending of state expropriation resulting from crisis and conflict and affecting a locality in the manner of a redistributive reform, driven by the actions of the landless and their movements themselves, and creating both a new type of space and the articulation and institutions mentioned by Escobar and Kay. This, I believe, is a partial picture of what successful land reform in Brazil can accomplish.

**Structure of this Study**

Any approach to understanding the agrarian reform issue in Brazil must take into account a wide variety of factors, some perhaps unique to Brazil, and many of which may seem to defy logic. I initially adopted an historical approach to the question in order to build toward a more complete understanding of factors presently at work; this is reflected in Chapter III. Chapter IV examines more closely economic factors between 1970 and 2005, focusing particularly on the development of the complex of activities that impact agriculture, and viewing these in light of development theory. Chapter V examines closely the “market-based” approach to sustainable rural development, particularly as it was carried out in the *Cédula da Terra* program in the State of Bahia. Chapter VI presents seven case studies, carried out in 2006, of settlements created under the Bahian

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\textsuperscript{88} This impact occurred where we worked for the Church in Caseara, Tocantins. We worked with 35 families who, after much struggle, were able to win title to the land they had occupied. Their success had such a dramatic affect locally, that – after we left the town in 1990 - the conservative mayor (PFL) provided municipal trucks to help other families occupy land. Last we heard, there are now at least six land reform settlements in the area.
Cédula da Terra program. Chapter VII presents an analysis of the case studies, along with certain conclusions and recommendations.

The two poorest regions of Brazil are the Northeast and the North (the latter is basically the Amazon region). Land ownership and settlement patterns are much older and more important in the more populated Northeast than in the Amazon region, where the economy has been based on extraction of natural resources from the forest and where, until recently, land ownership patterns were of less importance (Prado Junior, *Formação*, 123). In the eastern portion of the Amazon (Mato Grosso, Tocantins, Pará, Amapá, and Maranhão89), many of the settlers are migrants from the Northeast and elsewhere in Brazil and land patterns tend to follow those of the region from which the migrants come. For these reasons, this dissertation focuses especially on land patterns in the Northeast, and it is that region that the case studies were carried out.

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89 Maranhão is the only Brazilian state that is legally classed as being both in the Northeast and in legal Amazonia.
Map I-A: States and Geographical Regions of Brazil. North – green; Northeast – blue; Central-West – purple; Southeast – red; South – orange.
CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research framework provides for an initial evaluation of the market-based land reform program in Brazil, as carried out under the Cédula da Terra Program in the State of Bahia. It has been correctly pointed out that full evaluation of the impact of an agrarian reform program probably requires a thirty-year period, and even then may not be conclusive (Kay 1998). But public policy is not an exact science – decisions have to be made on the best evidence available. Such decisions always entail a degree of uncertainty; “Our task is to reduce that uncertainty” (Meadows 1998, 7).

Much of my own experience has been in what has come to be called “empowerment evaluation” (Fetterman 2003), working with community groups and NGOs, in an intentionally affirmative manner, to help them clarify their mission, take stock of their current position in light of that mission, and adapt plans to bring future actions into closer accordance with desired goals. This experience was useful in carrying out the case studies, especially in the context of providing and obtaining feedback from stakeholders.90 However, the primary purpose of the study itself is an initial, and inevitably partial, evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, successes, and failures of the GoB/World Bank program, and it is intended to share results with those structuring the program and those who critique it.

90 Lockwood (1993, 164) strongly argues “that fieldworker-respondent relationships matter.” We agree: being able to establish a personal relationship in the interview process is essential to the free flow of communication. The experience of the interviewers in empowerment evaluation and their deep familiarity with the region and with small farmers helped to establish the necessary rapport.
Values are imperative to undertaking evaluation, both in terms of the evaluator recognizing his or her own values (Crano, 155) and in the sense of setting up "criteria of merit" (Scriven 2003, 32-34; see Valadez & Bamberger 1994; Margoluis & Salasfsky 1998, 107 et seq.), which set forth characteristics that a good project of the type being studied should have. I have set forth below a statement of these two sets of values in Tables II-C and II-A respectively (Patton & Sawacki 1993, 188-91). It seems clear that there needs to be some degree of sympathy between the values of the evaluator and the goals of the program. It is also necessary that the evaluator be competent to evaluate the program in the context of the culture in which it is being carried out (Guzman 2003; Devereaux 1993).

One of the salutary results of the natural resources movement is to reject the notion, prevalent in some postmodern circles, that reality is merely a social construct – that "there is no reality except that created by people as they attempt to 'make sense' of their surrounds" (Guba & Lincoln 1989, 12-13) or that "what is commonly called scientific truth only represents ideological claims" (Donaldson & Scriven 2003, 8). Environment forces us to come to terms with real limits and possibilities – no amount of social construct is going to bring back depleted natural resources. As Thomas D. Cook has stated, the planet on which we live is itself an evaluator (Ibid., 11). Both existence and values are rooted in reality (e.g., Crano 2003, 155).

That being said, it is also true that reality is very complex and not readily comprehensible to the evaluator. A certain skepticism is therefore justified as to the ability of any single evaluation method to capture the whole picture (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick 1997; Patton 1997; Guba & Lincoln). This calls for humility on the part
of the evaluator, an openness to consensual models, a willingness to use a wide range of instruments and input, and an ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty. (e.g., Guba & Lincoln; Haas & Springer, 43; Meadows)

Projects operate in highly complex economic, social, administrative, and political environments that make it difficult to assess the extent to which successful (or unsuccessful) outcomes were the result of project design and management. It is often hard to tell whether the higher incomes of small farmers were a consequence of the rural development project being assessed or whether they were caused by national agricultural pricing policies, varying credit rates, or rapid urban growth... or some other factor. (Valadez & Bamberger, 76)

For this reason, in the present study, as broad an understanding as possible is needed of the Brazilian conjuntura – the socio-economic-political background of events (H. J. Souza 1999; Marsden & Oakley 1990). In researching, I found that there is no comprehensive historical study in Brazil dealing with land from a land reform perspective, and considerable research was required to develop a historical model that places current efforts in perspective; this study is set forth in Chapter III. Similarly, a review of more recent historical economic developments relating to Brazilian agriculture was required, and this is set forth in Chapter IV.

Valadez & Bamberger (8-10) discuss three models of evaluation used in developing countries: (1) those where inputs can be measured on the assumption that inputs will lead to outcome (e.g., vaccination campaigns), (2) those which “focus on the cost-effectiveness of the delivery systems and accessibility to the intended target groups,” and (3) those “based on the notion that the principal objective of social development should
be to help indigenous communities or underprivileged groups (such as... landless laborers...) develop the organizational capacity and knowledge needed to identify and satisfy their own needs.” While the current study involves some aspects of the second model (e.g., relative cost of land under the program, facility of delivery), it is primarily concerned with the third model. Again, this type of evaluation involves complexity, requiring flexibility and a variety of instruments (Ibid.)

**Sustainability and Indicators**

When we speak of sustainability of a land reform program, we need to consider both environmental and socio-economic sustainability. The standard for the former is really perpetual: are the land and other natural resources being used in such a way that they, and the surrounding environment, will not deteriorate over time? I am not an environmental scientist and the measures/indicators used in this area are basic ones arising from my experience in rural development: are legally required reserves being maintained? do agricultural practices maintain the soil and avoid harm to the surrounding environment? what is the situation regarding water resources?

With respect to socio-economic sustainability, time horizons are less distant. No one expects a land reform settlement to last forever. A settlement that meets the needs of its residents for twenty or thirty years may well be considered successful. Bittencourt, et al. (1999) identified eleven factors that affect the success of land reform settlements:

- the natural quality of the land and environment
- the origins and prior occupations of land settlement dwellers
- the socio-economic context surrounding the land settlement
- basic infrastructure and social services
- farming/livestock systems and the productive infrastructure
- the organization of the productive infrastructure
- availability of rural credit
- technical assistance
- political organization and institutional relationships
- agricultural and monetary income
- internal differences among the settlement dwellers

In the Northeast, they found that the first of these (poor land and lack of water) tended to be the primary cause of weak results in land reform, accompanied by lack of credit and technical assistance, and poor organization. In strong land reform settlements, the organization of production was the most important factor (Ibid., 50-51).

Ieno and Bamat (1998), measuring quality of life in land reform settlements in Paraíba, looked at many of the same factors – rural production, education, health, internal organization. In addition, they developed questions geared to discovering land settlement dwellers’ subjective view of their own quality of life. Many of these questions were used in our study.

**Sustainability Measures**

**Introductory note on indicators.** A few basic comments on indicators are included here as a reminder. The choice of indicators is highly important and requires a knowledge of and feel for the subject of study. All indicators work toward producing a comprehensible model of a more complex reality, and inevitably truncate that reality in
some manner. Poorly chosen indicators produce distorted results. New information can lead to changes in indicators – a researcher of a complex reality such as land reform settlements must walk the line between allowing indicators to evolve while keeping the research reasonably disciplined. Settlement dweller input in developing indicators is helpful where it can be achieved (Meadows 1998).

**Sustainability measures.** Table II.B sets forth indicators for socio-economic and environmental sustainability. I seek here to develop appropriate measures of sustainability applicable for each indicator; in other words, these measures are more specific indicators that aggregate into the indicators set forth in the table (see, e.g., Meadows, 22-23). This is done with respect to each indicator below. In developing these measures, I have drawn on my own experience as well as the work of others, including factors that specifically affected the success of land reform settlements, either independently researched (Ieno and Bamat 1998; Bavaresco 1999; Bittencourt 1999; Carvalho 1999; Xavier 1999), or drawn from data from the First Census of Agrarian Reform\(^{91}\) (Schmidt, Marinho & Rosa 1998; David, Waniez & Brustlein 1998; Bergamasco & Ferrante 1998; Barreira & Paula 1998; Riedl & Navarro 1998; Abelém & Hébette 1998; Carneiro, Andrade & Mesquita 1998), and ecological indicators such as the nineteen indicators developed by the Ministry of the Environment for measuring the likelihood of environmental degradation in the Northeast (MMA 2004).

These sustainability measures are discussed in detail below. A chart summarizing them is set forth in the conclusion.

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\(^{91}\) INCRA/CRUB/UnB (1996-7)
## Table II-A - Criteria of Merit – Agrarian Reform Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Socio-economic sustainability | • Quality of life assessment  
|                              |   o Dweller opinions                                                     |
|                              |   o Neighbor/family links                                                  |
|                              |   o Access to schools, health care, churches, etc.                         |
|                              |   o Community identity, celebrations, etc.                                |
|                              | • Community Association (existence, functions, settler participation, view of settlers, etc.) |
|                              | • Micro-economic viability                                                |
| Environmental sustainability  | • Agricultural methods                                                    |
|                              | • Forest or other reserves                                                 |
|                              | • Water                                                                    |
|                              | • Environment surrounding settlement area                                 |

### Socio-Economic Sustainability

**Quality of life assessment**

- Dweller opinions
- Neighbor/family links
- Access to schools, health care, churches, etc.
- Community identity, celebrations, etc.

Many of the questions in the interviews are geared to assessing dweller opinions as to their own quality of life. The underlying premise here is that dweller satisfaction with their life in the settlement is a strong indicator of whether they will stay on the land and actively work to better the community. Some of these questions relate to a feeling of ownership with respect to the settlement – did they participate in the organization of the group and/or the purchase of the land, do they contribute to the functioning of the community, do they hold leadership positions? Also important is a sense of belonging: do they participate in various groups? Open ended questions about hopes for their future and the future of their families can bring to light to what extent the settlement plays, in

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92 In addition to its value as a tool for determining settlement sustainability, settler views of quality of life touch on their sense of well-being, which, as Meadows (66) points out, is the ultimate end of development.
their eyes, a role in that future. Questions as to whether, all things being equal, they would sell their land or move to another settlement, help identify their feelings.

Qualitatively, the answers to these questions have to be viewed in light of tone of voice and non-verbals, and must be drawn out slowly. Rural people in Brazil tend to be initially positive (although a positive answer can come in many grades of enthusiasm or lack thereof), but are more likely to share real feelings after the first half hour or so. It was also important to have a sampling where both husbands and wives are interviewed; it is our experience that, where both members of the couple are not positive, the family is far less likely to remain on the land.93

Neighbor and family relations were also drawn out through questions. The underlying premise here is that close ties with neighbors and the presence of extended family are key elements in creating a sense of belonging and satisfaction with life. Family ties are highly important in Brazilian society generally and in rural Brazil especially.94

Access to schools, health care, churches and other services were drawn out through questioning and observation. Leite et al. (2001, 6) found that, in the settlements they studied, 90% of children 7-14 were in school – this would seem to be a reasonable benchmark. The availability of secondary school education (much rarer in rural areas) can also be an important factor. Availability of healthcare – usually precarious in rural Brazil – can be significant; settler feelings with respect to health care may be as

93 INCRA/CRUB/UnB (1996-7) noted that approximately 12% of the families in the 1996 Agrarian Reform Census were headed by women.

94 We observed in Tocantins, where many settlers did not have family, the resilience of the community in creating “family” through a series of godfather/godmother – co-godfather/co-godmother relationships. These may be created through the Church (at baptism, 1st communion, confirmation, or weddings) or through folk traditions (e.g., dancing around the fire on the Feast of St. John); in either case, the relationships are meaningful and are taken seriously.
important as objective information. Churches (Catholic and Protestant) are almost always formed by the people themselves; however, the availability of priests and pastors is worth noting, as are possible religious divisions in the community. Other services (bank services, registries, etc.) are of less urgent importance; many of these may be accessed through the community association.

Finally, community identity can be an important aspect of settler loyalty, ownership, and sense of belonging. Does the community celebrate certain days (e.g., the anniversary of founding) or identify itself in other ways (a soccer team, special symbols, a strong feeling about the community name, etc.)?

Community Association. The market-based land reform program places considerable emphasis on the role of settler associations in the purchase of land and successful operation of the settlement (World Bank 2000). I believe that the authenticity, credibility and effectiveness of these associations are important to settlement sustainability. These were judged both through objective analysis (what is the association doing, what programs does it have, what is the degree of participation, what types of facilities and/or equipment does it have?) and questions geared to finding out dweller’s opinion of and participation in the association. One key question was aimed at discovering whether the dwellers see the association as principally a means for getting credit (or other outside services) rather than as an essential element of the community itself. In addition, having worked in Brazil with community groups since 1969, and working with two fellow interviewers with similar depth of experience, we used our own experience to gain a sense of the authenticity of each association.

95 Early evaluations of the market-based land reform program raised significant doubts as to the quality of the community associations (Schwartzman 1999, 2, and 2000, 7; Xavier 1999, 22)
Micro-economic viability. Ultimately, the micro-economic viability of a land reform settlement is decisive with respect to its socio-economic sustainability. Such viability is not unrelated to other factors; for instance, strong loyalty to and participation in the settlement, and a strong association, can be factors that make an otherwise non-viable settlement function.\textsuperscript{96} However, in the end, if settlers cannot at least meet their basic needs while living on the land, the settlement will fail.

Some of the factors here are objective: how much and what is produced, how and where is it marketed, what prices are obtained, are there plans for alternative marketing, is there any actual or contemplated processing of produce, how much of local settlement consumption is raised on the land? The basic land quality and parcel size, and the type and quality of technical assistance (both at the beginning and ongoing) are important. How do farmers view their labor,\textsuperscript{97} and what types of labor patterns are used?

Certain indicators look toward possible hidden vulnerabilities and long-term trends that could affect micro-economic sustainability. What are the cost, source, and type of inputs used? What type of mechanical equipment is used? With respect to this equipment, what is the age and condition, the cost/source of servicing and spare parts, and is a reserve fund maintained for repair/replacement? What are the sources/costs of energy? (see Tschirley 1996; Schmidt, Marinho and Rosa 1998, 41)

Less objective factors include a sense of creativity in the community, leadership able to look for and seek alternatives, a collective willingness to overcome difficulties.

\textsuperscript{96} Antonio Fernando da Silva, for instance, mentioned a land reform settlement which “by any objective standard... should have failed.” It had poor land and few resources, but “the people are so determined, they are making it work.” Interview, January 31, 2006.

\textsuperscript{97} In Tocantins (1985-92) we found that small farmers generally did not allocate any value to their own and family labor when calculating the costs of production.
An important factor may be how many settlement dwellers have employment (permanent, temporary, seasonal) off the land, and whether this is of a type that draws their energy away from farming their land or otherwise.\textsuperscript{98} Other economic activities such as handicraft production, food processing, and small-scale commerce are also noted.

**Environmental Sustainability**

**Agricultural methods.** The line between socio-economic and environmental sustainability is an artificial one. It is for convenience rather than a hard and fast division. Clearly there can be no long-run socio-economic viability if the settlement is not sustainable ecologically. I am not an environmental scientist and environmental analysis, \textit{per se}, is not the object of this study. However, a `reasonable probability that the land will remain productive for at least one generation would be the minimum necessary for declaring a land reform settlement sustainable by any criteria.

Agricultural methods are closely tied to both micro-economic viability and environment. Many questions related to crops and production serve as a basis for both.

Measures of agricultural methods include the following: What type of plowing and planting is used? Are steps taken to avoid erosion? Is a system of crop rotation and/or fallow fields followed? Are various crops raised synergistically or is there a tendency toward monoculture? What types of fertilizers are used? Are pesticides used, and – if so – which ones? Are organic farming methods used? What is the source and type of seeds? What animals are raised and under what system (e.g., grazed and/or ration-fed)? Are fields burned or plowed under?

\textsuperscript{98} Leite (2001, 3-4) found that 79\% of settlers 14+ yrs/age worked only on their land, 11 \% partly on their land, 1\% entirely off the land, and 9\% - presumably retirees - did not work; 69\% of family income came from land produce, 17\% from government pensions, and 14\% from outside jobs.
Questions relating to these issues were included in the study. We found the most relevant areas to involve the synergy and variety of crops/livestock and the question of organic/non-organic agriculture.

**Forest or other reserves.** Natural reserves in the Northeast can include forests, grasslands, and/or caatinga – the desert-like growth in the semi-arid region. Key measures include: What are the legal requirements for maintaining reserves on the land, and are they being followed? Are other reserve measures being taken? What is the attitude of settlers to natural areas: i.e., are they seen to have positive value, to be a resource (in what way?), to be a hindrance to expansion or development? Are there ecological education programs in the community and/or schools? What is their content?

**Water.** Earlier studies have found that nearly two-thirds of land reform settlers have problems with water (Schmidt, Marinho & Rosa, 39; Leite, 6). This is a significant issue in the Brazilian Northeast. Key measures include: What is the source of the families’ water for drinking, washing, and stock raising? Is any form of crop watering or irrigation used? Are water sources (wells, streams, springs) abundant all year around, or are there dry periods? What are water sources during dry periods? Is there salinization detected? Has the settlement worked with water cachements (see, e.g., Jordão 1995) or other appropriate technologies for catching and/or preserving water?

**Environment surrounding settlement area.** The environment of the settlement is part of the environment of the surrounding area. Thus it is important to have some understanding of this wider environment. Key questions here include land use in nearby areas, the types of agriculture engaged in (e.g., wide use of pesticides or of irrigation), whether there is significant burning of fields, whether there are other factors
(desertification, mining, urban development, pollution) that may significantly affect the settlement during the next twenty-five years. What is sought is a broad picture, with an awareness of possible warning signals of environmental circumstances with potentially significant impact for the community being studied.

In the current study, our examination of the surrounding areas was rapid, based on personal observation, discussions with technical advisors and settlement dwellers, and our own prior knowledge of the region. We did not identify any factors that raised serious issues affecting the viability of the communities studied, but a more in depth study could be made of river water quality, water tables, and long term climate trends, the last especially in the most marginal semi-arid region (e.g., Veneza).

**Sustainability - Conclusion**

The ideas set forth above are charted below. Our study did not seek answers to all the measures, especially in those categories most closely related to environmental analysis. But these measures are mentioned here as a guide to possible future analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II-B Land Reform Settlement Sustainability Measures</th>
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<td>• Dweller opinions</td>
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<td>• Neighbor/family links</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access to schools, health care, churches, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community identity, celebrations, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Measures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Ownership”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participated in organization of group?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participated in land purchase?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perceived role in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership or other roles*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participation in groups/activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family/friend network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Perceptions 2 yrs./10 yrs./20 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Willingness to leave/sell</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Husband/wife dynamic &amp; attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community sports teams, symbols, name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity/divergence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Where possible, measures marked with an asterisk should be graphed over time (Meadows: 38)
| Community Association (existence, functions, settler participation, view of settlers, etc.) | Activities & programs*  
% and quality of participation*  
Facilities & equipment*  
- Source of these important (excellent facilities & equipment may come from political patronage rather than association authenticity)  
Dweller opinions  
- Do dwellers view association as simply a mechanism for obtaining credit or other benefits? |
| --- | --- |
| Micro-economic viability | Land quality  
Parcel sizes  
Type, quantity & quality of crops & livestock*  
Type/costs of inputs*  
- Fertilizers & pesticides  
- Seeds (do they have a seedbank?)  
- Equipment (repairs, parts, reserves)  
- Energy  
Labor input*  
- Individual/family  
- Cooperative  
- Collective  
Marketing practices and alternatives*  
Local processing (present and/or planned)*  
Local consumption v. purchased consumption*  
Other sources of income*  
- Labor (daily, temporary, seasonal)  
- Small scale manufacturing or commerce  
- Pensions  
- Government or NGO work projects  
Agricultural methods | Base information:  
- Arable land per capita  
- Soil quality and types  
- Field/pasture size and placement  
Soil treatment  
- Co-planting & alternating crops  
- Rotating crops – fallow areas  
- Crops appropriate for soil  
- Organic residue  
- Fertilizer (see also below)  
- Erosion  
- Soil degradation  
Crops & livestock* |

100 In our experience, almost all smallholding communities have some form of cooperative labor. Generally this takes the form of trading days of work (e.g., gathering in small groups to plant and harvest) and of mutirões – “barn raising” style activities, where neighbors gather together to work on a specific large project, usually including a meal and some form of social/festive activities as well.

101 Work projects are common in the Northeast, especially during drought periods. In the ones we organized through WFO/Catholic Relief Services during the drought of 1993, communities chose projects (usually construction of rainwater cachements or cisterns) and farmers received food for working on these projects. This allowed most of the farmers to remain with and support their families, rather than temporarily migrating in search of work (see Jordão).
- Biodiversity
  - Variety
  - Crop/livestock mix
  - Harmony w/natural biodiversity
- Orientation
  - Conscious use of sustainable methods
  - If not, what?
- Intensity/carrying capacity
  - Crops/ha.
  - Livestock/ha.
- Methods *per se*
  - Clearing (burning?)
  - Plowing
  - Planting
  - Harvesting
  - Others

**Inputs***
- Fertilizers
- Pesticides (which pests? appropriate?)
- Seeds (do they have a seedbank?)
- Tools & Equipment
  - Ownership
  - Source
  - Cost & reserves
  - Maintenance
  - Appropriate-ness
  - Power
- Energy
  - Sources
  - Cost
  - Quality/dependability
  - Volume
  - Usage

**Technical Assistance & Education**
- Who provides technical assistance?
- Agricultural extension services
- Are farmers actively involved?
- Education/capacitation available

**Labor input***
- Individual/family
- Cooperative
- Collective

Hired (permanent, temporary, occasional, seasonal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forest or other reserves</th>
<th>Base information:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Natural environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Flagship species*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mapping of reserves and linkages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td>- Legal reserves</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Other reserves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Settler attitudes/behavior</td>
<td>- Perceived value of reserves</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Vegetable products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>• Firewood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicinal plants</td>
<td>• Medicinal plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials for construction, artisan work, etc.</td>
<td>• Materials for construction, artisan work, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>• Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal products</td>
<td>• Animal products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>• Hunting</td>
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<td>Fishing</td>
<td>• Fishing</td>
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<td>Honey</td>
<td>• Honey</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>• Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental education</td>
<td>• Environmental education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials and presentation</td>
<td>• Materials and presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locale and audience</td>
<td>• Locale and audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Base Information:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Annual rainfall and rainfall patterns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Water table level</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hydrographic mapping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household water</td>
<td>Household water:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Potable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Volume of use</td>
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<td>• Treatment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Washing &amp; other household uses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Volume of use</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Runoff &amp; recycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural water</td>
<td>Agricultural water:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Crop watering</td>
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<td>• Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Volume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where used</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Periodicity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Irrigation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• % of arable land irrigated</td>
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<td>• Mechanism used</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cost</td>
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<td>• Energy consumption</td>
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<td>• Salinization or waterlogging</td>
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<td>• Stock watering</td>
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<td>• Sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Volume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Periodicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drought contingencies</td>
<td>Drought contingencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment surrounding settlement area</td>
<td>Environment surrounding settlement area</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Current land use in surrounding area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Socio-economic or environmental patterns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• New highways or railroads</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Urban growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Major irrigation projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Tourist development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mining activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trends in climate change</td>
<td>Trends in climate change</td>
</tr>
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85
It is important to focus on the issue for which indicators are being developed; if this is not done, one risks an "overload of information" (Tschirley 1996, 4). Indicators should be "robust" (i.e., able to portray the reality the describe) without attempting to be exhaustive (Vieira 2000, 56). In the present case, the goal is to determine whether the agrarian reform settlements are sustainable for agricultural purposes for at least a generation (± 25 years). This question is distinguishable from, although not unrelated to, other important environmental questions such as preservation of native caatinga growth and natural (as opposed to agricultural) biodiversity.

To the extent possible, it is important to look at indicators over time. In agriculture, trends over time can reveal important patterns. Similarly, it is important to recognize stock and flow indicators; often, stock indicators will be the most easily identifiable, but may be most meaningful with respect to the flow they illustrate (Meadows 1998, 12, 28).

Drawing up sustainable development indicators is "an enormous challenge." (Tschirley: 2) The challenge is augmented for farm environment indicators; environmental information is often gathered for other purposes and/or relates to broad geographic areas, making it difficult to relate it to individual smallholdings or even groups of smallholdings (Hamblin 1996, 2). In the present case we start with the farm and look outward, rather than vice versa. For example, see what pesticides farmers actually use, rather than working back from general data on pesticides found in local rivers. While not pretending to divorce land reform settlements from the surrounding environment, this seems the best method for focusing on those elements that will most directly affect the land in question.
However, it is important to have an understanding of the general environment in which the settlements operate. This environment affects the local farms and can provide indications as to agricultural practices that might present potential long-term environmental risks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II-C - Evaluator Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator Background</td>
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</table>
| Values                        | • Catholic Social Doctrine, especially concerning the right of the worker to own the instruments of his trade and his land (CNBB 1980; Pontifical Justice & Peace Council1998)  
                                 • Jeffersonian concept of positive value of small farmers in society  
                                 • Distrust of capitalism, especially in terms of large accumulations of capital  
                                 • Preference for organic farming  
                                 • Distrust of motivation of large fertilizer, seed, and pesticide producers  
                                 • Belief in the value of solidarity, community, neighbor and extended family ties  
                                 • Belief in a link between moral integrity and community solidarity  
                                 • Belief in the importance of environmental sustainability |

**Research Site**

Research was carried out at seven *Cédula da Terra* settlements in the State of Bahia. Selection of the land reform settlements was made by the research team based on information provided by professionals working in land reform. As set forth in the Overview of Case Studies, we selected settlements in the northern portion of the State, primarily in the semi-arid region, because (1) this region is among the most challenging
in Brazil to carry out land reform and agriculture generally, (2) the semi-arid Northeast encompasses the largest and poorest rural population in Brazil, and (3) our research team had experience with and an affinity for the semi-arid Northeast. We also selected settlements that were considered to be relatively successful because we believe that there is a need to study successful projects in developing countries in order to add to the knowledge of locally appropriate best practices (Tendler 1-8, 1997)

Five of the research sites are located in what is officially the Semi-Arid micro-region of Bahia, and two (Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III) close to that region on the western edge of the neighboring North Coastal micro-region. Beyond a narrow coastal strip that was originally Atlantic rain forest, the interior of northern Bahia is dry. Climate ranges from fairly dry in the easternmost settlements we studied (Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III) to drier – 600-700mm/annual rainfall - in the westernmost (Fazenda Veneza).

The natural vegetation of the Semi-Arid region is caatinga – sparse, low-lying bush made up of cacti and thorny scrub. There is a six-month dry season during which no rainfall occurs, and every several years this is extended into longer drought periods. One such period was ending at the time of our visit, and the importance of rain was emphasized by many interviewees.

Stock raising (cattle, goats, sheep) has historically predominated in the caatinga area, along with subsistence farming. The soil is relatively good, and manioc, black beans, and small amounts of corn (maize) grow well. The region is one of small and middle sized farms and larger ranches.
Methodologies

The most significant aspect of this research was the field work carried out in seven land reform settlements, especially those aspects involving evaluation of quality of life, socio-economic sustainability, and the authenticity and effectiveness of community associations. Questionnaires were used based on those successfully employed in earlier studies (Ieno & Bamat), but they were used with caution. It is my experience that rural people in Brazil reveal their thoughts and feelings through a patient process of conversation. Simple answers to questionnaires tend to “elicit atypical roles and responses” (Webb 2000, 1; see Lockwood 1993), especially as rural Brazilians may answer in manners they think they ought to answer or in manners that they believe will please the questioner. It is essential to observe the way language is used in responses and accompanying non-verbals (Webb 128, et seq.). Thus questionnaires need to be seen more in terms as a guideline to the interviewers (what are we seeking to find out?) than a tool to be used rigidly with rural settlement dwellers. Use of open-ended questions and allowing interviewees to tell their story are important (Seidman 1998, 12-13).

Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (163) quote Elspeth Huxley, who lived in rural Africa:

The best way to find things out... is not to ask questions at all. If you fire off a question, it is like firing off a gun – bang it goes, and everything takes flight and runs for shelter. But if you sit quite still and pretend not to be looking, all the little facts will come and peck round your feet, situations will venture forth from thickets, and intentions will creep out and sun themselves on stone; and if you are
very patient, you will see and understand a great deal more than a man with a gun
does. (The Flame Tree of Thika, 272)

For these reasons, a number of open-ended questions were provided in the
questionnaires and the three interviewers, all of whom have years of experience in the
rural Northeast, listened to settlers’ stories rather than pushing for answers to individual
questions. The result of this method is that conversations tended to veer toward matters
of concern to the settlers, and not all questions on the questionnaire were necessarily
answered by every interviewee.

In fact, when one is willing to listen, rural Brazilians tend to be very forthcoming
about their situation, expressing their thoughts and feelings more readily than most North
Americans do. We found the settlers of the seven settlement areas to be open in this
manner.

Our method followed a pattern. Equipped with introductions from CDA program
officials who were trusted by the communities, we initially (except in the case of Nova
Lusitânia) made contact with the technical advisors. In one case (Moita Redonda) the
technical advisor accompanied us in our initial visit to the settlement; in other cases, they
introduced us to settlers or sent word that we would be coming. Arriving at the
settlement, we would meet with a group of settlers – the meetings were usually called by
association leaders (in Nova Lusitânia, by a church leader), but were generally open to all
who wanted to attend. Sitting in a circle, we would introduce ourselves, present our
credentials, and explain that we were visiting the settlement as part of an evaluation for a
doctoral thesis. We would then ask those present to introduce themselves, and would let
the conversation evolve. These meetings lasted for one to two hours, and were generally
followed by an invitation to visit the fields and/or association facilities (schools, *casas de farinha*, the *bolacha* factory at Boa Vista III, etc.), which we did.

During the group meeting we would state our interest in interviewing individuals, and we were usually approached by several people who were interested in being interviewed. Following our visit to fields and association buildings, we three interviewers then divided up, generally starting with the people who had expressed an interest, and began interviewing. We found no shortage of people who were willing to talk to us – in fact, we did not encounter anyone in any of the communities who refused to be interviewed.

Generally the interviews took place in the interviewees' home, although a few were interviewed in their fields, at neighbor's homes, or elsewhere. Rural Brazilians are highly social people, and interviews were seldom isolated one-on-one undertakings. There were often others present, and where those others (especially husbands or wives, but also older children, relatives, and neighbors) actively participated in the interview, their responses were also recorded. Interviewees were generally eager to show us their homes, house lots (vegetable gardens, fruit trees, poultry, pigs), and other undertakings – in one case, for instance, the small candy shop they operated in their home.

Selection of interviewees was generally random – each interviewer would go from house to house, usually in different sections of the settlement. We attempted (and succeeded) to get a range of interviewees, with a good mixture of men and women of varying age groups. Where possible, we sought out for interviewing certain individuals who were recognized as formal or informal leaders, but we also always included a number of interviewees who did not have leadership roles.
Especially regarding the authenticity and effectiveness of community organizations, there is a degree of "connoisseurship" (Eisner 1991; Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 128-9; see Meadows, 7) – the ability of one with years of experience to have an educated sense of what is going on. In this case the three interviewers, all of whom have training and 15+ years experience in community organization in rural Brazil, had a sense as to the level of authenticity of a given community group. The presence of a female interviewer was important as women observers, conversing with women in rural communities, tend to learn more about certain dynamics of community life than do male observers talking with either male or female settlement dwellers.

Micro-economic information, important to judging the sustainability of land settlements, was approached sensitively (see Christensen 1993). On the whole, settlers were very open with information, but the interviewers never pushed for answers where interviewees seemed reluctant to provide them.

Especially with respect to issues involving quality of life, associations, micro-economic viability, agricultural practices, environmental reserves, and surrounding social environment, rapid rural appraisal techniques were used as appropriate (Margoluis and Salafsky 134; Valadez and Bamberger 151-152, 210-213; National Environmental Secretariat of Kenya 1991).

To the extent possible, information learned in these ways was triangulated with other information, such as statistics as to the numbers of people leaving the land settlements, information on loan repayments, observations of neutral local observers, etc. However, our time frame did not allow as much triangulation as we would have liked.
Analysis of Data

Our team began to analyze data on-site. Following introductory meetings with settlers and the subsequent tour of settlement facilities, the team would meet briefly to discuss issues that had arisen and to detail our interview strategy. We would then separate and begin interviewing. In most cases, we worked separately in the interview process, although occasionally two of us would be present at an interview (at times this happened when two of us chanced to arrive at the same home, or when two of us were visiting a facility or field together and an opportunity to interview arose; however, it also occurred in some cases where we felt that an interviewee had particularly important information to provide and/or a dual perspective (often male/female) might be helpful).

At least once or twice during the day, I would seek out my team members to briefly exchange information – who we had interviewed, who needed to be interviewed, any unusual or interesting facts we had gleaned, anything we thought needed to be further examined. In all of the settlements, the interviewing extended over at least two days (three days in Boa Vista III, Moita Redonda, and Biritinga); although interviewing often went on until relatively late (8 p.m.), we would always convene in our quarters to discuss what we had learned that day and plan for the next.

This on-site analysis allowed us to go back to interviewees and verify questions or inconsistencies. It also allowed us to identify people we should interview – for instance, individuals frequently mentioned by other settlers, or those mentioned as being in opposition to the current association leadership.
Both during and toward the end of our visits we would return and discuss our findings with community leaders, clarifying factors we had not fully understood. Among those who were very helpful in this respect were Adilson, past President of Vila Canaã, and his wife Veralucia; Erico, President of Fazenda Veneza; Petrus, a leader in Nova Lusitânia; Railda, a leader in Passos da Esperança; Antonio Sales, President, and Josi, Treasurer of Biritinga; and Walmir, President, and Israel, Treasurer of Moita Redonda.

The first community we visited was Vila Canaã on March 16, 2006. We then had further contact with the technical advisor, interviewed the local CAR manager, and did one day of interviewing at Fazenda Veneza before returning to Vila Canaã on March 19 (we finished up at Fazenda Veneza on March 20). This allowed us to approach these two communities with more perspective than if we had completed our interviewing at Vila Canaã before visiting another community.

After these first two visits, we returned to our base for four days before going out to the next two: Passos da Esperança (March 27-28) and Moita Redonda (March 29-31). We took similar break periods before visiting Nova Lusitânia (April 5-6) and, for personal reasons related to my job, Biritinga (April 18-20). We then went back to Salvador and re-interviewed key CDA personnel (see below) before visiting the final site of Boa Vista III (April 28-30).

During these breaks we were able to initially analyze and discuss the materials we had received and to research additional information (e.g., with respect to details of programs such as PRONAF that had been mentioned repeatedly in interviews). After the first two visits, we also decided to add a question about kinship links within each
settlement – whether the interviewee had relatives living in the same settlement (the answers we received confirmed that the great majority of settlers did have relatives).

In four cases (Nova Lusitânia, Vila Canaã, Moita Redonda, Fazenda Veneza), we were able to discuss our findings with the technical advisor after our visits. We were also able to discuss findings in most cases with other local sources of information, although I would have liked to have done more of this had we the time. As noted above, on April 26, having completed all site visits except to Boa Vista III (our visit to that community was prompted by these interviews), we returned to Salvador and discussed our findings with Berta Veloso dos Passos and Antonio Fernando Silva, CDA agronomists who had oriented us in locating possible study sites. On their suggestion, we also interviewed a senior CDA agronomist, Dr. Penedo, who was particularly informative as to the sub-soil issues in Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III, but who also responded to a whole series of questions we had developed based on our site visits (Berta and Fernando had also responded to these questions).

Following each set of site visits, we reviewed our interview sheets, refreshing our memories. Daniel Carvalho prepared a brief (two-three page) summary for each community. We organized folders for each community, including a formatted fact sheet, all interview responses, signed releases from interviewees, Daniel’s summary, supplementary documents such as maps and copies of association documents, and cross references to interviews made outside of the settlement.

Returning to the United States, I began the process of analyzing, tabulating, and translating key portions of the interviews (both those carried out with settlers and others).
I experimented with a tabulation form, but found it not to be very useful. I found the most workable method of analysis was to create a complete interview list for each settlement, based on the numbered interview forms, and then create a Word document for each category of responses in each community.

Questions had been structured to fairly easily classify the results on a cross-case study basis. However, given the free-flowing nature of interviews, material often appeared in places other than the response to the relevant question. This was particularly true with respect to settler attitudes, matters dealing with the association and collective areas, historical information, and economic information. Therefore, each interview form had to be combed thoroughly to assure that relevant information for each category was recorded in the appropriate Word document.

Interviewers had been requested to write down direct quotes when they found these to be particularly applicable or pertinent. I translated these quotes. These were particularly useful in writing up sections relating to settler satisfaction, sufficiency of income, views of the future, attitudes toward the MST, and – to a lesser extent – comments on history and the association. The quotes often communicate settler feelings more clearly than a mere summary of the statement or a statistic would do.

Interviewers also noted non-verbals and made other observations. These were noted in the appropriate Word documents.

Once information had been placed in the appropriate Word document categories, it was fairly easy to write up each case divided into those appropriate categories. I then did a cross-analysis of case studies. In some cases (attrition rates, number of settlers
willing to trade or sell, settler response to whether life was better or worse in comparison to previous experience) the cross-case analysis could be quantified and charted in a meaningful manner. More qualitative analysis was required for other areas, notably data related to associations and collective areas, agricultural production, and settler attitudes.

Where possible, findings were checked against data from other studies. This was particularly the case with respect to attrition rates, price per hectare, and price per family. However, much of the data available applies to very early (c. 1998) studies of Cédula da Terra programs, and other data is questionable.

Written case studies and analysis were reviewed by Brenda King-Powers, who made suggestions and provided additional input based on her experience as an interviewer. Daniel Carvalho, our other interviewer, does not speak English, but he provided input on several points via telephone and e.mail.
**TABLE II-D – RESEARCH GOAL AND QUESTIONS**

**Research Goal:** To provide an initial evaluation of the viability of market-based land reform as a possible instrument for effecting land redistribution in Brazil, seeking to identify program strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures.

**Primary Research Question:** Is market-based land reform potentially an effective instrument to redistribute land to working farmers in a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable manner?

**Secondary Research Questions**\(^{102}\) (the essential focus of research is reflected in the questions printed in **bold**; other questions serve to provide background information useful to the analysis of the essential questions):

1) Does the nature of the program, *per se*, create issues that cause a significant philosophical barrier to its acceptance on the part of a significant portion of Brazilian society?
   (a) Does the program promote a concept of land as a commodity, rather than as a non-renewal environmental resource with which humans live in a stewardship relationship?
   (b) Is the program’s emphasis on land purchase contradictory to the idea that landless farmers have a right to land, which right must be asserted, and, if so, does this constitute a significant problem?

   **Methods:**
   (a) Ongoing review of current literature
      (i) World Bank literature
      (ii) Government publications
      (iii) MST publications
      (iv) Other observers
   (b) Interviews with key leaders

2) Political issues:
   (a) Does the program significantly impair other forms of land reform through transfer of political focus and/or funds?
   (b) Does the program tend to reinforce the power of local elites that have been historically opposed to land reform?
   (c) To what extent has the program been used to undercut the action of landless movements such as MST?

   **Methods:**
   (a) Ongoing review of current literature
   (b) Analysis of government budgets and policies
   (c) Questionnaires and interviews with land settlement dwellers

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\(^{102}\) These Secondary Questions are directly linked to questions asked and observations made in the case studies.
3) Administrative issues:
   (a) What is the facility of the process from the point of view of the purchasing farmers?
   (b) What is the relative quality and value of land purchased, in comparison with other land reform procedures in Brazil?
   (c) What is the quality of technical assistance provided?

Methods: All three issues were examined most closely with respect to the settlement areas studied, through interviews with land settlement leaders and other local observers and through analysis of publicly available documents on land transactions and prices.

4) Sustainability issues:
   (a) What is the level of overall satisfaction of land settlement dwellers?
   (b) To what degree are land settlement associations authentic and effective?
   (c) What is the micro-economic viability of holdings (i.e., extent to which potential income exceeds costs, including payments for the land)?
   (d) To what extent are agricultural practices environmentally and economically sustainable?
   (e) To what extent have environmental reserves been provided for on the land?

Methods: These issues were examined with respect to the settlement areas studied. Methods included questionnaires, interviews with land settlement dwellers and other local observers, field observation. With respect to issues (c) and (d), a sample of individual holdings were be examined in depth.
Chapter III

Historical Background

Introduction

The attempts at Brazilian agrarian reform generally, and the Cédula da Terra program specifically, are best understood in their historical context. As there was no comprehensive history of Brazilian land from an agrarian reform perspective, in preparation for this dissertation I wrote such a history (Powers 1999). I also specifically reviewed economic development of agriculture in Brazil during the thirty-five years prior to our case studies (Powers 2006). This chapter focuses on the findings of those studies most relevant to the subject at hand.

Brazilian history (since European discovery) may be roughly divided into eight periods:

Early Colonial Period, 1500-1690: the discovery of Brazil by the Portuguese and the development of sugar plantations, principally in the Northeast.

Late Colonial Period, 1690-1808: the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais, and the shift of economic and political power toward the Southeast.
The Monarchy, 1808-1889: the transfer of the Portuguese court (fleeing Napoleon) to Rio de Janeiro, and (beginning 1822) the establishment of Brazil as an independent monarchy under the descendents of the Portuguese kings; one of the last acts of the monarchy was to abolish slavery in 1889.

The Old Republic, 1891-1930: following a brief rule by a military transition government, the republic was established; it was a period of strong state governments and a relatively weak federal government; coffee was the single most important economic factor.

The Vargas Government, 1930-1946: a dictatorship headed by Getúlio Vargas, a civilian; Vargas saw himself as a modernizing force and focused on urban industrial matters; the government enacted corporativist labor laws (including with respect to rural unions) that are still the basis of Brazilian labor relations.

The democratic interlude, 1946-1964: a period that witnessed political instability (the military serving as a moderating force), construction of the new capital in Brasília, and the rise (especially in the Northeast) of rural worker movements; the period ended with very high inflation and a weak, leftist president – João Goulart.

The Military Dictatorship, 1964-1985: begun by moderate military leaders in what was expected to be a short transition to stabilize the country, the government was taken over by hard-line military; nationalist in outlook, the government created high tariff barriers; the initial years saw unusually high GDP growth but, with the first oil crisis in 1974, this growth began to unravel and the economy slipped steadily over the next decade.
The post-dictatorship period, 1985-present, including the presidencies of José Sarney, a civilian who had been a pro-military government senator during the dictatorship and who was (and is) closely tied to large landholdings; Fernando Collar, who was impeached, and his idiosyncratic successor, Itamar Franco; and two serious presidents (both had been strong members of the opposition to the dictatorship): Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) of the center-left PSDB, who stabilized the currency and introduced both the bolsa família and Cédula da Terra programs, and Lula (2003-present) of the Workers’ Party (PT), who continued and built upon those programs.

Our discussion here focuses primarily on the period beginning with the military dictatorship.

In my historical study, which covered the period since 1500, I identified (Powers 1999, 1-2) nine factors that dominate the debate on land use and rural issues:

- an agricultural system geared primarily toward exportation
- the triptych of large landholdings, monoculture, and cheap labor
- under-use of land, poor agricultural techniques, and ecologically harmful practices
- land as a source and symbol of power and status
- a complex relationship among land, commerce, and finance
- a complex relationship between landowners and government
- confused land titles and possessory rights
- violence, corruption, and injustice
- frustration of efforts to carry out reform
Parallel to these factors, and alternative to them (in a certain sense) has been the continuous presence of subsistence farming, sometimes carried out (especially in the North and Northeast of Brazil) by farmers without formal title to their land (posseiros) and by renters and share-croppers.

**Background of Land Reform**

By the late colonial period, writers in the colony were calling for land reform. Among the first of these was João Daniel (1722-76), a Jesuit priest working in the north of Brazil. He and others argued that a redistribution of land was indispensable to resolving the problems of unproductive *latifundios* and hunger in the countryside. They saw the land question as constituting a social problem and a situation of profound injustice, and as adding to the problems of corruption and violence (Jobim 1983, 39, 80).

Leopoldo Jobim notes that two types of reform were advocated: (1) reforms affecting land ownership, involving redistribution of land for social purposes, and (2) reforms advocating technical advances to encourage productivity. He refers to these respectively as *reforma agrária* (agrarian reform) and *reforma agrícola* (agricultural reform). The Crown was actively interested in reform “as long as it did not touch on the

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103 Luis dos Santos Vilhena, writing in the end of the 18th Century, criticized the *morgados*, which only served “...to rob humanity of many means of subsistence,” and “the unending and extremely extensive landholdings that have been granted as *sesmarias* in Brazil” (M. Silva, 65). Dom Marcos Antônio de Souza, Bishop of Salvador at the beginning of the 19th Century, saw large landholdings as blocking orderly settlement in the interior: “This shows that they are a great obstacle to the propagation of the human race....” (F.C. Teixeira Silva, 10-11).
problem of distribution of land.” It feared alienating landowners and losing its base of support in Brazil (Jobim, 28).\textsuperscript{104}

Jobim (26) notes that the belief during the Enlightenment in the power of reform through legislative and administrative measures was “immense,” and Ligia Osorio Silva mentions (1996, 64), during this period, the Portuguese government’s “excessive valuing of the role of administrative measures as conductors of social reform.” But governmental measures advocating reforms were frequently withdrawn under pressure from the colonial elite, or were ignored. When actually put into practice, they were often counter-productive, creating problems rather than resolving them (See, e.g., L. Silva, 65-66).\textsuperscript{105}

This pattern can be seen in the fate of the royal Alvará of October 5, 1795. The Crown was concerned with preventing land grants that would dispossess or cause conflict with colonists who were already farming the land as posseiros:

...on one hand, harm and very grave damage to the Rights of My Royal Crown; on the other hand, consequences no less damaging and offensive to the Public Good, and the equality with which should be, and should have been, distributed such land to their Dwellers, such irregular distribution having reached such a state that

\textsuperscript{104} However, M. Silva (1998, 65, 72) notes that some of the large cattle ranches in Piauí were broken up during the reforms instituted by the Marquis do Pombal (Portuguese prime minister from 1750 to 1777) based on the concept that their sesmarias had been illegally granted. Motta (1998, 123-125) also notes largely ineffective attempts by the Portuguese Crown at some sort of land redistribution. In 1753, royal Resolutions of April 11 and August 2 provided that “land granted in sesmarias on which there are colonists cultivating the soil and paying rent to the sesmarios should be granted to the real cultivators.” See also below the discussion of the Alvará of October 5, 1795.

\textsuperscript{105} Skidmore (1998, 51) notes that Pombal did effect two reforms that impacted Brazil: revising the economic administrative structure in a way that required Brazilian legal and customary practices to be reinterpreted by judges sympathetic to Portugal’s mercantilist ideas, and forming three commercial monopoly companies to exploit exports of the Amazon, Pernambuco, and coastal whaling.
many of these Dwellers have not been able to obtain ...Sesmarias\textsuperscript{106}... because of objections of those without any Right...[trying] to possess themselves without Merit, and without legitimate license, to that which should have been validated in Titles to their possessions.

The Alvará not only recognized the right to land of those who actively cultivate it, but required, with respect to existing idle sesmarias (or the idle portions of same), that ownership be sold or given within two years to someone who would cultivate them, on pain of the land being returned (\textit{devoluta}) to the Crown. Within a year, the Alvará was withdrawn (Motta 1998, 123-125).

Here we have patterns which continue to be active through the present time: a distinction between agrarian and agricultural reform, government reluctance to interfering with large landowners, and a tendency to try to resolve issues through the issuance of legal and administrative measures elaborated in an intellectual context far from the reality on which they are to be imposed, with negligible or negative results.

The period from independence to the military dictatorship (1822-1964) continued to witness frustrated reforms. These included attempts to regulate land in the Law of 1850,\textsuperscript{107} the 1890s proposals of Rui Barbosa to distribute land to former slaves, limited attempts toward the end of the Vargas government to effect agrarian reform, and active but unproductive discussion of land reform in the 1950s. Throughout this time there was

\textsuperscript{106}Sesmarias are a form of land grand peculiar to Portugal – grants were made on the condition that the land be developed, and if it was not developed the land would revert to the crown.

\textsuperscript{107}Law 601 of September 18, 1850.
a growing recognition that land patterns were a barrier to development, accompanied by a seeming inability to do anything about them.

The distinction between agrarian and agricultural reform persisted. A series of technocratic solutions to the agrarian problem emerged during the Old Republic, with no attempt at meaningful structural change. The Vargas government, which showed some inclination toward change, would not effect a land redistribution:

Vargas strongly went against the agrarian interests, brought the latifúndios under control, incentivized internal colonization, limited the expansion of large landowners, promoted small scale family production on the frontier... but abstained from promoting... modernization of the agrarian structure or... agrarian reform, leaving the traditional latifúndio untouched (Linhares and Silva, 129).

The growth of the peasant leagues in the 1950s, together with the new influence of rural unions, the increasing concern of the Church, and a widespread opinion that the Brazilian land structure was archaic, gave hope for the first time that a solid reform might be undertaken. Indeed, some progress seemed to be made and significant legislation was pending when the military takeover of 1964 cut the process short.

Confused Land Titles and Violence

The background necessary to understand Brazilian land reform would not be complete without mentioning conflicting land titles and land rights. From the colonial

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108 Mendonça (1997) presents a thorough analysis of these efforts.

109 The Peasant Leagues began to be formally recognized in 1955. Initially growing out of groups to help pay funeral expenses, they were organized by lawyer Francisco Julião and began to demand a greater voice for the rural poor. (See, e.g., Andrade 1989; Martins, 1995)
period onward, Brazil has had a pattern of contradictory and confusing land titles, squatters often living on land to which they have no formal title (although they may have rights of adverse possession), while there are often more than one title to the property. Repeatedly the government recognized possessory rights without reference to the legality (or illegality) of the manner in which those rights were obtained. Taxation of land transfers often results in land being transferred in fact but not in the registry. This situation persists not only on the frontiers of Amazonia and Mato Grosso, but even in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and surrounding areas.

Marcia Motta cites James Holston, who states that “land law in Brazil promotes conflict, and not solutions, because it establishes the terms by which grilagem is consistently legalized” (Motta 1998, 20-21). Holston’s is, she notes, an original thought on the subject; it is also a highly insightful one. The continuous process of recognizing and subsequently legitimizing posses, no matter from whom or how obtained, rewards those who are able and willing to seize land unscrupulously through fraud or violence.

It has been noted, for instance, that the Law of 1850 ignored customary rural land patterns, including the use of communal lands. Teixeira da Silva (1999, 11, 14) has produced evidence that, as the majority of people did not understand the law, the elite learned to use it as a tool for seizing land by having unregistered land declared devoluta (returned to the state) and then registering their own titles to it.

The great landlords, principally cattlemen, coming from the coastal region, managed to register... ample areas of land, as the traditional possessory rights and forms of communal occupation were not recognized, managing subsequently,

Marcia Motta’s study of legal cases (1998, 225) leads her to note:

...the manner in which the fazendeiros -- lords and possessors of land -- consecrated their power and prestige, permitting them to forge titles to land, falsifying in local registries -- with the connivance of registrars and witnesses -- the origin and extension of their domains. It demonstrates how the Land Law of 1850 did not succeed in imposing a property title immune to the dubious strategies of the great fazendeiros in their efforts to occupy legally public land.

While violence was a factor throughout the colonial and imperial periods, there is some indication that it increased during the Old Republic.

Violence always was and continues to be a constant presence in the countryside. In the first republican decades, however, the episodes of violence... took on specific aspects that give the period some of its fundamental characteristics (L. Silva, 257).

Lígia Silva (258-261) also notes that, during this period, family feuds over land or political influence were common, as was banditry. Messianic movements, which attracted large numbers of people from the backlands, often led to violence. Silva sees such movements as a sign of the great numbers of people who could not obtain land.

“...(N)either the abundance of land nor the existence of favorable legislation were
sufficient to counteract the concrete social situation reigning in the backlands, marked by violence and coronelismo.”  

Under the law establishing the Guarda Nacional, the Coronel and other “officers of the Guarda Nacional could not, when arrested or subject to criminal proceedings or when condemned, be placed in common jails,” remaining instead under the custody of the “sala livre” of the local jail. Leal, writing in the 1940s, stated:

The role of hired thugs and bandits in local political battles has been very notable, although it is diminishing with the development of the Police, who not rarely take their place... In political reprisals and crimes and in fights between families, the activity of thugs is of the greatest importance (Leal 290, 293).  

Thus, with respect to the extremely violent bandits who plagued the backlands during this period, it has been noted that “...the struggle of the public powers against the bandits constitutes part of the struggle against the impunity of the coroneis who gave them coverage” (L. Silva, 261).  

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110 By “favorable legislation” she means the tendency to recognize posse rights. Coronelismo is the system through which rural landowners controlled votes in their region – e.g., of their renters, share-croppers, and smaller neighbors; the term originated with the coronels of the Guarda Nacional, which quickly became an honorary title for any wealthy person. See Leal.  

111 While many thugs were agregados of landholders, bandits also emerged from among the classes of smallholders who had been dispossessed of their land, often acting to avenge the murder of family. The greatest of these, Antonio Silvino, whose band was active in the Northeast during the first years of the 20th Century, was a Robin Hood figure who robbed only the rich and distributed some of his takings to the poor. Arrested in 1914, he was pardoned by Vargas in 1937.  

112 “In 1912, at the Convention of the states of the Northeast, the chiefs of police of the states most affected by banditry decided to jointly undertake hunting the bandits, even if, in order to do so, they had to invade the property of the coronel.” (L. Silva, 261).
During the Old Republic, the Vargas era, and after, landless workers and small farmers who had lost their land gravitated toward the frontiers and backlands, where they entered the forests and wild areas in search of free land. When land became more valuable -- often in connection with the construction of roads -- large landowners would move in and take over:

They would expropriate the land by force, taking advantage of the work done in clearing the forest... This is the history of the conquest of land which Jorge Amado relates in his stories about the cacau region of Bahia: gunmen, ambushes, falsification of titles. This is the history of expropriation and grilagem of small farmer's lands in Maranhão... and in the semi-humid part of the Tocantins valley... (Minc, 24-25).  

The violence of the grileiros was sometimes resisted with limited success.  

Indians also suffered great violence as the white population moved onto their lands. Massacres were carried out by professional Indian hunters and by bands acting under the authority of coroneis. Conflicts developed between small farmers and Indians, often resulting from state governments selling settlers land within recognized Indian areas (L. Silva, 262).

**Subsistence farming**

Subsistence farming has been carried out in Brazil since colonial time by independent

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113 We witnessed the identical procedures in Tocantins during 1985-1992.

114 For instance, José Porfirio led a group in Goiás that resisted grilagem throughout the 1950s when their land was made more valuable by the construction of the Belem-Brasilia highway. Porfirio was murdered during the military dictatorship (Minc, 25).
small farmers, renters, share-croppers, and posseiros. As manual labor was looked down upon by the Portuguese colonists, most of the early colonial subsistence farms were run by those with Indian blood, although later many such farms were run by poor whites, free blacks, and slaves. Throughout Brazilian history, rural workers and subsistence farming have been looked on as being backward and inferior.

Current historians recognize, however, that both poor whites and slaves had a much more pro-active role during the colonial period and the monarchy than had previously been thought, carving out spaces for themselves, generally in subsistence farming with the marketing of small surpluses. They have also recognized that subsistence agriculture played a far more important economic role than has generally been recognized (Motta 45; Gomes 2001, 269 et seq.; Siqueira 1997, 41-43).

During the Old Republic, there was a great deal of discussion about promoting food production so as to provide the basic needs of urban consumers. Some of this discussion centered around small farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce established a small number of agricultural settlements. Technically oriented ruralists promoted a four-pronged approach -- colonization, modernization of production methods, education, and credit/cooperativism. These ruralists tended to view the rural worker as the object of social action, rather than as one who could participate in it himself with something valuable to offer (Mendonça 1997, 139-140, 178-181, 213).

This attitude toward rural workers continued to prevail during the Vargas era. It was during the 1950s, with formation of the peasant leagues in the Northeast and the pioneering adult literacy work of Paulo Freire, that the concept of the rural worker as
subject of his own development began to be widely spread among intellectuals. This concept was to be a key element in the base community work carried out by the Church, beginning in the 1960s (of which more below).

The Estatuto da Terra: 1964 – present

Historical background

On April 1, 1964, a military coup ousted the Goulart government, virtually without resistance. While large landowners, concerned about agrarian reform, were among those who supported the coup, they were by no means the only source of support. The coup was widely approved among businessmen and the middle classes: inflation was increasing, the government was deeply in debt, Goulart showed little ability to control the situation, often engaging in irresponsible rhetoric. Since 1889, when they removed the monarchy, the military had stepped in and assumed control of the government periodically during crises. It was widely expected that they would do this now, returning power to a civilian government after a provisional period.

Eight months after taking power, the military government, under its first president, Marshall Humberto Castelo Branco, pushed through the Estatuto da Terra. While the large landowners complained that they had been betrayed, they were stripped of their primary argument – that such a statute was communist: Castelo Branco, who had fought with the allies in Italy in World War II, had an impeccable reputation and had entered office with the support of the United States. The landowners’ representatives in

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115 In this respect, one of the last straws for the military was when Goulart suggested that enlisted men should unionize.

116 Law 4.504 of November 30, 1964
Congress resorted to delaying tactics -- seeking to question everything they could in the proposed legislation. But modernizing agriculture was one of the three stated priorities of the government (the others were controlling inflation and reorienting international relations), and it pushed the law through (R. Bueno 1997, 3-6).\footnote{On the role of the agrarian question in justifying the coups, see Jones; for a leftist perspective on the matter, see Minc. The military also provided subsidized financing to the rural sector in general, and started the National Fund for Rural Refinancing with USAID funds (Linhares and Silva, 185). Oliveira (1988, 83) states that Castelo Branco's Minister of Planning, Roberto Campos, assured landowners that the Estatuto would not be acted upon.}

It is not my intention here to analyze in detail the \textit{Estatuto da Terra}. That law is still the basis of Brazilian agrarian reform legislation.\footnote{There are nearly eighty active laws and decrees that touch upon issues related to agrarian reform; most of these were issued after the Estatuto, but a few predate it, going back as far as 1937.} What we will look at are the major developments affecting agrarian reform which have occurred over the forty-five years since the \textit{Estatuto} was passed, giving particular emphasis to the underlying patterns mentioned above.

Suffice it to say here that, while there is debate about many aspects of the \textit{Estatuto}, most observers agree that it is a fairly good law which, if acted upon, could serve as a basis for serious agrarian reform. In enacting the law, the government, both responding to United States policy and from its own viewpoint,\footnote{U.S. influence is seen generally in the Alliance for Progress rhetoric and more specifically in the \textit{Carta de Punta del Este}. The Brazilian War College, which provided courses and training for military officers, also advocated agrarian reform for modernization.} saw agrarian reform as essential to the modernization of agriculture and the creation of a rural middle class. Although the validity of those goals was questioned by the left, the law had an overall applicability that made it acceptable to progressive forces.
In taking over the process of enacting agrarian reform, the government had “seized the flag” from the workers, in a certain sense cutting short their participation in the making of the law by delivering it from above. At the same time it provided them with a new rallying point, the workers now taking on the task of defending the *Estatuto* (R. Bueno, 6-8, 21).

While the *Estatuto da Terra* provided the basis for an agrarian reform, the reform never took place. After Castelo Branco, who identified with the moderate wing of the military, left office in 1967, the government came under the control of the hard liners and the emphasis turned to national security issues.

It is true that the military government did not carry out an agrarian reform: in two decades there were only one hundred and seventy expropriations of land, the concentration of land ownership increased enormously, as did the proletarization of the countryside (more than one million, six hundred thousand small farmers were converted into landless workers between 1970 and 1980). The landowners during these years oscillated a great deal in their positions. On the one hand, they had the government that, in order to maintain their support, threatened them with agrarian reform, even if a decrepit one. On the other hand, they had the opposition, the workers, the left, the popular movements, talking of a more radical agrarian reform and of invading land (Martins 1986, 25).

In 1985, the military government claimed that, during its twenty-one year administration, it had distributed a million titles to land, although the President of INCRA later admitted the number was only 560,000. Outside observers acknowledge 470,000,
but of these over 300,000 were simply titles issued to long-standing *posseiros*, recognizing the legality of their holdings. Of the remainder, 94,000 were settlements in the Amazon, on government lands or on bankrupt rubber plantations that had been expropriated in order to build highways (principally the Transamazonica), lands of little value, far from markets. Only 76,000 titles (about 3,620 per year) were genuine agrarian reform, involving expropriation of *latifundios* and distribution of land to rural workers (Minc, 8-10).

The military planned to pass the presidency to a civilian government through an election held in a carefully crafted electoral college, meant to assure selection of a picked successor. However, when Aureliano Chaves, the civilian vice president of Brazil, who identified with the moderate military, objected to the candidates chosen by the hard liners and made an alliance with the opposition, many civilian politicians who had supported the government followed him. They supported Tancredo Neves, a member of the opposition party. Tancredo, a highly respected conservative with close ties to the Church, made a commitment to agrarian reform.

Tancredo died before taking office, and his vice president, José Sarney was sworn in as president. Sarney, who had been part of the Chaves faction and the former Senate leader under the dictatorship, is from a family of large landholders in *Maranhão*. When the Minister of Agrarian Reform, Nelson Ribeiro (nominated by Tancredo and committed to agrarian reform) submitted to Sarney a National Plan for Agrarian Reform (PNRA), Sarney returned it to him nine times -- each version weaker than the last -- before

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120 In contrast Minc notes that the rural exodus in 1985 was 1.1 million people per year.

115
approving it.\textsuperscript{121} The Sarney government made it a practice to delay and lose expropriation requests sent to it by the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (Martins, 1994, 89-90).\textsuperscript{122}

Meanwhile, during the twenty-one years that had passed since 1964, the climate with respect to agrarian reform had changed dramatically, in three ways:

- During the hard line years, organization in the countryside had been severely suppressed. Labor leaders were arrested, killed, or forced into hiding; the incipient rural labor unions was co-opted and turned essentially into administrative units that processed government health benefits for workers. Though the Church committed itself to rural worker rights to a greater depth than previously,\textsuperscript{123} and although a relative loosening (\textit{abertura}) of government control after 1979 allowed the rural labor movement to begin to revive, a decade and a half had virtually been lost.

- The military government successfully involved the urban business sectors in land ownership. This was done through a series of laws granting incentives to companies

\textsuperscript{121} Decree 91.766

\textsuperscript{122} Veiga (1990, 73-146) narrates the effort to achieve agrarian reform under the Sarney government. Reform was also sabotaged by INCRA functionaries; in 1988, I was at a meeting with the Governor of Goiás, Henrique Santillo, who was nearly in tears with frustration: he was trying to have a \textit{latifúndio} in Goiás expropriated, but the process repeatedly reached the President’s office with errors of procedure and documentation that would make expropriation impossible.

\textsuperscript{123} The Church was virtually the only institution in Brazil capable of standing up to the military government, and even then at considerable risk. The ecclesial base community (CEB) movement, starting in Espirito Santo in the 1960s and spreading throughout the country, organized groups, especially in rural areas, to provide mutual self help, understand the current political and economic events, judge them in light of Christian standards, and act to change them (\textit{ver, julgar, agir}); this movement had a strong role in changing the fatalism one often encountered in the countryside in the late 1960s. The CEBs were closely watched by government police, often harrassed, and organizers were at times arrested or killed. In 1975, the Church formed the Land Pastoral Commission (CPT) to provide support to dioceses, CEBs and other groups working with land issues. The CPT also helped the rural labor movement as it began to revive in the late seventies and early eighties. In 1980, the Bishops came out with a strong document advocating land reform.
for the purchase of land or for engaging in rural activities. The FISET program subsidized corporations that invested in reforestation, the FINOR and FINAM programs, subsidized companies that invested in agricultural/stock-raising activities in the Northeast and Amazon regions, respectively. Often companies would invest through specially formed forestation or cattle-raising enterprises. As criteria for such programs were vague, the investments tended to be aimed at low-cost/low maintenance efforts: fast growing trees (*eucalyptus, pinus eliotus*) for cellulose, cattle ranching. The negative impact of these programs on the countryside has been widely noted. However, they served to provide the urban elite with a vested interest in a concentrated land structure. With growing inflation, the non-agricultural upper classes also began buying land for investment and speculation (See, e.g., Aguiar 1985, 53-58; Moura 1988, 3-4; Powers 1987a, 288-289).124

- The banner of "modernization" -- the government's basis for enacting the *Estatuto* -- had fallen. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the model of modern agriculture had increasingly changed -- in the United States and elsewhere -- to large commercial farming, mechanized and dependent on commercial fertilizers and pesticides. Those who supported "modernization" now viewed the small family farm as a relic. The economic argument seemed to be on the side of large landholdings, leaving land reform as a peripheral social issue. In essence, the landholders had found a new argument against agrarian reform.

Thus, when the Constitution of 1988 was promulgated by Congress (acting as a constitutional convention), the Church, the populists, and the left found themselves

124 Martins (1994, 49) points out that the alliance between large capitalists and landowners dates back to the beginning of the Old Republic, but was made stronger by the incentive measures here discussed.
advocating a social justice issue with little support from those most interested in economic development.

[T]hey did not manage a solid clause on agrarian reform, this defeat due decisively to the conservative congressmen, who were not worried by Vargas styled corporativist measures for the urban sector, but did not want to negotiate... the rights of property in the countryside. A new organization of rural landowners, the União Democrática Ruralista, outflanked the defenders of agrarian reform through intensive and effective lobbying. The conservative message was clear: guarantees of human rights were inoffensive but threats to land rights were another matter (Skidmore, 269-270).\textsuperscript{125}

The Constitution’s vague distinction between productive and unproductive land was particularly harmful, “practically annulling the relatively more advanced concepts of the Estatuto da Terra.” This distinction gave state and local judges grounds (which they amply used) for supporting the claims of large landholders, generating “a systematic wave of evictions of the occupants [small posseiros] from the land” (Martins 1994, 90-91; see also Moura on judicial actions).

\textsuperscript{125} The UDR’s lobbying was made easier by the fact that a very large percentage of congressmen (the “ruralistas”) were either landowners or tied to the landowning class. See Martins 1994, 91; Powers 1987b, 326. Veiga 1990, 7-9, notes that, in the mid-80s, not only the right, but the center and left, largely bought into the argument that modernization had made obsolete the economic arguments in favor of agrarian reform, a position he finds strange given contrary empirical evidence from other countries.
Modernization of Agriculture

The modernization in agriculture\textsuperscript{126} that occurred during and after the military regime has been analyzed elsewhere (Powers 2006). I outline here a few key points.

The process began as one focused on technology, seeking to augment the productivity of both land and workers. This included purchase, maintenance, and operating expenses for equipment (tractors, irrigation systems, etc.) and inputs such as hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides -- all of which required increased capital. It has been estimated that the value of such costs and inputs rose from less than 15% of the brute value of agricultural and livestock (agropecuária) production in 1949 to 40% in 1980. At the same time, processing of agropecuária production became both more widespread and more of it took place in Brazil than previously. Even items that were not processed -- such as truck garden produce -- tended to be marketed increasingly through modern commercial systems (transportation systems, wholesale centers, supermarkets) (Lavinhas and Ribeiro 1995, 73-75).\textsuperscript{127} By 1985, approximately 75% of food was sold in supermarkets (Belik 1999, 193-194).

Agriculture that evolved in this direction became a link in the chain of what has been called the “agro-industrial complex” (AIC). The chain does not start with the land, but with the inputs to the land, passes through the growing stage, then moves on to processing and commercialization. Capital is essential to this chain, so financing

\textsuperscript{126} Defined as the growing use of industrially manufactured inputs (Powers 2006, 7). Some authors use the term “conservative modernization” (Delgado et al., 1996, 218; Szmrecsanyi and Ramos 1996, 238; Ramos 1999, 188)

\textsuperscript{127} Lavinhas and Ribeiro note that, in the 1960s, Brazil opted for a “green revolution” productionist model over an agrarian reform model.
becomes key -- sometimes in a subsidized form from the government, sometimes through other measures such as pre-planting contracts with processors for sale of the crops. Agriculture is subordinated to financial and industrial capital (Lavinas and Ribeiro, 75; Mesquita and Brandão 1995, 12.)

The new system increasingly viewed land as a commodity. Ironically, however, this worked against the modern concept of agricultural efficiency in two ways: (1) during the inflationary economy that reigned in Brazil from the late 1970s to the mid 90s, land compared favorably with other investments and was purchased by speculators with no interest in developing its agricultural potential; (2) corporate investors who purchased land through tax incentives and subsidies -- an attempt to link financial and industrial capital more closely to agriculture -- had little vocation for agriculture and put only about 20% of their land into production (Benjamin, et al., 187-188).

Modernization of this type was most effective in the newly opening areas of the Central-West and in the relatively developed Southeast and South. In this last region, where there is a strong European tradition of family farms, such farms were to a certain extent included. Nevertheless, most small farmers -- especially in the less developed North and Northeast -- were excluded from the process of modernization:

Those rural producers, the great majority, who were not associated/integrated into this process of modernization, but who suffer its consequences, are transformed

128 "...in addition to a means of capitalist production, land becomes a highly liquid financial asset in a fairly unstable market for property titles, gaining value at an accelerated rate, at levels highly competitive with other financial assets" (Lavinas and Ribeiro, 75).

129 Although this rate is better than that of other latifundiários, it is below the rate for small (65%) and medium (28%) farms.
into the rural poor, into the excluded ones who are no longer producers, except as
a labor force that lives in want, waiting for the creation of possible modes of more
stable and promising insertion into economic development, and for whom access
to land no longer guarantees anything except a level of survival which is less than
minimal and forces them into various forms of salaried work (Lavinas and
Ribeiro, 74).\textsuperscript{130}

As carried out in Brazil, agricultural modernization proved harmful in at least
three ways. First, it created new, more efficient monocultures (soy, grains, oranges) with
vast productive capacities but for markets which are highly volatile, dependent on the
world economic situation, on the exchange rate, and on subsidies.\textsuperscript{131}

This makes it so that modern Brazilian agriculture is, at the same time, very
productive and very vulnerable. Pressured by the costs of inputs that are acquired
on the market, dependent on capitalist calculations and integrated into agro-
industrial complexes, it falls into disorganization easily, in contrast to what
occurred with the traditional [subsistence] agricultural sector, which was much
more self-sufficient. The vulnerability of our modern agriculture will only

\textsuperscript{130} The last phrase is an overstatement; where subsistence farmers have orientation and mutual support,
they can achieve a level of well-being perhaps superior to that of most urban slum dwellers, although their
money income is minimal.

\textsuperscript{131-131} Jank (2000, 125-6) notes that, while exports stagnated during 1981-92 due to worldwide recession,
1993-2000 was a “surprisingly” dynamic period for exports, especially key products such as soy, coffee,
sugar, chicken, and cellulose. The 1990s also witnessed a “profound structural change” in Brazilian agro-
business via opening of the economy and deregulation of markets, requiring both manufacturers of inputs
and processors to consolidate in order to compete, causing further concentration in the non-agricultural
components of the AIC. Real prices for crops fell consistently and were 50-60\% lower in 1995/98 than
they had been in 1982/86. By the turn of the century, “The big players in Brazilian agro-industrial
exports... could be brought together in a large room” (Jank, 123-4, 126-9; Helfand and Rezende 2001, 248-
9, 266-8).
disappear when its ties to a powerful internal market are increased (Benjamin, et al., 81-83).

Second, as Brazil opted to modernize via large, mechanized commercial farms rather than through smaller productive units, the marginalization of small farmers mentioned above forced many rural workers to leave the land.

Enormous contingents of small landowners were ruined and rural workers were displaced -- in a process that continues today -- moving on to contend for a place outside of agriculture, at virtually any [minimal] salary. Those that insist in remaining as farmers are systematically pushed out to the most distant areas, with the worst lands and the least infrastructure.

A new dynamic was added to the land conflict, one in which the more powerful forces are divided from the poor not only in terms of land ownership and financial power, but increasingly in terms of technology (Benjamin, et al., 84).

Finally, modernization as it has been practiced in Brazil, leads to increasing ecological problems. These are due in part to the pushing of subsistence farmers into areas unsuitable for sustainable farming: arid lands, river margins, rain forests -- leading to problems of desertification, erosion, deforestation. It is also due in part to the problems that plague modern agriculture everywhere -- agro-toxins, destruction of biodiversity, increasing dependence on chemical fertilizers. But chiefly it is due to the continued predatory and expansive nature of Brazilian agriculture -- worsened by the current view of land as a mere commodity. One is reminded of Sergio Buarque de Holanda's observation, with respect to colonial times, that technology simply made bad
agricultural methods more devastating (Buarque de Holanda, 49). The comment is even more applicable to the high technological capabilities of our own time.

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It was common up until very recently to speak of an archaic Brazil and a new one, existing side by side, the rural areas usually (although not exclusively) being part of the former, in contrast to the efficient industries of the cities. Rural poverty was especially identified as being part of the archaic Brasil. While there was some truth to this observation, it tended to obscure the reality of the modern situation: with the intermingling of the rural and urban elites and the option for agricultural modernization, land concentration and rural poverty are not so much a product of archaic practices as they are of archaic patterns transformed into modernity. New technologies, the opening of transportation, the increased sophistication of financial and commercial networks, made it increasingly easier for small groups of the wealthy to dominate larger areas of land. While their motives may have been no worse than those of their colonial and imperial fore bearers, the capacity of these groups to extend their influence, to eliminate the spaces and practices which they see as wasteful or risky (such as adverse possession by small posseiros, informal land use, or share cropping), advanced considerably. A strong argument can be made that many subsistence farmers in the past, living in relative isolation, were better off than the marginalized rural poor today. In any case, those who think that the struggle of the rural workers and their allies today is against an archaic

132 Buarque de Holanda, also noted (51) that frequent change in land ownership served as a disincentive to invest in the land’s fertility, another factor applicable to modernization. See also, L. Silva, 47-48

133 Lambert, Os Dois Brasis, is the classic statement of this approach. See also Moraes. For a view that refuses this distinction, see Miranda Neto, 45-47
system are dangerously mistaken: their struggle today is not against the archaic, but against the modern, the new.\textsuperscript{134}

The Underlying Patterns

The underlying patterns mentioned above have continued in the period since 1964.

- Although the domestic market for agricultural goods grew, the export sector continued to be favored. Pressures and incentives to export increased with the large negative balance of payments that emerged during the last ten years of the military regime (Benjamin, et al., 83-84. See also Skidmore, 251).\textsuperscript{135} The great anomaly in place since colonial times continued: Brazil became one of the world’s foremost exporters of food while a large percentage of its own people suffered from hunger and malnutrition.

- Large landholdings continued to be the rule, and land concentration increased (see, e.g., Hall, 108-120).\textsuperscript{136} While diversification occurred so that Brazil was not entirely dependent on a single export crop (as in the case of coffee), the plantations/farms

\textsuperscript{134} José de Souza Martins has developed this thesis; see Linhares and Silva, 142. In traditional, relatively isolated farm communities, for instance, farmers would store surplus harvest from good years, thus providing for occasional bad years. With the development of transport, however, the pressure to sell surpluses increased. Given the vast disparity of wealth, virtually every “modernizing” project - roads, irrigation, tourism - results in further marginalizing the poor. See, e.g., Porto, 179

\textsuperscript{135} President Cardoso stated with reference to agriculture: “Or Brazil multiplies its export efforts or it will not have conditions to overcome its difficulties.” He expressed the intention, however, to involve small landowners in this process (Lana). Martins (\textit{Atraso}, 77) notes that the military regime’s option to focus on the export market rather than the internal market, largely determined by factors outside Brazil, led toward promoting large landholdings.

\textsuperscript{136} In 1985, at the end of the dictatorship, 0.8% of rural properties of 1000 ha. or more occupied 44% of the arable land; this figure probably underestimates true concentration as it is common for the same owner or group to own more than one such property.
themselves tended to be monocultural. New monocultural export crops emerged (oranges, soy) as well as the older monocultural crops for export or domestic markets (cattle, rice). With adoption by the military government of the Pro-Alcool Program (incentivating alcohol-fueled automobiles and subsidizing sugar growers), land planted in sugar-cane actually increased (Martins 2000b, 27). Cheap labor also continues to be an important factor, despite a limited amount of mechanization. Rural wages continue to be low, many rural workers do not have signed work cards or receive employment benefits, and cases of de facto enslavement of rural workers (often brutally enforced) are regularly reported. 

- Despite the push for more efficient commercialized agriculture, the great mass of Brazilian land still tended to be wastefully used, with poor agricultural techniques and ecologically harmful practices. Figures from 1989 revealed that only 14% of Brazil’s arable land was under cultivation; that figure fell to 6.73% on landholding of between 1000 and 10,000 ha. and 2.31% on landholdings of over 10,000 ha. (Benjamin et al. 1998, 187). Wide scale burning of fields is common throughout the frontier areas; during the pre-planting months the smoke over states such as Rondonia, Tocantins, and Pará is thick enough to interfere with air flights. The continued pushing of poor farmers deeper and deeper into the Amazon has had negative environmental impact. Widespread land speculation, fueled by economic instability, increased the tendency of non-agricultural elements to invest in land,

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137 Oranges were usually processed to concentrate prior to export. One Brazilian orange grower had more orange trees than the entire state of Florida. Skidmore, 250

138 On slave labor see, e.g., Sutton; J.S Martins (Reforma Agrária, 41-44). Brazil’s income disparity between urban areas and rural (3/1) is the highest in Latin America (BID, Desigualdad, 16). At the end of the military regime (1983), only 4% of rural workers had signed work cards (Mesquita, 12).
deforesting large tracts in order to claim the land was “productive,” but in fact increasing the percentage of unproductive land (Almeida and Campari 1995, 1-7; Powers, 1987b, 324-325).

• There has been a change in the perception of the value of land. Nevertheless, while the value of land today may now be more an economic symbol than one of social status, there still exists in certain parts of the country (the Northeast and Central-West, for instance) a tremendous prestige in being a large landowner. Certainly the large landholder still has power in rural areas where he holds land, and in remote areas this power may be considerable. In addition, during times of instability and inflation, land offers one of a few safe investments, and is held by the non-agricultural elite for savings and speculation. Landowners also have had privileged access to public resources through credit, subsidies, and co-opting of government projects (Costa Filho 1998, 172; Tavares 1999, 230-231; Benjamin, et al., 79, Almeida and Campari, 7).\textsuperscript{139}

• The relationship among land, commerce, and finance grew more complex with the landowner status of great corporations, the myriad of (often abused) subsidized financing and tax incentive mechanisms, and the greater intricacies of financial and commercial markets. With the growth of food processing plants in Brazil, the

\textsuperscript{139} In the early 1990s a scandal broke out when it was discovered that many deep water wells drilled by the National Department of Drought Prevention Works (DNOCS) were on the property of wealthy landowners, including congressmen; the procedure was completely legal. Around the same time, the Catholic Church in Ceará undertook a project of locating over 4000 reservoirs built with public funds over the last forty years; it was found that many of these were on private lands. The Church advocated for public access to these reservoirs. Martins, \textit{Atraso}, 80, says that, with the reinforced link between urban capital and large land, there appeared after 1984 “...a new oligarchic elite, with very modern outward trappings.”
agricultural-commercial complex of the Empire and the Old Republic has evolved into
the agro-industrial complex of today (Mesquita and Brandão, 12).140

- The relationship between government and landowners continues to be complex.
  From 1950 to 1980 Brazil’s rural population fell from 70% to 30%. This clearly
  affected the old rural structure, as did opening of the countryside to transportation
  and communications (the military regime recognized this and gave control of
  powerful media to groups -- especially TV Globo -- that could be counted on to
  support positions that maintain the essential economic structure). Furthermore,
  landowners almost ceased to be a class per se: not only had corporate interests (and
  many wealthy urbanites individually) become landowners, but the old landowning
  families -- following practices that had begun in colonial times -- were increasingly
  important in commercial and financial activities. This is especially true in the North
  and Northeast, where there has been no urban industrial class to speak of and the old
  (e.g., sugar mill) money plays a significant role. The Northern and Northeastern elite
  has become expert in the use of government subsidies, not only in agriculture (e.g.,
  Pro-Alcool) but in industry, tourism (e.g., hotel construction), etc. (A member of a
  leading Recife law firm representing the elite told me that only three of their clients
  were real entrepreneurs; the rest dealt almost entirely with government funds.) But
  the old patterns still prevail in the North and Northeast, with elites able to control
  significant rural and poor urban votes, and the representational distribution in
  Congress, which heavily favors the North and Northeast, gives these elites a

140 Linhares and Silva, 145, note that the role of the agro-industrial complex in knitting together the
  interests of the rural and urban elites.
tremendous voice in national affairs (see, e.g., Sodré 2003)

- As noted above, confusion of land titles and of possessory rights continues to be a problem. In February, 1999, INCRA announced that it had discovered over 18 million hectares of land in the state of Amazonas that had been illicitly claimed by *latifundiários*, and that there was strong evidence that at least another 11.3 million hectares in the rest of the country was in the same situation. While such problems are perhaps most severe in frontier areas, title issues are common close to (and within) large urban areas (Lacerda, 2/25/99).

- Violence continues to be common in land conflicts. The military government, fearing a rural uprising, took brutal repressive action against rural union leaders and organizers and encouraged private groups to do the same:

  The military repression... opened the doors for violent action by the large land owners through their overseers and gunmen, in hundreds of places throughout the country, in the certainty that they would not be punished and, beyond this, were allied with the repression that was maintaining order.... Never in the history of Brazil was the *latifúndio* so powerful in the use of private violence and never were the armed forces so fragile in relation to it as during the military

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141 Although many factors lead to rural emigration, one strong factor has been the eviction of sharecroppers and small *posseiros* (Moura, 1-3; Powers, *Land and Violence*).

142 Identifying such land requires a painstaking search through local registries; judicial action must then be taken to reclaim it. As mentioned above, when buying farm land an hour outside of Rio de Janeiro, we discovered that almost all local lands were held in *posse*, often with unregistered changes of ownership and confusion with respect to titles. Major litigation is ongoing as to the legal ownership of Barra da Tijuca, a huge coastal area at the southern edge of the city of Rio, which has developed during the last twenty years into one of the richest neighborhoods in the city; conflicting titles and claims dating back to the 19th Century have litigated for years. Oliveira (85) notes that INCRA figures show that, in the mid 1980s, most large landowners (96% of *latifúndios por dimesões*) were not paying land taxes.
regime. In a certain manner, it was as if the Guarda Nacional had been reborn
.... (Martins, Atraso, 82-83; see also, Brasil: Nunca Mais, 125-128)\(^{143}\)

Figures for rural workers killed during the military regime are difficult to ascertain. In the period immediately following, the figures indicate an increasingly violent land conflict; although murders of workers and organizers peaked in the late 1980s, they continue to this day, accompanied by almost complete impunity of both the killers and those who hire them.\(^{144}\) As noted above, fraud and corruption with respect to land titles are rampant.\(^{145}\)

- Efforts at reform continue to be frustrated. The Church, principally through the CPT, has devoted substantial effort and resources to defending the rights of small farmers and landless workers; it sponsored (in 1987) a major campaign in favor of agrarian reform and continues to be a vocal advocate. Following the military abertura, rural union groups and other civil groups, including NGOs, began organizing and representing rural workers seeking land reform. The Movimento Sem-Terra (MST - Landless Workers Movement), organized in 1984 and gaining national visibility in the 1990s, has engaged in a policy of more dramatic action, including helping groups of landless workers to physically occupy land. The net result of all this, in terms of

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\(^{143}\) Oliveira (31-54) presents a summary of land related violence during 1964-86; for more recent period, see CPT publications.

\(^{144}\) Where there is significant international pressure, as respecting the murder of Sister Dorothy Stang, convictions of murderers are more likely (e.g., BBC News 2010)

\(^{145}\) "The conflict in Pontal de Paranapanema... is, in this sense, just one example. According to information collected by the Folha de S. Paulo [a major newspaper], nearly 50% of the region can be considered devolutas. All of which indicates that the genealogical tree of the land titles, from 1852 until today, is incomplete or falsified. The newspaper [states]... ‘two fazendeiros of Pontal manage to quickly falsify the titles, that have been passed hand to hand with each resale’" (Motta, 224).
effective land reform policy and actual land redistribution, has been miniscule.\(^\text{146}\)

**Impact of Development on Small Farms**

It has been noted that the model of rural development adopted in Brazil, particularly beginning with the military government, favored large corporate and/or absentee owned farms to family farms. The model “caused great inequalities in the countryside, as it accelerated the rural exodus, the industrialization of agriculture and its “technification” without, however, providing equitable distribution of knowledge and opportunity” (Blum 82). This led to the “premature expulsion” of workers from the countryside (Veiga 2000, 87; Wood and Carvalho 1994, 226).\(^\text{147}\) The “expulsion” of small farmers from the countryside, though generally an economic phenomenon, was also achieved in part through fraudulent and violent practices on the part of those seizing land (Powers 1987a, 1987b, 1987c).\(^\text{148}\)

Although the number of small rural properties did not decrease during the military dictatorship, they tended to become smaller – thus less able to support families – and offered limited opportunities for the younger generation. Furthermore, the significant decrease in renters and share croppers meant that many families were forced to leave agriculture or add to the growing number of day laborers.\(^\text{149}\) These changes placed rural

\(^\text{146}\) On MST see Oliveira, 79;

\(^\text{147}\) Sobhan (1993,112) notes that disproportionately capital intensive rural development in Brazil results in both rural and urban poverty which, in themselves, become a barrier to economic development.

\(^\text{148}\) Porto (1997, 177-207) has an interesting discussion of possible connections between technology and violence in rural Brazil.

\(^\text{149}\) There has been some discussion of rental and share-cropping as alternatives to expropriation for affecting agrarian reform. Although such a movement is probably not politically viable, the founding in March, 2002, of a rental and share-cropping exchange (*bolsa*) in Santo Anastácio, São Paulo, is an
workers in a position in which they had almost no bargaining power. Of those who stayed in agriculture, many were forced to migrate to other regions (mostly the frontier). (Moreira 1999, 28, 39).

Small farmers who stayed on their land often became suppliers of raw material for agro-industry. The strengthening of the oligopoles of the industrial sector of agro-business (both inputs and outputs) gave agriculture per se less bargaining power and a lower percentage of returns. This loss was made up to large landholders through government subsidies (especially rural credit), but small farmers tended to lose out. (Moreira 1999, 29-34, 39). Writing in 1981, Moreira (1999, 33-34) noted:

In general, the industries... act as an oligopoly, where competition for agricultural raw material rarely was carried out through competition in prices paid to producers but through other conditions in the purchase contracts – which tend to be generalized in relations between small family producers and the processing industry. Among the most usual forms of domination are (a) the furnishing (for free or not) of technical assistance, that assumes the double role of binding the producer to a certain company, on the one hand, and of demanding and encouraging the use of modern inputs, on the other; (b) the furnishing of credit to the producer, the company guaranteeing, on the one hand, the sales commitment in order to repay the debt and, on the other, the reposition of conditions of reproduction of capital from the small producer, and, consequently, his technology, (c) fixing the price of the product, established generally without the interesting development (Sant’anna 2003; X. Graziano 2003). On the level of modern agriculture, Laurenti (2000, 176) notes that the increasing use of rental land by large producers begins to divorce the question of land concentration from wealth accumulation. (See also Alston, et al., 1999, 202-203)
intervention of the rural labor union, the interests of the company prevailing.... (d) after fixing the price of the product, what effectively determines the price received depends, fundamentally, on the conditions linked to “classification” of the product (which results in different prices) and the measure of payment (weight, volume, etc.). This process has been increasingly carried out by the companies.

Generally, this situation led to a reduction in the surplus value retained by farm families (Moreira, 122).

Another extremely important impact of the modernization of agriculture – or of the mentality that promoted that modernization – was to create an attitude that mechanized, commercial agriculture is advanced and progressive, and that traditional family agriculture is archaic and backward. Small farmers – and especially subsistence farmers – were increasingly marginalized culturally,

... especially dealing with that which, more or less in a confused manner, he associates with his identity... and the practices of life and work with which it is linked. In these conditions, individuals and groups will remain always at the margin of the overall system.... (Almeida 1999, 153)

Together with an overriding attitude that urban is more advanced, “better” than rural, these values undoubtedly had – and to some extent continue to have – a large role in causing the young to migrate to the cities.\footnote{When we lived (1985-92) in Tocantins, a rural state with a population of 600,000, only one public middle school in the entire state stressed agriculture as a vocation. Generally the values taught were urban ones. The movement of Cooperative Family Agricultural Schools does wonderful work against this trend, but they are few and far between (see UNEFAB undated a, b, and c; see also Carneiro Baptista 2003). It was only in 2003 that the Federal Ministry of Education, under the new Lula administration and at the request of the MST, established a special secretariat for rural education.} (It is interesting, however, that Carneiro
(1999, 113) found that children of small property owners were less likely to want to move to the city than were children of those who did not own land.)

Who are the small farmers of Brazil? Jank (2000, 124) cites Guilherme Dias as classifying three distinct types of Brazilian rural producers:

- approximately 350,000 who have accumulated almost unrepayable debt and have not found a solution, especially in light of the extremely high interest rates in Brazil;
- about 780,000 who have the possibility of taking a new leap forward based on new productive technologies depending on a number of factors: the growth of the domestic market, the opening of new export markets, and the bettering of macroeconomic conditions and infrastructure;
- about “four million producers in the process of marginalization;” most of these are engaged in “pure food subsistence activity (principally in the North and Northeast regions)” but there are also a good number of “small family producers who encounter the risk of growing exclusion from the agro-industrial system.”

Although there are family-owned farms in all three of these categories, virtually all farmers in the third group are family farms.

Blum (1999, 69-72) presents another useful classification. He divides agricultural establishments into those owned and run by businesses (patronais) and those owned and run by families (familiares). The latter he divides into three types:

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151 Using terminology from the *Estatuto da Terra* – the Land Law (4.504 of 1964), he divides these into *Latifúndios* and *Empresas Rurais.*
• “Consolidated” – properties semi-specialized and diversified (3-5 income producing activities) whose owner lives on the property; they are generally about 50 ha., although they may range as high as 200; they use high technology and generally rural credit; their gross margin (total receipts minus variable costs) is in the range of R$15,600 p.a. Their owners are usually enlightened, leaders in the community, able to seek technical and financial advice, have good analytical and management skills.

• “In Transition” – more diversified properties (3-6 income producing activities) whose owner lives on the property; generally about 20 ha., although they may range as high as 100; use medium level technology; and their total receipts are lower. They are less likely to use rural credit, use less technical assistance, and have weaker analytical and management skills.

• “Peripheral” – even more diversified, with 4-7 subsistence activities, the excess of which is sold. The owner lives on the property, which is usually less than 20 ha., with a range up to 50. Low level of technology is used, and little or no rural credit. Income is below one minimum salary per month.¹⁵²

Although the details of Blum’s classification reflect the South of Brazil more than the North/Northeast, his three levels make sense. Most family farms in the North and Northeast would be peripheral ones, belonging also to Jank’s “four million producers in process of marginalization.”¹⁵³

¹⁵² Blum’s figures on income are clearly wrong – he claims that a monthly minimum salary represents R$7800 p.a., when in fact it has never represented more than about R$2600 p.a.

¹⁵³ Blum (62-70) provides a good summary of attempts to classify and describe family agriculture, including those used by PRONAF and INCRA. He notes that the difficulty in exactly categorizing family agriculture should not diminish its importance, but should encourage further study. Note also Porto and Siqueira (1997, 33-35), who distinguish between “integrated” and “excluded” small farms but note the overall complexity of rural Brazil.
Most of these four million, Jank (124) notes, are subsistence farmers, for whom “the apparent solution involves mechanisms that guarantee the producer the minimum level of income to survive (such as work programs, distribution of food baskets, rural pensions, minimum income programs). For the other family producers, the solution involves the creation and sustaining of jobs that permit the competitive insertion of large numbers of people in agricultural and, above all, non-agricultural activities (rural or urban\textsuperscript{154}).” The increasing need for non-agricultural sources of income for rural inhabitants, which partially results from the modernization of agriculture (Graziano da Silva, et al. 1999), is discussed below.

Montoya and Guilhoto (2000, 22) state that “the technological development and specialization of labor signify for the Brazilian rural producer a process that is necessary and beneficent as it permits him, with the same effort of labor, associated with the intensification of use of capital, to produce greater income and, therefore, increase in social well-being.” They note that, from 1959 to 1990, while the rural population remained essentially the same (33.16 million/1959, 35.83 million/1990), the per capita value of actual agricultural and live-stock produce rose from US$ 89.71 to US$ 925.29.

These figures are impressive. However, while it cannot be doubted that “for some, this process [modernization] brought about a bettering of work conditions, cultural awakening, and an important increase in income and salaries, it meant, on the contrary, for many, marginalization or social exclusion.... Brazil finds itself increasingly marked by inequality and the maintenance of regions and social classes in misery or in conditions

\textsuperscript{154} The term “urban” in Brazil applies to small towns – the seats of rural municipalities – as well as to cities.
close to misery.” (Almeida 1999, 30) The results of the policy of modernization have been described as:

... the exclusion and the exodus [from the countryside] of large contingents of rural workers and inhabitants, the strong social differentiation, the elevated concentration of land and of certain modes of production, pollution and the wearing out of renewable natural resources, the decrease in biological quality of agricultural products, the increasingly concentrated markets. (Almeida, 31)

The increase in salaried rural workers has led to discussion of the “proletarianization” of rural workers (e.g., de Janvry).

...the concept of the *industrialization of agriculture* should not be reduced only to alterations in the form of production.... The industrialization of agriculture represents not only changes in the relations of Man with Nature but also in the social relations of production and with his work tools.... The industrialization of agriculture implies the passage from a system of artisan production to a system based on manufacturing (with machines and a division between labor and capital) and even to large scale industry in some subsectors... And this passage is characterized essentially by the inversion of the role played by the worker who passes from the active and integrated artisan role to that of a partial worker (specialized in his tools) in manufacturing, until he reaches the passivity of the industrial worker who only watches his machine. (Graziano da Silva 1998, 4) 

However, this description may be overstated when applied to Brazil. Veiga (2000, 104) estimates that, as of 1997, only 26% of agricultural workers were “employees” –
and this would include many outside of the industrialized model discussed by Graziano da Silva. Especially in the less developed Northeast and North of the country, large holdings with employees tend to follow older patterns – such as on the sugar plantations, where employment methods are often similar to what they were in the 19th Century.

It is important to note that “the rural poor are not a homogeneous class” and that changes such as new technology effect different rural groups – and individuals – differently. Rural wage earners, however, tend to be a particularly vulnerable class, and the proportionate rise in their numbers speaks to the greater vulnerability of the rural poor in Brazil. (Griffin 1999, 136-138).

**Subsistence Farming**

Subsistence farming continues to be important. While still considered by most Brazilians as being backward and a block to development, recent scholarship notes that subsistence agriculture is not really an impediment to modernization, but provides inputs that modern agriculture finds convenient -- available sources of cheap day labor, raw materials and food stuffs that are not profitable for larger commercial farms to produce. Analysis has shown that there are many forms of family farm: the “modern family farmer” and the “technically qualified small producer” -- both of which tend to be more common in the South -- part-time farmers (who hold some type of non-agricultural job to supplement income), “lumpesinato” (who have a small piece of land where they live and produce a few things, but depend for their livelihood on working as day laborers for bigger farms), as well as the more traditional, self-sustaining subsistence farmers (see,
As noted above, small farmers increasingly get pushed onto the least desirable lands. Large numbers have been pushed into the Amazon:

Successive governments have deliberately used the region as a ‘safety valve’ to disarm pressures in other areas.... At the beginning of the 1970s, the Medici government, instead of undertaking structural reforms, fed the hope of diverting the so-called ‘excess’ population from the rural Northeast in order to colonize the Transamazonic Highway.... More recently, official resettlement projects in Rondonia and Acre, as well as private settlement plans in various parts of the eastern Amazon, have attempted to attract migrants... (T)he vast majority of the settlers have received no help from the government. They abandon their former homes, travel thousands of kilometers for land, measure out the lot that they claim, construct their houses, chop down the forest by hand, plant and sell their harvests... fighting incessantly against a hostile physical and human environment....

This human effort led to a repeated cycle of occupation and usurpation, as the Amazon frontier was pushed ever further inward. No sooner had the small farmers completed the exhausting task of clearing the land, the stronger commercial interests appeared and evicted them, by legal or violent means, in order to set up cattle farms or other businesses (Hall, 108-109).

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155 Benjamin, et al. (87) estimated there were four million traditional subsistence farmers in Brazil, only a fourth of whom had any access to credit.
The "Power of Backwardness"

Noted Brazilian sociologist José de Souza Martins has eloquently referred to "the power of backwardness" that seems to dominate Brazil. By this, Martins does not mean the notion that part of Brazil is "archaic" in the sense that Lambert (1973) and other earlier writers described it. Rather, Martins is talking about a deeply embedded cultural pattern which makes Brazil unique in many ways, one which -- at least on a public policy level -- avoids confrontation and seeks to work out compromises, especially among powerful groups.

Part of this pattern is a blurred distinction between public and private property. While dating back to colonial times, this is not an "archaic" characteristic, but one which is very much alive. It touches upon what is sometimes referred to as corruption, but does not end there -- many practices (such as a government agency – DNOCS - constructing deep water wells on private properties of major politicians) are legal. Although Brazilians often think of poor people “selling” their votes to politicians as a key factor here (actually, such “sale” is a complex process involving exchanges of favors and patronage\(^\text{156}\)), Martins points out that the really important exchanges of favors are not between the politicians and the poor, but between the government and the rich. Furthermore, he notes that, aside from a small portion of the “Weberian” middle class, few Brazilians see such exchange of favors as being essentially wrong. Indeed, both the

\(^{156}\text{In 1999 a law was passed, with Church support, that prohibits the giving, offering, or promising of anything of value – including patronage or jobs – in return for votes. Law 9.840 of September 29, 1999. It is not clear how effective that law has been in practice, particularly at the local level.}
labor movement, which was born in the state-protected Vargas system, and academics (federal universities -- the keystone of Brazilian academia -- are government-supported institutions with free tuition, the majority of their students coming from upper and middle class families) are involved in the system of government favors (Martins 1994).

While systems of exchange of favors are an essential part of any political system, they reach a high level of expectation and commitment ("compromisso") in Brazil. One of the privileges -- one might almost say duties -- of public office is to provide for one's family and friends, and very few Brazilians see this as being essentially wrong. The external trappings of coronelismo may have changed, but the essential structure -- often carried over to urban settings -- is still very real. 157

A related phenomenon is the flexibility of the elite. Rarely does the political elite say "no" -- protesting rural workers march to Brasilia, meet with officials, have their demands verbally met, go home, and nothing ever happens. It is truly amazing how quickly Church and leftist rhetoric is adopted -- my wife once remarked that, if a stranger came to Brazil during elections and saw the television presentations of the various parties, he would think that every candidate was a leftist. 158

It would be difficult, for instance, to find anyone in Brazil who would -- at least publicly -- admit to being against agrarian reform. Even the UDR -- the ultra-right

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157 The electoral system in Brazil is not based on districts; thus federal and state legislators can draw votes from anywhere in their states, which increases the power of informal networks. Nepotism and helping related groups is common; Brazilians may well complain when a politician "exagerates" in naming too many family members to office, but they are basically sympathetic to the practice. On "compromisso" see Bezerra, 118

158 This phenomenon sometimes takes concrete form; at the height of the base community movement, for instance, the government encouraged local prefeitos (mayors) to organize "community" associations, which were then given government grants.
landowners association -- always declares itself in favor of agrarian reform. Such people will simply say (with some reason) that agrarian reform is more than just distributing land -- one needs infrastructure, schools, health posts, credit facilities, and so on -- all of which are highly unlikely and place a real reform well out of reach. Or they do as the Sarney government did -- outwardly support the idea and sabotage it through inaccuracy, delay, and inefficiency, which are so expected from government in Brazil as to hardly raise a stir.

When it is clear that a change is going to happen, the elite is often able to seize leadership of the change to prevent it from running too deeply -- what Sonia Mendonça has called “changing in order to remain the same.” This is true in the political sphere -- the prince of Portugal declaring Brazilian independence, the military government enacting the Estatuto da Terra, the military regime’s vice president making possible the election of the opposition presidential candidate. It is also true in the economic sphere -- for instance, in the uniting of rural and urban elites to modernize agriculture.

The political system is also expert in co-opting people. One of the difficulties of Church and union organization in Tocantins was that, as soon as leaders emerged among the people, they would be offered jobs or political opportunities by the local power elites. While some resisted the temptation, and a few managed to occupy such posts without

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159 There is a genuine debate as to the importance of land distribution as the basis of agrarian reform. José de Souza Martins, whose opinion is highly respected, claims that the Church particularly has made a large mistake in thinking that land distribution is the essence of agrarian reform -- that in itself it is not that meaningful. Other writers (e.g. Delgado, 233-234) argue that the agrarian problem is primarily an issue of land distribution. It has been my position, and that of most of the Church, that land distribution is an essential first step -- that having land provides farmers with a base and vested interest to work for necessary changes. There is evidence, for instance, that land ownership per se causes rural workers to be more active politically. As we discovered in Tocantins, however, once farmers win their land, a whole new stage of action is needed, helping them to organize and develop productive capacity. The difference, therefore, among people of good faith, is one of emphasis and strategy.
losing their focus, for most struggling farmers or landless workers, it was very difficult to resist the allure of a paying job (for himself or his wife or grown child) and the political compromise that implicitly went with it.

A final factor is widespread impunity for crimes. Impunity is partly the result of a cultural reluctance to call anyone to account for his actions. While scandals rock Brazil on almost a weekly basis, a few token actions against a few scapegoats usually ends the matter. This attitude extends to perpetrators of rural violence.160

This set of political characteristics continues to affect rural Brazil. Linhares and Silva argue that it is the chief unifying characteristic of Brazilian agrarian history:

The only common link uniting the diverse historical patterns of the agrarian question among us is the continuous presence of the political question, in other words, of the domination that excludes the rural population from citizenship, generates poverty and extreme violence. Being a long-standing feature of Brazilian society, it brings with it the seeds of disorder, as though we had always been faced with the same agrarian question, facing the same five hundred years of latifundio.

In fact, agriculture and its responses to the development of the country are not archaic; what is archaic is the political system of domination that impedes the

160 Due to international pressure, the gunman who in 1986 killed Father Josimo Tavares, a CPT priest active in land reform, was later convicted of the murder, although the people who hired him never were. The gunman escaped from prison after a few months. He was later arrested in Gurupi, Tocantins, for a minor crime; when police recognized him, he insisted that he would only deal with CPT lawyers as they were the only ones he could trust! The lawyers met with him once, but within three days he had broken a hole through the Gurupi jail wall and escaped.
workers from participating in the riches of the cornucopia that agriculture creates or could create (Linhares and Silva, 145-146).

**Conclusion**

Tania Barcelar de Araújo, a highly respected economist from the Northeast, notes that Brazil has been able to internally develop highly sophisticated technology for building airplanes and for oil drilling:

This is the same country in which millions of people go hungry. Not because of technical incapacity. Always when the Brazilian elite has made a decision, the country has had the capacity to respond, including in agriculture. Up until the 1960s, for example, the Brazilian savannah lands were considered unsuitable for agriculture. Now the are dynamic areas that produce grains competatively, including for exportation. The same region that, twenty years ago, was held to be hostile to agriculture. Embrapa, a public research company, used it technical knowledge to correct the soil of the savannahs. There was no lack of technology, no lack of organizational skills, no lack of government to supply infrastructure, roads, warehouses, telephones... (Benjamin and Araújo, 17).

In studying the history of land in Brazil, the theme of chaos emerges. Chaos in undefined and overlapping land titles, confusion in a plethora of laws that are not regulated, decrees that may or may not supersede other decrees, regulations that may or may not be valid. Uncertainty when it comes to protecting small landholder’s rights,
uneven enforcement of laws that do exist. Impunity when it comes to punishing gunmen who shoot rural leaders.

Chaotic situations tend to benefit the strong and unscrupulous, tend to hurt the smaller and weaker. Which raises the question that lingers behind every Brazilian analysis of the agrarian question: Is the chaos really chaos, or is it planned chaos?

One notes the frustration, the outrage, on the part of many serious scholars who have studied the land issue. One can hear despair in Ligia Silva’s comment, “...with respect to land matters, nothing appears to have been decided among us in a definitive, clear, and uncontestable manner...,” in E.C. de Mello’s mention of patterns of “modernization without change” or Sonia Mendonça’s, “changing in order to remain the same.” One remembers James Holston’s statement that “...land law in Brazil promotes conflict, and not solutions, because it establishes the terms by which *grilagem* is consistently legalized” (L. Silva, 243; E.C. Mello 1999b, 161; Mendonça, 80; Motta 120-121.)

During the 1980s, most writers tended toward the position that the apparent chaos was consciously created or aggravated by classes that wanted to maintain the *status quo* of their own power with respect to land and to use land policy to benefit their own interests. There is significant truth to this position. It is clear that certain policy makers advocated systems that would force small farmers off land and into cities in the interests of keeping labor costs down, although others seem to have done so under the idea that it

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161 In 2009 Lula was severely criticized for signing into law Medida Provisória 458 (which became Law 11.952), nicknamed the *Medida Provisória de Grilagem*, which legalized 67 million hectares of informally obtained land in the Amazon region. Critics noted that 72% of this land is large tracts held by less than 7% of the landholders benefitte.(J. P. Martins 2009).
is easier to provide services to urban populations than to rural ones (many of these viewed rural life as essentially backward and saw urbanization as enlightenment). There can be little doubt, also, that landowners interested in seizing public or small posseiro’s land have seen the advantages of confused land titles and unclear laws, interest groups opposed to land reform have seen the possibilities for delay through complicating procedures and proposals, gunmen (and those who hire them) have benefited from inefficient, overloaded, and sometimes corrupt courts.

More recently scholars have tended to stress the multi-faceted nature of land, the many types of small and large landholders and rural workers, the variety of relationships among them. Some of these scholars see the dualism (small producer v. latifúndio, dominant class v. oppressed class) of earlier writers as naive. They make valid points, although the essential difference may be that, whereas the military regime, with its clear demand that one choose sides, gave legitimate rise to dualistic interpretations (power v. people, government v. Church, etc.), the more complex interworkings of Brazil’s current democracy make multi-faceted approaches more viable. Some of the newer writers, moreover, especially those who deal with the intricacies of the agro-industrial complex, risk a naivaté of their own, seemingly underestimating the impact of domination in a system in which disparities of wealth are as great as they are in Brazil.

E.C. Mello suggests that (especially with respect to Northeastern landowners) we are not dealing with a hegemony as such, but with a “corporativist class,” i.e., “a class that seeks to preserve its objectives not through control of the social milieu but through insertion into a milieu whose control has escaped them” (E.C. Mello, Norte Agrária,
This seems to me, on a national level, to be valid. Certainly landowners, by merging their interests with those of urban based capitalist classes, have been able to expand their influence. There are, in addition, other factors which have tended to give the interest group power over the ordinary Brazilian mind:

- Faulty agricultural models: as noted above, Brazilians have been generally convinced that large scale, chemically and mechanically oriented agriculture is the only modern approach. The environmental movement is beginning to challenge this view, but it has a long way to go before effectively changing public opinion.

- A model of planning divorced from reality: this is a phenomenon which has been repeatedly noted in Brazil. There is a deep cultural tendency for experts (in Brasilia, in universities, etc.) to develop elaborate and theoretically pleasing plans that have little relation to, much less input from, the people effected. Furthermore, there is a tendency to mistake a paper accomplishment -- a law passed, a plan written and published -- for a concrete one.

- Paternalistic modes of behavior, favor-based politics, and corruption -- the "power of backwardness" discussed above -- which make real change so difficult.

- Inefficiency and inertia. Mello (1999b, 9) quotes Henry Adams: "My conclusion is

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162 Mello was writing of the late imperial period, but the observation is even more valid today. Belik (181-188) further discusses the role of "corporativist" or "corporatist" groups in modern Brazil.

163 This tendency is shared by some well-meaning Brazilian civil groups. There is a tendency to produce beautifully designed posters (against AIDS or child prostitution, for instance) or, as recently happened outside my office building, elaborate displays (this one ran up the hillside and said - children should not be in the garbage - referring to children who work in garbage dumps) and feel one has accomplished something, without taking any action that essentially changes the situation.

164 Thus Veiga, 7, writing in 1989, noted, along with the potential economic advantages of agrarian reform, the growing political inviability of carrying it out. J.B. Silva, however, discussing political evolution in Ceará since 1985, correctly views more optimistic possibilities.
that history is simply social development along the lines of least resistance, and that frequently the line of least resistance is as much unconsciously discovered by society as it is by water.”

With respect to the last two points above, the MST (Movimento Sem Terra) took one of the few viable approaches. They became expert at keeping the agrarian issue in the public eye -- through court actions, demonstrations, public declarations sometimes bordering on the outrageous (see, e.g., Secco).165

One of MST’s key strategies has been occupying unproductive land -- or, depending on one’s point of view, invading it. Marcia Motta notes that the term “invader” is used by the landed classes to describe small posseiros today in very much the same way that it was used in the 1850s.

The truth is that the sem-terra of our time are, in one way or another, heirs to the struggles of the sem-terra of the past, but today they have at least the possibility to record, in the media, their version of the facts. For their representatives, the invasions are in reality occupations of land undertaken by the movement, whose objective is to question Brazilian agrarian policy through occupation of uncultivated lands, many of them legally public (devoluta), but griladas by large landowners.

.... As much in the past as today, the invaders claim that the occupied lands are, in reality, public lands, and not part of the landowner’s domain....

165 The current head of MST, João Pedro Stedile, lacks the charm of his predecessor, José Rainha, and the MST seriously alienated public opinion through seemingly gratuitous acts of vandalism, most notably the invasion and looting of President Cardoso’s private farm in 2002 and the invasion, forced detention of guards, and destruction of plants and specimens at an Aracruz research farm in 2005.
More than a century has passed... Nonetheless, as much yesterday as today, small landless _posseiros_ seek to legitimate the occupation through the principal of the act of possession, denying in judicial actions or in direct confrontations, through their occupation, the territorial limits set by the large _fazendeiros_ (Motta, 225).

In this respect, MST’s efforts had real impact; by 1999 an estimated 90% of rural land expropriations in Brazil resulted from occupations, most of them with MST support (Fernandes, 225).

In order to be effective, the MST’s political approach needed to be backed by serious, long-term pressure, such as the Church and a few civic organizations continue to provide (see, e.g., “O Clamor Que Vem Do Campo” and Biernaski). Equally important is the continued realistic presentation of a new model of “modern” agriculture, one that presents a caring relationship between humans and land not only as the only option which is sustainable over the long-term, but as one which is at least equal (in the long-run superior) to the productivity of current commercial practices.\(^{166}\)

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were indications that Brazil was approaching another moment in its history when agrarian reform might be viable:

Never have conditions been so favorable for the decision, which must be of a political nature, to eliminate the _latifúndio_. It does not have the strength it once had. There are great numbers of the population who desire to work the land; new agricultural technology is available, opening up wide regions for development and

\(^{166}\) For work in this area, see, inter alia, Pessoa, Coelho & Miranda, Tubaldini

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profundely altering the conditions in which production in the countryside can be carried out; rural isolation was broken by roads and communication networks, the population has urbanized, diminishing the political weight of rural bosses. It is anti-historical that Brazil continues to submit itself to groups who base their power and authority on the monopolistic control of territory....

Modern Brazil is now witnessing... a notable phenomenon: the desire to return to the land of populations mistreated in the cities, which have exhausted their capacity to absorb [the population]. At a moment in which unemployment places on the agenda the need to alter the paradigm of employing labor, and in a society in which the demand for food remains high, the existence of empty land, of people disposed to cultivate it, and of available technology makes for a rare potential that our country cannot refuse to use (Benjamin, et al., 85-86.)

A number of additional factors added to the favorable circumstances outlined in the above quote. With a relatively stable currency implanted in 1994, land prices fell considerably and other options for investment (the stock market, lending, commercial and industrial activities) became more attractive. Investment in land was also been affected by other factors: concern with the rising number of land invasions by MST, a serious effort on the part of government to collect land taxes from large landholders, a 1993 law providing a more streamlined process for expropriation, and actions by the government to

167 New mechanisms for promoting agrarian reform, recently introduced by the government, may be a step in this direction. See, e.g., Sekles; Jungman “A Nova Reforma Agrária”
revise the indicators for land use and production efficiency. It appeared that holding a
*latifúndio* would become increasingly less viable (Fernandes, 224-227).\textsuperscript{168}

By early 2006, when the case studies reported in this dissertation were undertaken, it seemed there was a window of opportunity to promote the *vocation* of Brazilian farmers (as well as of Brazil) for agriculture. It was against this background that this study was carried out.

\textsuperscript{168} Fernandes traces land price declines of 30-50% in São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul; in the North this may not be so much a factor. However, he notes that INCRA has now become probably the major purchaser of land (it has been accused of paying inflated prices [see, e.g., Galluci]), to the point that at least one *fazendeiro* has been accused of paying to have his land invaded. (Galhardo). Delgado, 235, notes that the fall in land prices is due in part to the lowering of prices for agricultural goods through opening of borders to imports, but also affected by the high price of Brazilian currency, which changed with this years devaluation. The summary process law mentioned is Complimentary Law 76 of July 6, 1993.
CHAPTER IV

MARKET-BASED LAND REFORM IN BRAZIL
(1996-2005)

Background

Brazil is a unique political/cultural/economic system and, as with all such systems, change is easier to discuss or plan than it is to effect. In Chapter III, I traced how certain patterns in Brazilian land occupation have been endemic since the colonial period. As with any complex system, what appear to be the obvious leverage points for change may not in fact be the best leverage points, and policies made to correct problems may have spin-offs that are damaging, or unexpected reactions which produce results different from, even contrary to, those originally intended.  

In a country with the vast income disparity of Brazil, public policies and development programs tend to suffer significant distortions. One reason is that those who make laws and policies often represent or identify with the ruling classes, and the policies and/or their application therefore, consciously or unconsciously, benefit those classes.

Even when a policy or its administration does not actively benefit the ruling classes, however, distortions result. Access to information, skills, education, and capital are so unequally distributed that almost any change tends to favor the small portion of the population that possesses these resources. Thus the poor tend to be displaced by development projects (irrigation, road building, tourist development) and pushed into more marginal areas while (in a process similar to “gentrification” in U.S. cities) the better-off occupy those lands benefited by the projects.

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169 Examples date back to the 1690s, when the Portuguese instituted land taxes to raise income and control speculation, but which resulted in a loss of control of land registration; the 1790s reforms by Pombal, which proved counterproductive; attempts to diminish rural exodus in the 1950s-1970s by passing land reform legislation, which (due to landowner fears) resulted in expulsion of tenant farmers from the land; FISET incentives for reforestation in the 1970's, which resulted in increased land speculation, rural exodus, environmental degradation, and food shortages.
Particularly applicable to the present case, this inequality extends to bargaining power. The wealthiest classes in Brazil can afford to sit on assets (rural land, urban offices and apartments) even where the assets produce no income or involve ongoing expenses. This phenomenon appears in the holding of vast tracks of rural land, for purposes of speculation, access to rural credit, hedging against inflation, and/or the prestige and political power that land ownership entails. On the other hand, the poorest classes -- including most rural workers and many small farmers -- are often desperate to secure immediate necessities and have very little possibility of bargaining.

The Players

With respect to the implementation of agrarian reform in Brazil during the period leading up to our case studies (1996-2005), a number of players must be considered.

Foremost should be mentioned those who need land -- landless workers and those whose parcels of land are too small to sustain their families. The FAO estimates that 2.5 million Brazilian families are in need of land (World Bank 2002, 2), while the MST (Movimento dos Sem-Terra) estimates that number at 4.5 million (Stedile c. 1999, 2) and a government/university study as high as 5.3 million (NEAD 2000b). In addition, there are many small and medium-sized family farmers who, while they may not need land personally, are interested in the availability of land for their children. Other small farmers may believe that their political-social-economic position may be improved through the growth in numbers and influence of the small landowner class. Small towns -- especially their commercial classes -- benefit substantially when agrarian reform populates the surrounding countryside with small farmers in place of thinly populated latifundios with absentee owners. Urban workers and unemployed may benefit from land reform through a reduction in the numbers of workers in the labor market. In some areas of the country, an increase in small properties may also lead to a more secure and accessible food source, benefiting the urban poor and residents of smaller towns.

At the policy bargaining table, the interests of the landless, of rural workers, and other popular groups tend to be represented by the following:

1) CONTAG (Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura [National Confederation of Agricultural Workers]) - the federation of rural
workers' unions. Formed in 1963, it is based on union structures developed in the 1940s as part of the corporatist state plan of dictator Getúlio Vargas. Operating out of a political philosophy similar to that of Mussolini in Italy, Vargas promulgated labor laws which protected workers' rights but viewed unions (sindicatos) of both employers and workers as auxiliaries of the state; the purpose of these unions was to help keep the economic system working in an orderly fashion. Local rural workers unions were more involved in administering workers' health benefits than in fighting for their rights. CONTAG supported agrarian reform, especially after the end of the 1964-85 military dictatorship, but did so from an administrative approach – proposing laws and trying to work within the government system. (e.g., Magalhães 1996, 2) It met with little success. CONTAG is opposed in some places by unions linked with the more leftist CUT (Centro Único dos Trabalhadores), although since 1995 CONTAG has itself been officially a member of CUT. CONTAG is in some senses both an ally of MST and its rival in representing rural workers. (Navarro 1998, 5)

2) Catholic Church/CPT (Comissão do Pastoral da Terra [Land Pastoral Commission]). During the late 1960s and early 70s, partially in response to the modernization of agriculture promoted by the military government, the Church, especially through its Base Community groups, began to support the cause of displaced and threatened farmers and rural workers. The CPT was founded in 1975 to organize this work, and was soon active throughout the country. The unique role of the Church during the military regime – as the only body large and popular enough to attempt to counterbalance the power of the military – brought under its protection a large number of social justice activities that would normally have been carried out by lay or secular organizations. The interest of the Church and the CPT was and is (as the name of the latter implies) a pastoral one, primarily concerned with the injustices experienced by small farmers and rural workers at the hands of grileiros (land-grabbers) and the negative effect that being thrown off the land has on families. While capable of confrontation, the Church is more
comfortable with negotiation. These positions at times put it at odds with leftists and radical groups, but has also at times placed it in the role of mediator (e.g., Fernandes 2000b, 50-51). The CPT is allied to, but sometimes critical of, the MST.

3) MST (Movimento dos Sem-Terra [Movement of the Landless]) – The MST was organized, with strong Church/CPT assistance in 1984 in southern Brazil – a region of numerous small farms. It has developed a confrontational policy with the government, actively occupying land and engaging in civil disobedience. It is fair to state that the increase in land reform expropriations following 1994, facilitated by economic factors that reduced the value of land as a speculative hedge against inflation and a source of easy credit, was also due to active pressure from MST in occupying land and keeping the land reform issue alive in the public consciousness. (e.g, Kay 1998, 28; SDdimensions 2000, 3)

4) NGOs – Prior to the 1992 Earth Summit, there was division between environmentally oriented NGOs (mostly international), some of which seemed to view people as primarily a problem, and socially oriented NGOs, some of which viewed environmental issues as frivolous. The Agenda 21 process helped to do away with this false dichotomy, so that almost all serious NGOs working in Brazil recognize the mutuality of social justice and environmental issues. NGOs have been wary of collaborating with the government for three reasons: fear of political manipulation, lack of government continuity, and

170 José de Souza Martins (2000b, 27) believes that, with the greater laicization of the CPT after the military dictatorship, the CPT (as opposed to the Church itself) lost some of this pastoral approach and became more confrontational and ideological. It is true that most mediating has been carried out by the CNBB (Council of Bishops) rather than the CPT, but CNBB depends on CPT orientation on land reform issues.

171 During the 1980s, e.g., GoB spent $2.5 billion subsidizing cattle ranchers in the Amazon. (Myers 1992, 443)

172 See, e.g., Hurell 1992, 411-13, 410, on the environmental movement prior to the Earth Summit. There are, however, groups like the Institute of Human Ecology in Pernambuco/Paraiba (with roots dating to the 1960s), that always took seriously the dynamic between human poverty and environment.

173 It is common at all levels of Brazilian government for one administration to completely cancel and change policies and programs developed by its predecessor.
government pressure (responding to political demands) to diminish quality and increase quantity of program coverage. However, most NGOs consider working with government in appropriate circumstances if it is understood that their primary obligation is to beneficiaries.

The other key groups at the market-based agrarian reform policy bargaining table (although only the first two of these were ever officially at the bargaining table) are:

5) **The World Bank** - The World Bank comes to the table with a history of its own, including the following factors that need to be considered: 1) significant criticism inside and outside Brazil for engaging in large-scale development programs that have often proven socially and environmentally harmful (e.g., Piddington 1992)\(^\text{174}\), 2) significant criticism in Brazil for having ignored civil society and NGO input; 3) limited success with land reform programs.\(^\text{175}\) At the time the *Cédula da Terra* program was started, the Bank had limited experience with market-based agrarian reform, and this program was viewed as an experiment. It should be noted that the World Bank is viewed in Brazil, to a large extent, as the representative of the development policies of the industrialized nations, and thus a certain north-south tension exists.\(^\text{176}\)

6) **The Government of Brazil** ("GoB") – which, itself, is a complex alliance of interests. The President from 1995-2003, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a sociologist of the PSDB party, was viewed at the time of his election as being center-left. However, in order to win the election against the Workers Party (PT) and to govern the country in a multi-party congress, Cardoso allied himself with two other large parties: the PFL – a right-wing party, based in Northeastern and Northern Brazil, with a heavy representation of large landowners, and the PMBD – the party with the largest national political

\(^{174}\) "Despite... efforts to improve its environmental image, questions persist about whether the World Bank has.. enacted sufficient reforms. It is not apparent that the environmental units and policies are having any meaningful impact on the culture of the organization..." (Soroos 1999, 46)

\(^{175}\) Interest in land reform among donor agencies had lagged for the fifteen or so years prior to 1997, then experienced a sudden resurgence. (SDdimensions 2000, 1)

\(^{176}\) "Development programs devised by the North have often emphasized large-scale, politically visible projects that impose Western technologies and ways of thinking on cultures and societies that are organized and structured much differently." (Bryner 1999, 178)
machine but which is largely made up, at a congressional level, of political opportunists without strong ideology but with a significant interest in maintaining the status quo. Cardoso became identified with neo-liberalism – the policy of opening the country to free markets (which many feel happened precipitously) and privatizing government enterprises (often in favor of foreign capital). Although he introduced significant programs – including market-based land reform and the bolsa escola, Cardoso was unpopular and widely viewed as sacrificing Brazil’s interests to the demands of the industrialized nations. In 2002, Lula – the PT candidate - was elected President, assuming office in January 2003. Lula maintained many of the prior government’s policies (notably with respect to economics), and built upon and improved such existing programs as the bolsa escola, Cédula da Terra, and PRONAF. His origins in the poverty of Northeastern Brazil gave him a strong personal commitment to land reform, but he faced many of the same political and institutional issues that Cardoso had faced; he same found himself facing a confrontation with the MST that was almost as tense as that faced by Cardoso.

7) **Agro-Industry** – there is intense competition in Brazil in the areas of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides (mostly multinational companies) and food processing and marketing (both multinational and national companies). These groups have a vested interest in including as many farmers and as much land and production as possible in the agro-industrial chain – producing specialized crops with high levels of chemical fertilization and regular uses of pesticides, usually on a mono-cultural basis (considered more efficient), often with pre-planting sales contracts to large processors.\(^{177}\) Agro-industry has no objection to land reform and/or small farms *per se*, seeing them as appropriate for, e.g., fruit and truck farming.

\(^{177}\) The representative of a Japanese pesticide firm told me (8/24/01) that his company, in order to compete, attempts to put together a complete package for farmers – bringing together a seed/fertilizer manufacturer, their own pesticide company, and a food processor who will finance/buy the crop – with orientation provided to the farmers. He considered this to be a win/win situation for everyone.
8) The Ruralistas – the “ruralists” are the larger landowners. They are represented by a powerful inter-party block in congress. Their extreme wing – represented to some extent by the somewhat discredited UDR (União Democrática Ruralista) - promotes violent reaction to the threat of land reform and land occupations. Generally, however, the Ruralistas use their considerable political power to secure legislation and policies favorable to their interests.178

Summary of Brazilian Land Reform Efforts179

While discussions in Brazil of land reform date from the 18th Century, the issue rose to a serious national level following World War II. The 1950s witnessed increasing demands for land reform from both developmentalists and leftists, culminating with the enactment of the 1964 Land Statute (Estatuto da Terra – Law 4.504) – promulgated by the new military regime with support of the United States government, both of whom viewed land reform as a method of combating Communism. Although the Land Statute is in many respects a good law, the strong influence of landowning elites within the military regime prevented serious land reform from occurring over the next twenty years. The first civilian government, which came to power in 1985, headed by a conservative president closely identified with large landholdings, produced little significant land reform, and progress under subsequent administrations has proved disappointing.

Poor progress during the post-military period is attributable in part to the political resistance of landholders, whose position was reinforced during the military regime by government programs that encouraged industry and the urban upper/middle class to invest in large landholdings. In addition, the modernization of Brazilian agriculture, during the 1964-85 period, caused opinion leaders to increasingly view the small family farm as a relic with little economic significance, removing much of the force of the developmentalist argument in favor of land reform. Land reform thus began to be viewed by many as a social project to provide subsistence to rural families so that they would not

178 “One of the main difficulties the executive faces... is the passage of pro-land reform legislation in the national legislature. The bancada ruralista... has repeatedly voted down legislation....” (Magalhães 1996, 3)

179 This section is a brief summary. See Chapter III for more detail.
move into urban slums – i.e., the lesser of two undesirables – a dirt farmer’s life (viewed by urban Brazilians as quaint but not something they would want) v. a life in violent urban favelas. Serious interest in land reform seemed to be limited to a small group of academics, the opposition Workers’ Party, the Church, and the growing MST.

**Legal Background**

Articles 184-191 of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 deal with agricultural and land policy and agrarian reform. Article 184 allows the Federal Government:

> to expropriate on account of social interest, for purposes of agrarian reform, rural property which is not performing its social function, against prior and fair compensation in agrarian debt bonds... redeemable within a period of up to twenty years.....

Expropriation is prohibited of small and medium-sized properties and of productive properties. A property is deemed to be fulfilling its social function if it is being rationally and adequately used, is in compliance with environmental and labor laws, and the exploitation “favors the well-being of the owners and laborers.” Agrarian reform title deeds cannot be sold for ten years after they are conceded. (Arts. 185-6, 189)

The Constitution was further defined by the Agrarian Law (8.629). Enacted in 1993, it was seen as a significant victory for the ruralista anti-land reform block. The law provided liberal definitions of what constitutes “productive property” exempt from expropriation, extended that exemption to unproductive property that has a technical project being implanted, and generally used language which is intentionally unclear and makes the legal process of expropriation easier to defeat. (Alves 1995, 251-253)

**The Beginnings of “Market-Based Land Reform”**

**The Birth of a Policy**

“Market-Based Land Reform” (MBLR) is a term that has come to be used for programs in which a government, rather than expropriating land for redistribution, finances the purchase of land by groups of landless farmers. Though arguably a
misnomer, the term is used in this paper for convenience. The two forms of MBLR that had been fully implemented at the time of our case studies were the Cédula da Terra (under which the settlements we studied were formed) and the Banco da Terra (Land Bank). A third form, Crédito Fundiário, was beginning to be implemented at the time of our case studies.

1) The World Bank Pilot Project – Cédula da Terra

A 1996 World Bank financed project, Ceará Rural Poverty Alleviation Project, included a small market-based land reform element which allowed 700 families to obtain land at a cost of approximately US$ 6000 per family, less than half the then current per family cost of land reforms using expropriation. The initial results of this project led the GoB to make “its first-ever request to the Bank for a free-standing Land Reform Project.” (World Bank 2000, 4)

In 1997, the World Bank granted this request, approving Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation Pilot Project 4147-BR – known in Brazil as the Cédula da Terra [Land Note] Project, which further instituted a market based approach to land reform.

The project seeks to reduce rural poverty in Northeast Brazil by: (i) increasing the incomes of about 15,000 poor rural families through improved access to land and participation in complementary, demand-driven community subprojects; (ii) raising the agricultural output of lands included in the project; and (iii) pilot testing a market-based approach to land reform in which beneficiaries obtain financing for the purchase of suitable properties negotiated directly between rural communities and willing sellers and which, if successful, will enable the Government to greatly accelerate the pace and lower the cost of its programs to improve land access by the rural poor throughout the Northeast and elsewhere in Brazil. (World Bank 1997, 2)

Community associations of rural workers would select the land and negotiate the purchase, allocate land to members, present supplementary proposals, receive financing, and engage in mutual self-help projects. The program was to be operated in a decentralized manner through state and municipal governments, and an active role was foreseen for “intermediary” NGOs. (Ibid, 2, 9)
The pilot would be implemented over four years. The budgeted cost was US$ 150 million (i.e., $10,000 per family), allocated 30% for land purchases, 56.2% for infrastructure, goods and materials, 2.6% for community development and technical support, 6.7% for state government level administration, and 4.5% for Federal Government evaluation and dissemination. (Ibid., 2-3)

The World Bank justification for the market-based approach as an alternative to expropriation noted that resistance to expropriation leads to higher fiscal costs, legal disputes, long administrative delays, and political contention, and that the expropriation and redistribution process results in “Frequent selection of unsuitable beneficiaries.” (Ibid., 5). It was noted that government policies (subsidized agricultural credit, blanket debt relief, and tax breaks) and economic structural problems (inflation), that had led to land being over-valued as an object for speculation, had to some extent been curtailed by the current GoB, improving the viability of a market-based approach. (Ibid., 4, 6).

With respect to environmental matters, the World Bank noted:

In contrast to conventional land reform projects, which because of lower costs are often located at or near the agricultural frontier, land purchases under the proposed project will likely occur well within traditional agricultural areas where services are available and markets are near. Therefore, the project is consistent with an overall approach to reduce the pressure on protected areas and primary forests by intensifying land use within the agricultural frontier. (Ibid., 9).

2) Implementation of the Land Bank (“Banco da Terra”) 

Complementary Law No. 93 of February 4, 1998, instituted “the Fund for Land and Agrarian Reform – Land Bank.” Following the World Bank proposal (developed in

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180 The World Bank Proposal did not specifically mention corruption, which in the past led to gross overpayments for land and purchases of phantom land (e.g., Ministério de Desenvolvimento Agrário 1999; Gondim 2001b). The World Bank model clearly envisions a negotiated model in which the interest of the buyers will make such overpayments less feasible.

181 “...without price stability at the macro-economic level, the problem of getting prices and incentives right at the regional and local levels (which forms the central thrust of... World Bank policy) is unlikely to be effectively addressed.” (Hurrell 1996, 424)

182 This paper focuses on the Cédula da Terra, and is not directly concerned with the Land Bank. Differences between the two programs are briefly discussed in Chapter VI.
conjunction with the Ministry of Agrarian Reform), the Law created the Land Bank "for the purpose of financing programs of landholding reordering and rural settlement." Beneficiaries are to be landless rural workers with at least five years experience or tillers with land parcels whose properties do not reach the size necessary to sustain a family, as defined in Article 40(II) of the Land Statute. It allowed for both collective and individual loans, payable over twenty years, a grace period of up to thirty-six months, interest no greater than 12% per year (a subsidized rate in Brazil), with a discount of 50% of principal and interest allowed pursuant to regulations.

The Decree regulating the Law entered into more detail, clarifying that collective loans could be made through cooperatives or associations of beneficiaries, that loans were to be secured by mortgages on the farm properties and, in the case of collective loans, by the fiduciary pledge of all cooperative or association members. Loans could be made for land purchase and basic infrastructure. A Caretaking Council (Conselho Curador) for the Land Bank was created at the federal level to oversee the state and municipal governments, which had direct administrative responsibility for the program.

The process of land purchase started with a Carta Consulta (Consulting Letter) from the proposed beneficiaries – usually a group organized in a cooperative or association. The Carta included basic information on the group, number of members of the group who intend to participate in the program, identification of all association members and their spouses, preliminary data on the land they wished to acquire (more than one property can be listed, in order of preference), and the estimated value of the

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183 Assentamento – here translated as “settlement” -- is the term for communities of small farmers who have won their land through land reform.

184 The actual rate in use is even more highly subsidized. Central Bank Resolution 2.728/2000 establishes interest at 6% p/a for loans up to R$15,000 per beneficiary, 8% on loans of R$15,000-30,000, and 10% above that. A rebate on financial charges is allowed of up to 50% in regions denominated “poorest” and 30% on all others.

185 Previously Decrees 3.027 of April 13, 1999 and 3.115 of July 9, 1999, both revoked by the current Decree 3.475 of May 19, 2000.

186 The Council consists of seven Ministers (Agrarian Development – who presides, Agriculture, Planning, Development-Industry-External Commerce, Finance, Environment, and Sports & Tourism), the president of the National Development Bank (BNDES), the president of INCRA, and two representatives of potential beneficiaries, selected by the Minister of Agrarian Development.
property and of additional basic infrastructure needed. A declaration by the landowners declaring willingness to sell to the beneficiaries, and proof of their ownership, had to accompany the Carta. The Carta was submitted to the local Municipal Council for Rural Development, which must forward it, within thirty days, to Technical Units, established by state governments or associations of municipalities. The Technical Unit then examined the eligibility of the proposed beneficiaries (cross-checking with lists of beneficiaries of other agrarian reform programs), the legal status and eligibility of the property, the adequacy of the property for the proposed purpose, its fair value, the priority of the project pursuant to national norms, and the availability of resources. If the project presented no difficulties, approval was to be communicated to the beneficiaries and the Municipal Council; if resources for the year in question were lacking, the project would placed on a waiting list for the next year. (Regulamento, Arts. 3, 27-30)

The legal operation was carried out in a single document which included the public registry of sale, financing contract, and mortgage. (Ibid., Art. 38) Provisions were made for accompanying and auditing the process. (Regulamento, Arts. 40-45) In the event of non-payment of principal or interest by beneficiaries, extra-judicial collection is to be attempted, failing which the beneficiary is listed as non-compliant in CADIN (the informative registry of unpaid credits of the federal public sector) and SERASA (the central credit service for banks). (Ibid., Art.25) No mention is made of judicially enforcing mortgages.

The Philosophical Issues

At first glance, the question of MBLR would seem to be simple in concept, if somewhat more difficult at the level of proof. Is the MBLR an effective instrument to redistribute land to working farmers in a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable manner?

No instrument, however, is value free. The manner in which goals are achieved affects both the nature of those achievements and the lives of participants and beneficiaries.

187 Municipalities may group together in associations to participate in the program.
Underlying the conflicts that surrounded MBLR are deep philosophical differences as to the way things ought to be. This is true even among those who, in good faith, firmly believe that a meaningful land reform should take place: the World Bank, sectors of the government, the Church, the unions, MST, the NGOs. I concern myself here with looking at the philosophical issues that divide these “good faith” players, setting aside for the moment, those players who — while they may verbally support agrarian reform — have little interest in its outcome or, in some cases, consider it as a superfluous or negative undertaking.

For convenience, I divide this discussion into a look at (1) methods and (2) results of agrarian reform, although I believe that the two sets of issues have many common philosophical roots.

1) Methods

“Land is not received as a gift, it is conquered”\(^{188}\) is an MST slogan. It is a reaction to centuries during which access to land in general, and agrarian reform in particular, were viewed as primarily something which occurs from the top down. In Chapter III, I traced how, from the 14\(^{th}\) Century in Portuguese history, land was a grant from royal authority, and how this pattern remained throughout Brazilian history, both formally (through legal structures) and informally (through large landholders, who would allow less important tillers use of land). While there were always exceptions of small tillers who staked their own claims, this happened most frequently in frontier and other marginal areas\(^{189}\) (continued expansion into the Amazonian frontier and other marginal

\(^{188}\) “A terra não é ganhada, é conquistada” An MST document translates this as “Land is not gained, it is conquered,” but this translation loses some of the meaning of the word “ganhada” in Portuguese.

\(^{189}\) This is a recurring pattern in Brazilian history. “Certain societies, such as Brazilian, permit an expansion at the margins of the formal and institutional system. This reveals at the same time a negative aspect, that is, concentration of power, and others, positive, the possibility for many people who live in marginality to find conditions more or less comfortable in which to live and work. But this does not occur without a strong dependency in relation to the “center.” It appears that one deals with, here, a form of self-organization of the “periphery” that seeks to constitute a more autonomous way within the economic system, giving itself levels of liberty and independence in relation to the dominant scheme and the modern classical pattern of organization of work. Those who propose this type of autonomy pertain to social groups that have generally few rights to participate, are poorly organized, and live in a precarious situation on the economic and material plane.” (J. Almeida 1999, 149)
areas being one of the causes of environmental problems\footnote{e.g., The highway to Rondonia, which in the 1970s opened the southern Brazilian Amazon to migration and significant degradation, was financed with a $440 million loan from the World Bank. (Soroos, 45)}. If land in those areas became more valuable, the top-down structure would reassert itself.

For the MST and its allies, therefore, the struggle for land is not only an end in itself, but a process of conscientization (\textit{concientização}). Through the struggle, the worker learns not only to value the land itself but the need for solidarity, critical thought, and continuous assertion of rights.

It could be responded to this position that the MBLR mechanism, in establishing a system through which small farmers pay for their land, \textit{is} providing them with a sense of importance of that land, a true sense of owning it and having “conquered” it. It is not (at least, entirely) a give-away. Furthermore, insofar as the program promotes associations of owners, cooperatives, training, etc., it could be argued that the system is promoting other values which the MST advocates – such as solidarity.

The answer to this is partly practical as well as philosophical. Or, better, it has practical results which arise out of the philosophical positions. The position of the MST and its allies might be summarized as follows (this list was originally developed during the Cardoso administration, but the MST relationship with the Lula administration is not as different as one might have expected)\footnote{This summary is my own, but based on extensive reading, discussion, and personal experience. (See, e.g., Aslam c. 1999, Global Exchange/Economic Justice Now c. 1999, Latin American Report 1999, Plevin 1999, Schwartzman 2000, Stedile c. 1999)}:

- The essential purpose of the GoB is to defuse the social conflict created by, and undermine the political base of, movements such as the MST. The government is using access to land in much the way that Henry Ford used higher salaries to defuse the union movement. The government (as opposed to individuals in the government) has no real interest in land reform and, once the social movements are undercut, will return to the minimally active stance it followed prior to the rise of those movements.
- Through stressing land purchases, the government is giving the large owners the essential choice as to which land they will make available. They will tend to keep the best lands for themselves and sell more marginal lands to the workers. Thus the old patterns will be maintained.
• The community associations established for MBLR program are often not authentic community organizations but have only been put together for the purposes of the program, and in many cases are controlled by political figures identified with landowners or other elite. This situation arises in part because neither the World Bank nor the government is interested in undergoing the long (minimum three year), arduous process of building genuine grass-root organizations.

• Decentralization of the project to state and municipal levels puts power in the hands of those levels of government where large landholders and anti-land reform lobbies have the strongest influence; this is especially the case in the poorest regions of the country, the North and Northeast.

• Access to land should be viewed as a right. The landless should not be unduly burdened with debt on their farms. The process serves to subjugate the small farmers to the agro-industrial-financial complex.

It has also been noted that the original project was presented by the government and the World Bank as a fait accompli with no input from representatives of the landless or other elements of civil society, and that the representation of civil society on the Caretaking Council is “almost non-existent... already indicating serious limitations as to its role and the positions to be defended” (Schwartzman 2000, 1; Bittencourt 1999, 6).

A 1999 analysis by an NGO technician expressed concern that, with the birth of MBLR, the number of expropriations was falling (he noted that, except for the World Bank participation, the funds for MBLR come out of the funds for land reform). He phrased the issue as follows:

[We] understand that the carrying out of an agrarian reform that promotes structural changes in land concentration (with expropriation of latifúndios that do

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192 Brazil has a history of such non-authentic community organizations

193 Tânia Bacelar de Araújo (1998) draws an important distinction between what she calls “deconcentration” – the passing of tasks from a more central authority (e.g., the Federal Government) to less central authorities (e.g., state governments or state offices of federal agencies) as opposed to what she believes to be true decentralization, the passing of real decision making power to beneficiaries and local communities. “For non-liberals, decentralization is not confused with privatization or the hegemony of atomized decisions of individuals or businesses, but means ‘transfer of competency, means, resources and power from the central spheres to the local spheres.’” (p. 5) By her definition, it might be fair to say that the Cédula da Terra program includes some elements of both deconcentration and decentralization.
not fulfill their social function) should not be viewed only through the economic and social aspects of job and income generation, but also from the political point of view (of the power structures at the three levels of government) and that of sustainable development. Therefore, the objectives of agrarian reform are not summed up in the distribution of land for settling families, they should also contribute to the decrease or breaking of the power of the latifúndio, which is responsible for the political, economic, and social backwardness of many Brazilian regions. Only with the breaking of the latifúndio culture... which signifies a change in conception and policies that to this day dominate the Brazilian government, will it be possible to realize the potential of family agriculture and... advance in the construction of sustainable development for rural regions. (Bittencourt, 1)

2) Results

There are at least three views of the results which land reform may bring about:

- Providing the landless with land will allow them to minimally sustain themselves and their families, relieve the country of a significant social problem, and perhaps reduce the pressure on overburdened urban slums caused by rural migration.
- Small farmers will be integrated into modern agriculture as part of the agro-industrial-financial system. The disadvantage of smallness can be offset, to a certain extent, through cooperative structures.⁹⁴
- Small farmers represent the possibility of a truly alternative agriculture and way of life, geared to solidarity rather than competition, use of appropriate technologies, environmentally sound (often organic) farming methods, and more just social structures.

Note that these three positions are not mutually exclusive. Agribusiness people recognize a niche for organic products, even the most solidarity-based groups recognize

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⁹⁴ Among some groups supporting market-based reform, prejudice against small farms is diminishing and there is recognition that family owned farms are “the most efficient and sustainable” (SDdimensions, p. 9).
that farmers need to market their crops, and everyone recognizes that agrarian reform will help resolve a significant social problem. The difference lies in one’s primary vision of what agrarian reform is meant to achieve. The average person on the street (if s/he thinks about it at all), many politicians, and a significant sector of government officials on all three levels, think in terms of the first of these models – resolving a social problem. Those in the government more seriously involved with agrarian reform and agriculture, the agribusiness and financial sectors, the World Bank, and some academics think more in terms of the second model. Many NGOs and popular movements, and some academics, think in terms of the third one.

Perhaps one of the key points that focuses these philosophical differences is the view of land as a commodity. J. Molina (2001), a supporter of market-based land reform writing in an FAO publication, notes that “...the new model of development emphasizes the market as the principal force or factor to distribute resources in the rural sector, both land and labor capital.” Recognizing that classical economic theory requires a competitive market to have fungible goods, freedom of participation for buyers and sellers, and a great number of buyers and sellers, and that all participants should have complete information, he states:

In the case of the land market, these requirements are not fulfilled because said markets are highly imperfect.... First, the degree of heterogeneity of land (which has to do with soil type, availability of water and other natural resources, existence of infrastructure and access to markets, among other factors). Second, the availability of capital to purchase land.... Third... the land market tends to be fragmented and/or segmented. Finally.... the high cost of obtaining information respecting the size and characteristics of property.... [emphasis added] (Molina, 2-3)

195 “...it is important to note that this ideological opposition has little correspondence, in the case of MST... with the concrete situations which they influence, in various regions of Brazil, where the economic projects which they sustain normally have a strong sense of economic integration and inclusion in the commercial and financial relations of the municipalities...” (Navarro 1998, 9)
Molina’s use of the term “imperfect” is standard economic language. Yet it is ironic that in classical economic terms the uniqueness of land is viewed as an “imperfection,” whereas an environmentalist or one who loves land would see this as a valuable quality. Once again, the ability of classical economics to ignore the reality of natural resources, the “conceptual chasms that divide modern economics from ecology” (Hempel 1996, 11), is brought into play.

Within the classical model, virtually all the prerequisites of a classical free market are missing in Brazil with respect to land. In addition to land not being a fungible item, there is no equality of bargaining power between the parties, few clearly defined property rights, no “effective and creditable mechanisms for resolutions of property rights conflicts” or “information systems so that the diverse agents in the market can participate and operate in the same efficient and effective manner.” (Molina 2001, 2)

Some of these failings can be alleviated. The MBLR legislation and regulations take steps to facilitate the legal transfer system, reduce conflicts as to property rights, and equalize (through the creation of technical units and the contracting of NGOs) the access to information. While an efficient and credible court system and overall equality of bargaining power are very long-range problems, the land bank regulations create mechanisms that help to deal with these issues.

None of the “good faith” players in our situation would deny the ultimate value of greater equality, clear property rights, effective conflict resolution, or greater access to information. But the reason for advocating those things can be disputed. A World Bank publication states one position clearly:

Land markets... are subject to regulatory constraints that significantly affect the operation of the market and equilibrium prices and sales, contribute to reduced efficiency, and have negative equity implications. The role of government in land market reform is to remove such regulations, establish a system of predictable market rules, and focus on the provision of information, adjudication of border disputes, enforcement of property rights, and valuation and assessment of land for tax purposes (Brandão and Feder 1995, 1).
Here is a clear concept of land as a commodity.\textsuperscript{196}

It is this factor, I believe, which underlies much of the initial resistance to and continuing discomfort with MBLR concept. Brazilians - especially poor Brazilians - have no particular reason to be enamored of the capitalist system and the market economy, which have not notably worked to their advantage. Other models of relationship to the land may lead to greater social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. A Brazilian sociologist has spoken of the attractive aspects of peasant autonomy, noting that it involves specialized knowledge of work and of a place, the ability to vary work and organize one's work time, and the possibility of living and working "close to the place of origin, conserving social and neighborly relations...."

... these are clearly a pre-industrial relationship with work.... [T]his leads us to admit that industrial work represents, at least apparently, a loss of autonomy that suffers a disaggregation when compared with work as it was previously conceived.... [T]his is not to say, necessarily, that these propositions-aspirations and these experiences of peasant autonomy are retrograde. In fact, one cannot deny that such a system has an internal logic that is dynamic and at times effective from the microeconomic and technical viewpoint when compared with the modern matrix; at the same time, it appears to have preserved certain characteristics of tradition that industrial society, as it is known today, has erased. (J. Almeida, 149)\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{196} At the time of resurgent donor interest in land reform, "...there was an emerging new consensus on neoliberal theory of economic growth... and a related group focusing more on fiscal and trade reforms broadly known as the Washington Consensus. This new paradigm was inherently opposed to policy interventions aimed at achieving social equity. There was a growing body of literature that pointed to development policy overcoming market distortions that prevented resources going to the best use.... Land and natural resources markets did not work because economic policies had favoured subsidies, protectionism and a whole gamut of interventions.... Almost all the major donors are now supporting land reform programmes in conceptual terms that are compatible with the Washington Consensus....." (SDdimensions, 4-5)

\textsuperscript{197} Note also Bryner, 178: "An alternative view of development begins with the interests and desires of local residents, who identify their problems, propose solutions, and work alongside those who can provide external technological and financial support. Crops are produced primarily for domestic consumption rather than export.... These efforts are sensitive to how change effects traditional cultures and to the need to reinvent community and individual identity in response to change.... [A]lternative technologies are appropriate, small-scale, compatible with local knowledge and culture...."
From both a social and environmental standpoint, treating land as a commodity can have negative results. The breakdown in rural community life is notable when land is sold and, particularly, accumulated into larger parcels for commercial farming. The process tends to dispossess small farmers: impressed by the money offered (coming from near-subsistence, a relatively small amount of money seems like a fortune), they often sell land and subsequently discover they have insufficient funds and skills to support their families. (e.g., Powers 1987a and 1987b) From an environmental standpoint, viewing land as a commodity pushes one away from the personal relationship to land, necessary to good husbandry, and towards short-term economic returns dependent on the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. (see, e.g., Netting 1993) The World Bank and neo-liberal vision of converting land into a commodity would, thus, seem to be an example of what has been termed “misplaced concreteness” -- applying the classical economic model to policy making as though it represented reality, with a inevitably distorted impact on real human culture, communities, relationships, and undertakings. (Daly and Cobb 1004; see also Middleton 1993, 110)

Evolution of the Program

As noted above, for approximately fifteen years prior to 1996, the World Bank and other large donor agencies had virtually dismissed land reform as a viable development mechanism. As the Sustainable Development Department (SDD) of FAO (which never stopped advocating land reform) noted, this situation changed:

What is surprising... is the rapidity with which land and agrarian reform has been returned to the development agenda by the major donors.... First and foremost land reform is back on the agenda because rural populations have put it there. (SDdimensions 2000, 1) [emphasis in the original]

The MST in Brazil is cited by SDD as one of the forces that has brought about this change. Also noted as factors in this change of agenda are growing awareness of rural issues on the part of urban populations, increased demands for rural rights, and greater international networking by NGOs and farmers groups, leading to pressures from civil

198 From 1985-1996, an estimated 4 million family farms ceased to exist. Dias & Amaral 2000, 242
society such as the document from the 1998 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “Towards A Better Distribution of Land.” (Ibid., 2)

In light of these pressures, the World Bank and other major donors were obliged to reconsider land reform. Historically, imposed redistributive land reforms have had mixed results, representing “both the most successful and the most unsuccessful examples of land and agrarian reform.” Given the risks of such programs, World Bank rules prohibit it from financing such land reforms. Furthermore, such programs were not in tune with prevailing neo-liberal economic theories. Thus “...negotiated and market-led land reform programmes [became] the ‘flavour of the month’ in the donor community....” (Ibid., 3, 5, 8) “Paradoxically, such [market-oriented] land policies have been much driven from above by the State and international agencies.” (Kay, 28)

The World Bank therefore had a strong vested interest in the success of the market-based approach. In the two years following implantation of the Cédula da Terra program, the Bank’s Inspection Panel turned down two requests for an investigation of the program from the Brazilian National Forum on land reform, a group consisting of most of the major civil society groups dealing with the issue (CPT, MST, ABRA- Associação Brasileira de Reforma Agrária, etc.). The Panel contended that the Forum’s critiques of the program arose from an ideological bias against market-based mechanisms and unawareness of program successes. (Schwartzman 2000, 1)

By 1999, the World Bank was declaring on its web page that “New Approach to Land Reform Proves Successful,” a claim echoed (at a more moderate level) in the neo-liberal press. (Schwartzman, 5; The Economist 1999) The Bank’s web page went on to state that:

...the three year project achieved its objectives one year ahead of schedule. A follow-up $1 billion adaptable program loan is being prepared for this fiscal year to capitalize on the current project’s success and maintain the momentum that this kind of land reform has generate (quoted in Schwartzman, 5).

The rush to expand the program caused tremendous concern, especially as it was recognized that such a large program would draw considerable funds away from land
The Bank’s own Preliminary Evaluation stated that “...the Cédula da Terra program is still too recent to permit an evaluation of its socio-economic impacts, either on the beneficiaries or on the communities” and noted that it was an open question whether beneficiaries would be able to manage their properties and generate sufficient income to meet loan commitments. (Ibid.) Schwartzman points out:

Even were information available on the productivity of the land... and the management capacity of the beneficiaries, it would still be extremely precipitous to call the program a “success,” since there is a three-year grace period for project loans, and the first beneficiaries will only have to begin repaying their loans in 2001. (Ibid.)

During the 2000 Grito da Terra (“Cry for the Land” - an annual event in Brasilia organized by the Church to advocate for land reform), representatives of CONTAG met personally with President Cardoso. CONTAG’s primary demand with respect to MBLR was not philosophical but highly practical – easier credit terms. On this basis, the GoB entered into dialogue with groups representing “organized civil society” that resulted in an agreement to move forward with an adapted Project of Land Credit and Combating Rural Poverty. The Project, announced by the government in July and approved by the World Bank in December, 2000, sought to provide access to land, community infrastructure, and technical assistance to 50,000 families over a three-year period, at a cost of US$ 400 million ($8,000 per family), half to be financed by the World Bank.

Analysis of the Issues
1) The issues related to methodology

The methodology arguments against MBLR were not without merit at the time that they were made. Certainly one of them – that the GoB was seeking to undercut the influence of the MST – rang true. Prior to the election of Lula, the MST was allied to the opposition Workers’ Party (PT) and consistently criticized the Cardoso government. During the Cardoso administration, the MST’s civil disobedience frequently irritated the government, and that irritation seemed to turn to personal dislike on the part of the

199 Plevin notes that in 1999 GoB “cut funding for INCRA 47% while spending $220 million on Banco da Terra.” He also notes that the World Bank loan increases Brazil’s foreign debt. (4-5)
President in 2002 when the MST invaded and vandalized his family farm in Minas Gerais. (This act also embarrassed the PT, which began to distance itself from the MST.) The Cardoso government overstepped itself occasionally in reacting to the MST, and a World Bank preliminary evaluation of the *Cédula da Terra* Program “...found that the *Cédula* [community] associations typically define themselves in opposition to the MST” (Schwartzman, 4). Undoubtedly the Cardoso government would have liked to have seen the MST’s influence wane, and this in part explains the government’s repeated praising and willingness to work with CONTAG, in some sense a less radical, “well-behaved” rival of MST in the representation of rural workers.200 (Jungman 1999a; NEAD 2000a)

The criticism of the community organization component of the program – i.e., that the community organizations undertaking land negotiations were created for that purpose and are not truly authentic – may also have had validity in some cases. A preliminary evaluation of the program found that

the majority of the associations originated from the populist tradition, in which representation is based on co-optation, subordination, and social and political control over poor populations. Even many of the associations that are being created exclusively to participate in the Program appear not to escape this context. It is however necessary to call attention to the fact that programs such as *Cédula da Terra* presuppose autonomous associations, with the capacity to take and implement strategic decisions on the use of assets under their control....

(quoted in Schwartzman, 7)

One observer noted the inability of the community organizations to negotiate directly with landowners, the actual negotiations being carried out by state technical advisors (Xavier 1999, 22). It is probably this type of situation which led to allegations of state officials in Pernambuco receiving bribes and acting as though they were real estate agents (Carvalho 1999).

How ‘authentic’ these community organizations are warranted study, both in the sense of whether they are be able to represent the interests of their members and manage

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200 Evaluators contracted by the World Bank noted the political/ideological dispute with the MST, Church, and other sectors of civil society and suggested that participatory inclusion of these groups would reduce opposition to the market-based programs. (Schwartzman, 4; Navarro 1998) I suspect it is GoB hostility to MST which led the World Bank to officially include only CONTAG in the new program.
ongoing program issues, and in the larger political sense of whether they support significant change or simply become part of the electoral "corral" of local elites. Weak, ineffective, or co-opted community organizations would cut to the very heart of the validity of the program.\footnote{...it is only by reestablishing the primacy of community in political life that the social and environmental sensibilities needed to manage the global reach of technology and capital are likely to emerge.... The relationship between strong communities and effective governance has been documented in numerous studies.... The point of the community restoration argument is... that it permits rooted engagement and face-to-face deliberation... The central premise of this book is that only by linking community ecological values with democratic design of policies and markets can the goals of environmental governance be realized in a sustainable fashion." (Hempel 1996, 8-10)} For this reason, evaluation of the community associations was a central theme of our case studies.

Closely tied to this argument is the issue of whether decentralization places agrarian reform in the hands of those local elites that have traditionally been most opposed to it. There were allegations that "Some associations, urged by landowners, pressured [state technical authorities] that the purchase be made for the price asked by the landowner, at times the landowners promising extra benefits so that some of the community leaders would pressure the government"\footnote{My experience in rural community organization indicates that these charges may or may not be true; because corruption is frequently present in Brazilian society, rural workers (like most other Brazilians) – especially those who do not have significant solidarity-based training – are quick to suspect (and spread rumors about) corruption whenever anything even potentially suspicious arises.} (Xavier, 22). In this respect, it should be noted that the pilot project "involved extensive evaluation and intensive Bank supervision" (World Bank 2000, 9), factors likely to diminish manipulation and corruption on the part of local power groups. Would a broader, nationwide program with less active Bank supervision would be more open to the types of manipulation that such groups have engaged in in the past? The primary mechanism for avoiding such distortions in the program, \textit{per se}, would seem to be that the community organizations are negotiating for their own benefit and therefore have an interest in obtaining the best land at the lowest price. But if these community organizations are not authentic, they can themselves be manipulated by local elites.

With respect to the issue of owners keeping the best land for themselves and only selling marginal lands to the program, possibly at inflated prices, initial studies seemed to show that this did not widely occur (note, however, that in three of our seven case studies..." (Xavier 22). In this respect, it should be noted that the pilot project "involved extensive evaluation and intensive Bank supervision" (World Bank 2000, 9), factors likely to diminish manipulation and corruption on the part of local power groups. Would a broader, nationwide program with less active Bank supervision would be more open to the types of manipulation that such groups have engaged in in the past? The primary mechanism for avoiding such distortions in the program, \textit{per se}, would seem to be that the community organizations are negotiating for their own benefit and therefore have an interest in obtaining the best land at the lowest price. But if these community organizations are not authentic, they can themselves be manipulated by local elites.
studies, owners did sell less desirable land to the program.\textsuperscript{203} The early studies showed that the beneficiaries negotiated purchase of good land at per family and per hectare costs substantially lower than those of land reform expropriations during the same period.\textsuperscript{204} However, it should be noted that expropriation itself is not free from the marginal land argument: the system gives landowners so much leverage in fighting expropriation that the GoB frequently opts to expropriate lands which the landowners are willing to have expropriated, and these are often less valuable lands. (There is support here for the MST position: there are indications that land expropriated as a result of MST land occupations/invasions is better land, especially in terms of location, than that otherwise expropriated by the GoB, and thus leads to more sustainable small farms (Sussuarana 2001)). Furthermore, the market-based approach permits acquisition of medium-sized parcels and “productive” land, which are exempt from expropriation under Brazilian land reform law; indeed, the new program aims to focus primarily on lands that are not subject to expropriation. (World Bank 2000, 11)

One final point on methodology is worth noting. José de Souza Martins, a highly respected sociologist, believes that “Those who fight for the rural workers want an agrarian reform that is confiscatory and punitive for the latifundio,” a position he thinks is pointless and ahistorical. He notes the danger of thinking of the land struggle as “a holy war,” and the “manicheism” of seeing it as a struggle between good and bad.\textsuperscript{205} (Martins 2000a, 25) He criticizes the MST and CPT for failing to dialogue with the government, recognize the plurality of post-dictatorship Brazil, and the inevitability of

\textsuperscript{203} Opponents of the program alleged in 1999 the most expensive land purchased under the Cédula da Terra Program “did not have agricultural potential because of its topography” and that the study of land values undertaken by the University of Campinas for the World Bank was flawed because the technicians responsible for the purchase were the same ones who filled out the study questionnaires. (Forum Nacional de Reforma Agrária 1999, 3)

\textsuperscript{204} Reydon & Plata (1999, 18-19) found that, in comparison with 1998 Cédula da Terra costs, average expropriation costs per hectare during the 1996-98 period were 66% higher in Ceará, 62% in Maranhão, 49% in Minas Gerais, 43% in Bahia, but only 14% in Pernambuco. World Bank 2000, 10, states that the Cédula da Terra lands cost “…about 28% less per family than the present value of initial expropriation prices in the Northeast. Since expropriated owners often obtain additional compensation through subsequent judicial actions, the final cost of expropriated lands can be as much as three times the initial compensation amount.”

\textsuperscript{205} Martins believes that middle class leaders and pastoral agents in the MST, CPT, and other movements tend to ideologize the struggle in a manner that is alien to the way the workers themselves think. There is some truth to this, though I think his cited article overstates the issue.
government management of agrarian reform (Martins 2000b 13-15, 22). I believe that, though uncharacteristically one-sided in his criticism, he is right to the extent that the literature of the MST often fails to distinguish among opposing parties, classing the GoB and the World Bank in essentially the same mode as it would the “landowners” – whom themselves vary greatly in attitudes and methods. On the other hand, it is possible to make the opposite mistake, of thinking that there are no “bad guys” here; greed, corruption, and violence on the part of some landowners and government officials are very much a part of the agrarian problem.

2) The speed of the process

With respect to the issue of whether the GoB and World Bank acted precipitously in expanding market-based agrarian reform from a pilot project to a US$ 200 million program, the vocal criticism that occurred in 1999 (e.g., Aslam, MST 1999a and 1999b, Plevin, PT) became somewhat muted, and probably rightly so. Certainly the critics were right that the World Bank announced victory at an early stage. It has been correctly pointed out that full evaluation of the impact of an agrarian reform program probably requires a thirty-year period, and even then may not be conclusive (Kay). But public policy is not an exact science – decisions have to be made on the best evidence available. The landless families in Brazil need access to land as quickly as is reasonably possible.

In this sense, a great deal of study, analysis, and thought went into examining the pilot project (e.g., W. Brandão 1998, Buainain et al. c. 1999, Navarro 1998, Reydon &

206 “The disjuncture is, most of all, in the fact that MST and the Church managed to put the agrarian question on the agenda of the Brazilian state and, at the same time, did not legitimize this inclusion... when they refused to accept it as a political fact, that has as its necessary and inevitable implication negotiation and agreement as to the viability, extension, form and quality of the reform. Because this is a pluralistic and complex society, different from societies with a more simple social structure, that are the reference point of these organizations, such as Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala....” (Martins 2000b, 25-6)

207 Martins argues that the GoB has actually gone beyond the vision of MST/CPT by seeking to reassert, for the first time since 1822, government authority over public lands held by landowners in posse. Indeed, the GoB has been able to reclaim an impressive 20 million ha. of land in this way. Min. de Des. Agrario 2000a

208 Having approached land reform both as a field worker and academically, I am aware how easy it is to be overcome by hate when you are working in the field (especially when your life is threatened and people you work with are murders). This can be a blinding and negative factor. (see, Powers 1987a, 1987b, 1987c). On the other hand, in the comfort of one’s academic study, it is easier to be cool-headed.
Plata 1999, Vegro & Garcia c. 1999, Xavier 1999). By the standards that the GoB and World Bank set forth, the pilot project was very successful:

With a stated objective of reaching 15,000 families in three years, the Projeto Cédula da Terra... will benefit some 23,000 families with about 617,000 hectares, at a per hectare cost of about R$193 and per family cost of about R$4,759. With complementary investments of R$4,114 per family, the results are significantly below the costs of traditional interventions. (World Bank 2000, 2)

Furthermore, the Bank noted lessons learned from the pilot and adapted the subsequent program accordingly (World Bank 2000, 9-11). This included, especially, greater input from civil society, particularly the active participation of CONTAG and the rural unions in represents.209

The GoB and World Bank would thus seem to have been justified, within their own context, in having moved forward with the larger program. Within its own framework, the analytical and technical work of the Bank, particularly, was impressive (see, e.g., Stiglitz 1998a and 1998b, von Amsberg c. 1999, World Bank 2000) and an attempt had been made to open dialogue with at least some of the other players (although I found no evidence that the GoB or World Bank had followed the advice of their evaluator that including “the participation (decisive and not merely consultative) of the MST... in the process could greatly reduce its opposition....” (Navarro 1998, 9))

3) The issues related to results

The question remains, however, as to the type of results a market-based land reform will produce. As stated above, I think it is this question that underlies much of the resistance to and discomfort with the World Bank model. Will the market-based approach, with the debt burden it places on the new farmers and the technical assistance provided by groups oriented by the GoB and the World Bank, inevitably lead toward land being viewed as a commodity, to the valuation of “modern” techniques and the high use of commercial/chemical inputs, and to farmers being absorbed into the agro-commercial-financial complex, losing their autonomy and solidarity?

209 Plevin states (3) that World Bank management had questioned the legitimacy of the National Forum for Agricultural Reform and Justice in Rural Areas, consisting of CONTAG, CPT, MST and other groups, to request investigation of the program, but that a World Bank inspection panel confirmed their right to do so.
This is not a question to be taken lightly. As noted above, the instruments used to achieve a purpose do have an effect. Prior to undertaking our case studies, I was personally more comfortable with – and confident of the results of -- methods used by the MST and, especially, the CPT – which actively build into the process a strong community and solidarity component, critical of the excesses of capitalism. I felt that one was not as likely to see these attitudes reflected in World Bank orientations.

Yet it needs to be remembered that the primary executor of the program is not the World Bank but the GoB. In Brazil, by the early 2000s, neo-liberalism had reached an apex and its influence was declining. A constructive nationalism was reasserting itself. The inevitability of neo-liberal models was being questioned and there was a growing articulation among those who doubt the wisdom of allowing market thinking to dominate the culture. This had a concrete impact politically – both inside and outside of the government.

At the same time, both in Brazil and elsewhere, the model of “modern” commercial agriculture has been under attack. There is growing recognition that the family farm is not a relic, but a vibrant unit essential to rural production and social well being. As an FAO document noted:

For some time there has been a growing body of scientific investigation that has noted the inverse relationship between farm size and production of food crops.... The data indicates clearly that all other things being equal the family farm is the most efficient and sustainable. This does not emerge through romantic wishful thinking but rather through the fact that, on average, a farm family achieves a much higher density of management than do any other types of farm enterprise arrangement. This greater density of management exists because there is motivated family labour available on a continuous basis. (SDdimension 2000, 9)

A World Bank economist stated that “…studies undertaken in Northeastern Brazil and confirmed by the 1995-6 Agricultural Census have shown that, on average, family farms are more efficient... than large farms...” (von Amsberg c. 1999, 6-7)

From an environmental standpoint, also, there has been a growing realization within certain sectors of society and of the government that modern commercial agriculture, as it has widely been practiced, may be harmful. Among matters being
questioned are genetic manipulation of seeds, use of chemical pesticides,\textsuperscript{210} excessive
dependence on commercial fertilizers, and emphasis on monocultures. Given the
tremendous commercial interests involved with these matters, it would be naive to
believe that they will be resolved quickly or to expect that large producers of agro-inputs
will stop courting and orienting agronomists, agricultural extension workers, and farmers
(small, medium, and large).\textsuperscript{211} Small farmers who have been active in MST, CPT, and
similar programs may have more tools for critiquing this commercial orientation, but
there is no reason, \textit{per se}, why such critical information cannot be shared with farmers
who have obtained their land through market-based mechanisms, especially where the
participation of NGOs is part of the planned process.

\textsuperscript{210} Paalberg 1995, however, noted, 312, 330-1, the difficulty encountered by FAO in getting World Bank
support for even a moderate pesticide limitation program.

\textsuperscript{211} "Everyone is aware of the dangers of contemporary industrial farming, the problem is that it is locked
into a huge social and economic complex that renders any alternative difficult to achieve." Middleton 1993, 111
CHAPTER V

CASE STUDIES

Overview of Case Studies

Introduction

In March and April, 2006, our research team\(^{212}\) visited seven *Cédula da Terra* land reform settlements in the Nordeste (semi-arid Northeast) and Litoral Norte (North Coastal) regions of Bahia (see Maps V-0-A, B, and C). In all cases we interviewed a substantial sampling of settlement area residents, and we also separately interviewed (usually in their offices) technical advisors to those settlements.

In selecting the settlements, we expressed an interest in seeing areas that had experienced some measure of success. We did this for the following reasons:

- In light of substantial criticism of the *Cédula da Terra*/Banco da Terra programs, we wanted to see whether any successful results had occurred.
- In our experience, failure in development projects (especially community organization projects) is easier to achieve than is success; we believed that relatively successful programs would prove to be more interesting.

\(^{212}\) The team consisted of Brenda King-Powers, a sociologist and trained community organizer with 25 years experience in Brazil (including nine years rural/small town community organization – two of them in Bahia – and three years experience working with farmers’ cooperatives in the Brazilian Northeast – including Bahia); Daniel Carvalho, the former director of Caritas (Catholic Charities) in Bahia, with over 20 years experience working with rural community and production groups – he is also the son of a small farmer and grew up in the region we studied; and the author.
• Although one can learn from failures, in many cases of land settlement failure, the original settlers have dispersed.

• We believed that examining what went right – and the problems and vulnerabilities of those settlement areas that have been relatively successful – would allow us to develop information that might be useful to planners and policy makers with respect to future programs of a similar nature.

Settlement areas were initially selected on the basis of interviews with technical people who had supported the program on a statewide basis. Our team intentionally selected the northern, primarily semi-arid region of the state rather than the more fertile southern region, for the following reasons:

• The semi-arid region, which extends north from Bahia, better represents the reality of the rural Brazilian Northeast, the area of greatest poverty in Brazil, where there is a high proportion of rural population and an ongoing notable need for successful development strategies.

• The agricultural and ecological challenges of implanting settlements are greater in the semi-arid region; we believed that successful experiences there were particularly worthy of observation.

• We, the team members, all have substantial experience with, and an affinity for, the semi-arid region.
Summary Description of Settlement Areas

The seven settlement areas are briefly described below. All of the communities are in the officially designated Semi-Arid Region of Bahia with the exception of Nova Lusitania and Boa Vista III, which are in the North Coastal region, although this area is still substantially dry.

All of the communities follow the agro-vila model of organization (developed in Bahia by CELANOR in conjunction with the first settlements in 1997). In this model, each settler family received a house/garden lot in the residential portion of the settlement and a larger agricultural lot in the surrounding fields. This is in contrast to a model in which families have their residences on their agricultural land, preferred in certain parts of Brazil. The agro-vila model makes it easier to deliver electricity, running water, and other services to the residents’ homes.

The land in each settlement is divided as follows: 50% individual lands (both housing lots and fields), 30% collective lands, and 20% ecological reserve. The original purpose of the collective land was to be worked jointly by the settlers, under the

213 Throughout this discussion and in the case studies themselves, the present tense is used to indicate conditions at the time of the studies – i.e., March/April 2006.

214 The Cédula da Terra program financed twelve settlements (a total of 468 families) in the Semi-Arid (Northeast) region of Bahia, and twelve (463 families) in the North Coastal region. In the entire State, there were 111 Cédula da Terra settlements with 4,263 families. During 2002-2005, the succeeding program, Crédito Fundiário, established eleven more settlements (343 families) in the Semi-Arid region, three more (74 families) in the North Coastal region, and 88 more (2,999 families) statewide. (Oliveira, Olalde, and Germani 2006, 7-8)

215 A few settlers did not like the agro-vila system. Some do not like living that close to neighbors, finding the agro-vilas noisy and intrusive (these people may be classified as “truly rural” – the level of noise in the agro-vilas was very low in comparison with most Brazilian towns. Several families had built small shelters or houses on their agricultural plots, where they stayed during key seasons such as planting and harvesting. At least one family had moved permanently out to a house on their agricultural lot, where they lived without electricity or water, but expressed great contentment as to the peace and quiet of their home.

216 Communal areas are often close to the residential area; ecological reserves are usually distant.
direction of the association, with the income used, first of all, to make land payments, any surplus to be administered or distributed by the association. The evolution of the collective area in each settlement – how settlers think and feel about it, how it is administered – constitutes one of the most interesting (and often polemic) aspects of our study.

Vila Canãa is in the município of Euclides da Cunha in the heart of the semi-arid region. Founded in 1998, the settlement has 73 titular families (plus 4 additional households) in an area of 1649 hectares. The economy is based on agriculture with beans as the primary cash crop, supplemented by manioc, corn, cattle and sheep. Leadership in the community is provided by a group of Seventh Day Adventists, most of whom (with some of the other settlers) came from a community that was a land reform settlement in the 1970s.

Veneza is also in Euclides da Cunha, although in an area even drier than Vila Canãa. Founded in 2002, the settlement area has 30 titular families in an area of 1004 hectares. The economy is based on goat raising and cultivation of sisal. Almost all of the settlers came from an area that was declared an Indian reservation and which they were required (as non-Indians) to leave.

Passos da Esperança is in the município of Olindina. Founded in 2001, the settlement area has 30 titular families in an area of 450 hectares. The economy is based on agriculture (manioc, beans, corn) and fruit raising (passion fruit, oranges). As in the case of Nova Lusitania and Boa Vista III below, the majority of settlers have cultural roots in the neighboring State of Sergipe, a people who highly value fruit raising
(especially oranges) and who view themselves to be, in contrast to their view of the Bahians, hardworking, steady, and reliable.

**Moita Redonda** is in the neighboring município of Inhambupe. Although purchased in 1998, actual settlement did not take place until September of 2001. The settlement area has 50 titular families in an area of 677 hectares. The economy is based on fruit raising. This settlement has been more directly affected by local political interference than any of the others.

**Nova Lusitania** is in the município of Esplanada. Founded in 1997, it was one of the first four settlements (all purchased simultaneously) under the *Cédula da Terra* program, and suffered the effects of early organizational problems in the program. The settlement has 26 titular families (plus 12 other households) in an area of 806 hectares. The agricultural economy was intended to be based on fruit trees – principally oranges, but also coconut palms and others. However, with the failure of many of the trees, due to soil problems, the settlers have moved to subsistence farming with a few attempts at cash crops, and most of the settlers also depend on oil revenues (42 Petrobras oil wells occupy 240 ha., and the settlement receives a monthly payment from Petrobras; part of the initial payments from Petrobras went to purchase an additional ~240 ha. in a nearby, non-adjacent area, on which 10 of the families have their agricultural plots). Almost all settlers have roots in a 1960s sergipano orange growing land reform colonization in the municipality of Rio Real, on the border of Sergipe (this characteristic shared with Boa Vista III).

**Boa Vista (Biritinga)** is in the município of Biritinga (the community is referred to as “Biritinga” by the technical assistants in order to distinguish it from other land
settlements named “Boa Vista”). Founded in 2001, the settlement has 37 titular families (plus two other families) in an area of 807.4 hectares, plus two non-titular families (grown children of settlers). The economy is based on cashew, manioc (with three casas de farinha owned by individual settlers), and apiculture.

Boa Vista III is in the município of Esplanada, a few miles from Nova Lusitânia. Founded in 1998, the settlement has 55 titular families (plus several additional households) in an area of 1375 hectares. The economy is based on fruit trees – principally oranges, but there is concern that oranges may not prosper due to soil issues; attempts have also been made to set up a bolacha (cookie/cracker) factory and other cottage industries. As in the case of Nova Lusitânia, most settlers come from the sergipano orange growing culture with roots in earlier land reform colonizations in the municipality of Rio Real. Many settlers came from relatively well off circumstances (with personal property such as motor scooters) before settling on the land.

**The Cédula da Terra Program In Bahia**

As noted in Chapter IV, following a small World Bank experimental project in Ceará, in 1997 the World Bank, at the request of the Brazilian government, approved Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation Pilot Project 4147-BR – the Cédula da Terra Project. Bahia was one of four states included in this program. The initial budget was US$ 150 million (i.e., $10,000 per family), allocated 30% for land purchases, 56.2% for infrastructure, goods and materials, 2.6% for community development and technical support, 6.7% for state government level administration, and 4.5% for Federal Government evaluation and dissemination. The program in Bahia is administered by
CDA – Coordenação de Desenvolvimento Agrário – Agrarian Development Coordination – a State Government agency.

In Bahia, the program had a number of key features. Based on work done by the NGO CELANOR, discussed in more detail in Case Studies 1 and 2, the standard agro-vila approach was developed for the Cédula da Terra land settlements. In addition to the house and farm lots, each community has a collective area (usually 30% of the land) and an ecological reserve, the latter following the Federal legal requirement of 20%.

Two major funds constitute key elements of the Bahia Cédula da Terra program:

**SAT** – subprojeto para aquisição da terra – the land acquisition subproject. These are the funds for actual purchase of the land, including the purchase price and directly related costs such as title registration. Funds are administered through the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil (BNB) and are disbursed at the time of purchase to pay the selling landowner and related costs. The land is owned by the group in the name of the Association – it is not individually held. The settlement has a three year grace period and then seventeen years (a total of twenty years) to repay. Interest is between four and six percent annually (a highly subsidized rate in Brazil). If for any reason payment is not made, all other financial resources (SIC, PRONAF, etc.) are suspended until payment is received.

**SIC** – subprojetos de investimentos comunitários – community investment subprojects. These are funds are a grant allotted to Cédula da Terra land settlement communities for post-purchase investments in community infra-structure, and are administered through the Banco do Brasil (BB). The first disbursement is usually for

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217 In the newer Crédito Fundiario program, the grace period was reduced to two years, with a total of fourteen years to repay if the loan is up to $15,000 and seventeen years if it is over that amount.
construction of housing and basic infrastructure. Beyond that, SIC funds can be used for projects developed by the community under the guidance of their technical advisor. Projects may include planting fruit trees, seed and fertilizer, livestock, equipment, water and electric resources (although frequently the State provides those through special programs), productive facilities such as *casa de farinha* (facility for making manioc flour), and other efforts approved by CDA.\(^{218}\)

Beyond the funds available through SAT and SIC, the government of Bahia made available other development funds. Most notable among these are funds from CAR – *Companhia de Desenvolvimento e Ação Rural* – Development and Regional Action Company – a state-owned development company in Bahia, which provided funding – usually in grant form through the CAR PRODUZIR program – for a number of projects in the settlement areas.\(^{219}\) Another state agency, SECOMP, financed the cookie factory in Boa Vista III, for instance.

In addition, the state government aided settlement areas in obtaining water and electric infrastructure. Basic water infrastructure – including, in the case of Vila Canaã and Veneza, piping of water from distant sources – is underwritten by a combination of state (EMBASA), municipal, and association funds. Starting in 2003, meters were installed in settler homes to measure and charge for actual usage. If settlers wish to have water in their fields, the settler and/or association has to provide installation. Electrical

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\(^{218}\) The World Bank model envisions a fixed amount per beneficiary. That portion used for land purchase (SAT) is subtracted from the total and treated as a loan; the remainder (SIC) is provided as a grant. The purpose in this structure is to provide an added incentive for the purchasing farmers to negotiate lower land prices, while the SIC portion is seen as providing resources to allow the new settlements to move quickly into production and economic viability. (e.g., Deininger 1999; Borras Jr. 2003, 372-373).

\(^{219}\) CAR PRODUZIR projects require a 10% contribution from the community, but this can be in the form of labor, use of the community tractor, etc. PRODUZIR II, in effect from 2001 to 2005, was a $75 million program - $54.4 million from the World Bank and $20.6 million from the State of Bahia. PRODUZIR III, which was going into effect at the time of our visit, was expected to be approximately the same size.
infrastructure is carried out with help from the State Secretariat for Infrastructure’s rural electrification program “Light For All” ("Luz Para Todos").

Settlers also qualify for Federal subsidized agricultural loans. The first and most basic of these is PRONAF-A, a fund set aside for settlers in land reform areas. PRONAF-A loans had a value of up to R$13,500 with very low interest, usually had a three year grace period (although up to five may be permitted), and are then repayable in seven annual installments with a rebate of 40% of principal if paid on time.

Once a farmer has used PRONAF-A, s/he can take out additional loans locally referred to as custeios. These are officially PRONAF-A/C loans, valued up to R$3,000 at 2% per annum interest, payable in up to two years, with a rebate on interest of R$200 if paid on time. In order to qualify for these loans, farmers must have a gross annual family income of between R$2,000 and R$14,000, not counting agricultural retirement pensions. Most families in settlement areas qualify, and many of the farmers took out these custeios, almost always to support specific agricultural projects.

For farmers with a lower family income, PRONAF-B loans are a possibility – these are loans of R$1,000 with interest of 1% per annum, up to one year grace period, and up to two years to repay, with a 25% reduction on the entire debt (principal and interest) if repaid on time. Farmers with family income in excess of R$14,000 can qualify for larger PRONAF D loans at 4% interest, up to five years grace period, with a total of eight years to repay and a 25% reduction of interest if repaid on time.

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220 PRONAF - Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar – National Program to Fortify Family Agriculture. The program was created in 1995.

221 Maria Djalma informed us, interview of March 21, 2006, that she is able to put in an additive that increases the maximum amount to R$16,000. In 2005-2006, the average exchange rate was approximately R$1.00 = US$0.425.
Other funding sources include PRONAF MULHER – a small loan fund for women who are wives of titleholders; this program, initiated in 2004 and expanded in 2005, permitted an initial loan of R$3,000 repayable in one year with discount if repaid in time. PRONAF JOVEM is a similar program for teenagers and young adults.

In 1998, the Brazilian Government created the Land Bank (Banco da Terra) a parallel program which also sponsored MBLR projects. The experts we spoke to preferred the Cédula da Terra program primarily because the Land Bank did not provide for a fund such as SIC and this seriously weakened the viability of the communities. Both programs were superseded by the Crédito Funiário program, and it was generally felt that this new program was superior to both of the others, a number of lessons having been learned and the procedures having been streamlined.

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222 Interview with Berta Veloso and Antonio Fernando da Silva, January 31, 2006.

223 The Crédito Funiário program began in 2001, overlapping with the Cédula da Terra program, which ran through 2002.

224 See, e.g., interview with technical advisors Sergio Ricardo Matos Almeida and Edna Moreira de Brito Batista, March 27, 2006.
Map V -0-A. The Brazilian Northeast
Map V-0-B. Micro-Regions in Bahia at the time the case studies were carried out. Five of the settlements studied were in the Nordeste, and two were on the western side of the Litoral Norte.
The northeast of Bahia (Northeast and North Coastal micro-regions, showing the municípios. The settlements studied were in the following municípios: Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III in Esplanada (54), Vila Canaã and Fazenda Veneza in Euclides da Cunha (14), Moita Redonda in Inhambupe (49), Passos da Esperança in Olindina (45), and Boa Vista in Biritinga (42).
Case Studies 1 & 2

Introduction - Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III

These two settlements, located approximately 10 miles apart in the município of Esplanada, are introduced together because they share three important factors: historical/cultural roots, climate, and a major agricultural and land quality problem. The unique aspects of each of these two settlements are discussed in the individual case studies that follow. As these two settlements were part of a pioneering program that helped set standards (such as the agro-vila pattern) for the entire Cédula da Terra program, the history here related is relevant to the other case studies as well.

Common Factors – Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III

History. In 1960, a large number of families from the neighboring state of Sergipe moved into an area of Atlantic rainforest in what is now the Bahian município of Rio Real, located on the border with Sergipe. In accordance with the agricultural traditions of their region, the Sergipanos were orange growers. Each family settled 20 ha. of land and, with financing from the IDBA, cleared the land and planted orange groves and passion fruit. The families had difficulty repaying the IDBA loans and their credit was suspended.

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225 Except where otherwise indicated, this history is based on our April 27, 2006, interview with Rafael and Eduardo Carlos, respectively coordinator and agricultural technician of CELANOR.
In the mid-1980s, the IDBA wanted to start refinancing the orange groves (which were now 25 years old), but required the formation of community associations to do so. Four such associations were developed in four villages (all in the municipio of Rio Real): Lagoa Seca, Lima, Tanque, and Lagoa de Baixo.\textsuperscript{226}

In 1995, Miguel Arcanjo, a local leader who emerged out of the Catholic CEBs movement, developed a plan through which the four associations could work together. They founded CELANOR – an agency made up of member associations. They hired an agronomist (Manzinho) and jointly bought inputs and sold produce.

As the families in these communities grew, and children came of age and married, the 20 ha. lots were often split up among siblings. However, a minimum of 5 ha. is required in that region to provide basic support for a family. A strong interest arose in finding more land.

In 1996, the joint associations, in conjunction with CELANOR, arranged a large PRONAF financing and bought land in the neighboring municipio of Esplanada, on which they formed the Colônia de Côco – a rural settlement area. This land was settled by approximately 26 families from the various associations, who divided the area in accordance with each settler’s ability to pay: “Those who had more money got more land” (Rafael – CELANOR). This was prior to the Cédula da Terra program, and was a private undertaking on the part of the associations.

By this time, CELANOR had 12 member associations. CDA (then CORA – Comissão Organizadora de Reforma Agrária) approached CELANOR regarding the

\textsuperscript{226} Our team visited this area on March 3, 2006 when we went to meet with Miguel Arcanjo, who still lives there. A good dirt road passes through several very small villages, each with a Catholic church and a few commercial enterprises. The road is lined on both sides with small but well-kept and reasonably prosperous looking farmsteads, the houses not far from the road and the fruit groves stretching out behind them.
Cédula da Terra program. CDA offered to help settle 600 families, and offered CELANOR a R$1 million budget if it would assume primary organization of this undertaking. CELANOR began developing plans – including the agro-vila concept that would subsequently become a mainstay of the Cédula da Terra program in Bahia. CELANOR helped to set up the first four Cédula da Terra settlements in the state: Nova Lusitânia, Novo Orizonte, and Antônio Conselheiro in the município of Esplanada and Cachoeira in the neighboring município of Conde. The official founding (contract signing) date for all four was November 9, 1997. Subsequently CELANOR helped in the founding of other Cédula da Terra settlements, including Boa Vista III, founded on June 8, 1998.227

Although these projects became something of a showcase for the government ("We spent a lot of time with visits…" from the World Bank, United States, etc. [Rafael – CELANOR]), the money promised from the state did not arrive fully as planned. In 1998, however, CELANOR entered the Fairtrade Labelling "Just Juice" program and began to receive international support, so that it was able to continue work without government funds. The Just Juice program provided a better price to growers for passion-fruit and orange juice, and CELANOR received US$100 for each ton of juice sold. These funds permitted CELANOR to purchase a small house in Rio Real as its headquarters and to continue paying its agronomist and field workers.

In 2000, however, CELANOR had to suspend giving technical assistance to the settlements. Technical assistance is based on 8% of the SIC, and the SIC had not been

227 Berta Veloso (interview January 31, 2006) noted that, during the 1990s eucalyptus prices fell and many of the reforestation companies were willing to sell land. In the decade of 2000, eucalyptus prices were improving and the companies in some cases tried to convince settlers to grow eucalyptus, and even expressed interest in repurchasing land, offering to remove population to other land. However, this does not directly impact the communities studied.
disbursed (see below). At the same time, a sharp decrease in the world market-price for passion-fruit juice diminished income from the Just Juice program. CELANOR was unable to pay its people, or even buy fuel for its vehicles.\textsuperscript{228} This situation improved as PRONAF financing became available for the settlements (PRONAF provides a technical assistance fee) – as of 2006, CELANOR was still active in advising on PRONAF projects. Eventual release of the SIC and improvement in the fruit juice market prices also helped, so that CELANOR was able to return to full functioning ability.\textsuperscript{229}

**Culture:** Almost all of the settlers in both Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III come from community associations in Rio Real. Although most were born in Bahia, they are culturally Sergipanos, and view themselves that way. These Sergipanos see themselves as hard-working and goal oriented, and their cultural model of agriculture is one strongly based on orange growing.

**Climate:** Although Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III are officially in the Northern Coastal Region rather than the semi-arid region, which they closely border, the

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\item Mazinho, the original CELANOR agronomist, who had worked with only partial payment during the early years, left at this time, formed a private agronomist firm and took on much of the advising work on a volunteer basis. He is now a PT alderman in Rio Real.
\item Rafael also discussed land settlements that had not proven as successful (Rafael CELANOR 27/04/06). Foremost among these was Cachoeira, which he termed a “mystery.” Located in the município of Conde, it started with 32 families, now has 10; 3 people died there. CDA intervened and indemnified 20+ families who left. The remaining 10, he told us, are living well; they have tractor purchased with SIC funds.
\item Another settlement with problems is Malombé, which was not a CELANOR project. Located in Esplanada – its borders touch those of Boa Vista III – Malombé was the only settlement with primarily urban settlers from Esplanada. According to Rafael, it got the worst land and no agro-vila. The settlers have very large house lots, and the collective area is small and has poor land. In general Malombé is very poor, but there is disparity of wealth there – the prefeito’s brother has two lots with a swimming pool. When we were in Boa Vista III, we were informed that there is violent crime in Malombé. However, the middle school children from Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III attend school there.
\item According to Rafael, the settlements of Timbó and Novo Paraiso are very similar to Malombé. Indeed, when we were first looking into land settlements to study, we were warned to stay out of several in the area north of Salvador, as they had become similar to urban slums and were considered dangerous.
\item Rafael also mentioned Nova Canâa (not to be confused with the Vila Canâa of our studies). Nova Canâa was described by Rafael as a pauperized minifudio (“minifundiaria pauparizada”) where each family has only 1.5 ha. This is not a Cédula da Terra settlement.
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climate is dry – similar to that of the southern portion of the semi-arid region where Moita Redonda, Passos de Esperança, and Biritinga are located. Like those communities, Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III had, at the time of our visit, experienced a dry period, though a less severe one.

Officially, the climate is classed as sub-humid and the natural growth of the region semi-decidual seasonal forest (floresta estacional semidecidual), although to us it looked very similar to the cerrado found in the southern portion of the neighboring semi-arid region.

**Agricultural Issue:** In both Boa Vista III and Nova Lusitânia, the settlers discovered, after buying the land, that much of their land suffers from highly compacted sub-soil. The compacted soil forms an almost rock-like strata, impenetrable by most forms of plant roots, starting anywhere from 20cm. to 2 meters beneath the surface. Thus plants, which seem to thrive in the fertile top soil, bud and grow vigorously but, in the case of fruit trees, will begin, sometimes as early as the second year, to shrivel and die.

This is particularly disheartening to farmers whose goal is to grow orange groves. Most of the settlers we talked to in these two settlements consider the growing of annual crops, such as beans and corn, to be something one does for family consumption only, but not the kind of agriculture they want to engage in professionally. And the subsoil problem is not limited to fruit trees: in many places the compacted subsoil negatively

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\(^{230}\) "When the land was purchased, we looked at it from the surface, and it looked good." (Rafael, interview 27/04/06). Most people we interviewed who had an opinion believed that the reforestation companies selling the land were aware of the problem. "We had access to the worst reforestation lands. The best went to a company based in Singapore. Here the best lands went into eucalyptus, the worst into agriculture." (Frei Chico) It is not clear whether the government was aware of the problem.
affects drainage, so that – especially after heavy rains – root crops such as manioc rot, and crops like passion fruit, corn, and beans can be harmed by overly wet soil.

CAR, CDA, EMBRAPA, and EBDA have all come to the area to examine the sub-soil problem. According to most of the settlers we interviewed, the consensus of these agencies is that this problem makes the land unsuitable for citrus trees. EMBRAPA has dug experimental trenches in both Nova Lusitania and Boa Vista III, and has a soil specialist studying the problem.231

One solution is to break up the subsoil. However this requires large-scale machinery and is expensive. A neighboring reforestation company, COOPENOR, reportedly paid R$350 per ha. for such a process.

The land seems to be slightly better in Boa Vista III than in Nova Lusitânia.232 In addition, because the cycle of settling, financing, and growing started earlier in Nova Lusitânia, that community has had to face the problem, while many in Boa Vista III have not yet had to. We found that settlers in Nova Lusitânia had given the problem a good deal of thought.

In an interview with community leaders in Nova Lusitânia (4/5/06), they discussed this matter in depth. The men expressed frustration with the land – “We weren’t able to bring much [with us when we came]. We relied on the land – but were mistaken” (Manuel). They discussed various crops that they had considered or experimented with.233

231 Meeting with Nova Lusitania representatives, April 5, 2006; meeting at Boa Vista III church, April 28, 2006.

232 Interview with Frei Chico, April 5, 2006

233 Six settlers tried raising pineapples; only one was successful and, because he was the only grower, he had trouble getting buyers to pick up his crop. Several had their manioc die. Another turned part of his
Edivaldo, one of the most articulate of the farmers in Nova Lusitânia, admitted that, because of the subsoil issue, he has considered giving up his land and leaving the settlement. But he added that, besides the problem with the land, "We have another problem – ourselves. We won't change our thought, but have to." He believes that the settlers are fixated on oranges, manioc, and cattle, and have to consider alternatives. It is clear that these men have considered the matter in depth, and they discussed a number of alternatives – including carrots, cucumbers, anise (which they told us the Brazilian natural cosmetics company, Natura, will buy), tobacco.

Edivaldo, Petro, Wilson, and twelve others in Nova Lusitânia began experimenting with organic farming. Of the original fifteen who did so, seven (including those three) have stayed organic. They believe this to be a valid option on the land, but note that organic agriculture also presents issues, including the cost of natural fertilizer and the cost of certification with IBD (representatives of IBD have visited Nova Lustâna). I had an opportunity to spend time in the fields with Sr. Petro and Edicarlos, the CELANOR agro-technician, and was impressed by the creativity and dedication Sr. Petro brought to experimenting with possible crops.

In our meeting with Dr. Penedo of CDA (April 26, 2006), an agronomist and state administrator of whom the settlers spoke of with considerable liking and respect, he stated that the State Secretary of Agriculture is concerned about the sub-soil situation in Nova Lusitânia, Boa Vista III, and neighboring settlements. The state does not have land into pasture and has three cows – "But you can have 12 cows maximum – then you live on what? If everyone produces milk, it will drive the price of milk down." (Manuel).

234 Several settlers who do not utilize organic methods mentioned spontaneously to us that they believe that the organic method is the best long-term solution. One stated that, although he does not use organic methods for his cash crops, he does use it for the food his family will consume.

235 One settler experimented with tobacco. See case study below.
adequate equipment for dealing with the subsoil problem. When we noted that the settlers had told us that the local municipal government had purchased a tractor for breaking the subsoil, he stated that, while he believes the local government’s intentions to be good, and the tractor purchased is better than the state’s equipment, it is still not really strong enough to deal with the compacted subsoil.

However, he feels that the concern about the subsoil has been overstated by some and agrees with the settler’s assessment that they need to consider alternatives. Viability, he believes, cannot be based only on suitability for citrus growing. He noted that yams have done well in the area, although this is not a plant which makes up part of the Sergipano culture, and feels that passion fruit can be successfully raised if drainage issues can be resolved. He also emphatically stated that the settlers should work with organic methods, and that, over the long run, such methods can be helpful in dealing with the compacted subsoil issue. He emphasized that organic methods are a holistic way of managing land, not simply the use of organic inputs.

This being said, he noted that the settlers are in need of additional funding to work this issue. The government is working to provide an additional two year grace period for land payments; Petrobras has been approached about assisting the settlement associations in developing projects. Noting that Federal funds for agrarian reform are spread very thinly, he hoped that the local government would be willing to help with technical assistance.
Case Study 1

Name of Settlement: **Nova Lusitânia**

Families in Settlement: 26 title holding families + 12 additional family homes

Location: Município – Esplanada

Area: 806 ha.

Contract Date: November 9, 1997

Dates Visited: April 5-6, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 15\(^{236}\) Individuals: 22

Family size (persons): 1-3/ 4-6/ 7-9/ 10+

Persons Interviewed: 10 men, 9 women, 3 youth (one male 18 married, one male 17 single, one female 16 married)

Ages: -20/3, 20-29/2, 30-39/6, 40-49/3, 50-59/6, 60+/2

Schooling: 0-2/7, 3-5/12, 6-8/2, unknown/1

In 8 families, wives have slightly more education than their husbands – usually two years or less. In one family the husband had more education (2 years).

Technical Assistance: CELANOR

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\(^{236}\) In two cases, families interviewed were not official settlers. Anselmo Rodrigues’ father is the title holder of their farm, but his father is 75 and Anselmo effectively runs the farm. Vagner de Jesus, on the other hand, is the son-in-law of a settler (Vagner is 21 and his wife is 15); he works on his father-in-laws land but was not knowledgeable about production or sales. Both men are worker members of the Association.
Figure V-1-A. Nova Lusitânia – plaza with football field and Catholic chapel, with the settlement primary school in the background.

Figure V-1-B. Nova Lusitânia – Association headquarters.
Figure V-1-C. Settlement youth in school uniforms outside of a small store operated by a settler family.
Geography: The settlement consists of 26 landholding families and is located in the municipio of Esplanada, 23 kms from the municipal seat: 20 km on paved roads, and 3 km on poor quality dirt roads that wind in and around a Petrobras oil drilling district. Each of the families has a dwelling lot (20 x 110m) in the agro-vila and a farm lot varying between 19 and 20 has. The communal farm land constitutes approximately 120 has. and the natural reserve 160 has. In addition to the land-holding families, twelve other families (grown married children of settlers) have been provided with small residential lots at the edge of the agro-vila and have constructed homes there.

The agro-vila is strung out along two sides of a winding dirt road that passes through the settlement to Novo Horizonte and other locations. At the entry of the settlement (the west end), there is the cluster of twelve houses built for non-landholding adult children of settlers, each with a small yard. The new Association headquarters are located approximately half way down the road on the south side. A small parallel street runs north of the road. Because the presence of oil wells led to purchasing additional lots (discussed below), some of the farm lots are reached by continuing down the road beyond the neighboring Novo Horizonte settlement, a distance of approximately three miles.

Climate: See Introduction to Case Studies 1 and 2, above.

History: As mentioned above, Nova Lusitânia was one of the first four Cédula da Terra projects in the State of Bahia, the contract for all four being signed on November 9, 1997. Twenty of the original settlement families came from the Community Association of
Loreto,\textsuperscript{237} and the remaining six came from the Community Association of Lima, both in the municipio of Rio Real, member associations of CELANOR. On July 31, 1997, these twenty-six families formed the Association for Community Development of the “Loteamento” of Nova Lusitânia.\textsuperscript{238}

The land was purchased from Duraflora S.A., a reforestation company, which promised to remove the pine (pinus eliotus) trees from the land. The company was supposed to harvest the trees in three phases during the first three years after purchase, but was not able to meet that schedule. It therefore negotiated with the settlers and provided certain benefits (use of tractors, digging of water storage trenches [tanques], etc.) in compensation for the delay. Some of the settlers did not negotiate this, and retained rights to the trees on their plots.

Actual entry on the land did not take place until 1998.\textsuperscript{239} However, the promised financing for the settlers was not released for several years. In 2002, the settlers protested at INCRA in Salvador during a visit of Raul Jugman, Minister of Agrarian Reform, with the result that their PRONAF financing was released.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{237} The Loreto Association was formed in 1987. Vitor Rodrigues, 75 at the time of our visit, was President of that Association when the new project began; he is now a settler in Nova Lusitânia, and his son, Sebastião Rodrigues, also a settler, was President of Nova Lusitânia in 2006. Petro was for four years Treasurer of the Association in Lima.

\textsuperscript{238} Of the original 26 families, 12 or 13 (our informants were not sure) have left due to various reasons, most notably family issues and agricultural problems. These families were replaced with new families. Some of the “new” families arrived quite early; for instance, Judite and her husband arrived after the housing lots had been selected but before the farm lots were. There had been no further attrition in the three years prior to our visit (2003-2006).

\textsuperscript{239} Edivaldo Rodrigues said that they began work on the land in late 1997, then moved there in tents in early 1998. His was the last house to be built because, as a leader, he did not have time to work on it.

\textsuperscript{240} In this protest, they occupied the INCRA building. Their target was not INCRA, per se, but getting the attention of the Minister. Five settlement areas (including Boa Vista III) participated in the protest. The municipal Secretary of Agriculture provided them with two buses to transport them to Salvador.
PETROBRAS, the Brazilian oil company, has 42 oil wells that occupy 240 ha. of settlement land. PETROBRAS paid a royalty to the former owners, but did not pay the settlers after formation of Nova Lusitânia. The settlers hired a lawyer and, in 2003, reached a settlement with PETROBRAS in which they were paid a lump sum for past royalties and ongoing royalties based on production. The lump sum was used in part to purchase approximately 240 ha. of nearby, but non-adjacent land, on which 10 of the families now have their agricultural plots (this land is approximately 3 km. from the agro-vila; one passes through the neighboring agro-vila of Novo Orizonte to reach it).

Three years prior to our visit, the settlers were informed that Nova Lusitânia had reached the stage of emancipation from government tutelage. However, this was communicated to the settlers verbally, no document to this effect had been provided to them. The settlers received training to assume their own autonomy, but they felt that the training was not sufficient. At the time of our visit, Government personnel were still visiting the settlement sporadically, and would come if called.

**Demography:** All interviewees were of rural origin except for Zélia, who claimed urban origin. Of the men, five had owned minifundios; three of these supplemented their income as daily farm workers and/or sharecroppers. One other owned 10 has. of land in

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241 At the group meeting, Edivaldo said that CDA tried to prepare them, but it was not sufficient. The workshops should have been earlier. When Edivaldo was Treasurer, for instance, he was oriented one year after he started. After money had been spent, he was told that it should not have been spent in that way. For instance, they opted to buy a simpler tractor than the one CDA indicated, and used the money in other way – for instance, for fencing to keep out animals. They had been told they should decide how to spend money, but then were told they should have gotten permission first. He got receipts, but they were invalid and he did not know that. CDA sent a person to work with him for seven days. He said that at one point some of the CDA were rude and looked at him askance, but that subsequently they understood. We were told that CDA now recognizes the shortcomings of the training the settlers received.

242 Edivaldo, at meeting with settlers, April 5, 2006. The settlers will never receive individual title to their land.
Colonia Coqueira, but the land was so poor he had to supplement his income as a daily laborer. Three worked family land, one of these supplementing his income as a tractor driver and another as a daily laborer. Three were rural employees: one administrator of a small pineapple farm, one a driver/orange worker for a landowner, and one a general farm laborer paid weekly. Two of the women worked in restaurants. Judite's husband was a small shop owner in a village in Rio Real.

Race/Ethnicity: white, afro-Brazilian

Gender: Four of the 26 title holders are women. Of the 15 households interviewed, 13 are titular families; of these, in three cases the titles are held by the wife (in two cases, because the husbands were too old to qualify).

Religion: There are nineteen Catholic families and seven Evangelical Protestants (Congregação Cristã do Brasil) in the settlement. Of the families interviewed, 11 identified themselves as Catholic (in one of these the wife is Catholic, the husband does not claim Church membership) and 4 as Congregação Cristã. Both have active chapels in the settlement.

Age: The title holders of the land interviewed ranged from in age from 25 to 65. Average age of title holders here was slightly older than in other settlements studied.

Attrition: In the period prior to 2003, thirteen or fourteen (our informants were not certain) of the original families left the settlement. Reasons cited for their leaving included hunger, family issues (separation), urban background, and the soil problem. No settlers were expelled. New settlers took their places and, from

--If a person comes from the city, unless they were raised in the country, they don't stay." Manoel Paixão
2003 on, there has been no further attrition. Some members of the community, however, feel that this is due more to the ongoing oil royalty payments than to increased satisfaction with community life.

**Education:** Most interviewees were satisfied with the education system. Twelve interviewees classed the schools as good or excellent, one as so-so, and one as weak.

“In the city (Esplanada), people say that the children from the settlements have more privileges than those in the city. Children here are more organized and developed than the children in the city.” (Elenice)

Children attend pre-school to 4th grade in the settlement. The school, built with CDA funds, is owned by the Association.

5th through 8th graders are bused to school in the Malombé settlement. The bus picks up students from the settlements of Cequeira, Novo Orizonte, and Nova Lusitânia; there are 60 to 70 kids on the bus, some have to stand for the half hour trip. There are 150 students in the Malombé school. Parents were satisfied with the education; Antonia stated that the teachers are excellent but that the students are “wild” (“bravos”). Beyond eighth grade, students have to go into Esplanada to study.

**Health:** Four interviewees stated that the health system is bad, one stated that it is good. Edivaldo pointed out that the health system is difficult in the whole country, but stated it
is adequate for the settlement. A health agent comes to the settlement periodically; there was divided opinion as to her effectiveness.

There is a doctor every Monday at the health post in the Antonio Conselheiro settlement. Residents have to take the bus, which requires that they be gone most of the day. At times they go and find that the doctor is not present.

**Water:** The Association administers an artesian well with the capacity of 2400 liters per hour. A water tower with 10,000 liter capacity was constructed with CAR funding; the project was administered by the Association. The water is of good quality. One issue under discussion in the Association is whether or not to install water meters in the homes.

The Itairi River borders the settlement, and Barro Branco Creek runs through it. The community tried to dam the latter to make a small reservoir, but the project was unsuccessful – the dam failed to hold water.

**Association and Collective Area:** The Association has its headquarters in a house constructed for that purpose on the main street. It also owns and administers the school (built with CDA funds), a tractor, a *galpão*, and the water well, and administers the payments received from Petrobras. These payments cover most Association expenses. However, there are also monthly dues of R$10 for full members and R$3 for worker members. There are 26 full members and 8 worker members.

The collective area is located close to the agro-vila. It was planted with oranges and coconuts. In 2005, these began to die, and we were told at the general settlers meeting that they consider most of these trees to be lost.
Eleven interviewees stated that the Association is representative of its membership, and none said that it was not. However, Jocemaria mentioned that representation is not always equal, that some members have more influence than others (she mentioned Milton, Raimundo, Branco, and Sebastião).

Wilson was one of those who said the Association is representative, but he stated that “problems in the Association” is what he likes least in the settlement. He was one of two who stated that they would not belong to the Association if they did not need membership to obtain credit.

Several interviewees stressed that, while there are differences of opinion, these are discussed in meetings, voted upon where necessary, and the majority opinion prevails.

“It’s rare that people [all] think alike. Some[one] will always disagree. What the majority chooses is what counts.” (Ivonete)

“People think differently. [They] take it to the Assembly.” (Judite)

Edivaldo, a former President of the Association and now a member of the Fiscal Council, said that in the beginning they had serious disputes and always had two slates of candidates for elections. More recently, they have put together a single slate, and he said that everyone’s reaction was “Thank God!” However, he stated that there continue to be important differences, one of them being the discussion between organic and non-organic farmers. But the major difference in his eyes is “associativismo,” i.e., one’s view on the value and role of associations.
“All that we have is via the [Association]. Each directory had a different manner
[of carrying this out].... I learned a lot. I’m a defender of associativismo.”

(Edivaldo)

He noted, however, that many members do not share this value. “[They] only work
together because [they are] required to do so.” Others confirmed that the participation in the collective work was low.244

This may be in part due to discouragement. We were told at the general settlers’
meeting that participation in work projects had been higher until 2005, when the trees in the collective area started to die. After that, participation decreased.

For this reason, a decision was reached to divide up the collective area, with each family taking responsibility for a portion of it, the goal being that income from that portion would go to each family’s land payment. However, we were informed that many of the parcels so distributed have been essentially abandoned. Petro stated that the division of the collective land had not worked out, and he felt that the situation was now worse than previously.

Edivaldo stated that, when he was President, about two years prior to our visit, the Association tried to change the by-laws to allow non-titleholding spouses (mostly wives) the right to vote, but “the law wouldn’t let them.” However, in the last election, with

244 At one point, the Association considered expelling members who continuously refused to meet their obligations. However, the neighboring settlement of Novo Orizonte expelled a member who then took them to court, and the matter has been pending for years, with the expelled member receiving a portion of the sale of eucalyptus and retaining control of his farmstead, although he put another person there and never lived on the land. This experience discouraged Nova Lusitânia from taking sanctions against members.
CDA and CAR present, the women were allowed to vote. Elenice pointed out that, while non-titleholding spouses could now vote, only titleholders could hold office.

Only one woman interviewed listed herself as being “very active” in the Association, and a few others said they attended meetings when they were able to. We also interviewed two worker members of the Association, one of whom (Anselmo) listed himself as being very active.

**Ecological Area:** The ecological reserve is divided up into small areas. All of the lowlands are reserved areas, as is a 30 meter wide strip along the river. Interviewees understand that the ecological reserve cannot be removed; those who spoke of it see it as positive for preserving nature and for wild animals. Also mentioned were that reserves help promote rainfall and/or that removing the ecological areas would be harmful to the river. “The reserve is like our lung.” (José Martins da Cruz) One woman mentioned that, while it was prohibited to remove wood from the ecological area for sale, it is permitted to remove it for fence posts.

**Economy:**

*Distinguishing Factor: Oil Revenue* - The oil royalties in 2006 generated an income of between R$7,000 and R$10,000 per month. The Association uses these funds to pay certain Association expenses, and the remainder is distributed evenly among the settler families, deposited in their bank accounts. This amount averages around R$300-600 per family monthly, and several families interviewed stated that they depend on it.

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245 Petrobras funds distributed to landholding families were R$ 520 in January 06, R$ 490 in February 06, and R$ 330 in March 06.
**Land:** The land purchase took place on November 9, 1997. The purchase price was R$130 per ha, for a total of R$104,780. SAT funds were R$110,119, and SIC R$131,967. Payments are R$310 per year.\(^{246}\) Most families seemed to be less worried about their ability to meet this payment than they were about PRONAF-A and custeio loans.

The subsoil problem (discussed in detail above) is the overriding factor with respect to land. At the general meeting with the settlers, we were told that they had invested in the area and that they felt that it would now be impossible to recover that investment. They felt the land would serve to survive, but not to progress. When there is a lot of rain, the soil becomes overly wet, even affecting corn and beans. When there is less rain, it is better, but still weak. With fertilizer, they are able to grow something, but rain seems to wash fertilizer away. The soil does not seem to improve.

A soil expert has opened trenches to study the land problem, gathering information for CDA, CAR, and the bank. With the help of the Church, a letter has been sent to the Minister of Agriculture from several settlements in the municípios of Esplanada and Condé, all with a similar problem.

Ten of the families stated that the soil is not fertile. José Viana said that “...the land doesn’t produce – [you] work the entire year and at the end of the year have nothing.” He noted the uncertainty as to what to plant.

One farmer stated that he believed further study necessary before determining the fertility of the soil. José Martins da Cruz, the only farmer with a significant commercial

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\(^{246}\) At the beginning of the program, land payments were to be spread out over 10 years, but a change to 20 years was negotiated.
plantation of grain and vegetables (see below) noted that his two ha. near the river are fertile, and that the remaining 20, while clay, are workable ("dar para plantar").

Guimarães, an organic farmer who opted to plant Tahiti lemons on a commercial scale rather than oranges, stated that the land is of medium fertility. Only one respondent, Jocimaria Paixão, stated that the soil was "good" - she and her husband plant orange, manioc, passion fruit, and coconuts (see below).

**Financing:** Twenty-two of the twenty-six families took out PRONAF-A loans. These loans are repayable in four installments of R$1300 each, with a rebate if timely payment is made. When the first repayment fell due in 2005, only six families were able to repay, and these did so by selling motor scooters, horses, etc.

The remaining families negotiated repayment. The second parcel was paid shortly after our visit, and settlers generally expressed concern as to whether it would be paid.

Almost all of the households we interviewed had PRONAF-A financing. In some cases, PRONAF-A funds were used to plant orange and coconut trees, though a household mentioned he also used them to plant manioc. In three cases, the families had taken over the homesteads from earlier settlers and had assumed their PRONAF-A debts.

Six of the households had taken out custeio loans. In three cases these loans finance manioc planting, in one passion fruit, and in one fertilizer for oranges. Two of the households had repaid their loans, and one of these had taken out a new loan for R$1800. In most cases the landholders seemed confident that they could repay.

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247 "If we pay PRONAF, our families will go hungry; better to negotiate with the bank." (Manoel). Each family that renegotiated repaid the portion of the loan taken for oranges, but was allowed payment for the remainder until May 2006. If the remainder is paid on time, they will get the rest.
the loan, with the exception of the purchaser of fertilizer, who said that the loan had not produced any appreciable income.

The Association submitted a project to the EBDA for PRONAF-Mulher funds to raise livestock. When asked why they chose that over, e.g., additional passion fruit, we were told that they had been informed that PRONAF-Mulher had to be for something they did not already have. They were told that the first R$1000 per family PRONAF-Mulher funds would be released only after currently due PRONAF payments were made. If the first R$1000 is repaid, then additional funds would be available.

**Production and Income:** Fourteen families were interviewed with respect to their agricultural production. Four of those families use purely organic methods; and three others are transitioning to organic. We were told that fifteen families total had moved or were moving to organic fertilizer. José Viana said that he would like to transition to organic, but did not have sufficient funds to do so.

In accordance with Sergipano custom, 11 of the families interviewed planted oranges as a cash crop. For 7 of the families, oranges were significantly their single largest investment. The approximate size of the orange plantings ranged from 450 to 1800 trees. In many cases, the trees had not reached full maturity, but where

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248 Anselmo Rodrigues is one of the farmers transitioning to organic. In his opinion, their land will only be viable with organic methods – “The soil is hot, and doesn’t work with chemical (fertilizers).”

249 Meeting with the community, April 5, 2006

250 In addition to commercial planting, all of the families planted fruit trees in their yards. These included a wide range – banana, acerola, guava, avocado, mango, seringuela, jack fruit, cashew, tangerine, graviola, as well as oranges, lemons, etc. The yard trees were generally reported to be doing well.

251 These numbers are approximate; farmers variously stated their orchard sizes in number of trees, in tarefas, or in hectares.
production was occurring, it was reported as weak. Edivaldo Rodrigues, with 3 ha. of trees, reported that he harvested only 10% of what he expected; Petro Oliveira, with 2 ha. of oranges, harvested and sold 3 tons\textsuperscript{252} at prices varying from R$60 to R$200 per ton; Antonio Nascimento dos Santos, with 750 trees, harvested and sold (for R$120) one ton; David and Jocimaria Paixão harvested and sold (for R$80-90) one ton. However, José and Maria Lucia Paixão, with six tarefas of oranges (700-800 trees) were able to harvest 5 tons in 2005, which they sold at prices varying from R$80 to R$150.

Two of the farmers invested heavily in lemons. Sebastião Rodrigues and his wife, Ivonete, found them to be “better than oranges” – with 700 3-4 year old lemon trees, they were able to sell 5 tons @ R$300 each. Wilson Guimarães planted no oranges but 7 tarefas of Tahiti lemons; he sells to a middleman (25 kg. for R$ 6).

Eleven of the families had commercial plantings of passion fruit. Jocimaria Paixão stated that, when passion fruit is producing, it fetches R$ 0.60 per kg., adding $100 to $200 weekly to family income. Isabel and Eliezer Martins receive R$ 0.60 per kg. Edivaldo Rodrigues reported selling 4-5 tons a year @ R$ 0.50 per kg.

However, the soil drainage issue may affect passion fruit. In a visit with Petro Oliveira in his fields, he stated that the soil problem causes passion fruit to wither and die after approximately a year of production (normal life span is 2 ½ years)\textsuperscript{253}

Ten of the families have commercial plantings of coconut, but the trees are not fully mature. Coconut is sold at a price ranging from R$20 to R$30 per 100. Only two families mentioned coconut as a significant source of income. Other commercial fruit

\textsuperscript{252} 1 ton (tonelada) = 1000 kg.

\textsuperscript{253} Passion fruit grows on vines suspended from arbors. If carefully tended, the vines produce fairly regularly throughout the year. Tending includes the delicate task of removing buds.
production included José Martins da Cruz’ 2 ha. of papaya (mamão) and Cosme Silva’s 1 ha. of pineapple.

With respect to non-fruit crops, almost all of the families plant manioc, usually in relatively small areas (< 2 tarefas). This is milled into manioc flour (farinha) – a staple of the Brazilian diet - at a casa de farinha – the miller keeps 18% of the total. Excess, beyond that needed for home use, is sold at the farmer’s market in Esplanada. Families recorded sales prices ranging from R$20 to R$30 a 60 kg. sack, with yearly sales ranging up to 30 sacks.

Drainage problems also affect manioc – which is usually allowed to stay in the soil and harvested as needed. Antonio Nascimento noted that, where he lived before, manioc could stay in the soil up to two years, but that here it cannot – “it is very weak.”

One farmer, Jose Martins da Cruz, has a significant planting (7 ha.) of beans, corn, peanuts, squash (abóbora), watermelon, and okra which he sells in the farmers market in Espanada; for the prior year he reported earning R$800 from watermelons, R$200 from beans, and R$150 from peanuts. Other landholders have only relatively small areas dedicated to this type of non-fruit crop.

At the general settlers meeting, we were told that the soil issue may also affect beans. Settlers stated that they should be able to harvest 12 sacks of beans per tarefa, but were harvesting half that amount.

The Brazilian tobacco company, Souza Cruz, recruited farmers to raise tobacco. Only one farmer, Sebastião Rodrigues, attempted this. Souza Cruz provided inputs and

\[254\] At the group meeting, we were told that, with the presence of the settlements in the area, the farmers’ market in Esplanada has grown 50-60%, and now operates on both Friday and Saturday instead of just the latter. Food has become less expensive for those living in town; they are “undercutting the middleman” (Petro). In addition, it has expanded the products available, with more varieties of fruit and vegetables.
he planted 60,000 tobacco plants, but the resulting crop was very small and did not recompense the labor.

Eight of the families raise chickens – on the average about 20 chickens per family. Six of the families have a mule or horse. The most diverse in terms of stock raising are Jocimaria and David Paixão who, in addition to 10 chickens, have two pigs, two sheep, and three goats.

Eight of the families receive the *Bolsa Família*,

which – depending on the number of children – is up to R$95 per month. Only one family has a member receiving an old-age pension.

Nine of the landholders interviewed work as daily laborers, ranging from about a week a month to “almost every day.” Daily laborers earn R$12/day working for the settlement (on settlement programs) and R$15/day working for others. The most common labor mentioned were agricultural work, loading trucks, and cutting pine trees for the reforestation company.

Other sources of income: Jose Domingos owns a tractor and rents it out with his time in other settlement areas (but not in Nova Lusitânia, which has its own tractor), usually paid by the *prefeitura*. Elenice (his wife) started a small store in 2005 – she says business is slow; when she can she buys goods wholesale in Feira da Santana (about four hours away) – her brother has a truck and goes there with her. Antonia Ferreira crochets, and sells Avon and Hermes products (earning about R$30 month). Maria Lucia Paixão

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255 The *Bolsa Família* provides a stipend to low-income families with school age children on the condition that the children are vaccinated and attending school.

256 This is a bit unusual, as in most rural communities in Brazil, old-age pensions are a major source of local income. In our small town in the State of Tocantins, for example, the day old-age pensions were distributed was the single most active day for local commerce.
also sells Avon products – she earns about R$10 per month, 20% of what she sells. Other families reported selling tanks of gas (used for cooking stoves) with earnings of R$ 40/m; and selling ice cream & popsicles, with earnings of R$ 45/m.

**Sufficiency of Income:** When asked if family income was sufficient, only two householders (both men) responded “yes.” Most others stated that there is enough to eat but not for other perceived needs:

“There is a lot lacking. But we get by *(dá para viver).* Food is no problem – Thank God. Clothes and shoes are more difficult.” (Elenice Rodrigues dos Santos)

“You work the whole year and it isn’t even enough to buy a shirt.” (Ivonete Maria de Jesus)

José Ferreira stated that there is enough to eat but not enough to pay for necessary investments: hiring a tractor, buying fertilizer. Several mentioned the importance of the Petrobras income and other income not generated from the land. But, when discussing other matters such as the future of their children, many were eloquent about the advantages of having enough to eat and a place to live (see below).
Settler Attitudes:

**Satisfaction:** Nova Lusitânia suffered the highest attrition rate (~50%) we encountered. That was prior to 2003, but has since stabilized. However, there are indications that stabilization (i.e., settlers not leaving) may be due in part to the oil revenues received by each family. The expressed level of satisfaction was not high: 17 of 22 people interviewed said that they would be willing to trade or sell their land given certain conditions. Sixteen of the respondents believe that their life is better in the settlement than before they moved there,\(^{257}\) and only one felt her life is worse (she came from a small landholding in Rio Real with producing fruit trees which they owned outright). Many had favorable comments about the community,\(^{258}\) but there was an overall sense of disappointment as to the quality of the land (especially with respect to raising fruit trees), concern about the cost of fertilizer, worry about the ability to meet payments, and a sense of apathy with respect to the future.\(^{259}\)

**Future:** Most interviewee responses with respect to the future of the settlement were general and superficial – things would be better in two years, much better in 10 years, or the interviewee hoped things will be better. A few expressed more specific insights. Edivaldo Rodrigues believes there are two possibilities: if the land problem is resolved, he believes it will be a new start for the community; if the problem is not resolved, he believes he will make it through, but is concerned that many of the others

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\(^{257}\) Some responses were nuanced. Edivaldo Rodrigues, who had previously been an administrator for a small pineapple farm, noted that he is now better off in terms of infrastructure (his term) – owning a house and land – but less well off financially – he is currently earning less money.

\(^{258}\) Edivaldo Rodrigues – “It’s the best place in the world” – but he would sell or trade for another community because of the soil problem – he emphasized that was his only issue. Antonio Nascimento dos Santos – “If the whole community could get better land and decided to move, we would too.”

\(^{259}\) One interviewee, Eliezer, said that he did not like anything about the settlement.
may fail. Petro also feels the future depends on the soil, and Eliezer Martins believes things will get worse – the soil is weak and oranges won’t grow. Ivonete de Jesus wants the prefeito to do more - especially in establishing a health post.

Deeper feelings emerged in some instances when discussing the future of their families. Antonio Nascimento wants his children:

“...to study well so as to progress in life. Not like me. But to stay around here. Out (in the world) only (works) if you have a very good job. This is rare. The good of man is the land. There are so many people unemployed, without anything to eat. If you have a house and food, everything is okay. Out there (lá fora) everything is purchased – here in the countryside we have everything.”

Edivaldo Rodrigues also wants his children to stay in the country, close by, but hopes the financial situation will ease up. Elenice hopes her children can go to college – which she sees as requiring them to study in Salvador – but hopes they will return to live in the interior. Maria Lucia thinks that in the future working in the country will become easier – she hopes for jobs for children so their life will be easier.260

Socio-Political Awareness: Generally the level of social-political awareness among interviewees was similar to the level one would expect among Northeastern rural Brazilians who are not active members of political parties, landless movements, active unions, or Church social justice groups (such as CPT or the CEBs movement). When

260 One settler’s teenage son was present at this point in the interview. Alair (17) wants to go to São Paulo to spend a year. His uncle and godfather live there; his uncle will get Alair a job if he finishes high school. But he ended by saying he would stay in the settlement if he could earn enough to “buy a shirt” (i.e., to have some ready spending money).
asked who helps/is in favor of the rural worker, answers included Lula/the President (3), the prefeito/municipal government (3)\textsuperscript{261}, the Church/churches/Frei Chico (2), and people or agencies within the government (2). Edivaldo stated, “The [Federal] Government says it is concerned, but doesn’t help much.” Cosme noted that “the person [worker] himself has to be in favor.” Alair stated that the producers of fertilizer and inputs, and the commercial intermediaries, work against the rural worker.

Attitudes toward the MST were similar to those current on Globo Television.\textsuperscript{262} Of the 13 interviewees who expressed opinions, six felt strongly negative toward the MST and its methods, three had more nuanced negative opinions,\textsuperscript{263} and three expressed approval; one of these last was the lay leader of the Catholic Church who is actively involved in diocesan social justice matters.\textsuperscript{264} One interviewee commented that she resented the MST in part because the negative image it creates rubs off on land reform settlement dwellers, and that people in town refer to the people in the settlements as “sem terras” (landless in a pejorative sense).\textsuperscript{265}

\textsuperscript{261} The municipal government has, in fact, provided help to the settlers to a greater extent than any other município in our study.

\textsuperscript{262} During the several months prior to the interviews, the image of the MST as portrayed in mainstream media was largely negative, emphasizing invasions of productive land, isolated acts of violence, and the presence of MST militants who were allegedly not legitimately landless farmers.

\textsuperscript{263} One interviewee stated that he found MST methods disagreeable, but it was good that people were winning the land; similarly, another said she disagreed with invading land, but people do need land and have to go after it (“correr atrás”). Similarly, Edivaldo, one of the more articulate interviewees, stated that he did not approve of MST methods – he clarified that he is not against the people who are trying to get land, but against their leaders, whom he felt are using them.

\textsuperscript{264} Alair, 17 years old, provided an interesting response. He stated that MST land invasions call attention to problem – that MST is helping people who are seeking (correndo atras) a means of working (meios de trabalhar) – taking land from those who do nothing with it and giving it to people who want to work it.

\textsuperscript{265} Researcher Brenda King-Powers noted that, in informal conversations, many of the women felt strongly about they and their children being ridiculed as “sem-terras.” See also Case Study 2.
With respect to politics, the interviews showed 19 votes in the last election for Lula, 3 for Serra, and 3 non-voters. With respect to the forthcoming election, of those who responded, 13 were undecided, 7 for Lula, and 3 for Serra. Only two interviewees expressed strong party affiliations, one with the PT, and one with Antonio Carlos Magalhães – the long standing political boss of the State of Bahia.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:** Nova Lusitânia is the oldest of the settlement areas studied, and one of the four oldest Cédula da Terra settlements in Bahia. Partly because it was among the first, the settlement experienced considerable difficulties in the organizational stages. Financing was delayed, attrition was high and settler satisfaction is the lowest that we encountered.

The subsoil issue speaks directly to one of the points that critics of market based land reform often make: that landowners will sell off the worst portions, while keeping the better portions of land themselves.\(^{266}\) It seems fairly clear that the company that sold the land was aware of the compacted subsoil.

Discovery of Petrobras oil on the land has been a mixed blessing. On one hand, it halted attrition and provided settler families with some income while potential solutions to the subsoil issue are examined. On the other hand, it seems to have created some dependency, and perhaps removed impetus for some of the settlers to be as active and creative as they might otherwise be in seeking alternatives to orange growing.

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\(^{266}\) As mentioned earlier in this essay, however, this critique is somewhat offset by the fact that, in Brazil, it is very difficult for the government to expropriate land that the owner does not want it to expropriate. We have seen the same issue arise in traditional land reform projects: landowners allowing the government to expropriate poor land while successfully resisting expropriation of good land.
Short of a massive investment in turning the subsoil, which no agency seems both capable and willing to make, it is difficult to imagine that the land will readily be converted to growing fruit trees. This is justifiably disappointing to most of the settlers – to ask a fruit grower to become a farmer of seasonable crops is asking a person to completely change his profession. Some of the farmers, especially those currently experimenting with organic methods, may be able to transition and find new crops. A way may yet be found to successfully extend the productive life of passion fruit and to grow other non-tree fruits. But as one farmer said to us, he has risked considerably and lost – he would want a thorough soil analysis and good technical guidance before he would be willing to risk again.

Government funds for land reform are stretched very thin, and the priority has to be landless families. The amount available to be invested in areas that have already received both land and considerable additional funds is limited. Nonetheless, and partly because the subsoil problem affects more than one community, a sincere effort seems to be being made to study the problem and develop alternatives. We doubt that these alternatives will be satisfactory to all of the settlers, and some may decide to leave or to simply remain relatively passively on their land depending primarily on Petrobras payments. But creative alternatives could help to revitalize that portion of the community that is able to adapt, and – perhaps via a certain percentage of replacement – the community itself.

Despite all of the difficulties, it is important to note that sixteen out of nineteen adults interviewed felt that their life was better in the settlement than it had been before. Interviewees were also on the whole positive about their neighbors and (aside from the
subsoil issue) about living in the settlement. Despite the very real disappointment of not being able to realize their dream of citrus raising, and the real costs of lost investment in time, effort, and money, this says significantly that Nova Lusitânia is not a failure – that it has had a positive impact on settlers’ lives.

When we first visited Nova Lusitânia, we became very concerned that, as the oldest of the settlements, it represented a pattern. In other words, we saw a danger that, once SIC, SAT, and PRONAF A moneys have been spent, the tendency would be for settler enthusiasm to wane and for disillusion to set in, sapping communities of their vitality and making sustainability less likely. We do realize that this is a potential danger, but in most of the other settlements studied, while the period following expenditures of funds and of obtaining emancipation from government tutelage is a vulnerable one, the realistic expectation of improved future production and income is a real impetus. In Nova Lusitânia, where this expectation/hope seems to have vanished – or at least become much more difficult to envision – we admire the tenacity and resilience of those settlers who continue working to produce what they can, to try new approaches, to create a solid community life.
Case Study 2

Name of Settlement: **Boa Vista III**

Families in Settlement: 55 landholding families plus several additional families\(^{267}\)

Location: Município – Esplanada

Area: 1,375 ha.

Contract Date: June 8, 1998

Dates Visited: April 28-30, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 19  
Individuals: 32

Family size (persons): 1-3/2  4-6/11  7-9/3  10+/1

Persons Interviewed: 17 men, 15 women (including 2 20-year-old single daughters)

Ages 20-29/3, 30-39/7, 40-49/17,50-59/5

Schooling: 0-2/14, 3-5/13, 6-8/3, (one of the young women completed high school)

In 9 of the families interviewed, the wife had more education than the husband – in three cases, 4 or more years more. In four families the husband had more education than the wife, but in only one case was the difference substantial.

Technical Assistance: CELANOR

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\(^{267}\) We were not given an exact number, but we saw the street with several of the new houses, at least one of which was under construction.
Map V-2-A. Boa Vista III Settlement. Cross-hatching indicates collective areas, dotting indicates ecological reserves. Settlers have two agricultural lots - a smaller one along the river and a larger one removed from the river. Unlike most settlements, ecological reserves are largely within the agricultural lots. Note that there are neighboring settlements both to the north (Baixa Grande) and south (Malhombé).
**Geography:** The settlement consists of 55 landholding families and is located along both sides of the small Ovo River in the município of Esplanada, 12 kms from the municipal seat on a good quality dirt road. The total area is 1375 ha. Each of the families has a dwelling lot (15 x 30m) in the agro-vila, an additional 1 ha. lot (discussed below), a riverside lot (average size 3.4 ha.), and a farm lot (average size 15 ha.) The communal farm land is located in three areas totaling approximately 260 ha, and the natural reserve is 101 ha. (primarily an allocated portion of each riverside and farm lot).

The agro-vila is constructed in the shape of a U, with a large central plaza in the center and a Catholic church in the plaza. Using the additional lots mentioned above, the community has also set up three streets of new house lots (15 x 50m) for grown married children of settlers, and several have constructed homes there.

**Climate:** See Introduction to Case Studies 1 and 2, above.

**History:** Boa Vista III was one of the second wave of Cédula da Terra projects in this part of Bahia, the contract being signed on June, 1998. Many of the original settlement families came from the Community Association of Lagoa de Baixo, and most of the

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268 The original plan for the community provided for 1 ha. house lots, but a technician from Salvador told the settlers they had to use smaller (15 x 30m) lots (presumably to facilitate basic services); the delta between the lot sizes was retained by each family in a separate lot close to the agro-vila. Meeting at Church 28/03/09.

269 Meeting with settlers at church

270 Ibid.

271 Rafael (interview April 27, 2006) referred to Boa Vista III as “a child (filha) of Lagoa de Baixo”
others came from other community associations\textsuperscript{272} in the \textit{municipio} of Rio Real, member associations of CELANOR.

The land was purchased from FERBASA (Cia. De Ferro Ligas da Bahia S/A), a reforestation company. The company cut the pine trees before the settlers moved in. The settlers we talked to believed that the pines had a negative impact on the soil.\textsuperscript{273}

Initially, many settlers continued to maintain their families in Rio Real; the men came to Boa Vista III to work during the week, often returning to Rio Real on the weekends. Some began moving onto the land at the end of 1999 and seriously working it in 2000.\textsuperscript{274} According to interviewees, in late 1999 or early 2000, Dr. Penedo, the agronomist responsible for the settlement, informed the families that they had to move to the land or they would lose their rights. Twenty-five of the fifty-five families on the original list (including the first President of the Association) decided not to make the move, and were replaced by twenty-five other families.

The initial SIC allocation for construction of houses was R$1300 per family, an amount that Rafael of Celanor feels was too little. But many of the settlers brought resources from Rio Real and used them to establish themselves in Boa Vista III. Some had tractors and other equipment.\textsuperscript{275}

Mico Preto’s story was fairly typical of the early settlement period. When he first arrived in late 1999/early 2000, there were only seven houses in the settlement area.

\textsuperscript{272} Waldemar Correio de Jesus, for example, still maintains his membership in the Association of Lima, as well as in Boa Vista III. Interview, April 29, 2006.

\textsuperscript{273} Meeting with settlers at church, April 28, 2006

\textsuperscript{274} Meeting with settlers at church, April 28, 2006.

\textsuperscript{275} Rafael, interview, April 27, 2006
Initially he lived in a temporary hut (barraca); his family stayed in Rio Real and he went back there every week end. When the house was built, he moved two of his daughters to the settlement with him. Blanca, the elder, remembers that there were twelve families when she arrived. When he had put in the floor and built an addition, he moved the rest of his family from Rio Real, sold the house there, and used the money to plant 280 orange trees.\footnote{Interview, 29 April 2006}

Water and electricity were installed in 2002. In that year Boa Vista III was considered a highly successful settlement, receiving the highest rating given by CDA. The settlement was featured in a 2003 article in Revista Cédula da Terra.

**Demography:** Only four of the adult interviewees claimed urban origins, and all of those grew up on farms. One of these, Ivone, had been working as a hairdresser in Salvador before moving to the settlement, but all interviewees had come to the settlement from rural settings. Ten of the men had minifundios (the largest 20 tarefas, the smallest 1 tarefa) and six (including the minfundista with 1 tarefa) worked land belong to their families. Eight of these men supplemented their income as sharecroppers, daily farm laborers, or – in one situation each – as a fruit seller, and as owner of a small bar. Only three of the men were entirely landless – all three worked as daily farm laborers, one also worked as a sharecropper and one as a bricklayer.

**Race/Ethnicity:** primarily white, some Afro-Brazilian

**Gender:** two of the 55 titleholders are women
Religion: The great majority of residents are Catholics. Sixteen of the families interviewed were Catholic, two did not declare a religious preference, and one said that they “had been” Jehovah Witnesses. The Catholic Church is in the central plaza; there is an active parish, with catechism and youth ministry.

Age: 17 of the 35 residents interviewed were in their 40s, eight in their 30s, five in their 50s.

Attrition: Approximately 35 of the original 55 settler families remain at Boa Vista III.\textsuperscript{277}

Education: The settlement has a public school that goes up to the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade. The director and two of the teachers come in from the city (Esplanada), and four other teachers are from the settlement. Most of the interviewees stated that the school was good, although two rated it as only fair. Students travel 15 kilometers to another settlement, Antonio Conselheiro, to attend middle school.

Health: Residents did not feel that health care was good. The nearest health post is in Antonio Conselheiro. The school bus takes patients there, but it ends up being an all-day trip. The doctor is there only on Tuesdays, and sometimes does not show up. There is a health agent at the health post, and people thought highly of her. There is also a local health agent resident in Boa Vista III, the daughter of one of the settlers; she does home visits, but there was some feeling that she was not sufficiently trained.

\textsuperscript{277} Meeting at church, 28/04/2006. In the early days of settlement, of the 55 families originally scheduled to be settled on the land, twenty-five did not take over their land and were replaced. This replacement has not included in the calculation of attrition.
**Water:** The Association well, opened in 2002, can produce 6800 liters per hour. The water tower has a capacity of 20,000 liters and is eight meters high, providing good water pressure to the houses, which can have water tanks located up to five meters above ground. Several interviewees cited the water – both having running water in their home and the quality of the water – as one of the things they like about the settlement. The riverside lots can be irrigated from the river, the farm lots have no running water on them.

**Association and Collective Area:** The collective land is planted with 25 ha in oranges and 15 ha in coconuts (approximately 7000 trees of each). Initially collective work went well, but participation waned. Approximately a year prior to our visit, the Association assigned a portion of the collective area to each family to maintain. However, this system did not work out, and – shortly prior to our visit – the community returned to the original system of collective work.

Not surprisingly, the collective work was cited as one of the major areas of discussion for the Association. Although settlers are only asked to work one day a month (or contribute R$15 to pay a substitute), there continue to be difficulties in getting everyone to participate. The Association Treasurer, Zé Sana, told us it gives the directory “a lot of work.”

Mico Preto, who was elected Vice President in the February election, focused on the importance of this issue:

“We have to sit and organize [the collective area]. We have to determine how much work is needed. We could divide in sub groups. If 30 go and 25 don’t,
[we] have to explain, call a meeting. [They] can pay rather than go. Those who don’t want [to work] can give up their right the collective [income] in writing through an Act of the Assembly.”

José Irmão, the Vice Treasurer, pointed out that all associations have the problem of people who do not work. “It’s always that way, every place.” Nilton agreed: “These things always happen.”

However, Zé Sana said that, despite the problem, they manage to get the work done. Mico Preto agreed, saying that already, having returned to the collective system, they are back to cleaning (limpando) the orange groves. Isodoro estimated that 90% of the settlers are participating; if true, this is a higher percentage than in most settlements.

In addition to the collective land, the Association owns the school, the well, the bolacha factory (see below), the soccer field, and a large tractor. Tractor charges are R$35/day for members, R$40/day for non-members.278

Shortly prior to our visit, the Association constructed, with SIC funds, an electrified casa de farinha with a capacity of producing 20 sacks of manioc flour a day, and also capable of making tapioca. The Association Treasurer told us that there is not sufficient manioc for the casa, and that there is relatively little manioc being planted. The Association had approximately R$5000 in SIC funds remaining when we visited.

The Association plans to set up a day care center where mothers can leave their children when they go out either to work in the fields or to jobs outside of the settlement area. They intended to use the second parcel of the SECOMP funds (the first parcel was

278 There are also five smaller, privately owned tractors in the settlement that charge R$35/day to members and non-members alike.
for the factory) for the center, but due to delays in accounting for the first parcel, the
second parcel was cancelled. They therefore were planning a new project for SECOMP
which they believed would be submitted to more rigorous examination due to the
previous delays.\textsuperscript{279}

The Association had five Presidents since its inception; the sixth, Luis Carlos, was
elected in February 2006, shortly before our visit, in a 23 to 19 vote victory over former
President Fausto. According to several interviewees, the two slates had no substantial
difference in platforms, and the election did not cause significant hard feelings or
divisions in the community. Most prior elections have had at least two slates of
candidates; the election of 2000 had three, but the election of 2002 was undisputed.\textsuperscript{280}

Luis Carlos, 30, was said to be a calm person but a hard worker who dedicates
most of his time to the Association. Natalia said that he travels a good deal, striving
(lutando) to benefit the settlement. Waldemar noted that the Association should
represent all of the settlers, and that Luis Carlos is doing that.

In an interview, Luis Carlos spoke of his experience (he was Treasurer before he
became President) and that being part of the Association has increased his knowledge.
He said that he thought that differences among the settlers at the Association meeting
were not that great. Among the things he would like to see for the settlement are a juice
factory, a scale for weighing oranges, the day-care center, a medical post, and paving the
streets. He noted that, in addition to the Association, the Church and sports (the

\textsuperscript{279} Meeting with group representing the settlement, April 28, 2006

\textsuperscript{280} Bosco was elected President in 2000 with 15 votes, over 14 for Fausto and 10 for Agostinho. Bosco was
reelected without opposition in 2002, but only served one year of his second term.
settlement has a soccer team) are strong unifying factors in the community (several other settlers also cited these two as unifying factors).

Overall support for the Association seemed to remain strong. Fausto mentioned that the Association is important for coming up with productive ideas. Blanca, 20, emphasized that working together they accomplish more than each one working alone. Antonio Gago used the example of toothpicks – one alone can be broken, but it is almost impossible to break a bunch of them held together.

“We have to live today in Association. [We] all need the Association. It makes it easier to get things, gives [us] more force.” (Antonio Gago)

“Who governs [the settlement] is us.... If [for instance] the fertilizer [we received] is not good for the oranges, and everyone votes on it, we handle the situation. The Association is for everyone.” (Ivone)

Several interviewees noted that differences of opinion are natural, and that differences are worked out through the meeting process. Natalia noted that they discuss the factory, the collective, and the fact that many members do not have money to pay for the land and PRONAF – these matters are discussed in meetings. Bosco noted that there are small differences of opinion: “People are different.” Renato, the current Secretary, said that there is diversity of opinion; the Directory tries to understand why a person is opposed to a proposition, and seeks to provide answers and convince members.
Although article 6 of the Association by-laws allows non-titleholding spouses to vote and be elected, this provision was not being observed in practice at the time of our visit. This seems to have arisen from a lack of understanding of the contents of the by-laws. When the content of the article was explained to them, the Directors of the Association said that they would take steps to implement it.

Another barrier to full participation is lack of education. Waldemar, for instance, was invited to hold a leadership position but said that he did not feel comfortable doing so as he did not know how to read. The case of Isodoro, however, had an interesting twist: although he had only a first grade education, he was elected Secretary of the Association in the past administration because the members wanted his daughter, Carla, then in her late teens and a high school graduate, to actually perform the job (she carried it out successfully).

**Ecological Area:** Unlike the other settlements studied, the ecological area(s) in Boa Vista III is a designated portion of each settler's riverside and farm lots, as well as of the collective land, sufficient in total to make up the 20% legal requirement. We were told in the general meeting that the ecological reserves are not used at all (e.g., for bee keeping, firewood), but are for “only wild animals.” However, one woman said that it provides firewood (*lenha*) for cooking.

Adilson noted that it is difficult to control the environmental areas because they are distant, and that there have been incidents of outsiders lighting fires and taking out wood. Natalia confirmed that the Association cannot control the areas, and that, where problems occur, they are not reported to IBAMA. Fausto, who was the second President
of the Association, believes that it is the Association’s job to protect the areas, but – in addition to being distant – the areas are not fenced; he says that they are being destroyed.

**Economy:**

**Distinguishing Factor:** This community has gone further than most others studied in trying to industrialize. In addition to an electric-powered *casa de farinha* (manioc flour mill) financed with SIC funds, the community has a factory (*fabrica*) to manufacture *bolachas*, inexpensive cookies and crackers (the difference being whether they are made with sugar or salt) made with very fine manioc-flour (*polvilho*).

The project, based on the knowledge and experience of women in the settlement, was developed by the Association President, the technical advisor, and Rose from Celanor. Rose purchased the material and supervised building the factory. SIC money was supplemented with additional funds. The factory consists of a kitchen and additional tiled room for preparing dough, packaging, etc. Firewood for the oven comes from the ecological reserve and from the orange groves.

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281 The *casa de farinha* has a median daily production of 20 sixty-kilo sacks. Meeting at church, 28/04/06.

282 Alice Prima Aguiar, wife of one of the titulars, provided interesting background. She had made *bolachas* at her home in Rio Real, and taught the other women at BVIII how to do so. "We began to work with a small clay oven." They then moved to Neide’s house, and eventually formed a group of 25 women. She considered herself a leader of the group, but subsequently desisted due to disagreements on how to carry forward the activities. Interview 29/04/06

283 Frei Chico developed a project through SECOMP ("Projeto Mulheres Rurais Empreendedoras do Litoral Norte") that included projects for four settlement communities – BVIII, Palmeira (manufacture of clothing), Mata Verde (home-made sweets) and Sabatáma (artisan goods). SECOMP provided R$68,267.09, the *prefeitura* R$5,780 and BVIII R$3,750; the contract was signed on 10/11/02. As the other settlements did not have their accounts in order, money for their projects also flowed through BVIII. Each settlement had a *tecnico* to accompany it – Rose for BVIII. After the factory was built, Maria Lucia dos Santos was chosen as treasurer for the project. There was a problem with accounting for the project funds; that was resolved in September, 2005, but the delay led to losing a second parcel of SECOMP funds that was intended to establish a day care center. However, when we visited, they were discussing with SECOMP putting in a new proposal for the day-care center, in order to free up the women in the settlement to work. Visit to the factory 28/03/06
In addition to bolachas, the factory can make bread, but was not currently doing so. The market for bolachas is small. The settlers we spoke to believe they have the necessary equipment but need to find the market, and that they really have not yet made a sufficient effort to identify markets.\(^{284}\)

Bolachas are sold in 60 gram packages and have a 60 day shelf life (but are most flavorful during the first week or two). One intermediary buys 100 packages every 15 days or so for R$0.50, and the factory sells directly in the town market for R$0.70. At the time of our visit, three women were working; a problem was noted with other women working part time and wanting a full monthly salary. Marlene, one of the women working in the factory, noted that, in the beginning the settlement kids and young people bought a lot, but they got tired of them.\(^{285}\)

Land:\(^{286}\) The land purchase took place on June 8, 1998. The purchase price was R$130 per ha, for a total of R$178,750. SAT funds were R$194,425 and SIC R$301,925.

Opinions varied as to whether the land should be described as good, adequate, weak, or – perhaps most realistically – some parts better and some weaker. But all settlers agreed that the land needs fertilizer

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\(^{284}\) Visit to the factory 28/03/06. Alice Aguiar, op cit., wanted to try selling bolachas in the Municipio of Conde, on the coast, but others did not agree.

\(^{285}\) Alice Aguiar, op cit., feels that the factory is not being well run. “There, everything is wrong (Ali tudo é errado)” She thinks the factory should make cake, and should be open to new ideas wherever they can get them – for instance the ideas appearing in Globo Rural. She says the factory needs (1) unity among the women working there, (2) firm management, and (3) clear rules to be followed (regimento). When she was in charge of the factory, she was able to go to Esplanada with 200 packages and sell them all. But she found being both administrator and sales person was too much. She also sought to impose rules, setting working hours, and doling out measured portions of dough to each woman; but she was criticized for wanting to be the “dona” of the factory.

\(^{286}\) Rafael of CELANOR mentioned that “family life in Boa Vista III is [sometimes] guaranteed by land in Rio Real. We encountered four incidents of this. Waldemar still owns two tarefas of land in Rio Real and maintains his membership in the Lima Association. Del also owns land in Rio Real. Galego has 400 orange trees that he maintains on his father’s land in Rio Real. Ivone’s father bought the lot in Boa Vista III from another settler and put it in Ivone’s name; he continues to own land in Rio Real.
“This land isn’t bad, nor is it the best. But if you fertilize, take care of the land and don’t let the weeds take over…” Mico Preto

“It’s good. There is the problem of the subsoil, but it’s good. That only hampers oranges. [The land] is good for coconut, manioc, beans.” Zé Reis

“Those who take care [of the plants] harvest.” Antonio Gago

As in Nova Lusitânia, soil experts have dug trenches in Boa Vista III and are mapping the soil. An attempt was made to turn the subsoil using an EDBA tractor; however, the tractor only had the capacity to cut 40 cm into the soil as opposed to the tractor used to by the neighboring reforestation company, which can cut up to 1.2 meters.

Financing: In 1998, each family received R$2210 to plant passion fruit – an amount not sufficient to plant one hectare. The passion fruit was excellent in quality. But about two years later world prices began to fall dramatically.²⁸⁸

Of the nineteen households interviewed, sixteen had taken out PRONAF A loans,²⁸⁹ in most cases for oranges, although the loans could also be used for land clearing, fencing, and/or coconut planting (only one of the interviewees used part of the funds for coconuts).

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²⁸⁷ “Quem zela, colha.”
²⁸⁸ Interview with Rafael at CELANOR, April 27, 2006
²⁸⁹ One interviewee was barred from taking the loan due to an old outstanding bank debt. The other two did not state their reasons for not taking out the loan.
Twelve of the households had taken out custeio loans, in all cases but one to plant manioc. One farmer mentioned that he had repaid two of the three payments on the loan, and was contemplating taking out an additional custeio. Two of the farmers took out the loans but felt the weather was too dry and did not plant. "The Bank Manager is from the country and understands," Natalia stated. Her family was negotiating a new custeio for R$3000 – R$1200 to repay the bank and the remainder to plant manioc. Zé do Roque and his wife Dé stated that she had submitted a proposal, prepared by Renato of CELANOR, for a PRONAF Women’s project that provides R$1000 capital for projects started by non-titular female spouses – which they planned to put into pig raising.

Antonio Gago is negotiating via COPEF, using his passion fruit on the vine as collateral for purchasing fertilizer. He states that this method will work with oranges also. He sees it as the only near term option for financing. "The Banco do Nordeste would finance a larger loan (custeio) for one year, but our production is [currently] too small to warrant this."

Production and Income: With respect to agricultural practices, only two families used fully organic methods. "Chemical fertilizer is throwing money away," Mico Preto said. He uses chicken manure, which costs him R$70-90 a ton; he stated that passion fruit needs 2 kg per plant, oranges 5 kg per tree. Iane mentioned that she and her husband would like to put 2-3 tons of chicken manure on the land, but at the cost of R$70

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290 The exception, Waldemar, took out the custeio to plant oranges. He repaid the full value (R$2000) and was contemplating a new loan of R$3000. Interview 29 April 2006

291 Interview, 28/04/06. The bank manager had been expected to visit the settlement, with a bank inspector, the week before to study the situation and make recommendations, but he did not arrive. Zé do Roque, interview, 28/04/06.

292 Interview, 28/04/06
per ton, could not afford to do so.\textsuperscript{293} Antonio Gago said that he uses chemical fertilizer rather than organic because he can pay for the former over time, and that makes it affordable.\textsuperscript{294} Several families said that they use a combination of organic and chemical methods.

As mentioned above, the settlers in Boa Vista III are of Sergipano background, in which orange raising is an important aspect of the culture. All nineteen families interviewed had planted commercial orange groves, ranging from 400 to 2500 trees, the average being 1450. However, due to the relative immaturity of the trees, only four of the families reported selling oranges during the preceding year. One of these, Zé Sande – the owner of the largest grove – earned R$1600 from oranges, and Mico Peto earned R$440, but the two remaining earned around R$100 or less.\textsuperscript{295} Del and Ana also have a commercial grove of 400 lemon trees, and reported selling approximately R$15-20 of lemons each week at the market in Esplanada.

Due to the immaturity of the orange groves, at the time of the interviews, passion fruit was the most important cash crop (it begins producing 6-9 months after planting). Seventeen of the nineteen families had commercial plantings of passion fruit, ranging from 500 to 2300 plants. Fifteen families reported income from sale of passion fruit. For 2005, two families recorded selling 10 tons (1 ton = 1000kg), one family sold 8 tons, three sold 4-5 tons. Prices were generally R$ 0.40 per kg, with a low of R$0.20 and a high of R$0.60. For some families, this added R$2000-4000 to annual income – a

\textsuperscript{293} Interview, 28/04/06
\textsuperscript{294} Interview, 29/04/06
\textsuperscript{295} Prices received for oranges ranged from R$110 to R$200 per ton.
significant amount. As the fruit is harvested during a ten month period each year, it provides a useful flow of income. Del mentioned that he sold 1500 passion fruit mudas (seedlings, saplings) at R$0.12 – 0.15.

Twelve families had coconut groves, the largest being 400 trees. However, the trees are not yet producing in quantity, and only one family recorded moderately significant sales (R$300) during 2005.

Thirteen families had manioc planted, in all cases one hectare or less. Six families recorded sales of manioc flour (farinha) the standard price during 2005 being around R$30 per 60 kg sack. One family earned R$1200 in such sales during the year, but for most it was considerably less.

Other significant cash crops planted included one farmer with 1700 inhame plants, three with significant plantings of papaya (mamão), one with three tarefas of watermelon, and one with 50 banana trees. Only one of these farmers recorded sales during 2005 – R$280 for papaya.

Waldemar noted that he had experimented with cotton, sunflowers, and castor oil plants (mamona); all three did well and he plans to plant more when he takes out a new loan (he repaid his first loan). He also experimented with rice and sugar cane, and said both did well. Adilson experimented with 250 acerola plants, but the experiment was not successful.

296 Antonio Gago noted that passion fruit sales were the basis of his family’s survival. Interview 29/04/06.

297 Interview, April 29, 2006.
Most of the farmers interviewed planted black beans, corn, squash, and vegetables for family use and for sale in small quantities at the farmers’ market in Esplanada and other towns. Isodoro maintained a stall at the market in Acajutiba, a small município (population 14,000) north of Esplanada, which he stated earned his family approximately a minimum salary per month. Most families have a variety of fruit trees on their house lots; one mentioned that he planted coffee on his house lot and it is growing well.

Stock raising was not a significant source of income. Although many families had a few chickens, only three of the interviewed families had significant flocks of poultry (ranging up to 25), mostly chickens, although one had 15 ducks. Only three farmers had a horse or mule, and one of these owned – in partnership with a neighbor – a two-wheeled horse drawn wagon (carroça) used for carting.

In eight of the households, the men work part time off their land. In five cases, the men work as day laborers earning R$15 a day, although one of these mentioned that he also takes on fixed price tasks (empreito) such as cleaning orange groves. One of the day laborers reports that he works outside only “as needed,” and one spends 20% of his time working off his farm, but three spend about half their working time on such jobs.

Three others who work outside have a higher skill level. Antonio Gago is the local representative of COPEF, receiving and weighing passion fruit each Saturday, receiving a commission on the amount so received; he also works 2-3 days a week in the casa de farinha, earning R$20 a day (R$25 a day if they work overtime). Fausto works

298 "Some people think that planting beans isn’t worth the effort," Antonio Gago told us. He laughed. "But I plant them."

299 COFEP had more than 30 members altogether, four of them in Boa Vista III – Antonio Gago, Bosco, Zinho, and Nato. However, it also purchases from non-members.
as a mason, carpenter, and electrician, earning R$25-40 per day. Bosco hires out as a
tractor driver/maintenance person at R$30 per day; he also owns his own tractor and nets
R$600 a month in hiring it out (the standard fee for renting a small tractor is R$35 per
day).

Ideas for additional investment were mentioned. As noted above, Luis Carlos
envisions a juice factory as a possibility. Alice, who is a seamstress, says that there is not
enough work for her in the settlement; she would like to set up a sewing atelier and could
teach the other women, but needs a plan, a place to work, machines, and a place to sell
goods manufactured. Several men mentioned the need for additional capital to better
work the land.

Ten of the nineteen households receive bolsa escola/familia ranging from R$30 to
R$95 a month, and one other family is in the process of registering for the bolsa. In one
family, the husband receives a government retirement pension (a minimum salary per
month). In two families, young adult children living at home have municipal teaching
positions, earning a minimum salary per month. Renato’s wife earns approximately
R$40 a month selling cosmetics.

At the time of our visit, Petrobrás was preparing to dig three oil wells on settlement
land. If the wells were successful, the Association would receive some payment. The
Association had contracted a lawyer (who worked on a 30% commission) to represent
them in dealings with Petrobrás.  

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300 Lane, interview 29 May 2006, expressed the hope that by next year Petrobrás would be paying an
amount equivalent to R$300 for each settler, and with this the settlers would make their land payments.
**Sufficiency of Income:** Only two of the nineteen households interviewed answered “yes” when asked whether household income is sufficient (again, both these respondents were men). Five families simply stated income is not sufficient — in one of these the father and three eldest sons work as day laborers to supplement income. Several other families indicated that they are able to make do with the income:

"Sometimes it’s sufficient, sometimes it’s weak (fraco), but it serves to make a living (da para viver)” (Waldemar)

“We dance in accordance with the music. I don’t have, but I will have. This year, if God gives me half of what I ask, I’ll accept it and carry forward.” (Mico Preto)

Mico Preto’s hope for the future - seeing the current hard times as an investment toward future harvests - was mentioned by three other men, and two others mentioned that, during passion fruit harvests, income is sufficient.

Day-to-day maintenance and health concerns were most cited by settlers among their worries. Delmina jokingly mentioned her devotion to Our Lady of the Grocery Bag (Nossa Senhora da Sacola) as she faced the weekly concern of whether there would be money for the Saturday farmers’ market and basic bills – water and electricity. Money for transport in the event of sickness, and for the purchase of medicine, was mentioned as a major worry by several interviewees.
**Settler Attitudes:**

**Satisfaction:** The early years at Boa Vista III were difficult. Rafael of CELANOR used very strong language: "Este povo foram massacrado."\(^{301}\) Attrition was relatively high, with approximately 20 of the first 55 families (27.5%) leaving. At the time of our visit, based on the agricultural events occurring in Nova Lusitania and other nearby settlements, settlers were beginning to express concern about the subsoil, but most had not experienced problems yet.\(^{302}\) However, attitudes among those interviewed were relatively positive. Of 37 people interviewed, only six (two married couples and two others) expressed mild interest in selling or trading their land.\(^{303}\) Four of the couples interviewed were emphatic about not leaving, and several mentioned that they had had to work hard to achieve what they now possessed in the settlement area. 25 of those interviewed stated that their life on the settlement was better than it had been before moving there,\(^{304}\) and only 4 stated that things were worse.

**Future:** Responses to questions about the future were generally optimistic. Several interviewees mentioned expectations for improved harvests. While orange harvests were cited by several people, there did not seem to be as much focus on oranges as in Nova Lusitania. Other crops were discussed, including truck farming, manioc, passion fruit,

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\(^{301}\) Literally, "These people were massacred." Interview, March 27, 2006

\(^{302}\) Nilton mentioned the need to study other plants that can substitute for oranges.

\(^{303}\) Lane, one of the two female titleholders, was thinking of selling and was offered R$25,000 for her land; she went to Salvador and saw "many things there I didn’t like," so decided to stay in the settlement.

\(^{304}\) Waldemar & Alice, a couple who stated how much they love their land, noted that economically they were just as well off prior to moving to BVIII, but that they love the land and community, so feel better off.
and papaya. Several respondents mentioned hoped-for improvements such as pavement, a plaza, a sports area, a public telephone post, a health post, a child-care center, and even a middle school. Three respondents mentioned the need for additional commercialization of local produce, two suggested scales for weighing large quantities of oranges, and one a juice factory.

With respect to long-range views, of the seven communities studied, the interviewees at Boa Vista III were one of the two most focused on having their children remain in the area. Mico Preto wants to help his children build houses in the area. Ze de Roque mentioned that his son moved to Salvador but was assaulted there and wants to return to the land – each of his sons has their own area to plant, and Ze de Roque intends to retire and leave his land to his sons. Antonio Gago wants his children to graduate, but wants them to learn to value the land and crops, to have pride in being “children of the countryside.” Natalia mentioned that one of the reasons to promote local commercialization is to provide jobs for children so that they can stay in the area.\(^{305}\) Isodoro mentioned the need for the family to obtain additional land so that the children, when grown up, can stay in the area.

**Socio-Political Awareness:** The level of socio-political awareness in Boa Vista III was similar to the settlements visited. When asked who helps/is in favor of the rural worker, answers included Lula/Federal Government (11), the Church/Frei Chico (5), the Program/CDA, etc. (5), the Rural Workers’ Union (2), and the *prefeito* (2). Ivone stated that it is “groups of workers” who support the rural worker.

\(^{305}\) Blanca, 20 year old daughter of community leader Mico Preto, with a high school education, also mentioned that a factory is needed to generate income; she is dating a young man from the settlement and wishes to get married and live there.
Opinions of the MST were largely negative. Thirteen interviewees did not approve of it, citing invasion of land, violence, and death. Ivone added that she thought the MST is badly organized. Del said: "How we entered here is right, invading is wrong."

Four interviewees had mixed opinions. Gamelão said the MST is "one part right, one part wrong." Isodoro thought they are "good when they make demands (cobram) on the authorities, bad when they invade." Zé Reis said he is neither for nor against them, but that the MST lost a lot of credibility when they invaded land and then were forced to leave it. Renato stated: "It is just to demand [land], [I am] in favor as long as it is peaceful."

However, Blanca, 20, supports the MST. "They invade because they need land to work and to provide food for their children." Zé do Roque observed that the large demonstrations carried out (by the MST) in the South of Brazil help the rural workers.

A factor that emerged more at Boa Vista III than at any other settlement, and which may impact the settlers’ reluctance to identify with the MST, is the prejudice that they feel in town against the "landless." Gamelão stated that there are people in the city (Esplanada) who do not like the people from the settlements, to the extent of saying they are "nauseated" by them.

"The Prefeito isn’t bad, but some of the people in his group treat us as though we were landless." (Antonio Gago)

Waldemar is able to joke about it:
“People call me Waldemar *sem-terra* (landless) and I respond, call me *sem-dinheiro* (money-less) but not *sem-terra*."

With respect to the last election, 19 interviewees voted for Lula and 10 for Serra. With respect to the next election, 25 interviewees intended to vote for Lula, three were undecided, and one said she would vote against him (interestingly, this was Blanca, 20, who listed the PT and Lula as factors that help the rural worker, but said that she simply did not like Lula). Only two interviewees had strong party affiliation, both with the Workers’ Party, but one of these clarified that he identified with the party at the national level only, not at the local level.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations**: Boa Vista III has not yet been hit by the subsoil compacting as hard as has been Nova Lusitânia. Although there is an awareness of the problem, it seems to lie on the horizon – we heard no significant reports of trees or crops failing because of it. Indeed the problem may be less severe in Boa Vista III than in Nova Lusitânia; there are indications that the top soil may be deeper, and that portions of the settlement – such as the riverside lots – may not be affected by it. We heard no reports of the problem affecting passion fruit, a major cash crop with significant potential.

It also seemed to us that the settlers’ hopes were not quite as much fixated on oranges here as in Nova Lusitânia. There is a willingness to diversify, to experiment with *inhame* (which Dr. Penedo told us does well in this soil), castor oil plants, and papaya – none of which require deep soil. But there is no doubt that, if the land turns out not to
support oranges, coconuts, lemons, and other fruit trees, it will be a severe blow to the community.

In speaking of the people of Boa Vista III, Rafael of CELANOR used the term "resilient." He stated it is interesting to see how some communities bounce back from adversity. He attributed this in part to the fact that the settlers arrived with above average material and cultural resources, and that many retained a safety net in the form of small fields and/or orange groves in Rio Real. But he acknowledged that resilience is not a phenomenon that can easily be explained

This spirit has shown itself also in the push to move beyond agricultural production into processing. The bolacha factory, initially a success, has encountered significant difficulties, leading to some disappointment. But the feeling we received was not that of the community giving up on the idea, but of regrouping to decide how to move forward.

The Association is encountering the tensions – especially with respect to the collective areas – that most of the associations studied are encountering. Leadership seems to be good, and there is a reasonably strong consensus on the value of the Association – not only to administer local needs, but to search out resources and solutions. The group had the ability to experiment with a new way of administering collective lands and, when that did not work out, to change back to the former method. It is clear that they are examining alternatives.

There is also evidence that, although participation in collective work continues to be problematic, participation may be at or above the level of most other associations. Efforts to include women, and perhaps to extend educational activities so that less
educated members can participate more fully, may well increase participation, as well as adding to the potential leadership pool.

Largely due to the unknown extent of the compacted subsoil, it is not possible to paint as bright a future for Boa Vista III as it is for some other settlements, in which it seems simply a matter of time until abundant crops bring a certain level of prosperity. Nonetheless, Boa Vista III seems to us to be a well-rooted community with strong unifying factors, which has shown itself able to envision and pursue opportunities. It is our impression that the settlement will be able to navigate the future and to confront whatever issues may arise.
Case Study 3

Name of Settlement: **Vila Canaã** (Associação dos Pequenos Produtores Rurais Vila de Canaã)

Families in Settlement: 73 officially settled + 4 additional families

Location: Município – Euclides da Cunha

Area: 1,649 ha.

Contract Date: May 25, 1998

Dates Visited: March 16 & 19, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 27  
Individuals: 41

Family size (persons): 1-3/7; 4-6/16; 7-9/2; 10+/2

Persons Interviewed: 22 men, 14 women, 5 youth (2 female - 16, one female - 15, and 2 male - 16, all unmarried)

Ages: -20/5, 20-29/1, 30-39/12, 40-49/14, 50-59/7, 60+/2

Education: 0-2/18, 3-5/17, 6-8/3, 8+/3 (all youth)

Husbands and wives tended to be in relative parity in terms of education, with the exception of five households; in four of these the women had more education than their husbands, in one the husband had an 8th grade education (the highest level of education among adults interviewed) and his wife a 4th grade education.

Technical Assistance: Maria Djalma Andrade de Abreu of NATE Núcleo de Assistência Técnica Agropecuária Ltda.
Figures V-3-A and V-3-B. Settler's houses in Vila Canaã. The top picture shows the basic brick housing originally provided through SIC financing. Many settlers have improved their homes along the lines of the bottom picture.
Map V-3-A. Nova Canaan: The agro-vila, showing seventy-three residential lots, four institutional lots, plaza, and football field.

Figure V-3-C. Seventh-Day Adventist church in Vila Canaan
Figures V-3-D and V-3-E. Association buildings in Vila Canãã. Above: the community 
galpão. Below: the casa de farinha. Both buildings are clearly marked with the names 
of the sponsoring entities – the World Bank (BIRD), the Government of the State of 
Bahia, CAR, CDA, and MDA.
Figures V-3-F and V-3-G. Settlers in Vila Canaã. Above: Ari Souza and his wife, Bela, in front of their home. Below: Délio dos Santos, leader of the opposition, and his daughter in front of the school bus that he partly owns and operates as a concession from the municipal government.
Figure V-3-H. Researchers Brenda King-Powers and Daniel Carvalho (left) with settler Gerson de Jesus next to water tank on his agricultural lot.

Figure V-3-I. Settlers in the living room of Veraluce and Adilson Souza (on the right), primary leader in organizing to purchase the land and first president of the Association.
**Geography:** The settlement is located in the semi-arid Northeast Region of the state of Bahia. Approximately 18 km. east of the town of Euclides da Cunha over 10 km. of good dirt roads, 8 km. of good sand roads (although we were told the sand roads are difficult to travel in the rainy season). The area of the settlement is less arid than other portions of the region, and has developed, in the last ten years, into an area of brown bean (*feijão*) growing (Euclides da Cunha has become the second greatest producer, after Irecê, of *feijão* in the State of Bahia). Because of this development, the value of the land since its acquisition has risen almost ninefold, from R$150/ha. to R$1350/ha.

Each of the landholding families has a dwelling lot in the agro-vila and a farm lot of approximately 11 ha. (according to local calculations, approximately 50 *tarefas*). 30% of the land is collectively held by the Association. As required by law, 20% is an ecological reserve.

The agro-vila consists of one wide main street running roughly west from the entry road, with two small parallel streets, and four small cross streets (see map). Houses range from very simple rough brick, 307 to more standard smooth white plaster (*reboco*), to one or two that are more elaborate and resemble middle class homes in town.

There is no through road, but small roads run in three directions from the agro-vila to the farm lots. At the end of the agro-vila, at the edge of the settlement property, the community has a good soccer field. Just beyond it – outside of the property – are two

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306 15 ha. divided by 50 is 3000 m²; a *tarefa* in this region is 3025 m², so the actual size in *tarefas* would be 49.57.

307 External or internal brick that is not covered by smooth plaster is usually a sign that a home is either unfinished or the owners cannot afford to plaster it. The funding to construct houses included plastering.
bars (these are a matter of minor controversy in the community, some residents contending that the bars are a source of rowdiness among some of the youth and visiting youth from other communities).

**Climate:** Vila Canaã is located in the semi-arid region. The natural vegetation would be *cerrado*.

**History:** In 1997, Adilson de Silva Souza, a small farmer in Lagoa dos Matos\(^{308}\) (located about 35 km away in the neighboring município of Quijinge), learned of the Cedula da Terra program.\(^{309}\) Adilson traveled to Salvador, met with persons in CDA, brought back information, and began forming a group, primarily of neighbors and relatives, to seek land under the program. The group considered land close to Lagoa dos Matos, but was not favorably impressed.

One member of the group, Décio dos Santos, was familiar with the region where the settlement is now located and believed that the land owner, Carlos Sampaio, might be willing to sell. Several members of the group, including Adilson and his wife, Veraluce, Adilson's brother Ari, and Décio, visited the site and liked it. They began negotiations directly with the landowner and, according to the *técnica*, Maria Djalma, handled the

\(^{308}\) Lagoa dos Matos was itself a land occupation area. In 1972, families from the area of Rio do Pombal entered what was apparently abandoned land and started to farm there, gradually claiming their rights. Some of the settlers in Vila Canaã, including Adilson and his elder brother Ari, were children of these families. According to what they told us, Lagoa dos Matos is highly accidented land with relatively small lots and, after thirty years of farming, the land is wearing out. This last point is possibly significant in considering the future sustainability of Vila Canaã.

\(^{309}\) Prior to learning about the Cedula da Terra program, Adilson, Ari, and other persons (mostly Adventists from Lagoa dos Matos) entered onto land next to their parents' land in Lagoa dos Matos. Their apparent goal was not so much to gain the land (which was of poor quality) but to call attention to their need for land. Although the land was not being used, the landowner reacted strongly and "forced them to run" ("botou eles para correr."
negotiations very well. She felt that this was “an important factor” in the formation of the group.\footnote{Interview with Maria Djalma, March 15, 2006}

Carlos Sampaio had purchased the land some years before from the son-in-law of a man who had reportedly obtained it through grilagem. Sampaio, a former prefect of the município of Ruy Barbosa, was aging and had lost interest in the land. He was willing to sell.\footnote{Adilson told us that initially Sampaio was hard to contact, and seemed to be wary of the group. But when he realized they were proposing a peaceful transition, he opened up and “in the end became a good friend.”} However, the negotiation process was lengthy, stretching from May, 1997, until the actual contract date in May, 1998.

The settlers’ original objective was to purchase the entire fazenda. However, it was discovered that part of the land held deposits of lime. Under Brazilian law, mining rights are separate from surface land rights; holders of mining rights can take over the area by paying indemnification to the surface holder. For this reason, the Cedula da Terra program would not finance the purchase of land covering mineral deposits. This factor seemed likely to kill the deal, but the members of the association approached the landowner regarding the possibility of purchasing that portion of the fazenda that did not have lime deposits, and the owner agreed. This deal was carried out.

Negotiations also almost foundered over the purchase price. After considerable negotiation, the government was willing to pay R$ 150 per hectare, but the landowner wanted R$180, a difference of R$30,000. The landowner agreed to take a personal promissory note from Adilson for the difference. Each family contributed R$300 and the amount was paid. The land so purchased was sufficient to settle 100 families in two
distinct areas, which subsequently became the settlements of Vila Canaã (73 families) and Alto Paraíso (27 families).

The 100 families had been made up of families from Lagoa dos Matos and a neighboring community. According to interviewees from Vila Canaã (we did not interview in Alto Paraíso), the division into two groups occurred with facility. Within the Vila Canaã group itself, rather than distributing fields purely by drawing lots (as is the usual case), the association decided to divide into five sub-groups (based on kinship and/or affinity); each of these sub-groups was assigned a number of fields (in accordance with its membership) and these were distributed by lots among the sub-group members.

Once the land was purchased, many settlers came and lived in temporary huts covered with plastic sheeting while they began work on the land. Carlinhos and Aliene, a married couple, came together and lived in such a hut. They liked it from the beginning, and had good memories of working during the day and conversing with other settlers in the evening. But they said the beginning period was hard, especially during the first two years.

This was in part because funding for the program was blocked for a year and a half. According to Maria Djalma, the blockage was caused by charges, levied by the MST, that landowners were being unduly favored. However, this matter was cleared up and funding was continued in 1999. In July of that year, Maria Djalma facilitated the group in a “participatory diagnostic,” in which settlers met, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their community, and drew up immediate and long term goals.312

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312 “Due to the necessity of creating a referential model for training for the pilot project ‘Cedula da Terra’ Settlement, a training was carried out between July 13 and 17, 1999.... As this project is a pilot, up to this time some activities were stumbling (atropeladas), various projects being in the phase of execution without there having been clearly defined their priorities and potential. This training event seeks to salvage this
By the early 2000s, Vila Canaã came to be viewed as one of the communities that was functioning well. Visitors were frequent. In 2004, an international conference was held and the community received visitors from various parts of the world.

**Demography:** All of the interviewees were of rural origin except for Ana Francisca Souza, who was born in the city of Santos, São Paulo, and Maria Josefa de Jesus, who was from the town of Euclides da Cunha; both were working on the land when it was bought and were included in the project. Of the men interviewed, prior to moving to the settlement, five were sharecroppers (one of these also had an employment relationship with a landowner), four worked land belonging to parents or parents-in-law, four had minifundios (one of these also sharecropped on the side), and four simply said they worked in agriculture without defining the type of arrangement (one of these also sold cattle as a sideline). Three had larger areas of relatively poor land – one 30 tarefas, one 40 tarefas, and Manoel Santana 86 tarefas that he had received in an INTERBA land reform project – he said the land was so bad that only 3 tarefas were arable. One man had grown up on a farm, but was running a small store in the town of Ribeiro do Pombal before moving to the settlement.

Three of the men had grown up on small farms that had to be divided among numerous children. Ernesto had so many brothers that there was no room for him on his father’s land, and he was selling roasted corn on the streets in Euclides da Cunha (hence fault of execution of the program, bringing forth first a diagnostic of the project so that, in a second event of training, a participatory planning may be developed.... A principal goal of this diagnostic is to waken the community so that it may identify its principle potentials and consequently permit their ordered and sustained development. The difficulty of perceiving good opportunities for production and business are elements that impede the growth of this project.” “DPA – Oficina Diagnostico Participativo – Comunidade Vila de Canaã” (NATE, Euclides da Cunha, 1999)
his nickname – “Milho Assado” – Roasted Corn). Antonio Santana, as the youngest brother, was in a similar situation – he went to São Paulo and worked there as a cook for eight years. Gerson was one of 20 siblings (17 brothers), and was selling books, sugar cane juice, and pasteis (light pastry filled with meat or cheese) in Sergipe before moving to the settlement.

Race/Ethnicity: Principally white, some Afro-Brazilian

Gender: In one of the twenty-seven households interviewed, a woman was titleholder. Women were not very active in the Association, although some attend the meetings. However, a number of women held active leadership positions in the Adventist Church.

Religion: About half the community (Decio estimated 40 families) were in some manner connected to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Sixteen of the families interviewed identified themselves as Adventist, and in two others one of the spouses was Adventist. Those identifying themselves as “Catholic” tended to be largely unchurched – there is no Catholic chapel nearby and the priest has never been to the settlement. The Adventists tend to dominate leadership, but this is probably in part because their church teaches them leadership and participatory skills. In fact, those skills are probably one of the factors leading to the success of the community. One Catholic interviewed felt that Catholics are marginalized in the community; it is interesting, however, that the main “opposition” figure in the community is an Adventist.

Age: Leadership in the community is provided by settlers now in their 40s; most of these would have been in their late thirties at the time of settlement. As in the

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313 “They telephoned me [about founding the settlement] and I didn’t think twice – I came. Here is good – I don’t even think about returning.” (Antonio Santana)
case of Fazenda Veneza, this may be a factor in community success. 25 of the 37 people interviewed were in their thirties or forties.

**Attrition:** Interviewees estimated that attrition since the beginning has been between 20 and 30%. Replacement of families leaving is governed by the Association. It was noted, however, that no families have left recently. Of the families interviewed, 23 were original settlers and four newer settlers. One interviewee stated that some attrition had been due to lack of adequate health care in the area – one child could not be treated in Euclides da Cunha, was sent to Salvador and died.

**Education:** The school in the settlement teaches approximately 80 children in pre-school through 4\textsuperscript{th} grade. Opinion about the schools was divided. Whereas 15 respondents classed them as “good,” fifteen others rated them anywhere between “so-so” to terrible. One noted that books and school supplies were lacking. It was stated that, although there are teachers who live in the settlement, for political reasons they are not appointed to the public school. Jô said that she wished there were evening classes for adults.

After 4\textsuperscript{th} grade, students go into Euclides da Cunha to study. A bus, owned in part and driven by Decio, transports the students under a contract paid by the municipal government. José Domingos felt that transport to schools in Euclides da Cunha for older students does not work well. Joice, 15, confirmed that they missed some school because of transport issues. Currently, however, she is attending regularly and likes it; she says that it is “good and organized,” and that there is little distinction between town and country students.

\(^{314}\) "Those who didn’t like it have left.” (José Hilton)

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Health: Interviewees were almost unanimously dissatisfied with health services. Fourteen stated that there essentially are no health services, and twelve that they are terrible, while nine classified them as mediocre or “not good.”

We were told that there is a health agent who comes at times to weigh the children. However, the agent did not seem to be very active. José Rodrigues said that he would like the prefeitura to open a position for health agent and fill it with someone from the community. Several interviewees said there should be a health post in the settlement.

For medical help, it is necessary to travel to Euclides da Cunha. According to Adália, “one has to leave very early, wait in line – at times [even then] one does not get an appointment.” However, when one does get an appointment, she says the doctor is good. If one has to hire a car to go to town, it costs R$30.

Water: The Association has an artesian well that was opened in approximately 2000, with a water tower and water piped to the houses and to the fields. However, the water from the well is not good for drinking and several interviewees mentioned the water as one thing they do not like about the settlement.

At the time of our visit, CAR had a project underway to pipe water from Monte Alegre to the two settlements of Vila Canaã and Alto Paraiso, a distance of 93 kms. It will be good quality water, but the settlers will have to pay based on consumption. The project calls for piping parallel to the existing piping, so that settlers can continue to use

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315 Since 2003, CAR has insisted that all such projects use water meters; consumers pay approximately R$1 per 1000 liters of water. This includes the cost of water and an operating fee for the entity that administers the water system, which can be IMBASSA, a municipal government, or another organization. Meeting with Marcos Gonçalves Adriano, CAR engineer, March 17, 2006.
the existing well (which has less good quality water) for irrigating their gardens, house plots, and fields. The project is undertaken via the PRODUZIR program, which is a grant requiring 10% participation by the community – the 10% can be in the form of labor.\footnote{Interview with Marcos Gonçalves Adriano, CAR engineer, March 17, 2006}

**Association and Collective Area**: At the time of our visit, the community was reaching the stage of emancipation, i.e., freedom from government tutelage. Maria Djalma, the technical advisor, stated that the programs and infrastructure planned for the community had been accomplished. SIC and PRONAF A funds have been invested, and the community now has individual financing.\footnote{Interview with Maria Djalma Andrade de Andreu, March 15, 2006}

As is generally the case, 30% of settlement land is allocated to the collective area administered by the Association. The goal of the collective area is to produce income sufficient to pay for the land. Pursuant to rules set forth by the Association assembly, each titleholder is required to provide one day labor per month in the collective area.

As long as there were SIC funds, the Association was able to pay settlers for work done beyond their one-day commitment, and this was a source of income important especially to some of the poorer settlers. “When the Association was paying, people were working a lot.” (Ari) From approximately 2003 on, however, the Association no longer had the funds to do this.

The tension between collective and individual interests is, as in most of the settlements, the primary issue confronting the Association.\footnote{Among other issues that were reported to have been serious ones was whether the collective area should be dedicated to manioc or to grazing land.} The current president, José
Rodrigues, told us that the collective is his biggest worry. Interviewees repeatedly said that Association meetings frequently resulted in debates about the difficulty of getting settlers to perform their collective labor days and/or the advisability of keeping the collective area or of dividing it up among the settlers. Maria Djalma informed us that the Association proposed that the land be divided up among the settlers, but that CDA had vetoed the idea. Apparently it seems to have been carried out in practice anyway: we were told that five tarefas of collective land were allocated to each settler and that these areas were distributed by drawing lots. Even with emancipation from government tutelage, however, such an arrangement will have to remain extra-official until the land is completely paid for.

In addition to the artesian well, the Association has a tractor, a casa de farinha, a galpão, and a corral. The Association also administers a seed bank and has silos for storing beans. Symptomatic of its current difficulties, the Association also has bee hives in storage: the project has stalled due to a dispute as to whether apiculture should be a collective undertaking or the hives distributed to individual settlers.

There are differences in view as to the purpose and goal of the Association. Adilson, the founding president and the single most respected leader in the settlement,

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319 As in some other settlements, maintenance of the tractor is a challenge. Decio told us that, for awhile, he was in charge of the tractor. When he assumed responsibility, the tractor was in a state of disrepair; he got it fixed and running, and maintained it with its income, but – within a year after he passed control to someone else – it was again in disrepair. Adilson also said that administering the tractor is a problem.

320 Maria Djalma (interview, March 15, 2006) helped the settlers negotiate a bank loan so that they would not have to sell beans during harvest season, when prices are low, but would be able to store them until prices rose.

321 We were informed that there are 15 families very interested in apiculture and that the Association was considering turning the hives over to them as a sub-group within the Association. Another group within the Association wanted to put together a project to plant cashew trees, but that had not been approved.

322 In questions about leadership, his name was almost unanimously cited.

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sees it as essential for moving forward with community-based projects and efforts to secure funding:

“We have to find a path for continuing. The Association can’t stop. We have to develop plans.”

Adilson feels that most Association members still do not understand the collective well. Antonio Santos Reis sees the collective as good for the settlers:

“I think it would be good to return to the collective. The members would get something; [and] they could maintain the tractor that is falling into disrepair.”

But José Moraes, a member of the fiscal council in the first directorate of the Association, believes that it has served its role. He believes that the function of the Association was to get the land and the early financing, and that it is no longer viable. In talking about the future, Antonio André said that he thought that in ten years the Association would probably be nearly dissolved.

Within the Association, some interviewees felt that there was a division between the Adventists and the Catholics, the Adventists being generally more in favor of collective work, the Catholics more in favor of individual effort. There certainly

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323 “The collective doesn’t function anymore. In the beginning it was different.” (Isacale)

324 “The Adventists want to do things their way.” (Antonio Andrade) He was the most outspoken on this point. He stated that the Adventists have their political group, but that he belonged “to the other group.” He said that, although there are more Catholics in the settlement, the Adventists are more united (among themselves).
seemed to be a difference in participation: of the fourteen settlers who classified themselves as mere members of the association, attending meetings and, in some cases, doing their monthly stint, eleven were Catholics and only three Adventists. On the other hand, of the seven who indicated that they were current or former officers, all but two were Adventists.\textsuperscript{325}

José Rodrigues confirmed that the Association is divided to a certain extent in two groups. There have always been two slates of candidates for Association elections, and he said that these parallel to a certain extent the division in municipal politics between the PFL and PMDB parties.\textsuperscript{326} The local Adventists are fairly united in supporting the PFL, although many Catholics do so also.\textsuperscript{327} In the last municipal election, the PFL won 150 votes in the settlement and the PMDB 94. However, these divisions are by no means hard and fast: Carlinho and Aliene, for instance, are Catholics who voted PMDB, but they cite the Adventist and PFL supporter Adilson as the leader they most respect in the community, and are very pleased with the (largely Adventist) leadership of the Association.\textsuperscript{328}

\textsuperscript{325} Of those settlers not recorded here, four interviews were with non-titular wives.

\textsuperscript{326} Nationally, the PFL is viewed as a conservative party; the PMDB is the largest party in Brazil, and is generally centrist, although it is largely opportunistic and has a wide range of membership. In Bahia, the PFL was at this time identified with Antonio Carlos Magalhaes, the most powerful political boss in Bahia for over thirty years. However, local political party affiliations may have little or nothing to do with the national ideology of the parties. Note that most of those who supported the PFL locally voted for Lula of the leftist Workers’ Party for president.

\textsuperscript{327} However, Decio, an Adventist who lists himself as being very active in the church, was the opposition candidate for President of the Association in both 2002 and 2004, in both cases losing by "a little more than 20 votes." He supported the PMDB in the local election and, when that party won, was awarded the contract to bus students from the settlement to town (a contract previously held by one of Adilson’s brothers-in-law). Although he cited the church as a divisive factor, he thought that only about 10% of the settlers are against the Adventist Church.

\textsuperscript{328} Other Catholics who feel the same way included Antonio Andrade Silva, Ernesto “Milho Verde” Ribeiro da Silva, and Cecilio Lopes Dantas,
In any event, settlers seem to remain active in the Association, if not in the collective work. Both Adilson and José Rodrigues individually stated that there is 80-85% participation in monthly meetings. Meetings are, by all accounts, lively, with active discussions; many settlers mentioned that issues were raised in meetings, discussed, voted on, and resolved. Some were less sanguine about the degree to which they were resolved: José Moraes thinks that only a minority agrees with the Association norms — “but they let it go;” Isacale finds the discussions tiresome and says they don’t resolve anything.

“I support what’s right; what’s wrong, I keep my mouth shut. [But] not everyone is the same — each one has different ideas.” Gerson

Of the ten settlers asked the question, eight felt that the Association represented well both the interests of their own family and those of other families, while only two did not feel it was representative. Sonia felt the representation was good, but could be better. Aliene stated, “Up until now, it’s good — the Association has made good decisions, and we agree [with them].” Twenty-four of the twenty-seven households said that they would continue to be members of the Association even if they did not need it to obtain credit; only three said they would desist from membership.

329 "Each one gives his opinion. Collective v. individual. [They] converse in the meeting, arrive at an agreement. Sometimes it is more difficult." (Marineide)

330 Ari mentioned that they used, at least in one situation, a leadership technique which we have seen work well in other organizations. When a member complained about how a certain project was being carried out, the Directorate invited him to take over leadership of the project. The member did so, and came to realize the complexities of the matter he was dealing with.
Sonia noted that the Association handled a delicate matter of stealing and drinking on the part of adolescent children of settlers. The young people were called in, talked to, and required to work on collective land to repay the damage they had caused.

Women tend not to be active in the Association. Jô, for instance, stated that women support and watch “but the voice is the men’s – [this is our] tradition.” Like many other women, she is active in the Adventist Church, where she is chief deaconess. She also stated that, as a woman, she has a concern about her husband becoming too active in the Association. Marlene attends the meetings and feels that she learns from them, and sometimes gives her opinion. Adália, who was knowledgeable about the Association, said that the women support the Association from outside; she also noted that the young people were not represented in the Association. Catya, who is not an active Adventist, stated that there are no activities for the women; Tereza, also not an active Adventist, said that the women tend to stay in their homes, and that there are no activities for them.

**Economics:**

**Land:** The land purchase took place on May 25, 1998. The purchase price was R$150 per ha, for a total of R$247,350. SAT funds were R$259,118, and SIC R$335,945. (Note also, as discussed above, that each settler contributed an extra-legal R$300 to make up the difference between the price the landowner wanted and the price the government was willing to pay.)

Land payments are R$280 per year for seventeen years (twelve years remain to be paid). Maria Djalma, the technical assistant, who knows the financial situation of settler families, believed that, at that time, 40% of the families would be able to pay up the full
remaining value of the land (R$3360) if they needed to.\textsuperscript{331} However, a relatively prosperous settler, Ari, noted that, although he used not to worry about paying for the land (as that was the function of the Association through collective production), since the “paralyzation” of the collective area, he is more concerned.

Observation indicates that the land is good quality. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven households interviewed stated that their land is fertile; only one stated that his is not.\textsuperscript{332} Five noted that parts of their land are fertile and other parts not. Twenty-two of the households said that they use no fertilizer on the land, and twenty-three that they use no pesticides.

An interesting note is that several settlers have begun plowing with animal traction. There seemed to be a growing interest in this alternative technology.

**Financing:** All twenty-seven families interviewed had taken out PRONAF A loans in the amount of R$9205.25. Although there was some flexibility according to personal preferences, typically the loan provided funds for:

- planting 4.1 ha of grazing land, 1 ha each of manioc and *palma*, and 0.5 ha of either *leucena* or andú beans
- purchase of 40 female and 1 male sheep or goats
- construction of 1.5 km of fencing and a small corral
- purchase of a small cart
- technical assistance

\textsuperscript{331} Interview March 15, 2006

\textsuperscript{332} This is Antonio Andrade, who stated that his land is sandy and dry. But he said that he chose that weaker land because it was closer to water.
Three families were unable to make the first PRONAF A repayment, and the Association covered the debt for them. This is considered a loan from the Association that the families will have to repay.\footnote{333 Interview with Maria Djalma, May 15, 2006.}

Twenty settlers interviewed (and over sixty of the settlers) also took out custeio loans, almost all of them to plant beans and corn. The loans were from the Banco Nordeste, and the bank manager visited the settlement.

According to José Rodrigues, the settlers went to the Bank in April of 2005 and applied for a loan to be disbursed in April. Actual disbursement of the first parcel of 60% of the loan did not take place until June 10. This meant that some settlers had to get advances from private money lenders in order to plant (private money lenders charge very high interest). The second parcel (20%) was disbursed in July/August, and the third (20%) in September, after the crop had been harvested and sold. Another issue he raised was that the custeio loans only came in amounts up to R$3000: José Rodrigues said that he only needed R$1500, but others needed up to R$6000 – although the manager was solicitous, he apparently did not have flexibility on this point. (The actual custeio loans granted to settlers were R$2900.)

Similar concerns about financing were expressed by other respondents. Antonio Andrade, one of the less prosperous settlers, also complained that financing often arrives too late for planting. He stated that it is necessary to plow two months prior to planting. “But how can I get money to plow? If I don’t repay in time, [I] enter into a vicious circle. [But] how can I pay to plow and pay the debt?” Three other interviewees felt so strongly about these delays that they cited bank bureaucracy and bank delays as the factor that causes most difficulty for the rural worker.
According to Adilson, the prior President and one of the strong leaders in the community, of the 60+ families that took out *custeio* loans (R$2900), only 10-12 have been able to repay on a timely basis. The remainder are being negotiated with the bank (according to Décio, about half have already renegotiated their loans). Valdino, for example, was able to pay 30% in December and extended the remaining 70%. But Ernesto Milho Assado told us that he had been unable to renegotiate the *custeio*: “I’ll pay it if I can – if not, I can’t.”

Cecilio was able to renegotiate his *custeio*, but still worries about it “a lot” (“*demais*”). Thirteen of the interviewees listed repayment of the loans (PRONAF A and *custeio*) as a major worry. For Marineide, it is “agony.” Ari and Antonio Costa (neither of whom took out *custeio* loans) said that they thought *custeio* borrowers underestimated the difficulty of the short-term pay back period.

**Production and Income:** Black beans (feijão) were virtually the only cash crop in the settlement. All 27 families have some land in beans, ranging from 6 to 50 tarefas (the latter the entire farm lot). In all but one case, farmers co-plant corn with beans, but corn is far less important economically. Carlos João dos Santos harvested 560 sacks of black beans and sold 500 @ R$60 each – an income of R$30,000. He was also one of the top sellers of corn, selling 30 sacks @ R$20 = R$600. Other relatively prosperous settlers reported income from beans ranging from R$11,500 to 25,000.

Nineteen of the families also have planted grazing land (capim), ranging from 4 to 35 tarefas, and ten have plantation of *palma* (used for animal feed), ranging from 1 to 5

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334 We were informed by other interviewees that Ernesto is very poor; our own observations tended to confirm this.
Sheep are the most common livestock – 21 families have sheep; the largest herd is Adilson’s, with 80 head; another herd has 50 head, and two have 30 each, but most families have 20 sheep or less. We were told that goats do not do well in the area, and only five families raise them – two with herds of about 25, the others considerably smaller.

Fifteen families have cattle – usually including at least one milk cow. The largest herd is 16 head. Fourteen have one or more donkeys, nine have a horse, and three a mule. Sixteen families raise chickens, mostly in small quantities, although Sonia has 70, two other families have 50, and three have 40.

Only one interviewed family is attempting to raise non-bean cash crops: Adalia and João José experimented with ½ ha. each of tomatoes/okra and mango/coconut trees, and have 1 ha. of watermelon. When we spoke with Adalia, the tomato experiment, which they had financed themselves, had not gone well. She expressed as her major worry investments that do not produce a return.

Although the PRONAF A financing encouraged manioc planting, only one family – José Gois and Nilza – had a commercial planting of manioc, and they only had two tarefas. In 2005 they sold 25 sacks of farinha at R$40 each – an income of R$1000. Sonia and her husband had previously two tarefas of manioc, but harvested it all and did not replant. Other families had small amounts of manioc on their house lots. There was a substantial planting of manioc on the collective land.

335 Gerson Felix de Jesus has the largest palma crop. “We needed land – God gave us land. A rose has thorns. [Ours is] the problem of drought. I planted palma. We have to think not only of ourselves, but also of the animals – they provide us with meat and milk. If I could, I would plant 10 tarefas of palma. Many people criticize, but I don’t like to see animals suffer.”
Antonio Andrade Silva said that he would engage in truck farming if he could irrigate his farm lot. He said that he has water available there two days a week, but needs irrigation equipment.

Several families plant squash and other vegetables alongside their beans and corn and/or use the bean fields to raise vegetables during the off-season, almost always primarily for consumption. Families use their house lots to plant a wide variety of fruit trees – we noted coconut, guava, tangerine, orange, lemon, pinha, banana, graviola, seringuela, cashew, acerola, jack fruit, mango, jambo – as well as garden vegetables and aipim.

Although the community enjoyed a prosperous year in 2005, there are poor families. It is interesting to compare the situation of two farmers. Jose Hilton (one of the poorest residents) has 2 sheep and 6 chickens. In 2005 he produced 12 sacks of corn, and sold 3 @ R$10 each. He produced 14 sacks of beans, sold 10 @ R$ 45. He sold 2 kids for R$60. His family receives R$90/month from the bolsa escola. His sons - 17 and 16 – help in fields. He owes R$280/yr in land payments, R$830 in Pronaf A, and R$2900 for custeio. Not being able to repay his debt is one of his principal worries: “I worry – I nearly went crazy.”

José Domingo carries exactly the same debt – and also admits to some worry about repayment. In 2005, he produced 500 sacks of beans and 80 sacks of corn, selling “almost all of it” @ R$50 and R$16 respectively. He has 20 sheep, 7 head of cattle, and 30 chickens. Marlene, his wife, sells sweets and homemade popsicles. They also receive a bolsa escola. The family is relatively prosperous.

336 Adilson stated that the stronger families try to help the weaker ones.
Only three men mentioned working as daily laborers (a common source of income in other settlements); daily laborers in the area receive only R$10/day, lower than in most areas. One man reported working as a daily laborer only three days a month, the others 12-15 days. Carlos João owns a tractor in partnership with his father and charges R$25 per tarefa for its use in cultivating and harvesting.

Non-farm income seems to be less diversified in Vila Canaã than in most the other settlements studied. The main source is the bolsa escola – which fourteen of the 27 families interviewed mentioned receiving. This can be an important element of income; for instance, Ernesto Milho Assado’s 2005 family income was approximately R$3500, of which over R$1000 came from the bolsa escola.

Only one family mentioned receiving government pensions – they receive two. One woman reported earning R$30/month selling cosmetics, and one family earns about R$50/month reselling natural gas for cooking. Décio owns a bus in partnership with his brother-in-law, and rents it to the municipal government for R$2400/month to transport students to school in Euclides da Cunha.337 One couple interviewed expressed their interest in setting up a small store in the settlement, which they felt would be a good source of income. (There is already one small store and a bakery – that produces bread – in the settlement area.) Marlene and Catya both mentioned independently that they would like to have a job in order to provide their children with a better chance to study.

337 This is a highly political appointment: the contract depends on the prefect’s continued patronage. Décio is the primary “opposition” leader within the settlement, and there was an undercurrent of comment linking him to the prefect, whom the majority of settlers did not support in the last election.
Décio, the opposition leader within the Association, mentioned the need for a small factory – perhaps one making fruit sweets.338

**Sufficiency of income:** When asked if family income was sufficient, seven families interviewed answered with a definite “yes.” Eight answered “no” with respect to basic needs (and in most cases their physical situation seemed to confirm this). Two noted that it is sufficient in years when there is rainfall and not sufficient in dry years.

“One year of drought wreaks havoc (“acaba com tudo”). [You can] store up food, but it would be difficult to pay the bank.”

“When there are beans it is [sufficient], when there are not beans, it isn’t.”

(Josevanda)

“It’s not enough, but we have learned to live with it. Summers are difficult”

(Marlene)

Three families answered “no” because they needed specific additional income. Adália would like additional income so as to be free to experiment with more crops,

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338 “[You] pass the whole year without wages. When winter [the rainy season] comes, you are burdened with debt; it’s difficult. [This is] why I think about an industrial area and irrigation.” (Décio)
Decio in order to purchase a health plan,339 Sonia because her daughter has medical needs.

Other responses were nuanced:

“A little more would be nice.” (José and Ana)

“The financial [loans] is the most difficult. We keep hoping.” (José Rodrigues)

“[It is] more or less [sufficient]. You have to be careful, but it’s sufficient. 100 sacks [of beans] at R$40 equals R$4000 – for one year, it’s little. You have to plan.” (Gerson)

Zé and Nilza felt that income was insufficient because they have to sell a sheep each month to break even (they have a flock of 50 sheep and 4 goats). Marineide also noted that at times “a little is lacking in terms of basics” – then her family sells beans, corn, or livestock. Adilson felt that income is sufficient for basic needs, but noted that diversification of income is important: he mentioned crops, goats, and that his family resells cooking gas.

**Settler Attitudes:**

339 Private health plans are very rare among rural Brazilians, who essentially depend on government medical services.
Satisfaction: Satisfaction was high. Interviewees were unanimous in saying they would not sell their land, and many of them were emphatic about it.

“For no money in the world. I came here to stay.” (Cecilio Dantas)

“No way (“de jeito nenhum”)! I’d buy more land if I could. (Carlinho)

“Not even for a lot of money.” (Manoel)

“Deus me livre!” (Zequinho)

Thirty-one interviewees stated that life in the settlement is better than it had been previously, one said it is a little better, one noted that it got worse at first but then got better. Only two respondents felt that it was worse.

Jô mentioned that, in the beginning she was afraid that it wouldn’t work out for her family without water, with fields to be cleared. But now she feels that this is the right place for them. Ivaneide, however, is lukewarm about living in the settlement, although her husband likes it.

Marlene expresses as her chief worry the “culture” (i.e., education) of her children (“cultura dos filhos”). With four children ages 16-20, all studying at the 8th grade level or higher, she is doing very well for this region. Yet, even in this prosperous family, there is an awareness of how dependent they are on the weather. José sums it up: “If the

340 Literally “God deliver me!” – a very strong negation in Portuguese.
winter\textsuperscript{341} is good, it’s okay; if the winter is bad, it isn’t.” Jedeone, their sixteen year old son, expresses as his greatest worry the connection between this factor and his own education: “You plant and you don’t know if you are going to harvest – if you lose the crop, you lose a year at school.”

**Future:** Settlers were generally optimistic about the future, envisioning larger harvests, greater prosperity, and more infrastructure (better appointed homes, paved streets). However, once again there was a realization of the importance of weather. Adilson and Veraluce said that, if it rains sufficiently, things will go well – if it does not rain, they hope the government will provide work projects to help families bridge the drought. Josevanda said, “If there isn’t rain, it will fail.” Isacale said the future would be better “if the weather is good.”

Antonio Andrade, one of the poorer settlers, said that it is difficult for him to see the future; he mentioned that he needs the help of his family, that he needs another chance. Antonio Santana said that some families will not make it, but those who do will thrive. Ari estimated that 10% of the families would not see their situation improve. Cecilio was generally optimistic, but felt there would be greater progress if there were greater unity among the settlers.

Visions of the future for their children vary. Cecilio’s son, 22 and married, will take over his father’s land. Zequinho also said that his sons and daughters (30, 28, 24, and 19) will take over his area. Antonio André says his children (ranging from 28 to 1 year old) will stay in the settlement. Aliene thinks that country life is better for her daughters.

\textsuperscript{341} Throughout northern Brazil, “winter” is used to mean the rainy season, and “summer” the dry season. These terms more closely coincide with Northern Hemisphere months than with those of the Southern hemisphere, “winter” usually beginning in October and ending in May.
Josevanda envisioned her children staying and working with them, and José Domingo said he hoped his children could marry in the settlement and stay there, especially as jobs outside the settlement are hard to find. His 20 year old son has obtained a lot, and is building a home next to his father’s.

But José Rodrigues wants his children to study and not to work in agriculture:

“I worry about the young people. They want to study and get jobs. I cannot predict what will happen.”

Adália wants her children to go to university and realize their dreams – have a house in town. Ari’s daughter, Eliane, 15, wants to become a veterinarian and live in Salvador. Her cousin, Adilson’s son Renato, 16, also wants to be a veterinarian. Marineide wants her children to have jobs, as does Ernesto Silva.

But, as José Rodrigues implied, the dreams and reality may not mesh. As Sonia notes, “The young people would like to find work outside of the settlement, but they can’t find it.” Ze Nelson envisioned the possibility of starting up a small business in order to provide jobs for his children.

Maria Djalma estimated that about 20% of the youth want to continue farming, and that the need for land for growing children has become a topic of discussion among the families. Adilson mentioned that he is concerned about jobs for his children once they graduate, as the land is not sufficient for all of them; if possible, he would buy an additional lot in the settlement.
Given the number of young people interested in having land – including an additional 38 young people from the neighboring community of Alto Paraíso – Maria Djalma was in the process of putting together a project for a new land reform area, to be carried out in a modified form of the Cedula da Terra known as Crédito Fundiário. One of the difficulties she faced, however, was the tremendous increase in value of land in the local area.

**Socio-Political Awareness:** As in most of the settlements, the socio-political awareness of settlers was at a level that one would expect from rural Northeastern Brazilians not actively involved in social movements. Unlike portions of the Catholic Church (which were not present among the largely non-practicing Catholics here), the Adventist Church, while providing its members with excellent organizational and people skills, and a genuine concern for community, does not tend to get involved in larger political/social justice issues. This was reflected in the comments of interviewees.

When asked who was in favor/supported the rural worker, answers included Lula/the Federal Government (7), the Cedula da Terra Program/institutions (5), and the Rural Workers’ Union (4). When asked who is against the rural worker, answers tended to be generic. Four interviewees answered citing bank delays and/or lack of financing, two mentioned bureaucracy, and three said that only people who do not understand (or are crazy) could be against the rural worker.

With respect to attitudes toward the MST, ten were primarily negative, most citing violence and/or invasion as the problem. Four had basically positive reactions. Marlene noted that the settlement came into existence due to the momentum caused by the MST;
her son, Gedeone, 15, said that the MST is fighting for what people need. Similarly, Marineide said that the MST “helps the needy to get land.” And Antonio André listed the MST as the foremost group helping the rural worker.

Other answers were more nuanced. Jô, Decio, and Ari all stated that they are in favor of the MST’s objectives, but not of their methods. Antonio Reis answered with a question: “It’s difficult to tell – are they [the MST] struggling sincerely or simply prone to violence?”

Regarding elections, 28 interviewees voted in the last election for Lula, three for Serra. In the next election, 26 said they would vote for Lula, two for Alckmin, and five were undecided. Only two interviewees said they had party affiliations, one with the Workers’ Party (PT) and one with the PSDB, the party running a candidate against Lula; but the latter said that he was going to vote for Lula rather than for the PSDB candidate because “Lula did much more in four years than FHC [Fernando Henrique Cardoso] did in eight.”

Jô mentioned the prejudice that the people in the settlements feel in town because they are identified with the “landless.” She said that initially, for that reason, stores in town did not want to give her credit, but that is no longer the case.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:**

Vila Canaã appears to be a highly successful settlement with indications that it can continue to be so. The community is blessed with excellent, fertile land – and it has successfully integrated itself into the area’s growing vocation for bean raising. As Decio stated: “We were privileged to find the right location for the program.”
Harvests have been good, and – as the land has not needed fertilizer – costs of production have been relatively low. Yet these very factors may speak to future difficulties, of which more below.

Maria Djalma and other observers noted the presence of the Adventists settlers as an asset. Our observations tended to confirm this. In any settlement, especially of this size, there will be (and should be) dissent, and not everyone is going to agree with the leadership. But, overall, the organizational and administrative skills of the Adventists seem to have been helpful to the community. Adilson, particularly, who led the settlement for many years and was almost universally sited as a leader even though he is currently not the President, seemed to be a person of unusual vision and compassion, honest and sincerely concerned with the community.

The major point of dissension – administration of the collective land – is one that haunts almost every one of the settlements (the possible exception being Veneza, where the wealth of the collective area, underwritten by sisal production, is sufficient to be able to pay settlers for their work). The community has tried some solutions – dividing up work groups according to vocation, semi-privitization of responsibility. None of these has worked astoundingly well, but the Association seems to continue to function adequately.

The community has two major sources of potential income and maintenance: black beans and livestock - principally sheep. Of these, beans are by far the economically more important, although the livestock could provide an important supplementary source of income and a safety net for difficult years. Dependence on beans has some of the disadvantages of monoculture discussed elsewhere – dangers of disease, overdependence
on the prices of a single market – but it is far less dangerous than fruit tree monocultures as fields dedicated to beans one year may easily be switched to other crops in another year.

Of more concern is the land itself. It is our impression that the settlers are taking the fertility of the land for granted, and are in danger of over-farming it. When asked if they practiced crop rotation, twenty-one farmers said “no” and only one, Antonio André, answered positively: he keeps 3-4 ha fallow each year. Unless some conscious practice of maintaining and renovating the soil is engaged in soon, the fertility is likely to decrease, creating the need for fertilization and the likelihood of lower yields.

The success of the bean crop may also have dimmed the need for creativity in the leadership and in the community at large. Unlike most settlements, we heard little talk of creative ideas for processing or industrialization. Granted, beans lend themselves less than fruit or sisal to such activities, but early on in the life of the community thought was given to processing goat milk and setting up systems for better marketing meat, and these were not mentioned during our interviews.

But we emphasize that, if our impression in this sense is correct, it is a matter of circumstances and not of personal capacity; the people of Vila Canaã seem to us to be intelligent and capable of creativity when the need arises. The willingness to consider alternative technologies (e.g., animal traction plows) may be a good sign in this respect.

With respect to participation of women in the Association, we have – in other communities – cited this as a significant area of possible improvement. It may be somewhat less so in Vila Canaã. The Adventist women seem to find satisfaction and leadership roles within the church, and their tradition – which should be respected – may
(as one of them said) make them more comfortable with exercising their skills in that arena. The non-Adventist women, however, do not have this outlet for their skills, and active inclusion in the Association could provide them with a means for developing activities that would both interest them and be advantageous to the community.
Case Study 4

Name of Settlement: Moita Redonda (Associação dos Pequenos Agricultores da Fazenda Moita Redonda)

Families in Settlement: 50 title holding families +

Location: Município – Inhambupe, Bahia

Area: 677 ha.

Land Purchase Date: September 18, 1998

Dates Visited: March 29-31, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 24 Individuals: 36

Family size (persons): 1-3/6; 4-6/10; 7-9/4; 10-12/0; 13-16/3

Persons Interviewed: 16 men, 16 women, 1 youth (male 16)

Ages: -20/1; 20-29/8; 30-39/9; 40-49/7; 50-59/8; 60+/3

Schooling: 0-2/20; 3-5/11; 6-8/3; 9+/2

In 10 of the families interviewed, the wife had 2+ years more education than the husband; in only two cases do the husbands have substantially more education than their wives.

Technician: José Eduardo Rocha Reis

Geography: The settlement is located 13 kms north of the town of Inhambupe, three kms from the village of Entrocamento. It is a short distance to the east of BR 110, the paved two-lane Federal highway between Inhambupe and Olandina.
Figures V-4-A and V-4-B. Above: Associate President Walmir Reis, his wife, Irelice, and their children. Below: Students in the settlement primary school.
Figures V-4-C and V-4-D. Above: Moita Redonda agro-vila. Below: settlers working with passion fruit vines.
The agro-vila has the appearance of a sizeable village – with a large open area at the entrance and dirt streets: three running north-south, and three crossing them east-west in a grid pattern. Houses are small but made of brick, varying between ill-kept messy exteriors to neatly smooth stuccoed white-painted exteriors.

The land is flat. Farm lots extend principally to the east of the agro-vila along three wide straight dirt paths (adequate for a jeep, truck, or horse cart to travel), gridded by shorter perpendicular paths that occur after every other farm lot.

House lots are 20 x 40m. The farm lots are approximately 8.5 ha each, with slight variations due to topography. Collective lots make up 30% of the area. As required by law, 20% of the land is set aside as an ecological preserve.

**Climate:** This is a semi-arid climate. At the time of our visit, the area was suffering from a drought that seriously affected production. For instance, we were told that passion fruit production was not even 20% of what it had been during the pre-drought period. The community’s future is dependent on orange trees that are in the process of maturation, and the drought undoubtedly has had a negative impact on their growth.

**History:** Moita Redonda’s history and existence has been more closely tied to local politics than any of the other of the settlements we studied. According to interviewees,

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342 The central of these paths ends at a fence, on the other side of which is a road. Some of the settlers would like to open a gate here for ease of access, but others are opposed as there would be no easy way to control outsiders coming through settlement lands.
the purchase of the land was arranged, at least in part, by the prefeita, Simone;\textsuperscript{343} she called the absentee landowner, José Marques, a personal friend, and asked him to sell.\textsuperscript{344} She was also active in encouraging the Association and in negotiations.\textsuperscript{345} According to José Eduardo, who is not her supporter, and several interviewees, Simone has continued to be involved with (or, depending on the viewpoint, interfere with) settlement matters.\textsuperscript{346}

A local movement, headed by Carlos Alberto (Carlito),\textsuperscript{347} began seeking land as early as 1996. Carlito, who worked for EBDA as a security guard, is a controversial figure. Nearly all the interviewees spoke of him as the leader of the movement, and he was said to be intelligent, but some thought he was dishonest (a “bandit” in the eyes of

\textsuperscript{343} Simone Simões Neri served as prefeita from 1997-2001 and from 2005-09. Leonidas Simões de Azevedo, from an opposing party (PFL) served as prefeito from 1993-97 and 2001-05; one interviewee told us that, in 1998, Leonidas was interested in buying the land for himself and questioned its suitability for land reform, generating a visit from CDA to examine the quality of the land. As prefeito, however, Leonidas left the settlement alone, neither supporting nor interfering; José Eduardo felt that this was better for the settlement.

\textsuperscript{344} One interviewee said that José Marques told settlers that he only sold them land because the prefeita had asked him to.

\textsuperscript{345} Israel Santos, who had been president of the Association Boa Sorte, was in 1998 secretary of the Association Moita Redonda and is one of the original signatories. He confirmed that the idea to buy the land came from Carlito and Simone, and that Simone was active, with the EBDA and others, in negotiating the purchase of the land. In an open-ended question, ten other founders and early settlers mentioned Simone’s participation as a leader/negotiator in obtaining the land. In addition to Simone’s involvement, two founding members told us that they were called into the Association by a municipal alderman.

\textsuperscript{346} Of the 20 interviewees who voted in the município and told us for whom they voted, 18 said they voted for Simone in 2004. Irandi stated that Simone had always helped the settlement, and stated that she had won 36 out of 55 votes cast in the settlement. (Although there are many more than 55 adults in the settlement, some – especially the newer settlers – are not registered to vote in the município.) Cecilia, wife of former Association president Zito, stated less approvingly that Simone was deeply involved in the wrong direction the Association was taking (“A prefeita estava no meio desta coisa.”) Lindoval, who voted for her, said Simone was a worker but “false” (“falsa”) – that she uses people. Simone’s active involvement in the settlement was also confirmed by Benone Reys, a former priest and ex-prefeito in Inhambupe (interview 29/03/06); he indicated that Simone was essentially responsible for organizing the Moita Redonda Association.

\textsuperscript{347} José Ribeiro, who said that he participated in every meeting relating to the land purchase, stated that Carlito formed (fez) the Association. This type of leadership – an organization dependent on a single leader – is common in Brazil.

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The technical assistant, José Eduardo, spoke of him being a good person and a hard worker. It seems clear that Carlito was closely tied to political figures, and that he used his connections to help find and purchase the land.

Purchase of the land occurred September 18, 1998. The land had essentially been abandoned, although Lindoval (who later became a founding settler) had been resident on it since 1982 as an employee caretaker. A few settlers moved onto the land in tents and/or began planting in the fields in late 1998/early 1999. But most families did not move onto the land until the end of September, 2001, when funding for housing became available. PRONAF funding to plant orange trees was not available until December 23, 2002 – so that most orange groves were planted in 2003 (three years prior to our visit).

The settlers came from two associations – Moita Redonda and Boa Sorte – each of which had about 40 members. The Moita Redonda Association was based in the nearby village of Entrocamento (3 km) and Boa Sorte in the village of Gameleira in the neighboring município of Olandina. The two associations were merged into one – the current Association. CDA made the selection of which members would be settled onto the land. Almost all of the original settlers were from nearby surrounding areas – some had minifundios quite close to the settlement. According to José Eduardo, the prefeita was instrumental in merging the two groups, and she also added some urban people from the town of Inhambupe; apparently CDA approved these people, but they turned out not to adapt to farm life and most had left the settlement well prior to the time of our visit.

348 In our experience of rural communities, it is not uncommon for leaders to be suspected by some of taking funds. Such rumors are not always true. However, the circumstances here are certainly unusual and would warrant further investigation.

349 Carlito never became a settler because he worked as a security guard for EBDA and would therefore not be eligible to receive land; he chose to retain his employment rather than enter the settlement.
**Demography:** 32 of the 36 interviewees stated they were of rural origin. Those claiming urban\(^{350}\) origin were Marcos Silva, Cohó, and José Vincente and his wife, Hilda, but all four of them had farming experience prior to arriving in the settlement (José Vincente and Hilda are among the most successful farmers in the settlement). Two other men interviewed said that their wives (not interviewed) were of urban origin.

Except for Walter, who worked as a bricklayer for the *prefeitura* of Olandina, almost all the men were engaged in agricultural work immediately prior to coming to the settlement. Eleven had *minifundios* of from two to eight *tarefas*. Of these, seven also hired out as day laborers, and two worked as sharecroppers (one of these also as a bricklayer). Three others were sharecroppers without land of their own, three were landless daily workers (one of these also worked as a barber), and two were employed farm workers. Two lived and farmed on their parents’ land.

**Race/Ethnicity:** Principally white.

**Gender:** Two of the families interviewed are female titleholders. One of these, Daci, served as vice secretary – one of the six directors - of the Association from 2002 to 2004.

**Religion:** Most families are at least nominally Catholic. There are six Adventist families in the settlement and one family from the Igreja Cristã (literally, Christian Church), an evangelical Protestant denomination. Of the households interviewed, fifteen stated that they were Catholic, and three Adventist.

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\(^{350}\) “Urban” in Brazil may mean that a person was born in a city or in the seat of a *município*, which includes many very small, primarily rural towns.
Age: Most of the founders we interviewed were in their forties or older; but Walmir (the president of the Association) was 36, and his wife 29, and founders Marcos Silva and his wife Maria were both 28. The families that entered since 2004 were all in their twenties and thirties.

Attrition: Only 27 of the original families remained on the land when we visited. 23 families were new. We were told that 10 families (not necessarily original ones) had left “in recent times” (i.e., the last couple of years). José Eduardo attributes the high attrition to a combination of selection of unsuitable settlers and local public mismanagement. Of the families we interviewed, 14 were founding families, one each the wife and daughter of founders who had left the settlement, and three not founders but early settlers (2001). Of the newer settlers, one had arrived in 2004, two in 2005, and one in 2006 less than a month prior to our visit.

Education: The settlement school has two classrooms and offers education through the fourth grade during the day and at night. The morning session has pre-school and 1st grade, the afternoon 2nd and 3rd grades; 4th graders (and other adult students) study at night.

Settlers were overwhelmingly positive about the settlement school. Seventeen of those interviewed said that it was good or excellent, two said it was fair. Only one said that it was weak: her children had previously studied at an Adventist school, which are very strong academically in comparison with Brazilian public schools. Two interviewees mentioned the higher grades in Inhambupe – one thought they were good, the other only

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351 Raimundo, who arrived in 2005, claimed that there were 15 new families in the last six months, but this may be an overstatement.
Cecilia’s daughter studies at the *Escola Agrícola* (a cooperative agricultural school); she is excited about her studies there and has developed ideas for investing in their land.

We interviewed the night school teacher (last year she taught the children), Edivania da Silva, 26, the daughter of settlers. She has a normal school education. We were impressed by her attitude. “I learn together with them [the students]; they have much to teach me.”

**Health:** A health agent comes to the settlement once a month, and doctors are at the health post in Entrocamento (3 kms distance) on Tuesdays (pediatrician), Thursdays (gynecologist), and Fridays (general practitioner). Settlers here were more positive about the health system than at most of the settlements we visited. Six said the health attendance is good, two thought it was so-so, and only one felt it was bad. Most simply described the system without stating whether they thought it was good or bad, but their overall attitude was moderately positive. Raimundo Rodrigues noted that the Brazilian public health system is pretty much the same everywhere – not an accolade, but a sign that he doesn’t feel that health care in the settlement is any worse than elsewhere. Two interviewees expressed concern about distance: Maria Angelina felt that Entrocamento was far, José Batista noted that one has to hire a car if anyone is really sick. Josefa stated that she felt the health care at the settlement was not a problem, but that the level of care in town (Inhambupe) was.

**Water:** Very early in the settlement history (c. 1999), a significant issue arose which has created a continuing problem. As president of the Association, Carlito, authorized
the digging of a well on his father’s farm (Fazenda Caraiba), where it serves five homes (not in the settlement) including, apparently, a home that Carlito built for himself. The well was not completed, and the prefeita, Simone, has pressured the Association to commit itself to signing a new project for amplification of the work. Shortly before our visit, a meeting was held in the Association in which the Municipal Secretary of Agriculture was present, pressuring the community to remove Israel as Treasurer because he refused to authorize additional expenditures on this well. Although the attempt did not succeed, the meeting increased tensions within the community, and Israel told us that he is thinking of leaving because of what is occurring there.

In CERB’s records, therefore, the settlement has two wells, when in fact there is only one in the settlement area. The second well provides water for house lots; settlers are charged a monthly fee of R$14 for water and electricity.

Raimundo stated that only twenty people – the newcomers – pay this fee. The president of the Association, Walmir, confirmed that there are families that have not paid their water bill for ten months, and that the new people have a better record for paying than the old settlers do.

At this time, water is not piped to the farm lots. Irrigation is being discussed in the Association as a possible project using remaining SIC funds.

**Association and Collective Area.** As mentioned above, the present Association is the fusion of two earlier associations – Moita Redonda and Boa Sorte. Each had

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352 Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section was provided at the initial meeting with the settlers in the galpão (storage area), March 30, 2006. The meeting was attended by fourteen men and one woman from the settlement, José Eduardo, and our team.
approximately 40 members and the selection of the settlers was made by CDA. (José Eduardo)

Originally each family donated one ha. of its land to augment the collective area. The collective area is planted with coconuts, oranges, and pasture. José Eduardo informed us that the pasture was in place when the land was purchased; the Association fenced it and rented it out for grazing cattle, income going to the Association, but that contract was ending and will not be renewed. The grazing land will be available for a collective sheep flock and for settlers to graze livestock.354

The Association also developed what appears to be a viable program of planting passion fruit on the collective land. The association plowed the land and provided wire. Two thousand passion fruit plants were planted. 30% of the revenue goes to the Association; the remainder is divided among the settlers in accordance with the work they provide on the passion fruit – those who do not participate have no right to the income. Passion fruit and harvests from the maturing orange trees (which produce three harvests a year) account for most of the Association’s agricultural income.

Association dues are R$2 per month. The Association has a galpão (a metal roofed structure used for storage) that was used as the school until a new school was built.

353 Israel Santos, the current treasurer of the Association, was president of the Boa Sorte Association. When it was merged into the Moita Redonda Association, in 1998, he became secretary of the latter.

354 José Ribeiro stated that the decision to set aside 1 ha as pasture land was never approved by the Association. He also stated that the members are not informed as to the Association accounts – what has been earned and spent – and that there is need to present an accounting. He stated that the Association sold oranges, and when asked about it, the treasurer responded “are you calling me a thief?” He claimed that the Association had a horse and wagon, that it was sold, and that nobody knows what happened to the money. Nonetheless, he pays his dues and generally supports the Association. Coho also felt that the treasurer does not provide sufficient reporting. But other members, e.g., Pedro Xavier, state that the Fiscal Counsel provides good reports.
in 2005. It also owns a tractor, which was obtained from CAR-PRODUZIR; it hires out to settlers at the subsidized rate of R$25/30 per day – the market rate is R$40-45.\textsuperscript{355}

When a family decides to leave, three replacement candidates are presented to the Association. The Association votes to pick one of these. The family picked then negotiates directly with the family that is leaving, without the participation of the Association.\textsuperscript{356} However, all the new families were currently waiting for CDA in Salvador to officially recognize their presence.\textsuperscript{357} Until that confirmation occurs, the new settlers are not completely certain that they can stay.\textsuperscript{358}

According to José Eduardo, the system for new entries worked fairly well until 2005, when some families entered without prior approval from the Association. Five families represented at our initial meeting stated that they had entered without the Association approval process. José Eduardo, who was present, stated that they must be treated as though they are in a trial period, and must go through approval.\textsuperscript{359}

\begin{itemize}
\item Some settlers have failed to pay for tractor services; Walmir, the President Association, told us that the tractor is what gives him the most problems.
\item Raimundo paid R$7,000 to take over the rights; he found the orange groves badly neglected. José Batista paid R$2,000 for house and fields, both of which he said were essentially “abandoned.” Both agreed to take over PRONAF debt.
\item José Eduardo told us that CDA has delayed so much in registration of new families that people who entered onto the land three years previously through the official approval process were still not registered.
\item Raimundo Rodrigues, one of the new settlers, told us that this situation made him nervous to the point of feeling ill. He is very uncomfortable because he has not been fully approved. He pays his monthly dues to the Association (R$2). He has seven tarefas of oranges planted by the previous homesteader, which were so neglected that he had to “save” them. He has only been able to plant 100 passion fruit vines and 2.5 tarefas of cowpeas. He paid R$7,000 to the prior settler to take over the land.
\item Walmir and Israel traveled to Salvador to discuss with CDA the process for these new families. They were told that the old titleholders must sign a document saying they are desisting and that the new titleholders must sign a commitment and go through a 90 day trial period. Only two families have not yet signed the required commitment.
\end{itemize}

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In the beginning, there was a good deal of orientation as to the value of the Association and how it should function. The Association by-laws were read aloud at least three times for the benefit of those who have difficulty reading.

However, in our initial meeting with a group of settlers, we were told that currently the by-laws of the Association were not being fully respected. The group stated that there are people who say they will not obey because, in that settlement, nobody is expelled for not obeying. They traced this in part to a fight in the fields with machetes that ended up in court. The Association decided to expel the guilty party and sent that decision to CDA in Salvador, but no action was taken. However, the guilty party left the settlement of his own accord.  

By 2003, the Association directorate had stopped functioning to the point that, when a new family (Raimundo and Gedilsa) entered, José Eduardo had to call a special meeting to get them approved. They signed a commitment. Raimundo said that he feels marginalized in the Association meetings. The directorate takes the position that only those new members approved by the Association can participate. Raimundo fulfilled his duties, but it took seven months for him to get approved. He did courses in associativismo and cooperativismo, and his wife did courses in associativismo and apiculture.

The technical assistant, José Eduardo, said that the new members want the Association rules enforced. Most of the new members are Sergipanos (a few are second generation Sergipanos from Colonia Roberto Santos, the established land reform

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360 However, there are some sanctions. Pedro Xavier told us that members who have not paid their monthly dues (R$2) cannot graze animals on Association pasture. He is six months behind in his dues.

361 "Everyone has to follow the by-laws.” (Walter de Souza, a Bahian new settler who entered in 2004)
area in Olandina), who are seen by themselves and others as being more industrious and organized.\textsuperscript{362} Benival, a former president of the Association and a Bahian, summed it up this way:

“It’s going to get better [here] because the new settlers are Sergipanos and like to work. They are truer friends than the settlers who left.”\textsuperscript{363}

Israel dos Santos, a founding settler and a Bahian, is currently treasurer of the Association. He has been severely criticized for trying to maintain the rules, but feels that they are important:

“I came to work, follow the norms and rules, obey the by-laws (estatutos). Who enters on the land and is qualified [to do so] should know the by-laws and obey them”

He feels that the Association is deeply divided, in part because its work has gotten mixed up with local politics. He states that the Association directorate is not listened to, that the members do not accept the actions of the directorate and wish to be consulted on all

\textsuperscript{362} The new Sergipano settlers we interviewed were attractive couples in their twenties and thirties, dynamic, enthusiastic, and apparently excellent farmers. They also showed a strong community spirit, spoke favorably of coopertivism and associativism. José Batista and Anuncieta, for example, organized a group of 10 families to begin giving parties in the school; she is organizing group of women to make and sell embroidery.

\textsuperscript{363} The group meeting confirmed that many of the new settlers are working better than the original ones – much better (“100%”) than the people they replaced, and that the new settlers are paying their monthly fees. But some new settlers have not worked out and have left. José Eduardo feels that the selection process is inadequate.
matters. Even as one of the leaders, he stated that the Association does not adequately represent all the families in the settlement.\textsuperscript{364}

In the last election, as in previous elections, there were two slates of candidates. In the view of some, these slates reflected a division between local political parties. Walmir, a supporter of \textit{prefeita} Simone, won the election for president over Saval. However, Israel, who was on the ticket with Walmir, was a supporter of another candidate for \textit{prefeito}.

Walmir confirmed that “individualism” divides the group, and that there is an issue in getting people to work the collective land. He has begged CDA to intervene. He notes that, up until now, income from the collective lands has been sufficient for the land payments. “[If we] lose the collective, we’re losing our heart.” The depth of his concern is perhaps reflected in his response to the question “In your view, who is against the rural worker?” His answer: “The rural worker himself. The government is providing the conditions [for succeeding on the land], but the people don’t take advantage of them.”\textsuperscript{365}

Work in the collective area is carried out by groups of 10 settlers – there are five groups, each with a coordinator. The groups were formed taking into account each settler’s interests and the days when it was best for him to work. The president of the Association determines the work to be done by each group. The collective work is one matter that generates discussions and divisions during meetings.

We were told that only one of the five groups is fully functioning – in the other four up to 50% of the members fail to turn up. José Eduardo stated that, overall, the

\textsuperscript{364} Israel, however, is positive about the settlement. “Life here is good. Our concern is with development. [Otherwise] it is calm.”

\textsuperscript{365} Walmir also noted that being president of the Association caused him to “lose a lot of time.”

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collective work had 70-80% participation. To overcome the need for work in the collective area, a contract was entered into to pay for work on the collective land. This created further issues, as settlers prefer to be paid for their work rather than donating their free days. We were told that there were members who owed the Association as many as 30 work days.366

The day prior to our visit, it had rained, indicating the end of the drought. The president of the Association declared all settlers free from collective work for that week in order that they could start planting their private fields, in order to take advantage of the wet soil. This was a sensible decision, as much collective land work is maintenance not notably affected by rain.

José Eduardo informed us that the Association still has approximately R$200,000 in SIC funds. José Eduardo’s contract as technical assistance ended in 2005, but – after six months – the community called him back because CDA told them they needed technical assistance with the remaining SIC. He stated that the community is considering a casa de farinha and possibly irrigated castor-oil plants (mamona).

In the meetings the women who are not titleholders listen but cannot talk, only whispering their opinions to their husbands.367 They have no vote. However, when CDA comes, the women participate – especially if the CDA representative is a woman. New by-laws proposed by CDA would allow both members of a couple to be members, and would also allow for worker members (sócios trabalhadores), a membership used in

366 Presence and absence for workdays is recorded in a notebook. José da Conceição, a member of the Conselho Fiscal, told us: “[They] say they are going to pay their days [missed], but they don’t pay.”

367 Pipio, a Sergipano who entered in 2005, said that, in their orientation, they were told that women who are not titleholders could not participate in Association meetings. Neide confirmed this, and most of the non-titleholding women said that they do not participate.
some settlements for, e.g., grown children of settlers who live in the area and help work the land. However the new by-laws have not yet been officially adopted.

The presence of a substantial number of new settlers who have not been officially recognized by CDA also makes the Association less effective. Though these new members seem to be diligent about paying their dues and performing their collective work, their lack of full standing limits their practical participation, especially with respect to voting and holding office.

Ecological Area: Most interviewees did not seem to have a clear idea of the purpose of the ecological area. Some mentioned that you cannot hunt on it, or disturb it in any way. They understand that it is protected by IBAMA. One interviewee suggested that the area should be deforested in order to make room for fields and homes for landless people. Walmir mentioned that, when the settlers had use all the land available, he would petition the government to let them use the ecological area.

José Eduardo told us that the fence protecting the ecological area from outsiders is not well maintained, and that – especially during the drought period – there has been an issue with outsiders putting cattle to graze there. He himself encountered a neighbor of the settlement there with twenty head of cattle.

Economy:

Distinguishing Factors: This settlement has been more affected by local politics than any of the others, in a way that has been detrimental to its development. José Eduardo believes that political involvement has caused a series of problems: (1) Because
of the relative ease of securing the land, the settlers perhaps did not value the land as much as settlers in areas that experienced a greater struggle. (2) The prefeita’s intervention resulted in certain families being given land who were not suited to it, did not properly care for the land and eventually left it, but in the process slowed the agricultural development. (3) The continued mixture of Association issues with local politics is disruptive to the Association and therefore prejudicial to socio-economic development. Regarding the first point, Lindoval compared the settlements history with those of MST settlements: “If we had to fight [for the land], I would be the only one left - no! even I would run.”

Land: The land purchase took place on September 18, 1998. The purchase price was R$254.48 per ha, for a total of R$172,355.04 total. SAT funds were R$186,500, and SIC R$313,209.60.

Land payments are made by the Association from sale of products from the collective area. At the time of our visit, four payments had been made. Only two interviewees mentioned land payments as one of their chief worries.

Sixteen of the households interviewed said that their land was good/fertile. Two said it was fair, one of these pointing out that it needs a lot of fertilizer. Four interviewees said that their land is weak or very weak. These statistics coincide with José Eduardo’s observation that 4-6 of the farm lots have poor soil.

Only two families are using exclusively organic fertilizer: José Vincente and Hilda, and Raimundo and Gedilsa. Raimundo noted that natural fertilizer is expensive.
According to José Eduardo, the land is good for raising fruit (oranges, passion fruit, coconut, papaya, watermelon, cashew, jackfruit, mango) as well as pepper, okra, corn, beans, and manioc.

José Batista, one of the new settlers from Sergipe, found that the land he took over had been abandoned. It was weak land – half of his acreage was especially weak. He applied fertilizer three times, and he also kept the trees on the land. “It is getting better;” he says that his land went from being the worst in the settlement to being “one of the ten best areas.” Anucieta, his wife, stated succinctly: “The land was dead – now it is alive.”

Israel, one of the founders, stated that his land is weak. His parents own land nearby and he farms 8 tarefas on their land, which he says does not require fertilizer. He is using chemical fertilizer on his settlement land to try to improve the soil.

Financing: Forty-five of the fifty settlement families took out PRONAF A loans. All the families interviewed except one (see below) received this financing. The amount was approximately R$9000, intended for the planting of orange groves (approximately 3 ha per family). The loan was signed in late 2002, and the first parcel disbursed in March 2003 for preparing the land. An Association commission was sent to Sergipe, where they purchased 65,000 saplings; they also purchased 20 sacks of fertilizer for each sapling. Subsequent disbursements were made in the second and third years to maintain the orange groves, but the bank made an error in the third year and disbursed only R$1000 per settler rather than R$1800.

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368 We visited a farm lot that had clearly been almost abandoned, and were informed that the new owner was in the process of recuperating it.
The first installment of PRONAF A loans was to come due in December, 2006. There are seven installments of R$1300 each, or R$780 with a 40% rebate if the installments are paid in a timely manner. Walmir, the president of the Association, estimates that 70% of those owing will not be able to make timely payment.

Five interviewees listed payment of the debt as their chief worry. José Ribeiro stated that the directors were trying to get the first payment, due in December 2006, postponed until 2007; if the paperwork is not processed, the settlers will lose the rebate (for timely repayment) and then he believes “nobody will have conditions to pay.” However, he believed that, if the payment is postponed until 2007, many will be able to pay. Walter also believed that, once orange groves reach full production, it will be sufficient to pay the debt.

Although others did not indicate PRONAF payments as a chief worry, it may still be a matter of some concern. In a joint interview, Irindi stated that she was more worried about PRONAF payments than her husband, to which he responded: “Who isn’t worried about this?”

With respect to additional financing, Lucia – a former treasurer of the Association, no longer resident in the settlement – attempted to get together a group of women to apply for PRONAF-Mulher, but was unable to do so. Two teenage children of settlers, both of whom studied at the Escola Agricola, obtained PRONAF-Jovem loans.

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369 Interview with Benone, March 29, 2006.
José Eduardo has also encouraged settlers to become members of the Credit Cooperative in Inhambupe, which will facilitate taking out smaller loans for agricultural projects. However, only about six settlers had become members at the time of our visit.

**Production and Income:** Although the contract was signed in 1998, Moita Redonda was not actually settled until 2001, which places it in practice among the newer settlements studied. It has also suffered a high rate of turnover. PRONAF funds were disbursed in early 2003, and production has been slowed by drought and other factors.

The PRONAF financing was for planting of orange trees. All of the households we interviewed except one received PRONAF financing and had orange groves, in most cases around three ha, although two homesteaders noted that they had planted additional orange trees at their own expense.

Because of the high turnover, many of the new families inherited orange groves (and PRONAF debt) from earlier settlers. In some cases, the inherited orange trees had not been well taken care of – either due to neglect by previous owners or to lag time between owners. Raimundo Rodrigues, who moved onto the land in 2005, stated that he had “saved” the orange trees abandoned by the prior owner. Three other new settlers, José Batista, Walter, and Reninho also mentioned that the orange groves they inherited from earlier settlers were in poor condition.

The orange groves that did receive adequate care are mature enough to have begun production. Fifteen of the twenty-four families interviewed reported some income from the sale of oranges. José Vincente and Hilda had significant production, selling 3

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370 The exception was Neia and her husband; they do not have orange trees; they had been on the land three years, had planted 3000 passion fruit vines, one tarefa of papaya, and one tarefa of lemons.

371 According to Olga, some orange trees were planted as early as June, 2001. The majority, however, were planted only after PRONAF financing became available.
tons in 2005 at R$100 each; already in 2006 they had sold 4 tons at R$150, one ton at R$180, and (the day before we arrived) 1700 kgs (1.7 tons) for R$350, 2006 to-date orange income for them totaling R$1140. Neide and her husband sold 5 tons of oranges in 2005, Olga 2 tons, Pipio 1 ton. The others settlers sold smaller amounts, often relatively insignificant as sources of income. Many of these sold by the 30 kg crate rather than by the ton.

A more significant source of income for at least three families was passion fruit. Altogether, thirteen of the interviewed families had significant plantings of passion fruit, ranging from 100 to 3000 vines, but only six families mentioned income from sales. Again, José Vincente and Hilda were one of the biggest producers, selling in 2005 10,000 kgs at between R$0.60 and 0.80 – income of between R$6000 and 8000 – notably more than their income from oranges.372 Another settler, José Batista, who had been on the land a little less than a year, planted 1000 vines of passion fruit and stated that he lived off the passion fruit, averaging R$150/week in sales. Walmir, who also has 1000 vines, stated that, during 2005, he sold an average of 200 kg a week at R$ 0.30-0.50. However, he noted that, because of the drought, production this year is not even 20% of what it was in the prior year.

José Ribeiro noted that he had previously had passion fruit, but gave it up. He found it to be “a lot of work” and needed significant inputs – stakes, wire, and fertilizer. He now plants pepper, which he sells at R$3 per kg. He is also retired with a government pension, and his wife earns a salary as a school teacher.

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372 Neia, who with her husband, has the largest planting of passion fruit (3000 vines) simply stated that they had sold passion fruit but did not tell us the quantity sold or the price.
The only other commercial plantings of fruit were relatively small areas: lemon (*tarefa*), coconut (maximum 1 ha), cashew (50 trees), papaya (1000 plants), and watermelon (maximum 1 ha). Except for watermelon (see below), no income from these was reported. On house lots, most settlers had a number of fruit trees, including mango, guava, *pinha*, banana, jack-fruit, acerola, avocado, *seringuela*, and sugar cane.

The third significant source of agricultural income was manioc. Sixteen families plant manioc, some small amounts, most around 1 ha, the largest being Cecilia and her husband with 3 ha. Eleven families reported earnings from manioc, Cecilia’s being the most significant – 8 tons sold in 2005 at R$80 per ton – for a total of R$640. Daci sold 5 tons at R$100 each to an intermediary truck. Benival sold 2-3 tons, Pipio sold 1 ton, and Pedro Xavier sold ½ ton.

José Vincente, who was 62 and retired at the time of our visit, but also one of the most productive farmers, did something that we have not seen anywhere else in our study. He had a sharecropper work his 1 ha of manioc land. The crop resulted in 60 sacks of manioc flour, of which José Vincente’s share was 30; he sold 10 at R$20 each and kept 20.

The only other significant income from manioc was earned by Lindoval, who owns a non-mechanized *casa de farinha*. where he charges 10 litres of manioc flour for every 60 kg sack processed. Lindoval was a farmhand resident on the *fazenda* before it was purchased, and has lived on the land since 1982. He received R$8000 in severance pay, and says it is this that has sustained his family. A jovial man of 46, he heads an

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373 Marcos Silva also tried planting coconuts, but they failed. He was not sure whether it was the seedlings he purchased or the land in which they were planted that caused the problem.
enormous family (at least 16 persons\textsuperscript{374}), officially divided into two households, although essentially living as one.\textsuperscript{375} He and his children farm the land and also have staked out a 20 \textit{tarefa} area on a neighboring abandoned farm that has been invaded by landless workers. In this latter area they run a brick-making facility which earns them R$500-600 per month “when everyone [in the family] works,” and have 40 banana trees from which they sell 50 \textit{caixas} a month at R$30. He has a triturator (agricultural shredder) that he uses to make fertilizer and animal ration from manioc stalks and castor oil plants.

Settlers recorded small earnings from other crops. The most significant in terms of income is beans; nine interviewed families sold some beans, the largest seller earning R$440 in 2005 from sale of beans. Ten families sold corn, the largest selling 30 sacks at R$23 (a total of R$690), but most selling only a few sacks at low prices. Cohó sold one ton of watermelon at CEASA for R$230; Dudú sold 1000 watermelon in 2005 (he did not recall the price). Other settles sold small quantities of peanuts, peppers, cowpeas, and squash. Most of the families raise vegetables for consumption. Hilda and José Vicente are planning to plant 1 ha of okra.

None of the families interviewed reported significant income from sale of livestock. Five families have chickens, the largest flock being Lindoval’s (50). Four have pigs: José Ribeiro has six, Lindoval five. Two have cows; a third, Antonio Alves Santos, has a herd of five cows and a bull, which he keeps on his son’s land outside of the settlement area. José Batista said that he intends to raise sheep if he can obtain permission to graze them on collective land.

\textsuperscript{374} He named 16 in the interview, but later mentioned they had 23 in the household.

\textsuperscript{375} This allows them to draw two \textit{bolsa familias}. 311
Seven families have at least one horse, mule, or donkey. Four of these have carts. Pipio mentioned that carting freight was a significant part of his income; José da Conceição charges R$5 for freighting within the settlement area.

Four families reported that their men work as daily farm laborers up to eight days a month at a wage of R$12/day. Of these Pedro Xavier, who is single, hires out exclusively to neighbors in the settlement. A certain prejudice against this form of earning was reflected by Anuncieta, who was happy that her husband “does not have to be humiliated by working in the fields of others.” Joseneide’s husband drives the Association tractor, earning R$15/day. Lucincia’s husband occasionally works as a driver for his father-in-law’s tractor in Entrocamento.

Fourteen of the families interviewed received bolsas escola/familia. Five families have members who receive retirement pensions. Dominga Silva earns a salary as a teacher. Raimundo Rodrigues works (part time) as a barber in Entrocamento. Anuncieta who, prior to moving to the settlement, sold embroidery as artisan work in Aracajú (the capital of Sergipe), has identified three other women in the settlement who do embroidery and intends to carry forward with that activity. One settler, not interviewed, borrowed money from the Credit Cooperative to open a small store in the settlement, but was reportedly having difficulty repaying the loan.

Other non-farm income is trivial. José Batista and Anuncieta resell bread. Walter’s wife earns R$20/month selling clothing and costume jewelry. Israel’s daughter earns R$10 doing odd jobs (biscates).

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376 We encountered this feeling among small farmers when we worked in Tocantins; a farmer who needed to work for pay (as opposed to trading work days) on the land of others, was often pitied as either going through hard times or not able to succeed on his own land.
**Sufficiency of Income:** In considering settler attitudes toward sufficiency of income and overall satisfaction, it is important to realize that some of the settlers interviewed are very new to the community, have not yet been officially recognized as settlers, and have not yet been able to fully develop their agricultural plots. Even for more established settlers, this is a transitional period between intense government involvement, with SIC and PRONAF A programs, and full agricultural production, as orange groves are not yet fully mature. It has also been a period of drought.

Raimundo and Gedilsa, are newcomers from Sergipe, Adventists, and have been on the land about a year. They seem to be a highly motivated young couple – both are intelligent and articulate (she has a complete 8th grade education, which makes her one of the more educated settlers). He is a trained barber, and supplements their income by barbering in Entrocamento. Their home is neat and clean, with a TV, a CD stand, comfortable sofas, a framed photograph of their daughter, a nice hutch in the kitchen. They have noted the lack of means of sustenance in the community. “The last seven months, people who didn’t have an income suffered.”

When asked whether income is sufficient, ten of the twenty-four families interviewed answered in the negative.

“It doesn’t make it. The oranges don’t produce income. They only serve to maybe pay the [PRONAF] debt.” (Dudú)

Three households answered positively. In one household, the husband answered positively, the wife negatively.
“Yes – up until now [it has been sufficient]” (José Vicente)

“No – because there are many mouths to feed and other things [to buy]” (Hilda)

Other responses were more nuanced:

“It depends on the year – [you] save from one year to the next.” (Bernival)

“Sometimes yes, sometimes no.” (Neia)

“It serves for the household, but not for the field [i.e. agricultural expenses]”
(Raimundo)

“At times it doesn’t do – we have to economize, sell bread, use the bolsa familia.” (José Batista)

Three families mentioned the importance of the bolsa familia/escola in meeting their economic needs. “It’s slow – if it weren’t for the bolsa escola we wouldn’t make it” (Lindoval) But Cecilia noted that the bolsa only serves to buy one week of food (“fazer uma feira”), and that they depend on help from relatives. One other family also noted that they received help from relatives.

Lindoval sounded a note that reflects a general concern with the program. He stated that family income was good as long as the government program was in place (SIC,
PRONAF A). Now it is “sufficient to eat, but not to buy meat.” He noted that in this year (2006) there would be no additional government investment. “It will be difficult. The oranges are not [yet] producing – it is going to be tight.” About his own situation (he has at least sixteen in his household) he joked: “R$200 for our family is only one fava bean.”

**Settler Attitudes:**

**Satisfaction:** 27 of the interviewees stated definitely that they would not sell or trade their land.³⁷⁷ Maria Angelina said she would think of trading only if the other land were much better: “We don’t want to throw away what is ours.” Irlandi stated that she and her husband had thought of selling but had decided against it.

> “Don’t even think about it! My dream has been to have a place [land] to work”
> (Walmir)

> “No way!” (Liazinho)

> “No – we struggled to make it better here.” (Joseneide)

> “We didn’t buy to sell.” (Olga)

³⁷⁷ Pedro Xavier, who is single, also said he was not thinking of selling, although he is widely rumored to be thinking of leaving.
Raimundo and Gedilsa Rodrigues, the couple who expressed deep worry because they have not yet been legally recognized as owners, said that they would sell if they knew that they could buy land in another area. Lindoval expressed the same sentiment (he previously had 80 tarefas of land in another area that he bought in 2001 for R$3400 and sold for R$9000). José Ribeiro said that he had not previously thought of leaving, but might do so because of the technical advisor. Israel, the treasurer of the Association, who was criticized by some (and supported by others) for trying to enforce Association rules, said that he was thinking of leaving; he and his wife stated they saw many wrong things happening.

Twenty-nine interviewees said that life was better (or much better) on the settlement than it had been previously.

"What we harvest is ours – before we worked harder and harvested less"

(Marcos Silva)

"Every year we have beans, [sweet] potatoes, manioc." (Maria Reis)

José and Josefa Correia qualified their satisfaction by saying that, although life was better, they now have more worries. Irandi said that they passed through many difficulties, but that it was beginning to get better. Raimundo and Gedilsa, José Ribeiro 378

José Ribeiro was very angry with José Eduardo. This may have been in part because José Ribeiro’s son’s application to take over one of the vacancies in the settlement was denied and/or for political reasons. José Ribeiro is closely tied to the prefeita Simone; while his daughter is reportedly a very good teacher, her appointment as a municipal teacher was made by Simone. José Eduardo has attempted to help settlement leaders resist pressure from Simone, e.g., with respect to making further payments to finish the well that is not on settlement land.
and Dominga, and Walter all felt that it was neither better nor worse than where they had been previously. Lindoval, who has been on the land (as an employee of the former owner) since 1982, stated: “It was better [now] for me because I know how to live here – but for the others it had to be difficult.”

Anuncieta, who with her husband José Batista, arrived relatively recently in the area, said that on the first day she didn’t like it here. They had moved from a village in Sergipe where they had a new, bigger house, and which had “everything” – such as paved streets. But she thinks it is better here because they have their own land, because her husband does not have to work on land that belongs to others (he previously had only 2 tarefas of land, so also had to hire out as a day laborer).

Future: Most interviewees were optimistic about the future. Seven settlers specifically mentioned expectations of increased orange production within the next two years:

“We’ll be selling more than 10 tons of oranges. [There will be] more comfort in the home.” (Walmir)

Two settlers mentioned expectations of increased passion fruit production, and eight increases in crops generally.

“It will be the double of today.” (José Conceição)
“I believe that, if it rains, it will be better – [but] lack of fertilizer will be a problem.” (Lindoval)

One settler was notably pessimistic about the future:

“The way it’s going, it’s going to be worse. If new [Association] directors enter, it could get better. In two years, none of the old settlers will be left.” (José Ribeiro)

Other interviewees expressed concern about the Association and divisions within the community, but in no other cases did such concern override essential optimism about the future of the settlement.

With respect to the longer term future of the families, few of the families voiced a desire for their children to remain on the land. Benival expressly stated that he does not expect his children to remain in the country. Other interviewees expressed desires that their children could study for a profession, would get jobs, perhaps be a teacher. José Batista and Anuncieta want their children to study for a career – which could be in agriculture or something else – but which will get them a job. Only José Conceição said that he wants his children to understand that, if they help, the land he has will be worth double what it is today. And Lindoval – who has a large family – stated that his lot is only sufficient for two families – he needs more land for his children as they grow up.

379 As noted above, José Ribeiro’s son was not selected as an applicant for one of the openings that occurred in the settlement, and José Ribeiro was angry about this.
Gedilsa – who is in her twenties – stated that “In the city everything is difficult.... We will stay in the countryside.”

Socio-Political Awareness: The level of political socio-political awareness was, as in many of the other settlements, what one would respect from Northeastern rural Brazilians who are not active in political parties or social movements. To the question of who is for or against the rural worker, most interviewees had either no answer or very general ones. Sixteen interviewees stated that Lula and/or the government were on the side of the rural workers. Three interviewees mentioned that the rural workers unions are for workers, and one mentioned cooperatives. José Ribeiro made the observation that the workers help themselves; Cohó similarly said that “we ourselves” help the rural worker.

Most interviewees either knew nothing of the MST or had only seen about it on television. At this time, TV Globo, the dominant station and the only one available in most rural areas, had focused on negative stories about the MST, and this was reflected in answers. Thirteen interviewees had negative opinions of the MST, three had mildly favorable opinions, and Neide stated: “If it weren’t for the violence, they would be great (ótimo).” Some other comments:

“A lot of fear, death – if it were I, I wouldn’t go with them. I doubt that they are really after land.” (Walter)

“Invasion doesn’t work. It’s better to buy [the land].” (José da Conceição)

“Negotiation is better.” (Edivaldo)
Most settlers rejected the MST strategy of “invading” land. Benival and Israel both compared this strategy to grilagem.

More telling were the comments of those who did have experience with the MST. Raimundo Rodrigues participated for four years in the MST in Sergipe and identifies with the Workers Party (PT); he stated that the MST “is only talk – it was a failure.” José Batista was in an MST camp for two years – he came to believe that their strategy of invasion was wrong and left.

Respecting politics, 27 respondents voted for Lula in the last election, and four for Serra. Interestingly, in three households, the husband voted one way, the wife another. In the next election, twenty said they were voting for Lula, and six were undecided. Only two interviewees expressed strong national party identification, both with the PT. José Batista and Anucieta expressly stated that they support Lula himself, not the PT.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:**

We visited Moita Redonda at a time of considerable tension – the Association had just held a meeting in which an attempt was made to unseat the treasurer. This highlighted several underlying issues – the off-site artesian well and the role of local politics (the Municipal Secretary of Agriculture was pressuring for the treasurer’s resignation), but also the issue of obeying the by-laws (the treasurer was an advocate of strict enforcement) and the question of old v. new settlers. Some of the new settlers felt that the treasurer was against them, although his resistance seems to be aimed more at strictly enforcing the rules of Association acceptance rather than any antipathy to the new
settlers themselves, whom he respected for being rule-abiding and paying their monthly fees.

Certainly this settlement experienced more internal conflict than any other settlement we studied. Political interference may be partially responsible for this, especially insofar as political influence caused the presence of early settlers who did not have an appropriate background or motivation for rural settlement life. Attrition always takes a toll, and in this case it seems to have been more rancorous than usual; many of the families who left failed to care for their land, did not perform their share of collective work, and left owing the Association monthly payments.

There are indications that the *prefeita* was essentially responsible for organizing the Moita Redonda Association. To the extent this was the case, it touches on concerns of critics of the Cedula da Terra (and other market based land reform) programs that local politicians will form paper associations for primarily electoral purposes. However, whatever its origins, the resulting Association in Moita Redonda has not turned out to be a paper association. Although flawed in many respects, the Association is an active body capable of reaching conclusions contrary to the wishes of the *prefeita*. Immediate emotions aside, the problems of the Association – administration of the collective lands, difficulty collecting dues and utility payments, problems with the tractor – are pretty much the standard problems that most associations face.

Indeed, in actual practice, the 70-80% estimated participation in collective work is higher than some other associations. And the Association has shown ingenuity in developing solutions to problems – leasing out grazing land for income, and then bringing the lease to a successful close when other income starts to become available;
coming up with an innovative concept for raising passion fruit on collective land with voluntary participation accompanied by corresponding rewards.

But divisions within the community could paralyze Association leadership and hamper the Association from moving forward with the organizational process necessary to carry the settlement further along the road to sustainability. A settlement of this size should be actively engaged in thinking of ways of leveraging its produce through commercializing and processing crops. A great deal will depend on how the Association invests the remaining SIC funds, and whether it is able to go beyond those funds into other development projects.

Certainly one key element to getting the community working together is the registration and official recognition of the new settlers and their integration into the community; we note that Walmir and Israel were taking steps to effect this. Community organization and/or facilitation by a neutral outside party might help the community to come to terms with some of the factors that currently divide it. Another factor of key importance is the adoption of the new regulations which will allow non-titleholding spouses to become full members of the Association, allowing the Association to draw on the talents and ability of the women who are now essentially excluded.

Economically, with the end of the drought period and the maturing of the orange groves, there is good reason to believe that settler income will substantially increase. It is unlikely that most settlers would be able to make the December 2006 PRONAF payment, but the chances of getting that repayment extended, especially in light of the drought, are reasonably high. Once orange production increases, loan repayment should be more feasible. Orange and passion fruit harvests from the collective area should be adequate to
cover land payments, and these may be supplemented by a collective flock of sheep and other income.

One serious area of concern, however, is the monoculture of orange groves; monoculture both makes plant diseases more likely and more devastating when they occur. It also exposes settlers to fluctuations in the orange market. In order to help hedge against these risks, we would recommend continued production of passion fruit and the consideration of additional possible cash crops.

An additional concern is the attitude of settlers toward the ecological area. Not only is this troublesome in that it shows a lack of concern with that area, but it throws a light onto the question of whether settlers are really aware of the complexity and interlinking of natural systems. An understanding of ecology is vital for any farmer to achieve sustainability, and especially so in a vulnerable, semi-arid climate.
Case Study 5

Name of Settlement: **Passos de Esperança** - Associação Desenvolvimento Rural
Passos de Esperança (Footsteps of Hope Rural Development Association)

Families in Settlement: 30

Location: Município – Olindina

Area: 450 ha.

Contract Date: December 28, 2001

Dates Visited: March 27-28, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 19

Individuals: 33

Family size (persons): 1-3/2; 4-6/10; 7-9/5; 10+/2

Persons Interviewed: 16 men, 16 women, 1 youth (female 13 years old)

Ages: -20/1; 20-29/6; 30-39/8; 40-49/10; 50-59/7; 60+/1

Schooling: 0-2/19; 3-5/10; 6-8/3; in HS/1 (21 yr old daughter)

Note: In six households interviewed, the wife had significantly (3+ years) more education than the husband; in the remainder of the homes, the educational level of husband/wife were roughly equal.

Technical Assistants: Sergio Ricardo Matos Almeida and Edna Moreira de Brito Batista of TECPLATA, both interviewed March 27, 2006
Map V-5-A – Passos de Esperança settlement area sketched onto a pre-existing map of the property. Environmental reserves are located at the southern tip and along the eastern border, and the collective area in the southwest.
Figures V-5-A and V-5-B. Above: meeting with Passos da Esperança settlers in the village school. Below: settlers in front of school following the meeting.
**Geography:** The settlement is located in the semi-arid Northeast region of the State of Bahia, 25 km. from the town of Olindina: 20 km south along paved federal highway BR110 (two kilometers south of a highway-based village called Dona Maria), and 5 km west of the highway by dirt road.

Each of the landholding families has a dwelling lot in the agro-vila (20 x 37m) and a farm lot of 9 ha. (according to local calculations, approximately 20.66 *tarefas*[^380]) About 20% of the land is in two collective areas – one area of 60 ha. located on the southeast of the settlement, and one of 30 ha. located in the southwest near the larger of the two ecological reserves.

One enters the community through a wide gate. The main street lies straight ahead, and a secondary street – on which the school and association headquarters are located – parallels it to the east. Both are dirt streets – and the secondary street develops a huge puddle of water after rain.

The agro-vila was designed by an outside expert from Feira de Santana. We were told by community leaders that, if they were to do it over, they would have wider streets and would put the school in another location.

Some fields are fairly distant from the agro-vila. For instance, José Nascimento’s field is about 1 km. from his home; he owns a motorbike to get there.

**Climate:** The region is classed by IBGE as semi-arid, with the natural growth ranging from *cerrado* to *caatinga*. Our visit here coincided with the end of an eight

[^380]: The settlers here use the Bahian *tarefa* – 4,356 M2 – and roughly calculate it at 2.3 *tarefas* per hectare.
month drought period. We were told that this was the first serious drought in sixteen years – although there had been a shorter one in 1993. (Joselito)

**History:** Within three kms of the settlement is the village of Gameleira, and beyond that the older land reform areas of Colonia Roberto Santos. The Colonia (as it is called locally) was formed through invasion of vacant land\(^{381}\) in the mid 1980s, principally by settlers from Sergipe, and was eventually administered by INCRA.

When the *Cédula da Terra* program was announced, meetings were held in Gameleira with the support of a state legislator, Aderbal Fontes Caldas, sparking the interest primarily of adult children of the settlers in the Colonia. Many joined the Rural Workers Union (STR). One of the original settlers in Passos de Esperança, Americo dos Santos, was president of the STR from 1997 to 2005 and is currently its treasurer; he still lives in the settlement and was interviewed.

In 1998 the Association was formed to try to locate land. The primary leader of the group and first president of the Association was Anselmo, who later became one of the original settlers of Passos de Esperança (although he no longer lives there). Railda Dantas Oliveira learned of the program and entered into it, as she said, “body and soul.” She became voluntary secretary of STR in 1998.\(^{382}\) She told us that 10-12 of the original sixty Association members now live in the settlement – some others

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\(^{381}\) According to Americo, the land had been fenced in and claimed by a company that had no legal right to it. They planted pine trees, but then abandoned the land. The Sergipanos invaded this land and occupied it. As most of the settlers in Passos come from this area, this is interesting background.

\(^{382}\) Edna, the *tecnica*, stated that Railda is “a natural leader.” Interview March 27, 2006. Our observations tended to confirm this.
went to other settlement areas. Dona Edna, the *tecnica*, accompanied them the whole way – she is their “godmother.”

In 2000 the Association located the land, and purchased it on December 28, 2001. The landowner, who had approached the *tecnicos* (Sergio Ricardo and Edna) about the possibility of selling his land, wanted to sell 500 ha., but INCRA only agreed to buying 450, so they had to diminish the area of each settler. The land cost R$130,000.

The initial settlement included some families from the city of Olindina whom Dona Edna recommended. All of these families left the settlement and were largely replaced by families from the Colonia, many of them relatives of Colonia families already in the settlement.

**Demography:** The settlers were almost entirely of Sergipano stock and background. Almost all of them had roots in the nearby older settlement area, Colonia Roberto Santos, located around the nearby village of Gameleira.

All but four of the interviewees classed themselves as being of rural origin. The four who classed themselves as “urban” were women; one of these had moved to a rural area when she was sixteen years old. Before moving to the settlement, six of the men were rural day laborers (although one of these also said he was an

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383 The landowner, Glaudson José de Almeida Chagas, was from Sergipe. According to Josefa, many of the people from Gameleira worked for him on his land; he was a “good person” and paid his workers “certinho” (i.e., the right amount at the time it was due).

384 Edna stated that she was impressed by the attrition rates: “What are these people thinking [when they enter onto the land]?” Sergio Ricardo noted that “99% of urban people don’t work out – the problem is learning to survive on the land.” Ultimately, he pointed out, there is a process of self-selection.

385 People from this Colonia also were among the founding and new settlers at Moita Redonda.
electrician), three were sharecroppers, two were employed farm hands, one a cowhand, one a rural security guard, and one worked his parents’ land. Two had previously had small landholdings of their own, but had lost them.

**Race/Ethnicity:** White, Afro-Brazilian

**Gender:** Four women are titleholders. One of them, Railda, was Secretary of the Association from 2001-2005 (and is currently Secretary of the Rural Workers’ Union); she holds a leadership role that goes beyond formal offices.

**Religion:** All of the interviewees were Catholic except for two women – one Adventist and one Evangelical Protestant. A number of Catholics attend mass in Gameleira (2-3 km distance). There is no chapel in the settlement.

**Age:** Eighteen of the thirty-three interviewees were in their thirties or forties, and this seemed representative of the settlement. Key leader Railda was 40, and directory members ranged in age from 38 to 55.

**Attrition:** In the initial stages, there was considerable attrition, and only about a third of the present settlers are from the original group. Vacancies were filled primarily through family connections, so that there are many related families presently in the settlement. Six of the fifteen families we interviewed were original settlers. Most of the others arrived fairly early, the most recent in January 2005 (a little over a year prior to our visit).

**Education:** There is a school in the settlement that teaches pre-school through 4th grades. It has 46 students in the morning session, and 21 adult students at night. The school building is owned by the Association, the teachers are provided by the
municipio. The school has two classrooms, bathrooms, and office and a cantina (small kitchen). The school building is in good condition, with ceramic flooring, good quality desk-chairs, blackboards, large open windows. The rooms are light and airy. There were a few pictures drawn by students on the walls.

Twelve respondents stated that the school is good to very good (one said excellent). Two thought that it is so-so ("mais ou menos"). One simply stated that it is simple ("simples") — a term roughly translatable as “nothing fancy.”

Approximately six 5th through 8th graders from the settlement study in the nearby village of Dona Maria. For 5th grade and beyond, students go into the town of Olindina. Dessiene, 13, is one of these; she said that she enjoys going to school in Olindina — fifteen students go there together on the bus.

**Health:** There is a health agent who lives in the neighboring area of Gameleira (3 kms. distance) and who comes once a month to the settlement. She performs some basic services, such as weighing the children and checking for dengue fever, and marks appointments for settlers to visit the doctor. There is a health post in Dona Maria. The nearest pharmacy is in Olindina.

Three respondents stated that the health agent herself is good, although one felt that she was limited ("muito devagar"); Americo noted that she is overworked. However, most of the respondents felt that the health system itself is mediocre to terrible.
**Water:** There was an artesian well on the land when it was purchased; it is currently owned and operated by the Association. The municipality donated 600 meters of pipe. Americo told us the pipe is too thin (affecting the flow of water). However, the settlers themselves installed the piping through a *mutirão* and now receive water in houses. Previously they had to fetch it from a central tank (*tanque*).

The water tower holds 10,000 liters. Water is pumped into it from a diesel driven pump (the electric company did not yet installed the 3 phase electrical necessary for an electric pump).

Although there is running water for the settler’s vegetable gardens on their house lots, there is no water piped to the fields for irrigation. Irrigating the fields has been discussed; it would entail extending water pipes or hosing to faucets on the agricultural lots. Josenito, a member of the Fiscal Council, stated that he thought such irrigation was not feasible, but other settlers cited irrigation as one of the goals of the community.

**Association and Collective Area:** The Association meets weekly on Mondays, and attendance was reported to be good. Members pay monthly dues of R$5. Several interviewees stated that they thought attendance at meetings to be important. Interviewees generally stated that there was not significant dissension within the community, and that matters were discussed in meetings and – when no consensus was reached – voted on. In each Association election, there has been only one set of candidates.
Women generally attend the meetings, and nine of the women interviewed listed themselves as being "very active" in the Association. Marivalda, wife of former President Edilson, stated that it is good that the wives participate, and that many women think this way.\textsuperscript{386} Holding office is limited to women titleholders: Railda was secretary of the Association, 2001-2005, and Josefina was currently 2\textsuperscript{nd} Secretary. Railda stated that she finds the men to be more united than the women, and that the women participate less than the men do.

Of the men interviewed, nine were members who had held no officer positions, although all said that they attended meetings, and several mentioned working in collective projects, paying dues, and generally participating. Of the others, Edilson had been president (2002-2004), José Pereira is currently vice president, Americo is treasurer, one had been vice secretary, and three members or substitute members of the Fiscal Council.

The collective land is planted with 20 ha each of passion fruit, oranges, and cashew. There is also manioc on the collective land. Americo noted that the orange trees on the collective land are not being fertilized due to lack of funds.

An issue in the past was whether a portion of the collective land should be devoted to oranges or sheep (oranges prevailed). Another recent issue, peacefully resolved, was the gate that was erected at the entrance to the community.\textsuperscript{387}

\textsuperscript{386} Her husband agrees: "The two need to participate." (Edilson)

\textsuperscript{387} Due to the proximity of the highway, some of the settlers wanted the gate locked at night. Others thought that would be inconvenient. The solution found was to lock the gate and provide each family with a key.
The primary current discussion topic at meetings is the care of the collective crops – especially oranges, which require more care than do cashews. Railda stated that administration of the collective lands does cause some division. Josenito mentioned that the failure of some to participate in the collective work causes differences.

There is a rule that, if a settler misses three work days, he is suspended from the Association. However, one settler who was suspended took the matter to court, and the judge initially showed signs of supporting his claim. CDA’s lawyers are fighting the issue and say that legally the settler should not have a case. However, there is a sense that the local judge does not understand the nature of the Cédula da Terra settlements.

There are varying opinions as to how funds – including future funds – should be spent; currently there are three opinions as to what should be the next investment: a tractor, a casa de farinha, or irrigation (water piped to the fields). The disagreement is only one as to which of these should come first; most settlers agree that all three are desirable. “Tractor, casa de farinha, irrigation – these are our dreams but we don’t have resources.” (Americo)

José Nascimento stated that, “For the time being, it’s okay. But [the Association] could do more projects.” He felt the prior President, Edilson, was more active, traveling to Salvador in search of resources.

388 She also stated that the settlers who arrived later were generally more individualistic than the original group that had worked together to form the Association and obtain the land. This is an interesting point and is in line with those who believe that the struggle to obtain land may be an important factor in community cohesiveness.
The Association owns the school. When the school was constructed, R$1600 was left over in the building fund. The community constructed a covered bus stop on the road and the entrance gate.

The last of the SIC funds – R$48,000 - were paid to COELBA (the state electric company) to install electric energy. It is expected that the government will reimburse the settlers this cost, in which case they would use the funds either to construct a casa de farinha and a casa de mel, or to pipe water to the farm lots.

**Ecological Area:** As required by law, 20% of the land is ecological reserve. This is in two parcels – 25 ha. at the eastern edge of the settlement, and 65 ha. along the settlement’s southern border. Settlers spoke relatively little about the ecological area; when they did it was merely to state that it was an area that could not be cleared and was important for wild animals.

**Economy:**

**Distinguishing Factors:** The economy of this settlement is directed at diverse fruit raising – principally oranges, cashews, and passion fruit. Manioc is an important secondary crop. Livestock is not permitted.

**Land:** The land purchase took place on November 13, 2001. The purchase price was R$288.88 per ha, for a total of R$130,000. SAT funds were R$143,906.40 and SIC R$201,645.

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389 Sergio Ricardo, interview of March 27, 2006. Railda believes that the decision will be for the casa de farinha.
The land cost R$130,000 (R$4334 per family). Payments are R$305 annually for seventeen years. Most interviewees expressed no concern about land payments. Income from the collective area is expected to be able to cover those payments, although last year the settlers had to contribute a portion from their own pockets.

Thirteen of the nineteen farmers stated that their land is good. One said that part of his is good, part weak. Two said that it is not good. Josenito and Mauricio stated that it was not initially good, but is improving with care.

All of the farmers use fertilizer. “If you don’t use fertilizer, you don’t harvest anything.” (Americo) Several use commercial pesticides. Edilson, one of the most productive farmers, uses only organic inputs, as do Xiquinho, and Gabriel. Americo stated that he would prefer to use organic, but that “it doesn’t work fast enough.”

Five of the farmers mentioned that they would like to have more land. “If I could arrange for more land, it would be good.” (Xiquinho) Edilson, specifically mentioned that he could work 15 ha. (he has nine); he hopes that his profits from the land will allow him to buy more outside of the settlement area. Gabriel (Bié) stated that the settlers have too little land. The tecnico, Sergio Ricardo, also stated that he felt that 9 ha. is insufficient.

Financing: All of the families interviewed received PRONAF A, which was earmarked for planting passion fruit, oranges, and cashews. The amount of the loans reported ranged from R$13,000 to R$15,000, and they were drawn down in three

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390 A possible exception is Gabriel, who stated that he would have to sell something ("desfazer alguma coisa") in order to make the payments.

391 “Too little land, too little money – it’s not good.” (Gabriel)

392 Interview March 27, 2006
installments. The first repayment parcel is due in 2009. Three interviewees included repayment among their chief worries.

According to Sergio Ricardo, the PRONAF A financing was appropriate for 7-8 has. He stated that the settlement was now ready for a new stage in financing, but it had yet to take place. Seven families told us that they intended to take out the special PRONAF loans for women (PRONAF MULHER - subsidized loans of R$1000 – if paid in a timely manner at the end of the year only R$800 needs to be repaid.) Four stated that they would use the loans to plant additional passion fruit, one was deciding between passion fruit and beans, and two were undecided. In addition, Josefa told us that she and her husband were in the process of obtaining a custeio loan to plant manioc, and Edilson stated that he was going to do the same.

Production and Income: As noted above, the PRONAF A financing was for orange, cashew, and passion fruit, and all of the households interviewed had commercial plantings of these three fruits. Most families had 2 ha. of orange trees, the largest grove being 3 has. Cashew plantations ranged from 1 ha. to 3 has. All families had 1-2 has. of passion fruit, except for Edilson, who had 4 has.

Because passion fruit vines mature more quickly than orange or cashew trees, passion fruit was at the time of our visit the major source of income for most of the families. In 2005, Edilson harvested 16,500 kgs of passion fruit – which he sold at R$0.50 - 0.80 per kg. He stated that his 2005 profit from passion fruit was R$3000 –

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393 Sergio Ricardo stated that Sergipanos tend to see oranges as the basis of their security, but in fact orange markets fluctuate a great deal, and only one in every three to four years is really profitable. The big juice factories really set the price. He believes that, in the long run, cashew will be a much more important and stable element of settler income. Interview March 27, 2006

394 Only one farmer mentioned selling small amounts of oranges and cashews.
in 2006 he was expecting R$2000 – 3000 per harvest (passion fruit in the area can render three to four harvests a year). Mauricio sold 12,000 kg at R$0.50, equaling revenue of R$6000. Josenito did not have an annual figure, but said that he sold R$200-300 a week when the passion fruit was producing, and that it produced fairly continuously during the year.

Thirteen other families reported 2005 passion fruit sales of between 500 and 2500 kgs, all sold at R$0.50 – 0.60. The three remaining families sold little or none. Sergio Ricardo noted that passion fruit had been providing a constant good price, and stated that it guarantees the basic income (“feira”) of most of the families, who are able to sell at least small amounts throughout the year.

Passion fruit is generally sold to middlemen who bring trucks from Salvador, Feira de Santana, or Sergipe. Settlers noted that they could get a better price for the passion fruit at CEASA – the produce wholesale center in Feira de Santana. Increasing production will allow them to institute better selling practices.

Fifteen of the families have commercial planting of manioc, ranging from 1 -3 has. In some cases the manioc is planted alongside cashew trees, but most seemed to be dedicated fields. Thirteen families reported some income from manioc.

Manioc is sold in a number of ways. Unharvested manioc may be sold – the buyer harvests it and pays for it. Thus, for instance, Xiquinho sold 25 tarefas of unharvested manioc for R$120 each, for revenue of R$3000; Denicio and Neide sold nine tarefas at R$100; Josefina and her husband earned R$1700 from manioc sold “in the land.”
Harvested manioc may be sold in small quantities or by the truckload. Or it may be processed into manioc flour (farinha) and sold by the sack; prices vary depending on the market and the quality of the flour, reported price per sack ranging R$20 – R$60. Americo was possibly the top earner in this area, selling 60 sacks of manioc flour at R$33 each, for revenue of R$1,980. Because the settlement does not have a casa de farinha, the settlers have to take their manioc either to Gameleira or Dona Maria to be processed into flour, and the casas in those localities keep 20% of the production in payment for processing.

Ten families had commercial planting of beans, normally 1-2 has., although Railda and Edmundo had 4 has. Josefina and her husband sold 35 sacks of beans at R$50, for income of R$1,750. The other families sold 20 sacks or less at prices ranging from R$45 to R$60.

Three families had commercial plantings of watermelon. José Pereira has had 3 ha. dedicated to watermelon for the past four years and said the he “harvests a lot.” He sold 2000 watermelon in 2005, but did not state the price he received (as with manioc, the price of watermelon can be affected by whether the farmer or the buyer harvests the field.) Josefa and her husband received R$0.20 per melon – they sold about 250 melons.

Railda and Edmundo have 500 papaya (mamão) plants and 500 banana trees. She reported that they sell about 30 crates of papaya a week at R$10 a crate. Their bananas were almost ready to produce at the time of our visit.

395 Settlers also use a manioc by-product (goma) as starch for clothing. Manioc is also used for animal ration and its remnants can be used for fertilizer.
Most settlers have production of corn, squash, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables (green beans, okra, inhame, maxixe, etc.) for consumption. Some sold small amounts of these. For instance, João Firmo sells squash and watermelon at the feira in Olindina.

All of the settlers interviewed have fruit trees on their house lots, often around 20-25 of them. In addition to fruits already mentioned, these include avocados, sweet limes, lemons, coconut, acerola, mango, graviola, seringuela, pinha, guava, jack fruit, persimmons, cacao, and others.

Livestock raising is not permitted in the settlement. Only two families interviewed indicated that they would like to raise livestock. We were told that the rule extended to raising chickens; however five families have flocks of chickens, Railda and Edmundo’s flock, with forty chickens, being by far the largest. One family has a horse, and Antenio has three sheep that he keeps on his parents’ land outside of the settlement.

Only three of the men said that they hire out as daily laborers, earning R$8-12 a day. A fourth, Edilson (one of the most prosperous farmers), said that he worked as a daily laborer until the PRONAF financing enabled him to really invest in his land. Unlike some areas, we were told that it was common in this settlement for the women to work in the fields.

396 Sergio Ricardo pointed out that it is not practical to raise livestock with passion fruit, especially in a small area. He believes that it is an illusion for small farmers to think they can depend on livestock for a living. Interview March 27, 2006

397 Although on most subsistence farms in Brazil, everyone in the family helps out in the fields during times of peak activity (especially planting and harvest), we found that in Tocantins farm families in which the women had to work regularly in the fields were looked upon as being particularly poor – or the husbands were looked upon as being shiftless, lazy, incompetent, almost abusive. This attitude also seemed to be present in some of the settlements in this study. However, where – as here – the
Two men receive retirement pensions. Eight families receive the *bolsa familia* or similar government subsidies, ranging up to R$95/month. Railda, who has been the volunteer secretary for the Rural Workers Union in Olindina since 1998, began in January, 2006, receiving a salary of R$300/month — she works there Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturday mornings. Josenito’s wife is janitor at the school and earns R$276/month when school is in session.

Other non-agricultural income seems to be less here than in some settlements. Donice earns an average of R$10/month selling magazines. Antenio resells gas for cooking — he sells about six tanks a month.

Josefa Carvalho mentioned that a primary need of the community is jobs for women and youth. Railda mentioned a possible project with passion fruit fiber.

There are no stores or other commercial enterprises in the settlement. Several interviewees mentioned that this made it difficult when they needed to make small purchases.398

**Sufficiency of Income:** When asked whether income was sufficient, eleven households responded positively, six negatively, one said “sometimes,” and an older settler — who had just started receiving his old age pension three months previously — said “yes and no” — that it is adequate for him because of the pension. Of the positive responses, one noted the dependency of weather, and three indicated that the income activity is fruit raising rather than heavy agricultural labor, the attitude may be different. Several settlers noted that women are particularly adept at picking the flowers from passion fruit vines — a delicate operation necessary to make the vines produce.

398 When João Firmo made this point as a minor complaint, however, his wife, Angelita pointed out that, before moving to the settlement, she used to have to buy everything — now she also has something to *sell*. 
was barely sufficient. Three of the negative respondents said that things are getting better as the fruit production increases.

“Yes – it serves to live very well” (José Almeida – but he noted that the bolsa escola helps)

“Yes – Thanks be to God!” (Xiquinho)

“We get by with what we have” (Gabriel)

“We make do ("dá um jeitinho")” (Railda – but her home is a comfortable rural middle class home with nice furniture)

“Something is always lacking – you have to think that way.” (José Firmo – but he noted that his passion fruit will produce better this year)

“It’s tight. We do not have good nourishment (alimentação)” (Americo and Martinha – but they felt that this would get better with increased production)

Railda mentioned that some families have sold all their beans and were now finding it hard to get by. Ilsa, who is the janitor at the school, stated that some children arrive at school hungry. Her husband, Josenito, noted that this is partly due to the drought and especially to its impact on the passion fruit harvest.
**Settler Attitudes:**

**Satisfaction:** Settler satisfaction was high. Of the adults interviewed, 29 said they would not trade or sell their land – four emphatically. One said he would do so only if the community became weak.

"It’s our patrimony for securing our daily bread." (Gabriel)

"Here is to live and to keep for my children" (José Almeida)

Several other settlers also mentioned that their land was for their children.

Twenty-five of the interviewees stated that life in the settlement was better than previously, and for thirteen of these it was much better. None said that it was worse. One said that it was about the same.

**Future:** Settlers were overwhelmingly optimistic about the future. Many envisioned a more abundant future when the fruit trees begin producing in quantity. José Nascimento pointed out that the greater level of production will not only be good in itself, but will enable the community to commercialize its produce more effectively.

Confidence in agriculture as a future for their children was higher in Passos than in any other settlement. In response to an open ended question about the future, several settlers envision their children continuing to work in agriculture, either in the settlement area or on nearby areas. João Firmo envisions his children working with

399 Eurides’ statement in response to this question – “Hail Mary - God deliver me” ("Ave Maria – Deus me livre!") does not translate well, but shows the depth of her feeling that she would never leave the land.
him on his land – he notes that they could put up to three more houses on their agrovila lot. Edilson also noted that his son (who was then 17) will want his own house – Edilson has already given each of his children a part of the land for which they are responsible, and they each keep the profits from their portions. Railda stated that she would not want her children getting jobs in town – that she would want them to stay on the land. Joselito says that his sons, now in their twenties, like the land and will stay in agriculture. José Almeida wants his children to study, but to use their education in agriculture. Xiquinho, José Almeida, Josefina Carvalho, Americo and his wife, Marinha, all mentioned that they wanted their children to have land. Unlike most settlements, no one interviewed stated that they wanted their children to get jobs and work in the city.

This situation produces a certain pressure. Edilson mentioned in passing that the collective land could be divided up for adult children of settlers, although it is difficult to see how this could be accomplished in a fair manner (there would be only 90 ha of collective land to divide among 30 families). He mentioned that he initially thought that 9 has was a lot, but is now realizing that he will need more for his children, and hopes that the income from his lots will allow him to buy land for his children outside the settlement. Donice and Bolero said they hoped their children would form a group to obtain their own land.

Socio-Political Awareness: When asked who helps the rural worker, responses included the Federal Government (7), Lula/the President (6), the Rural Workers’ Union (4), CDA/CAR/the program (2), other unnamed politicians (2), and banks – one specifically mentioning the Banco do Nordeste (2). There was one
mention each of the Association, the Cooperative (although nobody in the settlement is yet a member), and the prefeito.

Opinions of the MST were mixed. Of the twelve interviewees who voiced opinions, five were favorable. Valdina stated that the MST had a “good idea: they pursue [the land] and they get it.” Josefina Carvalho said that she thought the Movement important because “so many people don’t have land to work.” Edilson stated that the MST benefits thousands of families.

Six settlers had negative opinions, including two who have above average knowledge of rural issues. Americo, president of the Rural Workers’ Union, said he participated in an MST activity in Salvador, but didn’t understand well their program objectives. He doesn’t approve of invading land, but believes the government should require non-productive landowners to either produce or sell. Railda admitted she only knows of the MST via television, but questioned whether their real objective is to obtain land – if so, she thinks that they are going about it in the wrong way. Mauricio stated: “It is right to want land, [but] wrong to invade land.”

In the last election, 25 of the respondents voted for Lula and five for Serra. With respect to the next election, 25 intended to vote for Lula and five were undecided (interestingly, these five did not include any of the Serra voters, all of whom said they planned to vote for Lula). Four families stated strong identity with a political party – three with the Workers’ Party (PT) and one with the Liberal Front Party (PFL) – a conservative party strongly identified in Bahia with the then state political boss, Antonio Carlos Magalhães.
Railda noted that, with Lula in office, the rural worker was being helped from the top down, as well as from the bottom up. José Almeida, who voted for Serra but planned in the next election to vote for Lula, stated that Lula is “the only president who has helped the small farmer.” Edilson agreed: “Now the small [people] are the priority” (“Agora o pequeno é a prioridade.”)

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:**

Passos de Esperança seems to us to be a highly viable community. Despite difficulties of early high attrition, delay in disbursement of PRONAF A funds, and drought, and the real need some families were experiencing at the time of our visit, settlers showed a high level of satisfaction and optimism with respect to the future. This optimism, based on the maturing fruit trees, seemed to us to have a solid basis.

The resilience of the community is perhaps due in part to the relative homogeneity of the current settlers, and their roots in the old land reform area of Colonia. Having been raised in a land reform area, the settlers have a realistic set of expectations with respect to difficulties and goals. They have also not been very far displaced, and are able to maintain friendship and family ties.

Even taking into account Railda’s comment that the new settlers (who constitute two-thirds of the community) are more individualistic than the original group, it seems to us that the settlers have a relatively high degree of community participation. The issue of collective labor, which almost inevitably tends to create tensions in most settlements, has arisen but has not yet developed to the point of having to seek an alternative solution. Leadership in the settlement seems to be
capable, creative, and recognized by the settlers, and divisions in the community seem to be minor. Participation of women in the Association is positive, although we would recommend that office holding be opened to non-titleholding spouses.

Technical guidance seems to have been very good. The community has avoided monoculture, and has at least four major sources of potential agricultural income: oranges, cashews, passion fruit, and manioc. With Sergio Ricardo, we agree that the other three crops will be useful in offsetting less profitable years for oranges. We also agree that cashews may prove to be the real mainstay for the local economy, especially if the community can engage in small-scale processing.

Cashew processing can be done on a very small scale – even a single family can significantly add to its income by processing the nuts. However, both for general processing of produce and for commercialization, it would be recommended that Passos, as a relatively small community, consider combining efforts with other nearby small farmers (in Colonia and elsewhere), to create a larger base for operations. (We were informed that the Rural Workers’ Union in the municipio has over 3500 members, which indicates a strong population of small farmers.) This could be carried out through cooperatives, which already exist in the area, or through agreements among local associations.
Case Study 6

Name of Settlement: **Biritinga** ("Assentamento **Boa Vista**")\(^{400}\)  
Families in Settlement: 37 titleholders + 2 houses of non-titleholders  
Location: Municipio – Biritinga  
Area: 807.4 ha. (842.622 ha.)  
Contract Date: June 19, 2001  
Dates Visited: April 18-20, 2006  
Number Interviewed - Households: 21 Individuals: 33  
   Family size (persons): 1-3/7; 4-6/12; 7-9/2  
Persons Interviewed: 16 men, 16 women, 1 youth (male 16)  
   Ages: -20/2; 20-29/5; 30-39/9; 40-49/9; 50-59/5; 60+/3  
   Schooling: 0-2/13; 3-5/14; 6-8/4; one complete HS and one some university  
   In most of the families interviewed, husbands and wives were more or less equally educated. In two families, the husband had three or more years schooling than the wife. One wife (not interviewed) had a normal school degree – which allows her to teach school. Jurandi had three years of university in mechanical engineering and Josi, his wife, has a full high school education.

Technical Assistant: Sergio Ricardo Matos Almeida of TECPLATA, interviewed March 27, 2006

\(^{400}\) Assentamento Boa Vista (Good View Settlement) is the official name, but "Boa Vista" is such a common name among settlement areas that the community is often referred to as "Biritinga."
Map V-6-A – Boa Vista (Biritinga) settlement.
Figure V-6-A. Association president Antonio Sales da Silva
Figures V-6-B and V-6-C. Above: researchers Daniel Cavalho (left) and Arthur Powers with Antonio Sales and treasurer Josenilda Bento (with children). Below: titleholder Janailda da Silva (25) with her children in their living room.
Figures V-6-D and V-6-E. Settler homes in Boa Vista (Biritinga).
**Geography:** The settlement is located in a semi-arid region approximately 15 kms. east of the town of Biritinga via a poorly paved state highway (BA-85), and less than one km. north of the highway by dirt road. The town of Biritinga, however, is very small, and settlers have at least as much contact with the larger town of Serrinha, 25 km to the west of Biritinga.

Each settler family has a house lot (15 x 50m) in the agro-vila and a farm lot of 11 has. Two months prior to our arrival, the association divided up the collective lots (see below) so that each family received an additional 3+ has. of grazing land and 135 additional cashew trees. The manioc, however, continues to be held collectively.

The current President of the Association, Antonio Sales de Silva, told us that the settlers were not consulted as to the design of the agro-vila. They would have preferred larger housing lots. The community has also opened a new street to construct houses for grown children of settlers. Two families interviewed complained about the distance of their farm lots from their houses (one other family decided to live on their farm lot).

**Climate:** This area is classed by the IBGE as *cerrado arbório aberto* – a semi arid vegetation type that occurs in the interface between *cerrado* and *caatinga* – consisting of grasslands interspersed with small twisted trees.

Our visit to the community was at the tail end of a period of drought. One of the older settlers, Lourival Ferreira Lima, summed up the situation well:

401 There was formerly a bus from Biritinga directly to Salvador that ran on this highway. This was convenient for the community, but the bus was discontinued due to the bad quality of the road.
“Normally it rains well here. But once in awhile we have had these dry spells. Usually there are a few thunder showers in the summer, but last summer no.”

He noted that, whereas they can usually plant cowpeas, watermelon, and other food crops, it was more difficult this year.

The drought is an underlying theme in the case study. Several settlers mentioned losing cashew trees – some as much as 20%, although others almost none (the cashew is well adapted to the semi-arid climate). The weather also partially explains the relatively low agricultural production.

**History:** In 1995, the Association Boa Vista, a group of sixty families led by Antonio Cezar Mota de Carvalho (Lila), occupied a 22,000 ha. area called Campolândia which had belonged to the Barreto Araújo company but was abandoned. However, that settlement had problems as INCRA judged that the land was unsuitable for agriculture, and the land was under mortgage to a bank.

In approximately 2000, Antonio Pedreira Lobo, who had been two terms **prefeito** of the **município** of Biritinga, sought out Lila, who was his childhood friend. Lobo had been an unsuccessful candidate for political office, had campaign debts, and wanted to sell part of his land to cover them. The portion of land he offered the Association was without water.

By this time the Association had approximately 80 families. Of these, only twenty families qualified for the **Cédula da Terra** program and additional families
had to be found. Lila and other families began moving onto the land in 2000, although the Cédula da Terra land purchase was not effected until June 19, 2001.

Life was hard during the first several years. Settlers lived in tents while they built their houses. There was neither water nor electric energy. What water they had came from a reservoir on a portion of the farm that had not been sold to them. There they bathed, washed clothes, and fetched water for construction of the houses; they also drank that water. Water was considered a luxury – settlers stated they fried food because there was insufficient water for boiling. Subsequently they dug a shallow hole, lined it with plastic sheeting, and the municipal water truck would fill it once or twice a week. CERB – the state water company – stated that they were going to drill but failed to do so. The Association used its own funds to hire a private company (CRIAR – Construção e Engenharia Ltda.) based in Salvador to drill a well. This well, drilled in 2004, caved in. The Association petitioned CAR to allow them to use money earmarked for a casa de farinha to dig another well; CAR authorized this and the new well was successfully drilled in August 2005 at a cost R$56,000.

Lila continued to serve as president of the Association after the move. According to those we interviewed, he was something of a dictator. Anyone who spoke out against him he would threaten to expel from the community. He was also said to have administered the funds of the Association unfairly, paying some people for working when they did little or no work.

402 Interview with Lila’s brother, José Rubens Mota de Carvalho, March 18, 2006.
403 According to Firmino Dos Santos, who was president at the time, CAR has pledged to reimburse these funds. Interview April 20, 2006

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Per CDA rules, Lila could not remain indefinitely as president. He selected his successor, Firmino. Once in office, however, Firmino refused to obey Lila, generating a split in the community. In the next election (2004), Firmino’s chosen successor, Antonio Sales de Silva, defeated Lila by 36 to 35 votes. Sergio Ricardo helped mediate the dispute. Lila ended up leaving the settlement, and currently only eleven of the original families remain (and one son of original settlers) – the other twenty-five families are “new” settlers, not from the Campolândia group.

Attrition continues to be fairly high. During the year prior to our visit, two families left, one because he accepted a job in the town of Serrinha, and one because the wife had not wanted to come to the settlement in the first place and did not adapt there.

However, the settlers considered 2005 to be a “blessed” year in several respects. In addition to drilling the well and constructing the school (see below), the community received electric energy. The settlement had petitioned for electric

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404 Firmino told us that as president “he lost a lot of time.” A group of settlers who did not want to stay left the land, but wanted to return in 2003 when money to build houses was disbursed. They created a false document with the son of the prior landowner (apparently this document indicated that the plaintiffs were the true directors of the Association) and demanded R$30,000. The Association won the case, but spent R$3,000 on a lawyer, and Firmino had to spend a lot of time dealing with the case.

405 This was the first election to have more than one ticket of candidates. Lourival, the current Vice President, stated that part of the problem was that the newer families were feeling marginalized; by the time of our visit, however, he believed that “Now everything is better – now we know each other better.”

406 Manoel; his mother was the original titleholder. Manoel had been working in the mechanic’s shop for the local Serrinha bus company, but lost his job. He was married with three children; his mother called them to live with her (his father had had a prostrate operation and was away for six months). His mother transferred the title to Manoel. Manoel’s wife left him in 2005, taking their three teenage children to live in Feira de Santana; Manoel met Luciene and she and her seven year old son are now living with him.
energy in 2003. Installations were finally installed on December 31, 2005. The energy was turned on in the late afternoon, failed, and returned just before midnight. At the time of our visit it had been functioning for three months.

**Demography:** All of the men interviewed are of rural origin except for Jurandi Nilo, who is a trained metallurgical technician from São Paulo. Five of the women classified themselves as being or urban origin.

Before settling in the area, six of the men had possessed *minifundios*, and five had worked small parcels of land owned by their families. Many of these had to also sharecrop additional land or work as daily laborers. Three were sharecroppers who also worked out as daily laborers. One was a bricklayer and agricultural laborer, one was a full time bricklayer in Serrinha (where his wife was a domestic servant), one had worked in the mechanic shop for the Serrinha bus company but had lost his job, another was unemployed in Serrinha doing odd jobs. One was an unemployed security guard in Salvador, and one was living in an MST camp for landless workers.

**Race/Ethnicity:** Mostly white; one woman is the daughter of Gypsies.

**Gender:** Four of the 37 titleholders are women; we interviewed three of these. João Rocha and his wife, Del, are joint titleholders; Del was a

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407 Electricity was originally requested under the “Luz no Camp” (Light in the Countryside) program. This program required that the *municipio* enter with 10% of the cost, and there was a great deal of lobbying and bureaucracy involved at the local level. The Federal Government then replaced that program with “Luz Para Todos” (Light For All), which no longer required 10% from municipalities. Jurandi Ferreira Nilo, one of the settlers who had been a Workers Party activist in São Paulo, was in São Paulo on other matters and went to the party’s central headquarters there with the request. This was sent to the Ministry of Agriculture and funds for the project were authorized.

408 Jurandir left São Paulo and worked on his father-in-law’s land in Cipó (a rural area in Bahia not far from the settlement) for two years before seeking his own land. He came to visit the settlement, loved it (in his wife’s words, he “adored” it [adorou]), and put his name in with the association in the event of an opening. When another family left, he and his wife were called in. Because he receives a government pension, she is the titleholder. Both are leaders in the community.
member of the Fiscal Council. Zefinha is the Secretary of the Association even though she is not a title holder.

Religion: This settlement is more religiously mixed than most. We were told that there are four Assembly of God families in the settlement, and two in the neighboring settlement of Boa Sorte; they are in the process of building a temple in Boa Vista. We were also told that there are two Baptist families. Among families interviewed, eleven were Catholic, three Assembly of God, one Baptist, one Adventist, one mixed Catholic/Assembly, and one mixed Adventist/Assembly. Two respondents stated that religion is a divisive factor in the community.

Age: Eighteen of the 33 persons interviewed were in their 30s or 40s, and this seemed to be representative of the community.

Attrition: Only eleven of the original 37 founders, and the son of another founder, remain on the land. Of the families we interviewed, eight were founders. Many of the newcomers were persons who had some tie to the

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409 Eugenia is separated from her husband and runs her land with the help of her two sons, who are 25 and 20. Josi is titleholder because Jurandi, her husband, has a government pension and therefore cannot qualify as a titleholder. Jane was living with her husband on her father-in-law’s land in the município of Serrinha – there were 2 tarefas of land for 8 houses of relatives; her mother called her to live in the settlement; she and her husband arrived in 2002, worked with her mother; her husband left; in 2003, an opening came up and Jane got it in her own name; she is now living with Erivaldo.

410 Although rare under the Cédula da Terra, this was legally permitted where the couple is married under civil law. Registration of land in the name of couples has since become standard.

411 Maria José coordinates religious education and Josefina, Nalva, and Gracinha help teach it. José Marivaldo is one of the leaders of the Church. There is a Thursday prayer group. The priest comes, alternately, every three months to the settlement and to the nearby settlement of Boa Sorte, and most Catholic families attend mass at these two locations. The Catholics would like to build a chapel, but have held their services in the Association building.
community and were on a waiting list for openings. Most of the newcomers we interviewed arrived in 2002 or 2003. We were told that two families left and were replaced in 2005. Very early on, one family was asked to leave.

Education: Until the end of 2005, the school functioned in the Association building, but the Association built a two classroom school. The municipio agreed to provide the roof to the school – at the time of our visit, only one classroom had a roof, and the school was beginning to function in that classroom. Twenty children study in the morning pre-school to 4th grade. In addition, 28 adults were signed up for night classes. The teacher is Elaine Pereira Lima, who lives in the settlement and is daughter of the vice president of the Association.

Most interviewees felt that the school is improving. Five interviewees said that the teacher is good to excellent, and three more classed the school as good. Three said that the teaching is so-so (“mais ou menos”), and one said the teacher “is not bad.” One said the school is not very good. Luciene stated that the school is “normal for this region.” Lourival stated that the educational system in Brazil is not good.

Beyond the fourth grade, students go to school in the town of Biritinga. Only one interviewee mentioned the schools there – she thought they were good.

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412 Juraci, for instance, put his name on the waiting list in 2000; he waited two years for an opening. Similarly, José Carlos had his name on the waiting list from the beginning; he worked with one of the other men on the waiting list, Paulo (their wives are comadres [co-godmothers]), on a contract to clear settlement land. In 2002, there were 13 families on the waiting list; the directory met and selected José Carlos; Paulo was admitted later when a subsequent vacancy opened. Although José Carlos did not get his own lot until 2002, he considers himself to be “almost one of the founders.”

413 “The family was no good. Even the kids were no good.” (Jair)
Health: The Association has a small health post for a nurse who is supposed to come every fifteen days. Several interviewees stated that she does not come that often — perhaps once a month, that the attendance is poor, and that there is no privacy in the health post. But five women and one man, in separate interviews, told us the nurse is attentive, that she “helps a lot,” that she is good. All acknowledged that the space she works in is not adequate.

For any other health care, the settlers have to go to Biritinga. This usually means walking to the highway (about a kilometer) and waiting for the bus.

Water: The difficult history of this settlement with respect to water is set forth above. A successful well was drilled in August, 2005. The well has a capacity of 28,000 liters per hour. Although the community obtained electric energy at the end of 2005, at the time of our visit the well was still operating with a diesel motor as the Association did not have funds to purchase an electric pump. We were told that Petrobras would be donating a two-phase pump to the community.

The well has a 20,000 liter water tower. The Association charges a monthly fee of R$10, covering dues, water, and electricity. Water is pumped to the houses. Each residence has a 310 liter water storage tank. Because the tower was placed lower than it should have been, the water pressure is low and there is some difficulty in the flow to the houses.414

414 They received orientation from a geological engineer, Antonio Marcos Santos Raimundo (since deceased), who told them that locating the tower 2.5m above ground would be more than sufficient. They opted for 3m, but even that is not sufficient.
**Association and Collective Area:** The collective land was planted with 5000 dwarf cashew trees, and an area was set aside for grazing land. The community also planted manioc; some was harvested and the income used to make the first land payment. The pasture was used to graze sheep but “nearly all died – they were a total loss” ("só deu prejuizo"), and the community is discussing planting additional manioc on that land.

Because very few settlers were participating in the collective work projects, the Association divided the cashew and pasture collective area among the settlers. This occurred two months prior to our arrival. Each family received seven *tarefas*\(^415\) (slightly more than 3 has.) of pasture land and an average of 135 cashew trees.

The intention is for each family to care for and harvest from those trees. According to the President, Antonio Sales, the produce from the collective cashew trees still belongs to the Association, and will be used to make land payments. Differences among members in production level will be duly accounted for. The Association manioc is still completely collective; a collective work day ("*mutirão*") is held every couple of months to keep the field clean, and “nearly everybody participates.”

Manoel is an enthusiastic supporter of the new system. He stated that the collective work never reached 50% participation, and admitted that he himself owed many days due to sickness. Today he says that his area of the collective is all cleaned up – that he did it in a month. He feels that the Association is now moving forward and can concentrate on finding new resources.

\(^{415}\) This community uses the Bahian *tarefa* (4.536 M2)
Firmino, who was President from 2002-04\(^{416}\) and is now a member of the Fiscal Council, told us that formal voting in Association meetings is rare – that many decisions are made by consensus following discussion. The meetings foster free communications:

"Matters are well discussed. People speak openly, each one giving his opinion." (Gracinha)

Manoel noted that at times differences can be great, and that people can become rude. But both Jair and Jane said that the biggest disagreements arose from administration of collective work, a matter that seems to have been resolved.

Dissension reached its peak in the 2004 Association election where, for the first time, there were two slates of candidates. According to Lourival, the dissension arose in part because the newer arrivals felt marginalized.\(^{417}\) Antonio Sales won the election by one vote – Sergio Ricardo helped to mediate the dispute. Lourival feels that the dispute is behind them – “Now we know each other better.” Maria Elena agrees:

"The two groups didn’t have different proposals [ideas]. It has now returned to normal."

\(^{416}\) Firmino, a jovial, upbeat person with a good sense of humor, noted something that several presidents in the associations we studied encountered: that the time spent serving as president takes away from their agricultural activities and puts them behind.

\(^{417}\) As noted in the History, above, it may also have been generated in part by the personality of Lila.
João Rocha and Del said that there is now only one family that causes difficulties – that the rest are “everyone is for everyone.” Firmino stated that the Association is well organized, representative, and “works for the benefit of all.”

José Rubens believes that the Association could do better. He thinks it should actively lobby for government help. He emphasized that this is not only the job of the President. “[It’s as though], for the municipal government and the banks, [we] don’t exist.” He believes the Association should be constructing a water tank – and that the settlement needs industry – he mentioned, as possibilities, a bolacho factory and a broom factory. Josi, the current Treasurer, stated that she thinks the association is weak, needs to be more united, and needs bigger objectives: “[The settlement] still lacks a lot of things.”

Josi, who is the current Treasurer, says that, when she took over, the Association had no money in its account and owed the bank R$180 in fees, the município R$490 for water, and various amounts for taxes. She estimates that – including amounts owed for days not worked and unpaid monthly fees – settlers owed (and owe) the Association approximately R$5000. She took measures, including selling the remaining sheep (see below) and organizing expenditures, and the Association now has R$1600 in its account. She keeps clear books and posts information regularly. Nonetheless, she stated that in January, for instance, only ten families paid their full dues/utility bills. She said that there are two families who are very economically strapped (both single mothers).

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See Case Study 2.

Josi also feels that community festivities are important, and (as a community member, not as Treasurer) she helped organize festivities for the June Fetes (Festas Juninhas), Mothers’ Day,
There is also an issue with one family that does not live in the area, but has a home in Serrinha. This is illegal. However, the Association expelled a member in its early days and the experience was “horrible.” So they now work on the basis of trying to dialogue.

Miguel, who was Treasurer and is now a member of the Fiscal Council, stated: “We gain a lot as members – including knowledge.” Juraci agreed – he did a sustainable agriculture course through the Association and went on an educational trip. But he noted that all this had stopped occurring.

In two areas, the Association is advanced beyond most of those we studied. They allow “worker members” *(socios trabajadores)* – a category that recognizes and gives voice (but not a vote) to non-titleholding residents who work land – primarily grown sons or other relatives of settlers.

The Association also encourages the participation of women. Women who are not titleholders are free to participate in Association meetings and leadership, and many of them do so. Josefa, who is not a titleholder, is Secretary of the Association. João Rocha and Del are joint titleholders; both have served as officers in the association – he as vice treasurer, and she as a member of the fiscal council.

**Ecological Area:** The ecological area is distant from the rest of the community. The settlers use it for bee-raising. The President, Antonio Sales, told us that the ecological reserve was not in the best place, that what is now the pasture area was

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Christmas, New Years, Easter, the Corn Harvest Queen, and others. She taught a number of women how to bake cakes.
filled with trees which should have been saved. However, we were told that the ecological area protects the source of a small spring of water.

Consciousness of the value of the ecological area was higher here than in any other of the settlements. Three settlers also told us that they had set aside part of their own land as additional ecological reserve. Juraci said that he has a personal ecological reserve that he would not remove for any reason ("de jeito nenhum"), consisting of a grove of trees with a large canopy. Manoel told us he keeps 5% of his land in its natural state. Jane also noted that she and her husband have a private ecological reserve that they believe is important "for the animals and for the rain." Eugenia said that she hoped she would not have to clear all her land – if she had money she would buy more land to avoid the need to clear it all.

**Economy:**

**Distinguishing Factor:** Biritinga has the highest percentage of organic farmers of any settlement we studied. Of the farmers interviewed, seventeen are fully organic, one uses chemical pesticides only to kill ants and is moving toward using only organic methods, and only two use a mixture of chemical and organic methods.

**Land:** The land purchase took place on June 19, 2001. The purchase price was R$91.99 per ha, for a total of R$74,280. SAT funds were R$82,434 and SIC R$294,750. The first land payment of R$5600 was made in December, 2005.

Ten of the farmers said that the land is fertile, three said it was not fertile, three said it was so-so, and one said some is fertile and some not. However, their
answers seemed as much based on expectations as on objective factors. Every one of them stated that the land needs fertilizer to produce well.

Evandro stated that, for manioc, the land is of the best quality. Jurandi stated that it is good for cashew, manioc, and vegetables. João Rocha said that the land is good and, with fertilizer, very good. Firmino stated that, with fertilizer “everything grows,” and that by the third year of fertilization the land is good for beans. Paulo said, “There is no such thing as bad land” – indicating that it is how you treat the land that matters.

José Carlos, one of the least satisfied of the settlers, stated that without fertilizer a tarefa of land produces 15 sacks of farinha, with fertilizer it produces 50. He noted that you need a cartload of fertilizer per tarifa and the investment may not be worth it. However, if his calculations are correct, it would seem to be worth the effort: at a median sales price of R$25 a sack, the difference between the value produced by the unfertilized and fertilized tarefa is R$875, and the cost of a cartload of fertilizer is about R$200.420

Financing: All of the families received PRONAF A financing. Settlers had a choice between opting for only cashew trees (in which case they received financing sufficient for 1284 trees) or for cashew and apiculture (in which case they received 1070 trees and a kit including 10 beehives). Twenty-four of the thirty-seven families opted for apiculture. A portion of PRONAF A could be used for manioc.

Nine of the farmers stated that they have applied for and/or are waiting for the custeio, which they will use for manioc. The amount of the loan will be R$3000 per

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420 José Carlos further detailed his costs as follows – R$55/hour for a tractor to prepare the land – it cost him nearly R$1.000 to prepare 20 tarefas.
homestead, repayable in 20 months at 2% interest, with a R$200 rebate for timely payment.

As Firmino points out, the custeio is not really for manioc, but for the fertilizer to make the manioc grow. The cost of fertilizer is a concern expressed by many interviewees. Chicken manure was R$800 per truckload in 2005, and one interviewee said that he had heard it had risen to R1100; sisal residue was R$250 and said to have gone up to R$300. Firmino expressed hope that the custeio would be disbursed before the rains came, as he believes that after the rain starts the price of fertilizer will rise and it will be more difficult to work with it in the fields.

Firmino purchased two truckloads of chicken manure last year (paid with PRONAF A funds). He stated, however, that often two or three farmers will get together to purchase a truckload. In addition to chicken manure and sisal residue, Lourival bought cow manure. He also emphasized that they need to buy by the truckload – transport costs make smaller purchases more expensive.

Production and Income: Boa Vista (Biritinga) is a relatively new settlement, subject to difficulties in getting started and a high rate of turnover in its early population. PRONAF A funds were initially disbursed in 2003, but production has been slowed by drought and other factors. As a result, this settlement has the lowest agricultural production of any that we visited.

The primary PRONAF financing was for dwarf cashew trees, which had not at the time of our visit begun to produce in significant amounts. All settlers initially planted (approximately) either 1284 or 1070 cashew trees (depending on whether they opted for apiculture), but nine of the farmers interviewed reporting significant
loss of trees (100 or more) during the drought. Sebastião said that he lost nearly 40%, but this was unusually high. Seven farmers reported little or no loss. No farmer reported income from cashew.

PRONAF A also supported bee hives (apiculture), providing 10 kits – each with one hive – to farmers who opted for it. Thirteen of the farmers we interviewed owned hives – almost all the standard allotment of ten. Not all the hives had bees, but many did. João Rocha and Del had sixteen active hives and they sell honey at R$10 a liter, R$8 a liter if the buyer buys in quantity. One other farmer mentioned that he was beginning to harvest honey, but no other reported income from honey.\footnote{Firmino established a "sharecropping" system (his term); a young man from the settlement who understands apiculture agreed to take care of his hives, and they intend to split the produce 50/50.} However, at the general meeting we were told that settlers sell it in Serrinha at R$5/liter.

The only crop from which significant income was derived is manioc. All of the households interviewed have manioc, the largest planting being 9 tarefas. Manoel told us that he had lost 80% of his manioc in the drought; he stated that, because the second parcel of PRONAF A was disbursed late, he planted late and this resulted in losing most of the crop. But no other farmer reported significant losses.

There are three private casas de farinha in the settlement, owned by settlers. Maria Elena and her husband, José Maria, told us that theirs was the first casa de farinha in the settlement. They had operated it where they previously lived and brought it to the settlement in approximately 2003.\footnote{Although they are original settlers, she did not fully move to the land until that date.} Maria Elena told us that, since the arrival of the other casas de farinha, she and her husband no longer process
farinha for other families; they have two tarefas of manioc, which they process for themselves, selling a couple of sacks “from time to time.” Other than that, in 2005 they sold two sacks of corn and some firewood (see below) and receive a small bolsa escola. She said they live off their land, growing food for consumption.

Nininho and his wife, Aliene, own the second casa de farinha. His father helped them finance its construction. They go to the feira in Serrinha every Saturday and sell two to four sacks of farinha there each week (this is income of approximately R$50-100 per week, or around R$3750 per year). A truck from another nearby settlement transports them, charging R$5 per person and R$2.50 per sack. Nininho is also a bricklayer and painter, and earns money on jobs outside the settlement.

The third casa de farinha is owned by Sebatião. He rents it to other settlers, receiving 10 liters of farinha from every 80 liter sack processed there. He stated that the establishing of a new casa de farinha owned by the community would not affect him as he has 9 tarefas of manioc of his own and will continue to use his own facility to process it. In 2005 he sold more than 100 sacks of farinha at prices ranging up to R$36/sack.

Antonio Sales earned in 2005 approximately R$3000 from the sale of farinha. Four other farmers earned R$600-700 each. Jacira stated that her family had five harvests of manioc in the last four years, and João Rocha and Del indicated they sell it whenever they need to. None of the other families reported significant sales.

There were minor amounts of other produce sold, including corn and mangaba (a native fruit that grows wild in the fields), but neither in economically significant

423 When I visited Nininho’s casa de farinha a group of women were cleaning manioc in preparation for making flour (see Figures VI-6-F and Vi-6-G).
quantities. Lourival indicated that he usually plants watermelon for sale, but did not do so in 2005 due to the drought; he said that his brother did plant and lost 60% of his crop, and that the rest was dwarfed. Three families reported gathering and selling lenha – firewood used in cooking stoves; they sell it at R$6 per meter to trucks that pick it up and take it into town.

Almost all the families grew vegetables for family consumption, including beans, corn, cowpeas, squash, onions, watermelon, and various herbs. Three families had passion fruit (ranging from 30 to 100 plants). Most families had fruit on their house lots – often 20 trees or more; the varieties included mango, acerola, banana, coconut, orange, pinha, graviola, jack-fruit, sugar cane, seringuela, guava, papaya, coffee, castor oil plants, avocados, lemon, and – in one case – grapes.

Ten families raise chickens – most in fairly small quantities, but Eugenia has 160 free range chickens; she told us that they were 2-5 months old, and start laying when they are 6 months old. Lourival had plans to buy 200 chicks to start seriously raising chickens. One family has 5 ducks. Five families have 1-2 pigs each, five families have horses or mules and three have donkeys (three families have horse or donkey carts).

Six families received government pensions: four retirement pensions and two pensions for retarded children. Nine families received bolsa família.

Sebastião works as a driver for the município of Serrinha, earning R$600/month. Marivaldo’s wife works as a teacher in Serrinha (she has had that job 23 years). Lourival works as a bricklayer in Biritinga and Serrinha, earning R$25-30/day; he often spends the week away from home. His daughter will be teaching
night school in the settlement and will earn a minimum wage (approximately R$350/month). Paulo also works as a bricklayer. Jacira’s husband works as a daily laborer a few days a month earning R$15-20/day; Jane told us that her husband also works at times as a daily laborer, but earns only $R10/day. Firmino’s daughter works in Serrinha as manager in a store; she sends money to help care for her son, who lives with his grandparents in the settlement.

Juraci noted the need for economic activity to provide employment for women and young people: his specific suggestions include a factory to process cashew pulp—with a seal of quality, a honey factory, and a cooperative to sell their products at a good price. Aleine also mentioned the need for a factory of some type to provide employment for the women; she misses working and would participate in such an undertaking. She says that this idea has been discussed but not acted upon; as the cashew starts producing, possibilities may occur. José Rubens mentioned various possibilities, including a bolacho factory and a broom factory.

The Vice President of the Association, Lourival, mentioned a proposal to form a cooperative. However, the community viewed the group proposing it as being political. He noted that the people are not united with respect to this issue.

Sufficiency of Income: As mentioned above, agricultural production in this community is still at the beginning stages, and the community had experienced

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424 Family and/or community scale cashew-nut processing is feasible; the equipment is relatively inexpensive (and can sometimes be funded through grants); in programs carried out by GARD, a development agency, local processing increased family income R$350 or more a month. (B. King-Powers, former director of GARD). Juice can be extracted from the pseudo-fruit, and the pulp can be used preserves, candy, animal ration, or fertilizer.

425 See Case Study 2
drought. It is therefore not surprising that, when asked if income was sufficient, thirteen of the households interviewed replied in the negative, while only three replied “yes.”

“Income from the land is zero.” (Lourival)

“For the time being, no.” (Antonio Sales)

“No. But we’re beginning now. It should get better.” (Manoel)

“It’s nothing! It’s not [sufficient]! It doesn’t even serve to buy medicine.”

(Isidora)

Settlers almost all took the question to apply to farm income. Three families mentioned that they live off of government pensions, and José Rubens said they live on his salary as a driver in Serrinha.

The families that said that they have sufficient income include Nininho and Aliene (they own one of the casas de farinha and sell 2-4 sacks of farinha a week, and he supplements his income working jobs as a bricklayer and painter), Sebastião (he also owns a casa de farinha and has nine tarefas of manioc), and João Rocha and Del, who have opted to live on the farm lot and have an approach which is closer to subsistence farming than other settlers.426

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426 “He who works has enough to eat.” (João Rocha)
**Settler Attitudes:**

**Satisfaction:** The months before our visit saw two major victories for the community – the opening of the well in August and the arrival of electric energy on December 31. It is therefore not surprising that the overwhelming majority of settlers said that they would not sell or trade their lots:

“It’s going well – the difficult phase has already passed” (Leso)

“No – we’d have to do everything over again [somewhere else]” (Jane)

“We already suffered here. On the outside, the money would just come to an end. We’ll never leave.” (Jair)

“I like it here – I came to stay.” (Firmino)

“We worked before but never got any place. Here it is ours.” (Aliene)

“[I ] got out of the slavery of working for others.” (Juraci)

Fifteen of the interviewees were emphatic in their statement that they would not trade or sell. Gracinha – a particularly articulate and intelligent woman, simply stated, “No [we won’t leave] – this is our victory!” and her husband added, “We will never leave – never!” Sebastião stated, “We already struggled so much – we will not
sell!!” However, one couple was more doubtful and said they would not sell because they were afraid. One woman said she would trade for another piece of land if she could live in the country – she did not like living in the agro-vila in close proximity to neighbors.  

Twenty-three of those interviewed felt that life was better or much better in the settlement than it had been previously. Zefina noted that it in the beginning it was worse, but now it is better due to having water.

Maria Elena, who with her husband previously had 3 tarefas of land in another location, was one of two who stated that things were worse in the settlement than previously. At her old home, she had water readily available and planted a garden, selling the produce.

Interestingly, the other person who said it was worse was Josi (Josenilda de Gois Bento). She is a dynamic 33-year-old woman, with a full high school education, a titleholder and an acknowledged leader in the community. She is committed to the community and has no intention of leaving. But she admits she came to the community reluctantly because her husband really wanted to – he loves it there.

Future: Interviewees were almost unanimously optimistic about the future. Several mentioned expectations of increased production and income – especially from

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427 We encountered this attitude occasionally in other settlements, and have seen it in other regions where we worked. In certain rural areas it is customary for people to live fairly far apart, and some people find village life, even in very small villages, not to their liking.

428 Gracinha, whose husband previously worked ½ tarefa of his father-in-law’s land, stated: “How was I to raise five children on ½ tarefa of land? Where would they work? God helped this to happen. It is a dream come true.”

429 See note 528. Brenda King-Powers, who interviewed Josi and talked with her at depth, believes that Josi, who is better educated and better off financially than the other women in the settlement, at times feels isolated, especially when her husband travels to São Paulo to take jobs that supplement family income (he is a trained metallurgical technician).
cashew and honey. Others foresaw processing activities of various kinds (as discussed above) that will provide income and jobs. Juraci sees projects for additional land settlements surrounding them, bringing life and economic growth to the region.

There are differences with respect to their visions of the future of their children. Maria Elena wants her children to study and move to the city – she mentioned São Paulo, Salvador, Feira de Santana. Aleine also said she wants her children to graduate and get jobs. Julia and João Carlos hope their children will be doctors, lawyers, or teachers. But Gracinha is pleased that her seventeen year old daughter is almost engaged to a young man from the settlement and that they will be working on the land. Jailson, the sixteen year old son of João Rocha and Del, said that he wants to work with his father in agriculture. Nininho says that his eldest son (now 12) wants to be a cowhand.

**Socio-Political Awareness:** From our brief survey, the level of socio-political awareness was somewhat higher in Boa Vista-Biritinga than in some other communities. While many answers were typical of what would be expected from an average rural person in the Northeast – based largely on current television opinion – others were quite insightful.

Most observers identified Lula and/or the Federal Government as helping rural workers. Jurandi, a Worker’s Party activist, also noted the positive role of former Brazilian President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (from the PSDB), under whose administration the *Cédula da Terra* program began. Others mentioned, among those who help the rural worker, the Worker’s Party (8 mentions), CDA and/or the *Cédula*


da Terra Program (5), the Rural Workers Union (2), and the World Bank (2). Cited as against the interests of the rural worker were politicians and/or parties who oppose Lula (7), big business (5), and the local prefeitura (2). José Rubens, when asked who was against the interests of the rural worker, responded “500 years of the elite.” He also discussed briefly the need for land distribution, and cited the law of sesmaria.

Although recent television had shown images of MST violence that alienated a substantial portion of Brazilian people, including Worker’s Party activists such as Josi, responses to the MST among those interviewed were varied and nuanced. Three interviewees mentioned that the MST essentially generated the demand for land reform that led to the Cédula da Terra program.

“[I’m] in favor of the struggle for land, against invasion and violence. But without [the MST], we wouldn’t have entered here into the land.” (Juraci)

Jacira, who spent two years in an MST camp before coming to the settlement, and who still volunteers with the MST, stated: “They do so many good things – [the experience] gave me courage to stay on the land.” Other interesting comments:

“[MST] has good ideas in principal, but leads people at times into violence and death.” (Jane)

430 She stated that she was startled/afraid when she saw the MST violence on TV and that they were invading land that had owners, which she felt was not acceptable.
“Some parts are good, others no. Invading land is okay, but it has to be thought through more carefully.” (Antonio Sales)

“People can organize these days [as opposed to in the past] – they can now organize and do this legally.” (Gracinha)

“The Movement is good. There are people who enter it who create trouble... but the movement itself is great (ótimo)” (Firmino)

With respect to politics, twenty-eight of the interviewees voted for Lula, and thirty-one intended to vote for him in the next election. Eleven interviewees were affiliated with a party – all of them the Workers’ Party (PT), and two others said they voted mostly for the PT.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:**

Boa Vista – Biritinga had a difficult beginning marked by high attrition, struggles for leadership, water shortages, and lack of infrastructure. It has the lowest level of agricultural production of the settlements studied.

However, there are indications that the settlement may have come through these difficulties and may be headed toward a high level of sustainability. Most of the families who do not really want to farm have left the community, to be replaced by those who do. The dynamic leader who helped start the community, but who may have been a barrier to its growth, has moved on. 2005 was a banner year for
infrastructure – with the community finally receiving both electricity and water, as well as a school building. And the cashew trees that are to provide the economic base for community agriculture are maturing and should soon be producing significant income.

Although settlers will undoubtedly continue to plant manioc and to have sidelines such as bees and bananas, the planned economic basis of the community is essentially a cashew monoculture. As mentioned elsewhere, monoculture is almost never desirable. It leaves crops more vulnerable to diseases, and proves more devastating to the community when those diseases occur. However, the cashew is a hardy plant, native to the Brazilian Northeast, more resistant to drought and disease than most.

Another drawback in monoculture is that it exposes growers to the impact of international markets – in this case, the market for cashew nuts. This is a real problem, but can be dealt with in part if the community goes beyond simply growing cashews and gets into processing them. Equipment for community based cashew nut processing is relatively inexpensive, and it can add R$350 or more to monthly family income. In periods of low prices, it can also facilitate the storage of nuts in expectation of future increasing prices.

In addition to the nut (which is the true cashew fruit), cashew produces a pseudo-fruit or pulp which can be processed into juices or sweets, or used in a number of other manners, such as animal ration and fertilizer. With proper planning and investment, the settlement could develop a series of processing activities that would both increase income and provide jobs.
The Association has shown an ability to resolve issues creatively. This creativity was illustrated in the decision resulting in the private administration – but continued collective ownership – of the collective cashew trees. Steering a course between collectivization and privatization, the Association removed a major source of dissension (participation in collective work days) while assuring that income would continue to be available to make land payments.

It is hoped, as Manoel suggested, that with this issue behind them, the Association will be free to focus on larger objectives – such as the cashew processing facilities mentioned above. This will require leadership, vision, and a certain unity of purpose. Our interviews indicate that the potential is present, if not yet fully tapped.

Yet another hopeful sign is the high ecological awareness of the community. This is illustrated not only by the unusually high value placed on ecological areas, but by the large number of organic farmers – a factor which, in itself, increases the likelihood of sustainability.

Finally, the inclusion of women and worker members, as active participants in the Association, increases the diversity and number of potential contributors. It also increases the sense of ownership of these groups of community residents in the activities of the Association and the settlement.  

431 When working with small landless workers and small farmers in Tocantins, we discovered that families in which both spouses were active were far more likely to stay on the land than were families in which only one spouse was active.
Figures VI-6-F and VI-6-G. Settlers in one of the *casas da fainha* in the Boa Vista (Biritínga) settlement, engaged in mutual-help (*mutirão*) manioc processing.
Case Study 7

Name of Settlement: **Fazenda Veneza** (Assoc. Produtores Rurais da Fazenda Veneza)

Families in Settlement: 30

Location: Municipio – Euclides da Cunha

Area: 1,004.79 ha.

Contract Date: October 4, 2002

Dates Visited: March 18 & 20, 2006

Number Interviewed - Households: 18  Individuals: 28

Family size (persons): 1-3/1; 4-6/15; 7-9/2

Persons Interviewed: 16 men, 11 women, 1 youth (male 18 years old).

Ages: -20/1; 20-29/6; 30-39/12; 40-49/1; 50-59/3; 60+/5

Schooling: 0-2/10; 3-5/9; 6-8/5; 9-10/1; HS complete/1

Note: Generally the women have more education than the men. Among wives not present at the interviews, one has a university education and is doing post-grad work, one has a normal school diploma and is doing university; and one is a former teacher with an 8th grade education.

Technical Assistance: Maria Djalma Andrade de Abreu of NATE (Núcleo de Assistência Técnica Agropecuária Ltda.)

**Geography:** The settlement is located 30 km. northeast of the municipal seat (19 km. of good paved road, 11 of good dirt road). The area is semi-arid and relatively flat. The total area is 1004.79 has. Each of the families has a dwelling lot in the agro-vila (20 x
35m) and a farm/grazing lot of 15 has. The collective area is 344.97 ha., and the ecological reserve is 200.96 ha.

Houses in the agro-vila are located on four dirt streets around a very large rectangular central open area (100 x 280m). Each house faces the open area. The open area contains a soccer field and sites for construction of a school and a health post. The Association headquarters – community center is located on a corner lot, kitty corner to the northeast from the open area. The farm lots are located to the east of the agro-vila, the collective land immediately to the west, and the ecological area at the far western extremity of the settlement.

**Climate:** Vila-Canaã is located in the semi-arid region, and is the most arid of the settlements we studied. The native growth is *caatinga.*

**History:** Massacará, a village (*povoado*) dating from the 17th Century, was the original seat of the present município of Euclides da Cunha. In the early 1990s, Massacará and the area surrounding it were declared to belong to the Caimbé Indians; the land was to be marked (*demarcado*) as an Indian reservation and the non-Indian population removed. Local resistance and bureaucracy resulted in delays, but in 1999 this was carried out. Non-Indian residents were indemnified by the state for land (if they were landowners) and improvements (both landowners and others), and many moved to the town of Euclides da Cunha.

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432 According to interviewees, following generations of intermarriage, the distinction between Indians and non-Indians was based on lists maintained by the Indian bureau (FUNAI) and was somewhat arbitrary. Some respondents contended that the list was based upon those who had signed up for FUNAI benefits some time in the 1980s. There seem to have been families in which one brother was a registered Indian and another was not.
Maps V-7-A and V-7-B. Above: Fazenda Veneza agro-vila. Below: full plant of settlement, showing the agro-vila (center south), with agricultural fields to the east, communal lands to the west, and the ecological reserve at the far western edge.
Figures VI-7-A and VI-7-B. Settler homes in Fazenda Veneza.
In 1997, João de Deus de Carvalho (Janjão), a non-Indian resident of Massacará, formed an association of residents dwelling in Massacará who wanted to find alternative land. The original association had approximately 60 households. João and most of the others were moved to Euclides da Cunha in 1999. They became aware (through television and radio) of the Cedula da Terra program and began the process. Not all the members of that association qualified for the program, and some of those who did decided not to remain in the settlement. Twenty of the present settlers came from the original association (which changed its name to Fazenda Veneza after they purchased the land); the others were friends and relatives, except for Francisco Dias, who was the watchman on the property for the original owner and who received a lot.

The owner of the land that they are on was a mechanic (garage owner). The land had been rented out to a neighboring farmer but was, as one settler (Edeon) put it, “semi abandoned.” The owner sold them 749.5 ha. at the rate negotiated with the government, then included the remainder (255.29 ha) at no charge.

Several of the settlers came and saw the land before it was purchased. After purchase, as in other settlements, the men came first and began work. Most kept their families in Euclides da Cunha until their houses were built.

The settlement was named Veneza (Venice) because the settlers had heard of Venice, Italy, and liked the name.

**Demography:** Almost all the original settlement dwellers were families who were removed from Massacará during the demarcation process. Two of the families interviewed include registered Caimbé Indians who could have remained in Massacará
but elected not to. Two families interviewed, in both cases not original settlers, were formerly small landholders from an area close to but not included in the demarcation zone.

All families interviewed were of rural origin. The great majority had been small landholders previously, although one had been a sharecropper, one had worked on land belonging to family, one was a rural day laborer and bricklayer, and one simply described himself as an agricultural worker.433

**Race/Ethnicity:** White, Native American, Afro-Brazilian

**Gender:** Six of the thirty titleholders are women (we interviewed three of these)

**Religion:** Virtually the entire population of the settlement is Catholic. (One interviewee told us his wife is Assembly of God.) However there is no chapel in the settlement area; few of the participants listed themselves as active in church, and those few put their participation at a low level. Two young men (18 & 21 yrs old) from the same family mentioned that they would like to build a chapel, and one other couple mentioned spontaneously that a chapel would be something they would like to see to better the community in the future. One interviewee mentioned that the Catholics would like the priest from Euclides da Cunha to visit them, but that he has not been responsive.

**Age:** Average age of settlers is about 35 years old. The technical advisor, Maria Djalma, believed this to be one factor that makes Veneza a successful community.

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433 This interviewee, Adenor da Silva, also claimed to be a retired gunman, a claim confirmed by his neighbors.
Twelve of the twenty-eight people we interviewed were in their thirties, and six in their late twenties.

**Attrition:** 14 of the 18 families we interviewed were original settlers. The remainder took over vacancies – three of them fairly early (2002) and the fourth in 2003. None of the late comers had to pay indemnifications to prior settlers.

**Education:** A municipal primary school with 60 students operates in the Association headquarters pending construction of a school. There is one teacher (with one aide) who teaches 1-2 grade in the morning and 3-4 in the afternoon. She is from the community and holds a teaching degree from UNEB (a regional state university). Interviewees almost unanimously stated that the teacher is good but that the facilities are not (we observed the school in session and agree that the room in the Association headquarters is barely adequate). Several interviewees also mentioned a shortage of books.

Twenty middle and high students study in Euclides da Cunha; the municipal government provides transportation. Respondents felt the schools there are good, but that the transportation system is difficult. Only one couple (Raimundo and Monalisa) cited studies/schools as a major worry.

**Health:** Interviewees felt that health care is inadequate. There is no health agent at the settlement. Settlers have to travel 30 kms into Euclides da Cunha to get medical care. One child died for lack of medical care. One respondent injured his leg and had to walk eleven kms to the highway to get transportation into town. Two interviewees cited health care issues as their major worries.
Figures VI-7-C and VI-7-D. Students in temporary classroom located in the Fazenda Veneza Association headquarters (top picture is an outside view of the headquarters).
Figures VI-7-E and VI-7-F. Above: Association tractor and transportable water tank. Below: Titleholder Duvalina Rodrigues da Sousa in her donkey cart.
**Water:** The Association owns an artesian well with capacity for 1500 liters/hour, and a 3500 liter transportable water tank.

At the time of our visit, the community was waiting for better quality water to be piped in from Monte Alegre, approximately 100 km. distance. This project was underwritten by CAR, part of the same project designed to provide water to Vila Canaã. The piped in water would be used for drinking.

Only one interviewee cited water, per se, as a major worry. However, many interviewees noted the profound influence of climate – especially rain – on the settlement (see below). The water being brought in by CAR will not resolve the issue of irrigation needed for crops. Interviewees noted that, in their agricultural fields, they still depend on water brought from their own well – a distance of up to four kilometers. In addition to the Association transportable tank, some settlers carry water to their in barrels in their two-wheeled horse carts – a laborious process.

**Association and Collective Area:** Maria Djalma, the technical advisor, informed us that the Veneza association is the strongest she has seen, and that it is one of the few that she believes can fulfill the goal of undertaking complete payment for the land. When we arrived at the settlement, we were favorably impressed by the good quality of the Association building, which is used in part as a temporary school. Four men from the settlement were constructing a galpão (covered area) for keeping the Association tractor, tools, etc. We learned that the men were being paid for their work – and that, indeed, the Association has sufficient income to pay settlement men for their work at $R14/day – a significant source of income for some of the families.
Claudio Carvalho, the treasurer, told us that the Association has savings. If a family is paid up on their Association dues (R$2/month), the Association will cover medical costs; when the son of one settler had to be taken to Salvador for health treatment, the Association paid. The Association contributed R$700 to the settlement Christmas party, and sponsors parties when there are soccer games.

The Association owns a tractor. The tractor works out for R$100 a day for non-members (this was said to be market price) and R$80 a day for members. There are three tractor drivers – all from the settlement; a driver earns 20% of the day’s take.

The Association has 65 ha. of pasture land, 20 ha. of palmas, a machine that processes palmas for animal feed, and a corral with a 50,000 liter water tank. The Association flock is 430 goats and 70 sheep. Annual production per year is 150 head. Two men from the settlement are designated to care for the flock. They do not receive a wage, but are compensated in the traditional manner – for every three kids born, they keep one.

Much of the Association’s income is due to the settlement’s 90 ha. of sisal, of which are allocated to the collective area. The Association owns a machine for extracting fiber from sisal (decoration) – the residue is processed as feed for goats. A 2005 report (NATE) estimates the potential annual output of sisal fiber from the community at 3500 kilos per ha, or 315,000 kilos, with a market value of R$0.80 per kilo, for an estimated income of R$252,000, of which R$100,000 would be direct Association income. Several months prior to our visit, a fire broke out in the collective sisal and 30

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434 According to SINDIFIBRAS – the union of vegetable fiber producers in Bahia, Brazil in 2006 supplied 150 tons of sisal fiber (valued at US$130 million), approximately 42% of world production. 90% of the fiber produced in Brazil comes from the State of Bahia. (International Fiber Journal – February 2006)
tarefas$^{435}$ (26% of the collective sisal) burned. The loss in value to the settlement was estimated at R$30,000. Despite this loss, the remaining sisal is considerable and provides income to the Association.

Leadership in the Association is primarily male. One member of the Fiscal Counsel (Marilú) and the Second Treasurer (Monalisa) are women, both are titleholders. Duvalina, a titleholder who runs her lot with her two sons (21 and 18), stated that she enjoys participating in meetings. Other women mentioned participating in meetings of mothers for the school, and in a group of artisans organized by the Association. We briefly discussed with the community the legality of non-titleholder spouses (mostly women) voting and/or holding office in the Association.

When asked about their participation in the Association, unlike other settlements, most interviewees discussed participation in the work days rather than at meetings. Collective work is performed every Friday morning (8-11 a.m.) and participation is strong. We heard almost no complaints about collective work$^{436}$ – on the contrary, many interviewees cited collective work as a unifying factor, and as something they enjoyed.

Discussions over issues do exist. Several women organized a petition to have the school constructed in the plaza area (as originally proposed in the agro-vila plan). They presented this to the meeting, but a decision was reached – to which the women agreed – that it would be better to construct the school in another location.

\[435\text{ We were informed in Veneza that a tarefa is approximately 3.025 m}^2, 	ext{ a measure closer to the Sergipe tarefa (3.052 m}^2\text{) than to that typically associated with Bahia (4.356 m}^2\text{). The calculation in Veneza is: 1 palmo = 22 cm, 10 palmos = 1 vara, 25 varas = 1 tarefa (in other areas of Bahia, 30 varas = 1 tarefa).}\]

\[436\text{ The only significant criticism came from José Tancredo, who felt that the work days were not used as effectively as they could be. He stated that, as a result, some palma was lost and the project of using sisal residue for ration was delayed.}\]
Ecological Area: The ecological reserve is a single area of 200.96 has. (the obligatory 20%) at the western end of the settlement. Settlers had few comments about the ecological area. One interviewee told us that the settlers use the reserve for grazing.

Economy:

Distinguishing Factors: Veneza is the most arid community we visited. It is the only community we studied in which livestock raising is the most important activity. The role played by sisal is also unique.

Land: Each family’s portion of the land cost is R$110 per year, paid in September. There is a grace period of 3 years, followed by payment over a 17 year period (the first payment was made in September, 2005). The settlers expressed no worry about land payments, stating that the income from the Association, especially the sisal, should pay the land costs.437

When asked if the land is fertile, eleven of the eighteen households interviewed answered “yes.” Two others remarked that the land is good when it rains, but that it is weak when dry. José Tancredo stated that the land is the best in that part of the município. Dalvina modified her answer by saying that it is good for sisal and grazing. Delço, however, feels the land is “not the best” – that it is tired and overworked. However, Edeon stated that, although the son of the former owner did work the land, the land has lain fallow sufficiently to recover.

Twelve of the households stated they do not use fertilizer. However, the president of the Association, Erico, informed us that virtually all of the families use animal manure to nurture their palma. José Tancredo stated that beans and corn need fertilizer to grow;

437 In a separate interview, Maria Djalma, the technical assistant, concurred with this opinion.
he and two others stated that they use natural fertilizer only. Only one farmer stated that he currently uses chemical fertilizer, and one other (Claudio) stated that he had used chemical fertilizer in the past but now uses goat manure. Only three of the farmers interviewed use chemical pesticides, and two of these said they use them only to control ants. Although these factors make most of the settlers in Veneza de facto organic farmers, there did not seem to be as yet a strong sense of consciously opting for organic farming, as there was among other farmers, most notably many in Nova Lusitânia and Biritinga.

**Financing:** All of the families interviewed participated in Pronaf A financing. Each family had the right to a subsidized loan in the amount of R$15,000, drawn down in three parcels:

1st parcel (15 March 2005) – R$6285 for clearing land and fencing

2nd parcel (June 2005) – R$4788 for planting of 1 ha. of palma, 2 ha. of sisal

(planted jointly with grass for grazing)

3rd parcel (March 2006) – R$2350 for purchase of 20 nannies or ewes and 1 billy or ram [it was noted that, due to delays in issuing the parcel, it was received after the rainy season began and the price of goats had gone up, and would probably not be sufficient for the number indicated]

remainder – R$1577 for technical assistance.

The loan is repayable over seven years at R$1238 per annum, including a 46.5% rebate for timely repayment of installments. The loan is for preparation of 21 tarefas of soil,

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438 In cases where repayment has not been possible due to valid factors – e.g., weather – settlements have been able to renegotiate the timeliness of payments.
fencing, planting of 1 hectare of palma and 2 has. of sisal, construction of a covered corral and drinking facility (for goats).

Three of the farmers, and the wife of a fourth, stated that repayment of PRONAF is one of their chief worries. Edeon noted that he will have to sell sheep in order to make the payment. Claudio said that fifteen of the families will have problems repaying PRONAF.

Production and Income: Livestock raising is the chief activity in Veneza, although economically sisal production is the most important mainstay of the community.

Goat and sheep raising are of primary importance. Sixteen of the eighteen families interviewed have goats: Janjão has 140 goats, José Tancredo has 80, Raimundinho has 50, and two other families have 40 each. Seven families have ten or less. Fifteen of the families keep sheep (which are raised for their meat – the climate is not adequate for wool), the largest herds being around 30. Delço buys and sells goats both at the feira and to his neighbors.

Eríco sells one goat a month at R$5/kg. Rogerio sells 30 head a year. Adenor has sold 4 goats over a 2 year period at R$70 each. José Carlos sells 4-5 goats a year at R$4.50-5 per kg.

Raimundinho is one of two trained goat herders for the Association. As noted above, the herders are not paid for their work but receive one kid for each three born.

Seven families have beef cattle – the largest herd (belonging to Janjão) being 11 head, but most around five or six. Two other families keep cows. Only two raise pigs. Most families have chickens – usually around 11-15, although one family has 60.
Eight families have a horse, donkey or mule. Four settlers have animal-drawn plows.

Fifteen families planted grass (*capim*) for grazing, ranging in area from 4 to 21 *tarefas*. Fifteen families raise *palma* – a cactus usually used for animal feed (it can be consumed by humans when necessary); fourteen of the families had 3 *tarefas* or less, although Janjão and Irineide had 4 *tarefas*. Many of the families have hog plum (*umbu*) – a small, edible fruit that grows wild in the fields, which most also use for animal feed.

Sisal is the most important crop. As noted above, a 2005 NATE report estimated potential sisal sales for the settlement as a whole at R$252,000, of which approximately R$100,000 was from collective lands. The remainder, processed by the Association, is from the family lots. Allowing 20-30% for processing, this should result in family income from sisal averaging between R$3500 – 4000 a year.

However, these are projections for the future. Only one interviewee – José Tancredo – reported significant personal income (R$1000) from sisal in 2005, although several mentioned the importance of the collective sisal crop.

Sixteen families interviewed grew sisal, most of it planted after the purchase of the land, although (in addition to the collective sisal) two interviewees – Francisco Dias (who lived on the land prior to the purchase) and José Carlos – had some older sisal. Most interviewees had approximately six *tarefas* of sisal, but others had considerably more: Francisco Dias (30 *tarefas*), José Carlos (28), Getulio (16), and two (Adenor and Renán) had none.

Eleven families raised corn interspersed with black beans in areas ranging from two to seven *tarefas*. Two families raised corn alone. Janjão stated that he plants bean
and corn only for consumption, and this seems to be the case for a number of families. However, some sell their excess production.

Getulio, for instance, harvested fifteen sacks of beans, and sold seven in town at $R45 each. He also sold 29 “colhidas” of corn (20 ears) at R$16 each. Rogerio harvests 20 sacks of beans a year, and sells half of them. Telço sells 30% of what he produces (bean & corn). José Tancredo sold 5 sacks of beans @ R40 and 10 sacks of corn @ 16. Raimundinho also said that he sells beans, but did not indicate the quantity.

The only settler who reported more than a few hundred reais from bean sales was Edeon. He reported that he sold 40 sacks of black beans in 2004 at R$55-60 each, revenue in excess of R$2200.

Delço mentioned that he could rent land outside of the settlement area for planting beans at R$100 per tarefa. He was apparently considering doing so. He owns a Chevrolet pickup, which provides him with greater mobility than most settlers. He told us that his father owns a 500 ha. fazenda 30 km east of Veneza.

Seven families interviewed had small plantings (<3 tarefas) of vegetables – squash, manioc, cord beans, sweet potatoes, aipi cassava. One family had 14 tarefas. Two families had small crops of castor oil plants (mamona). Delço tried planting castor oil, but was unsuccessful.

On their house lots, settlers had planted fruit trees (guava, açerola, orange, passion fruit, etc.), cotton, and small quantities of vegetables.

Non-farm income can also be important. Telço’s household is an example. Although he is sixty-four, he does not yet receive a retirement pension. He hires out as a day-worker approximately seven days a month, earning R$14/day. His wife is a
luncheon assistant (merendeira) at the school, earning a minimum salary (approximately R$300). Their 18 year old son also works half days as a day laborer, and studies the other half. The family earns an additional R$25/month selling homemade sweets. The family has 20 goats, a donkey, 2 ha. of sisal, 12 tarefas of grazing land, four tarefas of corn, and three of palma.

Similarly, Walter, who is fifty-nine, is trying to get a retirement pension, but there is a long waiting list. He earns about R$20/month selling tanks of gas for cooking. His wife, Dalva, sews and sends clothes to her daughter in São Paulo to sell. Walter works as a daily laborer when he can, sells beans, and sells livestock when necessary. The family has over 60 goats and sheep, 8 beef cattle, 15 chickens, a donkey and cart, 5 tarefas co-planted with beans and corn, 2 ha. of sisal, 1 ha. of palma, and 20 tarefas of grazing land (he also uses the ecological reserve for grazing).

In addition to Walter, Telço, and Telço’s son, two other men mentioned working as day-laborers (at R$14/day) as a significant source of income. João Rodrigues, the 21-year-old son of settlers, earns somewhat less (R$10-12/day) driving the Association tractor.

Delço’s wife is a teacher’s aide in the school, earning a minimum salary. She is studying for her undergraduate degree at the university branch in Euclides da Cunha.

Two interviewees receive old-age pensions. Eight of the families interviewed, and five others in the settlement, receive the bolsa escola/familia, ranging between R$65 and R$95/month. One family had a $15 bolsa that was discontinued and another family had registered for the bolsa and was waiting.
Sufficiency of income: When asked whether family income was sufficient, only one interviewee responded “yes.” Five families answered “no.” Most indicated that income is barely sufficient.

“It has to be [sufficient]” (“tem que dar”) - (Delço)

“[It’s] on the edge (meu balançado). There are tight weeks. At times [paid] work is lacking [since] the sisal work stopped.” (Raimundo)

“It is more tight than tranquil” (“Mais apertada do que sossegada”) (Francisco & Rosenilde)

Several interviewees mentioned that they were waiting for the land to produce. José Tancredo stated that the land currently creates expenses, not income. Two families mentioned that they were surviving based on the R$95/month they receive from bolsa escola. An underlying sense of hope was voiced by Rogerio, who – when asked if income is sufficient - answered, “not yet.”

Settler Attitudes:

Satisfaction: Partially, perhaps, because it is the newest of the communities studied, settler enthusiasm in Veneza was among the highest we encountered. Of 27 settlers interviewed, twenty-four were definite in saying that they would not trade or sell their land. One woman said she would leave if she could find a better place, and one
couple said they wouldn’t sell, but would trade for a lot in another location if it were a
good one. Twenty respondents stated that life is better in the settlement than it was
before, and for eight of these it is “much better.”

“In the beginning it was difficult… there wasn’t either electricity or water. In
December [2005] they opened a new well.” (Irineide)

“Some things are better. There we had more peace – we had water. What is
better here is that we have a chance to have livestock – there we had less than one
tarefa [of land]” (Inés)

“Before we had water but we didn’t have land, we had meat but we didn’t have
work.” (Edeon)

Future: The interviewees were overwhelmingly optimistic about the future. Most
envisioned increased livestock and sisal production. Several mentioned that results will
depend upon their work.

“We will produce more. The Association will have good income. We have to
work to move things forward. It’s not easy.” (Claudio)

“We are gaining experience.” (Edeon)
In this, the most arid of the communities studied, there is an intense awareness of climate:

"[Things will be] 100% better – if God sends rain." (Walter)

"If there is no drought, it will be better – if there is, it will be worse.” (Adenor)

"If it rains, it will be better – everything depends on rain.” (Irineide)

Attitudes toward the land as the future of their families varied. Edeon stated that in five years his family hopes to have a house in town – one son, who likes the land, will stay there. Raimundo wants his children to study and grow – but to really know the land; he doesn’t want them to go to the city, but to grow on the land. José Tancredo wants to increase his landholdings – buy more land for the children that are with him and to enable his older children to return from São Paulo.

But Francisco Dias feels that “The young people won’t stay.” Eighteen-year-old Douglas wants to become more qualified as a mechanic and have his own garage in ten years. Irineide wants her children to graduate from school and seek “a better life, other fields of work.”

**Socio-Political Awareness:** In answer to the questions as to who is for or against the rural worker, most interviewees had general answers or none at all. Cited in favor of the rural worker were Lula (6), the Federal Government (3), Maria Djalma (3), and CDA/CAR (2). As against the rural worker, the responses included nobody/don’t know
big landowners (2) – although Edeon clarified that it was only big landowners who were politicians. He also felt that people from southern Brazil, who do not respect the Northeast, represented a barrier. And Janjão mentioned politicians who pretend to be in favor of land reform but who in practice are against it.

On a highly practical note, Edeon stated that the main force working against the rural workers was the bank, which wasn’t dispersing loans in a timely manner. Similarly, Erico felt that lack of available land and financing were the biggest barrier to the rural worker.

Attitudes toward the MST varied. Walter noted that there is an MST invasion not far from them – Fazenda Juá – where twenty to thirty families had been for the last five years: “I think it’s wrong to invade. I wouldn’t… but the guys want to work.” Similarly Renán stated that he doesn’t favor invasion, but that “There are many who want land and can’t get it through agrarian reform – [so they] invade.”

Perhaps exposure to a nearby MST settlement was one factor that made settler opinions toward the MST more nuanced than in some other settlements. However, some interviewees seemed to gain their information about the MST primarily from television. Edeon stated that this explicitly in his case. He also had sympathy with the workers: “[It’s] a way of demanding rights.” But he felt that a great number of them lost out in the face of resistance from landowners and gunmen.

Raimundo Morães felt that “No one knows who is right.” He respected the MST’s struggle, but said that it is sad when workers are killed.
Other comments included:

“We see ugly things – invasion. It is better to negotiate.” (Delço)

“There are people who need land. [The MST] helps.” (Duvalina)

“[We are] against. It provokes tragedy. [They should] search for a program similar to the Cédula da Terra.” (Adenor & Raimunda)

“It’s good and bad at the same time. It’s wrong to break things as they have been doing.” (Telço)

“The struggle is right – to achieve agrarian reform. The manner in which they [carry out the] struggle is wrong.” (Raimundo & Monalisa)

“The Movement in itself is good. Certain actions are not good. Invasions, for example.” (Getulio)

“Some [participants of MST] want agrarian reform. Others only want…[to create] confusion.” (Janjão)

With respect to politics, as in all the settlements, the interviewees were largely supporters of Lula. Eighteen interviewees had supported Lula in the first round of elections, six Ciro Gomes, and two Serra (the Ciro Gomes votes split 4-2 in favor of Lula in the second round). Sixteen said they would support Lula in the upcoming election, three Alkmin, and three were undecided; one other woman said she would not support Lula but was undecided as to which other candidate to choose. Claudio stated that he
thought Alkmin and Lula were both good candidates, but that “Lula understands the rural Northeast.”

Only five interviewees identified with a party – four with the PFL and one (Telço) with the PT. However, three of those who identified with the PFL intended to vote for Lula.

**Strengths/Vulnerabilities/Recommendations:**

“I have never seen a project more sustainable than this one.” (Maria Djalma, interview, March 21, 2006)

Maria Djalma has served as technical advisor to several *Cédula da Terra* and *Crédito Fundiário* projects, and has visited many more. Her opinion carries weight.

During our interviews at Fazenda Nova, we noted a high degree of optimism. As noted above, it is necessary to take into account the relative newness of the settlement – when we visited, Fazenda Nova had been functioning for only four years and still had SIC funds available. Although the first land payment had successfully been made, the first repayment of PRONAF A funds had not yet fallen due. It is to be expected that some of the initial settler enthusiasm would still be in place.

Bolstering that enthusiasm, and giving it a more solid footing, was the enviable position of the Association with its substantial sisal crop. Association income, principally from sisal, allowed the Association to pay for medical expenses, contribute funds for settlement celebrations, and pay settlers (and their grown children) to work on Association projects. This last is particularly important for community morale, both
ameliorating the issue of who performs Association work and providing a source of income for families that are having difficulty with cash flow. Some of the other communities we visited provided such paid labor out of SIC funds but had to stop doing so once SIC was used up. It appears that the Veneza Association may be able to continue such payments on a permanent basis.

The accidental burning of a quarter of the Association sisal planting illustrated community resilience. This was a significant set back – the estimated annual cost to the community being in the range of R$30,000. But, although regretted, it by no means seemed to discourage or even seriously worry the community, which was already looking into replanting the burned area.

Also encouraging was that the Association had moved up the supply chain with respect to sisal. Having obtained the appropriate decortication equipment, the Association extracts the fiber which allowed it to obtain a larger percentage of the total final price.

The community is leveraging well the by-products of its produce. Animal manure and manioc residue are both used for fertilizer, and sisal residue for goat feed.

The settlement does, however, have vulnerabilities. The one most noted by the people themselves is climate. Sisal is well adapted to the semi-arid region and is highly drought resistant. A prolonged dry period, however, would affect the settlers’ ability to grow supplemental food crops. We recommend that the community consider using some of the rainwater cachement techniques developed for the semi-arid region by such NGOs as MOC and CAATINGA.
Drought could also impact stock raising. In this respect, the significant planting of *palma* – a drought-resistant cactus – serves as an excellent hedge. *Palma* has long been used in the Brazilian Northeast during dry periods to feed animals – and, in severe droughts, human beings. It also serves as a source of nutrients when fed to animals on a regular basis.

The danger of overgrazing needs to be considered. Though the use of animal ration developed from *palma*, sisal residue, and other local ingredients can extend the natural grazing capacity of the land, we saw no evidence that the community has considered placing limits on the size of herds. We are concerned that some settlers are grazing animals in the environmental reserve.

The *de facto* organic farming of the settlers is encouraging. Generally, chemical fertilizer is not used in growing sisal. However, with respect to other crops, settlers may be currently depending to a large degree on natural fertility, as the land was fallow for some time. There may be a growing need to use fertilizers in the future. We would encourage the settlers to seek orientation in organic methods and to more consciously pursue organic practices. Especially given the delicate balance of the semi-arid area in which Veneza is located, we would also recommend that the community seek to become aware of the value of the environmental reserve and of best ecological practices generally.

As with any commodity cash crop, sisal is subject to market forces beyond the control of settlement dwellers. Current international demand for sisal fiber is strong, but markets fluctuate. Given the limits of the semi-arid climate, the settlement has taken steps to diversify: having two principal activities, sisal and stock-raising. Beyond the
raising of food crops for consumption and small scale marketing, which the community has already undertaken, it is difficult to envision what further forms of diversification might be possible, but we believe that an effort should be made to examine all such possibilities thoroughly.

This being said, it is our opinion that Fazenda Veneza exhibits characteristics that make its sustainability over the next generation highly likely. The agricultural-economic base is relatively strong, leadership seems to be reasonably capable, the Association well organized, and there seems to be a high level of satisfaction and cohesiveness within the community.
CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Case Study Analysis

Is market-based land reform potentially an effective instrument to redistribute land to working farmers in a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable manner?

This is the primary research question posed by our study. Case study interviews and observations were structured to provide information that could lead us to predict whether there is a reasonable probability that the seven land settlements we visited will be sustainable. “Sustainable” was defined as follows: that the settlements be socially, environmentally, and economically viable for at least a generation (±25 years). Questions were based on the sustainability indicators discussed in Chapter II.

Even positive results from the seven settlements studied would not, of course, definitively answer the research question. As noted in Chapter II, we purposely selected communities that we believed to be relatively successful (see Tendler 1997). The success of these communities might be an anomaly; if only seven successful communities
resulted from the entire market-based land reform program in Brazil, the program itself would hardly be viable.

Case study research is seldom definitive; we agree with Seidman (1998, 111) that "Much of what you learn may be tentative, suggesting further research." The current study provides a strong basis for such further research. But our readings and interviews also suggest that the cases here presented represent a sampling of a larger number of reasonably successful MBLR settlements. Perhaps most important, our study – together with those of other researchers – may aid policy makers and program technicians in understanding what factors help or hinder land settlement viability.

Yin (1994, 102-103) notes that there are "few fixed formulas or cookbook recipes" for analyzing case study results, and that a good deal depends on the "investigator’s own style of rigorous thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations." At the same time, and in no way contradicting this rigor, the validity of the investigator’s intuition needs to be recognized, although it is still incumbent on the investigator to articulate as fully as feasible the criteria used by intuition in selecting threads of fact (Seidman, 109).

In the present case, rigorous thinking included careful design of the interview questions to respond to key research questions, and organization of the case study presentations. These were done in such a way as to allow relatively easy comparison of factors across the seven communities – demographics, water, income/production, etc. Features that particularly distinguished one community from others were also flagged.
Key Research Questions

In support of the primary research question, our Research Proposal set out six secondary research questions. Those questions are answered in summary form here based on the experience of the seven settlements studied.

What is the facility of the process (of acquiring land and establishing/maintaining the settlement) from the point of view of the purchasing farmers?

This question needs to be placed in the context of land reform in Brazil. The traditional methods for obtaining land in Brazil have been settler occupation (or invasion) of land and/or expropriation of land by the Government. Both of these methods usually take years to concretize. Occupation at times leads to violent conflict and is often frustrated where the owner resists physically and/or legally. Expropriation (except in cases where the owner wants the land to be expropriated) can be held up in the courts for years.

Against this background, the processes in the communities studied were comparatively less difficult and more certain, although they were in some cases longer and more difficult than they should have been.

In some communities, the difficulty was not so much in obtaining the land – a process that went fairly quickly – as in the following stages. Thus in Boa Vista III (helped by the considerable experience developed by CELANOR over the prior three

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439 For instance, Fernandes (2006, 7) states that “The land expropriation process can take as long as five years...” and that “Some settlements existing for more than ten years still have few public services available.”

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years) and in Moita Redonda (see below), the land acquisition process was relatively rapid. But release of funds – especially for housing construction – slowed settlement: in Boa Vista III, a year and a half lapsed between land purchase (June 8, 1998) and real settlement of the area (late 1999/early 2000); in Moita Redonda, the lapse between purchase (September 1998) and settlement (September 2001) was two years. In addition, the continued failure of state officials to register replacement families in Moita Redonda has undoubtedly been a factor in that community’s slow stabilization.

Even where delays in funding did not slow settlement, they often delayed investment essential to the long-range stabilization of the communities. This was especially the case with respect to the five communities in which fruit-raising is an essential element, as fruit groves require three-five years to begin commercial production. Thus, for instance, Moita Redonda was purchased in 1998, settled in September 2001, but PRONAF-A funding that permitted full-scale planting of fruit trees was only authorized in December of 2002 – allowing planting in early 2003. Full maturation of the orange groves would occur in 2008 – 10 years after purchase. A key element necessary for economic sustainability of the settlement was thus delayed up to four years beyond what might have been achieved.

The birth of Nova Lusitânia was very difficult, in part because it was one of the first four Cédula da Terra settlements in the state – all organized by CELANOR and all purchased on November 9, 1997. State officials and local technical advisors, as well as the farmers themselves, were learning by doing. These were the first agro-vilas – a concept promoted by CELANOR that subsequently became standard. Evaluation of the

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440 "In the beginning [1997-8], nobody knew how to do it.” Maria Djalma, interview March 25, 2006.
land purchased was not adequate. SIC and PRONAF funds were not available until 2002. Because technical assistance depended to a certain extent on such funding, technical assistance was suspended for awhile in 2000.

Moita Redona’s acquisition was facilitated through the influence of local politicians, although it still took almost two years between the time the group initiated the search for land and the purchase date. This political help may have come at a cost, partly because of inclusion of some inappropriate urban background settlers (all of whom have since left), and partly because continued intervention by local politicians in the community is disruptive. In addition, in the opinion of the local technician, the relative ease of obtaining the land may have caused some settlers to undervalue it.

In Vila Canaã, the acquisition negotiation was handled largely by the settlers themselves. It proceeded relatively rapidly, being completed in less than a year. Settlers did have to extra-legally contribute R$300 per family to meet the gap between the price the landholder wanted and what the government was willing to pay; this is not permitted in the program, but it worked and saved the deal from falling through. Additional funding (SIC) was held up for about eighteen months due to political issues, but was then released.

In Passos de Esperança, the acquisition process was more difficult. It took the association three years from the time it organized to locate and buy land. When the land was located, the government only authorized the association to buy 450 ha of the 500 ha available.
Boa Vista - Biritinga actually had its birth in Campolândia, a semi-successful land occupation; although in 2006 that occupation continued to exist, the settlers after eleven years had not won legal right to stay on the land. Settlers from Campolândia, frustrated by the lack of progress there, formed the core of the initial settlers in Biritinga (20 of the 37 families came from Campolândia). By comparison, legal right to Boa Vista - Biritinga was obtained in less than a year. Interestingly, in this case, settlers began moving onto the land in 2000, prior to the actual purchase in June, 2001. However, it required another four years for settlers to obtain an adequate water supply – an essential component of their settlement package. Shortage of water, together with a leadership struggle and the presence of some settlers unsuited or uncommitted to rural life, led to high attrition in the early years.

In Veneza, the newest of the settlements, both the acquisition process and financing went smoothly. Beyond the 749 ha purchased, the landowner donated an additional 255 ha. The settlement was benefited by the substantial plantation of sisal already on the land.

The Importance of SIC and PRONAF. Integrally related to the ease of acquisition is the SIC component of the Cédula da Terra program. This program, discussed in the Overview of Case Studies, provides funding – as a grant, not a loan – for housing, fencing, basic infrastructure, and some initial planting (e.g., fruit trees), equipment, and small productive projects.

Berta Veloso and Antonio Fernando da Silva, state agronomists who worked with a large number of land reform programs throughout Bahia, briefly compared the Cédula
da Terra to the Banco da Terra, another market-based land reform program that did not include the equivalent of the SIC. They frankly stated that the SIC made the Cédula da Terra much more viable. SIC provided the groundwork for the communities to move rapidly beyond land acquisition into productivity.

Closely related to this is the PRONAF-A program, which provides subsidized agricultural loans for land reform settlements. In his study of the Cédula da Terra in Ceará, Gomes de Alencar (2002) found access to such credit to be one of the positive points that settlers mentioned as a result to land reform. Although none of our interviewees explicitly stated it in that way, the great majority made use of the PRONAF-A credit, and several had advanced to PRONAF-A/C – the shorter term “custeio” loans. Indeed, several interviewees noted the need for greater amounts of working capital. In Moita Redonda, the technical advisor encouraged settlers to join the local rural credit union, and a few had done so. Access to credit and to financial information and skills is an area in which these communities could develop significantly; we sensed a readiness to learn if more opportunities to do so were made available. We recommend that further training in this area be provided to settlers, beginning as early in the settlement process as feasible.

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441 The Banco da Terra, created in 1998, was a parallel program run by the Brazilian government with slightly different goals. Unlike the Cédula da Terra and the Crédito Fundiário, the Banco da Terra was not aimed at poverty alleviation per se, did not limit beneficiaries to the poor, foresees reimbursement of all expenditures (not just land costs), and allowed for financings up to R$40,000 per beneficiary (compared to a combined ceiling of R$15,000 under the other two programs) (Teofilo and Prado Garcia 2003, 30).


443 Germani and Carvalho (2001, 93) raise the question as to whether the nature of the title (i.e., that land is titled through the association rather than individually) will inhibit future access to credit from other sources. We have not heard this concern expressed elsewhere, but it merits further examination.
What is the relative quality and value of the land purchased, in comparison with other land reform procedures in Brazil?

A significant concern with land reform programs in Brazil has been the use of relatively marginal lands for land reform. This is the case with expropriation, where landowners may make available for expropriation and/or not resist the expropriation of lands that they view as less valuable/desirable. In addition, under Brazilian law, only non-productive land can be expropriated, a rule that tends to limit the availability of land to lower quality parcels or to geographical areas distant from markets. The non-productive land rule does not apply to land purchased through the Cédula da Terra and similar market-based programs, but the former factor – that the current landholder has to be willing to part with the land – certainly does apply. Critics express concern that landowners will retain the best land and sell marginal/less good lands to the settlers.444

In three of the seven cases we studied, this seems to have occurred. It is probable that the reforestation companies that sold land with impacted soil to the Nova Lusitânia community and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Boa Vista III, were aware of the problem and did not share this information with the purchasers.

In Biritinga, the landowner sold the settlers a portion of the land that was without a readily usable source of water – although in this case the transaction was transparent,  

444 “It is also not possible to avoid... that landowners put their worst land on the market.” (Buainain, et al. 1999, 26)
the purchasers being aware of the situation. As noted above, it took the settlers four years to obtain an adequate water supply, a considerable hardship. However, the essential fertility of the land seems to be adequate.

At the other end of the spectrum, the land in Vila Canaã, which had been fallow (as pasture) for some years prior to settlement, is very fertile. It has proven to be excellent land for beans and other crops, and has substantially increased in value.

In the remaining settlements, the quality land seems to be neither substantially better nor worse than the general land in each respective geographical area. Biritinga, Moita Redonda, and Passos de Esperança are all reasonably fertile.

Veneza, although typical of the very dry area in which it is located, represents something of a warning sign. As land values increase, MBLR programs are pushed toward areas where cheaper land is available. This issue was confirmed by Maria Djalma, the technical advisor for Vila Canaã and Veneza. She noted the difference in quality of those areas, acquired respectively in 1998 and 2002. She told us that, although there is tremendous interest, especially among the young adult children of settlers, in opening additional MBLR areas, it was becoming difficult for her to find land at the price authorized by the government.

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445 It should be noted that Biritinga was also by far the least expensive land per hectare – see Table VII-A.

446 Deininger (1999) notes that, in order for MBLR programs not to raise the cost of land, the ideal ratio of land supply to demand should be 3:1. In the region in which Maria Djalma is working, there is no indication that the increase in land prices is a result of MBLR programs (this confirms Teofilo and Prado Garcia’s finding (2003, 31-32) with respect to the program generally). Prices have risen for other reasons, most notably recent recognition that the region is excellent for raising beans.

447 Under both the Cédula da Terra and Crédito Fundiário programs, the ceiling allowed for land purchase plus grant (SIC) is R$15,000 (Teofilo and Prado Garcia 2003, 31). As to the importance of the program
Table VII-A – Price per hectare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th># families</th>
<th>Contract date</th>
<th>Land R$</th>
<th>Price per hectare R$</th>
<th>Land price per family R$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Lusitania</td>
<td>806.00</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11/09/97</td>
<td>104,780</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>4,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Vista III</td>
<td>1,375.00</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>06/08/98</td>
<td>178,750</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>3,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Canaã</td>
<td>1,649.00</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>05/25/98</td>
<td>247,350</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td>3,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Canaã</td>
<td>269,250</td>
<td>163.28</td>
<td>3,688</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moita R.</td>
<td>677.00</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>09/18/98</td>
<td>172,355</td>
<td>254.58</td>
<td>3,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biritinga</td>
<td>807.40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>06/19/01</td>
<td>74,280</td>
<td>91.99</td>
<td>2,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Esperan.</td>
<td>450.00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12/26/01</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>288.88</td>
<td>4,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneza</td>
<td>749.50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10/04/02</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>173.45</td>
<td>4,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneza</td>
<td>1004.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>129.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VII-A sets forth the price of the land per hectare and, perhaps more important, per family settled — as comparatively higher per hectare prices (Moita Redonda and Passos de Esperança) may be justified by the quality of the land being able to sustain more families. In most cases, these figures for the settlements studied are having a price ceiling, see e.g. Busainain et al (1999, 26), who suggest that the structure of the Cédula da Terra program – with associations of buyers who know that they are going to have to bear the cost of the land – is the best mechanism, in theory, for assuring a good balance between land price and quality.

448 Vila Canaã Settlers contributed R$300 each extra-legally to augment the land purchase = R$21,900.00. This increases the real land price from R$150 to R$163.28 per ha.

449 Land price is estimated based on SAT.

450 The landowner contributed 255.29 ha. without additional charge. This decreases the real land price from R$173.45 to R$129.38 per ha.
roughly comparable to those for the entire *Cédula da Terra* program, which were an average of R$191 per hectare and R$4,759 per family (Childress and Muñoz 2008, 1). The notable exception is Biritinga, where both the price per hectare and the price of land per family are considerably lower than both the program average and the other settlements visited.

Table VII-B sets forth the cost of each settlement in terms of SAT and SIC investment. With the exception of Veneza, which is something of an anomaly (the owner donated over 25% of the land, and the exchange rates for dollars were highly skewed), cost per family ranged from approximately US$7700 to $9400, with four projects in the $8500–9000 range. This compares with R$11,975 (approximately US$8000) per family planned for the *Cédula da Terra* program generally (Lambais 2007, 18).

These costs also compare favorably with the cost of land reform programs generally. According to INCRA (2002), the cost of land only for resettled families ranged from R$19,412.74 (at R$382.67 per hectare) in 1995 when no MBLR

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451 The average for Bahia was higher – R$230/ha (Teofilo and Prado Garcia 2003, 31).

452 Gomes de Alencar, in his study of the *Cédula da Terra* in Ceará (2002, 30-31), cautions against overemphasis on low per hectare or per beneficiary costs. He studied three settlements where land cost ranged from R$349/ha and R$6,825/family to R$89.35/ha and R$4,280/family. He concluded that only the most expensive of these three was likely to be able to pay off its debts – the other two were not sufficiently productive.

453 This figure is obtained by averaging the exchange rates for 1997-2000, when the majority of *Cédula da Terra* programs were carried out. Pursuant to theory (see, e.g. Deininger 1998), the total for SAT/SIC per beneficiary was to be identical for all program beneficiaries, the cost of land (SAT) being deducted from that total as a loan, and the remainder remaining as a grant to the community. One purpose of this was to encourage communities to negotiate hard on the land as they would thereby have more SIC funds (and less high loans). Although the basic loan-grant structure was maintained, the equal distribution to all beneficiaries seems not to have been followed.

454 In Brazil, with respect to INCRA expropriations prior to the Cardoso administration, "...anecdotal evidence of excessive compensation abounds" (Deininger 1999, 23 n. 32; see Ministério de Desenvolvimento Agrário 1999; Gondim 2001a and 2001b).
programs had yet been implemented – to R$8,294.83 - 9,701.00 (at approximately R$260 per hectare) in 1998-2000 (Teofilo and Prado Garcia 2003, 22). Thus the average price of land for all land reform programs was, in 1998-2000, almost twice that of the Cédula da Terra program.

Table VII-B – Cost per family in US$455

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>SAT R$</th>
<th>SAT US$</th>
<th>SIC US$</th>
<th>Total US$</th>
<th>US$ Cost per family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Lusitania</td>
<td>110,019</td>
<td>99,565</td>
<td>131,967</td>
<td>231,532</td>
<td>8,950.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Vista III</td>
<td>194,425</td>
<td>168,655</td>
<td>301,925</td>
<td>470,580</td>
<td>8,556.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Canaã</td>
<td>259,718</td>
<td>225,254</td>
<td>335,945</td>
<td>561,199</td>
<td>7,687.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Canaã *</td>
<td>+21,900</td>
<td>+18,994</td>
<td></td>
<td>+18,994</td>
<td>+260.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moita R.</td>
<td>186,500</td>
<td>157,917</td>
<td>313,210</td>
<td>471,127</td>
<td>9,422,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biritinga</td>
<td>82,434</td>
<td>33,361</td>
<td>294,750</td>
<td>328,111</td>
<td>8,867.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Esperan.</td>
<td>143,906</td>
<td>62,029</td>
<td>201,645</td>
<td>263,674</td>
<td>8,789.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneza **</td>
<td>143,907</td>
<td>39,589</td>
<td>55,473</td>
<td>95,062</td>
<td>3,168.73456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If one compares years prior to institution of the Cédula da Terra, the price of land alone under INCRA expropriation programs were over four times as much. The total

455 US$ figures for SIC are (except for Veneza) from CDA “Programa Cédula da Terra, Projetos 1997-2001 (c. 2002). SAT figures are provided in R$, converted to US$ as of the contract date for each settlement. Numbers for Veneza were provided by the technical advisor, Maria Djalma, all in R$ - the US$ figure for Veneza’s SIC is an estimate based on an average exchange rate for the years it was in effect.

456 In 2002 the exchange rate changed dramatically – from R$2.32/US$1 in December 2001, to R$3.635/US$1 in October 2002. This accounts in part for the dramatically reduced US$ cost per family in Veneza. However, even if adjusted to the 2002 exchange rate and allowing a 1.34 multiplier to the SAT to account for the value of the land donated by the landowner, the Veneza cost per family would be approximately $5670, considerably less than any other project.
average cost per beneficiary of those expropriations has been estimated at US$30,000 (Deininger 1998, 23), again almost four times as much as the Cédula da Terra.

It should be noted, however, that the total government investment in the Cédula da Terra settlement areas goes beyond SAT and SIC, including – in some settlements – government subsidized water and energy projects and special projects such as the Boa Vista III bolacha factory. In addition, in all land reform areas, there is the general cost of subsidized loans (PRONAF), not to mention Bolsa Escola/Bolsa Família subsidies, which are available to low-income families throughout Brazil.457

What is the quality of technical assistance provided?

Berta Veloso considers quality of technical assistance to be one of the most important factors in settlement success. She specifically focused on the person of the technical advisor, stating that she has seen programs saved by dedicated extension agronomists.458 Similarly, Maria Djalma noted that, in cases where the technical advisor was not interested and stopped accompanying a program, the settlements were often not successful.459

457 De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet (2006, 23), in a study of the impact of the Bolsa Escola in the Brazilian Northeast, found it increased school attendance 7.8%.


On the whole, we were very favorably impressed by the quality and dedication of the technical assistance provided during the early stages of settlement. This may be in part because the settlements we studied were relatively successful.\(^{460}\)

It should be noted that, while agricultural advice constitutes an important element of such assistance, good assistance goes beyond that to include orientation in preparing proposals, advice on loan programs, orientation on association rules and practice, discussions regarding administration of collective areas, helping communities develop strategies for the future, and a general willingness to accompany settlement dwellers—and especially leaders—through the entire process of community formation and maintenance. One of the most effective technical advisors, Maria Djalma Andrade de Abreu, who accompanies Vila Canaã and Veneza, is not an agronomist but a dynamic sociologist, deeply concerned with the welfare of the communities, knowing the settlement dwellers personally and accompanying their activities on a regular, ongoing basis.\(^{461}\)

At Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III, excellent technical assistance was initially provided by CELANOR, a non-governmental organization. However, CELANOR’s experience raises certain concerns. Technical assistance is provided by non-governmental organizations, and while their assistance is valuable, it is not always sufficient to address the complex needs of settlement dwellers.\(^{462}\)

\(^{460}\) Germani and Carvalho (2001, 49-50, 89), who studied three Cédula da Terra settlements in Bahia, are very critical of the technical assistance provided generally. Nonetheless, with respect to the Antonio Conselheiro settlement, a close neighbor of Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III (the only settlement they studied in the regions we visited), they acknowledge that the settlers were satisfied with their technical assistance and that production had increased.

\(^{461}\) “Settlers leave family and structure to come to a new place with people they may not know, under rules they are not used to.” Maria Djalma, interview March 15, 2006. She points out that not all of the women can arrive in the settlements right away—often the men go first. Some wives want to leave, some couples separate, there can be issues of domestic violence. “The technical advisor must have sensitivity to family problems.”
technicians – either non-profit groups like CELANOR or independent agricultural assistance offices, as in the case of the other five settlements. The assistance is initially paid for as a portion (8%) of SIC, and subsequently as a portion of PRONAF-A loans.\textsuperscript{462} When the government delayed considerably in disbursing these funds, technical assistance had to be suspended.

As SIC is used up and the first phase of PRONAF-A loans finishes, these funds become less available. If CELANOR had not been able to become part of the Just Juice program, it might not have been able to continue giving assistance. Indeed in 2006, in Nova Lusitânia, the oldest of the communities, where SIC and PRONAF funds had been spent, almost no ongoing support was being provided to the administrators of the association (the settlement was considered “emancipated” from government tutelage, although certain rules still applied until the land was fully paid for). CELANOR could provide only very limited agricultural assistance, and only to those settlers who were engaged in or tending toward organic farming.\textsuperscript{463}

We identified a need in several of the communities for more in depth and continuing assistance. For instance, we found that communities needed help in interpreting charters and by-laws (as noted, we were able in several communities to

\textsuperscript{462} In c. 1991, a CPT agent in Tocantins expressed concern to me that the payment of technical assistance from loan funds inclines the technicians toward advising settlement dwellers to take out loans (such as PRONAF) even when it may not be in their best interest to do so. Although we saw no evidence of that having happened in the settlements we visited, her concern about a potential conflict of interest is valid.

\textsuperscript{463} In Moita Redonda, technical assistance lapsed due to political factors – the local politician who had helped the community did not like the technical advisor, and vice versa. The community association terminated the advisor’s contract but called him back after six months because they needed his advice.
explain that the charters allowed participation of non-titleholding spouses\textsuperscript{464}). There was also a need for accompaniment in the planning and carrying out of industrialization projects – such as the bolacha factory in Boa Vista III and the possibility of family/community cashew nut processing. Several interviewees, including technical advisors, noted that the trainings offered through CDA were useful but not sufficient. We believe that ongoing technical support to these communities would significantly enhance their ability to identify and carry out productive community projects.

In terms of continuing agricultural accompaniment, there is no provision to pay for this other than the technical assistance fee connected with PRONAF loans. Other regions of Brazil have well developed agricultural extension services, although our experience is that most extension workers are not trained to work with small farmers or with organic and alternative farming methods\textsuperscript{465}. The ongoing presence of either state extension workers, adequately prepared to work with small farmers, or of a mechanism capable of supporting independent agronomists (NGOs and/or private firms), seems to us to be highly desirable in helping the settlements achieve and maintain sustainable production\textsuperscript{466}.

\textsuperscript{464} This issue arose in all of the communities except Biritinga, where the non-titleholding spouses were actively participating.

\textsuperscript{465} In the State of Espirito Santo, in the late 1960s, ACARES – the state agricultural extension agency – established a well-developed program for small farmers, including not only agricultural advise, but social workers trained in community organization. This was made possible in part due to the large number of small farmers in the state and their consequent political clout. When we were living in Tocantins in the 1990s, the local extension worker in the municiplio of Itacajá was knowledgeable about organic methods and alternative technologies, but he told us that he was one of a very few in the state that had that interest. Again, Itacajá was a district in which small farmers predominated.

\textsuperscript{466} Deininger (1999, 25-28), a World Bank economist who sets forth the basic argument in favor of MBLR, believes that the mechanism that allows communities to select technical advisors (from an approved list) and pay them with SIC/PRONAF funds gives the communities greater control over the technical assistance that they receive. However, he also recognizes that, after the first two years or so (the period SIC is in
**Gender Differences.** A final point is the role of women. We have repeatedly noted our opinion that inclusion of women in the Associations is important. In 2002, a government study showed that 87% of titleholders in traditional (INCRA) land reform areas, and 93% in *Cédula da Terra* settlements, were men. As a result, in 2003 – the year after the most recent of the settlements we studies was founded – the government issued Portaria 981/2003 requiring that in future land reform settlement titles be granted jointly to couples (Ciranda do PRONAF para Mulheres 2005). We believe this is a positive step.

In the communities we studied, the activity of women in agriculture was mixed. Attitudes about this varied. It should be noted that subsistence farming is labor intensive, involving heavy work. Some women we interviewed showed no interest in engaging in field work, and thought it inappropriate that they should do so, except in special situations (such as during peak planting or harvesting, or where the family had no sons to help their father). Many women took family leadership in less heavy activities such as maintaining vegetable gardens and tending poultry and small livestock, and many engaged in non-agricultural activity to supplement family income (e.g., holding a municipal job, sewing, reselling cosmetics or other products). In the fruit-raising communities, women often participated – and they were particularly respected for the delicate work of removing passion fruit buds.

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*effect), local (or state) governments may have to help with technical support. Cassiano Sousa Lemos Jr. (2003, 2), Coordinator of CPE/CAR, makes clear that the State of Bahia consciously opted for the contracted technical assistance model in both the *Cédula da Terra* and *Crédito Fundiário* programs, and links this type of assistance to organic agriculture particularly appropriate to the semi-arid region.

467 When we lived in Tocantins, we found that farmers whose wives worked in the fields – except at peak planting and harvest season, when everyone worked – were looked down upon as subjecting their wives to inappropriate hard labor.
Couples varied widely in the degree to which the wives were knowledgeable about and participated in agricultural decisions. Many of our interviews were with wives only, or with husbands and wives separately or together. In most cases, the women had a good sense of the general nature of the farm activity, the relative value of crops, and what was required to carry out the work. Some women were actively involved in planning and strategizing – for instance, Adalia in Vila Canaã, when talking about her and her husband’s unsuccessful experiments with tomatoes and okra, made it clear that they had both been involved in the decision to make those experiments.

In 2001 (Portaria 123/2001) the government decreed that 30% of PRONAF should be preferentially directed to women. However, “...in practice, the 30% quota did not have a greater impact because it was not accompanied by an effective confrontation of the problems of access by women to credit.” (Ciranda do PRONAF para Mulheres) In 2004 PRONAF Mulher (“Women’s PRONAF”) was created to finance small (R$3000) agriculturally related projects. This program was expanded for the 2005-6 season, and many of the women we interviewed were considering possible projects. We note that in three of the settlements (Vila Canaã, Passos da Esperança, and Veneza) the technical advisor was a woman – and in the others, the advisors were supportive of women’s participation. We expect that a number of these projects were implemented.

**What is the level of overall satisfaction of land settlement dwellers?**

All of the settlement areas suffered attrition during the initial years. Table VII-C graphs the attrition rates, which ranged from a low of 25% in Vila Canaã to well over to over 60% in Passos de Esperança and Biritinga. These figures are somewhat higher than
those noted in other studies. G.S. Costa (2002, reported in Oliveira, Olalde, and Germani 2006, 12), analyzing 26 Cédula da Terra settlements in 2001, found attrition averaged 36%, though it ranged from 10% to 80%. Another 2001 study (cited by Mattei c. 2002, 15, and by Martins 2004, 6), found that “In some cases, the study showed that almost 60% of the families left the settlement areas.”

Similarly, Bruno, Medeiros, and Guaniziroli (2001, reported in IPEA 2002, 81) found attrition to be 35% on the average in INCRA expropriation land reform settlements, but only 21% in those promoted by grass-roots movements (such as the MST). Assuming this last number to be accurate, it points to better selection, preparation, and/or support of participants – or perhaps simply to a higher level of motivation. Attrition – the reasons for it and possible measures to reduce it – is an area that warrants further study.

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468 I am reminded of the statement of Lindoval in Moita Redonda: “If we had to fight [for the land], I would be the only one left – no! even I would run.”
In the seven settlements we studied, with rare exceptions, attrition was voluntary. Reasons for leaving included family issues, life decisions (such as to remain in their old neighborhood), health problems, and reactions to conflicts within a community. In a number of cases, settlers told us that many who had left were not suited to rural life. And in communities, such as Biritinga, where there was no really viable source of usable water for four years, attrition may be a result of undue hardship.

Notably absent as reasons for leaving were schools or health facilities (as opposed to health problems). In our experience, both of these are factors that can lead rural families to abandon their land and move into towns. However, we found that – in all of the communities – settlers were reasonably satisfied with the educational options offered to their children, which usually included on-site primary education and reasonable bussing for middle school and high school. While less satisfied with health facilities, interviewees often expressed the opinion that the Brazilian health system is difficult
everywhere, and did not necessarily see their own situation as substantially worse than it would be elsewhere. We note here that the ability of the MBLR program to purchase land relatively close to established towns facilitates access to health and education in comparison with land reform projects in frontier or other areas far from population centers.

With the exception of Biritinga, by the time of our visit, the initial attrition process seemed to have worked itself out in the communities. In Passos de Esperança, for instance, which suffered one of the highest attrition rates, most attrition occurred early on, and only one family had left during the two years prior to our visit.

Do these high attrition rates reflect negatively on the viability of the Cédula da Terra process, or on the sustainability of the communities? A certain amount of attrition is inevitable. But high attrition rates may be costly to the people involved and to the community. In Moita Redonda, for instance, we found that fruit tree maturation lagged in many lots that were no longer held by their original owners – either because the original owners had not planted or, if they planted, cared for their fruit trees, or because there was a gap between the original owner leaving and the new owner taking over, during which period the trees were neglected.

Transition of lots from original to new owners was treated differently in the various communities. In some cases, the Association was active in picking the new owners and setting the rules for transition, in others it allowed the original and new owners to negotiate fairly freely. Most transitions seemed to be fairly reasonable – with new settlers paying for improvements actually on the land and assuming the previous
owner’s PRONAF debts. This latter could be problematic where the original owner did not invest the PRONAF funds well. In one instance – in Moita Redonda – we encountered a new settler who paid what seemed to us a very high amount for his lot, thus diverting funds that might otherwise have been invested in the land.

Moita Redonda generally seemed to have the most difficulties with the effects of attrition. There was significant tension between some older and newer owners, augmented by cultural differences between the original Bahiano settlers and the newer Sergipano settlers. New owners as a group were kept in limbo over a multi-year period due to lack of official approval of their status. But the tensions and uncertainties here may be as much a symptom of underlying problems in Moita Redonda as a cause of those problems.

Despite the undoubted psychological, organizational, and – at least in the fruit-based communities – economic costs of attrition, we did not see evidence that attrition, per se, seriously impacts the long-term sustainability of these communities. To a certain extent, those settlers who saw it as a winnowing process were not without reason. The attrition may be seen as part of the “self-selection” process through which those who are less interested, less determined, or less qualified remove themselves from participation in the settlement (see Borras Jr. 2003, 371). Aside from Moita Redonda, we found that newcomers were absorbed into the community and often viewed as an improvement over those who had left.

To a certain extent, attrition may reflect weaknesses in the community organizations that originally gave rise to the associations. In other cases, factors beyond
the control of those associations resulted in a certain number of settlers being added to the community at the last moment – in Biritinga, for instance, not enough members of the original group qualified and seventeen of the original 37 families were added by CDA; in Moita Redonda, the local politician who helped birth the movement seems to have inserted some of her urban constituents into the group. We recommend that organizational and selection processes be examined to determine whether steps can be taken to reduce attrition.

Overall settler satisfaction was high in all communities except Nova Lusitânia. A very high percentage of those interviewed said that they were not considering leaving the community, i.e., by selling or trading their land (Table VII.D) (see Germani and Carvalho 2001, 67).

**TABLE VII-D – Settlers Willing To Trade Or Sell (# Interviewees)**

![Bar chart showing settler willingness to trade or sell](image)

Nova Lusitânia is the oldest of the settlements studied. The large number of settlers willing to sell/trade their property raises a concern for settlements as they leave the initial funded period and move into a post funding stage. Once SIC and PRONAF-A moneys have been spent and state assistance is less available, it is likely that the
difficulties of day-to-day life and the concerns about ongoing financial and agricultural issues are going to take a certain toll on settler feelings. There is a vulnerable period here.

This point is perhaps reinforced by noting that one of the highest levels of morale and satisfaction we encountered was at Veneza, the newest of the settlements we studied, where the honeymoon period was not yet over.

Nevertheless, our conclusion from the interviews is that the willingness in Nova Lusitânia to sell/trade stems primarily from deep disappointment due to the land being unfit for citrus trees. This is a unique circumstance (shared, perhaps to a more limited extent, with Boa Vista III). The other fruit-raising communities visited – Moita Redonda, Passos de Esperança, and Biritinga – are buoyed by reasonable expectation that the fruit groves will be productive. While in these latter communities there may be a period, between the end of funding and the full maturation of orchards, during which difficulties arise, we do not see Nova Lusitânia’s situation as being predictive of that in the other communities.

Another indicator of satisfaction is how the settlers view their lives in comparison with their situation prior to moving into the settlement. Table VII-E sets out comparative figures for interviewees. Here also the numbers are highly positive. Even in Nova Lusitânia, a significant majority of interviewees felt that their life was better or much better in the settlement than it had been previously.469

469 Germani and Carvalho (2001, 66), who are critical of the Cédula da Terra program, record a similar finding in the Antonio Conselheiro settlement: “According to... the majority of settlers, the condition of their life was better. This is because the opportunity to become small landholders gave them more
These figures, especially given the strength of their verbal and non-verbal expression as observed in the interviews, together with settlers’ comments about their future, demonstrate a strong desire on the part of most settlers to stay in the land reform settlements. We have here a significant indicator of commitment to the settlement areas, a positive element in building a sustainable community.

Although we have defined sustainability as approximately covering one generation, it is interesting to note settler attitudes toward their children’s future. In almost all of the communities there were parents who definitely did not want their children to continue in agriculture. However, there were also parents who did want and expect their children to remain on the land, and in some cases, they had taken practical steps toward this happening – most notably by providing their children fields of their own to plant and/or in providing adult children their own houses within the settlement area.

We interviewed too few young people to draw definite conclusions, but among those we interviewed, a number expressed interest in staying in the countryside. Maria Djalma autonomy, guaranteeing the sustenance of their families and creating hopes of becoming future entrepreneurs.” Although the use of this last term is unusual, and may stem from Germani and Carvalho’s underlying premise that MBLR is an instrument of neo-liberalism, it captures the sense of hope we also witnessed in most of the settlements.
estimates that in the settlements she accompanies (Vila Canaã, Veneza, and several more), approximately 20% of the young people want to stay on the land – and it seems that this would be a reasonable estimate generally.

In this light, we find it unfortunate that we only encountered two instances – both in Passos de Esperança – of young people who were studying at the Escolas Agrícolas Familiares, the integrated cooperative agricultural schools discussed in Chapter III. Formal education generally in Brazil tends to promote urban values and denigrate rural ones – all too often youth are presented with a choice between education or agriculture, not an opportunity to have education for agriculture. To the extent that schools such as the Escolas Agrícolas Familiares can be promoted, the long term viability of small scale farming will improve.470

To what degree are land settlement associations authentic and effective?

In Brazil, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it became fashionable for government to offer programs and other benefits through community associations. It sometimes occurred that a local politician or other leader would throw together a largely artificial “community association” – made up of real people but not a participatory, community group in any real sense of that term – in order to meet the technical qualifications of the law and receive whatever benefits it provided. All three members of our research team had witnessed such happenings, and we were expecting to find that at least some of the community associations were inventions of this type.

470 In the south of Brazil, the MST has established a network of schools. Although these have been criticized for being ideological, they undoubtedly offer a rural-oriented education.
We were therefore pleasantly surprised to discover that, although varying in their effectiveness and quality of leadership, all of the associations were valid organizations with genuine participation and, in most cases, histories rooted in genuine community movements. Even in Moita Redonda, where there was evidence that the association had been formed under the auspices of local politicians and where local political interference was most apparent, the association – although plagued by dissension – had developed to the point that it was able to take decisions independently of its political mentors.471

The bases of associations in pre-settlement community movements also affected group cohesiveness. Where a significant number of settlers came from the same community, or a number of closely knit communities, they tended to have a cohesiveness that helped them resolve leadership and community issues. This was certainly a factor in Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III, where all of the settlers came from CELANOR member communities in the município of Rio Real. Similarly, in Passos de Esperança, all of the settlers came from a neighboring 1970s sergipano land settlement area, in Vila Canaã, almost all came from a neighborhood about forty miles away,472 and in Veneza,

471 This is not to deny Navarro’s (1998, 21) observation that the associations, in some cases, may initially have a “merely instrumental orientation” – i.e., that they may have been formed solely or primarily for the objective of obtaining land. However, all of the associations we studied had some roots – Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III in longstanding colonization community associations (and CELANOR members) in the município of Rio Real, Vila Canaã in an earlier land reform area (and its neighborhood) in a neighboring municipality, Passos de Esperança in the old land reform colonization area around Gameleira, Biritinga in the Campolândia land invasion area, and Veneza in the group displaced by creation of a Native American reservation. Even Moita Redonda – which, more than any other group, owed its origin to the influence of a local politician – arose out of a movement that had organized to seek land two years prior to the purchase; the group leader and politician saw a mutual benefit to working together to secure land. But this was undoubtedly the association with the most “merely instrumental orientation.”

472 In Vila Canaã, although only about half the community identified with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, this shared religion also seemed to be a factor in creating considerable cohesiveness. Veneza was almost entirely Catholic, and most other communities were majority Catholic with a small number of Evangelical Protestants. Nova Lusitânia was the community in which the Catholic-Evangelical split was most divisive.
almost all came from an area that had been declared to be an Native American reservation.\footnote{473}

An issue which we were able to help the associations address was the question of participation of non-titleholder spouses, mostly women. In Biritinga, the ability of non-titleholder spouses to be active members and hold leadership position provides a rich source of talent that has been unavailable to the settlements that prohibit membership and/or leadership roles to non-titleholder spouses. The assistance we were able to provide to the associations during our visits, analyzing with them the regulations in this respect, will enable them to change this situation.

Beyond the communities we studied, although we were not able to research the matter in depth, we were told that “false” community associations have been relatively rare in Cédula da Terra programs in Bahia – a state generally noted for political machines and maneuvering. Berta Veloso told us that, in the more humid southern portion of the state, there had been a number of “adventurers and opportunists” in the land settlement areas, but that this type of person is not attracted to difficult areas such as the semi-arid region.\footnote{474}

The Collective Areas. One of the most important functions of the Associations is administration of the collective areas. This is also one of the most fascinating aspects of our study.

\footnote{473}{Other factors affecting cohesiveness included the presence of extended family – a factor we identified in almost every community – and the shared sergipano cultural identity found in Passos de Esperança, Nova Lusitânia, and Boa Vista III. On the other hand, in Moita Redonda, where most of the older settlers were bahianos and the newer ones of sergipano heritage, this was divisive.}

\footnote{474}{Interview January 31, 2006.}
In theory, if well managed, produce from the collective area in each settlement can pay off the value of the land, as well as other community expenses. In only one of the settlement areas, Veneza, did we find that the system worked as planned (and even there, with modifications). This may be partly due to Veneza being the newest of the settlements – enthusiasm for communal activity may diminish with time – but it is also due to the mature sisal crop on community land that brings in income, allowing the community to pay settler work hours. Other settlements find it very hard to work communal areas on a voluntary basis – some dwellers work, others do not, and this builds resentment. The collective areas therefore varied between fairly successful to virtually abandoned.

A number of communities have, in practice (it is not permitted formally), resorted to dividing the collective areas among families, each family caring for its own area as though it were an additional family lot. However, even here there are a number of permutations. In Biritinga, for instance, shortly before we arrived, the communal dwarf cashew trees were turned over to individual families, each family receiving approximately 135 trees to care for and harvest. Income from the area goes to the association for payment of the land and other expenses, each family being credited with amounts brought in from its section. Communal pasture was also divided up, each family receiving seven tarefas, but communal manioc was kept under the Association, with a collective work day held every couple of months to clean the field, and we were told that “nearly everybody participates.”

475 In Biritinga, for instance, we were told that collective work never reached 50% participation. Other communities did not provide numbers, but the issue was present in all of them. Enforcing rules may be problematic: in Passos de Esperança, a settler suspended from the Association for failure to perform his required work days took the matter to civil court. CDA lawyers were defending the Association, but the judge seemed inclined to favor the suspended settler.
In Nova Lusitânia, a similar division of responsibility for communal fruit trees had been put in place earlier, but did not prove successful; we were told that many of the allotted communal plots had been essentially abandoned, although this may have been in part due to discouragement caused by the compacted subsoil problem, which was causing the trees to die. Boa Vista III also discovered that dividing up responsibility for the communal lands was not successful; following a year of experimenting with a system of individual family administration, the community returned to collectivized work shortly before our visit.

In Moita Redonda, where each family originally donated one hectare of its own plot to increase the size of the collective land, the Association plowed the land and provided wire for the planting of two thousand passion fruit plants. Thirty per cent of the revenue goes to the Association, the rest is divided among settlers according to the work they provide on the passion fruit – those who do not participate have no right to income.

The administration of these areas continues to be a challenge. Part of the problem may be that the concept of collective work is not in tune with local culture. Maria Djalma, the technical advisor for Vila Canaã and Veneza, noted that collective work is not part of the culture of farmers in the Brazilian Northeast; she mentioned that the MST has been more successful in introducing this idea. Generally in the North and Northeast of Brazil, experiences with cooperative commercialization of produce have been far more successful than cooperative production. It may be that, although collective planting is not in all cases viable, the associations can find their vocation in organizing settlers to industrialize (as is currently the case with sisal in Veneza) and commercialize their crops, and in the cooperative purchase of fertilizer and other inputs.
What is the micro-economic viability of holdings (i.e., the extent to which potential income exceeds costs, including payments for the land)?

Earlier in this paper we discussed at some length the situation of agriculture in Brazil, especially the situation regarding small family farms. While recognizing that there is much debate over this issue, we lean toward the position that small scale farming can be economically viable – that it can produce a good standard of living for a family – at least with respect to certain types of crops. Among these are labor intensive farming – especially organic and other specialized methodologies – as well as other activities such as apiculture and certain forms of fruit farming. We noted, however, that small scale farming increasingly requires excellent technical assistance and education to thrive, techniques that make best use of land on a sustainable basis.476

One of the greatest areas of concern is the viability of the settlements in terms of agriculture. Setting aside for the moment the cases of Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III, where the subsoil problem affects the agricultural capacity of the land, what is the evidence that the agricultural production of these communities is sufficient to provide a sustainable income for the settlers?477

476 To the extent that land reform settlements (through either traditional or market-based approaches) are pushed toward marginal land, such assistance becomes even more important. Only highly competent organic and alternative techniques can renew marginal lands and avoid problems such as desertification. In this light it is encouraging to read the following from the Coordinator of CPE/Car: “...some projects in the semi-arid region initiated work oriented toward organic agriculture and living in harmony with the dry land, with use of native fruits on a sustainable basis....” (Lemos Junior 2003, 2).

477 This analysis is undertaken with the caveat that it is questionable whether, in the context of modern society, any agriculture can be successful without some type of government subsidy (Powers 2006).
Two of the settlements – Vila Canaã and Veneza – seem to us to be highly viable communities. Although each has its vulnerabilities, both show signs of long-term sustainability. One of these signs is that both communities have two major potential sources of income – black beans and sheep in Vila Canaã, sisal and goats in Veneza. Although Vila Canaã may be currently relying too heavily on the natural richness of its long-fallow soil – not yet having implemented crop rotation and organic fertilization - community cohesiveness is strong, and leadership is capable and adaptable – able to guide the community as it confronts issues that will arise. In Veneza, the strong base that the existing sisal crop provides to the association should continue to underpin the community’s ability to pay for land and move forward with substantial collective projects.

Moita Redonda and Passos de Esperança also give indications of being self-sustaining once their fruit trees mature. Passos de Esperança has done a better job of diversifying, with almost equal distribution of land among orange, cashew, and passion fruit; in addition, many families have commercial plantings of manioc. As we have noted elsewhere, ecological – as well as economic – diversification is crucial for resilience of both the ecosystem and the economy. Moita Redonda is more dependent on oranges; this increases the danger of any monoculture by being one with a particularly volatile market. It is to be hoped that the settlers will continue to back this up with plantings of passion fruit as well as other, smaller cash crops.

Biritinga had the lowest level of agricultural production of the settlements visited. This resulted, in part, from early difficulties mentioned above, most notably a shortage of water. However, the impending maturity of the cashew trees – the essential economic
component of the community – indicated that the settlement had a good chance of obtaining sustainability. As noted, monoculture is not, in our opinion, advisable for farms, but cashew offers more potential stability, and more possibility of local processing, than other fruit monocultures. The large number of organic farmers here (the highest percentage of any community studied) bodes well for the land being sustained – and even improved – over the next generation. If the community can develop less expensive sources of natural fertilizer, can implement cashew processing facilities, continues to maintain sufficient food crops to meet essential needs, and continues to pursue honey production and other minor income producing activities, Boa Vista-Biritinga should be able to prosper for at least a generation.

Boa Vista III is something of a question. It is not yet clear to what extent the subsoil problem will keep the settlers from their objective of being orange farmers. However, the settlers in Boa Vista III seem open to other possibilities. If orange raising does not turn out to be possible, they may turn to other crops that are appropriate to the land, such as yams, pineapple, passion fruit (if proper drainage can be established), grains, or truck gardening. As the state recognizes a certain degree of responsibility with respect to the subsoil problem – and especially as this problem impacts several communities – there are indications that the state will help to provide training and seed money to facilitate such a transition.

Nova Lusitânia is the least likely of the settlements to be able to support itself through agricultural production. Oil revenues are currently playing a large role in maintaining the settlement; we have no basis for knowing how long those revenues will last, nor how continuous the flow of income may be. A few of the farmers are actively
seeking to improve their land through organic methods and to find crops that can grow well despite the serious subsoil problem. However, were oil revenues to cease without a serious solution to the agricultural question, while it is not likely that the settlement will disappear, it could easily become – as are some others in the Coastal North region – an area of endemic poverty. It is therefore vital that the soil analyses being carried out by the state be taken seriously as the starting point for a program to transition the community to appropriate agricultural activities. Properly fertilized, passion fruit and/or other vine or bush fruits might constitute a possibility. If not, an option might be considered to offer resettlement to those current settlers who do not wish to transition from fruit growing activities, and bring in settlers interested in engaging in agriculture appropriate to the land.

One of the issues faced in all of the communities is inevitable inequalities. We interviewed families in almost all communities who were very poor and seemingly unable to do little more than sustain themselves, much less make land or financing payments. José Firmino dos Santos, former President of the Association at Biritinga, phrased the issue: “Among the poor, there are always some who are more poor.” Ari in Vila Canaã estimated that ten percent of the settlers there would never improve their situation. Erico, President of the Association in Veneza, said that the poor among the community were one of his major concerns.478

478 Our analysis did not permit an in depth study of the root causes of the poverty of some settlers. Among the factors mentioned in interviews and/or observed, alcohol addiction would be a major cause. In most cases, single women raising families were hard pressed; in at least one of these cases, the single mother was living in the settlement due to family influence and clearly did not have a vocation for agriculture – it seemed she was in the settlement merely as a means to obtain housing. Lack of education did not seem to be an issue, per se – many illiterate farmers were successful – but lack of know-how (agricultural, financial, or both) seemed to play a factor to some extent. There were also incidents of illness. One of the most
The settlers' have a joint obligation to make land payments, and failure to make land payment suspends all other financing. The plan is for association income to cover those payments, but in communities where it has not done so, the group has covered payments for those families who cannot (the understanding being that these families will repay when and if able). However, it is unlikely that the community can or will cover lapsed Pronaf-A or custeio loans – although, at least where a good number of settlers are unable to pay, the associations generally work to obtain extensions. Adilson, the former President of Vila Canaã and a natural leader, stated that the better-off settlers take care of the poorest among them; to a certain extent this view is reflected in other communities – Maria Djalma noted that “social inclusion” is an essential part of the program. But there is the view expressed by Antonio Costa, also of Vila Canaã, that “in ten years those who are lazy will leave, those who stay will be active;” this also reflects a feeling expressed in many interviews that some among the settlers do not exert themselves or carry their weight.

It has been noted that there is a general trend, worldwide, for agricultural households to depend in part on income from non-agricultural activities. Many of the telling of these was a young couple in Moita Redonda which had been doing very well until the husband suffered a motorcycle accident, approximately ten months prior to our visit. The couple was very hard pressed and living off of donations from their extended family.

479 Interview, March 15, 2006.

480 Antonio speaks from the relatively privileged position of a healthy, single 35-year-old man with no dependents and a title holding of his own.

481 The question has been asked as to whether there are cultural/social factors that incentivize the “lazy.” It has been argued (e.g., Alvarez 2009) that the bolsa escola/bolsa familia may have this affect, but we did not witness it as such; in most cases, it seemed to provide the families with a safety net that enabled them to stay on the land and work it (rather than the husband migrating in search of work, as often happens in the Northeast). The oil revenues in Nova Lusitânia did seem to have the effect of causing many of the families to become acomedadas (roughly “complacent”), i.e., not working the land as hard as they might, although this occurred in tandem with the severe disappointment of discovering that the land was unsuitable for the orange trees they wanted to raise. But we saw no other factors that would incentivize laziness.
households interviewed have some non-farm income, common sources including the hiring out the men’s labor (in many cases this is agricultural related labor), freelance jobs (bricklayers, electricians, a barber), municipal jobs (teacher auxiliaries, school bus drivers, health assistants), and small commercial activities (small stores, bars, selling cosmetics, etc.). Those who receive a government pension – either for retirement or disability – earn a minimum monthly wage, which places them in a position of relative affluence and security. Many families mentioned the importance of income received from the Federal Bolsa Familia/Bolsa Escola, and it is our opinion that subsidy has enabled many of the families to remain on the land during difficult stages when resources are scarce.

Closely related to this is the attempt, within the communities – on either a community or private basis – to capture a greater share of agricultural income by engaging in some type of agricultural processing. Veneza has equipment for extracting fiber from sisal, adding to the value of the end product. Boa Vista III is the community that has most seriously pursued, with limited success, small industrial activities to capture a greater share of the value of their produce. A few of the other communities are thinking along these lines, although most seemed to focus on establishing manioc processing facilities (“casas de farinha”), an economically questionable investment.

Natural Reserves. One of the tertiary research questions posed in this study was “To what extent have environmental reserves been provided for on the land?” We found that, in all cases, at least the legally required twenty percent of land had been set aside as ecological areas.

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Attitudes toward the ecological reserves varied. At one extreme, a few interviewees stated that they would like to do away with the reserves to allow for expansion of the communities – in one case, for opening land for grown children of settlers. But most settlers had a relatively benign view of the reserves – repeatedly interviewees told us that the reserves were good for preserving wild animals or for avoiding drought – some said that they “call” (*chama*) the rain. Generally use of the reserves was limited to grazing a few animals, bee raising, and/or collecting dead wood for cooking.

The one exception was Biritinga, where respect for ecological reserve was the highest we encountered. Three settlers there told us that, in addition to the legally required reserves, they had each set aside a portion of their own land as a reserve. It is probably not a coincidence that Biritinga is the settlement with the highest percentage of organic farmers.

**Intangibles.** While it is valid to attempt to objectify the reasons for success, it is also clear that there are certain intangibles that are difficult to capture. Berta Veloso, a highly respected government official who has worked with the *Cédula da Terra* program since the beginning, told us that for years she has been asking herself why some land settlements succeed and some fail. There is no real explanation, she feels, except the people. Her colleague, Antonio Fernando da Silva (Fernando) agreed. They noted that Fernando has been accompanying a settlement which, by any objective standard, should have failed – having poor land and other disadvantages – but that the people are so
determined they are making it work.\textsuperscript{482} Rafael of CELANOR noted the importance of capacity for resilience (\textit{capacidade de resiliência}) – the ability of a group to recuperate from negative or even disastrous events.\textsuperscript{483}

These observations verify our own experience with land reform settlements, community organizations, and human organizations of various kinds. The morale of the group often makes the difference as to whether a project succeeds. Certainly many of the items discussed above – leadership, group cohesiveness, group organization and history – can affect morale, as can settler attitudes, satisfaction levels, and dozens of other factors.\textsuperscript{484} But it is important to recognize that morale can go beyond (at times transcend) these factors. While difficult to quantify or submit to objective tests, it can often be sensed by experienced observers.

**Tertiary Questions**

Our research proposal also set forth five tertiary questions that warrant very brief discussion:

Does the \textit{Cédula da Terra} program promote a concept of land as a commodity, rather than as a non-renewal environmental resource with which humans live in a stewardship relationship?

\textsuperscript{482} Interview, January 31, 2006 with Berta Veloso dos Passos and Antonio Fernando da Silva

\textsuperscript{483} Interview, March 27, 2006 at Rio Real. He noted that resilience can be aided by outside circumstances; for instance, he attributes some of the resilience of the settlers at Boa Vista III to the fact that some of them retained small lands with fruit trees in their former area of residence, and were able to draw on these resources when hard times arose.

\textsuperscript{484} Settler attitudes and satisfaction levels reflect morale as well as affecting it; there is a feedback loop here.
The *Cédula da Terra* program was born during a time when neo-liberal thought – i.e., that the world’s problems could be resolved through market forces – was sweeping the political world and a certain portion of the international development community. The name “market-based” land reform, together with some of the literature that accompanied that movement, gave rise to a concern that this program was intended to and/or would further push the concept of land being a commodity, bought and sold with a capitalist attitude, rather than being an essential part of the eco-system, a resource to be lived with in a relationship of stewardship and caring.

I have a great deal of sympathy with this concern. To my mind, much harm has been done by viewing land as a commodity or simple production resource, to be used in accordance with short-range economic objectives. In the United States, ownership of land by large corporations has been seen as one factor contributing toward this negative attitude, and some states have taken steps to limit such ownership. An ideal is often presented such as that in portions of Switzerland, where the same family lives on the land for generations and, knowing the land will constitute the family’s source of livelihood for the long-range future, cares for the land in a way that helps it to maintain, and even improve, its fertility.

On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter III, Brazil has a long history of abuse of land by large hereditary landowners, who have used it over the generations to draw off income and who have repeatedly, until relatively recently, failed to reinvest in it. Even

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485 e.g., Domingos (2002, 3) "...implementation of 'market-assisted agrarian reform' can only be understood as the extension of neo-liberal concepts introduced by [the World Bank]." Similarly, Germani and Carvalho (2002, 89-93): MBLR is "a program of undisguised neo-liberal style."
among small landholders, practices such as slash and burn agriculture have proved
detrimental to their land.

As originally envisioned by Deininger (1999) and others, the MBLR concept
proposed that the land holdings gained through the programs would be fairly easily
transferable. This was in contrast to traditional expropriation land reform programs in
Brazil, which usually prohibited resale of the land by the original recipients without
government permission.

Within the *Cédula da Terra* program, however, there are a number of factors that
affect transferability. First, the land is owned by the Association, not by the individual
titleholders — it is, in essence, a type of condominium — and any transfer of lots requires
(at least in theory) Association approval. Second, at least until the land is fully paid for
(20 years after the contract date), any such transfer of land has to be approved by CDA —
the State agency that serves as guardian to the program.

Settlers who do not actually live on the land can be — and have been —
dispossessed of their land by CDA. Although in Biritinga there were a few titleholders
who did not live on their land (and this issue had been taken up with CDA), we did not
find this in any other community.\(^{486}\) This rule severely limits anyone buying a lot and
holding it for speculative and investment purposes.

With the major attrition in most communities, there were many transfers of lots.
As noted above, in some cases this entailed purchase by the incoming party of the
improvements that had been made by the outgoing party and/or assumption of the

\(^{486}\) In Vila Canaã, one of the better homes seemed to be closed up and the owners were not present, but we
did not fully examine whether this was a temporary or permanent situation.
outgoing party’s debt, but it did not generally include payment for the land itself (the reason being that, in most cases, few land payments had been made and that most of those were made, at least in part, by the Association). But these transfers generally resulted in changing ownership from a party who did not want and/or could not maintain the land to a party who very much did want to own and work it.

We found no evidence among the settlers of their viewing the land as a commodity. On the contrary, most talked about staying on it long term, and many spoke of it as a heritage that they hoped to pass on to their children. The growing interest among many of the settlers in organic agriculture was also based, in large part, on the conviction that organic agriculture is best for the long range viability of their land.

Is the Program’s emphasis on land purchase contradictory to the idea that the landless farmers have a right to land, which right must be asserted, and, if so, does this constitute a significant problem?

Domingos (2002, 5) sums up this critique admirably: “By passing the responsibility to democratize land to the market, political leaders intend to relieve the State of its essential legal responsibilities as outlined in the Brazilian constitution: the distribution of land for social interests.” To what extent is this true or meaningful?

In Chapter III we discuss the Brazilian Constitution and the problems incurred in trying to translate general constitutional statements into an enforceable expropriation law. Suffice it to say here that effort has been continuously frustrated and that expropriation has had very limited success in Brazil.
Critiques such as that made by Domingos seem to me to overestimate the importance of the term “market” when used in this context. Under the Cédula da Terra program, the government subsidizes approximately 70% of the cost of obtaining land. The government provides guidance, supervises negotiations, must approve the land price, funds the entire infrastructure, and has veto power over who can be a beneficiary to the program. It does not seem to me that the government has reneged on its responsibility to help landless farmers obtain land, but simply has found another instrument for doing so. Nor do I read the Constitution as requiring that the land be freely distributed – that farmers have to pay a certain amount (on highly subsidized credit) seems to me to be both fair and wise policy.

**Does the program significantly impair other forms of land reform through transfer of political focus and/or funds?**

One argument in favor of MBLR is that it offers another tool for landless farmers to obtain land, and that it is best seen as an arrow in a quiver of policies, rather than as the single primary solution to the land reform issue (see, e.g., Deininger, et al. 2003, 14; Lambais 2007, 25; El-Ghonemy 2007). In this respect, the government retaining its power to expropriate land – and in fact doing so – provides an added incentive for landowners to consider a willing sale under an MBLR program.

I believe there is merit in this position. However, given limited resources for agrarian reform, there is evidence that MBLR has drawn focus and funds away from other land reform measures. Wolford (2007, 249-250) notes that, between 1997, when the Cédula da Terra program started, and 2001, INCRA’s budget for traditional land
reform was cut from US$2.6 billion to about half that amount, and by 2003, it was cut an additional 39%. However, she fails to note that the INCRA 1997 budget was unusually high – in 1995 it was US$1.3 billion and in 1994 only US$0.4 billion (Deininger 1998, 23).

In any case, this reduction can be only in part attributed to the growth of the MBLR programs. The direct cost of the Cédula da Terra program was estimated at US$150 million, $90 million of which was a loan from the World Bank; the Crédito Fundiário system, which built upon that program, was US$450 million, about half loaned by the World bank (Borras Jr, 376; Childress and Muñoz 2008, 2). These totals, spread over a period of approximately eight years, do not fully account for the decrease in INCRA spending.

Be that as it may, to what extent is this shift in focus important? Unlike some other countries (see Borras Jr., 376), Brazil maintains an active expropriation program, and it would thus seem that the goal of having various instruments to carry out agrarian reform is being realized. It is our tentative conclusion from the evidence reviewed that MBLR, in the Brazilian context, is probably a faster and less expensive way to obtain land for the landless poor than is expropriation. If this is the case, it makes sense to shift resources from expropriation efforts to MBLR.

One step was taken in 2000 by the Government and the World Bank in an effort to maintain a balance between expropriation and MBLR. In general, lands purchased through the Cédula da Terra had been relatively small and medium sized farms rather than large latifundios, although in theory any land could be acquired. In 2001, in
response to critiques from the proponents of expropriation, the program was expressly limited to acquiring lands of up to fifteen modules.\footnote{This policy allowed CONTAG and other civil society groups to support MBLR (Lambois 2007, 25).} Brazilian law expressly prohibits expropriation of land below this limit, thus the Cédula da Terra was prohibited from purchasing land that could be acquired through expropriation. (Oliveira, Olalde, and Germani 2006, 3).

\textbf{Does the program tend to reinforce the power of local elites who have been historically opposed to land reform?}

One of the concerns with the Cédula da Terra program – a concern our research team shared as we began this study – was that it decentralized agrarian reform to the states and municipalities. Traditionally Northeastern states and rural local governments have often been dominated by groups that identify with large landowners, with electoral corrals being run by local politicians under the system of coronelismo discussed in Chapter III. It was our concern that the programs would come under the control of elites who oppose land reform and would thus be made ineffective. Did this occur?

Borras Jr. (2003) is a critic of MBLR. Many of his comments are based on early evaluations carried out by Navarro (1998) and Buainain et al (1999). Borras writes (378):
To a large extent, the beneficiary (self)-selection process has been manipulated by local government officials, interested church people and elite peasant leaders. These local elites controlled the information about the project and selected by themselves the beneficiaries (Navarro 1998, 19). In fact, Navarro finds that, in some regions, ‘the friars are who decided who could or could not be part of the association to be formed’, as he points to ‘the manipulation of the local peasants induced into forming associations, not knowing the conditions of the process’ (Navarro 1998, 15, 19).

This critique is, to say the least, an odd one, mixing local government officials (who may or may not be tied to landholding interests) with the Church – which has for the last thirty years been the primary advocate of land reform. Indeed, the Navarro quote is taken entirely out of context – turning to the original document in Portuguese, we discover that Navarro (14) was pointing out that the friars intervened to remove people who already had considerable patrimony from the land reform associations, so that the land could be available to poorer people who really needed it!

Part of Borras’ objection seems to be connected with his statement (378) that “the beneficiaries are generally from the rural poor, but not the poorest of the poor.” However, in almost forty years of working with community organization and social programs in Brazil, I have found that it is almost never the poorest-of-the-poor who lead any grass-roots movement or social change. Our case studies did indeed confirm that the communities were generally developed and led by people who were not among the

488 Perhaps it is these not-poorest-of-the-poor that Borras means when he speaks (378) of “elite peasant leaders” and “rich peasants.”
poorest of the poor. These leaders, together with NGO organizers, technical advisors, and the state agency – CDA (which last had final decision power over the inclusion/exclusion of any beneficiary), definitely did influence the selection of candidates. It is our impression that this selection process was generally a reasonably fair one, and that problems developed where – as in Moita Redonda – it was to some extent ignored.

To state that beneficiary selection is influenced by these persons and groups is a far cry from our initial concerns that the process would be controlled by landowner groups or others who are opposed to land reform. In only one community, Moita Redonda, did a local politician have an inordinate amount of influence in forming the community – and even there, she seemed to be acting out of populist motivation and not in the interest of local landowners.

Minor interference by local politicians in community life is a factor in several of the communities, where certain persons in the community are rewarded with municipal jobs (teacher auxiliary, school bus driver, etc.), usually in return for their political support. But this is common throughout Brazil, and in no case did the interference seem to stem from pressure from large landowners. We found no evidence in our case studies that decentralization led to domination of the *Cédula da Terra* program by large landowners or other groups opposed to land reform.

**To what extent has the program been used to undercut the action of landless movements such as the MST?**

One of the chief charges against the market-based land reform movement was that it had been adopted by the Cardoso government to undercut the power of movements
such as the Movimento Sem Terra (MST). This charge was clearly to some extent justified – the MST and Cardoso were strongly opposed, and finding another mechanism for carrying out land reform was advantageous to the president.\textsuperscript{489} But to what extent was the program actively used to undercut the MST and similar movements?

Interview questions dealt with settler attitudes toward the MST. These attitudes were largely negative, but no more so than the attitudes of most Brazilians at the time who gained their information primarily from Globo television – the main source of information for the majority of settlers. While the MST had enjoyed considerable popularity in the late 1990s,\textsuperscript{490} by 2006 it had lost much of that support – due largely to such actions as invading and trashing President Cardoso’s farmhouse in Minas Gerais (images of the wrecked furniture and filthy rooms were on everyone’s television screen) and invading and destroying specimens in an Aracruz botanical laboratory.\textsuperscript{491}

Settlers generally rejected this type of approach. However, there were some settlers who stated that the MST had been important in raising consciousness of the need for land reform, others who stated that the movement did some good, and a few who were frankly positive toward it. We saw no indication that the program had inculcated attitudes toward the MST one way or the other.

\textsuperscript{489} Fernandes (2006, 13-16) provides a good summary of the conflict between the Cardoso administration and the MST. He notes that, while the Cardoso administration initially thought that settling families on the land would reduce pressure from the landless, the opposite occurred: “...geographers can document that for each settlement created, the number of landless workers carrying out grassroots action multiplied...” (14). “In the Cardoso government, agrarian reform was treated as a problem left unsolved in the past and formulated as a compensatory policy in line with a conservative model of agricultural modernization.... The compensatory policy is a form of minimizing socio-economic problems without solving them.” (6-7)

\textsuperscript{490} Wolford (2007, 243) states that, at the end of the 1990s, 85% of urban middle-class Brazilians had favorable attitudes toward the MST.

\textsuperscript{491} This latter action was actually carried out by a small splinter group not under the control of the MST, but in the minds of most Brazilians, the MST was identified with it.
Perhaps most telling were comments of those settlers who had actual experience with the MST. Founded in the South of Brazil, the movement has never been as effective in the North and Northeast, and comments reflected this, and were generally critical.

Closely related to the issue of the MST was the overall level of socio-political consciousness among settlers. With a few exceptions, we found this to be similar to the general level of rural Northeasterners who are not actively involved in social justice or union movements. There seemed to be little awareness of or interest in class issues. Although Lula was immensely popular and the great majority of settlers had voted for him and said they would do so again, there were very few who identified with the Workers’ Party. Local political identification was based on personal relationships and local practicality as it is in most of rural Brazil, with little concern with the ideology of a candidate’s party on the national level.

I personally believe that most of the settlers would benefit from the type of training provided by the CPT, socially conscious NGOs, and land reform groups – and could learn a good deal from the MST, especially in such areas as rural education. It would be interesting to see these groups reach out more to the Cédula da Terra and Crédito Fundiário settlers who are, in some respects, natural allies in building a society that is more supportive of small scale agriculture. By, to a certain extent, anathematizing the MBLR programs – and hence, by implication, the beneficiaries of those programs – the MST (if not the Church and other agencies) creates an unnecessary barrier between potential allies.

492 The exception was in Biritinga, where Jurandi Nilo is a committed PT member, originally from São Paulo; he and his wife, Josi, are leaders in the settlement. Eleven interviewees (out of 33) in Biritinga were affiliated with the PT, and two more said they usually voted with the PT.
Other Key Factors

In Chapter I, we noted nine Key Factors to development projects generally. We briefly touch upon those here in connection with the *Cédula da Terra* program as it developed in Bahia.

1) **Authenticity of participation.** As noted in Chapter IV, the *Cédula da Terra* program, when implanted at the national level, had very little input from civil society. In Bahia, early involvement of CELANOR – a clearly legitimate association of existing small landholder communities – was one factor that helped to allay this. CELANOR essentially designed the first communities, developing the agro-vila concept that became standard, and orienting the first steps in the program. There were also indications in various localities of interaction between state officials (CDA/CAR) and rural workers unions, church groups, and other components of civil society. Thus the authenticity of participation at the state and local level exceeded that nationally. The authenticity of the settler associations in themselves has been discussed at length above.

2) **Ownership.** Once again, viewed at the state level, we were impressed by the degree to which state officials involved in this program and technical advisors (both those from NGOs and those from private groups) took ownership of this program. They were clearly involved and concerned. Officials at the state level, such as Dr. Penedo, Berta Veloso, and Antionio Fernandes da Silva, knew these communities personally and were concerned with their problems. For instance, meaningful efforts were being made – within the limited resources available – to bring in experts to study the
compacted soil problem in Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III.\footnote{But the following should be noted: “The State is trying to resolve issues, such as the case of purchase of inappropriate land, but – almost always – this remains an intention. In assuming its responsibility and seeking ways of resolving the problems, there are costs that are never passed on to the responsible people involved in the negotiation process – especially the [former] landowners and the professionals – but to society at large and, principally, to those most harmed, the beneficiaries who believed in a Project legitimized by the State.” (Oliveira, Olalde, and Germani 2006, 4).} In some of the municípios, most notably Esplanada (the location of Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III), the municipal governments were also interested and involved. The ownership of the settlers themselves has been discussed – to summarize it, settlers had a strong feeling of owning the program and their settlements, despite issues as to the role of the associations and collective areas.

3) **Adequate statement and communication of goals.** It seemed to us that, by the time of our study, state officials, technical advisors, and the associations themselves had a good sense of the program’s goals. This had admittedly grown over time – in the beginning, as Maria Djalma remarked, nobody really knew what they were doing or how to go about doing it.\footnote{Early mistakes, especially regarding the quality of land acquired, caused the State of Bahia to increase state oversight of the program; originally the state oversight had been planned to be minimal (Oliveira, Olalde, and Germani, 3).} It also seemed that feedback from the *Cédula da Terra* program – and a certain continuity of personnel – helped to improve the Crédito Fundiário program that followed it. The *Cédula da Terra* program nationally had, by 2002, exceeded its goal of settling 15,000 families on the land; the *Crédito Fundiário* program aimed at settling 50,000 families in three years (Teofilo and Prado Garcia 2003, 30).

4) **Adequate time frame.** Having worked for major international funding agencies, I was impressed by the extent to which the *Cédula da Terra* program seemed to be
relatively free from artificial time pressures. Funded in 1997, it was allowed to function over a five year period – a reasonable time frame for development – with SIC funds being disbursed even later, at an organic pace that seemed to coincide with the various communities’ capacity to absorb them. Thus as late as 2006, several of the settlement areas still had SIC funds that had not been fully spent.\footnote{495} It is unusual to find a large program which is as willing as this to recognize the slow pace of rural development and the necessity to allow programs to unfold in accordance with cultural and seasonal rhythms.

5) \textbf{Awareness of local social, cultural, and political complexities.} One of the advantages of decentralization of the \textit{Cédula da Terra} program is that it allowed the program to be adapted and carried out by people who more fully understood the local milieu. Both CDA and CAR officials seemed to be strongly aware of the realities and complexities of life in the semi-arid and north coastal regions of Bahia. Technical advisors were all local people with a history of working with communities in these areas. Input from community leaders was taken seriously.

6) \textbf{Internal workings of aid industry and government.} The relative flexibility with time has been noted above. This reflects generally a characteristic noted by Deininger (1998, 24) in comparing the \textit{Cédula da Terra} with similar programs, that “the process [in Brazil] is considerably more flexible and agile.”

\footnote{495} This contrasts with what Deininger (1998, 9 n.15) says of the process in Colombia: “This failure to proceed more swiftly with implementation of the negotiated model of land reform was not due to resource constraints but rather institutional rigidities and resistance. In fact, resources available for market assisted land reform were accumulated until the end of the year and then disbursed in a rushed process that bore little relationship to the regulations of the law, using the argument that it would be better to spend the resources imperfectly than losing them.”

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At the same time, certain internal procedures, especially on the part of the World Bank, seemed to work in favor of the program. Audit mechanisms were almost undoubtedly a factor in avoiding overcompensation of landowners (as had previously occurred under government expropriation programs). Feedback mechanism – especially as the World Bank was in the process of developing greater sensitivity to beneficiary concerns and social/environmental impact of programs – helped to bring about improvements in the subsequent Crédito Fundiário program.

7) Resources – human, technical, financial. Resources in development programs are almost never truly “enough.” However, in this program, initial financial resources seemed to be adequate to program needs. SIC funds provided a valuable means of providing for initial infrastructure, agricultural inputs, and small productive projects. These funds were substantially supplemented with funds from the CAR PRODUZIR program and other sources. More concern for ongoing working capital and project funds arises as the communities move beyond SIC and initial PRONAF-A funding.

Human and technical resources are more limited. As pointed out, the quality of technical assistance was quite good, but a concern arises as communities pass out of the SIC/PRONAF-A stage as to how that technical assistance will be provided. Even in the initial stages, we have noted a number of areas where additional training and accompaniment could be provided – where a small investment in “capacitation”496 would result in a disproportionately large benefit to the communities – for instance, in

496 “Capacitação” – the Portuguese word goes beyond the sense of training, and implies that one is truly helping people to become capable of doing something on their own.
the area of helping communities (either singly or, more likely, in small groups) to conceive of and develop small facilities to partially industrialize their produce.  

8) **Ongoing monitoring.** During the period up until “emancipation” – i.e., the moment when all of the SAT and SIC funds have been spent and accounted for – CDA seemed (in all cases except Moita Redonda) to be doing a good job of monitoring ongoing progress. Periodic visits were made to communities by CDA (including to Nova Lusitânia, which had been informed verbally that it was “emancipated”), during which CDA personnel dealt with questions and issues raised by the communities. Association accounts were subject to audits. Banco do Brasil (BB) and Banco do Nordeste do Brasil (BNB), respectively, were responsible for SIC and PRONAF loans, and the latter made fairly regular visits to the communities.

9) **Provisions for maintenance.** As noted above, maintenance both of the program itself and the land settlements it created is a concern. Deininger (1999, 25) expresses concern that, in Brazil, the high level of subsidy of the program (c. 70%), together with the probability that many of the loans made will not be fully repaid, could hinder the continuation/growth of the program. In Bahia in 2006, we began to see signs that CDA was overburdened, and concern that it might not be able to continue to accompany the programs to the degree that it would like to.

**Additional Questions**

At the beginning of this Chapter, I mentioned that case studies often suggest further research. I come away from these case studies with a strong desire to return to the

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I am currently discussing with my fellow researchers, Daniel Carvalho and Brenda King-Powers, establishing a small program to provide this type of support to land settlement areas in northern Bahia.
field and further examine many issues, not only (or even primarily) as an academic researcher, but as a community organizer long engaged in empowerment evaluation (see Chapter II). Within the wealth of potential research, I would raise especially the following:

1) What lessons can be learned from Association formation, leadership, and participation? What are some of the best practices that have been developed (both in the MBLR programs and elsewhere) and how might they be made available/useful to the settlers – and to new groups engaging in programs?

2) What are the true statistics and real causes of attrition in MBLR settlements? Is attrition due to weak associations, poor selection, and/or inadequate orientation of candidates? Is it (as seems to be the case from our studies) a winnowing process in the initial years that resolves itself as the communities become established? What steps can be taken to reduce attrition and to ameliorate its consequences (e.g., through the smooth, well-regulated transfer to new titleholders)?

3) How have the collective areas been handled in other settlement areas? Have structures or mechanisms been found that make them more feasible? Or has the division of the collectives into individually administered lots tended to become the norm? Where the collective areas are individually administered, have they been completely “privatized” or do sales/income still run through the association?

4) What small-scale industrialization or other income-producing projects are viable for these and similar communities? Do these work best when
administered by families, communities, or groups of communities (e.g., via cooperatives)? Through past experience, I have ideas of some that might work – small scale cashew nut processing, for instance – but I would like to expand upon and update this information.

5) With respect to the younger generation, what steps (if any) do their schools take in preparing them for possible rural life? How can access to genuine, participatory agricultural education be increased? How can young adults be absorbed into communities with limited numbers of lots and/or how can adequate new settlement areas be established for them (and does the number of young people interested in an agriculture life warrant such an effort)?

In addition to these questions, there are a number of questions that researchers with different qualifications could examine. Among these are best agricultural practices for appropriate crops in the region, alternative crops that might be grown to supplement income (ginger, peppers, etc.), alternative technologies applicable to the region and the settlers, water usage and conservation, maximizing the viability of the environmental reserves, best methods for soil treatment of purchased lands.

**Conclusion**

Years ago there was a debate in Brazil centered around Paulo Freire’s work with adult literacy training. Teaching Northeast Brazilian rural workers to read, Freire came to the conclusion that the process of literacy training itself could be more or less liberating, and he developed methods by which the workers truly participated in their own learning process, becoming more fully conscientized (a word invented by Freire) as to the socio-economic realities which caused the poverty they experienced and
developing the attitude that they could work together to make changes. The military regime sent Freire into exile and his approach was essentially banned (except for a few holdouts such as the Church’s MEB program).

Freire himself was never doctrinaire, but there developed toward the end of the dictatorship and thereafter, a feeling that only a Freire-style approach was valid in literacy training, that more traditional or less participatory approaches were co-opting the learners into the dominant system. The trouble was that, beyond small pilot programs, it was difficult to train and run programs in the Freire style. Most adult literacy teachers were poorly paid public school teachers or volunteer parishioners, and they taught the way they had learned: by putting letters on the board and having the students copy them down, going through the phonetics... ba, be, bi, bo, bu. Should such training be allowed? Portions of the Church and other “good faith” sectors of society reached the conclusion that, whereas Freire’s methods were clearly preferable, when working with adults,\(^{498}\) learning to read was in itself a liberating and empowering experience, and that the literate adult could go on to grow.

In much the same way, I believe that ownership of land is, in itself, liberating and empowering for the adult rural worker.\(^{499}\) This is not to say that the newly landed farmer cannot be enmeshed in an undesirable commercial structure, overburdened with debt, take wrong paths, give up, fail. All of those things can happen to new farmers, however

\(^{498}\) Brazil’s rote education system, when working with children, can be very negative. The difference in attitudes between students/graduates of participatory rural schools, such as the cooperative Family Agricultural Schools, and the standard public schools, is notable.

\(^{499}\) It is interesting in this light to note Gomes de Alencar’s finding (2002, 26) that the greatest value settlers in the Ceará Cédula da Terra program cited was liberdade (liberty, freedom). Lambais (2007, 19) notes with respect to studies of the program that “The freedom of the peasants from the economic rent imposed by landowners enables them to use land and labor to arise from poverty even if the economic efficiency levels are not satisfactory yet.”
they obtain their land. They are perhaps less likely to happen to farmers who have participated in MST, CPT, or similar programs. Like Freire, these groups may, in some respects, have better methods of consciousness raising, but they are not reaching everyone.

On initial analysis, in the Brazilian context, market-based programs seem capable of getting more farmers permanently settled on the land more quickly than either expropriation or land occupation/invasion. As structured under the Cédula da Terra, with SIC support and subsequent access to PRONAF credit, the programs also seem able to give the settlers a good start toward productivity and the possibility of better income, although additional technical assistance, educational opportunities, and access to working capital seem to be needed.

As Teofilo and Prado Garcia (2003, 23) state, “Land distribution is only the first step in the process of increasing opportunity and improving the lives of the rural poor,” but it is a vital first step. Once on the land, small farmers will be better able to constitute a political force capable of fighting for their needs — including credit, technical assistance, and debt relief.

Critical oversight of the programs on the part of civil society must continue. The important questions need to be continuously asked: are these programs meeting their

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500 “The performance of MBLR is overall satisfactory – the income has increased significantly with the peasants rising from poverty, which is one of the main arguments of the MBRL — poverty alleviation” (Lambais 2007, 25).

501 “Property rights are just one constraint on agricultural productivity. The state must ensure through its policies that the squatters have access to other markets, including credit, products, inputs and technology markets.” (Teofilo and Prado Garcia, 23)

502 This process had begun in the communities we studied. Settlers in Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III participated in an occupation of INCRA offices in order to get SIC funding released; they also were negotiating with the state and municipality regarding the soil problem. Associations in several of the settlements had or were in the process of negotiation extensions of loan repayments.
own criteria? are the community organizations representing beneficiary and small farm interests? are local elites attempting to co-opt the process? is the government manipulating the World Bank and/or the programs for its own political goals vis-à-vis MST? Monitoring and accompaniment can help rural communities critique neo-liberal values that periodically are in vogue at the Bank.

Critics rightly point out that MBLR cannot carry out a truly redistributive land reform “in the same way that the state can” (Borras Jr., 390). But forty-six years of the Estatuto da Terra have demonstrated that there is little likelihood that the Brazilian government is going to carry out a major redistributive land reform through expropriation — indeed, given constitutional, legislative, and judicial barriers, it would be almost impossible for the President of Brazil to do so even if he wished to. To reject MBLR as a tool on the basis that it will not bring about truly redistributive change is to make the perfect the enemy of the good.

In my opinion, it is vital for groups such as CPT and MST to engage MBLR programs and use them to the full extent possible for the benefit of Brazilian landless workers. To do otherwise is to throw away a valuable tool for carrying out agrarian reform in Brazil.
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II. **Legal Texts**

Central Bank (BACEN) Resolution 2.728/2000, altering conditions of financing for the Land Bank

Complementary Law 76/93 – Deals with summary process of expropriation for social objectives

Complementary Law 93/1998, Instituting the Fund for Lands and Agrarian Reform – Land Bank

Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988, as amended

Decree 1.946/1996, establishing PRONAF – National Program to Fortify Family Agriculture

Decree 2.622/1998, Regulating the Land Bank Law

Decree 3.475/2000, Regulating the Land Bank Law

Decree 91.766/1985 approving National Agrarian Reform Plan

Decree-Law 3.365/1941, on expropriation for public use

Law 601/1850 – Land Law of 1850


Law 8.629/1993 – Regulates Constitutional provisions on land reform


Regimento Interno do Conselho Curador do Banco da Terra [Internal By-Laws of the Caretaking Council of the Land Bank]

Regulamento do Fundo de Terras e da Reforma Agrária – Banco da Terra [Regulamentation of the Fund for Lands and Agrarian Reform – Land Bank]
Interviews

Almeida, Sergio Ricardo Matos, March 27, 2006; telephone interview March 10, 2006. Technical advisor for Boa Vista – Biritinga, also assists at Passos de Esperança.


Arcanjo, Miguel, April 27, 2006. Founder of CELANOR and leader of Rio Real communities that gave rise to first Cédula da Terra projects.


CDA – interview with agronomist, Dr. Penedo, April 26, 2006 in Salvador. He is familiar with all the settlements we visited, and is particularly knowledgeable with respect to the sub-soil issue in Nova Lusitânia and Boa Vista III.


Reys, Benone March 29, 2006. Church activist and former mayor of Inhambupe, aware of the political situation of Moita Redonda.

Rocha Reis, José Eduardo, March 29, 30, and 31, 2006. Technical advisor for Moita Redonda.

Silva, Antonio Fernando, January 31 and April 26, 2006. CDA agronomist who has accompanied all of the settlements that we visited.

Sussuarana, Marcos, August 18, 2001. A sociologist who founded CPPTCuniã – an NGO working with rural populations in Rondonia. He proposed a master’s thesis based on his observations that land reform areas in Rondonia resulting from MST occupations are better located, and therefore more potentially sustainable, than those resulting from government oriented expropriations.

Veloso dos Passos, Berta, January 31 and April 26, 2006, plus prior phone contact. CDA agronomist who worked with Cédula da Terra since its inception.
List of Interviewees from Settlements

The following list names, nicknames, and ages of interviewees. Numbering is tracked to the interview form of each set of interviewees.

**Case Study 1: Nova Lusitânia** (April 5-6, 2006)

1) Edivaldo Rodrigues (36)
2) Elenice Rodrigues dos Santos (30)
3) Antonio Nascimento dos Santos (55)
4) Ivanete Maria de Jesus (37)
   Almir Rodrigues (17) – son
   Renasey Santos Rodrigues (18) – son – (socio trabalhador)
5) Vagner A. de Jesus (21)
6) Cosme Aurelio Silva (70)
   Filomena Honora de Jesus (61) – spouse
7) Antonia Ferreira dos Santos (55)
8) Jocimaria Alves dos Santos Paixão (33)
9) Maria Lucia da Paixão (48)
   José Viana da Paixão (48) – spouse
10) José Martins da Cruz (43)
   Rosenilda Araujo Oliveira da Cruz (34)
11) Petronilio Dias de Oliveira (59)
12) Wilson Bastos Guirmaraes (36)
13) Judite de Conceição Lago Ferreira (54)
14) Eliezer Martins da Cruz (59)
   Isabel Martins (57) – spouse
15) Anselmo Nunes Rodrigues (25) – (socio trabalhador)
   Zélia Nogueira Luz (16) – spouse

**Case Study 2: Boa Vista III** (April 28-30, 2006)

1) Edmundo (Mico Preto) (59)
   Ma Lourdes (44) – spouse
   Branca (20) - daughter
2) Jose Renato de Aquinos (Ze de Roque) (59)
   Delmina (56) - spouse
3) Iane Pinto Menezes (34)
4) Waldemar Correia de Jesus (55)
   Alice Prima Aguiar (55) - spouse
5) Antonio Souza (Antonio Gago) (39)
   Luciana Jesus de Souza (31) - spouse
6) Jose Ferreira de Anunciacao (Del) (44))
   Ana Ma Souza Santos (Ana) (43) - spouse

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7) Renato Edison da Costa (49)
8) Jose Primo dos Santos Irmao (Adilson) (46)
   Maria Lucia Cruz Santos (44) - spouse
9) Anatalia Santos Souza (Natalia) (44)
10) Roque Mendes de Jesus (Dedé) (47)
    Maria de Conceição Santos de Oliveira (Conceição) (44) - spouse
11) Manuel Ferreira da Costa (Zé Sande) (44)
    Elneide Roza Rebeiro da Costa (Neide) (43) - spouse
12) Fausto Rodrigues da Souza (43)
13) Jose Pereira Filho (Galego) (42)
14) Nilton Cesar dos Santos (35)
15) Luiz Carlos da Silva (Presidente da Associacao) (30)
16) Adilson Souza de Almeida (Gamelas) (31)
    Marzia Nascimento dos Santos (24) - spouse
17) Jose dos Santos Reis (Zé Reis) (47)
18) Joao Bosco de Souza (Bosco) (47)
    Maria Souza Santos (Santinha) (34) - spouse
19) Jose Isidoro de Santana (Isidoro) (49)
    Josefa Alves de Goise (Meninha) (46) - spouse
    Carla (20) - daughter

**Case Study 3: Vila Canaã** (March 16 & 19, 2006)

1) José Hilton Araújo Santana (Galego) (47)
2) José Domingo Santos Reis (46)
   Marilene Gois Reis (42) – spouse
   Gedione Gois Reis (16) - son
3) Adilson de Silva Souza (42)
   Veraluce Santana Souza (40) -spouse
   Renato (16) - son
4) Antonio Andrade Silva (46)
5) Ernesto Riveiro da Silva (Milho Assado) (48)
6) Antonio Costa Santana (Tonio) (35)
7) Gerson Felix de Jesus (52)
8) Cecilio Lopes Dantas (55)
9) Carlos João dos Santos (32)
   Aliene Macedo dos Santos (34) - spouse
10) José Rodrigues de Gois (Zé de Messias) (42)
11) Decio José dos Santos (56)
12) Antonio André de Oliveia (Toninho) (56)
13) José Anesio da Silva (Zequinho) (68)
   Josefa Anajoaquim da Silva (55) - spouse
14) Josevanda Pereira dos Santos (Jó) (37)
15) Sonia Aleixo da Silva Santos (38)
16) Marineide Macedo da Silva Jesus (39)
17) Adelia Souza Santos (35)
   Joice Souza Santos (15) - daughter
18) Isacale Daniel da Costa (Sossego) (30s – unspecified)
   Catya Macedo da Costa (33) – spouse
   Jaqueline (15) - daughter
19) José Morães de Souza (Zé Nelson) (56)
   Ana Francisca de Nascimento Souza (48) - spouse
20) José Gois da Silva (Zé Bebenuto) (48)
   Nilza Santos Reis da Silva (42) - spouse
21) Antonio Santos Reis (Boca Crente) (60)
   Teresa Rodrigues Reis (Tetê) (58) - spouse
22) José Nilson Araújo da Silva (Zé Nilson) (33)
   Ivaneide Jesus Santana (26) - spouse
23) Maria Josefa de Jesus (Preta) (38)
24) Valdinho Jesus dos Santos (Caboquinho) (32)
25) Osvaldo Santos dos Reis (Dadá) (49)
26) Ari Souza (Nenzão) (49)
   Eilane (15) - daughter (interviewed at the home of her uncle, Adilson)
27) Manoel Costa Santana (Nego Velho) (47)

**Case Study 4: Moita Redonda** (March 28-31, 2006)

1) Maria Angelina de Conceição (Maria de Giló) (51)
   Augusto Alves de Souza (Dudú) (54) - spouse
2) Marcos Roberto Santis Silva (28)
   Maria José Ferreira dos Santos (28) - spouse
3) Benival Pereira de Santos (52)
   Maria Wilma Martins dos Reis (33) - spouse
4) Raimundo Jesus Rodrigues (39)
   Gedilsa Ribeira Nascimento Rodrigues (31) - spouse
5) José Walmir Martins Reis (Walmir) (36)
   Irellice Souza de França (29) - spouse
6) José Batista de Souza (29)
   Anuncieta de Espírito Santo Souza (28) - spouse
7) José Ribeiro dos Santos (63)
   Dominga Alves de Silva (52) - spouse
   Edivania da Silva (26) - daughter
8) Pedro Xavier dos Santos (59)
9) Hilda Silva dos Santos (Miudinha) (39)
   José Vincente Irmão (Ze de Beti) (62) - spouse
10) Tarcila Pereira Andrade Oliveira (Daci) (44)
11) José Correia dos Santos Irmão (Cohó) (46)
    Josefa Correia dos Santos (45) - spouse
12) Edivaldo Rodrigues dos Santos (Dadinho) (49)
13) Cecília Souza dos Santos (43)
14) Walter de Souza (26)
15) Irandi Serra Santos (38)
    José da Conceição (39) – spouse
    Evalton (18) - son
16) Lindoval de Conceição (46)
17) Antonio Pereira Lima (Liazinho) (65)
18) Antonio Alves Santos (59)
19) Aldemir de Goes Santos (Pipio) (32)
20) Renivaldo Dias dos Santos (Reninho) (34)
21) Israel Xavier dos Santos (Real) (52)
22) Joseneide Rodrigues dos Santos (Neide) (42)
23) Maria Olga Santana Reis (Olga) (59)
24) Lucineia Lima de Souza Santana (Neia) (20)

Case Study 5: Passos da Esperança (March 27-28, 2006)

1) Valdina de Oliveira (41)
2) Josefa Santos Cavalho (44)
3) Donice Reis (37)
   Adeladio Cardoso Souza (Bolero) – 46) - spouse
4) Denicio Antonio dos Santos (Barrudo) (33)
   Gilvaneide Conceição dos Santos (Neide) (31) - spouse
5) Josefa Almeida da Silva (51)
   José Bispo de Jesus (59)
6) João Ferreira Firmo (46)
   Angelita Pereira de Souza (41) - spouse
7) Americo Anatole dos Santos (Anatole) (55)
   Martinha Reis de Jesus (54) - spouse
8) José Nascimento dos Santos (28)
Marivalda Reis Silva (21) - spouse
9) Edilson Emilio Ferreira (32)
    Joselita Conceição Santos Ferreira (28) - spouse
    Desiane (13) - daughter
10) Railda Dantas Oliveira (40)
    Eduardo Alves da Silva (42) - spouse
11) Jierson Secundino dos Reis (30)
    Eurides Maria de Jesus Santos (26) - spouse
12) Josenito Oliveira Santana (59)
    Maria Ilza dos Santos Santana (Ilza) (57) - spouse
13) José Figueira Almeida (Uga) (46)
    Josefa Luziana dos Santos (29) - spouse
14) Mauricio Batista de Santana (32)
15) Domingo Vieira dos Santos (Bob Sponja) (62)
16) Gabriel Lopes dos Santos (Bié) (48)
    Miriam Silva Santos (Mira) (42) - spouse
    Lauravania Lopes Santos (21) - daughter
17) Antonio Luiz Ramos (Tonho de Valdete) (31)
18) José Fernandes Moreira da Silva (Fernando) (37)
19) José Pereira de Jesus (Zé da Gracia) (51)

Case Study 6: Boa Vista (Biritinga) (April 18-20, 2006)

1) Josenilda de Gois Bento (Josi) (33)
   Jurandi Ferreiro Nilo (55) - spouse
2) Jacira Assis de Jesus (43)
3) Juraci Ferreira Lima (Jura) (56)
   Josefa Silveira de Jesus Lima (Zefina) (38)
4) Manoel de Silva Santos (Leso) (38)
   Luciene de Almeida (27) - spouse
5) Janilda da Silva (Jane) (25)
6) João Rocha (65)
   Maria Delunda Guimaraes Oliveira (Del) (40) - spouse
   Jailson (16) - son
7) Maria Elena de Souza (Dedê) (50)
8) Antonio Sales da Silva (46)
    Maria das Graças Silva e Silva (Gracinha) (44) - spouse
9) José Osmari Motta de Carvalho (Nininho) (41)
    Aliene Moraes dos Santos (35) - spouse
10) Julia Jesus Ramos (34)  
   José Carlos de Jesus (Cabeludo) (33) - spouse
11) José Rubens Mata de Carvalho (35)  
   Juviane Maria Silva Carvalho (19) - spouse
12) Lourival Ferreira Lima (Lolo) (58)
13) José Firmino dos Santos (Firmino) (63)
14) Evandro Martins de Lima (Arroz) (35)  
   Vanusa da Silva (Cigana) (29) - spouse
15) Eugenia Rodrigues de Souza (Jenice) (53)
16) José Marivaldo Lima Pinheiro (Marivaldo) (48)
17) Sebastião Binas Santos (Bastião) (46)
18) Isidora Maria de Jesus (Dorinha) (62)
19) Jair Barbino Pereira de Santana (29)  
   Vanusia Jesus dos Santos (Nusia) (21) - spouse
20) Paulo Carmo Lima (43)  
   Maria José Capistrano Lima (Zefinha) (37) - spouse
21) Miguel Ferreira Santiago (49)

**Case Study 7: Fazenda Veneza** (March 18 & 20, 2006)

1) José dos Santos (Delço) (34)
2) Raimundo Ferreira Silva Morães (35)  
   Ivone Ferreira dos Santos (47) - spouse
3) Edeon Ferreira de Melo (35)
4) Walter Dantes de Oliveira (59)
5) Cláudio Dantes de Carvalho (38)
6) Francisco Ferreira Dias (37)  
   Rosenilde Jesus Silva (37) - spouse
7) Inês Ferreira da Souza (29)
8) José Carlos Correia de Souza (28)
9) Renan Gonçalves Teixeira (61)  
   Francisca Vasco da Silva (Chica) (51) - spouse
10) Duvalina Rodrigues de Souza (Duva) (51)  
    Douglas Souza (Boca) (18) - son
11) José Tancredo Melo (Zé de Chico) (60)
    Márcio Souza Melo (32) - son
12) Adenor Bittencourt da Silva (60)  
    Raimunda Santos da Silva (39) - spouse
13) Telso Costa Santos (64)
14) Rógerio Xavier (34)
   Menicia Cardoso e Silva Xavier (30) - spouse
15) Eríco Dantas de Souza (28)
   Dominga Gama (28) - spouse
16) Raimundo Aleixo dos Santos (Raimundinho) (31)
   Monalisa Cardoso e Silva (31) - spouse
17) Mancileide Souza Melo (24)
18) Ireneide Aleixo de Morães (37)
    João de Deus de Carvalho (Jojão) (70)
APPENDIX A

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

The following is the form as actually used in the field. This was adapted for the sake of clarity with the input of local native speakers. The English translation follows.

The consent form was read by (or to, where reading skills were limited) and explained to all interviewees in the settlement areas. All interviewees waived confidentiality.

---

Formulário de Consentimento
Estudo de Cédula da Terra


A participação de entrevistados é voluntária. O entrevistado pode, a qualquer momento, recusar de responder a qualquer pergunta ou pode parar a entrevista. A entrevista deve durar mais ou menos uma hora.

As informações compartilhadas na entrevista são confidenciais no sentido que o entrevistado (menos que ele/ela concorde ao contrário) não será citado o nome, em qualquer maneira que deixará que ele/ela possa ser identificado como a fonte da informação. O risco que esta confidencialidade pode ser violado é muito pouco.

A finalidade desta pesquisa será uma avaliação que beneficiará trabalhadores rurais e outros que apoiam reforma agrária, como também agências de desenvolvimento, possibilitando um melhor entendimento dos pontos fortes e fracos deste modelo de reforma agrária, e providenciar informações que possam melhorar a situação de pessoas participantes deste programa e de outros programas semelhantes.

O responsável para a pesquisa é Arthur George Powers: (0xx 21 9615 0330 ou arthur_g_powers@yahoo.com)

Se você tiver perguntas sobre os seus direitos referente à esta pesquisa, entre em contato com Julie Simpson no Secretariado de Pesquisas da Universidade de New Hampshire: julie.simpson@unh.edu

Anotar qualquer renúncia de confidencialidade e suas condições:

______________________________
Assinatura do entrevistado

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Appendix A: English Translation

Consent Form

Cédula da Terra Study

This study has as its objective an evaluation of the Cédula da Terra program. The study is being carried out by Arthur George Powers in preparation for his doctoral dissertation at the University of New Hampshire, U.S.A.

Participation by interviewees is voluntary. The interviewee may, at any time, refuse to respond to any question or stop the interview. The interview lasts more or less one hour.

Information shared in the interview is confidential in the sense that the interviewee (unless s/he agrees to the contrary) will not be cited by name, in any manner that will allow him/her to be identified as the source of information. The risk that this confidentiality can be violated is very small.

The purpose of this study is an evaluation that will benefit rural workers and others who support agrarian reform, as well as development agencies, making possible the better understanding of the strong and weak points of this model of agrarian reform, and to provide information that can better the situation of people participating in this program and other similar programs.

The person responsible for this study is Arthur George Powers (0xx 21 9615 0330 or arthur_g_powers@yahoo.com)

If you have questions regarding your rights in reference to this study, enter in contact with Julie Simpson at the Secretariat of Studies of the University of New Hampshire: julie.simpson@unh.edu

Note down any waiver of confidentiality and the conditions [of the waiver]:

______________________________
Signature of the interviewee
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW FORMS

PORTUGUESE AND ENGLISH

For each household interviewed, a family information form (cadastro) was filled in. For each interviewee, an interview form was available (though in practice, for logistical reasons, interviewers often noted the responses of family members on the same form, indicating which family member the response came from). In some cases, family members were interviewed jointly, in others separately. Family member interviews were then brought together with the cadastro and randomly assigned a number for records purposes.
PROJETO DE ESTUDO
“CÉDULA DA TERRA”

FICHA DE CADASTRO FAMILIAR

No. __________

1 _ LOCALIZAÇÃO
Município: ____________
Comunidade: ____________

2 _ IDENTIFICAÇÃO
Nome: ____________

Apelido: ____________
Estado civil: ____________

Nascimento (data):

Cidade e estado: ____________
Zona rural ou urbana: ____________

Grau de instrução: ____________
Continua estudando? ( )sim ( ) não

Companheira:

Apelido: ____________
Estado civil: ____________

Nascimento:

Cidade e estado: ____________
Zona rural ou urbana: ____________

Grau de instrução: ____________
Continua estudando? ( )sim ( ) não

Dependentes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nome</th>
<th>Idade</th>
<th>Estuda</th>
<th>Qual Série</th>
<th>Parentesco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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3 CAPACIDADE PRODUTIVA
A terra tem quantas hectares (ou tarefas)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planta? O que?</th>
<th>Percentagem?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Quais fruteiras tem (tipo e número)?

Criatorios:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cria? O que?</th>
<th>Quantos?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4 RENDA
Trabalha em que? Renda anual:

Tem aposentados(as) em casa? Quantos?

Tem assalariados em casa? Quantos?

• Os assalariados trabalham em que?

Tem alguém que ganha como diarista ou biscateiro? Quantos?

• Ele(s) trabalha(m) em que?

Tem renda que vem através de produção artesanal?
## CONDIÇÕES DE INFRA-ESTRUTURA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tipo de construção da casa</th>
<th>Abastecimento</th>
<th>Tratamento da água</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Tijolo/Alvenaria</td>
<td>__Barreiro</td>
<td>__Filtrada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Adobe</td>
<td>__Poço/Nascente</td>
<td>__Fervida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Taipa revestida</td>
<td>__Carro pipa público</td>
<td>__Coada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Taipa não revestida</td>
<td>__Carro pipa privado</td>
<td>__Semente de lirio branco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Madeira</td>
<td>__Cisternas</td>
<td>__Cloração</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Material aproveitado</td>
<td>__Rede pública</td>
<td>__Corta (usa sal, cimento)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Outros</td>
<td>__Outros</td>
<td>__Outros</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escoamento Sanitário</th>
<th>Destino do lixo</th>
<th>Saúde</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__Céu aberto</td>
<td>__Céu aberto</td>
<td>__Atendimento médico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Rede pública</td>
<td>__Coletado</td>
<td>__Saneamento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Fossa</td>
<td>__Queimado</td>
<td>__Posto de saúde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Fossa séptica</td>
<td>__Enterrado</td>
<td>__Agua encanada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__Vala</td>
<td>__Outro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tem reservatório de água? ( )sim ( )não Quantos? Tipo?

Qual a distância para buscar água? Quem vai buscar?

Onde pega a água? ( ) barreiro ( ) açude Outros:

Qual a qualidade da água? ( ) salobra ( )+magnésio ( )barrenta ( )limo ( )poluida-dejetos ( ) boa qualidade outros:

Existe lavandaria comunitária? Onde: Origem da água:

Quais as principais doenças que afetam sua família?
Pesquisa referente a “reforma agrária a base do mercado”

Arthur George Powers, dissertação de Ph.D. - Universidade de New Hampshire

Para moradores nos assentamentos

Data:

Nome do entrevistado:

Apelido:

Outras pessoas presentes:

Confidencialidade:

- Completa (a informação não será atribuída ao entrevistado)
- Parcial (indique os itens confidenciais)
- Desnecessária

Aplique ficha de cadastro familiar

1) Quero saber de você:
   a) família de origem/região:
   b) que fez antes da reforma agrária:

2) Como foi que chegou a morar aqui?

3) Me conta como foi que você adquiriu esta terra.

4) Quem teve a ideia de comprar esta terra?

5) Você ou alguém de sua família [quem?] participou na decisão de comprar esta terra?

6) Quem foram os líderes na compra da terra? [Eles residem no assentamento? Que é que você pensa deles?]

7) A quem pertencia a terra? Fale sobre ele:

8) Você ou alguém da sua família participou nas negociações da compra da terra? [Em que maneira? Você acha que sua participação foi importante?]
9) Vocês tiveram assistência técnica na compra da terra? De quem? Como foi?

10) Atualmente, você participa nas atividades/funçãoamento do assentamento? De que maneira? Que é que você acha de sua participação atual?

11) Quando você precisa de conselho (orientações), você procura quem - referente aos assuntos de
   a) Terra?
   b) Lavoura?
   c) Finanças?
   d) Família?

12) Quem são os líderes atuais do assentamento?

13) São grandes diferenças de opinião entre moradores do assentamento? Sobre que? Como é que estas diferenças são tratadas?

14) Fale sobre a associação. [Como foi que começou? Quem foi que começou? A associação representa bem os interesses de sua família? Das outras famílias?]

15) Você participou na organização da associação? Como foi sua participação?

16) Você participa atualmente na associação? (Se não, porque?) Como é sua participação?

17) Se você pudesse conseguir crédito sem a associação, ainda continuaria de se manter associado?

18) Em quais programas de crédito sua família tem participado?

19) Se você pudesse conseguir outro lote de terra nesta região, igual ou melhor do que a sua, você sairia do assentamento?

20) Se você pudesse vender sua terra, venderia?
21) Como é que você sente sobre a vida que você e sua família tem aqui no assentamento?

22) Quais são as coisas que você gosta aqui?

23) Quais são as coisas que não gosta?

24) Que precisa para que a sua vida (e de sua família) seja melhor?

25) Como são as escolas? (acesso, nível, qualidade)

26) Como é o serviço de saúde? (acesso, disponibilidade de médicos, qualidade)

27) Quando você mudou para o assentamento, sua vida:
   a) Ficou melhor?
   b) Ficou pior?
   c) Ficou mais ou menos no mesmo nível?

28) Daqui a dois anos, a vida no assentamento será melhor ou pior? E em dez anos? Porque?

29) Quais são suas esperanças para o seu futuro e de sua família? Em 10 anos? Em 20?

30) Fale sobre a sua terra e lavoura:
   a) A terra é fertil?
   b) Como é o preparo do solo para a plantação?
   c) Você usa adubo – que tipo?
   d) Você usa pesticidas – que tipo?
   e) Que tipos de pragas tem na lavoura?
   f) Você pratica rotação das lavouras? De quanto em quanto tempo?
   g) Que tipo de assistência técnica você recebe?
   h) Você vende uma parte da sua produção? Qual percentagem? Onde vende? Qual preço?

32) Quais são os pagamentos que vocês têm que fazer para a terra? Você se preocupa com eles?

33) Quais são as coisas que mais preocupa?

34) Os assentados aqui são unidos ou divididos? Porque?

35) Que é que une mais as pessoas no assentamento? Que é que mais os divide?

36) No seu ver, quem é que apoia (está a favor do) o trabalhador rural?

37) No seu ver, quem é que está contra (dificulta a vida do) o trabalhador rural?

38) Que é que você pensa do Movimento Sem Terra (MST)?

39) Você votou na última eleição para presidente? (Em quem? – primeiro e segundo turno)

40) E na eleição deste ano, você pensa de votar em quem?

41) Você tem um partido político de preferência? (Qual?)

42) Você votou nas eleições para prefeito?

43) Você ajudou algum candidato?
44) Você participa nas seguintes organizações:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizações</th>
<th>Muito</th>
<th>Mais ou menos</th>
<th>Pouco</th>
<th>Não</th>
<th>Qual Função?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associação do assentamento</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperativa</td>
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<td>Partido político</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grupo de mulheres</td>
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<td>Sindicato</td>
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<td>Igreja ou grupo religioso</td>
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<td>Grupo de esporte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grupo de jovens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associação de pais e mestres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outros</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Observações da equipe:

- Condições da casa e limpeza, presença de outras construções no lote, disponibilidade de água, disponibilidade de comida

- Animais, lavora, padrões de produção, infraestrutura produtiva

- Interação entre vizinhos, sinais de conflito, sinais de divergência de renda/riqueza dentro do assentamento
Appendix B – English Translation

Information Form

Study Project

Cédula da Terra

Family Information Form

No. ____

1. **Locality**

Municipality: Community:

2. **Identification**

Name: Marital state: 
Nickname: 
Birth date: Rural or urban? 
City & State: 
Schooling: Still studying? ( ) yes ( ) no

Spouse: 
Name: Marital state: 
Nickname: 
Birth date: Rural or urban? 
City & State: 
Schooling: Still studying? ( ) yes ( ) no

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Studies</th>
<th>What grade?</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. **Productive Capacity**

How many hectares (or tarefas) does your land have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you plant?</th>
<th>Percentage?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What fruit trees do you have (type & number)?

Livestock:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you raise?</th>
<th>How many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. **Income**

What do you work at?  
Annual income:

Are there pensioners in the family?  
How many?

Are there salaried people in the family?  
How many?

- The salaried workers do what?

Does anyone earn as a day laborer or freelance worker?  How many?

- They work at what?

Is there any income from artisan work?
5. **Infrastructure Conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of house construction</th>
<th>Water supply</th>
<th>Water treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ brick</td>
<td>_ reservoir</td>
<td>_ filter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ adobe</td>
<td>_ well/spring</td>
<td>_ boiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ taipa with plaster</td>
<td>_ public water truck</td>
<td>_ passed through a cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ unplastered taipa</td>
<td>_ private water truck</td>
<td>_ white lily seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ wood</td>
<td>_ rain cachements</td>
<td>_ chloration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ found materials</td>
<td>_ public water</td>
<td>_ cut with salt, cement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ other</td>
<td>_ others</td>
<td>_ others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human waste</th>
<th>Garbage</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ Open sky</td>
<td>_ open sky</td>
<td>_ medical attendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ public sewage</td>
<td>_ collected</td>
<td>_ sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ privy</td>
<td>_ burned</td>
<td>_ health post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ septic hole</td>
<td>_ buried</td>
<td>_ piped water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ ditch</td>
<td>_ Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have a water reservatory? ()yes (no  How big? Type?

What is the distance to go for water? Who fetches it?

Where do you get water? () dam () reservoir Other:

What is the quality of water? () salty () magnesium () clay () lime () polluted

() good quality () other

Is there a community laundry area? Where: Source of water:

What are the principal sicknesses that affect your family?
Appendix B

Questionnaire

Study of “market-based land reform”

Arthur George Powers, Ph.D. dissertation – University of New Hampshire

For dwellers in settlement areas

Date:

Name of interviewee:

Nickname:

Other persons present:

Confidentiality:

- Complete (the information will not be attributed to the interviewee)
- Partial (indicate the confidential items)
- Unnecessary

Fill in the Family Information Form

1) I would like to know from you:
   a) Family and region of origin:
   b) What you did prior to agrarian reform:

2) How did you come to live here?

3) Tell me how it was that you acquired this land.

4) Who had the idea of buying this land?

5) Did you or anyone in your family (who?) participate in the decision to buy this land?

6) Who were the leaders in the land purchase? (Do they still reside in the settlement? What do you think of them?)

7) To whom did the land belong? Talk about him:

8) Did you or anyone in your family participate in the negotiations to buy the land? (In what way?) Do you think that your participation was important?)
9) Did you have technical assistance in purchasing the land? From whom? How was it?

10) Presently, do you participate in settlement activities/functioning? In what way? What do you think about your present participation?

11) When you need advice (orientation), whom to you seek out in terms of the following matters:
   a) Land?
   b) Crops?
   c) Finances?
   d) Family matters?

12) Who are the present leaders of the settlement?

13) Are there big differences of opinion among the settlement dwellers? About what? Who are these differences dealt with?

14) Talk about the association. (How did it begin? Who started it? Does the association represent well the interests of your family? Of other families?)

15) Did you participate in the organization of the association? How was your participation?

16) Do you presently participate in the association? (If not, why not?) How is your participation?

17) If you could obtain credit without the association, would you continue to be a member?

18) In which credit programs does your family participate?

19) If you could obtain another lot [of land] in this region, equal or better than yours, would you leave the settlement?

20) If you could sell your lot, would you do so?

21) How do you feel about the life you and your family have here in the settlement?

22) What are the things you like here?

23) What are the things you don’t like?

24) What is needed for your life (and that of your family) to be better?

25) How are the schools? (access, level, quality)
26) How is the health service? (access, availability of doctors, quality)

27) When you moved to the settlement, your life:
   a) Got better?
   b) Got worse?
   c) Stayed more or less at the same level?

28) In two years, will life in the settlement be better or worse? In ten years? Why?

29) What are your hopes for your future and that of your family? In 10 years? In 20?

30) Talk about your land and crops:
   a) Is the land fertile?
   b) How do you prepare the soil for planting?
   c) Do you use fertilizer – what type?
   d) Do you use pesticides – what type?
   e) What type of pests do you have in the crops?
   f) Do you practice crop rotation? How often?
   g) What type of technical assistance do you receive?
   h) Do you sell a part of what you grow? What percent? Where do you sell it? At what price?

31) Is your family income sufficient for your needs? Explain.

32) What are the payments you need to make for the land? Do you worry about them?

33) What are the things that most worry you?

34) Are the settlers here united or divided? Why?

35) What is it that most unites people in the settlement? What most divides them?

36) In your opinion, who supports (is in favor of) the rural worker?

37) In your opinion, who is against (makes life difficult for) the rural worker?

38) What do you think of the Movimento Sem Terra (MST)?

39) Did you vote in the last election for president? (For whom – first & second balloting)

40) And in the election this year, you are thinking of voting for whom?

41) Do you have a political party that you prefer? (Which?)
42) Did you vote in the elections for the municipal prefect?

43) Did you help any candidate?

44) Do you participate in the following organizations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>More or less</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>What role?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s group</td>
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<td>Union</td>
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<td>Church or religious group</td>
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<td>Sporting group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent-teachers assoc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Team observations:

- Condition and cleanliness of home, presence of other buildings on lot, availability of water, availability of food

- Animals, crops, production patterns, productive infrastructure

- Interaction with neighbors, signs of conflict, signs of gaps of income/wealth within the settlement
APPENDIX C

IRB LETTER
May 24, 2005

Arthur Powers
Natural Resources
James Hall
Durham, NH 03824

IRB #: 3279
Study: Market-Based Land Reform in Brazil
Approval Date: 05/23/2005

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects. (This document is also available at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/IRB.html.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed pink Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson
Manager

cc: File
Mimi Larsen Becker

Research Conduct and Compliance Services, Office of Sponsored Research, Service Building, 51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585 * Fax: 603-862-3564