

# The contributions of the notion of everyday resistance to the historiography of peasant struggle

## As contribuições da noção de resistência cotidiana para a historiografia da luta camponesa

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### Abstract

This article aims to present a theoretical perspective for the interpretation of the everyday resistance of landless workers in the struggle for agrarian reform. To achieve such objective, we explore the notion of everyday resistance, developed by James C. Scott, highlighting the strategies constituted in the relationship of consensus and confrontation with the State and dominant groups. The North American author's proposal is to shift the epistemological focus centered solely on the major rebellions and protests that have occurred in the historical process. Scott's theory values the minute daily actions of subordinate groups, directing attention to the hidden discourses and practices of prosaic struggle as a political expression in interpreting long-lasting class conflicts.

**Keywords:** James Scott; Peasants; Land reform.

### Resumo

O presente artigo busca apresentar uma perspectiva teórica para a interpretação da resistência cotidiana dos trabalhadores sem-terra na luta pela reforma agrária. Para tanto, explora-se a noção de resistência cotidiana, desenvolvida por James C. Scott, destacando as estratégias constituídas na relação de consenso e enfrentamento ao Estado e aos grupos dominantes. A proposta do autor norte-americano é deslocar o enfoque epistemológico centrado apenas nas grandes rebeliões e protestos ocorridos no processo histórico. A teoria de Scott valoriza o cotidiano ínfimo dos grupos subordinados, direcionando o olhar para os discursos e práticas ocultas da luta prosaica como expressão política na interpretação da longa duração dos conflitos de classe.

**Palavras-chave:** James Scott; Camponeses; Reforma Agrária.

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## Introduction

This article intends to focus on the peasant resistance issue in the historiography of class struggles and changes occurred in the historical knowledge production in the last few decades of the XX century. This is a bibliographical study on the possibilities of interpreting the peasants' resistance in the land reform struggle.

To deepen the understanding of the elements found in the landless workers' organization in their daily lives and change the focus from the classical paradigm that has prioritized great rebellions in history, we introduce the notion of everyday resistance developed by James C. Scott, as an analytical tool. In this sense, the recent process of landless workers' organization in social movements in the Brazilian context is highlighted, evidencing the perception of the need to defend their aims, interests, and social rights, as well as their class consciousness as subjects able to shape their own fate when facing the pressures and contradictions of capitalist society.

By means of dialoguing with Scott's theory, we managed to advance in the understanding of the daily life social disputes, which give meaning to the experience of fighting for land in the Brazilian field. The analysis of such everyday dynamics broadens the scope of this study, allowing the understanding of resistance and the strategies adopted by landless workers in their space of coexistence, where collective identities and solidarity networks are developed.

The everyday resistance approach reveals the landless workers' protagonism in the construction of their own history, emphasizing their ways of resisting, negotiating, and adapting to the adverse conditions of the agrarian context. Thus, Scott's theory offers analytical lenses that go beyond the most visible and spectacular protest demonstrations, enabling a deeper analysis of the subtle tactics and daily practices that shape those individuals' trajectory in the fight for the land.

Therefore, the incorporation of such notion in the historiography of land struggles in Brazil enriches the understanding of the landless workers' experiences and strategies, as well as the challenges they face in their journey of social transformation and pursuit of social and agrarian justice. When we look beyond great rebellions, we can see the force of the everyday fight and the fundamental role it plays in the long trajectory of resistance and claim for rights and equity in the Brazilian rural area.

## For a History of Everyday Resistance

When reviewing the peasant movement classical theories, Scott found out that in the historiographic tradition, peasant leaders started to occupy the center of material sources, in historical writings and files when in revolutions, rebellions, and wars of independence, they were seen as a constant threat to the state and the international order. For that author, theorists privileged strikes and great rebellions occurred in history as the axes to explain class struggle.

In a larger sense one might say that the historiography of class struggle has been systematically distorted in a state-centric direction. The events that claim attention are the events to which the state and the ruling classes accord most attention in their archives. Thus, for example, a small and futile rebellion claims an attention all-out of proportion to its impact on class relations, while unheralded acts of flight, sabotage, theft which may have far greater impact are rarely noticed. The small rebellion may have a symbolic importance for its violence and for its revolutionary aims but for most subordinate classes historically such rare episodes were of less moment than the quiet, unremitting guerilla warfare that took place day-in and day-out.<sup>1</sup>

Academic attention drawn to the peasant insurrections, mainly in the United States, only occurred after the end of the Vietnam War (1955-1975). Most of the time, when the peasants appeared in historical registers, they were not seen as political subjects able to promote social transformations, but rather as anonymous individuals linked to the several types of statistical data gathered such as demographic density, migration, land property, work relations, and farm production.

Conversely, Scott built up a theoretical-methodological approach to the peasants' "prosaic struggle", which constantly escapes and questions domination in daily life. That author believes that too much attention was given to insurrections, while some vital elements of the more durable terrain of class struggles was neglected. It seems relevant to highlight that rebel practices are relevant for the understanding of different forms of peasant resistance throughout the historical process. However, a methodological

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<sup>1</sup> SCOTT, James C. Everyday forms of peasant resistance. In: *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, v. 13, n. 2, 1986, p. 5.

effort is required to shift the epistemological position that privileges the perspective centered on state mediations since, according to that author:

A history of the peasantry which only focused on uprisings would be much like a history of factory workers devoted entirely to major strikes and riots. Important and diagnostic though these exceptional events may be, they tell us little about the most durable arena of class conflict and resistance: the vital, day-to-day struggle on the factory floor over the pace of work, over leisure, wages, autonomy, privileges, and respect<sup>2</sup>.

That author showed some limitations of the academic production based on written and official documents to reveal the contents of “anonymous forms” that constitute the peasant movement social world. Both the historiographic and literary productions, somehow, contributed to the construction of a stereotyped image of peasants, reproducing an idealized view of behaviors that alternated between passivity and insubordination impulses, as explained by Scott:

The explosions themselves are frequently a sign that the normal and largely covert forms of class struggle are failing or have reached a crisis point. Such declarations of open war, with their mortal risks, normally come only after a protracted struggle on different terrain<sup>3</sup>.

The agrarian reform study, for example, called the attention of a great part of human science researchers, mainly focusing on the analysis of battles fought by workers against powerful rural landowners and the state. In addition, when the context of camps is analyzed as the main form of political organization of the landless workers, the focus is turned to land occupations, that is, the direct confront with owners of vast portions of land.

In the Brazilian historiography, peasants are better known due to the great rebellions occurred against large landowners than by their historical formation or by the interpretation of their daily lives<sup>4</sup>. In fact, open confrontations reveal publicly the unequal conditions experienced by

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<sup>2</sup> SCOTT, James C. Everyday forms of peasant resistance. In: *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, v. 13, n. 2, 1986, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> SCOTT, James C. Normal Exploitations, Normal Resistance. In: *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press, 1985, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> MOTTA, Márcia; ZARTH, Paulo. (Orgs.). *Formas de resistência camponesa: visibilidade e diversidade de conflitos ao longo da história*. Vol. I: Concepções de justiça e resistência nos Brasis. São Paulo, UNESP; Brasília, Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário, NEAD, 2008.

field workers and their disagreements with the reproduction of such unequal conditions and neglected forms of life.

On the one hand, the public act of occupying an unproductive property denounces that certain area is not fulfilling a social role, that is, it should be expropriated and destined to the land reform process to really meet the requirements of those who need to work and produce. On the other hand, the action carried out by landless workers to guarantee this right denied by the state is qualified as a violation of the private property right principle, even if certain property is unproductive or underused.

The landless workers' action as a resistance practice is a way to question the Brazilian archaic power structures. During the civil-military regime, installed as a consequence of the political impasses related to the agrarian issue in the country, the state created a legal apparatus supported by the Land Statute (1964) to "administrate" the agrarian issue, aiming at isolating territorial conflicts that might provoke political risks to the development plans implemented favoring the latifúndio<sup>5</sup>.

Land occupations and the organization of camps are the main collective actions disseminated by the field social movements as a form of protesting, putting pressure, and negotiating their demands with the state. The resistance organized within social movements boosted significantly the creation of rural settlements in Brazil.

However, it seems relevant to emphasize that the focus on the daily life of landless camps did not receive the same theoretical treatment when compared to rural settlements<sup>6</sup>. This usually occurs because their organization is "temporary" since they are part of a phase that precedes the creation of rural settlement projects, marked by the transient families and the political impasses of negotiations with the government<sup>7</sup>.

The fight for land is one way of resistance woven by landless families facing the capital contradictory dynamics, which spreads over the field and the city on behalf of "progress" and the rationalized (mechanized) agricultural

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<sup>5</sup> MARTINS, José de Souza. *Os camponeses e a política no Brasil: as lutas sociais no campo e seu lugar no processo político*. Editora Vozes, 1981.

<sup>6</sup> TURATTI, Maria Cecília. M. Uma etapa pretérita: a passagem pelos acampamentos. *Travessia*, São Paulo, n. 39, p. 21-24, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> SAUER, Sérgio. *Terra e modernidade: a reinvenção do campo brasileiro*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2010.

production provoking the appearance of a disowned and aimless crowd, kept on the margins of society and destined to several forms of precarious survival<sup>8</sup>.

Not only did those workers share the closeness of the tents organized next to the roads, but also the unequal insertion in class relations. Those social spaces generate learning and contribute to the construction of new community knowledges, practices, and values. The solidarity among the participants is based on sharing experiences, trajectories, and expectations for the future that unifies the similarity of their social conditions exercised in the everyday resistance.

This principle interconnects the differences between the members of a movement, but this does not mean that social movements are formed by a harmonic and homogeneous unity, on the contrary, conflicts and tensions are recurrent among their members. In the public spaces of claims, discourses and practices tend to converge, creating an imaginary of unity and a vision of wholeness<sup>9</sup>.

Sociability spaces in the camps are important to understand the workers' actions in the land struggle. Occupations and camps represent innovations of practices in the subversion of order and legality, whose objective is to legitimate their right to the land. The dissidence of social movements when facing power relations broadens the horizon of reflections upon ruptures in the workers' ways of thinking and acting as well as in their actions.

Resistance in camp spaces can be interpreted as a practical expression of subordinate groups in the routine of little visibility, based on a discrete fight, which is most times anonymous, when compared to participations in the "formal politics". In this sense, Scott presented a fundamental distinction to mark the formal and informal organization environments, when considering that:

If formal political organization is the realm of elites (for example, lawyers, politicians, revolutionaries, political bosses), of written records (for example, resolutions, declarations, news stories, petitions, lawsuits), and of public action, infrapolitics is, by contrast, the realm of informal leadership and nonelites, of conversation and oral discourse, and of surreptitious resistance<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> MARTINS, José de Souza. *A sociabilidade do homem simples: cotidiano e história na modernidade anômala*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> GOHN, Maria da Glória. 500 Anos de lutas sociais no Brasil: movimentos sociais, ONGs e terceiro setor. *Revista Mediações*, Londrina, v. 5, n. 1, p. 11-64, 2000, p.14.

<sup>10</sup> SCOTT, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 200.

Such separation is fundamental to set the workers' position in the everyday fight and in the long duration of class struggles. The struggles in the informal contexts of the political life test and question the "boundaries of permissible". And the resistance is constituted in the doings of the daily struggle, since, in addition to being an instrument of political intervention in their reality, it is also a way of subverting historical domination.

Peasants have formulated, historically, based on their own experience of suffering, such as exploitation and expropriation, an intense discourse that presents a critique to the power exercised by the dominant groups. This resistance practice is built up in the realm of subordination relations. However, it seems relevant to emphasize that, in these relations, there is no effective full domination, and it is moved through ruptures that result in the subversion of the power exercised by the dominant elites.

Scott thoroughly examined the occurrence of the "border violation" between the public discourse of dominant groups and the opposing discourse by the dominated groups, characterized by simulation of a staged submission. For that author, the political impacts resulting from the public statement of the "hidden transcript" might succeed or fail, also provoking extraordinary effects on social transformations.

Such direction directs our view to the land struggle claims, which represent an invaluable field of manifestation of the social conflicts and contradictions. Collective actions outstand in the mainstream news and headlines of the country with the intensification of occupations and the formation of camps with the presence of landless families demanding the land reform. This is, therefore, a process of affirmation of the social rights that have been institutionally denied and is characterized by the media as a "rebel act". When we do not interpret the workers' choices in the daily life context, any act of public demonstration for better life conditions can be labelled as a "rebel act".

A well-succeeded act of public demonstration and insubordination by the workers and peasants is already enough to cross the "boundaries of permissible" in power relations. The protests and demonstrations generate consequences for those that dare to defy the authority and power established in society, since "by denying rebels the status in public discourse they seek, the authorities choose to assimilate their acts to a category that minimizes its political challenge to the state"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> SCOTT, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 206.

The labels ascribed to the action of the land struggle movements are created when the forms of insubordination are potentially opened when facing the dominant groups and the state. The landless workers' refusal with different practices that challenge the rural environment dominant structure represents threatens that hamper the reproduction of "hegemonic appearances".

By promoting the rupture with a mentality of subordination, landless workers create possible alternatives to claim their fundamental rights. Their attempt to disqualify the public challenge results in the main labels ascribed to social movements, supported by the format of news contents produced and disseminated about the territorial disputes in our country. The dominant groups' rhetoric and the media coverage have acted in the classification of these people as "enemies" of the country.

Taking that into consideration, Scott raises a relevant issue about the characteristics depicted by communication means, in which revolutionary groups are commonly deemed as "bandits", even when peasants transform in heroes those that promoted popular justice; and dissidents are seen as mentally disturbed individuals, nation's opponents or traitors, whether these produced adjectives prevail or not in the minds of a broader group in society.

Such questioning seems to be quite relevant to reflect upon the effort made by the dominant elite to disseminate the legitimacy of field violence, with the consent of the state, to defend private property, which is supported by great part of society. And the news reports act directly and indirectly to disseminate and privilege agribusiness dominant sectors in society.

In a polarized context of class struggles, we understand that certain derogative adjectives used to depict the landless workers tend to prevail in the public opinion, even if a significant advance has been observed in the last few decades, with the appearance of several alternative channels and media produced by the landless groups.

While the land reform fight gains new spaces, the answer is increased state repression and the violence imposed by henchmen and gunmen, stiffing even more the unequal field of correlation of political forces. Even in a field of political disputes that is unfavorable to the action of organized movements, the occupation has been the main offensive method against unproductive latifundios or land occupied by deed-falsifiers.

Daily actions confirm the forms of resistance built up in different experiences, which might reveal the main alternatives found for the

construction of political agendas and protest discourses. The decisions about land struggles demonstrate the workers' historical ability of collective organization to claim their rights, clashing with the dominant groups' interests, which equipped peasants with a sense of social justice that legitimates historically their practices in defense of the right and permanence on the land.

These and other forms of dissatisfaction contribute to build up a horizon of possibilities for the understanding of the landless workers' daily, fragmented, and diffuse forms of resistance.

### Dissident Culture and the Art of Political Disguise

The interpretation of daily forms of resistance found in Scott's theory puts forward a critique to the Marxist thesis of hegemony concept elaborated based on Antonio Gramsci's writings. Scott points out that resistance implies challenging the power exercised by dominant groups from hidden forms (and also declared) by subordinate groups.

Conversely, the hegemony thesis explains that subaltern groups tend to absorb a "dominant ideology" that distorts the social reality experienced, resulting in the creation of a distorted network of values and beliefs that are shared among the dominated. Social domination from one group to the other does not occur by the use of force, but rather by the propagation of a social authority, since the groups control the material life production means and the ideological sectors that form social consciousness.

The discussion around the material life production mode and, consequently, the social consciousness production originated from the classical theory by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as presented in the work called *The German Ideology*. Such ideas were written between 1845 and 1846 and those authors developed a critique to the German Neohegelian philosophy, particularly to the idealism and the principles of materialism by Ludwig Feuerbach. About representations of the self and the world linked to the dominant ideas in different historical times, Marx e Engels stated that:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are

on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch<sup>12</sup>.

Scott's critique is based on the contemporary reading of this form of historical interpretation of cultural domination, supported by the assumption of the ideological alignment of hegemonic groups that creates a "false consciousness" among the dominated groups. Thus, Scott exposes the main gaps in the hegemonic thesis ramifications:

The problem with the hegemonic thesis, at least in its strong forms as proposed by some of Gramsci's successors, is that it is difficult to explain how social change could ever originate from below. If elites control the material basis of production, allowing them to extract practical conformity, and also control the means of symbolic production, thereby ensuring that their power and control are legitimized, one has achieved a self-perpetuating equilibrium that can be disturbed only by an external shock<sup>13</sup>.

The issue proposed sets parameters of consent, supported by the asymmetric exercise of authority and unequal control of objective and subjective relations built up in power relations until there is a political will intervention in the form of a party. The centrality of the party in the political organization of the working class plays a fundamental role in untying the "social block" from the revolutionary practice, since this would be the only way for the dominated groups to give a new meaning to their experiences and world views.

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<sup>12</sup> MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. *The German Ideology*: including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to The critique of political economy. New York: Prometheus Books, 1998, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> SCOTT, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 78.

Some theorists pointed out to a historical trend of revolution originated in the working class, granting the proletariat a revolutionary role able to promote great alterations in the structure of power relations. In the Brazilian historical reality, the urban-industrial proletariat was conceived as the main historical agent able to break the structure of class domination in the relations of material life production in capitalist society, disregarding the political action of peasant struggles. In addition, the peasant movement history in Brazil is related to the guardianship of political parties and field paternalism<sup>14</sup>.

Such historical perspective suppressed the interpretation of conflicts and contradictions of capitalist relations based on the experiences lived by peasants as a class, as well as their ways of thinking, their ideas and values built up along the historical process. In the specific case of the main formulations of the hegemony thesis, that author understood that they did not allow the identification of conflicts and protests that really occurred in social relations. Thus, Scott considers that:

Those who are tempted to dismiss all principles of human action that contend with class identity as “false-consciousness” and to wait for Althusser’s “determination in the last instance” are likely to wait in vain. In the meantime, the messy reality of multiple identities will continue to be the experience out of which social relations are conducted<sup>15</sup>.

The everyday forms of resistance by subordinate groups, relatively powerless, considered by that author as the “weapons of the weak” are dissimulation, foot dragging, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, gossip, and arson, among others.

In his work *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, the author defends the idea that subordinate groups, mainly peasants, developed spaces for the dissemination of a “dissident subculture” characterized by “political disguise” to face power. The hidden resistance practices are evidenced in situations in which certain groups challenge the unequal life conditions that are imposed in a top-down manner. These are “silent” actions because in certain political struggle situations it is not favorable to state publicly or challenge the social authority of the relevant dominant group. Therefore, that author defends that

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<sup>14</sup> MARTINS, José de Souza. *Os camponeses e a política no Brasil: as lutas sociais no campo e seu lugar no processo político*. Editora Vozes, 1981.

<sup>15</sup> SCOTT, James C. Normal Exploitations, Normal Resistance. In: *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press, 1985, p. 43.

the greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinate and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinates will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast. In other words, the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask<sup>16</sup>.

The analysis of resistance movements requires an exercise of interpretation of an “offstage transcript” woven on the edges of power relations, that is, in the “hidden transcript”, where the main critique to the contradictions lived and noticed unequal relations are born.

It is backstage of the “political theatre”, which is marked by the “game of appearances”, in which the revelation of the real meanings behind great deeds carried out by authorities and governments who are used to “ascribing to themselves the history protagonism and scene” occurs. The condition opposed to their own will also occurs to obtain other possible gains, because dominants can never fully dominate the “scene”. For certain subordinate groups, political strategies have been the constitution of a “silent struggle”, away from the presence of dominant groups and the state, which keep the violence monopoly.

This is a fundamental issue to think resistance as “acceptance” to open new horizons to possible interpretations of power relations. The “apparent acceptance” might mean a political strategy, since everyday resistance is positioned, dialectically, somewhere between consent and challenge to the dominant social order.

Scott sought to understand the power relations experienced by peasants in an outstanding rice producer region in Malaysia, in a period of mechanized agricultural development in the 1970s, with the introduction of automated machines and harvesters, which substituted the human workforce provoking decrease in their income and highlighting social inequalities.

The fact evidenced was that there were not open confronts or challenges by organized movements. The absence of a class-political organization to resist the forms of social exclusion promoted by the “capital innovations” did not necessarily mean that the peasants accepted passively certain conditions imposed. The actions carried out were anonymous due to the possibility of punishment to those involved.

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<sup>16</sup> SCOTT, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990, p. 3.

The alternatives found to manifest the main gestures of inconformity included starting some fire on the farms to boycott the use of machines by the landowners, for example. The assumed “passivity” condition in relation to the social domination on that island, in the absence of public confrontation, coexisted with the constant pressure exercised by the daily practices that questioned the social hierarchies established.

This does not mean that “accepting submission” reduces or nulls conflicts and the subversion of the dominant social order. When workers get organized in social movements to claim their right to the land, by means of a land reform fight, they also share their “experiences of suffering” and converging interests to break the domination ties that make them subordinate. So, they break the silence and promote public demonstrations that confront dominant groups.

The synthesis of the resistance practices analyzed might be better understood from individual and collective experiences, both hidden and declared, scattered, and organized at the level of the land struggle social movements. The feelings of submission, exploitation, anguish, suffering, humiliation, happiness, and dreams are part of the experiences lived and remembered to legitimate their achievements and the defended life style. Therefore, experiences are seen as a field of possibilities for the everyday struggle interpretation.

The argument defended is that resistances do not occur only in social movements or political parties, which are historically involved in the formation of class consciousness and a revolutionary view when facing the dominant class. In fact, they occur mainly outside these organizations, based on a critique to the conditions, convictions, and values imposed to them.

Resistances are formulated in the “minute daily actions” since individual criticism generated in the family and neighborhood scenery or in the work environment are shared among subjects, reaching a collective dimension of inconformity, and thus, resulting in consent or direct challenge to the dominant classes and the state.

For this reason, it is important to consider “hidden transcripts”, which occur some time before the actions of occupations or road blockage, as important aspects in the study of the everyday resistance. This implies that collectively the landless workers carry out a diagnosis of the conditions lived and elaborate a prognosis and a tactic definition for the land demand and the solidification of the struggle in the camp spaces.

To sum up, in addition to hidden discourses, researchers can collect and analyze some material such as minutes, booklets, base work notebooks, and, mainly, the agendas generated by workers regarding their forms of organizing the work and production in rural settlements. Such documents might help researchers to interpret the interests and projects defended by landless workers in the daily life of the land reform struggle spaces.

## Final Considerations

From the reflection proposed on the notion of everyday resistance, it is possible to think about the daily practices of subordinate groups and their conceptions and critiques to the dominant groups that defend class interests different from theirs. Everyday resistances show how subjects see themselves in the power relations surrounding them in certain historical situations and how they think and act in certain conditions experienced.

Interpreting resistances without reaching the dimension of what has been lived might result in a reduction in the field of possibilities of action by the subjects who transform reality and the possible history paths. Social experiences provide the necessary evidence to interpret the dialectical relation between objective and subjective determinations in conflicts lived throughout their lives. It is in the daily experience, built from their lives, where the subjects formulate rational and emotional responses to the social contradictions and their values, guiding their actions in certain situation and conditions in their daily lives<sup>17</sup>.

At each new organization in the land struggle, new contents emerge that go beyond public claims, and the need for deepening “hidden practices”. The land struggle camps result from the experience of workers and peasants expropriated of the field they desire, the possibility to return to their own land, or the denial of their first access to it.

Therefore, when workers decide to start a camp and occupy a farm, those subjects configure new sociability and collective resistance spaces. However, resistance in this case, comes much earlier than action, resulting from a process of interaction between thoughts and actions in their daily existence. This makes them active agents of their own fate, following certain paths, and making complex choices in the construction of their own history and in their daily actions.

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<sup>17</sup> THOMPSON, Edward P. *A miséria da teoria ou um planetário de erros: uma crítica ao pensamento de Althusser*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1981.

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