

Rural world, diverse lives: experiences, work and culture

Mundo rural, vidas diversas: experiências, trabalho e cultura

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Abstract

Throughout this presentation, we briefly discuss the studies that comprise the dossier “Rural World, Diverse Lives: Experiences, Work, and Culture.” This dossier brings together studies that address the Brazilian rural world from multiple dimensions: historical, social, political, and cultural. The articles presented here are situated between the colonial period and the 21st century and analyze themes such as land conflicts, migration, labor, political repression, monocultures, territorialities, and cosmologies. From a historical perspective, in dialogue with sociology, anthropology, and geography, the texts highlight the complexity of rural experiences and the protagonism of subjects often rendered invisible by traditional historiography. The articles in the dossier draw on diverse sources such as official documents, interviews, oral histories, ethnographic accounts, and others, proposing new ways of interpreting the rural world not only as a productive space, but also as a territory of disputes, resistance, knowledge, and meaning.

Keywords: Rural World; Territories and Territorialities; Trajectories and Experiences; Sources and Historical Narratives.

Resumo

Ao longo desta apresentação, comentamos brevemente os estudos que compõem o dossier *Mundo rural, vidas diversas: experiências, trabalho e cultura*. O dossier reúne estudos que abordam o mundo rural brasileiro em múltiplas

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dimensões: históricas, sociais, políticas e culturais. Os artigos aqui apresentados se situam entre o período colonial e o século XXI e analisam temas como conflitos fundiários, migrações, trabalho, repressão política, monoculturas, territorialidades e cosmologias. A partir de uma abordagem Histórica, em diálogo com a Sociologia, a Antropologia e a Geografia, os textos evidenciam a complexidade das experiências rurais e o protagonismo de sujeitos frequentemente invisibilizados pela historiografia tradicional. Os artigos do dossiê partem de fontes diversas como documentos oficiais, entrevistas, memórias orais, relatos etnográficos, entre outras, propondo novas formas de interpretar o rural não apenas enquanto um espaço produtivo, mas como um território de disputas, resistências, saberes e significados.

Palavras-Chave: Mundo Rural; Territórios e Territorialidades; Trajetórias e Experiências; Fontes e Narrativas Históricas.

Introduction

The Brazilian rural world has been the subject of study in the Humanities and Social Sciences since the early stages of its institutionalization in the country. This social, economic, and cultural space has generated fundamental debates in the field of Agrarian and Rural History, while also permeating historiographical, sociological, anthropological, and educational discussions. Land ownership and its use, in particular, have occupied a central place in the academic imagination, mobilizing different generations of researchers who, over time, have sought to understand and interpret the dynamics of the Brazilian countryside.

However, as observed by José Erondy Lira Lurkiv¹, A significant portion of researchers, when focusing on the rural world, have appropriated consolidated theoretical frameworks, often produced in other contexts and time periods. This dependence on pre-existing analytical categories has produced poorly problematized representations of rural Brazil, which have come to be conceived from a logic external to the subjects analyzed. The adoption of such frameworks sometimes offered apparent methodological comfort but contributed to the production of historiographical art that treats the countryside and its inhabitants as non-subjects of history, that is, ahistorical and apolitical subjects, erased as protagonists of their own trajectories.

¹ LURKIV, José Erondy. Alguns olhares sobre o campo. *Esboços: histórias em contextos globais*, v. 6, n. 6, p. 49-54, 1998.

In the late 20th century, re-readings and new approaches emerged and started to question such hegemonic representations, proposing more complex and situated readings. At that point, “new subjects enter the scene”². Research based on previously marginalized sources, such as interviews and oral histories, has contributed to shifting the perspective on rural areas. Studies that focus on daily life, power relations, experiences, trajectories, and resistance of rural subjects, recognizing their agency and historicity, have gained prominence. These changes represent an important milestone in the renewal of Brazilian rural historiography, bringing it closer to the diverse realities that make up what we now understand as the *rural world*.

Since then, studies focusing on rural issues have addressed the dynamics present in the constitution and transformation of Brazilian rural spaces (living, existing, and resisting), the adventures and misfortunes (conflicts) of people who occupy these places, whether as spaces for housing, living, or working – peasants, settlers, squatters, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, day laborers, etc..

Taking into account the issues outlined above, we proposed this dossier, which is part of Vol. 30 of the *Revista de História Regional* (Regional History Journal). Our aim was precisely to bring together studies that reflect on and stimulate new reflections on this “rural world” in its multiple historical, social, cultural, and economic dimensions, through current and classic interdisciplinary approaches involving areas such as History, Sociology, Rural Development, Anthropology, and Education, among others.

In our view, this objective has been fully achieved. The articles gathered in this edition propose diverse reflections, guided by multiple themes, theoretical and methodological perspectives, and academic trajectories that differ in terms of the education, geographical origin, and generation of the researchers involved. The contributions address structural aspects, such as land ownership, land use, forms of production, reproduction, and consumption, but also delve into symbolic, cultural, and political dimensions, dealing with topics such as rural identities, ways of life, food practices, relationships between countryside and city, and social memories.

Furthermore, the dossier includes studies that address the contemporary challenges faced by/in the rural world in light of the political, economic, and environmental transformations of recent decades. The articles problematize the rearrangements in social relations, forms of representation, and everyday

² SADER, Eder. *Quando novos personagens entram em cena*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1995.

resistance strategies of the individuals who live and work in this territory. Migration, gender, environment, sustainability, public policies, heritage, landscapes, education, traditional knowledge, and social struggles appear as central and/or secondary themes, revealing the material and subjective transitions that have reconfigured the Brazilian countryside.

Below, we present, in chronological order, the twelve articles that comprise this dossier. Throughout this exposition, we seek to synthesize the main arguments developed by their authors, highlighting their specific contributions and establishing connections with the central theme of the dossier. Whenever possible, we also situate the researchers within their academic trajectories and production networks, to broaden the dialogue and value the plurality that characterizes this volume. Our aim is to offer the reader an introductory overview that sparks interest in reading the texts in their entirety and highlights the points of convergence, but also the tensions, that these texts maintain with each other and with the general theme that has been proposed.

These articles are complemented by an interview with Marilda Aparecida de Menezes, a leading researcher in the field of peasant studies, migration, and labor. The interview lends historical and emotional depth to the scope of this dossier and invites us to reflect on the paths of research and the ethical commitments it entails.

With this dossier, we hope to contribute to the strengthening of a critical field of study, sensitive to diversity and attentive to the disputes that continue to shape the rural world in its multiple expressions.

The first article, *Raízes que saciam a fome* (Roots that satisfy hunger), by Nathália Moro & Christian Fausto Moraes dos Santos³, investigates the central role of cassava, a food originating from indigenous cultures, in the construction of the food culture of Portuguese America. Using 16th-century sources such as chronicles, travelogues, and colonial treatises, the authors examine how indigenous knowledge related to the growing, processing, and consumption of cassava was appropriated, reinterpreted, and sometimes decontextualized by European colonizers. Analyzing from cultivation to consumption, the researchers highlight the variety of manufactured goods

³ MORO, Nathalia & SANTOS, Christian Fausto Moraes dos. Raízes que saciam a fome: o papel da mandioca (*Manihot spp.*) na dinâmica colonizatória da América Portuguesa no século XVI. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-21, 2025.

produced from this plant and emphasize the relevance of cassava within the colonial dynamics.

The study highlights cassava not only as a fundamental agricultural resource for food security during colonization, but also as a profound indigenous legacy, with material and symbolic roots in the historical and cultural formation of Brazil.⁴ Throughout the pages of this study, the researchers reveal a sophisticated social technology that articulates technical knowledge, everyday practices, and intergenerational transmission of knowledge, configuring a complex network of productive and cultural organization. Techniques for eliminating toxins, the production of foods such as beiju (cassava flatbread), flour, and cauim (a fermented beverage made from cassava), and the division of labor within indigenous communities are central and crucial elements of this analysis. Emphasis is placed on the leading role of women, who, it should be noted, are identified as fundamental in the process of domestication and transformation of cassava.

This study directly engages with the dossier by exploring the multiple dimensions of the rural world from a historical and cultural perspective, and by valuing traditional knowledge, food practices, and social dynamics rendered invisible in hegemonic discourses. Although the notion of “rural world” is historically linked to colonial logic and Western forms of territorial organization, this article aligns with the dossier’s purposes by broadening the understanding of ways of life connected to the land and food production, especially by highlighting Indigenous knowledge and social dynamics prior to colonization. By emphasizing the leading role of Indigenous women and the technical sophistication observed in the handling of cassava, the research contributes to decentralizing traditional agrarian historiography and introduces alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between culture, nature, and food. Thus, the article aligns with the dossier’s scope by giving visibility to diverse historical experiences that shaped the Brazilian food, social, and symbolic foundations⁵.

⁴ It seems relevant to mention that the study and the debates presented in this article might be broadened if read alongside the text *The colonization of stomachs*, by the same authors. See: MORO, Nathalia & SANTOS, Christian F. M. dos. The colonization of stomachs: Indigenous people, Europeans and the consumption of cassava (*manihot spp.*) in 16th Century Portuguese America. *Cuadernos de Educación y Desarrollo*, v. 17, n. 3, p. 1-23, 2025.

⁵ It is also worth highlighting that the article has a rich dialogue with the recent issue of *Revista Tempo, Espaço e Linguagem* (Vol. 15, Núm. 2) (Time, Space and Language Journal) which addressed the History of Food and Supply in the Portuguese-Brazilian world, see: BRAGA, Isabel Drumond & MARTINS Valter. Alimentação e abastecimento no mundo luso-brasileiro (séculos XVI-XXI). *Revista Tempo, Espaço e Linguagem*, v. 15, n. 02, 2024.

The second article, *A Diretoria da Agricultura e três solicitações de terras sergipanas*⁶ (The Agriculture Office and three land requests in Sergipe), authored by the researcher Pedro Parga Rodrigues, fits the dossier's proposal by focusing on the mechanisms of land appropriation, the subjects involved in land disputes, and the ways in which the imperial state mediated and consolidated unequal relations in rural areas during the second half of the 19th century. By providing a situated analysis, yet attentive to structural debates, the article expands the understanding of the territorial and political dynamics that shaped the Brazilian countryside, revealing the interests, strategies, and negotiations present in the formation of the national agrarian structure which, as we will see later when discussing the other articles, reverberated in other contexts and time periods.

*This study, alongside other works by the same author⁷, contributes to the renewal of the historiography of property and land policy in Brazil by qualitatively analyzing land purchase processes that occurred at the end of the 19th century in what was then Vila Cristina, Sergipe province. Using documentation from the Agriculture Office, an agency then linked to the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works, the researcher examines requests made by rural landowners between 1873 and 1889, a key period between the last reform of the ministry during the Empire and the Proclamation of the Republic.

The main purpose of the article was to challenge established historiographical interpretations that point to the failure of the 1850 Land Law, as well as the idea that it represented a “ground zero” in the constitution of private property in Brazil. On the contrary, Rodrigues, in line with a recent and renewed historiographical current, argues that the Law was part of a broader, continuous, and complex process that had been unfolding since the Pombaline Reforms in the previous century (18th) and that extends beyond the Empire.

⁶ RODRIGUES, Pedro Parga. A Diretoria da Agricultura e três solicitações de terras sergipanas. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-21, 2025.

⁷ It would be exhausting and would stray from the focus of this presentation to dwell on the researcher's other works, as his academic production and trajectory encompasses the history of property, agrarian history, as well as studies centered on the Land Law of 1850 and the operation and functioning of the Agriculture Office. However, it is worth at least mentioning one of his recent studies here, which maintains a fruitful and powerful dialogue with the article included in this dossier.: RODRIGUES, Pedro Parga. As continuidades na ruptura durante a aplicação da Lei de Terras de 1850 pela Diretoria da Agricultura (1873-1889). *Cadernos de Pesquisa do CDHIS*, v. 37, p. 354-379, 2024.

Based on an analysis of documents found in the collections of the National Archives and the Rui Barbosa Foundation, the author shows how ministerial agents acted ambiguously: while they were supposed to apply the law, they frequently legalized irregular landholdings by local elites, highlighting the fluidity and instrumentalization of land policy in the imperial context. Thus, the study dismantles the dichotomy between effective laws and resistant elites, proposing a more nuanced view of the articulation between the State and local power.

Following the presentation of the texts that make up this dossier, the next studies will focus their analyses on more recent periods, that is, the 20th and 21st centuries. In *Conflitos rurais no Vale do Rio Doce*⁸ (Rural conflicts in Vale do Rio Doce), by the researchers Haruf Salmen Espindola, Alisson Cardoso de Oliveira & Maria Terezinha Bretas Vilarino, the study focuses on agrarian disputes in the municipality of Itambacuri, Minas Gerais. Based on a multiscalar approach and diverse sources, such as testimonies from a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission of the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais, news reports from the time, and oral interviews with two local residents, the authors seek to understand the causes and consequences of a series of conflicts over land ownership in a region marked by economic expansion and the presence of diverse capitalist interests.

The study sheds light on the conflicting coexistence between squatters, farmers, ranchers, and large industrial enterprises (especially steel mills, logging companies, and mining companies) in the Urupuca Valley, Minas Gerais, within the context of an expanding agricultural frontier. The arrival of large companies such as Acesita and Belgo-Mineira, coupled with the opening of new roads, particularly the Rio-Bahia highway, profoundly transformed the territory and fostered land grabbing and violence against small farmers. The actions of “powerful people,” with the support of public agents, resulted in a scenario of power imbalance, where peasant resistance coexisted with intimidation, evictions, silencing and deaths/murder.

With extensive research and production in the field of agrarian conflicts, especially developed within the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Integrated Territorial Management at the University of Vale do Rio Doce, the researchers, throughout the article, contribute to the understanding of how violence, economic interests, and the action (or omission) of the

⁸ ESPINDOLA, Haruf Salmen; OLIVEIRA, Alisson Cardoso de & VILARINO, Maria Terezinha Bretas. *Conflitos rurais no Vale do Rio Doce: cenário, atores, roteiro e vivências (1945-1961)*. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-28, 2025.

Brazilian/Minas Gerais state shaped the rural territoriality of that region, and, to a certain extent, nationally, in the late first half of the 20th century. The analysis incorporates both the structural elements of agrarian conflicts and the subjective experiences of the social actors involved, especially the women interviewed, whose accounts evoke daily life, losses, and forced displacements/migrations of family members, acquaintances, and friends.

The study aligns directly with the scope of the dossier by highlighting not only state violence and the violence of the “powerful,” but also concrete experiences of struggle and resistance amidst profound political, economic, and social transformations. The article exemplifies how the rural world is also a stage for symbolic and material disputes, and how the silenced and erased memories of those confrontations reveal important layers of Brazilian agrarian history. By emphasizing the multiple voices and dynamics that constitute the rural environment, the authors reaffirm the importance of considering that space as heterogeneous, marked by conflicts, but also by diverse agencies. Their analyses of the Minas Gerais context are in fruitful dialogue with Saggioratto, who, in a broad analysis of rural Brazil, emphasized that since colonization, violence in the countryside has been part of Brazil’s land structure⁹.

Next, still discussing the state of Minas Gerais, but specifically the period of the military regime, Luís Fernando de Souza Alves, Luiz Paulo Fontes de Rezende & Laurindo Mekie Pereira, in their article *A ditadura pegava era só quem era vagabundo mesmo*¹⁰ (The dictatorship only caught those who were really lazy) examine the violence perpetrated against rural workers in northern Minas Gerais during the Brazilian military dictatorship.

Starting from a recurring provocation in common sense, namely, the idea that the regime only persecuted “vagrants,” the researchers dedicate themselves to dismantling this discourse by demonstrating how landless settlers/peasants – notions used interchangeably throughout the study to refer to rural workers and people who depend on a way of life connected to the land – were systematic targets of repression in the name of an authoritarian and exclusionary state project. Their discussions remind us of the debate held by Moraes Silva, a reference in the field of studies on rural Brazil, who

⁹ SAGGIORATTO, Julia. Terra e poder: a violência estrutural do campo brasileiro. *Rede de Estudos Rurais* [online], 25 de março de 2025. Disponível em: [\[https://redesrurais.org.br\]](https://redesrurais.org.br) Acessos em: 05 de Jun./2025.

¹⁰ ALVES, Luís Fernando de Souza; REZENDE, Luiz Paulo Fontes de & PEREIRA, Laurindo Mekie. “A ditadura pegava era só quem era vagabundo mesmo”: frutos do golpe de 1964 sobre camponeses norte-mineiros. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-32, 2025.

characterizes this moment, the second half of the 20th century, as a period marked by a tragic modernization that, among its various characteristics, resulted in the exile of thousands of people from the Brazilian countryside¹¹.

Using diverse sources, such as interviews, newspapers, books, and other documents—like the reports produced by the *Truth Commission in Minas Gerais*—this study also analyzes and highlights some aspects of the actions of Colonel Georgino Jorge de Souza, who, as head of the 10th Battalion of the Military Police in Montes Claros, Minas Gerais, acted as a local agent of repression, colluding with large landowners to carry out expropriations and consolidate a project of land concentration¹².

The authors' analysis makes a significant contribution to the dossier's objectives by denouncing and reinforcing aspects of structural violence in the Brazilian countryside; highlighting the concrete effects of state policies on vulnerable rural populations; and shedding light on historical processes that shaped rural space as a field of dispute and exclusion. The discussions presented in the study reveal a scheme of collusion between the State and agrarian elites, based on land grabbing, notarial fraud, and political persecution, frequently legitimized by the use of the *anti-communist* discourse of the period. The study also demonstrates that the State acted, directly or indirectly, in collaboration with private agents, promoting violence as an instrument of territorial reorganization.

The article directly relates to the preceding work on agrarian conflicts in the Rio Doce Valley, maintaining its focus on the state of Minas Gerais and deepening the understanding of the dynamics of violence in the countryside in a later period. While the text by Espindola, Oliveira & Vilarino maps land disputes between the 1940s and 1960s, involving the actions of companies and farmers in agricultural frontier zones, the study by Alves, Rezende & Pereira shows how, from 1964 onwards, repression became institutionalized with the support of the military regime, continuing the strategies of expropriation and silencing of rural workers. Together, the two articles, in intense dialogue with recent historiographical and sociological reflections on the agrarian issue,

¹¹ MORAES SILVA, Maria Aparecida de. *Errantes do fim do século*. São Paulo: Ed. UNESP, 1999.

¹² The actions of Colonel Georgino Jorge de Souza, as well as the agrarian conflict in Cachoeirinha in northern Minas Gerais—issues and moments addressed in one section of the article—are explored and debated in greater detail throughout the first author's dissertation, which is supervised and co-supervised by the other authors of the article. See: ALVES, Luís Fernando de Souza. “Posseiro bom é posseiro morto”: coronel Georgino e o conflito agrário de Cachoeirinha no Norte de Minas Gerais. Dissertation (Society, Environment and Territory Master's Program). Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2025.

build up a revealing panorama of the historical persistence of land violence in Minas Gerais and Brazil, contributing to the understanding of the rural world as a territory of dispute, violence, resistance, and domination.

Both studies highlight how, in contexts of large landholding expansion and the implementation of state modernization projects guided by a “conservative modernization”¹³, often questionable in terms of its real benefits for local communities—the Brazilian countryside has repeatedly been the scene of exclusionary and violent practices. In short, besides being conservative, this modernization has also been *tragic*¹⁴. In conclusion, the authors show that past political choices, especially those promoted by the State throughout the 20th century, continue to leave deep marks on the land structure and social dynamics of the present.

Next, we highlight two articles that are part of a broad research project funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) entitled *Faces e contrafaces do trabalho rural* (Faces and Counterfaces of Rural Work), with a focus on Brazil and Colombia in the current context of large-scale commodity production¹⁵.

The first text, contributed by Graziela da Silva Motta, *Trabalhadores à/na deriva*¹⁶ (Workers adrift), analyzes the discourses surrounding the death of an Indigenous worker in the late 1990s during thinning activities in apple orchards in southern Brazil. It maintains fruitful dialogues with the preceding texts in this dossier, particularly in exploring state action, but this time not in matters of land concentration and disputes; its focus is on the state’s actions or inaction regarding precarious rural wage labor.

Based on a police investigation, Motta highlights how precarious working conditions, medical negligence, and the State’s actions in defense of the market, not the workers, have contributed to the necropolitics that permeates the use of Indigenous labor in the countryside. Her study shows how working conditions in apple thinning and harvesting, heavily marked by

¹³ DELGADO, Guilherme. Do “capital financeiro na agricultura” à economia do agronegócio: mudanças cíclicas em meio século (1965-2012). Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, 2012

¹⁴ MORAES SILVA, Maria Aparecida de. *Errantes do fim do século*. São Paulo: Ed. UNESP, 1999.

¹⁵ The project (CNPq/MCTI Universal Call no. 10/2023) is linked to the Land, Labor, Migration and Memory Research Group (TRAMA), based at the Federal University of São Carlos, and led by researcher Maria Aparecida de Moraes Silva. The project addresses gender, race, and labor relations in various agribusiness crops: such as sugarcane in the states of São Paulo and Alagoas, coffee in Colombia and Minas Gerais, and grapes and apples in Rio Grande do Sul..

¹⁶ MOTTA, Graziela da Silva. Trabalhadores à/na deriva: discursos sobre as causas da morte de um trabalhador indígena. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-19, 2025.

the racial division of labor, expose Indigenous people to the risk of death and the invisibility of their demands. The emblematic case of Fág Mág, who died without proper medical care, reveals the unequal machinery that sustains agricultural production in the fruit sector.

The second text, authored by Ediano Dionisio do Prado & Marilda Aparecida de Menezes¹⁷, also discusses the theme of rural wage labor, specifically analyzing labor relations in the mountain coffee farming of southern Minas Gerais, responsible for more than 30% of the national production of Arabica coffee. The study highlights how the region's topography, which hinders mechanization and intensifies the use of temporary labor, especially during harvesting, is marked by informality, vulnerability, and recurring reports of conditions analogous to slavery.

Based on specialized and regional bibliography, the article reveals the contrast between the discourse of modernity and efficiency of the coffee agribusiness and the precarious reality experienced by workers, especially migrants from the Northeast and northern Minas Gerais, who carry out the harvest during the peak season, above all, without guaranteed rights. The study highlights that, while large properties modernize in terms of management and technology, they maintain archaic labor relations in the countryside, perpetuating the exploitation of wage earners.

Panorama do trabalho rural na cafeicultura de montanha (Overview of rural work in mountain coffee farming) maintains a fruitful dialogue with the preceding text, especially when focusing on the mobility of rural wage earners based on the notion of *permanently temporary* workers coined by Maria Aparecida de Moraes Silva¹⁸. These workers – indigenous people, miners, and people from the Northeast of Brazil – move to harvest regions – apples, sugarcane, coffee, oranges, among many other products – for a period of time, and then, when capital no longer needs them, they are returned to their places of origin and then come back again. Therefore, it is a *permanently temporary* migration, since a large part of them migrate every year, their lives are divided into space and time, neither here nor there, like swallows¹⁹, always in motion.

¹⁷ PRADO, Ediano Dionisio do; MENEZES, Marilda Aparecida de. *Panorama do trabalho rural na cafeicultura de montanha*. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-25, 2025.

¹⁸ MORAES SILVA, Maria Aparecida de. *Expropriação da terra, violência e migração: camponeses maranhenses no corte da cana em São Paulo*. *Cadernos CERU*, v. 19, n. 1, p. 165-180, 2008.

¹⁹ MORAES SILVA, Maria Aparecida de Moraes. *As Andorinhas. Nem lá, nem cá*. *Cadernos CERU*, v. 9, p. 29-44, 1998.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that both Prado & Menezes and Motta point to a central contradiction in Brazilian agribusiness: its globally celebrated economic strength rests on forms of exploitation and invisibility of rural labor.

After that, on *Nas trilhas da conservação* (The trails of conservation), by Melissa Lujambio Alves²⁰, From the perspective of Environmental History and, in a way, in line with the articles that precede it, especially in identifying the role of the State, it considers the conflicts, contradictions, and alliances involved in the creation of the Serra do Conduru State Park (PESC) located in southern Bahia. The study is an excerpt from her master's research²¹, which analyzes historically how such conservation process, occurred between 1993 and 2006, reshaped deeply relations between local communities, state institutions, environmental organizations, and nature. While the creation of the park resulted in land disputes, loss of access to natural resources and tensions with local dwellers, it also opened spaces for participatory management and ecological regeneration experiences.

Using an interdisciplinary approach sensitive to the multiple dimensions of the territory, such as natural, social, and cultural aspects, this article highlights how environmental policies operate as vectors of transformation in the rural world, revealing both the conflicts and the possibilities for negotiation that emerge from these processes.

Its inclusion in this dossier broadens the understanding of the diverse lives that inhabit rural areas, especially in contexts affected by state environmental conservation projects. Lujambio Alves' work directly engages with other texts in the collection that discuss displacement, territorial reconfiguration, and public policies, establishing important connections with reflections on the role of the State, land disputes, and the lifestyles of individuals who occupy the rural world. Furthermore, by proposing an interpretation of the interactions between humans and non-humans, the article also connects with approaches that shift the exclusively anthropocentric focus, enriching the debate on plural ruralities.

This issue also includes three contributions that analyze the rural world of Pará, as follows: *Dendeicultura e capitalismo* (Oil Palm Cultivation and

²⁰ LUJAMBIO ALVES, Melissa. *Nas trilhas da conservação: a criação do Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, Bahia, de 1993 a 2006. Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-26, 2025.

²¹ LUJAMBIO ALVES, Melissa. *Nas Trilhas da Conservação: conflitos e alianças no Parque Estadual Serra do Conduru, Sul da Bahia, 1993-2006. Dissertação (Mestrado em História)*. Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2023.

Capitalism), authored by Marlon Kauã Silva Cardoso, Tânia Guimarães Ribeiro & Dalva Maria da Mota.²², *O cotidiano de trabalhadores rurais no pós-trabalho assalariado na dendêicultura* (The daily lives of rural workers after their salaried work in oil palm cultivation) by Laiane Bezerra Ribeiro, Dalva Maria da Mota and Éberton da Costa Moreira and *Aspectos da ontologia ribeirinha na ilha Saracá* (Aspects of riverine ontology on Saracá Island), by Genisson Paes Chaves & Sônia Barbosa Magalhães.

The first two articles, which in many aspects directly engage with Motta's considerations on indigenous workers in apple harvesting and Prado & Menezes's considerations on coffee pickers in Minas Gerais, investigate the working conditions of rural wage earners involved in palm oil production in the state of Pará. The first focuses on Igarapé-Açu, in the northeast of the state of Pará, in light of comparisons with the context of Indonesia, the world's largest producer of palm oil. This study conducts quantitative and qualitative research, based on interviews with workers and a critical dialogue with specialized literature, especially international literature, due to the scarcity of work on wage labor in palm oil production in the Brazilian context. Cardoso, Ribeiro & Mota examine the social impacts of palm oil cultivation in Brazil, understood as a neo-extractive activity sustained by an export-based development model.

The analyses contained in the text, in addition to highlighting, to some extent, the transnational dimension of contemporary agricultural exploitation, reinforce that rural wage labor in monocultures presents degrading characteristics, such as excessive working hours, health risks, use of pesticides, frequent accidents, and lack of adequate protective equipment for workers²³. In parallel to the reality of Indonesia, marked by worse conditions than Brazil, especially regarding technology and the absence of union organization, the study reveals that, although situated in distinct contexts, the two experiences share structures of exploitation associated with the logic

²² CARDOSO, Marlon Kauã Silva; RIBEIRO, Tânia Guimarães Ribeiro & MOTA, Dalva Maria da. Dendêicultura e capitalismo: o processo de trabalho assalariado na monocultura do dendê. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-25, 2025.

²³ As with the previous article, the considerations in this article can be further explored in light of the analyses contained in the first author's dissertation, see: CARDOSO, Marlon Kauã Silva. *A dendêicultura em Igarapé-Açu/PA: um olhar sobre as relações de trabalho que tipificam o trabalhador rural na Agroindustrial Palmasa* (Oil palm cultivation in Igarapé-Açu/PA: a look at the labor relations that typify the rural worker in Agroindustrial Palmasa). Dissertation (Sociology and Anthropology Master's Program). Belém: Universidade Federal do Pará, 2024.

of capital, which transform human labor into a commodity and subordinate the territory to the demands of the international commodities market.

In the Amazonian context, the promise of sustainable development linked to oil palm cultivation is questioned as the activity displaces family farmers, disrupts peasant ways of life, and transforms landscapes previously occupied by streams and diversified farms into extensive monocultures. Thus, this article critically examines the idea that oil palm can be an engine of productive inclusion, and denounces its alienating and exclusionary effects, based on a Marxist reading of labor and social reproduction.

The second article²⁴ the trajectories of rural workers in the municipality of Acará after the termination of their salaried employment in oil palm cultivation. Based on a case study in the village of Belenzinho, conducted between 2021 and 2023, the study investigates how these individuals reorganize their daily lives between family, community, and agriculture, highlighting their strategies for remaining in the countryside. The study shows that, after the end of their salaried work experience, marked by high turnover and grueling working conditions, the workers return to family farming, incorporating technical knowledge acquired in oil palm plantations. In this context, they reaffirm themselves as multi-skilled family farmers, combining traditional crops (cassava) and fruit crops (açaí, cupuaçu, cocoa), and giving new meaning to time and community life, previously limited by the rhythm of factory work. The text thus reveals the social and affective dynamics that make up the post-salaried work experience and the forms of peasant (re)existence in the Amazon region of Pará.²⁵

Regarding the third contribution about the countryside of Pará²⁶, Chaves & Magalhães address the cosmologies and ways of life of Amazonian riverside communities from an ethnographic and autoethnographic perspective. Based on narratives from residents of Saracá Island, in the state of Pará, the authors investigate the relationships between people and non-human beings, both visible and invisible, that share the same space and shape the daily

²⁴ RIBEIRO, Laiane Bezerra; MOTA, Dalva Maria da; MOREIRA, Éberton da Costa. O cotidiano de trabalhadores rurais no pós-trabalho assalariado na dendêicultura. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-25, 2025

²⁵ Also recommended as interesting reading, which to some extent complements and deepens the issues addressed throughout these last two contributions, is the article GUIMARÃES, Jamilly Brito Guimarães; MOTA, Dalva Maria da; MOREIRA, Éberton da Costa & SCHMITZ, Heribert. "O dendê era um sonho": agricultores familiares e rupturas com as agroindústrias de dendê no Pará, Amazônia. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, v. 63, p. 1-22, 2025.

²⁶ CHAVES, Genisson Paes & MAGALHÃES, Sônia Barbosa. Aspectos da ontologia ribeirinha na ilha Saracá, município de Limoeiro do Ajuru (PA). *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-23, 2025.

lives of the riverside dwellers, in their relationships with nature and with the community itself. Visions, apparitions, humanized animals, and spirits compose a unique ontological universe that permeates local experience and organizes moralities, decisions, and daily practices of life in the forest. The work was developed using open interviews, participant observation, and records of family memories, including those of one of the authors. These experiences and narratives, captured by the authors, proved central to the constitution of the Amazonian riverside world and the production of local knowledge.

Unlike Western dichotomous views between nature and culture, human and non-human, the *riverine ontology* outlined in the study reveals a relational worldview, in which different forms of life, material and immaterial, coexist, interact, and mutually influence each other.

This penultimate contribution broadens the scope of the dossier by giving centrality to the symbolic, spiritual, and cosmological dimensions that structure ways of life in the countryside, especially in Amazonian contexts. The article shifts the focus of the analysis from the rural as a mere productive space or a space of land conflict, as presented in the previous texts, revealing it as a territory of meaning, memory, and spirituality. By incorporating traditional knowledge and non-Western ways of interpreting the world, the research, an excerpt from the first author's doctoral thesis²⁷, confirms the dossier's commitment to a plural, complex and non-reductionist view of the Brazilian rural world, where the visible and invisible are intertwined in the traditional populations' everyday practices.

Closing the issue, there is the article *O papel das escolas do campo brasileiras* (The role of Brazilian field/rural schools), authored by Vanessa Policarpo Maciel and Luciano Daudt da Rocha²⁸. The study discusses how rural schools and Brazilian peasant social movements contribute to resisting the coloniality of knowledge and valuing local knowledge. Based on a theoretical and bibliographical reflection anchored in the Epistemologies of the South and the liberating pedagogy of Paulo Freire, the text analyzes the role of these schools as spaces of political, cultural, and food resistance in the face of the colonial legacies that shaped education and food production in Brazil.

²⁷ CHAVES, Genisson Paes. *Visagens, mizuras, aparições: aspectos da ontologia ribeirinha na ilha Saracá, município de Limoeiro do Ajuru, estado do Pará*. Tese (Doutorado em Agriculturas Amazônicas), Universidade Federal do Pará, 2024.

²⁸ MACIEL, Vanessa Policarpo; ROCHA, Luciano Daudt da. *O papel das escolas do campo brasileiras na superação da colonialidade do conhecimento*. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-20, 2025.

Maciel & Rocha show that field education emerges as a decolonial practice that breaks with the Eurocentric and homogeneous vision of “rural education,” incorporating traditional knowledge, ways of life, and sustainable food practices. The article highlights the importance of educational experiences linked to movements such as the MST (Landless Workers’ Movement), which articulate the struggle for land, food sovereignty, and the emancipation of rural people, pointing to field schools as territories of social justice, epistemological resistance, and the construction of new horizons for rural life.

Complementing the articles that make up this dossier, the interview *Enredos, memórias e trajetórias nos estudos rurais* (Plots, memories and trajectories in rural studies) Marilda Aparecida de Menezes²⁹ presents a valuable intellectual account of four decades of research dedicated to the study of the Brazilian rural world, with an emphasis on themes such as migration, labor, peasantry, and family relations. Menezes, a renowned rural sociologist educated in Brazil and England, shares in her account not only the academic milestones of her career, but also the theoretical and methodological transformations that have shaped her work in recent decades.

The interview, conducted in November 2024, covers everything from the author’s first major works, especially her dissertation, which is marked by the weight of Marxist and macrostructural readings from the 1980s, to her progressive openness to the subjective and cultural dimensions of the migratory and rural experience, highlighting, in particular, her adoption of Oral History approaches and methodologies and studies on trajectories.

One of the central points of the dialogue is the critical appropriation of James C. Scott’s work, especially his notion of everyday resistance, which Menezes mobilizes to interpret the silent and often invisible strategies developed by migrant peasants in contexts of economic and social domination. By bringing her reflections on the rural world and her experience in the analysis of migrations, the researcher not only historicizes academic debates, but also reiterates her commitment to an approach that recognizes the voices, trajectories, and agencies of the subjects researched. His most recent studies, focused on memory and the re-encounter with interlocutors and spaces previously researched, reaffirm this sensitive and committed perspective.

²⁹ PEREIRA, Bruno César & MENEZES, Marilda Aparecida de. *Enredos, memórias e trajetórias nos estudos rurais: Entrevista com Marilda Aparecida de Menezes*. *Revista de História Regional*, v. 30, p. 1-23, 2025.

The inclusion of this interview in *Mundo rural, vidas diversas* (Rural World, diverse lives) lends depth and reflective density to the editorial proposal by articulating the trajectory of a researcher who dedicated herself to understanding the rural as a field of experience, conflict, resistance, and transformation. Thus, Menezes invites us to think of research not only as a technical exercise, but as an ethical and political practice, nourished by dialogue, listening, and commitment to the social subjects who inhabit the multiple worlds we call “rural”.

Finally, we emphasize that this dossier gathers together a series of studies that, from different disciplinary, chronological, and geographical perspectives, contribute to a plural and in-depth understanding of what we call the “rural world.” The texts presented here explore themes ranging from the exchange of knowledge between indigenous peoples and colonizers in the 16th century to the contemporary impacts of oil palm cultivation in the Amazon, passing through land disputes in the Empire, agrarian and state conflicts in the 20th century, and riverside ontologies that challenge the modern Western rationality.

The interview with Marilda Aparecida de Menezes provides a common thread that runs through the dossier: a sensitive and committed look at the subjects of the countryside, their stories, their struggles, and their ways of living, resisting, and reinventing themselves. Together, the texts gathered here reaffirm that the Brazilian rural world is composed of multiple lives and experiences that are sometimes invisible, but always powerful, challenging simplistic narratives and demanding analyses attentive to the contradictions, inequalities, and knowledge that constitute it. By proposing this collection, we hope to contribute to the strengthening of a critical, diverse field of study in constant dialogue with the realities that we seek to understand and transform

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