Trying to build a classless utopia in the land of racial democracy: The lack of racial discussion within the educational materials of the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers' Movement

Rolf Straubhaar

The hegemonic ideology of racial democracy and rural cultural norms of racial silence continue to inform racial identities and national racial discourse in Brazil, in this case within the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (or MST), a left-wing movement for agrarian reform. In this article I engage in textual analysis of a textbook from the MST's youth curriculum, arguing that the language used in this textbook does not recognize the centrality of race in world or Brazilian history, but rather focuses on the role of social class in marginalization. I also argue that race is largely ignored in the textbook's description of the MST itself, despite the organization working in rural areas that are predominantly indigenous or Afro-descendant. Lastly, I argue that language is used which implicitly separates the MST leadership from indigenous and Afro-Brazilian populations. The implications of these findings are analyzed through the lens of critical race theory and Brazilian rurality.

Keywords: Landless Rural Workers' Movement; race in Brazil; rurality; critical race theory

The Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, or the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (hereafter referred to as MST), began in the 1980s as an effort to promote equitable and just distribution of land in Brazil, particularly among rural farmers. The MST works with rural farmers to identify and settle on underutilized land and build just and equitable communities. It has since grown to become the largest grassroots popular organization in Latin America.

As it has grown, the MST has taken on a radical political agenda and has become a prominent force in Brazil's political Left. Through its continued growth (via further land seizures) and its educational endeavors, the MST seeks to overhaul Brazilian society, promoting social change that equalizes the social and economic status of Brazil's rich and poor (Carvalho 2010).

Due to the explicitly radical and Marxist politics of the MST, it is interesting to note that the national rhetoric of the MST does not address issues of racism or racial equity (see MST 1995, 1999, 2001, 2010). This is especially interesting due to the prominence of discourse on race and racial

inequity in Brazilian society (see Telles 2006). However, as I will argue more fully in this article, it is also understandable given the particular ways in which national Brazilian discourses of racial equality are embedded in and shaped by rural cultural conceptions of race that emphasize class-based differences rather than racial ones as explanations for social inequality (Twine 1998).

More specifically within the educational initiatives of the MST, a rural movement with national outreach, I argue that this rural tendency to explain social inequalities in terms of class rather than race is reflected in the lack of discussion of race in MST school curricula (see MST 1995, 1999, 2001, 2013), and is reinforced by the MST's orientation in class-oriented radical Marxism. Through a document analysis of one of the MST's school-based curricula, in this article I will argue that the revolutionary rhetoric in these documents revolves primarily around critical discussions of class, largely ignoring race in a manner that, while understandable given aforementioned context, is problematic given the central (Winant 2001) and structural (Bonilla-Silva 2001) nature of racism in Brazil. Drawing on critical race theory, particularly the work of Hall (1980) and Stoler (2002) on the historical-contextual nature of racism, I will explore how the silence regarding race in MST educational literature reflects both a persistent Brazilian myth of pacific race relations called "racial democracy," or the idea pioneered by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre's (1933) that rural Brazil is relatively unique among former Western colonies in its racial harmony and accepted level of racial integration, as well as a more particular public silence around racial inequity that is noted in the literature on rural Brazil (Twines 1998).

Conceptual framework

Before discussing the role of race in the MST, it is first necessary to establish a theoretical framework of race and racism through which the specific context of the MST's educational work can be analyzed. The following section will detail three crucial tenets of such a framework: the structural centrality of race in society, the malleable and nuanced ways in which race and racism are defined and constructed

in a particular context, and the particularities of rural racism in Brazil.

Firstly, the notion of the centrality of race in any discussion of social structure and history pervades the work of many scholars of race, including Hall (1980), Winant (2001), Goldberg (2002) and Feagin (2006). Hall (1980, 55) asserts that race is "intrinsic" to social organization. Winant (2001, 3) argues that race has a permanent position of "centrality" in any discussion of modernity or the modern world. Goldberg (2002) argues that race is central to any discussion of the organization of the state, and to Feagin (2006) it is the structural and society-wide nature of racism that makes it a necessary component of any discussion of social structure. In the particular context of Brazil, Guimarães (1999) holds that skin color, and the social assumptions associated with such, also hold a position of "centrality" in the organization of Brazilian society. This point may seem self-evident to some, but the assertion of the centrality of race seems necessary given the lack of discussion thereof among social scientists who are not explicitly scholars of race and racial theory.

One of the reasons the centrality of race must be asserted is that through such an assertion the case for the structural nature of racism is facilitated. In the face of dominant discourses which dismiss the continuing importance of racism, Bonilla-Silva (2001, 11, 22) decisively asserts that "racism should be conceptualized in structural terms," as "dominant races" maintain a "structure to reproduce their systemic advantages." He strongly echoes a number of prominent voices in sociology, such as Bourdieu and Wacquant, in noting the presence of social reproduction as an explanatory framework for the variable socioeconomic status of different racial groups.

Feagin (2006, 2), working within a North American framework, similarly asserts that racism extends beyond individual prejudice and bigotry and is instead "a material, social, and ideological reality" that undergirds the primary institutions and founding documents of the United States and extends to all aspects of day-to-day life for both blacks and whites in America. Though his underlying argument for systemic racism is in many ways similar to Bonilla-Silva's (2001) notion of structural

racism, Feagin's (2006) rationale for why such a theory is needed is more clearly explained. He also describes the forms of structural reproduction of race much more clearly than Bonilla-Silva, providing explanatory frameworks for how racial hegemony is reinforced at the national, community and familial level. At the community level, Feagin (2006, 163) describes how white youth under slavery and segregation were taught by example to taunt and harass blacks, particularly (though not exclusively) in the American South. At the familial level, he points explicitly to how the "color line" and general racial attitudes are passed intergenerationally (Feagin 2006, 169-170), stating generally that "we human beings have a distinctive ability to acquire much knowledge from our parents and other predecessors and to pass that acquired knowledge down to the succeeding generations" (Feagin 2006, 187).

Scholars of race in Brazil have documented a similar, though unique historical trajectory of race relations that has codified "black" as a discriminated "Other." João Reis (1993) has extensively documented the terms used to codify African slaves and their descendants as separate from their colonial masters, from the colonial period through the end of slavery in the late 19th century. Even after the outlawing of slavery, prominent Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1965) has described what he calls the "metamorphosis of the slave," in which terms such as "black" were used to continue designating and informally separating poor descendants of slaves as a subaltern subclass of Brazilians underneath the (relatively) pale bourgeoisie.

This contextualization within the Brazilian academic literature on race is crucial, due to the particularities of Brazil's history with race and racism. Whether one's research is historical or empirical, focused on contemporary racism or previous historical forms, researchers must always recognize that racism will be nuanced, complex, and culturally coded as a product of its time and place. Biology may have played a leading role in 19th century public rhetoric on race, but our social construction of race in every time and place has always "mixed science with common sense and traded on the complicity between them" (Wacquant 1997, 223).

Winant (2001) insightfully notes how the iterative process of racial formation contributes to this malleable nature of race and racism. To make this point, Winant (2001, 39) appropriates Myrdal's notion of "circular and cumulative causation." That is, to Winant (2001, 3) "the racialization of the world is both the cause and consequence of modernity," both a result of the structures and practices of modernity as well as the praxis through which modernity comes to be. To Winant (2001, 289), the basic structures of modern society (including the economy, politics, culture, and personal identity) have always been fundamentally "racially shaped categories," at least in the modern era. Whether during the era of chattel slavery or during the periods of racial inequality that have followed it, race has continued to both invent and reinvent modern society, and in Winant's opinion, continues to do so. Race and racism have been and continue to be malleable categories, iteratively formed through their interaction with other social structures and dominant paradigmatic ideas of any given time and place.

This notion of racism as praxis has strong ties to Omi and Winant's (1994) earlier notion of racial formation. Omi and Winant (1994, 55) define racial formation as "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed," giving discursive meaning to racial identities and structures. Stoler's (2002) assertion regarding the need to deepen our analysis of racial ambiguity rather than "flattening" certain historical and contextual forms of racism only highlights the insight of Omi and Winant's (1994) notion of racial formation, as it is this sociohistorical process of shaping racial categories through social and political forces that makes the analysis of racism in any of its temporal, spatial and cultural contexts so nuanced and complex.

Race in rural Brazil

With this recognition of the complexity of contextual racism and each context's particular process of racial formation, it is crucial to note the particularities of race and racism in Brazil, a topic that has a robust literature in the American and Brazilian academies, and even more particularly the intricacies of rural Brazilian racism (which has been much less extensively explored).

Perhaps the strongest voice on race in Brazil, in terms of impact on both academic discussion and the personal identity construction of everyday Brazilians, is Gilberto Freyre, whose seminal work *The masters and the slaves: A study in the development of Brazilian civilization* (1964) first theorized the notion of racial democracy, or the idea that Brazil is relatively unique among former Western colonies in its racial harmony and accepted level of *mestiçagem*, or racial mixture. This notion, while arguably overly positive in its portrayal of "humane" Brazilian slavery and race relations, has fueled decades of academic and social debate about the level of racial inequality present in Brazilian society, and has been one of the primary drivers of racial formation for Brazilians of all races.

In the 1960s and 1970s, it was precisely this notion that the São Paulo school of sociology (referring to a group of scholars at the University of São Paulo that took primary leadership from the luminary Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes) tried to debunk, undertaking numerous studies to document the lasting racial discrimination and structural inequalities experienced by Afro-Brazilians (Jackson 2007). While these works opened the academic debate on race in Brazil, making it acceptable to question the racial democracy hypothesis, Freyre's theory had already deeply imbedded itself within the Brazilian social conscious and become a point of national pride (Rufino 1988), to the point that international movements towards civil rights for Afro-descendants (such as the American civil rights movement, or the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa) gained little traction in Brazil, even among Afro-Brazilians.

Hanchard (1998), in studying the black power movement in Brazil, posits the notion of racial democracy as the primary reason for the lack of resonance and support experienced by the black power movement in Brazilian society, especially in comparison to the civil rights movement in the US. That is, most Brazilians (including Brazilians of color) believe in the existence of racial democracy, making social currents like the black power movement appear unnecessary or, at worst, nationally divisive (see also Barcelos 1999). From an anthropological perspective, Sheriff (2001) supports this thesis with her

ethnographic research amongst Afro-Brazilian residents of an urban slum in Rio, who would openly

recognize racial prejudice in isolated instances while persisting in their belief in the ability of Afro-

Brazilians to achieve social mobility through merit due to the reality of racial democracy. Even

amongst poor Afro-Brazilians, perhaps the social group that one would expect to be most cognizant of

racial discrimination, the notion of racial democracy still holds great discursive power.

Winant (2001) echoes this sentiment in his discussion of race in Brazil. Classifying racial

democracy as a "racial ideology," Winant (2001) asserts that is exactly the presence and acceptance of

this ideology that led to a relative dearth of social mobilization around issues of race in the 1960s and

70s. According to Winant (2001, 220), "by proclaiming itself a racial democracy, Brazil was able to

defuse much of the racial mobilization that other societies encountered during the postwar years." In

its efforts to bring issues of racial inequality to the forefront, Winant (2001, 237) asserts that the

Brazilian black power movement most powerfully "[revealed] the continuity, tenacity and resilience of

white supremacy."

Telles (2006), in his sociological treatise on race in Brazil, tries to reconcile the potential worth

of racial democracy as an explanatory theory with the existence of structural racial inequality by

recognizing the partial truth and merit of both. There is some evidence to support the partial truth of

racial democracy as an explanatory framework for race in Brazil: most particularly, there are significant

levels of racial mixing and a comparatively low (at least relative to the US) amount of racial

segregation. However, structural inequalities still persist along racial lines, with few blacks entering

the Brazilian middle and upper classes. By recognizing that racial democracy has some reflection in

Brazilian racial reality, while likewise recognizing the presence of structural barriers to social mobility

for Afro-Brazilians, Telles (2006) perhaps most accurately encapsulates the paradox of Brazilian racial

relations, in which superficially *cordialidade* (or "good manners") prevails between races, while

structurally economic inequalities leave an enormous divide between white Brazilians and Brazilians of

color.

Rural Brazilian conceptions of race and racism

With regards to research exploring the particularities of rural Brazilian racism, unfortunately most of the work exploring this subject was conducted during the first half of the twentieth century, when U.S.-based social scientists (particularly anthropologists) saw Brazil as the racial democracy it claimed to be, an idealized counterbalance to the racial tensions of the U.S. (Harris 1956; Landes 1947; Pierson 1942). One of the only recent studies to investigate rural Brazilian racism in much detail was that conducted by Twine (1998) in a small village in the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Twine (1998) found that most rural Afro-Brazilians (at least in the village in which she did fieldwork) recognized the existence of latent prejudice against them in society at large, but were hesitant to recognize it publicly and exhibited a certain degree of defensiveness (as they did not want to be seen as self-perceived victims, and felt a certain amount of national pride that led them to support the "racial democracy" myth).

In general, Twine (1998) found that both black and white rural villagers utilized particular cultural practices to avoid recognition or discussion of racial inequalities, which she attributed in part to the social pressure to not cause trouble in small rural communities in which everyone knows one another and in part to the national discourse of racial democracy. However, while Twine's (1998) study provided some insight into the ways in which national Brazilian racial discourses can be navigated and understood in rural areas, the racial dynamics of rural agrarian communities like MST encampments remain understudied. This article is in part intended as a first step into this line of inquiry.

The Brazilian Landless Rural Workers' Movement

In order to more fully understand the specific context of the MST as a site for discussion of rural Brazilian conceptions of race and racism, this section will analyze the existent literature on the movement, particularly focusing on academic works which study its organic growth over time and its

use of revolutionary language and Freirean organizational praxis.

The MST has grown to become the largest grassroots organization in Brazil. This growth can be attributed to the salient and urgent nature of land reform as a political issue in Brazil. Brazilian land ownership is incredibly consolidated, with a very small group of large landowners owning almost half of all rural landholdings in Brazil: 378 million acres in total. Within these holdings, 38% of arable land owned by this small group is completely unused (Stédile et al. 2000). The government has historically attempted to remedy this inequality of land ownership even before the rise of the MST—under the military government that arose in 1964, landless peasants were granted land plots in the name of economic development and (to stave off insurrection) national security. The specific measure that granted these plots was the 1964 Land Statute, which stated that "private property can be expropriated if it does not serve a social function" (Martins 2000, 35).

During the military regime of the 1960s, 70s and 80s, this law allowed for the rise of several peasant movements, such as MASTER (Movement of Landless Farmers) and the Peasant Leagues (or Ligas Camponesas) (Cole 2007). In 1985, these and other groups coalesced into the Movimento Sem Terra through a three-year land occupation in Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state in Brazil. In response to the occupation, the government recognized the occupiers' right to land and resettled them legally, giving the MST its first taste of political legitimacy (Carter 2003). Since then, the movement has continued to settle unused private land and press for legal ownership, spreading organically with each government-sanctioned conquest to its current formidable membership of roughly 1 million people settled on more than 5 million hectares of occupied land (Cole 2007, 7).

There is an exhaustive literature on the factors that contributed to the rise and growth of the MST as an organization and institution (Branford and Rocha 2002; Medeiros 1995; Stédile and Fernandes 1999; Wolford and Wright 2003). Much of that growth can be credited to the political connections between the MST and the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), or Workers' Party, in Brazilian

politics (Martins 2006, 265). The PT has been the dominant political party in the Brazilian congress for much of the last decade, and is the party of Brazil's last two presidents (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the president of Brazil from 2002 to 2010, and Dilma Rousseff, his successor since 2011). Through these political connections, the MST has been able to maintain many of its settlements by providing extensive post-settlement state-sponsored social services to its members, through credit programs and technical agricultural assistance (Ondetti 2008; Rosset 2001; Wolford and Wright 2003). One study showed that, as of 2006, 81% of MST settler families benefited from development credit, 72% from housing credit and 75% from food credit (Heredia et al. 2006). In one ethnographic study, sampled settlers stated that these forms of state support are one of the primary reasons they are willing to endure the hardships of land occupation and continue associated with the movement (Cole 2007). This politically friendly context has been crucial to the spread of the MST, and is an important factor to consider in any discussion of how the MST has been able to spread as wide and become as strong as it currently is.

However, though the MST has succeeded in gaining political support for its extensive land occupations, the movement has aims far beyond the acquisition of land for the landless. The movement is strongly committed to a wholesale transformation of society, replacing the current unjust capitalist system with one in which all people can live and work in dignity, solidarity, and equality (MST 1995, 2001). In this sense, though the MST works with the Brazilian government out of political expedience, it sees part of its purpose as a subordination and replacement of government, through the establishment of "autonomous self-governing centers of authority" (Petras and Harding 2000). The MST consciously uses revolutionary language, seeing itself as an instrument of social revolution within Brazilian society.

The roots of this revolutionary rhetoric and ideology began in the earliest days of the MST, through its early support from progressive branches of Catholicism rooted in liberation theology. The Comissão Pastoral da Terra (the Pastoral Land Commission, or CPT), a progressive Catholic

organization begun in 1975 to support the political organizing of the rural poor, was directly involved with the formal organization of the MST on a national level, and first trained MST leaders in the revolutionary pedagogy of Paulo Freire and the notion of *conscientização*, or promoting critical consciousness among the disenfranchised as a means to empower them and instigate widespread social change (Issa 2007; Martins 2006). It was this early mentoring role of the CPT that began the MST on its eventual path to become an explicitly ideological social movement, rather than an isolated political group in southern Brazil concerned with small-scale land reform. Without this early incubation in liberation theology, the MST would likely not even closely resemble the national movement it is today (Stédile and Fernandes 1999).

As just mentioned, it was through this mentoring period with liberation theologists that MST leaders became familiar with and adopted the pedagogical model of Paulo Freire (1970, 53) and his notion of critical consciousness, defined as the act of "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality." In relation to the Brazilian rural poor, the MST sees itself as a catalyst, the means whereby the critical consciousness of the poor can be developed to the point of mobilization for social change (MST 2010). In this spirit, the educational projects of the MST were extended to include formal and non-formal educational initiatives, including primary schools, secondary schools and adult literacy classes.

However, at least rhetorically the MST leadership sees the movement itself as a venue wherein structural social change can be promoted in rural Brazilian society, a point of praxis for challenging the status quo of social and economic inequality in Brazil (MST 2010). The use of Freire's facilitation and pedagogical techniques at the organizational level are meant to fashion the MST as a larger space that can function as a form of praxis for social change (Carvalho 2010, 3-4). Indeed, the MST has overtly stated that its educational goal is to construct a Marxist utopia (MST 2001) that will first become an independent entity unto itself and then act as a force for social change throughout Brazilian society.

Methods

This article will interpret *A história da luta pela terra e o MST* (Morissawa 2001), a textbook documenting the MST's history and structure from its own organizational perspective. While not universally used throughout MST's schools and educational programs, it is a commonly used text in such settings[1]. This text will be explored using Clifford Geertz's (1973) framework for analyzing and interpreting the discourse within texts as cultural representations. In this case, Morissawa's (2001) textbook will be focused on as a text that can be studied and analyzed to see how it represents the MST leadership's official discourse and understanding regarding world, Brazilian and MST history, and most particularly the role of race and racism within such.

I also draw here on my training in critical discourse analysis (Gee 1999; Fairclough 2001), a methodology used to examine and unpack the implicit meanings and assumptions that are present in written texts. While racial analysis of text is inherently limiting, as one is unable to further probe into the motives or thoughts behind particular wordings or phrasings with the author in subsequent interviews, critical discourse analysis is commonly used to explore hidden power dynamics, in particular dynamics related to race (Teo 2000; Wodak & Matouschek 1993). However, while such analysis is relatively common the Anglophone literature (Teo 2000; Wodak & Matouschek 1993; see also Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravinik, Krzyżanowski, McEnergy & Wodak, 2008), this article represents an initial foray into this type of analysis of racial dynamics in Brazilian texts.Since Morissawa's (2001) textbook was written in Portuguese for a Portuguese-speaking audience, I read it in Portuguese in order to best understand the arguments therein as they were originally intended, unaltered by potentially tone-changing translations. I then translated the text, checking the accuracy of the translation myself as well as having it checked by several native Portuguese-speaking colleagues. I translated all citations used herein into English.

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[1] According to several personal contacts with MST educators in several Brazilian states.

I coded cited portions of the textbook following the procedure outlined by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995). That is, I first read through the full textbook several times, making note of all references to race and racism that arose within this data set. I then re-read them, making note of which racial themes were most prevalent, or arose most frequently.

Findings

Based in the following analysis of the aforementioned MST textbook, which documents an insider's MST interpretation of world history, Brazilian national history and the history of the MST itself, I will make several arguments: first, that while the MST's interpretation of global and national history takes note of and condemns the fact that particular races have experienced significant inequalities and difficulties (most notably slavery), it does not recognize the "centrality" (Hall 1980; Feagin 2006; Goldberg 2002; Winant 2001) of race within those histories or within Brazilian history (Fernandes 1965; Guimarães 1995, 1999; Reis 1993), or the manner in which social class in Brazil is intimately intwined with race (Guimarães 1995); instead often tangentially including the racially marginalized within a larger discussion of oppression on the basis of income and social class. Second, I make note of the near complete absence of race within the textbook's history of the MST (and the few tokenistic ways in which it is referenced), despite the fact that indigenous and Afro-Brazilians make up a significant portion of the current MST population. Third, I describe the way in which indigenous and Afro-Brazilians are described in language that symbolically separates them from the MST leadership and its core following in the (largely white) Brazilian South.

The non-central positioning of race in global and national history

In the first section of Morissawa's (2001) text, the history of the world is told from an MST perspective, heavily based in a Marxist critique of income inequality. Beginning from the rise of civilization in Egypt, Greece and Rome and then continuing through the rise of European feudalism, mercantilism and the industrial revolution, Morissawa (2001) makes regular note of how personal property and capital

accumulation have historically created an increasingly wide gap between the powerful rich and the marginalized poor.

However, despite the fact that these historical periods of inequality were often structured by race, the central role of race and racism is rarely mentioned. For instance, the textbook notes that slavery existed in ancient Egypt (Morissawa 2001, 10) and Rome (Morissawa 2001, 13), but the term "slave" in these sections is used interchangeably with "peasant" and "the poor" when referencing those who were marginalized in these societies, overlooking racial and cultural differences between those who were slaves and those who were slave-owners.

The first mention of race relative to slavery comes in Chapter 3, which tracks the history of European feudalism. In describing the differences between slaves and servants, Morissawa (2001, 16) notes that "in recent history, Africans were bought and sold as slaves." In Chapter 4, which tracks the growth of commerce and mercantilism throughout the world, one would think the role of colonialism and chattel slavery in driving growth in global trade and the production of trade goods would play a prominent role: however, colonialism is only given brief mention in two paragraph (Morissawa 2001, 22) before a lengthier analysis of the emergence of the European bourgeoisie, the French revolution and beginning of the industrial age. Within these brief paragraphs, only one sentence tangentially mentions that a slave trade began with Africa (Morissawa 2001, 22), and there is no mention of the fact that chattel slavery was inherently racially structured.

Chapter 5, which charts the rise of various populist movements throughout the world (including the Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutions, communist Vietnam and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas), is the first to concretely mention race, and this only in its description of the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. Specifically, the text describes Zapata as "a *mestizo* of indigenous and Spanish ancestry" who "wanted agrarian reform that returned to the ancient indigenous system of parceling land" (Morissawa 2001, 32). However, while Zapata's followers are described as members of the

Mexican proletariat, no mention is made of racial difference between Zapata's revolutionaries and the powerful interests they challenged.

Chapter 6, which describes the rise of the "era of globalization" along with market liberation and increasingly powerful transnational companies, makes several references to race. However, it does so only in very general terms (such as "the new international financial order...stimulates racism and ethnic conflicts" [Morissawa 2001, 48]) or in isolated incidents like the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda (Morissawa 2001, 51).

Generally speaking, the world history section of the text only rarely references race, despite the intrinsic role of race in structuring many of the historical events and periods covered, particularly chattel slavery and the racial inequalities that followed it. When race is mentioned, it is primarily tangential, such as in the casual reference of Emiliano Zapata's racial background. I argue that this section in general fails to recognize the "centrality" of race in global social structures (Feagin 2006; Winant 2001).

In Section 2 of the textbook, which covers Brazilian national history, race and racism are given more attention than in Section 1. Slavery in particular, both the slavery of Brazilian indigenous peoples (Morissawa 2001, 56-58) and people of African descent (Morissawa 2001, 59-62), is explored over the course of several pages. However, the text is very expository (focusing on the timeline of colonial arrival, the Jesuit missions, the establishment of a slave trade with West Africa), with little in the way of racial analysis or explanation. Some class-based analysis is provided: for example, slavery is defined as "[a way] to produce on lands without laborers" (Morissawa 2001, 59). However, only two paragraphs over the course of six pages provide any analysis of the role of race in social dynamics in early Brazil.

First, Morissawa (2001, 61) describes colonial stereotypes of rural Native Brazilians and challenges them, stating that "until a short time ago, Indians were considered lazy and that is why the

Portuguese preferred bringing slaves from Africa. Only quite recently, having come to know and understand better their culture and way of life, have we come to understand and respect indigenous peoples." This statement problematizes the assumption that indigenous slavery was considered unsuccessful due to a faulty indigenous work ethic, and provides a normative assertion that indigenous peoples deserve to be understood and respected.

Second, Morissawa (2001, 61-62) provides some insight into how the racial dynamics established during the Brazilian colonial period continue to influence contemporary rural Brazilian society:

> It's important that we remember that the blacks and mulattoes descended from these slaves are, today, the majority of the country's poor. We will see that, when the Emancipation Law was signed in 1888, they represented an immense mass of dispossessed people, most of whom only knew how to work the land, but didn't have a single square meter of land to plant for themselves.

This short paragraph makes a provocative assertion which conforms to the Brazilian race literature cited earlier (Fernandes 1965; Guimarães 1995, 1999; Reis 1993; Telles 2006): namely, that the basic structures of contemporary Brazilian society are derived from the same "racially shaped categories" (Winant 2001, 289) that took form during the colonial period under slavery.

In a similar statement in the same chapter, Morissawa (2001, 70-71) frames the political and legal approach to Brazilian abolition in the late 1800s as being motivated by a desire to maintain the status quo:

> Seeing that the end of slavery was inevitable, and the slavery-based conflicts in various regions, especially the coffee-producing South, the Brazilian Crown established a law limiting the right to land. This was so that former slaves, the Brazilian poor, squatters and immigrants couldn't become land-owners, but would instead continue as manual labor in larger plantations. According to this law one could only own land if one bought it or legalized it through the notary's office, having paid a tax to the Crown. This Land Law implied that one must have capital to gain land ownership, which mean that the land was transformed into a market to which only the rich had access....This was all what the powerful wanted. It was the counterpart to abolition. In effect, this guaranteed land ownership would

only be available to those that already had it and those that had money.

As important as it is that this statement recognizes that the living conditions of rural Afro-Brazilians changed little with abolition, and that this lack of change was intentional, this statement continues to focus on the class-based dynamics of the situation, with the marginalized situation of Afro-Brazilians being named alongside the "poor, squatters and [largely European] immigrants." This focus on social class is understandable given the Marxist orientation of the MST leadership, but it nonetheless masks the role of race and racism in historical instances of oppression.

While these two quotes provide some insight into the causes of continued racial inequality in contemporary rural Brazil, these concise statements are also the only instances of analytical discussion of race and racism throughout this entire section of the textbook. Slave rebellions, including slave retreats known as *quilombos* (Morissawa 2001, 64, 67-68), are mentioned briefly. The end of slavery is discussed in economic terms, framed as being motivated by the negative influence of continued slavery on trade relations with Western countries that had already abandoned the practice (Morissawa 2001, 69-70). Inequality in Brazilian society is discussed at length, but always in ways that focus on the Brazilian "poor" without differentiating between different racial groups within such, promoting the analysis of inequality on class-based issues rather than race. In the last several chapters of the section of the textbook addressing Brazilian history, which cover several agrarian reform movements, the military dictatorship and a general discussion national economic policies from the late 19th century through the beginning of the 21st, the role of race and racism in Brazilian society is left completely unexamined.

Minimal referencing of race in MST's history

Even more so than in the globally and nationally focused sections of this MST textbook, in the section dedicated to the MST's own institutional history race is barely mentioned. Several leaders within the rural Brazilian agrarian reform movement, such as Padre Josimo Tavares (Morissawa 2001, 142), are identified as Afro-Brazilian, and in one section there is a passing recognition that the MST includes

people from "the various cultures of [Brazil]" (Morissawa 2001, 165), but beyond these instances there is literally no mention of race within this textbook's portrayal of the MST's institutional history. This is particularly interesting when one chapter describes in depth the history of the MST on a state-by-state basis throughout Brazil, including sections describing the growth of the MST in Brazil's North (where most people have some indigenous ancestry) and Northeast (where most people are at least partially Afro-Brazilian).

Following a recounting of the MST's institutional history, there are a number of shorter chapters describing various aspects of the MST as an organization and the role of various interest groups within it. More specifically, there is a chapter highlighting the importance of the participation of women in the MST, calling their participation "fundamental to the development of our actions at all levels" (Morissawa 2001, 212), as well as a chapter highlighting the importance of youth participation (Morissawa 2001, 213-214). However, there is no similar chapter describing the participation of indigenous Brazilians or Afro-Brazilians, despite the heavy growth of the MST in areas of the country where these ethnicities are predominant among the rural poor.

Interestingly, a number of terms are used in the textbook to describe the marginalized situation of Brazil's rural poor that historically carry significant racial meaning, but are used without reference to race. Most prominent among these are comparisons of Brazilian rural poverty to slavery, which occur in various chapters of the section of the text addressing the history and organization of the MST. In the historical section, a copy of a letter written by participants in the first national MST congress is included, and in that letter the current state of the landless rural poor is described as "a life of exploitation and even slavery" (Morissawa 2001, 137). In a chapter describing life in MST encampments, Morissawa (2001, 226) states that unlike in other rural agricultural environments throughout Brazil, in MST encampments "you don't see salaried peasants working without legal protection or slaves working only for food." In both of these instances, the term "slavery" is used to

refer to cruel working conditions, but is divorced from its historical association with Brazilian chattel slavery. This seems especially interesting given the extensive participation of Afro-Brazilians within the MST.

The little racialization of MST participants that is included in this textbook is implied and not stated openly. Most prominently, this racialization comes through photos that appear throughout each chapter. In the beginning chapters outlining MST history, this racialization is primarily white, as the movement itself began in heavily white areas of Southern Brazil. As a result, the photos of early MST leaders are all of white Brazilians, primarily men.

Once the history of the MST extends to the rural Afro-Brazilian Northeast and Indigenous North, the photos of MST participants begin to include individuals from these racial backgrounds, and do so with increasing frequency. However, in none of these photos or the chapters that contain them is this racial difference noted.

In several instances, while the race of those included in photos is not made explicit, the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian MST participants seems rather tokenistic—that is, it seems to be a rather symbolic and perfunctory gesture to recognize racial diversity within the MST. Specifically, in the chapter on youth involvement, a picture of a young Afro-Brazilian man receiving a diploma takes up the majority of the page (Morissawa 2001, 213). In a special section in the appendix noting the various awards that have been presented to the MST, there is a photo of an elderly Afro-Brazilian woman, looking down instead of at the camera, accepting a national award on behalf of the MST (Morissawa 2001, 223). Especially given the lack of explicit recognition of the participation or role of Afro-Brazilians and other Brazilians of color in the MST throughout the rest of the text, the inclusion of these photos seems a rather tokenistic gesture meant to imply racial inclusion (even if such is not explicitly recognized or addressed).

Seeing ethnic Others as Them, not Us

As discussed earlier, there is also language used throughout the text that implies distance between various ethnic and racial identities and MST participants. For example, in a chapter on the early history of the MST in Southern Brazil, there is a sidebar containing the text of an official letter drafted at one of the early annual meetings of the MST. In that letter, those from European-dominant Southern Brazil are referred to as MST "state representatives," a term that implies inclusion and members within the MST, while those from Afro-Brazilian and indigenous Northern states are referred to as "invited guests," a term that explicitly denotes a lack of membership (Morissawa 2001, 139). This letter uses language that clearly expresses sympathy and solidarity with oppressed Brazilian racial or ethnic groups, but it also does so in a way that maintains distance and separation between them and the MST. For example, at one point the letter states, "We want through this document to bring all our companions...throughout our entire country, including our Indian brothers, information about this first meeting" (Morissawa 2001, 139). While terms such as "brothers" clearly connote familiarity and solidarity, the fact that the letter is written from the first person plural ("we"), and that "we" clearly does not include either the MST's "invited guests" or non-present "Indian brothers." While the "we" is not explicitly racialized, this linguistic separation of the MST "us" (who at this point hailed primarily from white-dominant Southern states) from "them" (who were primarily from other more indigenous or Afro-Brazilian areas of the country) does carry racial overtones.

Conclusion

On the basis of the larger body of Anglophone literature in race theory (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Hall 1980; Stoler 2002; Winant 2001) as well as the Brazilian literature on this subject (Fernandes 1965; Guimarães 1995, 1999; Reis 1993; Telles 2006), I have argued that racism is central to any discussion of society, and that racism includes structural discrimination of people of color. However, I have also made note that beyond this broad global definition, the particulars of racism are intrinsically connected and built within a specific temporal and spatial context.

Within the racialized context of rural Brazil (Harris 1956; Landes 1947; Pierson 1942; Twine 1998), I argue that the hegemonic ideology of racial democracy (Telles 2006) and rural cultural norms which promote racial silence (Twine 1998) continue to inform personal racial identities and national racial discourse, impeding the growth of Afro-Brazilian political movements and facilitating structural inequalities which keep the Brazilian middle and upper classes largely white. This racialization is "central" to the organization of Brazilian society, as class boundaries are firmly (albeit subtly) racialized (Fernandes 1965; Guimarães 1999).

Through analysis of one of the MST's youth textbooks, I further argue that even within the national rhetoric and publications of an organization as politically radical as the MST, discussions of race and racism in global and Brazilian society do not recognize the structural nature of racism, and any mention of the role of race within the MST itself is still largely absent or tokenistic. On one hand, this is understandable given the MST's explicit focus on exposing the deeply unequal class structure of Brazilian society. However, just as has occurred in New Left movements throughout the world that have been similarly troubled by the difficulty in balancing analysis of race and class (Levitt 1979), this results in textbooks such as this that do not seem to account for the "the centrality [in Brazilian society] of notions of color and whitening, the inscription of such in a state order that presupposes differential treatment" (Guimarães 1999).

On the basis of the literature on Brazilian rurality (Harris 1956; Landes 1947; Pierson 1942; Twine 1998), I also assert that this is a reflection of a tendency in rural Brazil to frame racial inequalities in class-based rather than racial terms, a tendency that is only reinforced by the MST's class-based Marxist philosophical orientation. This article represents an initial foray into analysis of race and racism within the MST and its educational programming. While the present work focuses on movement-wide MST discourses of race and racism reflected in curricula developed by national movement leaders, there is an urgent need for further research regarding how race is discussed and

reflected in the MST, at the national level among movement leaders and at the local level, within the daily interactions of community members in MST encampments. Such research can provide insight into how MST leaders address issues of race at both the national and local levels, as well as how even progressive or leftist Brazilians potentially incorporate the hegemonic racial norms of rural society into their daily lives. Findings from such studies would also provide larger insight into how race can be potentially overlooked or understated even in progressive organizations due to cultural norms surrounding race, as well as the power of racial ideologies like racial democracy in promoting particular forms of racial formation.

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