

# 1 Social Inequality, Agrarian Reform, and Democracy in Brazil

This chapter sets the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) and Brazil's mobilization for agrarian reform in context. It opens by juxtaposing two images of early twenty-first-century Brazil that illustrate in a vivid way the glaring social disparities and contentious visions enveloping the MST's quest for land redistribution. The text then offers a brief appraisal of the MST and its influence on Brazil's reform agenda. Thereafter, it probes some of the principal effects that deep and durable social inequality can have on development and democracy. This is followed by discussion of land reform experiences worldwide that situate the Brazilian case in comparative perspective. The ensuing two sections evaluate Brazil's prospects for agrarian reform and outline the main positions in the country's contemporary debate over land redistribution.

## **Early Twenty-first-Century Brazil: Two Distinct Images**

May 2, 2005. And they marched. Carrying bright red flags in an orderly three-mile queue, 12,000 MST peasants embarked on an unprecedented sixteen-day procession across the hilly savannah leading up to Brasília. "Agrarian reform now!" chanted the men, women, and children assembled from far-flung corners of Brazil. The marchers had gathered the day before to celebrate a massive May Day labor rally. Their send-off from the sprawling modern city of Goiânia was blessed by the local archbishop and cheered on by other town leaders.

The logistical set up for the 125-mile mobilization was impressive.<sup>1</sup> Each night the marchers slept in large circus tents assembled on private ranches along the highway. The federal policemen accompanying the walk looked on rather anxiously each morning as the MST occupied the edge of a new estate to set up its camp. No violence was used, and all encampment areas were tidied up after the crowd's departure.

All participants were served three daily meals prepared by a cooking staff of 415 volunteers. Food donations from land reform settlements linked to the MST

and contributions from church organizations, local and state governments, and other national and international sympathizers, assured the necessary resources for the mobilization.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the march, the MST's mobile radio station broadcast special programs available to participants through 10,000 small radio receivers on loan from the World Social Forum. More than sixty-five vehicles were employed to transport the circus tents, portable toilets, and personal belongings from one campsite to the next.<sup>3</sup>

Each stretch of the march began before sunrise. Protest songs, chants, and playful conversations with newfound comrades boosted morale along the daily eight-mile walk. Afternoons and evenings were reserved for consciousness-raising activities and amusement. Through the study of primers prepared by the movement's pedagogical team and lectures offered by various guests, the participants were invited to debate an assorted range of topics, including the MST's proposal for agrarian reform, Brazil's political juncture, present-day forms of imperialism, and the dangers of genetically modified seeds, among other environmental concerns.

After dinner, the camp offered "cultural nights," with performances by peasant musicians, dancers, and poets from all regions of the country. A massive screen was set up to exhibit movies and documentaries. One of the crowd's favorites was Walter Salles's *Motorcycle Diaries*, a gripping film about the South American travel adventures of young Ernesto "Che" Guevara. No alcohol was allowed on the camp premises.

As the march worked its way to the nation's capital, MST representatives were busy meeting with government ministers, congressional leaders, and judicial authorities. Aside from petitioning for land reform, they lobbied in support of several rural development projects and human rights protection. Over the course of two weeks, MST emissaries participated in fifty gatherings with twenty different federal ministries.

The government's fiscal austerity concerns, nonetheless, put a damper on the MST's negotiations. Prior to the march, the finance minister had slashed the budget for many social programs, including land reform. The restrictions on domestic spending undermined President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's longstanding commitments to redistribute land. The same austere policies, coupled with soaring interest rates, enabled the financial industry to post record-high profits. In early 2005, government payments to service Brazil's public debt doubled the amount spent on all programs related to health, education, social welfare, agriculture, transportation, and public security.<sup>4</sup>

"We refuse to accept the fact," declared Fátima Ribeiro, a member of the MST's national board, after meeting with the minister of agrarian development, "that the 850 million dollar cutback for agrarian reform will be used to pay interest on the national debt, handing out yet greater profits to the bankers. Hope," she added, "is the last thing to die and that's why we are mobilizing."<sup>5</sup> The MST's

arrival to the nation's capital was greeted by São Paulo's senior senator, Eduardo Suplicy, and four deputies of the Workers Party (PT). Upon their arrival in Brasília, the marchers held a ceremony to thank their federal police escort and gave each officer an MST T-shirt and cap. After spending the night next to the football stadium, they set up on their final protest through Brasília. The procession of 20,000 citizens was led by indigenous people and afro-descendants from the state of Bahia. First, they demonstrated in front of the US Embassy where they left a pile of "American trash" (mostly litter from McDonalds and Coca Cola products) and burned toy weapons to repudiate American consumerism and imperialism. At the Finance Ministry, the MST held another protest rally where calls were made for an "authentic Brazilian model of development." A large sign described the Finance Ministry as a *Fazenda do FMI* (an IMF estate).

Meanwhile, MST delegates were busy in Congress presenting petitions to the presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, and attending an honorary ceremony for Dom Luciano Mendes, the former head of Brazil's National Bishops Conference and a lifelong advocate for agrarian reform. Outside the National Congress, Brasília's civil police provoked the only confrontation of the entire seventeen-day mobilization. The brawl began after a police car drove into a throng of marchers, crushing many of its participants. In response, some began to bang on the vehicle. The mounted police rushed in to beat back the protesters. Adding drama to the episode, a police helicopter hovered menacingly low over the crowd. Two senators scurried to the scene to appease the local police. Close to fifty people were reportedly wounded in the melee.

News depictions of the final day of the march focused largely on this brief incident. Prior to this, television coverage of the march had been largely negative. For days, the media fixated its attention on the donation of food and water by the governor of Goiás and the mayor of Goiânia. The evening news treated this story, and the provision of six ambulances to care for the marchers, as a major political corruption scandal. A public prosecutor's decision to investigate the contribution to the march was given prominent headlines, and encouraged a reporter for TV Globo's "Jornal Nacional," Brazil's leading news program, to describe this "unprecedented situation" as one where "the state was actually financing a movement against itself."<sup>6</sup> At other points during the march, press interest was generally sparse. The day the MST arrived to Brasília, only one of the country's five leading newspapers carried a front-page story of their mobilization.

At the Palácio da Alvorada, President Lula warmly welcomed a delegation of fifty MST members and supporters from the church, labor, student, and human rights organizations, as well as national celebrities. Lula delighted his visitors by putting on an MST cap. After intense negotiations, his government agreed to restore the budget cuts for land reform, hire 1,300 new personnel to refurbish the federal agency responsible for land distribution, and offer additional

support for agrarian reform communities. Few other petitions made by the MST were actually met.

The marchers' last evening culminated with an ecumenical worship service, followed by a political rally and a music concert with well-known Brazilian artists.

The MST march to Brasília was an imposing event, comparable in scope to other great marches of the twentieth century: Mahatma Gandhi's twenty-three-day walk to the coastal town of Dandi, India, in 1930, where he defied British colonial rule by making salt; the twenty-seven-day Jarrow Crusade of unemployed workers from northeast England to London, in 1936, in the midst of the depression era; Martin Luther King Jr.'s five-day walk from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965, at the height of the civil rights movement in the United States; and, the thirty-four-day indigenous march from the Bolivian Amazon to La Paz, in 1990, to demand land rights and protection of the rainforest. But, never in world history had there ever been a peaceful protest march as large, lasting, and sophisticated as this one.<sup>7</sup>

■ June 4, 2005. Scarcely eighteen days after the culmination of the MST march a very different scene unfolded in São Paulo, Brazil's mega-city, industrial heartland, and financial capital.

A helicopter landed on the top of a four-story, neoclassical Italian palazzo with an impressive view of the city's skyline. Next to the heavily guarded, fifty-million-dollar building stood a shantytown; below flowed the melancholic, stench-filled Tieté River.

Stepping out on the helipad was one of Brazil's most important politicians. Inside, the crowd stirred with excitement. Geraldo Alckmin and his wife Lu had arrived. Soon, São Paulo's governor would be inaugurating the largest luxury goods department store in the world: a "temple of opulence," a "Disneyland for the rich," a "shopping bunker," according to local news accounts.

Inside the palazzo, Alckmin and Lu embraced their daughter Sophia. Alckmin was given the word: "Daslu represents the union of good taste and many work opportunities." He would certainly know. Sophia and his sister-in-law, like other young women of the upper class, were prominent Daslu employees. The ribbons untied, fifty musicians of the Daslu violin orchestra began to play. Impeccable, white-gloved waiters served champagne. Throughout the two-day festivity, Daslu treated its elite guests with 2,280 bottles of exquisite Veuve Clicquot champagne.

Strolling over Daslu's 20,000 square meters of marble floors, covering the size of three football fields put together, Alckmin, Lu, and Sophia stopped to appreciate the refined luxury items on display: a Dior crocodile leather hand bag for \$16,660; a Prada mink coat for \$19,600; Dolce & Gabbana jeans for \$1,750;

Manolo Blahnik sandals for \$1,250; and a Ralph Lauren T-shirt for \$1,030. “This is all very colorful,” observed Alckmin.

On the second floor, Sophia pointed out to her parents a helicopter hanging from the ceiling. “Look at this is beautiful motorcycle,” said Lu, shortly after, as she gestured toward a Harley-Davidson valued at \$81,300. Luxury cars, including a convertible Maserati tagged at \$306,000, were on exhibit nearby. A few steps ahead, a handful of model yachts were on display, among them a Ferretti boat priced at \$5.4 million. Daslu’s real estate office even offered an island near the posh beaches of Angra dos Reis. The cost: \$3.3 million.

Skiing equipment for those planning a trip to Chamonix, \$8,000 bottles of wine, the latest home entertainment technology, and much more; Daslu has it all. A champagne bar, comfortable sofas, flowers, and espresso cafes are scattered throughout the store. Beautiful women, fluent in various languages—the store’s Dasluzettes—pamper their customers with endearing Brazilian charm.

“This is our elite club,” explained a dazzling socialite. “It’s an apotheosis,” chimed in her companion. “Chanel, Prada, Gucci, they are all here at Daslu.” Champagne flute in hand, she recalled her largest shopping “extravaganza,” a \$100,000 Mercedes Benz purchased on a whim. “And at Daslu, it was during a sale. I started getting more and more excited and didn’t stop until I had bought 20 clothing items, all of them top fashion names. Why, just today I reserved two Chanel shoes. I could spend the entire day lost in Daslu. This is the most marvelous place in the world to get lost.”<sup>8</sup>

Daslu’s grandiose opening was artfully designed to corner Brazil’s booming luxury goods market. At \$2.3 billion a year, it is the largest such market in Latin America, growing rapidly at 35% a year. São Paulo alone accounts for 75% of the business, reputedly one of the world’s most profitable.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the richest Brazilians appeared to be doing better than ever before. Merrill Lynch estimated that the country’s millionaires had jumped from 92,000 to 98,000 between 2003 and 2004. And according to *Forbes* magazine, the number of Brazilian billionaires doubled to sixteen in 2005.

Alckmin was not the only renowned politician in attendance at Daslu’s opening ceremony. Along with scores of high-flying businessmen, bankers, industrialists, soy bean kings, and sports and fashion personalities, were José Serra, the mayor of São Paulo, and Antônio Carlos Magalhães, the powerful senior senator and kingpin of Bahia, best known by his acronym, ACM. During the festivities, Alckmin and Serra kept fending off questions about their presidential candidacies. Daslu was blessed to have such influential patrons.

July 13, 2005. Five weeks after its glittering inauguration, Daslu’s world was shaken by a rude awakening. That morning, over 100 federal police officers and tax agents raided the Daslu palazzo and detained its owner, Eliana Tranchesi, along with two business associates, on suspicion of tax fraud. The investigators alleged that Daslu had evaded more than \$10 million in taxes over the past ten

months by using fake companies to underreport the value of its imported goods. At customs, Louis Vuitton dresses worth over \$2,000 at wholesale prices were being declared for \$10 and fine Ermenegildo Zegna ties for only \$5.

The police actions triggered alarm bells in Brasília and in São Paulo. Terribly upset with the news, ACM moved quickly to intervene on behalf of Eliana, a family friend who had hired the senator's granddaughter to work at Daslu. ACM voiced his outrage to the minister of justice, who spent much of the day handling angry phone calls from other VIPs. The senior senator then called Eliana, who was still in custody at the federal police office, and cried with her over the phone. Later, he made a scathing speech at the Senate podium criticizing the Lula government. His comments were echoed by his colleague Senator Jorge Bornhausen, president of the second largest party in Congress, the conservative Party of the Liberal Front (PFL), who described the Daslu raid as an "attack against the market." Eliana's arrest, he warned, could "generate an economic crisis by frightening foreign investments from Brazil."<sup>10</sup>

The country's leading business association, the Federation of Industries of São Paulo (FIESP) issued a forceful communiqué condemning the police arrest at Daslu. National news coverage of the affair gave prominent voice to its critics. The editorials of the country's most important newspapers supported Daslu and her owner. The media's depiction of the story prompted the ombudsman of Brazil's leading daily, *Folha de São Paulo*, to lament: "our newspaper could have published at least one little article defending or explaining the Federal Police's actions."<sup>11</sup>

■ Two contrasting scenes, the MST's national march to Brasília and Daslu's inauguration in São Paulo, only a few days apart, provide pointed images of early twenty-first-century Brazil. Both events share a typically Brazilian air of grandiosity. One presents the largest long-distance protest march in world history. The other portrays the opening of the biggest luxury department store on earth. Their many differences, however, are compelling and emblematic.

Here stands a multiracial mobilization of the poorest strata of Brazilian society. There is an essentially all-white gala of its wealthiest pinnacle. One event is an act of protest, fueled by feelings of solidarity and the mystique nurtured by a sense of shared sacrifice. The other celebrates a business endeavor that caters to hedonistic temptations. Whereas the marchers live frugally, consuming mostly home-grown food staples, the Daslu crowd shares a feast sprinkled with imported sparkling wine, basking amid fashionable name brands and extraordinarily expensive products.

The contrasts continue. Progressive politicians back the MST mobilization, while the Daslu inauguration is well-attended by conservative ones. Their depictions in the mass media are disparate as well. The nation's leading news

outlets treat public expenditures of \$130,000 in food and water for the MST marchers as an act of political corruption, while tacitly condoning Daslu's scheme to evade \$10 million in import levies. Whereas the MST needs to agitate for agrarian reform and other basic social rights, the Daslu crowd enjoys the necessary contacts, clout, and financial means to advance their interests in more discrete ways. The MST march challenges Brazil's status quo. The Daslu fête celebrates it with great opulence.

Brazil's sharp societal divide runs the gamut of this continental-size nation: the fifth-largest country in the world, both in territory and population, the ninth-leading economy, by the mid-2000s, and one of the globe's most unequal societies. According to a 2005 report, only war-ravaged Sierra Leone exceeded Brazil's income disparity. In Brazil, the wealthiest 10% of the population holds 46% of the nation's income, while the poorest 50% possesses only 13%.<sup>12</sup> The combined resources of its 5,000 richest families—that is, 0.001% of the population—adds up to 40% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>13</sup>

In the countryside, asset distribution is even more unequal. Scarcely 1% of the landholders control 45% of the nation's farmland, while close to 37% of the landowners possess only 1% of this same area. By all accounts, Brazil holds one of the world's highest concentrations of land.<sup>14</sup> Existing land tenure arrangements are rooted in Brazilian history. These were forged during its colonial period, with the vast land grants (*sesmarias*) to privileged Portuguese families and the institution of slavery. The sharp asymmetries were sustained, thereafter, under different political systems: empire, oligarchic republic, military rule, and political democracy.<sup>15</sup>

The MST and Daslu emblemize Brazil's disjointed society. Both worlds are interwoven, however. In their own way, each sheds light on the other. To confine the MST's place in Brazilian society as a movement merely engaged in the struggle for land or the search for alternative models of rural development is to miss out on the larger picture. The MST is not just a rural phenomenon. Looming behind its orderly marches and bright red flags is a specter that haunts Brazil's secular inequities. Though often exaggerated, the fears of change it elicits are not baseless. The MST rattles common-held perceptions, norms, and customs. It upsets "the natural order of things." It exposes, gives voice to, and channels tensions that underlie Brazilian society. Some view its agitation as a national anathema. Others sympathize with its disruptive thrust. Among the latter, many consider the movement a powerful Brazilian symbol and inspiration in the struggle to achieve equal rights and the full promise of citizenship.

### **The MST and the Struggle for Agrarian Reform in Brazil**

During the twentieth century land distribution policies were undertaken in scores of nations. By the 1990s, however, the third world's trend toward urban-

ization and increasing agricultural yields through innovative technologies, coupled with the demise of communism and the rise of neoliberalism, had created a climate of opinion that sidelined land reform from the international development agenda. Amid all this, a curious countertrend began to take place in Brazil. Since the 1980s, an array of grassroots mobilizations has been pressing the Brazilian state for land reform, engendering in the process one of the longest sustaining social movements in history: the MST. By the mid-1990s the MST had become Latin America's largest social movement, and land reform had become firmly entrenched in Brazil's public agenda.

Brazil's first stirrings for land reform took place in the mid-1950s, in the country's poor northeast region. These mobilizations gained broader impetus during the early 1960s. The country's first national agrarian reform program was thwarted, nevertheless, by a conservative military coup d'état in 1964, days after its promulgation. Thereafter, Brazil's nascent rural social movements and their leftist allies suffered extensive repression. The newly created National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) was placed under state corporatist control. Eight months after the coup, however, the new military president issued a moderately progressive land reform law. Although used mainly to further the government's colonization program in the Amazon, the legislation gave reform advocates—notably CONTAG, church, and opposition party leaders—a legal platform on which to defend squatters and call for land distribution.

CONTAG's rural network expanded rapidly with government support. By 1984, it included 2,626 unions with over nine million members. Although constrained by the authoritarian regime and its own bureaucratic ways, the rural trade union movement provided an important venue for the formation of class identity among the peasantry and the diffusion of citizenship rights. They also offered a space that allowed small farmers and rural workers to nurture social capital and leadership skills and to discuss agrarian matters. Despite the military's alliance with the landlord class, CONTAG and many of its unions found ingenious ways to sustain an ongoing, often discrete, struggle for land in communities scattered across the countryside.<sup>16</sup>

A new landless movement erupted with force in the early 1980s, notably in Brazil's southern region. It emerged with the backing of a progressive religious network and the assistance of several rural trade unions, in a context shaped by intense agricultural modernization, growing demands for democracy by civil society groups, and the gradual demise of military rule. The MST was established officially in January 1984. A year later, Brazil witnessed the inauguration of a new civilian government that promised to carry out a land reform program.

Since its origins, the movement has developed a sophisticated grassroots organization, with a nationwide presence, an estimated 1.14 million members, over 2,000 agricultural settlements, a network of 1,800 primary and second-



ary schools, a national university, various news outlets, 161 rural cooperatives, including 4 credit unions, and 140 food processing plants.<sup>17</sup> By 2006, the MST had prodded the Brazilian government to distribute more than 3.7 million hectares, a territory nearly the size of Switzerland, or the state of West Virginia.<sup>18</sup> After the mid-1990s, the MST earned national fame as a leading critic of neoliberal policies and a forceful voice on behalf of Brazil's underprivileged majority.<sup>19</sup>

Through its ongoing activism and frequent workshops, the movement has inspired many other grassroots associations in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. An array of popular organizations, including CONTAG's rural trade unions, have assimilated MST tactics and taken courage from its actions.<sup>20</sup> Between 2000 and 2006, the Brazilian countryside had eighty-six peasant associations engaged in mobilizations for agrarian reform.<sup>21</sup> The MST is the most visible and elaborate of these movements. It remains predominant in the south. But the struggle in the northeast and Amazonian region has been led primarily by rural trade unions and various locally organized movements, including informal groups of squatters. In 2006, over a quarter of Brazil's 7,611 agrarian settlements were linked to the MST.<sup>22</sup> More than 90% of the land distributed between 1979 and 2006, however, resulted from activities undertaken by other peasant groups. This is particularly the case in the Amazonian region where roughly three-quarters of Brazil's land distribution has taken place.<sup>23</sup> The vast majority of these allocations have resulted from peasant land struggles.

In recent years, the MST has become an influential voice in international advocacy networks such as the World Social Forum and *Vía Campesina*, a coalition of family farmer associations in sixty-nine countries. By placing agrarian reform on Brazil's public agenda, the MST has helped stimulate growing global interest in land redistribution. A telling manifestation of this trend took place in early 2006, when the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) convened its Second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. The last time the FAO had held a gathering on this topic was in 1979. The 2006 event was hosted by the Brazilian government in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, not far from where the MST was born.<sup>24</sup>

Few issues have been as contentious in contemporary Brazilian politics as land reform. The MST's incisive role in the struggle for land redistribution has earned it glowing accolades on the political Left and spiteful comments among those with conservative views. In recent years, the Right has gone as far as to portray the MST's mass occupations of large, mostly idle farms as "acts of terrorism."<sup>25</sup> This sense of paranoia on the Right finds a natural counterpart in the romanticized depictions offered by the idealist Left. Both revel in the MST's revolutionary potential, albeit for opposite reasons. Each side exaggerates considerably. In doing so, they generally overplay the MST's influence on Brazilian affairs.

Though unusually long lived and complex for a social movement, the MST is essentially a poor peoples' association. It operates with limited resources and is susceptible to many of the collective action problems that can be found among grassroots organizations. The MST is not a "society of angels." Within the movement one can find many of the same human vices and blunders that have beset other social movements across the world.<sup>26</sup> Although large and broadly extended throughout Brazil, the MST comprises only a small fraction of its populace. Less than 1% of the nation's adult population and no more than 5% of its rural inhabitants are members of this social movement.<sup>27</sup>

Part of the MST's public recognition stems from an element of media aggrandizement. News coverage of the MST, though frequent, has been mostly negative, and at times blatantly hostile. The myths and misunderstandings about the MST constructed by the Brazilian press cannot be underrated.<sup>28</sup> The country's striking concentration of media power is partially responsible for this situation. It is estimated that nine family-owned conglomerates in Brazil control the media outlets that generate 85% of the country's news information.<sup>29</sup> Though staffed with many competent journalists, this press oligopoly and its attendant class biases hamper the diffusion of alternative views on the MST and other popular organizations.

Fear, fury, enchantment, and controversy over the MST should be of no surprise to students of land reform. After all, the redistribution of land, wealth, and power has sparked inevitable conflicts throughout world history. As Frederick Douglass presciently observed, such changes cannot take place without a measure of "thunder and lightning."<sup>30</sup>

### **Social Inequality, Development, and Democracy**

Prevailing ethical views across the world, it is fair to say, abhor situations of steep social injustice. Gross disparities of wealth deeply offend most religious traditions and secular philosophies. Injunctions against hoarding food and other livelihood assets can be found in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Marxism, and various strains of liberalism.<sup>31</sup> These long-standing moral concerns have been reinforced in recent years by a growing awareness among scholars as to the harmful effects that durable inequities of wealth and other assets can have on economic growth, social development, and political democracy. The following comments synthesize several key ideas in this regard.<sup>32</sup>

1. *High inequality can slow economic growth.* Unfair access to credit means the economy misses out on profitable opportunities. Unequal educational opportunities lead to a loss of potential talent. Lopsided access to productive assets can leave entire segments of the population outside the market society,

because they are simply too poor to produce for the domestic market or consume the goods produced therein. The point is well illustrated in a study prepared by Nancy Birdsall and Richard Sabot comparing economic growth rates and social inequality in Brazil and South Korea, a country that experienced a radical land reform following World War II and invested substantially thereafter in developing its human capital. Using a simulation exercise, the study revealed that Brazil's economy would have grown an additional 17.2% between 1960 and 1985 if it had had South Korea's levels of social equality. Income disparity cost Brazil at least 0.66% of its yearly GDP growth. Deep social imbalances, then, reduce economic efficiency and progress.<sup>33</sup>

2. *High inequality hinders poverty reduction and can fuel further disparities.* Sharp and durable disparities of wealth make it much harder to reduce poverty through economic growth alone. According to a World Bank report, "Brazil could reduce poverty by half in ten years with 3% growth and an improvement of 5% in the Gini coefficient (the most common measure of income inequality)." Adding, "It would take the country 30 years to achieve the same objective with 3% growth and no improvements in income distribution."<sup>34</sup> Economic growth alone in highly unequal societies is more likely to fuel income disparity than bridge its gap. Brazil's "economic miracle" in the late 1960s and mid-1970s offers a poignant example of this. Between 1966 and 1976 Brazil's annual GDP growth averaged an impressive 9.2%, yet income inequality rose sharply. From 1960 to 1977 inequality increased from 0.50 to 0.62 on the Gini coefficient scale.<sup>35</sup>

3. *High inequality diminishes the overall quality of life, particularly in matters of personal security.* Every year one in three Brazilians is a victim of crime. The nation's homicide rate of 23.4 deaths per 100,000 people is nearly three times higher than the world average.<sup>36</sup> Steep disparities can make life miserable for all sectors of society. Whereas the Brazilian rich live in guarded mansions and condominiums, with private security around the clock, the urban poor are often victimized by the drug-related violence that has taken firm root in the nation's sprawling shantytowns (*favelas*). In 2007, only 6% of the Brazilian population felt their society was becoming safer.<sup>37</sup>

4. *High inequality tends to diminish social trust.* Stark class asymmetries nurture societal tensions and misgivings. According to the Latinobarómetro poll, Brazil has the lowest levels of social trust in the entire continent. Between 1996 and 2004, an average of less than 5% of Brazilians said they could trust other people most of the time.<sup>38</sup> High mistrust hampers the development of social capital. As Robert D. Putnam and other scholars suggest, a grave deficiency of social capital can hinder market activities, frustrate civil society efforts, and stifle the workings of political democracy.<sup>39</sup>

5. *High inequality engenders a dualistic pattern of development and produces a disjointed, apartheid-like society.* In 1974, economist Edmar Bacha coined the concept of “Belindia” to describe this phenomenon in Brazil: a small, rich, first-world Belgium coexisting with a large, poor, third-world India. Belindia thrives on the disparities between the formal and informal sectors of the economy, each nowadays occupying half of the nation’s workforce. Brazil’s social apartheid hampers the development of basic civil rights. Its great social distance fuels an ethos of disregard for human rights, notably in relation to the poorest social strata.<sup>40</sup>

6. *High inequities condition political power and cultural resources in society.* High inequities bias the political rules of the game and produce lopsided distributions of political strength and representation. They also skew access to education, mass communications, and other informational assets. These conditions fuel a cultural hegemony by facilitating dominant efforts to instill their ideas, values, and perceptions of what is to be considered “realistic,” “feasible,” and “desirable” in society. Politics and public policies are thus shaped to favor the interests of the privileged few; a view shared by two-thirds of the Brazilian population.<sup>41</sup> The extreme imbalance of political power and cultural resources creates a vicious cycle that encourages corruption, undermines competition and efficiency, and hinders the development of human capital among the poorest segments of the population, by restricting public investments in health and education.<sup>42</sup>

7. *High inequalities subvert the rule of law.* Societies with stark power imbalances are inhospitable to the development of a juridical system based on the fair, impartial, and independent application of legal norms. Acute disparities of wealth, as Oscar Vilhena Vieira underscores, “obliterate legal impartiality, causing the invisibility of the extremely poor, the demonization of those who challenge the system, and the immunity of the privileged.” In such societies, compliance toward legal institutions is undermined by a lack of mutual responsibility among its members. The underprivileged see no reasons to “behave according to the rules of the game that systematically harm their interests,” while the privileged feel “no social constraints on the maximization of their interests.”<sup>43</sup> In Brazil, only 10% of the population believes they have equal access to the judiciary, the second lowest position in Latin America.<sup>44</sup>

8. *High inequalities undermine political democracy.* Unequal access to productive assets can engender distributional conflicts and foster instability.<sup>45</sup> In offering their people a lower quality of life, starkly unequal nations can fuel legitimacy problems. A 2002 survey found that 86% of Brazilians thought their society was unfair.<sup>46</sup> Such feelings of discontent, no doubt, influence public per-

ceptions of their political regime. Between 1996 and 2006, an average of only 41% of Brazilians indicated a support for democracy, and barely 24% of those surveyed claimed they were satisfied with their democracy.<sup>47</sup> In sum, democracies in highly unequal societies tend to be of dismal quality. These polities are often perceived as corrupt, are generally disliked by their people, and are potentially unstable.<sup>48</sup>

The foregoing discussion suggests that gross social inequities pose a distinct and serious challenge to development and democracy. Reducing such disparities can be a difficult task, yet the reforms needed to make this possible are no mystery. These include a wide range of redistributive policies related to taxation, credit, employment, education, health care, housing, social safety nets, and land tenure.

### **Land Reform**

Land reform has been a classic instrument for redistributing wealth since antiquity. The Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans went through phases of land redistribution between the seventh and second centuries BC. In the modern era, the first major land reform began with the French Revolution's decrees repealing feudal tenures and freeing all persons from serfdom. By contrast, in England the eighteenth-century enclosure movement expelled the peasantry from their communal lands and into the growing industrial towns. Scandinavian peasants were entitled to hold their own property by the early nineteenth century. During the subsequent decades similar measures led to the termination of feudal arrangements in Germany, Russia, Spain, and Italy. In the United States, the Homestead Act of 1862, issued amid the Civil War, enshrined the ideal of the family farm and spurred the colonization of its western territories. In Canada, similar policies were pursued under the Dominion Land Act of 1872.

However, as a matter of public policy and political struggle, no other century has witnessed as much attention to the land question as did the twentieth century. Certainly, by any standard, the last century has been the epoch of land reform par excellence, during which land redistribution policies were undertaken in scores of nations.<sup>49</sup>

In a very broad sense, the twentieth-century surge in land reform efforts can be explained by a constellation of demographic, economic, societal, and political factors. Rapid global population growth made land a scarcer commodity. Despite the accelerated urbanization, most of the world's population throughout the twentieth century actually lived in rural communities and derived their livelihood from farming. Economic modernization during this period fostered pressure to transform traditional land patterns and raise agricultural productivity. Coupled with this, a gradual yet inexorable breakdown of rural isolation

through technological changes in communication and transportation generated a distinct context for advancing changes in land tenure patterns. This epoch also marks the diffusion of new power configurations shaped by the state's growing presence in the countryside; the appearance in rural areas of an array of external actors advocating fresh ideas; and the development of novel forms of peasant organization and mobilization.

Twentieth-century land reforms, though ushered under a variety of political systems and ideologies, have largely been associated with and influenced in many ways by the political Left. Indeed, all governments of a Marxist persuasion enacted significant reforms, often through state collectivization schemes, as in the Soviet Union, China, most of Eastern Europe, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Ethiopia. After World War II, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan implemented significant land redistributions. These reforms were firmly supported by the US government, yet were strongly affected by the Cold War era and the prevailing zeitgeist in support of state-led development policies. In the ensuing decades, other Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, followed suit by introducing ceiling laws that restricted their farm holding size.

Elsewhere, a variety of nationalist regimes, influenced by socialist ideas, expropriated large landholdings to the benefit of peasants in Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala (however briefly), Egypt, Indonesia, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Portugal, and Peru. Under the sway of strong left-wing political parties, democratic governments in Italy during the late 1940s and Chile after the mid-1960s executed land reallocations as well. Other Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, initiated timid efforts in this regard in the aftershock of the 1959 Cuban revolution and the radical transformation of its agrarian structure. In the 1980s, Nicaragua, after the Sandinista revolution, and El Salvador, amid a war with left-wing guerillas, also executed varying land transfer programs.<sup>50</sup>

A common form of advancing land reform in the second half of the twentieth century was through the introduction of land ceiling legislation. These laws set limits on the size of agricultural landholdings. Land ceiling laws have been applied in both capitalist and socialist economies. Table 1.1 presents a sample of countries that have enacted such policies.

The origin and type of land reforms can be accounted for by two basic thrusts—one societal-based (or “from below”) and the other state-anchored (or “from above”). Very often the temptation has been to dichotomize these two thrusts and describe the genesis of some land reforms as stemming from above while treating others as arising from below. This approach, however, involves a very crude approximation to reality. In practice, no modern land reform could ever take place in the absence of a state. By definition, land reforms entail state involvement in restructuring property relations or regulating tenure arrangements in the countryside. In the absence of the state, such alterations could

**Table 1.1.** Land ceilings: A comparative sample

<i>Country and legislation year</i>	<i>Ceiling level</i>		<i>Country and legislation year</i>	<i>Ceiling level</i>	
	High	Low		High	Low
Japan (1946)	21	1	India (1972)	21.9	4.1
Italy (1950)	—	300	Sri Lanka (1972)	20	10
South Korea (1950)	—	3	Algeria (1973)	45	1
Taiwan (1953)	11.6	1.5	Pakistan (1977)	8	4
Indonesia (1962)	20	5	El Salvador (1980)	—	500
Cuba (1963)	—	5	Nicaragua (1981)	700	350
Syria (1963)	300	15	Bangladesh (1984)	—	8.1
Egypt (1969)	—	21	Philippines (1988)	—	5
Peru (1969)	150	15	Thailand (1989)	—	8
Iraq (1970)	500	10	Nepal (2001)	6.8	1.3

*Sources:* Table 1.1 was produced on the basis of the following sources for each country: *Japan*, Kawagoe (1999); *Italy*, King (1973); *South Korea*, Kuhnen (1971); *Taiwan*, Tseng (2004); *Indonesia*, Quizón and Debuque (1999); *Cuba*, Menjivar (1969); *Syria*, AllRefer.com (2006a); *Egypt*, Library of Congress (2003); *Peru*, Lastarria-Cornhiel (1989); *Iraq*, AllRefer.com (2006b); *India*, Zaheer (1980) and Indiaagronet–Agriculture Resource Center (2006); *Sri Lanka*, Singh (1989); *Algeria*, King (1977); *Pakistan*, Quizón and Debuque (1999); *El Salvador*, Wood (2003); *Nicaragua*, Kaimowitz (1989); *Bangladesh*, Quizón and Debuque (1999); *Philippines*, Lara and Morales (1990); *Thailand*, Quizón and Debuque (1999); and *Nepal*, Aryal and Awasthi (2006). A preliminary table and thoughtful discussion of the merits and difficulties of implementing land ceilings can be found in Yue (2004).

*Note:* All figures are in hectares (one hectare equals 2.47 acres). Variations between high and low ceilings are usually linked to the issue of land irrigation. As a rule, nonirrigated lands are accorded a higher ceiling than irrigated ones.

only take place through war, land grabs, and other expressions of naked force. The state may ultimately legitimize the results of these struggles. Nonetheless, in doing so it would prove the basic point: in the end, all land reforms must be sanctioned by the state.

Alternatively, no land reform could ever arise in a society that lacked expectations and demands for it. The intensity, scope, and way in which these claims are articulated and acted upon can vary immensely. Without them, however, land reform would become a nonissue, as certainly appears to be the case in the world's most developed countries. Hence, at bare minimum, societal voices are needed to trigger the initial impetus for any land distribution program. Clearly, then, the enactment of land reforms implies a combination of both state and societal thrusts.

Throughout the twentieth century, in most countries of the world, transformations in land tenure arrangements have been largely spearheaded by the state. This was notably the case in Japan and South Korea (under US occupation),

**Table 1.2.** Land reform in Latin America: A comparative index

Ranking	Country	Period	Land Reform Index <sup>a</sup>	Farmland distributed <sup>b</sup> (%)	Peasant beneficiaries <sup>c</sup> (%)	Reform years <sup>d</sup>	Democratic regime <sup>e</sup>
1	Bolivia	1953–1955	34.17	29.9	52.7	2.4	Mostly not
2	Cuba	1959–1963	34.08	81.2	75	4.6	No
3	Guatemala	1952–1954	18.00	17	19	2.0	Yes
4	Chile	1967–1973	9.86	40	20	6.1	Yes
5	El Salvador	1980–1984	7.45	19.6	12.7	4.3	No
6	Nicaragua	1979–1988	5.63	29.9	23.1	9.4	Mostly not
7	Peru	1964–1977	4.45	35.4	25.1	13.6	Mostly not
8	Venezuela	1960–1973	3.92	29.1	24.8	13.8	Yes
9	Panama	1968–1978	3.52	21.9	13.3	10.0	No
10	Mexico	1917–1940	3.21	22.5	54.1	23.8	No
11	Colombia	1962–1979	1.72	17.1	13.8	18.0	Yes
12	Honduras	1967–1984	1.14	11.2	8.8	17.5	Mostly not
13	Ecuador	1964–1983	1.11	9	10.4	17.5	Mostly not
14	Paraguay	1989–2002	0.78	2.3	8.3	13.7	Mostly yes
15	Dominican Republic	1962–1982	0.75	8.7	6.9	20.7	Mostly yes
16	Costa Rica	1962–1980	0.68	7.1	5.4	18.3	Yes
17	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>1985–2002</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<i>Brazil Ranking</i>		<i>17th</i>	<i>15th</i>	<i>17th</i>	<i>13th</i>	

*Notes:*

- a. The *Land Reform Index* gauges both the scope and intensity of the land redistribution process. It does so by adding the percentages of farmland distributed and peasant beneficiaries, and dividing this number by the reform years.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. *Farmland distributed* refers to the percentage of reformed land in relation to the total farmland available in the country. The total farmland area excludes reserved public domains and nonagricultural areas.
  - c. *Peasant beneficiaries* gauges the percentage of families benefited from the reform in relation to the nation's agricultural workforce.
  - d. *Reform years* refers to the time period it took to implement the main phase of land redistribution, developed by dividing all the reform months by twelve. This chart does not encompass all reform activities in each country.<sup>2</sup> Rather it focuses on their principal reform periods. Fewer reform years generally imply a more intense pace of land redistribution.<sup>3</sup>
  - e. The *democratic regime* classification is based largely on the existence or not of an electoral democracy, that is, a regime in which the main national leaders acquire or hold office through free and fair elections.<sup>4</sup>
1. The percentages for farmland distributed and peasant beneficiaries were drawn from various sources. These are listed by country according to the Land Reform Index ranking order. (1) *Bolivia*: Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A); (2) *Cuba*: data from MacEwan (1981: 45–46) for land expropriated from May 1959 to mid-1963 and the total farmland, and from the Cuban Economic Research Project (1965: 235) for the land expropriated during the remainder of 1963, the estimate for the percentage of beneficiaries is from Kay (1998: 17); (3) *Guatemala*: Handy (1994: 93–95); (4) *Chile*: de Janvry (1981: 206–7); (5) *El Salvador*: data on reform area and beneficiaries are from Thiesenhusen (1995b: 154), total farmland is from Strasma (1989: 413), and the total agricultural workforce is from the 1980 census figures, published by International Labour Organization (2008); (6) *Nicaragua*: numbers on reform area



and beneficiaries are from Kaimowitz (1989: 385) for 1979–80 and Enríquez (1991: 91–92) for 1981–88, total farmland is from Reinhardt (1989: 460), while the total agricultural workforce is based on a 1980 official estimate published by International Labour Organization (2008), percentages for Nicaragua are close to those offered by Baumeister (1992: 21): 28% for the reform area and 22% for the beneficiaries; (7) *Peru*: figures for the reform area and beneficiaries are from McClintock (1981: 61), total farmland is from Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A), and total farming families is from Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (8) *Venezuela*: statistics for the reform area, beneficiaries, and total farmland are from Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A), total farming families is from Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (9) *Panama*: Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (10) *Mexico*: Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A); (11) *Colombia*: the numbers for the reform area and beneficiaries are from Zamosc (1987: 266–69), the total farmland was obtained by adding Zamosc’s data for land area distributed between 1970–77 to the farmland area registered in the 1970 agrarian census, the total agricultural workforce is from the 1973 population census, obtained from International Labour Organization (2008); (12) *Honduras*: data for the reform area and beneficiaries is from Brockett (1998: 194), total farmland is from Stringer (1989: 364), while the total agricultural workforce is from the 1977 population census, published by International Labour Organization (2008); (13) *Ecuador*: Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (14) *Paraguay*: Carter (forthcoming); (15) *Dominican Republic*: figures on the reform area and beneficiaries are from Stanfield (1985: 320–23), while total farmland and farming families is from Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (16) *Costa Rica*: Thiesenhusen (1989b: 10–11); (17) *Brazil*: numbers for reform area and beneficiaries are based on DATALUTA (2008), total farmland area and agricultural workforce are from the 1995 agrarian census, IBGE (1996). Other sources consulted for this chart include El-Ghonemy (2001), Grindle (1986), Ondetti (2008), and Sobhan (1993).

2. A handful of countries extended their land distribution program after their main reform period. In Mexico, reform activities dropped considerably in the 1940s but regained some momentum in the 1960s. By 1970, Mexico’s reform area represented 34.1% of the total farmland, while its peasant beneficiaries amounted to 66.2% of the total agricultural families; author’s calculations based on Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A). Both El Salvador and Nicaragua had small redistribution programs in the 1990s that benefited former insurgents. In the Nicaraguan case, this took place amid a modest reversal of the Sandinista land reform.
3. For most countries, the reform period begins with the introduction of either a new or enhanced agrarian reform law, or the announcement of a specific program to carry out such reforms. The starting dates for the following countries are: Mexico (February 5, 1917), Guatemala (June 17, 1952), Bolivia (August 2, 1953), Venezuela (March 19, 1960), Colombia (December 13, 1961, though computed as starting in January 1962), Dominican Republic (April 27, 1964), Ecuador (July 11, 1964), Chile (July 28, 1967), El Salvador (March 6, 1980), Brazil (May 27, 1985). Costa Rica’s reform period begins with the creation of the Instituto de Tierras y Colonización (ITCO), a government agency designed to implement its 1961 land reform law. Honduras’s reform gained impetus in mid-1967 with the installation of a reformist leader at the helm of the Instituto Nacional Agrario (INA), much after the promulgation of a 1962 land reform law. Paraguay’s reform era begins with the election of President Rodríguez on May 1, 1989, three months after the demise of the Stroessner regime. All reform periods close at the end of the calendar year, with the exception of Guatemala, which concludes on June 27, 1954, with the overthrow of the Arbenz government; Chile, which ends on September 11, 1973, with the military coup against the Allende government; and El Salvador, which closed its reform period in June 1984, at the end of the reform period’s legal mandate. A reform month is counted only if it encompasses more than half of the days in a month.
4. The regime classifications presented in the chart draws on Smith (2005: 347–53) and Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán (2007: 157–60).

Taiwan (after the Nationalist takeover of the island), and most of Eastern Europe (guarded by the Soviet army). Mexico experienced a strong societal surge for land distribution in the years that followed the 1910 revolution, yet the country's principal agrarian reform measures, introduced by President Lázaro Cardenas (1934–40) bore the patent marks of an active state. Contemporary cases where the primary drive for land reform is a societal one include Brazil, Paraguay, Honduras, Guatemala, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

Land reform can take place under autocratic and democratic political regimes. The most radical transformations have taken place in nondemocratic settings, usually after a social revolution or a foreign military occupation. In Latin America, four of the ten most extensive land reforms were implemented after social revolutions, in Mexico (1910), Bolivia (1952), Cuba (1959), and Nicaragua (1979). Only three of the top ten reforms were conducted by democratically elected leaders. These were in Guatemala (1952–54), Chile (1967–73), and Venezuela (1960–73). Guatemala's and Chile's reform, nevertheless, ended in right-wing military coups supported by the US government. Land distribution was reversed in both countries. The Venezuelan reform was less controversial since it was carried out mainly on public lands.<sup>51</sup> Compared to other Latin American experiences, Brazil's land reform process from 1985 to 2002 was one of the least significant in the hemisphere. It ranks last in the Land Reform Index presented in table 1.2. This index measures the scope and intensity of land reforms undertaken in seventeen Latin American countries during the twentieth century. In all these cases land distribution policies were preceded and accompanied by peasant land occupations and other pressure tactics.

Political democracies are unlikely to institute a revolutionary alteration of the land structure. Constitutional guarantees and mechanisms of due process temper the prospects of sweeping transformations. Still, the range of options available under this political regime can be broad. Table 1.3 conceptualizes two basic alternatives for redistribution under existing democracies: a conservative and a progressive approach to agrarian reform. The chart presents a distilled, ideal-type distinction, aimed at flushing out the underlying conceptual differences. Reality, of course, often blurs these categories. The analytical distinction, nonetheless, should help elucidate contemporary developments in Brazil.

### **Brazil's Prospects for Agrarian Reform**

This section examines the contextual setting, politics, and prospects of agrarian reform in Brazil. It opens with a comparative framework aimed at situating the nation's development challenge in a global perspective. Brazil is not a poor country. As can be observed in table 1.4, its wealth and human development

**Table 1.3.** Agrarian reform in contemporary democracies: Two basic approaches

	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Progressive</i>
<i>Impetus</i>	Reactive and restrained. Responds to social protest.	Proactive and engaging. Motivated by an agenda for social change.
<i>Policy scope</i>	Deals with specific demands, not systemic issues.	Structural orientation.
<i>Main purpose</i>	Appease rural conflicts. Limit social change.	Promote peasant agriculture. Transform agrarian structure and power relations.
<i>Extent and rate of land distribution</i>	Minimal and protracted. Benefits relatively few people. Land tenure pattern remains mostly intact. Reforms are implemented at a sluggish pace.	Substantial and rapid. Benefits a considerable proportion of peasants. Land tenure system experiences swift and discernable changes.
<i>Patterns of land distributions</i>	Ad hoc and dispersed. Favor state and landlord interests.	Strategic and concentrated. Propitious for peasant development.
<i>Effect on popular sectors</i>	Palliative. Destimulates new claims.	Invigorating. Favors the assertion of new entitlement claims.
<i>Impact on large landholders</i>	Neutral, or even positive. Landlords can profit through generous state compensations.	Negative. Terms of expropriation favor the public treasury over the agrarian elite.
<i>Relation to the status quo</i>	Fearful of upsetting landlords. Distribution does not alter prevailing power relations.	Prepared to confront landlords. Distribution seeks to change power configurations.
<i>Relations between state and social movements</i>	Tense and/or paternalistic. Criminalization of social protest. Human rights violations occur with impunity.	Constructive partnership. Respect for social movement autonomy. Protection of basic human rights.
<i>State and land reform settlements</i>	Meager support, if any. Aid responds mainly to social agitation.	Significant. State programs foster sustainability, including agro-ecology.

**Table 1.4.** Inequality, development, and land reform, Brazil and other leading developing countries: A comparative view.

Country	Inequality			Human Development Index
	Income/ consumption Gini	90th/10th percentile ratio	Land tenure Gini	
Brazil	0.59	16.25	0.85	0.800
South Africa	0.58	16.91	—	0.674
Colombia	0.54	15.00	0.80	0.791
Argentina	0.51	13.71	0.83	0.869
Mexico	0.49	11.87	—	0.829
Philippines	0.46	—	0.55	0.771
China	0.45	—	—	0.777
Iran	0.43	—	—	0.759
Nigeria	0.41	7.26	—	0.470
Thailand	0.40	5.56	0.47	0.781
Turkey	0.37	5.73	0.61	0.775
Egypt	0.34	—	0.65	0.708
Indonesia	0.34	—	0.46	0.728
India	0.33	—	—	0.602
South Korea	0.32	—	0.34	0.921
Russia	0.32	4.67	—	0.802
Poland	0.31	4.03	0.69	0.870
Pakistan	0.27	3.09	0.57	0.551
<b>Brazil Ranking</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>6th</b>

*Sources:* United Nations Development Programme (2007) for column 4; United Nations Development Programme (2005) for column 7; World Bank (2005) for columns 1, 2, 3, 5, 6; CIA (2008) for column 8; for column 9, see note below.

*Notes:* Argentina's income inequality refers only to urban areas, which comprise over 90% of its population. The column for land reform experiences in the twentieth century was prepared on the basis of an extensive literature review presented in the note to table 1.1 and note 50. The four-fold classification draws on two criteria: (1) the scope of the redistribution and (2) the maximum size of land ceiling laws. India, for example, had little land redistribution in the twentieth century, yet instituted fairly restrictive land ceiling laws which varied from state to state, oscillating between 4.1 and 21.9 hectares. By contrast, the Philippines's land ceiling law of five hectares was riddled with legal loopholes that exempted three-fourths of the nation's farmland. All currency figures are in US dollars.

<i>Wealth and poverty</i>			<i>Agriculture employment % in agriculture</i>	<i>Land reform experience during the 20th century</i>
Gross national income at PPP	Population % below \$2 per day at PPP	Child mortality under 5 per 1,000		
8,020	22.4	35	20	Low
10,960	34.1	66	9	None
6,820	22.6	21	23	Low
12,460	14.3	20	1	None
9,590	26.6	28	18	Moderate
4,890	47.5	36	35	Low
5,530	46.7	37	43	Extensive
7,550	7.3	39	25	Extensive
9,309	2.4	198	70	None
8,020	32.5	26	49	Moderate
7,680	24.7	39	36	None
4,120	43.9	39	32	Moderate
3,460	52.4	41	43	Low
3,100	80.6	87	60	Moderate
20,400	2.0	5	10	Extensive
9,620	7.5	21	11	Extensive
12,640	2.0	7	16	Extensive
2,160	73.6	98	42	Moderate
<b>7th</b>	<b>6th least</b>	<b>8th least</b>	<b>7th least</b>	<b>Low</b>

indicators rank moderately high in comparison to other large developing nations. Brazil, however, is the most unequal of all these countries. Only South Africa, a country that suffered a brutal system of racial apartheid during much of the twentieth century, rivals Brazil's income disparities.

Two suggestive findings can be gleaned from table 1.4. The first is that inequality and poverty are not inherently related. India, Pakistan, and Indonesia are illustrative of the fact that societies that are less unequal can also be quite poor. Extreme levels of income equality, in fact, can hinder economic growth by reducing work stimulus and other investment incentives. The Soviet Union's uniform wage structure exemplifies this point well.<sup>52</sup> Brazil, of course, presents the opposite extreme. Here, excessive inequality reduces economic output and sustains significant levels of social misery. A critical twenty-first-century challenge for Brazil, then, is to overcome its longstanding patterns of social exclusion by broadening access to wealth and other livelihood assets.

The second lesson suggests a connection between levels of societal equality and land tenure reforms. The most unequal developing nations listed in ta-

ble 1.4 are those that have had little or no land reform during the twentieth century. Only two exceptions, Turkey and Indonesia, had a fairer land tenure system in place prior to the last century than that found in most formerly colonized areas of Latin America and Africa. Nearly all of the more egalitarian societies in this roster of nations had experienced a substantial process of land redistribution. Thus, as the world historical record shows, land reform can play an important role in reducing grave social disparities.

Brazil's social contrasts are palpable in many ways. In the countryside, a highly modernized and dynamic agricultural economy coexists with a pauperized society, in which more than half of the population lives below the national poverty line. The nation is a leading global producer and exporter of major agricultural commodities—notably sugar, coffee, oranges, soybeans, beef, and tobacco—yet nearly half of its population has experienced restrictions in accessing basic food necessities. According to a 2005 government survey, more than 25 million Brazilians, 14% of the population, had suffered from hunger in recent years.<sup>53</sup>

Adding to these contrasts, Brazil is also a land of strong regional differences. Indicators of its conspicuous north-south divide can be observed in table 1.5. Whereas the midwestern and southern half of Brazil enjoys a standard of living comparable to Mexico, Cuba, and Bulgaria, human development indicators in the northeast are similar to those of Indonesia and Syria, while the Amazonian north is akin to Iran and Paraguay. Yet on income distribution all five Brazilian regions fare among the nine most unequal nations of the world.<sup>54</sup>

Rural violence in Brazil is much higher in the north and northeast regions, where inequality and poverty are more prevalent. As noted in table 1.5, between 1988 and 2005, more than three-quarters of all rural killings, assassination attempts, and death threats over land conflicts took place in these two regions. The northern half of Brazil includes areas where state presence has either been historically absent or enmeshed in patrimonial fashion with large landholders. Landlords in these regions, and elsewhere in Brazil, have repeatedly used violence to deter the struggle for agrarian reform. According to the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), Brazil's leading human rights organization in the countryside, between 1985 and 2006, 1,465 land reform activists and peasants, including dozens of children, were killed in different rural conflicts. Impunity with regard to these assassinations has been the norm. Only 8% of these cases were ever brought to trial, and fewer than twenty of the landlords who hired the gunmen to execute such crimes have been condemned by the courts.<sup>55</sup>

Since 1985, successive governments have undertaken land distribution measures, prompted largely by peasant mobilizations and public outrage over a few notorious killings in the countryside. By 2002, the Brazilian state had benefited close to 605,000 peasant families through the allocation of 27 million hectares in public and private land; a territory three times the size of Portugal.

**Table 1.5.** Poverty inequality and development in Brazil, by region

Regions	Poverty (%)	Illiteracy (%)	Human Development Index	Income distribution Gini	Land distribution Gini	Rural violence index
North	35	8	0.762	0.598	0.851	40
Northeast	50	18	0.718	0.617	0.811	37
Midwest	24	9	0.827	0.622	0.810	10
Southeast	17	7	0.834	0.586	0.757	8
South	20	5	0.831	0.572	0.712	6
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.801</b>	<b>0.609</b>	<b>0.843</b>	—

*Sources:* Gacitúa-Marió and Woolcock (2005b) for columns 1, 2, 4; Hoffman (1998) for column 5; CPT/NERA (2006) for column 6; see note for column 3.

*Notes:* The five regions of Brazil comprise the following states: north (Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins); northeast (Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, and Sergipe); midwest (Brasília, Goiás, Mato Grosso, and Mato Grosso do Sul); southeast (Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo); south (Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul). Poverty figures are from the Fundação Getúlio Vargas based on a 1999 PNAD survey; illiteracy data draws on the 2001 census; Gini coefficient for income inequality is derived from data in the 2001 census, see Gacitúa-Marió and Woolcock (2005b: 27). The Gini coefficient for land inequality was produced on the basis of INCRA's 1998 Land Registry, see Hoffman (1998). The rural violence index presents the percentage of murders, death threats, and attempted assassinations, by regions, of peasants and land reform activists between 1988 and 2005. These data are based on CPT compilations by Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, director of the Núcleo de Estudos da Reforma Agrária (NERA) of UNESP Presidente Prudente. The Human Development Index (HDI) was prepared by the author on the basis of the following sources: life expectancy data for 2006, IBGE (2007a); adult literacy rates for 2006, IBGE (2007b); gross enrollment ratio based on 2000 data, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Instituto de Desenvolvimento Humano and Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (2004); GDP per capita at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) dollars for 2005, IBGE (2005); and PPP conversion rate (IMF 2008). The formula used to produce the HDI was taken from UNDP (2007: 356).

Under President Lula's first government the total number of beneficiaries increased to 825,000 families, while land distribution reached a total of 41.3 million hectares; a territory as large as Sweden.<sup>56</sup> Despite the impressive numbers, the reform process has been an essentially conservative one, in the terms offered in table 1.3.

True, there have been some important differences. Under presidents Fernando Collor de Mello (1990–92) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002), the federal government was more hostile to landless movements than during the Lula administration. The Cardoso and Lula governments, on the other hand, distributed more land than their predecessors. The Lula government, however, has provided more resources for land reform settlements and peasant agriculture than all previous administrations. Still, despite these trends, the gist of agrar-

ian reform policies in Brazil has been mostly reactive, restrained, and sluggish in its demeanor.

The reform's slow pace cannot be accounted for by any shortage of land or lack of potential beneficiaries. Quite to the contrary, scholarly studies suggest there are somewhere between 3.3 and 6.1 million families that could benefit from land reform. With children included, the number of potential beneficiaries could reach as many as 30.6 million Brazilians, a population the size of Canada.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, according to the official land registry, Brazil has at least 231.3 million hectares (1.4 million square miles) of unproductive land, both privately and publicly owned. This estimate excludes all conservation areas and indigenous reserves. Altogether, Brazil's unproductive farmland comprises no less than 27% of the national territory; an area four times the size of France, or ten times the size of the state of Montana.<sup>58</sup>

Land reform measures enacted thus far have strived mainly to appease immediate claims, defuse local conflicts, and, above all, avoid major confrontations with large landholders. As such, they have refrained from taking forceful actions aimed at transforming the agrarian structure and its power asymmetries. The distributional impact of Brazil's land policies, though significant in some local areas, has had a minimal effect on the nation's land tenure arrangement. Even with the initiatives undertaken by Lula's first government, Brazil's land redistribution still ranks (in proportional terms) among the least significant reforms undertaken in Latin America. The total 1985–2006 reform efforts raised Brazil's position in the Land Reform Index (see table 1.2) to fifteenth place, only two notches above the last place. All told, this reform process has benefited 5% of the total agricultural workforce and distributed 11.6% of the total farmland.<sup>59</sup>

Brazil's conservative agrarian reform is the result of numerous factors addressed throughout the book.<sup>60</sup> One critical dimension deserves special attention here: the politics of Brazil's agrarian inequities. The current land structure originated during the colonial era and was maintained until the present period through various political practices. Brazil's early formation as an oligarchic society produced a powerful landlord class and a weak patrimonial state. Land concentration and slavery (a practice proscribed only in 1888, after 358 years of legal existence) produced a nation of sharp power asymmetries and autocratic rulers. This political system thrived on an export-oriented economy, structured around large plantations and extractive enclaves. Throughout Brazilian history, the agrarian elite reaped the benefits of state protection and privileged access to public resources. These patrimonial features established a highly exclusionary development model.

During the twentieth century, Brazil experienced an intense process of capitalist modernization, led by an invigorated state. Yet the secular inequities remained largely intact, especially in the countryside. The landlord class lost



some of its national prominence with the rise of a thriving industrial, commercial, and financial bourgeoisie. Still, it retained significant political leverage, a result of its close ties to other business sectors and the media establishment, along with a large presence in the National Congress and an active engagement in state and local politics. The enduring strength of the landlord class has historically undermined efforts to democratize Brazilian politics and extend equal citizenship rights.<sup>61</sup>

Mainstream scholars such as Alfred P. Montero describe contemporary Brazilian democracy as an “oligarchical system of representation.”<sup>62</sup> This system is the upshot of traditional elitist politics and institutional arrangements created during the twentieth century that undermined the political involvement of popular sectors. The stark disparities of power and access to public resources produced by this condition are illustrated in table 1.6.

Drawing on the data in table 1.6 one can establish the following findings. Between 1995 and 2006, the average political representation of landless peasants was one federal deputy for every 612,000 families. The landlords, on the other hand, had one federal deputy for every 236 families. Thus, the political representation of landlords in the Chamber of Deputies was 2,587 times greater than that of the landless peasantry. As a consequence of this lopsided distribution of power, between 1995 and 2005, each landlord had access to \$1,587 in public expenditures to every dollar made available to landless peasants. Thus, extreme disparities in political strength have led to what John K. Galbraith wryly described as “socialism for the rich.”<sup>63</sup>

Brazil’s enduring oligarchic privileges were reinforced during the twentieth century through various practices that undermined the development of civil and political rights among the poor. In the last century, popular movements and progressive political parties endured the brunt of repression during Brazil’s sixty-eight years of authoritarian rule.<sup>64</sup> Adding to this, the government hindered the formation of independent popular organizations by establishing a “state corporatist” structure for labor and peasant trade unions.<sup>65</sup> Instituted from the 1930s to the early 1980s, this framework legalized working-class associations in urban areas and, by the 1960s, in rural areas, while bringing them under state control. These developments, for the most part, constrained civil society expansion among the lower classes. Alongside these policies, Brazil’s poor experienced the recurrent denial and violation of basic human rights, most dramatically through the intimidation, criminalization, and assassination of grassroots leaders. The “un-rule of law” among this segment of the population has deeply undermined trust and cooperation with law enforcement agencies.<sup>66</sup>

Various other mechanisms prevalent during the twentieth century led to the underdevelopment of poor people’s political rights. The disenfranchisement of illiterates until 1985, along with extensive clientelistic practices and vote buying among the poor, contributed to the depoliticization of underprivileged

**Table 1.6.** Landless peasants, landlords, political representation, and public expenditures

	Landless peasants (and family farmers)	Landlords (and agribusiness)
<i>Population</i>	6,120,000	22,000
Number of landless families and large landlords		
<i>Political representation</i>	10	93
Average number of federal deputies linked to each social sector, from 1995 to 2006		
<i>Public expenditures</i>	10.2 bn	58.2 bn
Total funds allocated by the federal government to each social sector, from 1995 to 2005 (in billions of US dollars)		

*Sources:* Del Grossi, Gasques, Graziano da Silva, and Conceição (2001), and Ministério de Desenvolvimento Agrário (2003) for row 1; Vigna (2001, 2003) for row 2; Ministério de Planejamento, Orçamento e Gestão (2006) and Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento (2006) for row 3.

*Notes:* Table 1.6 was developed on the basis of the following data and calculations. (1) *Population:* number of landless families assumes the higher estimate provided by Grossi, Gasques, Silva, and Conceição (2001). The number of large landlords is derived from INCRA's land registry data published by Ministério de Desenvolvimento Agrário (2003: Table 5.1.1.1). This figure includes all rural properties that are at least fifty times larger than the fiscal module established for Brazil's different regions. Fiscal modules are measurements set in the national agrarian law that vary in size according to regional characteristics. Near large urban metropolis a fiscal module usually equals five hectares of land. In distant parts of the Amazon, a fiscal module can include as much as 110 hectares. According to Brazil's agrarian law, any private estate above fifteen fiscal modules is considered to be a large property; see Teixeira (2005). (2) *Political representation:* number of federal deputies with organic ties to landless peasants is based on the average of three congressional periods. These included five representatives for the 1995–98 Congress; ten for the 1999–2002 period; and fifteen for the 2003–6 legislature. The number of federal deputies linked to the *bancada ruralista* (caucus representing large landholders and agribusiness interests), were the following: 117 for the 1995–98 congressional period; 89 during the 1999–2002 congress; and 73 during the 2003–6 legislative period. According to Edelcio Vigna, a rural policy expert at Brasília's Institute for Socio-Economic Studies (INESC), the figures for the landowners caucus should be treated as low estimates, since many other deputies are also direct descendants or relatives of large landholders, and thus inclined to cooperate with this group. In 2007, Vigna estimated that 120 federal deputies (23% of the lower house) and twelve senators were part of the *bancada ruralista*. I am grateful to Vigna's assistance in gathering this data. (3) *Public expenditures:* allocations to landless peasants are based on expenditures made by the Ministry of Rural Development. Allocations for large landholders include Ministry of Agriculture expenditures and agricultural credits provided by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES). The Ministry of Agriculture's expenditures and credit programs for small farmers, according to Vigna and other policy experts, is minute compared to the sums devoted in support of agribusiness farming and large cattle ranches. The Reais-US dollar exchange rate was calculated using data from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (2006).

sectors.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, Brazil's weakly institutionalized party system, costly election campaigns, and conservative media establishment, have bolstered elite interests while limiting the prospects for popular representation in politics. A highly fragmented party system, with weak party organizations and attachments, and intense personalist politics, has forged a political class deemed to be largely unaccountable to voters; albeit responsive to their wealthy campaign donors. "Weak parties," Scott Mainwaring writes, "have been a pillar of a system in which the state usually functions mostly for elites, in which these elites enjoy privileged access and favors," while "the poor suffer."<sup>68</sup>

The malapportionment of parliamentary seats in the National Congress has also buttressed the political strength of Brazil's large landholders. Election rules introduced by the military regime exacerbated federalist provisions limiting the democratic principle of "one person, one vote." This formula, in effect, enabled 13% of the national electorate to determine 51% of the Senate's composition and led to the overrepresentation of states with strong oligarchic traditions in both legislative chambers.<sup>69</sup> Due to their large presence in Congress, the landlords have been able to defeat various progressive initiatives on land reform, including pivotal measures in the 1988 Constitution. Further, their political clout has compelled all recent presidents to appease the landowners' caucus in order to sustain majority coalitions in Congress.

The obstacles to land reform and other redistributive policies in Brazil are compounded by the organizational fragmentation of its public administration and conspicuous bureaucratic politics. As Kurt Weyland underscores, these conditions have induced interest associations to "infiltrate" and "capture" many public agencies, and thus rendered state reform efforts vulnerable to elite opposition.<sup>70</sup> If anything, the "capacity of minority interests to block institutional change" has proven to be a resilient feature of contemporary Brazilian politics.<sup>71</sup>

The accumulated effects of Brazil's exclusionary development model and oligarchic system of political representation have greatly constrained the political participation and influence of popular sector groups. The last two decades of political freedoms and competitive elections have led to some discernible improvements, nonetheless. One of its stirring developments has been the rise of a new generation of popular movements, which, like the MST, have sought to organize and politicize their grassroots constituents. Since the mid-1990s, the MST has become Brazil's most expressive and incisive movement in the effort to contest the dominant system of elite privileges. Its contentious edge, brash tactics, and occasionally rough actions have stirred many reactions. Some intellectuals have accused the MST of being a "threat to democracy." Their views have had ample exposure in the mass media.<sup>72</sup>

A closer examination of the MST's actions, however, reveals a largely positive impact on Brazilian democracy. The MST has contributed much in advancing the prospects and quality of democracy by: (1) challenging the nation's

stark social disparities, while generating constructive policy alternatives and valuable lessons in grassroots development; (2) strengthening Brazilian civil society through the organization and incorporation of marginalized sectors of the population; (3) facilitating the extension and exercise of basic citizenship rights—civil, political, and social—among the poor; (4) highlighting the importance of public activism—a form of social conflict grounded on pressure politics and bargaining with state authorities—as a catalyst for social development; and (5) engendering a sense of utopia and affirmation of ideals imbued in Brazil’s long-term, complex, and open-ended democratization process.<sup>73</sup>

Brazil’s prospects for substantial land reform remain uncertain. By international standards, Brazil is a world laggard on matters of wealth distribution. Even with a perceptible need and potential for reform, its current prospects face great political barriers. The long-term fate of agrarian reform will be shaped by multiple demographic, environmental, and economic trends, along with various political factors. In the coming years, much will depend on the balance of societal and political forces, the ideas articulated in the public sphere, and, ultimately, the political will of those at the helm of the state. Whatever the outcome, the social movement for agrarian reform has stirred and strengthened Brazilian civil society in ways that may well advance future struggles for democracy and social justice.

#### **Agrarian Reform in the Twenty-first Century: The Brazilian Debate**

The contextual analysis offered in the preceding section sheds light on the contemporary land reform debate in Brazil. This dispute is broadly divided into two camps. Standing on one side are longstanding opponents and newfound skeptics of land redistribution. On the opposite side are various proponents and sympathizers of agrarian reform. Their contrasting positions are tinged by varying perceptions of reality and shaped by different interests and value commitments. The following paragraphs outline the main arguments put forth by each camp.<sup>74</sup>

Opponents and skeptics argue that land reform has become an irrelevant policy for the nation’s rural development given the technological modernization of agriculture, abundant food production, and profitable agribusiness farms. Further, they insist, the amount of unproductive land available for redistribution has diminished considerably, particularly in the southern and southeast regions of the country. Traditional land estates have been converted into agribusiness enterprises, which are currently responsible for two-thirds of the nation’s agricultural output. In 2005, agriculture represented 42% of all Brazilian exports.<sup>75</sup> These exports are a leading source of foreign currency earnings needed to pay the country’s external debt and reduce its reliance on international creditors. Thus, according to reform opponents, agribusiness’ significant contribution to

the national economy warrants the protection of all productive landholdings, regardless of their size. The government, therefore, should curtail all threats to existing property rights and refrain from land expropriations, even in cases where rural estates are known to employ slave labor.<sup>76</sup>

Adding to this, skeptics of agrarian reform underscore the fact that Brazil is nowadays primarily an urban nation. Only one-fifth of its population lives in the countryside and works in agriculture.<sup>77</sup> In their view, “the time for land reform has passed.”<sup>78</sup> Modernization, they maintain, leads to an irreversible exodus from the countryside. This makes the peasantry a “moribund social class.” Hence, instead of spending limited public resources on a “futile” economic cause, the government should focus on expanding its social welfare programs and generating urban jobs for the new migrants. Land reform, they maintain, is a very expensive way of doling out welfare assistance to the poor, particularly given the steep rise in land market values during the 2000s. At most, some argue, land distribution should be carried out only in Brazil’s “backward” northeast region.<sup>79</sup>

To succeed in today’s competitive market a family farmer needs specialized knowledge, modern technologies, and good management skills. Few land claimants, the critics contend, have the capacity to become successful farmers. In fact, most of them are undeserving “vagrants,” “opportunists,” and “cheaters.”<sup>80</sup> Opponents assert that land reform settlements are an “economic failure” and usually describe these communities as “rural *favelas*.” They believe the demand for land in Brazil is much lower than is often claimed and question official statistics on land concentration. These numbers, they suggest, are either inflated or irrelevant to the issues at stake.<sup>81</sup>

Finally, critics of land reform tend to be adamant in their opposition to the MST, which they portray as a “violent, authoritarian, and manipulative organization with a hidden revolutionary agenda.” Land reform advocates, they claim, are driven by “ideological” views and informed by “outdated” ideas. Their “dangerous agitation,” opponents sustain, jeopardizes Brazil’s economic competitiveness, undermines the rule of law, and threatens its democratic institutions.<sup>82</sup>

The assorted supporters and sympathizers of agrarian reform, on the other hand, converge in their concern for Brazil’s deep social injustice. Land reform, they contend, is an important policy for reducing poverty, fostering social inclusion, and bridging the country’s vast inequality gap. Agrarian reform is a “historical debt” to Brazil’s rural poor. Its implementation should be treated, many argue, as an act of reparation to the descendants of more than three centuries of slavery and longstanding restrictions to peasant land ownership. Despite the trend toward urbanization, Brazil still has a vast pool of potential land reform beneficiaries and extensive land availability, all of which makes land redistribution a contemporary and relevant policy. Large landholders, reform proponents insist, generally underutilize their properties and are routinely pro-

tected in this through acts of “state complicity.” For example, they highlight the government’s decision not to revise the more than three-decade-old productivity indexes used to determine if an estate can be expropriated for land reform. If the agribusiness producers are as “efficient” as they maintain, then, why not update these technical criteria? Agribusiness “success,” critics point out, has been overhyped by a sympathetic media establishment, which masks the fact that this rural sector continues to benefit generously from public subsidies.

With adequate support programs, they assert, agrarian reform would stimulate rural productivity, especially for domestic consumption. The bulk of the food consumed by Brazilians, proponents highlight, is produced by family farmers, notably, manioc (92%), poultry (88%), bananas (85%), beans (78%), potatoes (77%), milk (71%), and coffee (70%). Moreover, family farmers are more productive per hectare than large-scale farmers and generate 87% of all rural employment in Brazil.<sup>83</sup> Land reform, they insist, is an effective and inexpensive way of generating employment. On average, each job created in a land reform settlement costs the government \$3,640, whereas the cost of generating work in other economic sectors is substantially higher: 128% more expensive in industry, 190% in commerce, and 240% costlier in the service sector.<sup>84</sup>

By fostering needed employment in the countryside, they believe, land reform can deter the migration of poor people to the nation’s vast and unmanageable urban slums. As such, it would help stem the drift toward social decomposition affecting many parts of the country, by mitigating rising crime rates and heightened expressions of urban violence. Strengthening rural communities through agrarian reform would help spur the revitalization of small towns, which have experienced a steady decline in many regions of Brazil. If land reform settlements were mere “rural *favelas*,” they ask, then why is it that 91% of those surveyed in these communities say their quality of life has improved since acquiring land?<sup>85</sup> These and other findings, they suggest, reveal a great potential for strengthening poor people’s social rights. As such, a substantial agrarian reform could help improve the overall quality of citizenship rights and democracy in Brazil.

Additionally, many supporters underscore the ecological advantages associated with peasant farming. Large-scale cattle ranching and industrialized agriculture, with its high chemical dependency, undermine environmental sustainability and create health hazards. Agribusiness farmers and other agrarian elites are responsible, they claim, for the destruction of much of the nation’s natural heritage, including the Amazon rainforest. Peasant agriculture, by contrast, is usually “more ecological” and produces safer and more nutritious foods. From this point of view, agrarian reform would help foster a more “sustainable and endogenous pattern of development,” grounded on principles of social justice and concern for the welfare of Brazil’s vast contingent of marginalized people.<sup>86</sup>

Most proponents, however, do not see land reform as a magical panacea for

Brazil's social woes. They believe it can help solve some important problems, while catalyzing additional reform efforts. Agrarian reform, after all, is a highly charged and symbolic issue on the nation's public agenda. Over the last fifty years it has been a leading bellwether of Brazilian politics. Debates over concrete initiatives aimed at furthering land redistribution are one of the clearest indicators of the nation's contemporary political divisions between progressives and conservatives. Because of its symbolic weight, many advocates of agrarian reform feel that its progressive implementation could help trigger a broader "popular momentum" for social change.

The clash outlined above between opponents and supporters of land reform reveals markedly different ideas and values, as well as a contrasting tone in their overall argumentation. Critics of the reform agenda are generally more deterministic, defensive, and skeptical in their views of change. They underscore existing constraints in ways that rationalize the status quo. By contrast, land reform advocates tend to be more voluntaristic in their perceptions of change and are inclined to anchor their views on moral feelings and imperatives. These proponents challenge the status quo by decrying its injustice, while accentuating practical alternatives and potential benefits that could be obtained through reform. Whereas the opponents emphasize the historical novelties at stake, advocates for reform stress the intricate links between the past and present, and justify acts of historical reparation and accountability. Conservatives believe redistributive policies could establish dangerous precedents, while progressives see them as creating a positive impetus for further change.

Brazil's current debate over agrarian reform bears on matters that go well beyond the confines of topical discussions over land policies and rural development. The issues raise deeper questions about Brazilian society. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, land reform remains part of an intricate and contentious conversation over the future of Brazil—its promises, needs, fears, and dreams.

## Notes

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1. This depiction of the MST's 2005 national march draws on a close reading of all principal news accounts of the mobilization, including *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Folha de São Paulo*, *Jornal O Globo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *Correio Braziliense*, *Agência Carta Maior*, and Sue Branford (2005). In addition, I consulted the transcripts of all the national television news coverage of the march; the MST's information service, posted at its website at <http://www.mst.org.br/informativos/>; and an MST video on the march, *Ergue a tua Voz: Marcha Nacional pela Reforma Agrária* (2005a). Conversations with people in-

volved in the mobilization were very helpful. I am particularly grateful for the generous assistance provided by Antônio Canuto and Geraldo Fontes.

2. The most visible supporters of the march were linked to the Catholic Church. Brazil's National Bishops Conference (CNBB) issued a communiqué conveying its "full solidarity" with the MST's march. Over ninety pastoral agents, bishops, nuns, friars, priests, and seminarians participated in the march, including the president of the CPT, Dom Tomás Balduino, and theologian Leonardo Boff. Well-known musicians, theater troupes, and international solidarity groups also contributed to the mobilization. The ruling Workers Party (PT) issued a statement supporting the march. Furthermore, close to 1,000 municipal governments, where the MST has settlements, helped cover the transportation expenses for the peasants who joined the march in Goiânia.
3. The event was also supported by 325 MST health workers and other medical volunteers, along with sixty-five MST teachers who took care of the march's 115 children in a roving day care center.
4. The information refers to the first four months of 2005; see Banco Central (2005).
5. MST (2005b).
6. "Ministério Público quer investigar se houve uso de dinheiro público para a marcha do MST." "Jornal Nacional," TV Globo, May 9, 2005. Another telling comment was offered by Boris Casoy, the anchorman for the nightly news program of TV Record: "It is not fair that those who pay taxes—all of us—be used to sustain the MST's propaganda, a political movement, very often violent, that insists on not legalizing itself to escape the rigors of the law." "Poder público precisa respeitar um pouco mais o dinheiro do contribuinte." "Jornal da Record," TV Record, May 5, 2005.
7. In comparative terms, no other social movement has organized as many long-distance marches as the MST. Gandhi's Salt March started out with 78 men and endured for 240 miles; see Wikipedia (2006). The Jarrow Crusade consisted of 200 men and completed 280 miles; see Colette (2006). The Selma-Montgomery civil rights march began with 3,200 people and covered 54 miles; see Branch (1998). The indigenous march from Trinidad to La Paz started with 300 men, women, and children and crossed 350 miles, see Healy (2001: 361–94). By contrast, the MST's 1997 national march to Brasília mobilized 1,300 people for 64 days, from three different starting points: the city of São Paulo, Governador Valadares in Minas Gerais, and Rondonópolis, Mato Grosso, covering 640, 447, and 576 miles, respectively; see Chaves (2000) and Dos Santos, Paula, Ribeiro, and Meihy (1998). The MST's first long-distance march took place in 1986, when 250 landless peasants walked 27 days on a land reform pilgrimage to Porto Alegre; see Carter (chap. 6, this volume) on Rio Grande do Sul. In October 2007, landless peasants in India organized the world's largest long-distance march yet. For 27 days, 25,000 lower-caste and indigenous people walked 200 miles to New Delhi to demand land reform.
8. The description of Daslu's inauguration is based primarily on Bergamo's (2005b) news chronicle. Unless otherwise noted, all of the Daslu quotes are from this article. The depictions provided here are also informed by the author's visit to Daslu on July 25, 2005.
9. Benson (2005) and Downie (2005).
10. Bergamo (2005a).
11. Beraba (2005).
12. The data on social inequality are from a Brazilian government think tank, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA) (2005: 50–61). Subsequently, IPEA published a study that noted a reduction in Brazil's Gini coefficient for income inequality. According to this report, between 2001 and 2005, the Gini measurement for income inequality



- dropped from 0.593 to 0.566; see Barros, Carvalho, Franco, and Mendonça (2006: 108). The latter figure, however, still situates Brazil among the nine most unequal nations in the world, considering the 123 countries computed by the World Bank (2005).
13. Campos, Barbosa, Pochmann, Amorin, and Silva (2005: 29).
  14. This data are from Brazil's 1995 agrarian census; see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) (1996).
  15. For helpful historical reviews of Brazil's agrarian structure and politics, see Buainain (2008); Costa and Santos (1998); Faoro (1957); Forman (1975); Guimarães (1982, 1989); Martins (1981, 1991, 1996, 1997); Medeiros (1989); Schmink and Wood (1992); Silva (1996); and Stédile (2006, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 1999, 1997).
  16. Rural trade union statistics are from Maybury-Lewis (1994: 219–20), who offers a valuable overview of CONTAG's history under the military regime. Further insights on the rural trade union movement can be found in Medeiros (chap. 3, this volume) and Rosa (chap. 15, this volume); also see Houtzager (2001), Medeiros (1989), Pereira (1997), Ricci (1999), and Welch (1999).
  17. The number of MST members is admittedly uncertain. The MST has no formal roster. No surveys have ever been taken to quantify the movement's actual membership. By the end of 2006, the MST is estimated to have helped settle over 135,000 families. In mid-2007, the movement claimed to have an additional 150,000 families mobilized in encampments scattered throughout Brazil, see MST (2007b). Based on these numbers and an estimate of four adults (and adolescents) per family, one could project the MST membership to approximately 1.14 million people. Needless to say, levels of commitment among MST members are quite variable. The number of settlements and MST settlers presented here is based on the author's calculations derived from DATALUTA (2008) for total land reform settlements and families in 2004 and 2006, and MST (2007a) estimates for the number of land reform settlements affiliated to the movement. DATALUTA offers one of the most comprehensive databases on land reform issues in Brazil. Its findings are generated by the Núcleo de Estudos da Reforma Agrária (NERA) of the Universidade Estadual de São Paulo (UNESP) Presidente Prudente, a research center directed by Bernardo Mançano Fernandes. All figures on cooperatives and agro-industries are from the MST (2009). For sources and further data on the MST's accomplishments in education and communication, see Carter and Carvalho (chap. 9, this volume).
  18. Area occupied by MST settlements is based on the author's estimates for 2006 derived from DATALUTA (2008) and MST (2007a). For further details on these estimates, see Carter and Carvalho (chap. 9, this volume).
  19. Key sources on the MST's history and evolution include: Branford and Rocha (2002); Caldart (2002); Carter (2002); Fernandes (2000); Morissawa (2001); Ondetti (2008); Stédile and Fernandes (1999); Wolford (2010); and Wright and Wolford (2003). A useful review of the recent literature can be found in Welch (2006). The MST is treated as a social movement on the basis of Tarrow's (1998: 4) standard definition of this phenomenon as "collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities." Social movements are also characterized as a form of contentious politics by McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996); McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001); and Tilly (2004b).
  20. More details on the MST's impact on other popular movements can be found in Rosa (chap. 15, this volume).
  21. For further information on these peasant groups see tables 5.4 and 5.5 in Fernandes (chap. 5, this volume).

22. The number of settlements is based on the author's estimates derived from DATALUTA (2008) and MST (2007a). State-by-state data on MST settlements is provided by Carter and Carvalho (chap. 9, this volume).
23. These figures are based on the author's calculations derived from DATALUTA (2008). The estimate for the Amazonian region covers all the states that are part of what is officially known as "legal Amazonia," including large parts of the states of Mato Grosso and Maranhão.
24. FAO's 2006 land reform conference in Porto Alegre came on the heels of the 2004 World Forum on Agrarian Reform, held in Valencia, Spain, with representatives from seventy-two countries; see Carta Maior (2006). Both events, in turn, were shaped by the growing number of Asian, African, and Latin American countries that have been experiencing struggles for land reform; see Akram-Lodhi, Borrás, and Kay (2007); Deere and Royce (2009); Borrás, Edelman, and Kay (2008); Moyo and Yeros (2005); and Rosset, Patel, and Courville (2006).
25. A noted exponent of this view of the MST is Xico Graziano, a former advisor to Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who acted briefly, in 1996, as head of the federal government's land reform agency. A former federal deputy for the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), Graziano currently runs an NGO dedicated to the promotion of agribusiness and writes a regular column for three of Brazil's leading newspapers. On May 23, 2006, he published an opinion piece titled "Agrarian Terrorism" in which he treated the MST as the rural equivalent of a criminal gang known as the First Capital Command (PPC), responsible for a violent rampage that killed over three dozen police officers and prison guards in São Paulo that same month. Earlier, in November 2005, a commission of the National Congress controlled by the *bancada ruralista*, an influential caucus comprised of large landholding interests, issued a document describing the MST in similar terms.
26. For thoughtful examinations of some of the MST's recurring collective action problems, see Carter and Carvalho, Calvo-González, and Wolford (chaps. 9, 11, and 12, this volume), as well as Branford and Rocha (2002) and Caume (2006).
27. These percentages are based on IBGE's (2001: 96) 2000 census data for the population fifteen years and older, both nationally and in rural areas only.
28. Lerrer (2005), Hammond (2004), Comparato (2000), and Berger (1998) offer informative accounts of the Brazilian media's portrayal of the MST. A glaring example of the press' hostility toward the MST can be found in *Veja*, Brazil's best-selling weekly publication. *Veja*'s caustic articles on the landless movement include the following titles: "As Madraçais do MST" (The MST's Madrassas), September 8, 2004; "A Esquerda Delirante" (The Delirious Left), front cover of the June 18, 2003, issue; "A Bagunça Promovida pelo MST" (Disorder Fostered by the MST), April 3, 2003; and "A Tática da Baderna" (The Riot Tactic), front cover of the May 10, 2000, issue.
29. Intervezes—Coletivo Brasil de Comunicação Social (2005: 21).
30. Frederick Douglass's statement is from an 1849 letter to an abolitionist associate cited in Bobo, Kendall, and Max (1996).
31. The words of the prophet Isaiah speak eloquently for the Judeo-Christian heritage: "Shame on you! You who add house to house and join field to field, until not an acre remains, and you are left to dwell alone in the land. The Lord of Hosts has sworn in my hearing: Many houses shall go to ruin, fine large houses shall be uninhabited. Five acres of vineyard shall yield only a gallon, and ten bushels of seed return only one peck." Isaiah 5: 8–9 (New English Bible). In Islam we find similar admonishments:

- “Woe to every slanderer, defamer. Who amasses wealth and takes pleasure in continuously calculating his wealth, thinking that his wealth would make him last for ever. Nay! He shall most certainly be thrown into Hell.” Qur’an 104: 1–4. Both religious traditions condemn the excessive accumulation of riches but are not opposed to the creation of wealth per se. Rather, their religious contempt is toward the “love of wealth,” which leads to an estrangement from God’s imperative to seek justice and help those in need. I am grateful to Amin Mohseni for his sharing his thoughtful insights on Islam.
32. Inequality is a complex concept with multiple dimensions and meanings. The problems raised here refer fundamentally to situations of stark inequities of wealth and other basic livelihood assets that restrict the opportunities and capabilities for human development. For relevant conceptual discussions, see Sartori (1987); Sen (1992, 1997, 1999); and Tilly (1998, 2005). More generally, on inequality and development, see Cornia (2004); Selligson and Passé-Smith (2003); Tulchin (2002); Wilkinson and Pickett (2009); and the World Bank (2005). The literature on social inequality in Latin America has grown in recent years. Valuable information and assessments can be found in Berry (1998); Birdsall, Graham, and Sabot (1998); Chalmers, Vilas, Hite, Martin, Piester, and Segarra (1997); Ferranti, Perry, Ferreira, and Walton (2004); Ganuza, Barros, Taylor, and Vos (2001); Justino, Litchfield, and Whitehead (2003); Karl (2003); Lustig (1995); Morley (2000); and Tokman and O’Donnell (1998). More specifically on inequality in Brazil, see Campos, Barbosa, Pochmann, Amorin, and Silva (2005); Gacitúa-Marió and Woolcock (2005a); Henriques (2000); Hoffmann (2004); Schwartzman (2004); Weyland (1996); Wood and Carvalho (1988); and World Bank (2004).
  33. Birdsall and Sabot (1994).
  34. Ferranti, Perry, Ferreira, and Walton (2004: 4).
  35. Average for GDP growth was obtained from IPEA (2006). Gini coefficient figures are from Fishlow (1972) and Barros, Henriques, and Mendonça (2000).
  36. IPEA (2005: 108–21).
  37. Corporación Latinobarómetro (2007: 102).
  38. Corporación Latinobarómetro (2004: 32).
  39. Putman (1993) and Edwards, Foley, and Diani (2001).
  40. Bacha (1976). Cristovam Buarque has written extensively on Brazil’s social apartheid; in particular see his discussion of the concept of *apartação*, or apartation (1994). On the disregard for human rights in societies with extreme disparities of wealth, see O’Donnell (1999).
  41. Corporación Latinobarómetro (2004: 17).
  42. This general point is well articulated by Karl (2003) and Rueschemeyer (2005). More broadly, on the politics of inequality, see Chalmers, Vilas, Hite, Martin, Piester, and Segarra (1997); O’Donnell (1998); and Tilly (1998, 2005).
  43. Oscar Vilhena Vieira (2007: 2, 21).
  44. Corporación Latinobarómetro (2007: 101).
  45. On the relationship between social inequality and political violence, see Muller and Seligson (1987).
  46. Data from the Corporación Latinobarómetro’s 2002 survey, table 3.5, cited in Ferranti, Perry, Ferreira, and Walton (2004: 295). A 2007 survey found a nearly identical percentage, with only 13% of Brazilians perceiving their societies as “fair,” see Corporación Latinobarómetro (2007: 39).
  47. Corporación Latinobarómetro (2006: 72–74).
  48. According to Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi (2001: 171), rising inequalities

can reduce the life expectancy of democracies to twenty-two years. In countries with diminishing inequalities, the recent trend in Brazil, the life expectancy of democracies can reach eighty-four years.

49. Some authors make a distinction between “land reform” and “agrarian reform.” Land reform is defined as a state-enacted measure that redistributes “property in land for the benefit of landless workers, tenants and small farmers.” Agrarian reform, on the other hand, is conceived as a broader policy initiative that embraces land tenure reforms along with efforts to improve social conditions for peasants through a variety of support programs such as credit, education, technological assistance, infrastructural development, and cooperatives. Land reform, in this view, can take place without a more comprehensive agrarian reform; see King (1973: 2–3). Each can vary significantly in quality and scope. The distinction is well taken. Throughout this book, however, land reform will be treated as largely synonymous to agrarian reform. This owes much to the fact that contemporary agrarian policies, in Brazil and elsewhere, generally assume that any effort to redistribute land must be accompanied by other support measures. Moreover, in Portuguese both terms are usually translated into the same term, *reforma agrária*.
50. These appreciations are based on an extensive review of the comparative land reform literature. The texts consulted on this matter include: Akram-Lodhi, Borras, and Kay (2007); Basset and Crummey (1993); Bermeo (1986); Bingswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon, and van den Brink (2009); Brockett (1998); Colburn (1989); De Janvry (1981); De Janvry, Gordillo, Platteau, and Sadoulet (2001); Desai (1986); Dorner (1992); Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978); Fox (1990); Ghimire (2001); Grindle (1986); Handelman (1981); Hooglund (1982); Huntington (1968); Inayatullah (1980); Kay (1998); King (1973, 1977); Lipton (2009); Menjivar (1969); Montgomery (1984); Moyo and Yeros (2005); Paige (1975); Pausewang (1983); Prosterman and Riedinger (1987); Riedinger (1995); Rosset, Patel, and Courville (2006); Sobhan (1993); Swinnen (1997); Thakur (1989); Thiesenhusen (1989, 1995); Williams (1992); Wolf (1973); and Zamosc, Martínez, and Chiriboga (1997).
51. Almost three-fourths of all land distributed in Venezuela between 1960 and 1973 involved a colonization program on state-owned land; see Eckstein, Donald, Horton, and Carroll (1978: Appendix A). A similar situation also took place in Colombia, where 90% of the reform area and 88% of its beneficiaries were settled in public domains; author’s calculation taken from Zamosc (1987: 266–69).
52. On the adverse effects of extreme income equality, see Cornia (2004: 44–46).
53. Rural poverty data are from the World Bank (2005: 278); agricultural productivity rankings are from Flake (2006). For statistics regarding access to food, see IPEA (2005: 56).
54. Standard-of-living comparisons are based on UNDP’s (2007) Human Development Index; comparisons on income inequality draw from the Gini coefficients for 123 countries published by the World Bank (2005: 280–281).
55. Comissão Pastoral da Terra, CPT (1988–2013).
56. Author’s calculations made from DATALUTA (2008). Fifty-five of a total of 7,575 settlements established by INCRA between 1985 and 2006 were eliminated from the final tally presented here. These fifty-five settlements are essentially extractive reserves located in the Amazonian rainforest, namely in the states of Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Pará, and Rondônia. All together, these enclaves make up an area of 18,339,543 hectares that has benefited 35,957 families; forty-seven of these extractive reserves were created during the first Lula government. DATALUTA’s settlement figures for 1979–2002 are akin to those of Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (2003).

Its number of beneficiaries reflects the amount of land plots made available, not the actual number of settlers recorded in INCRA's database. They are biased, in other words, toward the highest possible number of land reform beneficiaries. Official data on land distribution in Brazil have been the source of controversy in recent years, in part due to the efforts made to "massage" these numbers for political gain. Former president Cardoso (2006: 539), for example, claims to have benefited 635,000 peasant families. Other official sources, however, suggest numbers that oscillate between 482,500 and 524,380 families. Closer examination of settlement data produced under the Cardoso administration found that many of the communities cited in its statistics were counted twice, while others existed only "on paper." Further, these statistics also included beneficiaries from two government programs that did not promote actual land redistribution. One of these programs facilitated the provision of land titles to farmers with de facto landholdings. The other offered a special credit line for farmers interested in purchasing land, often from other small rural proprietors. Reviews of relevant debates over land reform statistics can be found in Delgado and Fernandes (chaps. 2 and 5, this volume); also see Sauer and Souza (2007); Melo (2006: 220–23); and Scolese (2005: 81–84). The Lula administration presented data indicating it had settled 381,419 families between 2003 and 2006; see Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário (2006: 62). These figures, however, also computed beneficiaries of the government's land titling and credit programs. After an extensive review of INCRA's settlement data, DATALUTA concluded that the number of beneficiaries from Lula's 2003–6 land distribution policies reached 254,249 families. Of these, 33,643 families were settled in huge extractive reserves in the Amazonian rainforest, rather than regular farm plots, and thus excluded from the land reform tally presented here. For an appraisal contrasting the Cardoso and Lula government's land reform programs, see Deere and Medeiros (2007).

57. The estimate of potential beneficiary families is from the best academic study on this topic, prepared by Del Grossi, Gasques, Silva, and Conceição (2001). The 30.6 million figure presented here assumes a family composition of five, and multiplies this number by the study's high estimate of 6.120 million families.
58. These estimates are based on INCRA's land registry, published in a government-commissioned proposal for President Lula's National Agrarian Reform Plan; see Sampaio et al. (2005: 43 and Table 5.1.1.1). The 231.3 figure was obtained by adding 120.4 million hectares in large private estates (which the owners themselves declared to be unproductive) and 110.9 million hectares of unregistered public land. This study discounted 57 million hectares of unregistered public land that were overcounted in INCRA's land registry. The same report indicated that as much as 36% of Brazil's territory, that is, more than 311 million hectares, could be considered unproductive farmland. For a useful review of these findings, see Melo (2006: 203–214). Brazil's great land availability is corroborated by a US Department of Agriculture report that notes that the country only utilizes 5% to 7% of its land mass for agriculture. Pasture areas and other potentially productive land for agriculture amount to 38% of its territory, excluding nonarable areas (5%) and forested regions (52%); see Flake (2006).
59. Reform area and beneficiaries are derived from the author's calculus based on DATALUTA (2008). The data for total farmland and agricultural workforce used to produce these percentages are from the preliminary results of the 2006 agrarian census; see IBGE (2007).
60. On the main elements of Brazil's conservative agrarian reform see principally the chap-

- ters in this volume by Delgado; Medeiros; Fernandes; Carter and Carvalho; Branford; and Carter's concluding chapter and epilogue.
61. On Brazil's contemporary landlord class, see Mendonça (2006) and Bruno (1997). Its historic influence on the formation of Brazilian society is treated at length in Cardoso (1977), Faoro (1957); Lamounier (1989), Martins (1996, 1997), and Prado Jr. (1994). The landlord class has long been regarded as an essentially negative force for democratization. A classic statement in this regard is Moore (1966). For more recent and nuanced appraisals of this issue, see Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992), and, especially, Huber and Safford (1995).
  62. Montero (2005: 71).
  63. Galbraith (1977: 279).
  64. The sixty-eight years of authoritarian rule is from Smith's (2005: 349) regime classification. It includes the 1900–1929 period, which Smith describes as a “republican oligarchic” era.
  65. Schmitter (1971).
  66. The “un-rule of law” is given extensive treatment in Méndez, O'Donnell, and Pinheiro (1999); Pinheiro (1997); and Pereira (2000). More broadly, on the problematic development of civil rights in Brazil, see Carvalho (2006). Recurrent infringements of human rights in the countryside are meticulously recorded in the CPT's annual reports on rural conflicts, published regularly since 1990. The class biases of the Brazilian judiciary and its implications for the MST are carefully analyzed in Meszaros (chap. 14, this volume).
  67. On Brazil's voting restrictions for illiterates and electoral clientelism, see Lapp (2004: 119–53), Mainwaring (1999: 174–218), Martins (1996: 19–51), and Avelino Filho (1994). For a classic study of this political phenomena, see Leal (1993).
  68. Mainwaring (1999: 335).
  69. Stepan (2001: 345). On the problem of legislative malapportionment, also see Snyder and Samuels (2004).
  70. Weyland (1996).
  71. Montero (2005: 51).
  72. Leading intellectual critics of the MST in recent years include Rosenfield (2006), Graziano (2004), Martins (2000a, 2003c), and Navarro (2002a, 2002b). Their views are further examined in Carter's concluding chapter in this volume.
  73. These points are discussed in Carter (2009, 2010). Matters concerning the quality of democracy are given extensive treatment in O'Donnell, Cullell, and Iazzetta (2004). On the importance of social movements for the development and extension of citizenship rights, see Foweraker and Landman (1997) and Tilly (2002, 2004b). The long-term approach to democratization suggested here draws on Whitehead (2002).
  74. For a useful review of the contemporary land reform debate, see Lerrer's (2003) interviews with fifteen leading government officials, civil society leaders, and scholars representing a broad spectrum of ideas.
  75. Agricultural production data are from the Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos (DIEESE) (2006: 180); export figure is from Flake (2006). Also see the interview with Lula's first minister of agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues, former head of an agrarian elite association, in Lerrer (2005).
  76. Brazil's problem with modern slavery in rural areas is addressed in Medeiros (chap. 3, this volume); also see Breton (2002), CPT (1999b), and Sutton (1994). Efforts during the 2000s to pass legislation mandating the expropriation of estates that use slave labor have been blocked by the landlord caucus (*bancada ruralista*).

77. According to CEPAL (2004), 15% of Brazil's population resides in rural towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants.
78. Navarro's interviews are found in Scolese (2003) and Lerrer (2003: 258–59).
79. Navarro's interview is found in Lerrer (2003: 252); see also Graziano (2004: 38–39).
80. Graziano (2004: 156, 161).
81. See the interviews with two landlord representatives, Samapio Filho and Hein, as well as Navarro, in Lerrer (2003: 166, 201, 264).
82. A review of this “threat” argument can be found in Carter's concluding chapter to this volume.
83. Oliveira (2004: 32–62). This study is based on data from the 1995 agrarian census. Its definition of family farmers applies to all agricultural producers with less than two hundred hectares of land.
84. The cost of generating jobs through land reform is from an INCRA study conducted in 2004, which reported significant regional variations. This data and the comparative figures provided here are from Leite (2006a: 152–54). Each land reform plot is assumed to generate three jobs, a conclusion reached by one of the most comprehensive studies on land reform settlements in Brazil; see Heredia, Medeiros, Palmeira, Cintrão, and Leite (2004).
85. The survey data on land reform settlers are from Heredia, Medeiros, Palmeira, Cintrão, and Leite (2004: 347).
86. For an assessment grounded in these ideas, see Leite (2006b).