

Contemporary capitalism and the “resistance social networks”¹ of the Brazilian countryside

Capitalismo contemporâneo e as “redes sociais de resistência” do rural brasileiro

El capitalismo contemporáneo y las “redes sociales de resistencia” en el Brasil rural

Received: 04/13/2022 | Reviewed: 04/21/2022 | Accept: 04/26/2022 | Published: 04/29/2022

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Abstract

The climatic and environmental imbalance, the result of the intensification and expansion of the capitalist planetary economic system, is increasingly worrying. Alarming data revealed by scientists worldwide, mobilize countries in favor of reducing these effects, for the maintenance of the human species. The objective of this article is based on this premise, which, through exploratory research, will explain the historical context that consolidates this conjuncture, the reflexes of this trajectory in contemporary times, as well as the “resistance social networks”, which underlie the confrontation to such systemic imbalances. Focusing on the Brazilian reality, and, in particular, the insertion of capitalism in relationships in the country's rural environment, the article will bring to the discussion the impact of rural capitalism on the struggle of peasants/rural workers; the consolidation of this capitalist insertion in the countryside through contemporary data regarding Brazilian deforestation and the consolidation of agribusiness and the production of export monocultures, which directly impact work and food security in Brazil. In order to present some alternatives of resistance existing in Brazil, in this worrying scenario, as a way of thinking and systematizing strategies for overcoming it.

Keywords: Capitalism; Networks; Actor-network theory; Agroecology.

Resumo

O desequilíbrio climático e ambiental, fruto da intensificação e ampliação do sistema econômico planetário capitalista, é cada vez mais preocupante. Dados alarmantes revelados por cientistas em nível mundial, mobilizam países em prol da redução destes efeitos, para a manutenção da espécie humana. Parte-se desta premissa o objetivo deste artigo que, por meio de uma pesquisa exploratória, irá explicar sobre o contexto histórico que consolida esta conjuntura, os reflexos desta trajetória na contemporaneidade, bem como as “redes sociais de resistência”, que se articulam no enfrentamento a tais desequilíbrios sistêmicos. Tendo como enfoque a realidade brasileira, e, em específico, a inserção do capitalismo nas relações no ambiente rural do país, o artigo trará para a discussão o impacto do capitalismo rural para a luta dos camponeses/trabalhadores rurais; a consolidação desta inserção capitalista no rural por meio de dados contemporâneos em relação ao desmatamento brasileiro e a consolidação do agronegócio e da produção de monoculturas de exportação, que impactam diretamente o trabalho e a segurança alimentar no Brasil. O intuito é, também, apresentar algumas alternativas de resistência existentes neste cenário preocupante, como forma de se pensar e sistematizar estratégias de sua superação.

Palavras-chave: Capitalismo; Redes; Teoria ator-rede; Agroecologia.

Resumen

El desequilibrio climático y ambiental, resultado de la intensificación y expansión del sistema económico planetario capitalista, es cada vez más preocupante. Datos alarmantes revelados por científicos de todo el mundo, movilizan a los países a favor de reducir estos efectos, para el mantenimiento de la especie humana. El objetivo de este artículo parte de esta premissa, que a través de una investigación exploratoria explicará el contexto histórico que consolida esta coyuntura, los reflejos de esta trayectoria en la contemporaneidad, así como las “redes sociales de resistencia”, que se

¹ The term “resistance social networks” is underlined in the text, in an effort to highlight it as a term under construction.

articulan en el abordaje de tales desequilibrios sistémicos. Centrándose en la realidad brasileña y, en particular, en la inserción del capitalismo en las relaciones del medio rural del país, el artículo traerá a discusión el impacto del capitalismo rural en la lucha de los campesinos/trabajadores rurales; la consolidación de esta inserción capitalista en el campo a través de datos contemporáneos sobre la deforestación brasileña y la consolidación de la agroindustria y la producción de monocultivos de exportación, que impactan directamente en el trabajo y la seguridad alimentaria en Brasil. El objetivo es también presentar algunas alternativas de resistencia que existen en este preocupante escenario, como una forma de pensar y sistematizar estrategias para superarlo.

Palabras clave: Capitalismo; redes; Teoría actor-red; Agroecología.

1. Introduction

There is a consensus that human activities directly interfere with the space in which we live. Among the reflections of this intervention, what stands out in contemporary times is an increasingly notorious global warming. The consequences of global warming are already affecting the lives of many people around the globe and the changes have occurred quickly and directly affect the climate, causing, in addition, negative effects on biodiversity. As can be seen in a recent publication, in February 2022, in the sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)/WGII, which discusses the strength of climate effects: "Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health" (IPCC, 2022, p. 35).

The climate regime threatens all states in all their dimensions of production, culture, housing, art, and commerce (Latour, 2015). And beyond the climate imbalance, humanity's 'choices' regarding its development (production, economic, and cultural) create a scenario of both financial instability and compromised quality of life and the environment.

With regard to environmental changes, data published in a previous report by the IPCC/WGI, August 2021, show that temperature changes are increasingly uncontrolled and impactful. The projection is that in the next decades, we will have an increase of 1.5°C in global warming, a critical limit for the population's health and one that directly affects Brazilian agriculture (IPCC, 2021), since Brazil, as a commodity agro-exporting country, will feel these effects significantly.

In face of the facts, what we have in operation is what Furtado (1974) had already signaled, five decades ago, about the implementation of the precepts inherent to the third phase of the imperialist stage of capitalism, which is characterized as a planetary economy, increasingly dependent on non-renewable resources and on the strengthening of large companies, capable of promoting the exploitation of natural resources, also on a planetary scale.

This reinforces the hypothesis that "in our civilization, the creation of economic value provokes, in the great majority of cases, irreversible processes of degradation of the physical world" (Furtado, 1974, p. 19) and that, not always, they cannot be solved by technological progress alone. After all, populations, including Brazilians, do not feed on 'technologies' or commodities but survive on the fruits of their labor, food² is the most important item, that is, a priority social fact.

However, as far as labor is concerned, what can be observed is that, since the year 2020, a significant negative impact is configured, with the emergence of a pandemic virus - Sars-Cov-2, pointed out by experts as the result of the imbalance described above³ and, by requiring drastic changes in social organization, exacerbated the scourge of unemployment, especially in the poorest countries and/or those with unequal income distribution. About this, the IPCC 2022/WGII report warns about the increasing risk of animal-transmitted diseases, such as dengue, chikungunya, and Sars in practically every continent, in addition to water-borne diseases in some places and contamination from toxic algae blooms.

In view of the exposed context, this paper aims to analyze some important issues for reflection regarding the planetary capitalist dynamics and how such dynamics guide the relationship of human beings with nature. To discuss some important

² According to Woortmann (2007), "in studies on social dimensions of food among peasants, argues that 'food,' for this group, is a "nucleating cultural category that is articulated to 'work' and 'land,' and that eating choices that include forbidden, permitted, and preferred foods are linked to dimensions of gender, memory, family, identity, religion, etc." (Lima, 2015, p. 57).

³ According to (Pontes, 2020, n/a), in the case of the new coronavirus, long before it infected the first humans and traveled from China, it inhabited other hosts in a wild environment. Isolated and in balance in their habitat, such as closed forests, viruses like this would not threaten humans. The problem is when this natural reservoir begins to be clipped, destroyed, and occupied.

data about the reflexes of these positions in contemporary times, and finally, to point out some “resistance social networks” amid this context, specifically concerning the reality of the Brazilian countryside.

Therefore, following the exploratory methodology, which focuses on “getting to know the characteristics of a phenomenon in order to seek, later on, explanations of the causes and consequences of this phenomenon” (Richardson, 1999, p. 326), we seek to delimit some consolidated theoretical references, in Brazilian and international literature, in order to exemplify this conjuncture, as a way to expose plausible and already existing possibilities of integration between society and nature, in the light of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

This paper is subdivided into three guiding points, namely: the influence of capitalism on agriculture and, consequently, on the struggles of rural workers; the reflection of this influence in Brazil; and the signs of possible “resistance social networks”, even amid contemporary capitalism.

2. Methodology

Departing from the understanding that methodology is characterized as the way of thinking along with the practice exercised on reality where method, technics and creativity are simultaneously present (Minayo, 2019), this paper is characterized as the result of a qualitative social research.

From this perspective, social research is identified as an activity that seeks to understand the behavior of individuals and society; and qualitative research as the “study of history, relations, representations, beliefs, perceptions and opinions, an outcome of the interpretations that humans make about how they live, build their artifacts and themselves” (Minayo, 2014, p.57).

Here, specifically, we will be bringing an exploratory bibliographic study that is carried out through the investigation of the capitalist insertion in the Brazilian countryside, in order to get closer and more familiar with the analyzed object and with the contribution and guidance on possible hypotheses (Prodav & Freitas, 2013), that represent here overcoming and resistance proposals; in a persistent exercise towards insights and ideas, which allow a greater understanding of the subject.

Regarding the research cut, it took place in a longitudinal way and comprises the specific and relevant literature for the study of the reality that is in question, formulated in the last fifty years, that is, from the 70's up today, an extensive cut, but one that helps us to bring to view the paradigms that were pointed out at that time, and that are still present nowadays. The data were collected from secondary sources, through websites, official documents and scientific bibliographies.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Agrarian context in contemporary capitalism

According to Furtado (1974), the rapid industrialization of the periphery of the capitalist world - that is, the countries that were historically colonized and responsible for providing resources to consolidate the central countries - corresponds to the third phase in the evolution of industrial capitalism. A period that 'began with a process of integration of the national economies that form the center of the system' (Furtado, 1974, p. 28).

Until the mid-1970s, the development of industrial practices was identified by material progress, which would spontaneously lead to improved social standards. A rather utopian vision, in view of the political game as background, and its heterogeneous influence on the social structure.

For a long time, especially in the golden age of capitalism 1945-75, the concept of development was associated with the ideas of progress and growth of gross domestic product, from the 1980s and especially 1990s, other elements began to gain body in this debate, mainly environmental issues, social justice, and the need for stakeholder participation in the planning and management process (Plein, 2016, p. 27).

Important factors were pointed out in the first Human Development Report published in 1990, and, in Furtado's (1974, p. 32) analysis, "the growth of the economy will come to be understood by many analysts as an element of a larger process, since its results do not automatically translate into benefits."

Sen (2000, p. 28), in his important analysis in "Development as Freedom," points out the difference between development and economic growth, the latter enables a society to desire wealth for utility, which is 'the freedom to lead the kind of life we have reason to value,' that is, people's search for wealth aims to obtain goods, in this sense wealth becomes more important because it enables consumption. However, the author considers that there are other aspects of life that are important and are not propitiated only by the fact that there is economic growth.

It is as important to recognize the crucial role of wealth in determining our conditions and quality of life as it is to understand the restricted and dependent nature of this relationship. A proper conception of development must go far beyond the accumulation of wealth and the growth of Gross National Product and other income-related variables (Sen, 2000, p. 28).

The author points out, therefore, that growth needs to consider development in order to ensure the improvement of people's lives and the freedoms they can enjoy, which include, among others, adequate food, access to health services, and quality education, as well as the guarantee of basic services such as sanitation and access to drinking water. Because the absence of some freedoms related to economic poverty prevents many individuals from enjoying basic, fundamental rights.

According to Veiga (2010), growth is the result of the free interaction of market forces, agreed upon by the unequal and emblematic Washington Consensus. Such agreement, as cited by Yamamoto (2011, p. 108), drives the globalization of the economy through "transnational industrial groups, resulting from a process of mergers and acquisitions of companies in a context of deregulation and liberation of the economy". And yet:

Unequal development is accelerated, in leaps and bounds, among companies, branches of industry, and different nations, and, within countries, in favor of the dominant classes and groups [...]. The transfer of wealth between classes and social categories, and among countries, is at the root of the increase in chronic unemployment, the precariousness of labor relations, the demands for wage restraint, the so-called 'flexibility' of working conditions and relations, and the dismantling of the social protection system (Yamamoto, 2011, p. 111).

The emergence of climate disasters, which together lead to uncertainty about the future, leads Veiga (2000) to criticize an orthodox economy that subordinates the natural environment to the economic system. In contemporary times, the effects of climate change have shown that this economic vision is mistaken.

Thus, humanity's insistence on distinguishing nature from society creates a scenario that produces a concentration of wealth and, at the same time, poverty, and misery. It drives the privatization of public institutions in peripheral countries, which will be acquired by companies that own technology and stimulate creative design work, under the control of profitability norms, which consequently will contribute to the intensification of work and low wages. In short, the burden of privatization falls on increased structural unemployment and union disarticulation, as discussed by Anderson (1995).

In addition to the privatization of public goods, another factor that consolidates the monopolistic articulation of the contemporary world and solidifies the role of the peripheral countries in the international labor dynamics, is linked to property relations.

As far as Brazil is concerned, there is a political and economic interest in promoting agribusiness to the detriment of family-based agriculture, expressed in the increase of export subsidies that "imposed a reduction in social spending and implemented a regressive social security and labor policy with a clear commitment to the interests of big capital" (Yamamoto, 2011, p. 122). In a well-demarcated framework, Santos (2012) states the existence of three main phenomena, which

consolidate the Brazilian position in the current monopoly capitalist dynamics. These are the conservative character of the modernization of Brazilian capitalism, the passive revolution⁴, and the centrality in state intervention.

With regard to the conservative character of Brazilian modernization, we find as characteristics, the agrarian structure consisting of agricultural estates which develop their agricultural practices through extensive monoculture production with an export focus. It is important to highlight that, according to Talaska (2017, p. 200 and 201), after the Agrarian Law of 1993 was sanctioned, the term 'agricultural estate' was suppressed in official documents from Incra and the Brazilian legislation, which created a substitute category called 'large property.' But, as the author discusses, it is only a substitution of terms, given that from 2014 registry statistics, she points out "the existence of 182 agricultural estates by size in Brazil, whose occupied areas total 12,845,381.8 hectares." A territory area larger than the entire state of Pernambuco, or Santa Catarina, or the area of the junction of Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Alagoas, and the Federal District.

According to Prado Júnior (2004), this type of export-oriented production, which remained hegemonic, consolidated Brazil's place in the international division of capitalist labor. Such characteristics, according to Cardoso de Melo (1994), solidified industrialization in Brazil and in all Latin America, as national capitalist export economies, with a lagging character.

As a consequence of this dependency, which transforms the "agrarian economy into a source of surplus production appropriated by the hegemonic urban sectors" (Wanderley, 2011, p. 25), a link between production and labor is guaranteed that, according to Florestan Fernandes (1973), atrophies the Brazilian capitalist agrarian development.

It is worth noting that the logic of the peripheral monopoly assumes that only a few investors meet the necessary conditions for investment, a crucial element for the definition of the agribusiness format in the country (Albuquerque, 2004). Where, no longer only the primary product is sold, but also products with several levels of processing.

In this way, the monoculture agricultural estate is maintained, with priority given to export, which gains an air of modernity, justified by its participation in the country's balance of trade.

In short,

The mass of rural and urban wage earners grows, necessary for the expansion of the internal market, and to meet the demands of increasing production and productivity. This same development incorporates and recreates the small simple mercantile production - partners, small tenants, squatters - submitting it to the yoke of capital (commercial, industrial, financial) and to the land revenue. Agricultural wage earners and peasants experience a permanent deprivation of social, labor, and political rights, deepening an exclusion from the power bloc and from political pacts (Iamamoto, 2011, p. 131 and 132).

It is important to point out that the Brazilian bourgeoisie is marked by the rural structuring, whose protagonists are the owners of large areas of land, who dictate the rules of state investments in the sector, in favor of agribusiness, interfering in the major transformations operated in the life of the nation (Ianni, 1984). Thus, "the accumulation of capital requires not the rationalization of agriculture, but its submission to the rationality of the industrial sector" (Silva, 1981, p. 67). In view of an orthodox Marxist reading, it was credited in the "proletarianization the confirmation of the emergence of properly capitalist relations in agricultural production, that is, the consolidation of a true rural proletariat" (Wanderley, 2011, p. 58). However, "the impositions and determinations of capital, effective in the construction of mechanisms of control and power over workers, did not appropriate the entire social space" (Ferrante, 1993, p. 70), not being able to coerce the correlations of forces, present between the classes.

⁴ Characterized by the exclusion of popular forces from political decisions in the direction of social life; by a bourgeois democracy that is restricted to members of classes that qualify economically, socially, and politically, for the exercise of bourgeois domination; and by an unequal process of lagging capitalism (Santos, 2012).

3.1.1 Resist to survive

It is worth mentioning the importance of peasant resistance to what was being imposed, which, as shown by Martins (1981), from the end of the 1940s on, the Peasant Leagues (Northeast), the Landless Farmers' Movement (South), and the rural unions started to occupy an important place in the manifestation of rural workers' rights.

As an example of this correlation of forces and in contrast to the statements of Albuquerque (2004), Iamamoto (2011), Wanderley (2011), what is observed is a movement of rural workers towards the organization of collective structures, through agricultural cooperation, which includes associations and cooperatives, for the production of surplus for marketing (Borges, 2010).

As a result of this articulation, and in view of the expansion of procedures, such organizations, like the MST, specialize in forms of agro-industrial production (technological insertion), in order to increase productivity and maintain themselves in the market.

According to data from the Institute for Applied Economic Research - IPEA (2013), with data from the Agricultural Census of 2006, the family agroindustry produced more tons of cassava flour and starchy food made of cassava per year, than the non-family agroindustry, even having as priority the productive diversification, A factor that may be linked to the insertion of a significant portion of farmers who benefit from INCRA's Terra Forte Program, a program that aims at applying R\$300 million in projects for the implementation and/or modernization of agro-industrial structures in the Settlement Projects (Mattei & Andrade, 2017).

Data that strengthen the visibility that, as a form of resistance, occurs a political maturation of rural workers, expressed mainly in the struggle of traditional communities, in the rural union force, and in the struggle for land of squatters, partners, and tenants (Iamamoto, 2011).

It is in the midst of a set of struggles and tensions of the various segments of the working class, which it organizes in search of better wages, land, work, and social rights, that rural poverty presents itself in a cruel and unmeasured class form. It is also where the government response is given through focused policies, among which is the creation of agrarian reform settlements, in a compensatory configuration (Sant'Ana, 2014).

According to Almeida (2009), it is within the crisis, the result of a concentrated, unequal, and excluding land structure, that collective actions take strength. To him, this organized pressure is what led, in 1944, President Getúlio Vargas to authorize the creation of agricultural and rural unions, and in 1963, the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers - Contag.

In a repressive context and with little autonomy, in view of the successive military governments, Contag only began to have more openness in 1975, when a new framework of struggles, mobilizations, and social demands for citizenship, democracy, freedom, union autonomy, social assistance, an adequate agricultural policy of minimum prices, and agrarian reform came into effect.

These factors have contributed "to the emergence of social movements with a certain degree of organization and structuring, which in turn have led to numerous encampment and land occupation actions" (Almeida, 2009, p. 55), especially since the 1980s.

According to Bergamasco and Norder (1996), the meaning of settlement is something created in space-time and can be defined today as a unit of agricultural production, created through public policies of land use reorganization, and it can be divided into five distinct types. They are: colonization projects, created by the military regime, from 1970 on; resettlements of people affected by dams and the like; state plans for the valorization of public land and regularization of tenure; agrarian reform programs and extractive reserves.

However, Almeida (2009, p. 57) points out that,

The struggle for land reaches its peak with certain settlements based on the actions of landless farmers. Then, new problems arise, particularly with regard to forms of organization and agricultural production. As soon as these problems are identified, arising from the agricultural use of poorly fertile, hilly land and the lack of technical assistance, the first civil support groups and associations begin to emerge, made up of technicians and farmers, whose objective will be to promote and develop agriculture in the context of these settlements. Many of these groups are constituted as associations, non-governmental organizations of civil people closely linked to churches (mainly Catholic and Lutheran), agricultural technicians, and the movement of landless rural workers MST, which was already well structured at that time.

It is worth noting that “in a new political context, both the union oppositions and the MST defended the need for a new law capable of supporting a broad land distribution” (Medeiros, 2015, p. 346), as opposed to the Land Statute. In this period, there was a significant increase in occupations and encampments, “bringing the land issue back into the public arena, based on both economic arguments (the importance of food production) and moral justifications (the need to eliminate the enormous social injustice that marked the Brazilian countryside)” (Medeiros, 2015, p. 348).

According to Mazalla Netto (2013, p. 24), “the real consolidation of agrarian reform and the establishment of the countryside as a space for living and for sustainable rural development happens, to a considerable extent, through the process of struggle for land and for the rights of rural workers”. The MST is the greatest influence of organized social mobilization in this area.

As pondered by Sant’ana (2014, p. 268), with the consolidation of the MST and its struggles, after the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as President of the Republic, what is observed is that,

Even though violence against social movements has decreased and programs for family agriculture have increased, the political direction of agrarian reform has remained the same: redistributing land, not in order to make it possible for families to access it and guarantee their autonomy through policies aimed at strengthening the settler as an autonomous producer responsible for producing food and, at the same time, guaranteeing his/her own and his/her family's reproduction through work. On the contrary, the beneficiary of agrarian reform becomes a user of social programs aimed at those who have no income.

This factor reinforces the agrarian policy as a focal social policy, with rural workers being one of the targets of the dominant class and the mass media, in a context of constant criminalization.

Even after 2006, with the enactment of law 11,326, entitled the Family Farming Law, which helps this population to channel state resources, it is “absolutely insufficient to analyze and understand the complexity of the subjects of the Brazilian countryside” (Saquet, 2017, p. 87).

In this sense, one of the contributions of Marxism is in guiding on the need to understand the essence of the so-called peasant production, which involves the cultivation of the land, small-scale production, and activities centered on the family nucleus.

According to Oliveira (2004), Marx points out that there are, in this context, three segments in modern society: the owners of the labor force, the owners of capital, and the owners of the land. And in complementation, Saquet (2017) points out that among the landowners, there are those who develop their productive activities from it, and who do not make up the monopolistic mass of rural entrepreneurs⁵, they are linked to the land; their main objective is the biological and social reproduction of the family and not the valorization and accumulation of capital; they have a close relationship between family labor and consumption, with emphasis on cooperation, stimulated by the need to ensure the family's reproduction; they are integrated to the markets via the flow of goods with subordination to the rules of the capitalist production model; family labor predominates; they promote socialization and the reproduction of labor power; they own the other means of production besides the land: inputs, instruments and machines; and, they have a working day that varies according to the time of year, that is, according to the planting and harvesting periods.

⁵ According to Wanderley (2011, p. 26) “rural entrepreneurs have a privileged position in this structure, as they are the immediate agents of capturing agricultural surpluses destined for the dominant sectors, through which they sediment the material base of their own social reproduction.”

Saquet (2017, p. 90), "there is, in general, in peasant agriculture, the reproduction of non-capitalist relations of production or relations not specifically capitalist created by modern capitalism;" however, these relations are dependent on the market, directly producing the means of socioeconomic reproduction.

3.2 The impact of contemporary capitalism and the search for alternatives

Among the guidelines obtained in 2021, as a result of the data made available by the IPCC/WGI report, scientists are emphatic about the planetary need to combat greenhouse gases and CO² in a short space of time, if the proposal is to keep the earth's temperature habitable for humans (IPCC, 2021). The 2022 IPCC/WG2 report presents several implications of climate change and warming for food production, and consequently, food security.

However, in the Brazilian reality, the picture is not favorable to the maximum reduction of gases, and contrary to expectations, in the year 2019, the country increased 9.6% of gross greenhouse gas emissions. This is the year in which the country, because of an uncommitted government policy and lack of interest in actions involving environmental preservation and climate issues, extinguished the Department of Climate Change and Forests of the Ministry of Environment and shelved plans to prevent and control deforestation (SEEG, 2020).

According to data from the System of Greenhouse Gas Emission and Removal Estimating System - SEEG (2020, p. 4), "the country released into the atmosphere 2.17 billion tons of carbon dioxide, against 1.98 billion in 2018," however, the country's Gross Domestic Product-GDP, in that year, rose only 1.1%, a factor that expresses that devastation is not linked to the generation of wealth for Brazil.

As the main factor of Brazilian environmental devastation, there is the deforestation of the Amazon, followed by the agricultural production, which suffered an increase of 1.1% compared to the year 2018.

Among the main emissions from the agricultural and livestock sector, it can be seen that they are linked to the expansion of cattle raising (28%) - a factor that represents a real increase of 7% in emissions, together with the use of synthetic fertilizers in agriculture (24.8%), and the management of animal waste, irrigated cultivation, and the burning of agricultural waste, which complete the remaining 6.7% of national emissions for the sector in 2019 (SEEG, 2020).

Such a scenario is inserted in the contemporary context of the imperialist stage, which has as its proposal the devaluation of human labor, and where the crisis of the union movement and the reduction of the contingent of workers stand out (Netto & Braz, 2012).

According to Netto and Braz (2012, p. 230):

All the transformations implemented by capital aim to lower the rate of profit and create renewed conditions for the exploitation of labor power - from wage reduction to job precarization. Here, in fact, lies one of the most expressive aspects of the offensive of capital against labor: the rhetoric of 'full employment' of the 'golden years' has been replaced, in the discourse of the defenders of capital, by the defense of precarious forms of employment and part-time employment, which forces the worker to seek sustenance, simultaneously, in several occupations.

This work is even more scarce in the pandemic period. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE, in the first quarter of 2021, the country had 14.8 million unemployed, which represents a percentage of 14.7% and corresponds to the highest rate and the largest contingent of people without work of all quarters since 2012 (IBGE, 2021).

In addition to the reduction in the number of jobs in the country, another additional factor that hinders the maintenance of the subsistence of the working class is the budget reduction linked to food and nutritional security (FNS) in the country, which, in the year 2021, had a 75% cut in relation to 2020, going from 1.2 billion to 279.6 million, respectively, a

scenario that translates, in the pandemic moment, the expansion of problems such as unemployment, hunger, and poverty. Such a picture also reflects the governmental positioning in face of this scenario.

With data from the National Survey on Food Insecurity, in the context of Pandemic of Covid-19 in Brazil, conducted in 2021 by the Brazilian Research Network on Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security - PENSSAN Network, less than half of Brazilian households (44.8%) had their residents in Food Security. Out of the remaining, 55.2% were food insecure, 9% lived with hunger, that is, they were in a situation of severe food insecurity (FI).

This condition is worsened in rural households, which reached the percentage of 12% (PENSSAN, 2021), the worst index since 2004. As for rural households, the situation is exacerbated in places with little water available for food production and for raising animals.

These factors must be interconnected with the urgency of thinking about strategies for environmental restoration that reduce this social scourge. The information pointed out in the survey shows political and economic neglect of aspects such as labor and hunger in the country, and that, when compared with the increase in deforestation rates and income concentration, further amplifies the existing inequalities in Brazil.

Against the backdrop of job availability and investments in food and nutritional security for the population, agriculture and cattle ranching reached exponential growth in recent years, especially in 2020, when most economic sectors suffered strong retraction due to the pandemic. According to data from the IBGE, while the Brazilian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plummeted 4.1%, the biggest drop in the last twenty-five years, agribusiness grew 2% (IBGE, 2021).

In light of this context, we are reminded of the fundamental difference between development and underdevelopment, historically marked in capitalism by industrial activity, which has in its essence the concentration of a large part of the surplus in a few hands and in certain social groups directly committed to the productive process (Furtado, 1974).

This situation drives economic growth at the expense of development with equity, given that growth is independent of culture, insofar as it does not imply the invention of a project, being limited to social aspects and its economic base, and 'ignoring the complex relationships between the future of human societies and the evolution of the biosphere' (Veiga, 2010, p. 10).

It is pertinent to infer that such a framework becomes unsustainable and already shows signs of its ruin. According to Schneider (2011), since the 1990s, political, economic, environmental, and social issues have entered the development agenda, with a specific concern for economic growth, and that it should be linked to the distribution of wealth and to issues related to sustainability, democracy, and social justice.

Some movements gain strength as a theoretical construction, such as Polanyi's substantive economy (2000) and Sen's development as freedom (2000). According to Heenirich, Filus, and Plein, (2021, p. 05) "both converge towards the understanding that development cannot be seen only by centering on the economy, but that it must be considered multifaceted, dynamic, and capable of obtaining reflexes beyond economic aspects" prioritizing the insertion of collective decisions that take into consideration cultural and regional characteristics.

As inherent alternatives to social relations, added to this context of environmental concern signaled by Schneider and Escher (2011), Polanyi (1978) observes and describes the intensification of counter-movements, which in the form of natural social protection, together with the productive aspect, are responsible for moving the 'goods' out of the orbit of market mechanisms (Bugra & Agartan, 2007). In a process of coexistence of such economic forms, in a dynamic where society can finally regulate the system (Schneider & Escher, 2011).

According to Latour (1994), the most important political issue for this to occur is that it is crucial that the two collectivities, society, and nature, are reconstituted taking into account the integration between humans and non-humans,

treating in an integrated way: the social, nature, and discourse, in an environment that allows the production of institutions and the creation of collectivities/associations.

Given the exposed conjuncture and the need for more sustainable and inclusive alternatives, Veiga (2010, p. 10) signals that the development of nations should design interventions with the precepts of ecological prudence and the appropriate use of nature "deployed in socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically sustained over time" The example of agroecology should be seen as a scientific model capable of supporting the transition from current models of rural development (Zamberlan, 2012). Since, as Caporal and Costabeber (2004, p. 13), argue:

In applying the principles of agroecology, it is possible to achieve ecologically-based agricultural styles and thus obtain products of superior biological quality. But to respect those principles, this agriculture must meet social requirements, consider cultural aspects, preserve environmental resources, consider political participation and empowerment of its actors, and allow the achievement of economic results favorable to the society as a whole, within a long-term time perspective, that is, sustainable agriculture (Translated by the authors).

3.2.1 The agro-ecological guidance

As a productive and social alternative to these non-capitalist relations, the strategy proposed by theorists is the strengthening of an agroecological peasant agriculture, which focuses on production without chemical inputs, and that is intended for family food and the local market, advocating the conservation of nature, valuing biodiversity and the knowledge of the farmers themselves (Saquet, 2017), opposing, therefore, the model used by the conservative modernization of Brazilian agriculture that was guided by the precepts of the Green Revolution.⁶ But, as Altieri (2004, p. 21) points out: "restoring ecological health is not the only goal of agroecology [...], sustainability is not possible without the preservation of the cultural diversity that nourishes local agricultures."

Still, according to this author (1989; 2004), Agroecology, through the management and analysis of techniques and technologies, developed based on agroecosystems, encompasses the ecological, socio-cultural, and economic fields. "Agroecology provides ecological principles for the study and treatment of ecosystems that are both productive and preserving natural resources, and that are culturally sensitive, socially just, economically viable (Altieri, 2004, p. 17).

More than an agricultural model, "it addresses the social organization, economic behavior, and political stance that contribute to the social transformations needed to generate more sustainable and equitable production and consumption patterns" (Mazalla Neto, 2013, p. 30).

What can be observed in the Brazilian trajectory is the unprecedented use of precarious labor and exploitation of natural resources, with the purpose of maintaining the consolidated capitalist structures. In response to this structure, and as a form of resistance, an organized popular mobilization emerges, mainly through the MST and related organizations, which seek alternatives to maintain life in the countryside, through practices based on cooperative principles and the conservation of natural resources.

These organizations, although expressive in their actions and productive activities, such as the MST, which is emerging in this sense, have not yet managed to break with the status quo of the capitalist economic dynamics, to the point of an effective change in the pre-established framework, but they are consolidating and gaining strength, as can be observed in the sequence.

In short, we are living a critical moment in human history, the result of the imbalance created by human action and the insistence on a system that has proven to be wrong and harmful. This imbalance is reflected in the ecosystemic

⁶ According to Tambara (1985), the Green Revolution is the capitalist penetration into the countryside and its objective is to maximize production by using nature to obtain profits. It is a program with the apparent objective of contributing to the increase of production and agricultural productivity in the world, from the development of experiences in the field of plant genetics, for the creation and multiplication of seeds adequate to the conditions of different soils and climates and resistant to pests (BRUM, 2000).

(environmental) issues and in the quality of human life, and it also has negative consequences in terms of food and work. Therefore, it is urgent to think and develop strategies to overcome this imbalance, and these should generate more inclusive and sustainable practices, such as those advocated by sustainable rural development and agroecology.

3.3 The importance of reporting on “resistance social networks” in contemporary capitalism

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, after the rise of big industry, "the growth of the world economy was predominantly extensive, that is, with production and population increasing at very close rates" (Veiga, 2010, p. 66).

However, as Veiga (2010) observes, such growth did not mean an increase in the population's per capita income, because the widening of the foundation of support and political consolidation of contemporary capitalism occurs through the generalization and institutionalization of social rights, which enable the organization of a veiled consensus, which ensures its monopoly performance (Netto, 2011).

In a movement, called by Latour (2019) a "double click,"⁷ where contemporary society tends to keep the same and, again, in order to kill the mediations. A context that stimulates the forgetfulness of networks and that institutes black boxes⁸ of domination and massification, being necessary, a constant movement of breaking with the mode of programmed happiness, in favor of different forms of happiness and coexistence.

However, as far as the unfolding of the different historical passages of development are concerned, what can be observed is that it was only in the 1990s that countries cogitated more effectively on local thinking with the use of participatory diagnoses, in favor of a safety net that considers issues such as environment and sustainability, with the increase of strategies for the reduction of poverty and hunger (Ellis & Biggs, 2001).

As observed by Ellis and Biggs (2001), it is only in recent times that development includes discussions and effective actions in relation to the protagonism of the individual (actor/ peasant/family farmer), in the space lived, a conjuncture that signals the need for an unbureaucratized and decentralized development, to be built in a collective way (Saquet, 2007).

Spaces where qualitative social aspects take place, which prioritize the non-use of “excessive efforts on the part of their producers, poorly paid jobs exercised in unhealthy conditions, inadequate provision of public services and subhuman housing standards” (Veiga, 2010, p. 81). With strategies to reduce the ills that plague impoverished communities, and specifically, those in peripheral countries.

A social context in which mercantile relations are embedded, and where networks exist that influence the functioning of markets as sets of actors linked by a relationship and a form of social integration that puts actors in contact with each other (Steiner, 2006). In a place where the material conditions are sustainable, the economy is circular, and where there is the multiplication of controversies⁹ (Latour, 2019), because "nature and society are not separated by a radical or ontological difference" (Gonzales & Baum, 2013, p. 145), and individuals, the 'things,' permeated by mediation, form the collective that is in a continuous process of articulation.

Regarding rural areas, it is necessary to have a dynamic that includes the presence and permanence of family farming, with its different social sectors and their representations (Abramovay, 1997), and to have mediations that contribute to increasing the trust among the people of a community, their bond with the land, the forest, the plantations, the people, in short,

⁷ According to Latour (2019), the reference pattern of double-click communication occurs when one wants us to believe that it is feasible to carry, without the slightest deformation, any precise information about situations and things that are not present here, in a looping of reproduction and copying.

⁸ According to Latour, "scientific knowledge develops by the progressive construction of 'scientific facts' that are like black boxes whose truth or adequacy is taken for granted by those who use them as a starting point for other studies, but whose problematic nature can always be highlighted when examined in their origins" (Schwartzman, 1997, p. 30).

⁹ Controversies are "multivariate elements that in syncopated or irregular movements disperse or stabilize and that never belong to a single domain or unit a priori. Hence the presence of controversies that at some point stabilize into domains, categories, identities, or explanatory frames of reference" (Gonzales & Baum, 2013, p.150). According to the Actor-Network Theory, it is necessary to "trace more solid relations and discover more revealing patterns [one must find] a means of registering the links between unstable and changing frames of reference" (Latour, 2012, p. 45), which must be followed and not necessarily resolved.

with the place and the territory (Brandão, 2012). Spaces where trust ends up having an emotional and affective content that is constituted with people and things, within social relations, which are linked to the formation of a set of common beliefs and values, which allow endowing collective actions with identities (Soto, 2013). These actions value traditional knowledge, which is shared and reproduced through direct dialogue among individuals, in a movement of nature, society, and thought, effected in relations of closeness and distance, with energies, forces, successions, contacts, identities, differences, contradictions, in a dialectical synthesis between society-nature (Saquet, 2012).

In an innovation and conservation 'hybrid' of knowledge and management, trying to maintain the identity passed on from generation to generation as family heritage, which is facilitated, allowed, and produced by hybrid beings that are neither facts nor things. That is, these 'hybrids' are humans and non-humans entirely connected, and in continuous mobility (Latour, 2012).

Given that family production is developed with a certain autonomy before the market, the family farmer cultivates for family food and to sell surpluses and buy goods needed to produce and to supply his/her extra-farming needs (Saquet, 2017). In this sense, productive, commercial, and technological relations take place in a transterritorial dimension, synthesizing markets, production, and globalization.

The commercialization networks, in turn, dynamize the economic potential and contribute to the valorization of territorial identities through interconnections. The example of short marketing circuits for organic/agroecological family farming products, which contributes to territorial development and consolidates agroecology in these spaces. Short networks, whether of knowledge exchange or commercialization, should be analyzed, apprehended, and used "as a starting point in rural development processes that, in turn, should mirror the cultural identity of the people who live and work in a given agroecosystem" (Caporal & Costabeber, 2002, p. 78).

Inserted in this context, agroecology seizes the experiences of farmers, safeguarding the decision-making autonomy of the subjects and, at the same time, integrating popular knowledge with technical and scientific knowledge, and an integrative and intelligent process, from sharing and cooperation that contributes to cognitive processes and continuous learning. In agroecological practices, one identifies the impetus to do the best possible way, with skills learned physically, materially, and socially, in an organic relationship of the social.

In view of the above, what becomes imperative is that these experiences need constant analysis, in favor of building knowledge to improve production and, concomitantly, conscious consumption skills on the part of consumers. In a qualified, critical, and constructive process, bearing in mind that people organized in cooperation and solidarity networks are potential contributors to a fairer and more sustainable society, without having to disconnect from the world around them.

In this perspective, André Lemos (verbal information¹⁰, 2020) signals that, for this movement to occur, one of the alternatives is to trace the networks, and thus create a proof of heirs and descendants, in a process of building itself as existence, in the perspective that to exist is a constant act of passing through others. In an exercise of raising uncertainties, which relies on ethnographic observation to analyze the center of relationships, where we consider humans and non-humans equanimously, treating in an integrated way the social, nature, and discourse (Latour, 2012).

It is no longer a matter of separating the exact knowledge about nature from the exercise of power among men, but of following the network that constantly connects men and things and that allows the construction of collectives, in order to closely link the issue of economic growth with the environment, and, from this, to be able to affirm the possibility of development, in an articulation among economic and social human behaviors, the evolution of nature, and the social configuration of the territory (Veiga, 2010).

¹⁰ Lecture given by Professor André Lemos in 2020, granted to the Instituto Humanitas Unisinos-RS, entitled: Inquiry into the modes of existence, an anthropology of the modern, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVLn37wLQF0&t=14s>.

4. Final Considerations

In the Brazilian reality, of an underdeveloped country, "little or no attention was given to the consequences on the cultural level, of an exponential growth of the stock of capital in the large modern metropolises" (Furtado, 1974, p. 17). Added to this hostile scenario, the lack of a collective environmental awareness contributes to the invisibility of environmental impacts that have little attention, given the self-centered use of natural resources in the country.

It can be seen, however, that from the 1980s and mainly in the 1990s, the discussion regarding nature and the environmental impacts of the current economic system has been on a global agenda, in view of the 'administration' of resources and consequently the maintenance of monopolistic capitalism.

On the other hand, this concern, veiled by environmental discourse, also contributes to the consolidation of "resistance social networks" that, amid the conjuncture, seek alternative forms of interaction, with a development perspective of a territorial character, which starts from the local and not the transversal, and that identifies development as an effective process if conceived and implemented by local actors (Plein, 2010).

In a context where individual action is necessary to safeguard the social situation, it is important to preserve the particularities of social demands and strengthen the social heritage (Polanyi, 2000), besides being socially located, given the relevance of going beyond the individual motives that may have motivated the action (Granovetter, 2005).

Specifically in this text, this movement is expressed in the struggle of the rural workers and specifically of the 'landless workers'-MST, who in the midst of this context mobilize (in the escape from the double click) towards the conscious use of natural resources and fairer forms of the income distribution, which are materialized through agroecology and cooperative organization.

As Saquet (2017) points out, for these experiences of flowing agroecological production to be more evident, it is necessary to invest in research, proposals, and systematization, within the productive and living units signaling the specificities of each relationship, in its reality, that is, empirical research needs to be resumed and valued, and should occur *en masse*, in the scientific community. Understanding that this space is of constant correlation of forces, with distinct initiatives, interactions, conflicts, and appropriations of techniques and technologies in view of the capitalist project for the Brazilian countryside and its interconnection with the planetary system.

Considering the above, this paper sought to systematize some considerations in relation to the context experienced in the Brazilian countryside, focusing on the need to observe the interaction of actors, with regard to mobilization, resistance, and counter-hegemonic political struggle, through the interrelation between knowledge and practices (cultural, political, economic and environmental), and their dialogue with technical and technological innovations. An environment where the processes of political and cultural self-organization consider the predominantly family, cultural, political, ecological, cooperative, and participatory values, and objectives.

In addition to the systematization presented, this paper is aimed at pointing out some ways of thinking and giving visibility to the experiences of resistance networks in light of the Actor-Network theory, given its originality and dynamics, which analyzes the social of the modern world and its fragilities, (in view of its predatory positioning) and guides the way of how to report them as human and non-human collectives, which exercise a certain degree of importance within their connections. This methodology allows us to give visibility to the networks and their interactions, understanding them as being in constant mutation, but with characteristics that can serve as pointers to the consolidation of collective and just forms of subsistence.

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