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Organizing the struggle for land: a socioterritorial perspective

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Abstract – This article examines how organizing emerges in the everyday practices of land struggle among residents of the Índio Galdino Settlement, Curitibanos (SC, Brazil), revealing links between such practices and socioterritorial organizing. The theoretical approach combines the organizing perspective in Organizational Studies with Agnes Heller's work on everyday life and Michel de Certeau's notion of tactics. The study is an interpretive qualitative inquiry based on narrative analysis, drawing on eight semi-structured interviews with settlers and on field diary records. The findings show that the struggle for land is a continuous organizing process in which encampment and settlement are interdependent moments, marked by survival-driven collectivity and by the ongoing renegotiation of access to and use of land, production, and relations with the State and the market. The symbolic centrality of land, solidarity networks, and everyday commercialization tactics are also highlighted. The study proposes socioterritorial organizing as an exploratory analytical category for organizing in which the reproduction of the collective depends on disputing and maintaining specific territorial relations, examined through territory, memory, conflict, and everyday life.
Keywords: Agrarian reform. Everyday life. Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST). Socioterritorial organizing. Territorial conflict.

Organizando a luta pela terra: uma perspectiva socioterritorial

Resumo – Este artigo examina como o organizar emerge nas práticas cotidianas de luta pela terra entre os moradores do Assentamento Índio Galdino, em Curitibanos (SC, Brasil), revelando as conexões entre tais práticas e o organizar socioterritorial. A abordagem teórica articula a perspectiva do organizing nos Estudos Organizacionais com a obra de Agnes Heller sobre a vida cotidiana e a noção de táticas de Michel de

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Certeau. O estudo consiste em uma investigação qualitativa interpretativa baseada em análise narrativa, a partir de oito entrevistas semiestruturadas com assentados e registros de diário de campo. Os resultados mostram que a luta pela terra constitui um processo contínuo de organizar, no qual acampamento e assentamento são momentos interdependentes, marcados pela coletividade voltada à sobrevivência e pela renegociação permanente do acesso à terra e de seu uso, da produção e das relações com o Estado e o mercado. Destacam-se também a centralidade simbólica da terra, as redes de solidariedade e as táticas cotidianas de comercialização. O estudo propõe o organizar socioterritorial como categoria analítica exploratória para formas de organizar em que a reprodução do coletivo depende da disputa e da manutenção de relações territoriais específicas, examinadas por meio de território, memória, conflito e vida cotidiana.
Palavras-chave: Conflito territorial. Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST). Organizar socioterritorial. Reforma agrária. Vida cotidiana.

Organizando la lucha por la tierra: una perspectiva socioterritorial

Resumen – Este artículo examina cómo el organizar emerge en las prácticas cotidianas de lucha por la tierra entre los habitantes del Asentamiento Índio Galdino, en Curitibanos (SC, Brasil), revelando las conexiones entre dichas prácticas y el organizar socioterritorial. El abordaje teórico articula la perspectiva del organizing en los Estudios Organizacionales con la obra de Agnes Heller sobre la vida cotidiana y la noción de tácticas de Michel de Certeau. El estudio consiste en una investigación cualitativa interpretativa basada en el análisis narrativo, a partir de ocho entrevistas semiestructuradas con asentados y registros de diario de campo. Los resultados muestran que la lucha por la tierra constituye un proceso continuo de organizar, en el cual el campamento y el asentamiento son momentos interdependientes, marcados por la colectividad orientada a la supervivencia y por la renegociación permanente del acceso a la tierra y de su uso, de la producción y de las relaciones con el Estado y el mercado. Se destacan también la centralidad simbólica de la tierra, las redes de solidaridad y las tácticas cotidianas de comercialización. El estudio propone el organizar socioterritorial como categoría analítica exploratoria para formas de organizar en las que la reproducción del colectivo depende de la disputa y el mantenimiento de relaciones territoriales específicas, examinadas a través del territorio, la memoria, el conflicto y la vida cotidiana.
Palabras clave: Conflicto territorial. Movimiento de los Trabajadores Rurales Sin Tierra (MST). Organizar socioterritorial. Reforma agraria. Vida cotidiana.

1. Introduction

Brazil entered the twenty-first century with land still held in very few hands, an outcome of the way the territory was occupied and of the limited reach of agrarian reform policies (Germani, 2006). Agrarian reform itself has assumed different meanings over time (Cardoso; Dal Bosco, 2025).

Since the mid-twentieth century, social movements have denounced land concentration and social exclusion in the countryside. Despite initiatives by rural unions and the Peasant Leagues, the repression that intensified after the 1964 coup weakened these experiences. In this context, the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), formally established in 1984, emerged as an organized response to the

exclusionary agrarian structure, articulating social struggle and territoriality (Morissawa, 2001; Santos *et al*., 2025).

Although widely studied from historical, sociopolitical, and agrarian perspectives, the MST has been less explored in Organizational Studies as an organizing process in motion. The literature in the field privileges business organizations with formal structures, marginalizing organizing forms that emerge from socioterritorial conflicts. This emphasis tends to render invisible organizational experiences that are not primarily oriented toward instrumental efficiency or economic rationality.

The organizing perspective helps address this gap by shifting the focus from organization understood as a static entity to the processes through which it is constituted in everyday practices (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005; Duarte; Alcadipani, 2016). Analyzing the MST through the lens of organizing not only applies this framework to a new empirical object but also challenges the framework's own assumptions, suggesting that socioterritorial organizing processes are shaped by collective memory, political conflict, territoriality, and the reproduction of life. In doing so, this article takes organizing into a setting where institutional stability cannot be presumed, reconfiguring it on the basis of socioterritorial experiences and structural conflicts.

This discussion engages with the contributions of Certeau (2014), particularly his distinction between strategies and tactics, which shows how socially situated subjects produce creative ways of acting and resisting within asymmetrical power structures. In addition, Heller (1970) emphasizes the historicity of everyday life, understanding it as a space in which routines, choices, and social relations simultaneously reproduce and transform social life. Everyday practices continuously produce situated, historically constructed, and often counter-hegemonic organizing forms. Despite epistemological differences, the interweaving of their perspectives sustains the idea that reality and history are built in the everyday, in becoming, in flow, and in everyday practices.

In this direction, social movements can be understood less as stable entities and more as historical and relational processes constructed in everyday praxis (Picolotto, 2011). Concrete experiences of rural settlements, such as the Índio Galdino Settlement in Curitibanos (SC), constitute privileged contexts for observing practices of struggle and organization.

Given this framework, this study seeks to understand how organizing emerges in the everyday practices of land struggle among residents of the Índio Galdino Settlement, in Curitibanos (SC), revealing the relationships between such practices and socioterritorial organizing processes. The article aims to contribute to broadening the analytical scope of Organizational Studies, suggesting the need for approaches capable of incorporating history, territory, political conflict, and the reproduction of life as constitutive dimensions of organizing processes.

Ontologically, the study draws on a processual perspective, understanding organizations as phenomena in permanent construction through social practices. Epistemologically, it adopts a critical interpretive approach, acknowledging the situated character of knowledge in contexts of socioterritorial inequality.

In addition to this introduction, the article is organized into four sections: the theoretical framework; the materials and methods; the results and discussion, which situate the historicity of access to land in Curitibanos and analyze the everyday organizing practices of the settlement; and the final considerations.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Organizing and the processual understanding of organizations

In mainstream Organizational Studies, formal and institutionally stabilized business organizations still enjoy a strong analytical privilege. Organization tends to be conceived as a bounded entity. This assumption contributes to marginalizing socioterritorial organizing forms marked by political conflict, structural inequality, and material precariousness, which are often treated as peripheral. A review of Brazilian research on alternative organizations confirms this asymmetry: studies concentrate on formalized or associative experiences and rarely address organizational forms constituted under territorial conflict (Adversi; Seifert, 2022). At the international level, the expanding literature on alternative organizing, recently reviewed by Vijay *et al*. (2026), has broadened the range of organizational forms the field recognizes; the experiences examined here suggest that territorial conflict deserves a more central place in that agenda.

The organizing perspective challenges this tradition by shifting the focus from organization as a static entity to the processes through which it is constituted in everyday practices (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005; Duarte; Alcadipani, 2016). In Brazil, this agenda continues to expand toward organizations in which the organizing process and lived experience unfold simultaneously (Duarte; Alcadipani, 2025). Organization is an effect of interactions, negotiations, and sensemaking. The sensemaking approach mobilized in this article (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005) centers on meaning-making and coordinated action; it does not place at its core the territorial dispute over access to land, the ability to remain on it, and control over its use. Research on prefigurative and alternative organizing has already taken organizing into politically contested settings, treating it as political by nature and systematizing the struggles that surround it (Schiller-Merkens, 2024; Vijay et al., 2026).

In the Brazilian discussion of organizing proposed by Duarte and Alcadipani (2016), the emphasis falls on organizational practices and sensemaking, and territoriality is not among the dimensions examined. Shifting organizing toward experiences such as that of the MST makes it evident that organizing is not only about constructing meaning, but about materially sustaining collective life amid structural inequality. The renewed interest in place within Organizational Studies has already problematized the power relations attached to place and its institutional, political, and material dimensions (Dacin *et al*., 2024). This article builds on that opening but works with the notion of territory, understood as space appropriated through relations of power and disputed as a condition of existence (Fernandes, B. M., 2005). Whereas place draws attention to how organizations are embedded in, and shaped by, specific locations, territory foregrounds the struggle over access to land, the ability to remain on it, control over its use, and the collective reproduction of those who depend on it. It is this struggle, and the organizing it demands, that the present study examines.

Studies on everyday life in settlements (Rodrigues *et al*., 2021) and on the MST's formative praxis (Fernandes, R. C., 2025) broaden the understanding of organizing by showing that it involves grassroots work, political formation, and continuous territorial reconstruction. Outside Brazil, Bhatt *et al*. (2024) followed two community collectives in rural India for over seven years, one of them an indigenous village that, after a three-decade struggle, obtained ownership rights over the surrounding forest and declared all its land village commons. The authors show that such place-based collectives organize through self-governance, commoning, and the cultivation of discursive spaces while confronting both internal hierarchies and external domination. In these contexts, organizing is not limited to coordinating actions or negotiating meaning; it articulates material reproduction, the formation of subjects, and social legitimacy.

Conflict does not appear as dysfunction or an exceptional event, but as a constitutive dimension of organizing.

Thus, this article applies and reconfigures organizing on the basis of the MST's experience, from the perspective of socioterritorial experiences historically rendered invisible in Organizational Studies. By incorporating territoriality, collective memory, and conflict as ontological dimensions, the organizing perspective mobilized here is extended by foregrounding territorial relations and the material practices through which collective life is sustained under structural conflict.

Organizing processes prove inseparable from history, politics, and material struggles for existence. Analyzing the MST through organizing implies questioning emphases that remain common in the field, such as the centrality of business organizations and the treatment of territory as context.

2.2 Everyday life, history, and social practices: contributions from Heller and Certeau

To understand organizing processes, it is insufficient to restrict the analysis to formal structures. The contributions of Heller (1970) and Certeau (2014) offer analytical foundations that shift the focus to everyday life as an ontologically constitutive dimension of social life.

Heller (1970) understands everyday life as the domain of social reproduction, but also as a space in which moral and historical choices are made. Everyday life constitutes the level at which the individual and society are articulated, producing historical continuity and transformation. By affirming that "society has no substance beyond man" (Heller, 1970, p. 2), the author shifts the analysis from structural abstractions to concrete practices, suggesting that history is realized in the ordinary actions of subjects. Everyday life is thus not a depoliticized microscale, but rather the terrain in which values, decisions, and collective projects are sedimented.

Certeau (2014), in turn, emphasizes the micro-practices through which socially situated subjects negotiate and reinvent power structures they do not fully control. His distinction between strategies and tactics shows that, while strategies are tied to institutionally stabilized positions, tactics emerge from the action of those who inhabit spaces of asymmetry. Practices such as producing, circulating, and trading configure creative modes of appropriating and reinventing social space. Certeau (2014) highlights the situated agency manifested in the everyday "arts of doing." In Brazilian Organizational Studies, this framework has been used to read the ordinary management of civil society organizations (Morais; Santos, 2024) and to approach the historicity of organizations through the relation between place and space (Lacerda; Ipiranga, 2024).

The articulation between Heller and Certeau allows everyday life to be understood simultaneously as a space of historical reproduction and political invention. If Heller emphasizes continuity, Certeau reveals the inventive power of everyday life in the face of asymmetries. This convergence shifts organizational analysis away from an exclusively structural or institutional plane toward the plane of situated practices, revealing that organizing processes are reconstituted by territorial and political contexts.

If organizing shifts organization from structure to process, Certeau (2014) radicalizes this movement by showing that, in contexts of asymmetry, the organizing process assumes a tactical form. Organization can be understood as the accumulated effect of everyday tactics that, through repetition, sustain collectivities under subalternity.

Adopting everyday life as an analytical category implies recognizing that organization is not reducible to formal arrangements or stabilized structures. It is produced in ordinary decisions, practical negotiations, creative adaptations, and the conflicts that traverse social life. In socioterritorial contexts, this perspective allows us to understand that organizing means, simultaneously, reproducing conditions of existence and reinventing them. In Brazilian Organizational Studies, Gouvêa, López Cabana and Ichikawa (2018) had already brought Heller and Certeau together, alongside Lefebvre, to argue that the dialogue between history and administration can open room for the stories and everyday practices of those whom hegemonic discourse silences.

3. Materials and methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach guided by a critical interpretive perspective, consistent with the processual ontology adopted. The research was conducted at the Índio Galdino Settlement, in Curitibanos (SC), between June and November 2023, over five field visits. The settlement is home to 51 families and lies between the municipalities of Curitibanos and Frei Rogério, in the central-western region of Santa Catarina (Gomes; Gouvêa; López Cabana, 2026). Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with settlers aged between 27 and 68, identified by pseudonyms. All interviews were carried out with consent, recorded, transcribed, and complemented with field diary records. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal Institute of Paraná (IFPR) on 24 October 2022, under CAAE 63883822.3.0000.8156, and all participants signed an informed consent form. Part of this material was analyzed in a previous study focused on everyday sustainability practices (Gomes; Gouvêa; López Cabana, 2026); the present article revisits the same fieldwork from the perspective of organizing.

Access to the settlement was mediated by a regional leader of the MST, who provided the contact details of a leader in the settlement; after initial contact by telephone and by message, the first visit was scheduled. That visit coincided with an activity held by professors and students from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Six interviewees were referred by the local coordinator, and two were invited after interactions during that collective activity. Three inclusion criteria were adopted: having taken part in the encampment phase, currently living in the Índio Galdino Settlement, and agreeing to take part in the study. Data collection closed with the eighth interview, when the accounts began to repeat episodes and evaluations already recorded; the number of participants also reflected the residents' availability to share their stories, with no claim to exhaustiveness. In addition to the interviews, the first author engaged in participant observation (Serva; Jaime Júnior, 1995), taking part in the everyday activities of the community, and a field diary was written after each of the five visits, recording perceptions, informal conversations, and observations of domestic and productive routines that complemented the analysis.

The analytical strategy was grounded in narrative analysis, following Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972), with attention to sequences of events, evaluations, and social positioning. Narratives were examined as situated forms of meaning-making. Working with narratives also has a political dimension, since it brings into the analysis of organizations the accounts of those usually silenced by hegemonic discourse (Gouvêa; López Cabana; Ichikawa, 2018). Narratives were interpreted as devices through which subjects retrospectively organize their experiences, allowing us to observe how everyday practices, memories, and conflicts are articulated in the constitution of socioterritorial organizing. The transition from encampment to

settlement was reconstructed retrospectively through participants' accounts collected in 2023, rather than observed longitudinally.

The analysis followed four steps. First, the interviews were transcribed in full and, together with the field diary, read repeatedly and annotated, with attention to recurrent themes and to the links between individual accounts and the collective context. Second, narrative segments were delimited, that is, passages in which participants recounted past events in temporal sequence, as distinct from opinions or general descriptions. Third, each segment was examined through the components proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972): orientation (who, when, where), complicating action (the sequence of events), evaluation (what makes the episode worth telling for the narrator), and resolution. Evaluation received particular attention, since it is where narrators state why an episode matters and position themselves in relation to others. Fourth, segments whose complicating actions and evaluations referred to the same kind of experience were grouped into narrative cores. Six cores emerged in this way: experiences of struggle, encampment organization, settlement management, division of tasks, productive strategies, and institutional relations. The grouping was carried out collectively by the authors. The excerpts presented in Section 4 were chosen because they condense evaluations that recur within each core; they are numbered sequentially (001–012) and identified by the participant's pseudonym and the year of the interview.

The interpretation was guided by the organizing perspective, understanding narratives as organizing processes. Narrated practices, such as productive decisions, political confrontations, and commercialization tactics, were analyzed as constitutive of socioterritorial arrangements. The analysis privileged tensions and reconfigurations as part of organizing under conditions of structural conflict.

We acknowledge that this research is situated and does not seek statistical generalization. Its potential for analytical or theoretical generalization rests on examining the relevance of the proposed category in other historically and territorially specific contexts. Narratives are contextual reconstructions, expressing meanings produced at the moment of the interview. The aim is not to represent the MST as a totality, but to understand how, in a specific context, socioterritorial organizing is produced in everyday life.

The researcher's position also shaped the material. The empirical material was produced in the first author's master's research at IFPR, which this article revisits and deepens; fieldwork was conducted by the first author. The empathetic closeness built with participants over the visits was a condition for the narratives to be shared, but the same closeness carries the risk of normative or romanticized readings of the struggle. To reduce this risk, the analysis deliberately kept in view the episodes in which collective organization failed or fragmented, such as the individualization of purchases after the settlement, the collapse of the market association, and the stigma faced at school, and the interpretation was developed collectively by the authors.

Building on this methodological approach, the following section presents the analysis of the six narrative cores, linking the episodes recounted to the conditions under which the socioterritorial arrangements of the Índio Galdino Settlement take shape and change. Examining event sequences and participants' evaluations makes it possible to trace how experiences of struggle unfold in everyday organizing, amid continuities, tensions, and reconfigurations of collective relations.

4. Results and discussion: history, territory, and organizing in the struggle for land in Curitibanos

4.1 Territorial dispute in the Contestado region

The territories in which the MST organizes today carry the marks of a long process of dispossession. Lands once occupied by indigenous peoples were absorbed into a colonial and later national order that rewarded large estates, and the inequality produced in that process still shapes the conditions of rural life (Lemos, 2006). In recent decades, this concentration has taken new forms: in the MATOPIBA region, the conversion of land into a financial asset has intensified land concentration and displaced family farming (Leite; Pinto, 2025).

The Curitibanos region expresses this conflictual historicity. Land disputes during the Contestado War (1912–1916) left marks on forms of territorial occupation and on local social relations. As Germani (2006) observes, the marginalization of caboclo populations and the expulsion of indigenous peoples occurred alongside the consolidation of power among the so-called "coronéis" (local political bosses), often sustained by mechanisms of coercion and violence. The organization of land ownership reveals asymmetrical power relations.

Read through Certeau's distinction between place and space, recently recovered for historical research in Organizational Studies (Lacerda; Ipiranga, 2024), the Contestado appears as a confrontation between the place ordered by the railway company, the State, and the large landowners, and the space practiced by caboclos, squatters, and dispossessed workers, who turned religious, communal, and political bonds into a defense of their ways of life (Carvalho, 2009).

What was at stake was not only possession of land but the possibility of remaining a recognized collective, and resources that seemed merely cultural or religious became tactical instruments in that dispute (Certeau, 2014). Peasant resistance manifests itself both in direct confrontations and in the ordinary practices of survival, community organization, and cultural reproduction.

The historical effects of these disputes remain visible in the region. Recent studies indicate that caboclo populations continue to face labor precariousness, economic instability, and social exclusion, revealing persistent inequalities (Tecchio, 2023) — a process that conditions trajectories and forms of socioterritorial organizing. Research on the Contestado territory shows that this marginality was itself historically produced: the invisibilization of caboclo populations operated as an effect of the same movement of land concentration (Gemelli; Chmura, 2022), and the caboclo ethos persists less as a residue of the past than as a position continuously reconstructed in the face of exclusion (Tedesco; Battestin, 2022). Settlers themselves link this legacy to the present. As one of them put it, "Curitibanos, with its old coronelismo, which is not old, still has it today. [...] It is in the blood" (Gomes; Gouvêa; López Cabana, 2026).

From the perspective of socioterritorial organizing, these historical dynamics are constitutive dimensions of organizing processes rather than a backdrop. The struggle for land is not restricted to events or policies; it materializes in everyday practices, community relations, and collective strategies that sustain life in territories marked by inequality. Socioterritorial movements, such as the MST, are part of this historical flow, articulating agricultural production, political action, social formation, and territorialization as organizing practices (Duarte; Alcadipani, 2016; Cardoso; Dal Bosco, 2025; Santos *et al*., 2025).

This perspective allows us to understand the Índio Galdino Settlement as a contemporary expression of historical processes of territorial dispute, social resistance, and collective construction. History, territory, and everyday life are not separate dimensions, but interdependent elements in the continuous production of socioterritorial organizing forms.

4.2 Organizing the struggle: the MST and territorial construction in Curitibanos

The MST emerged in the 1980s as a response to the historical concentration of land and structural inequalities in the Brazilian countryside, consolidating itself as one of the main expressions of the struggle for agrarian reform in the country. Its repertoire, inherited in part from the Peasant Leagues and from grassroots church work, combined land occupations with political formation and schooling (Morissawa, 2001). This trajectory shows that the MST is better understood as a historical process of collective mobilization (Picolotto, 2011). The movement arrived in Curitibanos in 1998, in a municipality where land disputes had a long history. The mobilization of families represented both the pursuit of land and the possibility of reorganizing their social, economic, and symbolic lives.

The literature on the MST also emphasizes that the movement is not reducible to political mobilization for land, but involves continuous processes of formation, grassroots work, and the construction of collective subjects. R. C. Fernandes (2025) highlights that the movement's praxis articulates productive organization, political formation, and educational experiences, showing organizing as a material and formative practice. This process can be understood as a continuous practice of social organization, in which organization emerges from action. During one of the field visits, a settler summarized this processual dimension in a statement recorded in the field diary (2023): "the Movement is an idea; there is no legal structure that organizes the movement, it happens through the mobilization of people with the goal of obtaining land (territory)." This statement reveals organization as territorial mobilization in flux. Analyses covering four decades of the movement's trajectory reinforce this reading, showing that popular agrarian reform and rural education operate as mutually sustaining pillars of the same organizing effort (Scheeren; Farias; Francisco, 2026).

Occupation, encampment, the division of tasks, and collective decisions constitute moments in which organizing materializes as situated social practice. According to João: "Decisions are not structured through formal voting, but through the search for consensus, in prolonged discussions until consensus is reached among peers" (João, 2023). A similar rule appears in the community collectives studied by Bhatt *et al*. (2024), where members state that no decision is taken while a single person still disagrees; in both cases, consensus is less a procedure than a way of keeping the collective together under pressure. Organizing means not only coordinating actions but also materially reproducing common existence, articulating territory and political action.

Across different narratives, the contemporary struggle is connected to regional historical memory. One settler stated: "we are descendants of the caboclos of the war" (Field diary, 2023), linking the current territorial dispute to the legacy of the Contestado War. Memory does not operate as nostalgic evocation, but as a political resource that sustains the legitimacy of remaining on the land. Certeau's attention to the place from which history is produced, recovered for Organizational Studies by Lacerda and Ipiranga (2024), helps to read these statements: the settlers are not only remembering the Contestado but writing its history from the position of those who lost the war and remained on the land.

Field visits revealed how this process materializes in the everyday experiences of settlers. Everyday life in the households constitutes a space for narrative and identity production. The act of narrating one's own trajectory is an organizing practice that reaffirms collective belonging and temporally structures the experience of struggle. Narrating organizes the past and projects the collective future.

4.3 Narratives of the "before": trajectories preceding the struggle

Since organizing is rooted in the everyday experiences of settlers, it is necessary to observe trajectories prior to entering the movement. Structural limitations, family experiences, and productive practices shape dispositions toward collective action, so that the decision to join the MST tends to have a longer history than the occupation itself.

> 001 – "Maria" worked at the community health post, and I worked in the fields [...] the land belonged to my father [...] I didn't even know about the struggle, I just went. After I left, "Maria" said: are you really going? I said, I'm going! [...] So I went, for 72 days I couldn't leave anymore, no one could leave, it was closed off [...] even the police shot at us. The hired gunmen there were strong, the police themselves shot at us. [...] Then I came home and no one wanted me to go [...] but it seems like it's in the blood (João, 2023).

When João states that "it seems like it's in the blood," the decision appears less as an isolated act of will than as part of a longer trajectory. In his account, he worked on land that belonged to his father, joined the occupation without prior knowledge of the struggle, and decided to go again although no one at home wanted him to, even after the violence he had faced. Read together, these elements suggest that the choice was situated within a restricted field of alternatives, in which staying would likely mean continuing to work on land that was not his own. Going to the encampment was a move made within the cracks of the agrarian structure. Occupying the land constitutes a reappropriation of space, reorganizing territorialities.

Joining the movement does not result only from political engagement, but also from structural constraints that restrict alternatives. Everyday life is a space of situated choices, shaped by needs, values, and historical limits (Heller, 1970).

Prior to the formalization of the settlement, an embryonic form of organizing can be observed: mobilized family networks, the circulation of information, the sharing of risks, and the building of trust. Organizing emerges from the collective decision to confront the territorial threat. The "before" of the struggle already contains socioterritorial organizing practices, even if not named as such by the subjects themselves.

Collective permanence in the encampment, marked by fear, isolation, and violence, further shows that organization is not constituted solely by formal structures, but through the everyday sharing of risks and expectations.

Field notes also indicate that this decision is rarely individual. Family conversations and hesitations show that the struggle for land reorganizes domestic relations, expectations for the future, and senses of belonging. Agrarian reform goes beyond the dimension of public policy and materializes as lived social experience.

This dimension becomes particularly evident in Mariana's narrative:

> 002 – My father had a piece of inherited land. But there were three siblings, so when it was divided, very little was left for each [...] we had enough for subsistence. [...] sometimes he worked outside, in carpentry [...] then when they presented the movement to my father, we got really scared, because of what we saw in the media [...] (Mariana, 2023).

This account reveals how land fragmentation and economic instability produce trajectories marked by limited material possibilities. Inheritance division reduced the land's productive viability, forcing the family to supplement their income with temporary work. The approach to the MST emerges not as prior ideological adherence, but as a

situated decision in the face of the structural insufficiency of the fragmented smallholding.

The ambivalence expressed by Mariana — "we got really scared" — indicates that the movement is initially perceived as a risk, marked by uncertainty.

> 003 – [...] at the time, since there was that other settlement on the other side of the river, there was talk of dams, so we were also afraid, and until then, where we lived is now underwater [...] about ten or twelve families from our community left. On the day we started packing things up, it was emotional to leave and to leave my grandmother behind [...] (Mariana, 2023).

Beyond any economic damage, the loss of ancestral territory ruptured affective and communal bonds. Displacement reveals the territorial threat. Joining the movement can be interpreted as a process of collective re-territorialization (Fernandes, B. M., 2005).

Family decisions to migrate, remain, or join the movement constitute situated responses to broader historical processes. The subsequent conquest of land involves, beyond economic improvement, the reconstruction of autonomy, belonging, and everyday stability.

This tension between displacement and belonging also appears in Manoel's narrative:

> 004 – My father [...] was a peasant, always worked the land [...] always dreamed of buying land [...] my father worked as a bricklayer, back then his work was quite hard. My father suffered a lot too because he was blind in one eye, so when he went looking for a job, besides being Black, caboclo you know, and also having that eye problem, there was prejudice, so he suffered a lot because he couldn't find work [...] always with the dream of becoming a producer (Manoel, 2023).

This trajectory reveals the persistence of peasant identity even after forced urban migration. Urban labor emerges as a necessity, revealing a forced displacement from territoriality. The everyday reproduction of life, marked by labor precariousness and racial and physical discrimination, restricts the field of possibilities but does not eliminate the projection of futures. The "dream of becoming a producer" operates as an active memory that preserves a territorial horizon even under adverse conditions.

In light of Certeau (2014), this symbolic persistence of peasant belonging can be understood as a form of everyday resistance; even embedded in exclusionary urban structures, the subject maintains practices, values, and expectations that challenge the dominant logic.

In these trajectories, joining the MST reads less as a break than as the point where territorial memory, material necessity, and the pursuit of dignity meet. Socioterritorial organizing manifests itself as a recomposition of everyday life. Organization emerges as a situated response to precariousness and symbolic dispossession.

This centrality of everyday life in organizing experiences also appears in other studies. Rodrigues *et al*. (2021), investigating settlers and pre-settlers in Paraná, demonstrate that ordinary practices, territorial memories, and community networks sustain collective life, showing that belonging is produced in the everyday. The authors reinforce that socioterritorial organizing emerges less from formal arrangements and more from relational processes rooted in everyday life. This empirical convergence strengthens the proposition that socioterritorial organizing is constituted in the

everyday as a situated practice of re-territorialization and of sustaining life under conditions of structural inequality.

4.4 The encampment as a space of organizing: solidarity, learning, and resistance

MST encampments are territories of intensive organizing, in which organization emerges from the concrete need to sustain life. From the perspective of organizing (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005; Duarte; Alcadipani, 2016), organization is understood as a process in flux, continuously produced by situated interactions; in encampments, this flux occurs under precariousness and conflict. Organizing, in this context, means not only coordinating activities but also collectively producing the minimum conditions for existence.

José's narrative offers a glimpse of this dynamic:

> 005 – [...] there was the hygiene crew [...] there was the health crew [...] if there weren't enough volunteers, we'd go by number [...] the coordination leader [...] would join in and call everyone [...] we need to fix up the shack, do this and that, today there's work to do there, dealing with water for us to drink, there's not much water left in the well, we need to dig that well deeper [...] (José, 2023).

The division of tasks, the care for water, and the organization of health reveal that organizing structure is not pre-established, but continuously produced through action. In light of Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005), this is "enactment" — organization emerges through doing. As in the "live" organizations discussed by Duarte and Alcadipani (2025), organizing and lived experience occur at the same time: there is no rehearsal separate from the performance, and each day in the encampment is both the organization and its test. Under material scarcity and constant risk, digging wells, organizing shacks, and distributing responsibilities were also ways of reasserting autonomy over a territory not yet won.

Encampment actions emerge from the absence of structural control. Scarce water, improvised shelter, and collective health become organizing problems whose resolution depends on everyday inventiveness. Organization does not operate upon a given territory; it produces it. The encampment constitutes a process of practical territorialization.

This organizing dimension expands into external networks of solidarity: “006 – Many donations came [...] churches or other settlements [...] even from abroad” (Mariana, 2023).

These donations show that socioterritorial organizing is not restricted to the physical space of the encampment. It articulates networks that produce material sustenance and legitimacy. Organizing emerges precisely within institutional gaps, constituting itself in contexts of neglect and conflict. Solidarity does not eliminate asymmetries or precariousness; it coexists with structural vulnerabilities. Organizing, in this context, is not harmony, but a process shaped by material necessity.

The formative dimension of the encampment also reveals an articulation between organizing and everyday practices:

> 007 – [...] they'd separate us by line [...] those of us in fourth grade ended up helping with instruction [...] I had to go to the city to study, and that hit me a bit, you know? You didn't have friends the same age who came from the same place, a vehicle would come to pick up students to bring them to the city [...] so I suffered a lot of bullying, even from teachers. And the uniform was mandatory, and we didn't have one (Mariana, 2023).

Collective literacy and mutual aid reveal that organization involves the production of knowledge and values in everyday life as a formative space. Everyday life is a space of formation, a field of invention. By teaching and learning collectively, encampment residents produce micro-spaces of autonomy. The contrast with urban schooling shows that socioterritorial organizing is placed under tension when confronting hegemonic institutions.

This tension becomes even more explicit in the negotiation of stigma: “008 – Many people think the landless are like animals [...] we adapted to them, now they treat us well” (José, 2023).

This symbolic dispute for recognition shows that organizing goes beyond internal coordination and comes to operate at the interface with society. Through everyday coexistence and productive relations, settlers reconfigure social perceptions. Organizing, here, is also about contesting narratives.

The encampment shows that organizing, in contexts of land conflict, means: (a) the collective production of the material conditions of existence under scarcity; (b) practical territorialization through everyday tactics; (c) the articulation of external networks of solidarity and legitimacy; and (d) symbolic disputes for social recognition.

Rather than a mere stage prior to settlement, the encampment is the formative core of socioterritorial organizing: a space in which resistance, learning, and territorial production become indissociable. In the vocabulary of prefigurative organizing, the encampment can be read as a space in which the collective life sought through the struggle is already practiced in the present, amid the struggles that such practice inevitably provokes (Schiller-Merkens, 2024).

4.5 From encampment to settlement: everyday reorganizations

Achieving settlement does not represent the end of the organizing process, but its reconfiguration. If the encampment demands organization oriented toward resistance and survival, the settlement shifts organizing toward the management of territory, production, and community relations. The struggle is transformed. Resistance, previously centered on remaining under tarps and on the direct dispute for land, shifts toward the everyday sustaining of the conquered territory, involving productive organization, institutional negotiation, and the continuous reconstruction of the collective.

From the perspective of organizing (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005; Duarte; Alcadipani, 2016), this shift shows that organization is not a state that is achieved, but a continuously renegotiated process. The conquest of land does not stabilize the collective; it opens new arenas of tension. Organization does not end with the institutionalization of the settlement, but is re-inscribed in productive practices and institutional relations. João's narrative makes this shift explicit:

> 009 – When the first resources came in [...] we jumped at buying a yoke of oxen, an ox plow, a cart [...] Nobody stopped, and man, we couldn't get everyone to pool together. Should we join forces and buy an agricultural equipment set? With the same money we could have bought a tractor that would do everyone's work. Everyone started to look at things individually [...] (João, 2023).

This account reveals the shift from a collectivity forged in scarcity to a scenario in which the allocation of family plots reactivates historical dispositions toward family productive autonomy. In the encampment, cooperation was an immediate condition of

survival; in the settlement, relative security reopens the possibility of individualized decisions.

Read through Labov's components, the episode has a clear structure. The orientation places it at the moment “when the first resources came in”; the complicating action is the rush to buy oxen, plows, and carts household by household; the evaluation lies in João's retrospective judgment that “with the same money we could have bought a tractor that would do everyone's work”; and the resolution is that “everyone started to look at things individually.” The evaluation is where the narrative does its organizational work. João measures the settlement against the collective that the encampment had made necessary and recognizes that, once the purchase of equipment no longer depended on pooling resources, cooperation in that decision had to be proposed and argued for, and that the proposal failed. The episode thus condenses the transformation of interdependence that this article identifies as the distinctive feature of socioterritorial organizing in this case.

Everyday life constitutes the space in which internalized values guide practical decisions (Heller, 1970). The pursuit of one's own tools responds to the need for material security, especially after long periods of instability. João's later reflection on the missed opportunity reveals the persistent tension between the collective project and individualized practices.

If, in the encampment, tactics operated against the exclusionary agrarian structure, in the settlement they also come to operate within the collective itself. Territorial organization does not eliminate the need for practical invention; it shifts its arena. Cooperation, which in the encampment was reinforced by scarcity, comes to depend more on political choices that must be reiterated on an everyday basis. Bhatt *et al*. (2024) draw a comparable distinction between internal and external marginalization, showing that alternative organizing in place-based communities has to confront not only external domination but also hierarchies and divisions within the collective itself.

Field records indicate, however, that the collective dimension does not disappear. It is reconfigured in associative and cooperative initiatives and in shared commercialization practices, in which organizing forms emerge and transform. Comparable dynamics appear in other settlements, where women's productive groups sustain collective processing and commercialization even under precarious infrastructure and unstable access to institutional markets (Oliveira; Cruz; Paula, 2025), and where the movement's insertion into institutional markets simultaneously widens its economic reach and constrains its autonomy (Souza; Lazzaretti, 2024).

These tensions become particularly visible in commercialization strategies. Settlers used to sell products at local farmers' markets, in a dynamic based on territorial proximity and direct sociability, but a decision by the municipal government established the Municipal Market as a formalized space for sales: “010 – The idea was one stall for each community [...] we formed an association [...] it didn't work out [...] products of animal origin couldn't be sold [...] they had to be legalized” (Manoel, 2023).

Sanitary formalization and institutional requirements introduce external rationalities that create tension with the logic of family farming. What seemed like a supportive policy becomes a demand for adaptation. Socioterritorial organizing comes to operate at the interface between peasant territory and institutional apparatus, without suspending structural asymmetry. Mariana adds to this experience: “011 – [...] they demand that our stalls always be full [...] we don't produce all year round! [...] you spend the whole day there tending it like it's a business, like a shop [...] it didn't flow the way we imagined” (Mariana, 2023).

The contrast between the logic of the farmers' market and the constant demands of the formal market reveals the mismatch between different productive rationalities. The municipal market requires standardization and regularity. This tension occurs at the interface between territory and institutions. The conflict is not only technical. On one side, the market expects stalls to be always full and products to be certified, as in a shop open every day; on the other, settlers produce according to the seasons and sell what they have to buyers they know. What is at stake are distinct ways of arranging production and time, and not only compliance with sanitary rules. Studies of family-farming markets indicate that this friction is not particular to Curitibanos: the structure of commercialization channels tends to displace producers toward requirements of regularity, standardization, and sanitary compliance that their productive scale does not accommodate (Miranda; Wegner; Dias, 2024). The loss is not trivial, since open-air markets remain a central source of income for family farmers, particularly for women (Rocha; Carvalho, 2022).

It is in this context that settlers devise other ways of selling:”012 – And so [we sell] through WhatsApp. Because people were already used to going to the market, so we already had a certain friendship. Let's say, they're not just customers” (Manoel, 2023).

The use of WhatsApp is not merely a matter of technological adoption; it re-inscribes commercial relations into networks of trust, operating within the cracks of the market, reactivating communal bonds, and revealing the negotiation between economy and belonging. In a civil society organization in Caruaru, Morais and Santos (2024) show that management is built beyond formalized processes, through the continuous mobilization of strategies and tactics that do not erase conflicts and hierarchies; the sales through WhatsApp can be read as ordinary management of the same kind, improvised by settlers in the gaps left by the formal market.

From this perspective, the passage from encampment to settlement does not eliminate the condition of vulnerability, but transforms it. If the threat used to be eviction, it now takes the form of economic unviability, bureaucratic demands, and internal fragmentation. Similar barriers appear in access to rural credit, where difficulties with land titling and the shortage of technical assistance restrict the reach of public funding for family farmers (Sousa; Rosanova; Ribeiro, 2026). Conflict remains a structuring element. We find that: (a) organization does not stabilize with the conquest of land; (b) territory requires continuous management; (c) cooperation needs to be reiterated; (d) everyday tactics remain central.

The settlement does not constitute the end point of the struggle, but a shift in its arena. Land ceases to be a promise and becomes a historical responsibility.

4.6 Socioterritorial organizing

The articulation between everyday life, history, and organizing processes allows us to move beyond simply applying the organizing perspective to socioterritorial contexts, pointing to the need for conceptual reconfiguration. This shift emerges from the empirical evidence analyzed in this study, especially from settlers' narratives and from practices observed in everyday life. If organizing refers to the continuous flow of interactions and sensemaking (Weick; Sutcliffe; Obstfeld, 2005), the analysis of the struggle for land shows that such processes do not occur under conditions of relative institutional stability, but in settings marked by structural inequality, political conflict, and territorial dispute.

In socioterritorial contexts, the production of organization occurs under conditions of structural asymmetry. Organizing, in these contexts, implies continuously dealing

with material uncertainties, territorial threats, and disputes over legitimacy. Socioterritorial organizing is not limited to sensemaking, but operates as a situated practice of resistance.

This finding indicates that the sensemaking vocabulary, centered on meaning-making and coordinated action, needs to be complemented in contexts of socioterritorial conflict, where the dispute over access to land, the ability to remain on it, and control over its use lies at the core of organizing. By shifting organizing toward socioterritorial experiences, it becomes evident that organizing also means materially sustaining collective life.

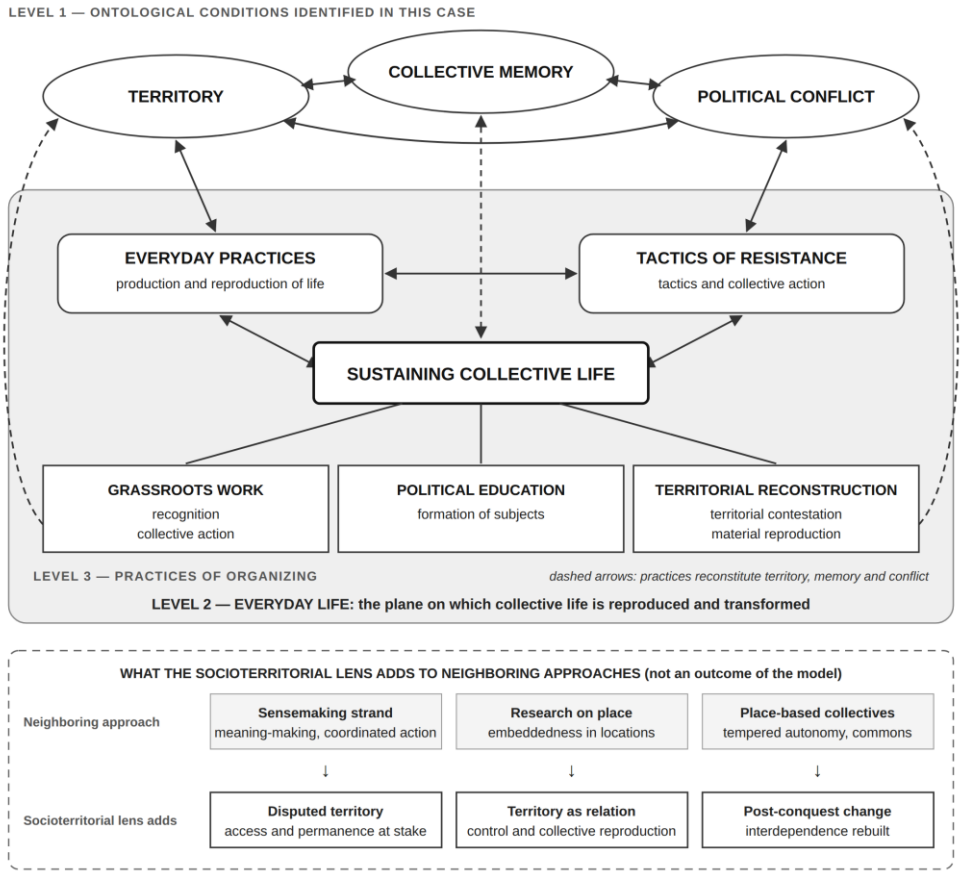
This proposal can be situated within the broader field of alternative organizing (Vijay *et al*., 2026), and in particular in dialogue with prefigurative organizing, which treats organizing as political by nature and attends to the struggles that accompany any attempt to enact another way of living (Schiller-Merkens, 2024). The experience of Índio Galdino, however, points to a difference that matters for the concept. In prefigurative organizing, the alternative is usually framed as the enactment of values that actors choose to live by; in the struggle for land, material necessity, political formation, and the collective project appear intertwined, since the need to sustain life on a territory under threat is not separable from the political project the movement elaborates through formation and grassroots work. The closest interlocutor is Bhatt et al. (2024), who also examine territorially situated collectives facing internal and external marginalization and for whom exit from the territory is rarely a viable option. What the notion of socioterritorial organizing adds to these formulations lies in the transformation of collective interdependence once territory has been won. In the encampment, collective practices were sustained above all by scarcity and threat, alongside political commitment; after the conquest, the allocation of family plots, the arrival of the first resources, and the requirements of the formal market reduced the immediate dependence on certain collective practices and reactivated family productive autonomy, making their continuity a matter of negotiation (Section 4.5). In one of the cases analyzed by Bhatt *et al*. (2024), the land won was declared village commons; in Índio Galdino, the conquest led to family plots worked by each household, and organizing came to depend on renegotiating which practices would remain collective. Socioterritorial organizing names this movement: organizing in which territory is first the object of a collective dispute and then the ground on which the collective must be recomposed.

Based on this analytical shift, we propose the notion of socioterritorial organizing, an empirically grounded construction that emerges from the dialogue between the field research findings and the literature. All organizing takes place somewhere; what distinguishes socioterritorial organizing is not location but the fact that the reproduction of the collective depends on disputing and maintaining specific territorial relations concerning access to land, the ability to remain on it, and control over its use. In these contexts, organization not only disputes meanings but materially negotiates its own continuity, and conflict over territory is part of that continuity. These dimensions have distinct analytical roles. Territory, understood in this relational sense, is the defining feature of the category; collective memory, conflict, and everyday life are components of the analytical lens, and in the Índio Galdino case they appeared as recurrent features. Whether they are necessary conditions in other contexts remains an empirical question. The category is therefore situated and still exploratory, and its scope depends on the comparative research outlined in Section 5.

This proposition adds to ongoing processual debates in Organizational Studies. In contexts such as the one studied here, we propose understanding organizations as

processes shaped by territory and by political conflict. This requires treating socioterritorial organizing forms not as peripheral empirical exceptions, but as experiences that can inform the understanding of organizing as a social practice. This reading resonates with the notion of tempered autonomy proposed by Bhatt *et al*. (2024): marginalized place-based communities negotiate their autonomy through selective and strategic engagement with dominant groups rather than through open confrontation or withdrawal, since "exiting might not be an option for place-based communities" (Bhatt *et al*., 2024, p. 61). The settlers' dealings with the municipal market and with public policies follow a similar logic. Leaving the conquered territory would entail high costs, including the loss of land won through years of struggle, and the narratives express a political and affective commitment to remaining on it; organizing therefore proceeds through adaptation and negotiation rather than exit.

Figure 1 – Socioterritorial organizing: an analytical model



Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

Figure 1 represents a relational architecture rather than a causal sequence. It articulates three analytical levels (the ontological conditions identified in this case, everyday mediation, and the practices through which socioterritorial organizing takes shape) connected by two-way links: the ontological dimensions condition everyday practices, and these practices, in turn, reconstitute territory, memory, and conflict, as indicated by the dashed arrows. The model derives from the systematization of empirical data, functioning as a theoretical abstraction of the dynamics observed in the field.

The first level brings together the three dimensions that the analysis identified as constitutive in this case: territory, collective memory, and political conflict. They lie at

the foundation of organization rather than merely around it. In the settlement, territory is what makes collective life possible. Collective memory is mobilized as a political resource, as the settlers' references to the caboclos of the Contestado show. Conflict runs through the entire trajectory of organizing and is part of what keeps it in motion.

At the second level is everyday life, incorporated from Heller as a central ontological category. Socioterritorial organizing does not take place outside everyday life, but in the productive routines and practical decisions that reproduce and transform collective life under conditions of structural inequality.

The third level comprises the practices through which organizing takes shape, read through the organizing perspective and Certeau. Everyday practices articulate the reproduction of life and resistance through tactics that reconfigure power asymmetries. Organizing thus appears as a process bound up with territory, combining material reproduction and political invention.

At the center of the figure lies the sustaining of collective life, the core of socioterritorial organizing, which both results from and feeds back into the other levels. This sustaining is realized through recurring practices identified in the research, such as grassroots work, political education, and processes of territorial reconstruction, which constitute emerging organizing expressions from the field. In the case examined here, conflict is neither contingency nor deviation; it is a constitutive condition of the organizing process.

Finally, the lower panel of the figure is not an outcome of the model but a positioning device: for three neighboring approaches discussed in Section 2.1 and in this section, namely the sensemaking strand, research on place, and studies of place-based collectives, it indicates what the socioterritorial lens adds: attention to settings where access and permanence are disputed, to territory as a relation of control and collective reproduction, and to the transformation of interdependence after territorial conquest. The model is exploratory. It systematizes relations observed in a single settlement and is offered as a lens to be examined in other contexts of socioterritorial conflict.

4.7 Socioterritorial organizing and socioterritorial movements: convergences and divergences

The proposal of socioterritorial organizing does not start from scratch. In Brazilian geography, the concept of socioterritorial movements has for two decades named collective subjects for whom territory is not merely an object of claims but a condition of existence. B. M. Fernandes (2005) distinguishes socioterritorial movements, which build their identity and their reproduction in and through the territory they conquer, from socio-spatial movements, which claim spaces, often as mediating agencies, without existing from a territory of their own. Pedon (2013) systematized this approach within the geography of social movements, and Halvorsen, Fernandes and Torres (2019) carried it into international debate, defining socioterritorial movements as those that make territory central to their identities, strategies, and goals. The MST is the paradigmatic case in this literature, and recent studies continue to use the concept to analyze agrarian collective action (Santos *et al*., 2025), the resistance of agrarian and urban movements to deterritorialization (Moura; Souza; Lima, 2025), and the territorialization of agroecology within the MST itself (Dourado; Pereira, 2026).

The convergences with the reading developed here are direct. In both, territory is a condition of collective existence rather than a backdrop; occupation is a moment of territorialization; and the trajectory of the struggle involves the loss, conquest, and reconstruction of territories, a movement that the narratives in Section 4.3 describe as displacement followed by re-territorialization. The settlers' references to the

Contestado War and to the community flooded by a dam fit this description: territory is lived as something that can be taken away and must be rebuilt.

The differences lie in the object and in the scale of analysis. The literature on socioterritorial movements takes the movement as a political subject and observes territory mostly at the scale of conflicts, occupations, and policies, often through aggregated data such as those of the DATALUTA network (Moura; Souza; Lima, 2025). Socioterritorial organizing looks instead at the processual level: how organization is produced, sustained, and also undone in the everyday life of the people who make up the movement. This shift brings into view dynamics that are not, strictly speaking, movement actions, such as the individualization of investments after the conquest of land, the failed association at the municipal market, and the sales through WhatsApp, yet they are decisive for whether the conquered territory remains a collective project. The dialogue with Heller and Certeau is what allows these ordinary practices to be read as organizing rather than as a residue of political action.

Seen in this light, the contribution of socioterritorial organizing is less the discovery of territory as a constitutive dimension, which geography has long established, than its translation into Organizational Studies, where recent work on place (Dacin *et al*., 2024) offers a point of entry that the notion of territory can extend toward disputes over access, permanence, and control. The concept offers the field a way of examining organizing under territorial conflict, and offers the literature on socioterritorial movements a vocabulary for the everyday processes through which movements are organized and reorganized once territory has been won.

5. Final considerations

The analysis of the trajectories of settlers at the Índio Galdino Settlement allows us to understand the struggle for land as a continuous organizing process woven into everyday life. By articulating the contributions of Heller (1970) and Certeau (2014) with the organizing perspective, we show that organization is not restricted to formal structures, emerging instead in the ordinary practices that materially and symbolically sustain collective life.

The empirical findings show that encampment and settlement constitute distinct, yet interdependent, moments of the same organizing process. In the encampment, collectivity is an immediate condition of survival, structuring practices of solidarity, learning, and resistance. In the settlement, this collectivity must be continuously rebuilt in light of the division into family plots, productive decisions, and tensions between family autonomy and the collective project. The evidence also indicates that the struggle for land does not end with its conquest: institutional requirements and public regulations reconfigure the field of dispute, imposing new forms of adaptation. Also noteworthy is the symbolic centrality of land, which goes beyond its productive function and asserts itself as an element of belonging, identity reconstruction, and community cohesion. Socioterritorial organizing emerges at this convergence between the material reproduction of life and practical invention under conditions of territorial threat.

In the field of Organizational Studies, this study contributes by shifting the focus from organization as a formal entity to the socioterritorial processes through which it is constituted. Its main contribution lies in showing how collective interdependence is transformed after territorial conquest: in the encampment, collective practices were sustained largely by scarcity and threat; in the settlement, the division into family plots and institutional requirements reduced the immediate dependence on some of these practices and made their continuity a matter of negotiation. By analyzing the MST from this perspective, we show that such organizing forms broaden the empirical scope of

organizing and bring territory and conflict into its vocabulary. In this sense, we propose understanding these experiences as expressions of socioterritorial organizing, a situated and still exploratory category that brings together territory, collective memory, political conflict, and the material reproduction of life in the analysis of organizing.

As discussed in Section 4.7, this interpretation converges with the literature on socioterritorial movements in treating territory as a condition of collective existence, and departs from it in its focus on the everyday processes through which organization is produced and reworked. Studies on the MST's formative praxis (Fernandes, R. C., 2025) and on everyday life in settlements (Rodrigues et al., 2021) support this reading, showing that organization emerges simultaneously as territorial experience, formative process, and practice of social reproduction.

The research nonetheless has limitations. It is a study situated in a single settlement, whose results do not allow statistical generalization to settlements in general or to the MST as a whole. This delimitation does not preclude analytical or theoretical generalization: the category of socioterritorial organizing can guide the understanding of other contexts, provided that their historical and territorial specificities are considered and that its relevance is examined through comparison with other experiences, in line with the discussion of generalization in case studies by Pozzebon and Freitas (1998). The narrative approach privileges interpretations built from reported experiences and does not fully capture broader structural dynamics. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 3, the closeness between researcher and participants may have influenced the interpretation, which required reflexive attention throughout the analysis. That same relationship, however, gave access to nuances of lived experience, to the meanings attributed to everyday practices, and to tensions in collective relations, which are central to the interpretive approach adopted here.

These limits point to avenues for future research. Comparative studies among settlements, longitudinal investigations, and analyses that integrate institutional, economic, and territorial dimensions could deepen the understanding of the dynamics identified. Exploring the concept of socioterritorial organizing in other contexts of territorial conflict, such as traditional communities, indigenous territories, quilombola communities, or urban housing movements, may also contribute to consolidating this theoretical agenda. In this direction, future research could compare how memory, territory, and conflict are articulated in each of these contexts, testing the analytical robustness of the concept of socioterritorial organizing proposed in this article and its capacity to illuminate organizing processes beyond the MST.

Finally, the trajectories analyzed show that agrarian reform is not exhausted by the redistribution of land: it is realized in the everyday construction of productive alternatives, in negotiation with institutional structures, and in the persistence of subjects who reinvent ways of living in the countryside. Experiences such as that of Curitibanos thus invite Organizational Studies to treat counter-hegemonic organizing forms as sources of conceptual renewal rather than as peripheral objects.

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Availability of underlying research data		Yes. The content underlying the research text is contained in the manuscript. The complete interview records are not made publicly available because they involve data from human participants, in accordance with the consent form approved by the Ethics Committee.
Use of Artificial Intelligence		Yes. Artificial Intelligence was used in a single stage: the translation of the manuscript from Portuguese into English, carried out with the Claude tool (Anthropic) after the original text was completed. The procedure consisted of submitting the final Portuguese version to the tool and then comparing the translation against the original, manually adjusting the study's theoretical vocabulary (organizar/organizing, cotidiano/everyday life, acampamento/encampment, assentamento/settlement) and preserving the oral register of the interview excerpts; terms with no stable English equivalent, such as caboclo, were kept in Portuguese. The research design, fieldwork, analysis of the narratives, and writing of the text were carried out entirely by the authors, without the use of AI. Responsibility for the content, in both languages, lies with the authors.
CrediT	Vitor Carvalho Gomes	Functions: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, project administration, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.
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