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Abstract

The Landless Workers' Movement (MST) has been the principal protagonist developing an alternative educational proposal for rural public schools in Brazil. This article analyzes the MST's differential success implementing this proposal in municipal and state public schools. The process is both participatory—activists working with government officials to implement MST goals—and contentious—the movement mobilizing support for its education initiatives through various forms of protest. In some locations, the MST has succeeded in institutionalizing a participatory relationship with government actors, while in other regions the MST has a more limited presence in the schools or has been completely banned from participating. Drawing on the concept of coproduction—the active participation of civil society actors in the provision of public goods—the author argues that coproduction is a joint product of high levels of social mobilization and government orientation. The former is necessary in all cases, while the latter can take the form of either a left-leaning or clientelistic government.

Keywords

participatory governance, social movements, coproduction, rural schooling, state-society relations

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On March 20, 2012, President Dilma Rousseff launched a new federal program¹ that will dedicate unprecedented funds to maintaining quality schools in the Brazilian countryside. The educational philosophy inspiring this program, *Educação do Campo* (Education of the Countryside), has gotten increasing recognition over the past fifteen years and has been institutionalized nationally through a series of federal laws and decrees. The major idea behind *Educação do Campo* is that students should not have to commute to the city to study; rather, having quality schools that are based in students' rural realities, which prepare and encourage students to live and work in the countryside, is a right for all rural citizens.

The proposal for *Educação do Campo* has had an unusual trajectory. Unlike most educational reforms, which are developed and implemented by politicians and bureaucrats on behalf of civil society, the principal protagonist developing these educational ideas has been a controversial social movement with a combative relationship with the Brazilian state: the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST, Landless Workers' Movement).² The MST is a national social movement that has helped more than one million women, men, and children receive land on which they can work. The movement does this through occupations of large landed estates, in which hundreds of landless families enter the property, set up makeshift camps, and wait until the government gives them the legal rights to live on the land.

MST activists have also been experimenting for more than three decades with alternative approaches to pedagogy and learning that support the movement's vision for small-farming and collective agricultural production. Although the MST's educational practices were initially limited to areas of agrarian reform, in the late 1990s the MST began to align with other rural organizations and develop a more general educational proposal. It was through these alliances that the MST's educational practices became recognized as a national pedagogical approach for all rural areas: *Educação do Campo*.

The federal recognition for *Educação do Campo* is not just another example of government actors conceding to social movement demands; it represents the nationalization of educational initiatives that have been underway—with varying degrees of success—at the state and local levels for more than a decade. In these diverse regional contexts, MST activists not only propose alternative educational ideas to government officials but also engage in the implementation of these educational practices by working with teachers and school principals, facilitating discussions with communities, organizing teacher trainings, and writing new curriculum. However, arriving at this form of collaboration is rarely a consensual or conflict-free process; movement activists have an openly political agenda, and must engage in contentious actions to become participants in the educational sphere. Reactions from state and municipal governments to the MST's educational proposal vary widely, with government officials supporting the MST's participation in certain locations while criticizing them as “guerrilla trainers” in other regions.

What accounts for the variation in MST activists' ability to participate in educational provision? It is the aim of this article to propose answers to this question, through a comparison of several state and municipal school systems. These cases illustrate a

gap between the theoretical predictions in much of the literature on participatory governance and the regional realities of MST participation in public schools. I argue that this variation in MST participation is a joint product of levels of social mobilization and government orientation (i.e., left, right, or clientelistic) and thus brings partisan politics back into the literature on participatory governance.

The Brazilian Rural Public School System and the MST

The Brazilian public school system tends to be very traditional, promoting a universal education that teaches the same content to all children, irrespective of their different backgrounds and histories. This educational approach has its roots in the 1930s, when a group of intellectuals, the *Escolanovistas* (New Schoolers), wrote a manifesto that critiqued the Catholic education system and declared free and public education to be the right of all Brazilian citizens and the domain of the state.³ The universal schooling that was established had a middle-class orientation, preparing students for urban, white-collar lives. With the military coup in 1964, control over public schooling was centralized in the hands of the federal government. During the following two decades the government invested heavily in secondary and tertiary education, levels of schooling that were seen as critical for Brazil's economic development and urban industrialization. Primary education—which constituted the majority of schooling in rural areas—was largely ignored.⁴

The end of the military dictatorship in 1985 and the new Brazilian constitution of 1988 brought important structural reforms to the public school system. Authority over K-12 schooling was completely devolved to state and municipal governments, in an ambiguously defined “regime of collaboration.” Educational improvement was difficult due to the impoverished condition of many local governments, which were now charged with providing educational access to all of their citizens. Consequently, throughout the 1990s primary schooling in rural areas did not significantly improve, and rural schools continued to be seen as an embarrassment to a “modern” Brazilian state: a backward system that contained multigrade classrooms, teachers with no tertiary education, and collapsing school infrastructure. Finally, in 1998, a reform in the financing mechanism of primary education and the federal government began to guarantee a minimum level of spending per student for all primary schools.⁵ Overnight, this law vastly increased the revenue poor municipalities had to invest in education, especially in poor, rural regions.⁶ However, for the mayors and governors who received this aid, it was more economically efficient to close down rural schools and transport students to nearby urban centers, rather than invest in new rural infrastructure. Thus, even with this new funding, the marginalization of rural education in Brazil continued into the twenty-first century.

The MST emerged in the early 1980s in the southern regions of Brazil, when the country was still under military dictatorship and the disregard for investment in rural primary schooling was at a peak. As MST activists started winning the right to live on the land they were occupying, they also began fighting for schools in these agrarian reform settlements. According to the MST's own calculations,⁷ the movement has

successfully pressured state and municipal governments to build more than 2,000 new rural public schools that currently serve approximately 200,000 students.⁸ However, this fight for basic educational access was insufficient. The teachers who were sent to these schools had minimal training, and moreover, they espoused the traditional vision of education as an escape route from rural life. The movement's initial engagement in the educational sphere in the 1980s was a response to the minimal access, low levels of educational quality, and this traditional vision of rural schooling among teachers. MST activists made it a goal to encourage youths to stay in the countryside, and prepare them for lives as future farmers, activists, and intellectuals.

First through informal study groups, then through the development of a formal pedagogical proposal for all rural public schools—including alternative teacher-training programs—movement activists in the South began to take the provision of education into their own hands. Many activists came out of the progressive Catholic Church,⁹ and had previous experiences working with priests who utilized educational ideas based on Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.¹⁰ Freire quickly became a philosophical inspiration for the movement. In addition, university students visiting the MST's encampments introduced other theorists, including several Soviet pedagogues who wrote during the 1920s. These socialist pedagogies were critical in helping MST activists—primarily from the south of Brazil—reflect on the role of manual labor and student-run collectives in public schools.¹¹

As the movement expanded its struggle for agrarian reform, MST activists traveled to the northern regions of the country, encouraging small farmers, rural workers, sugar cane laborers, and even urban residents to occupy land. As Wolford¹² describes, these activists promoted a vision of agrarian populism that was linked to a particular history of small landholders in the South. Nonetheless, these MST discourses and practices traveled to the North and were “negotiated and refigured through practice.”¹³ This process occurred for the MST's educational proposal as well: dozens of activists from these northern regions were also chosen to attend courses in the South, where they learned about the educational proposal the movement was developing. These activists traveled back to their communities, adapting these ideas to their distinct social, cultural, and political contexts.

Despite regional differences in the MST's organizational structure and agrarian base, the MST education collectives that are currently active across Brazil can be described as fighting for similar outcomes, which include a combination of curricular and organizational proposals.¹⁴ First and foremost, MST education collectives fight for schools located in rural communities, with curriculum that values life in the countryside. This includes a holistic approach of moving beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to foster learning based on thematic topics relevant to rural areas. The curricular approach also engages students in manual as well as intellectual labor. The MST collectives fight to incorporate agro-ecological learning in the curriculum, while also promoting collective work practices. Additionally, and most polemically, MST activists want schools that inspire students to participate in the movement, which means studying the history of agrarian reform and incorporating MST cultural practices, such as protest chants and songs, into daily school routines.

In terms of the organization of the school system, the MST envisions schools as spaces of nonhierarchical democratic governance, where parents, teachers, and students make collective decisions about how their schools should function. In order to implement this goal, local MST activists must convince their communities—and the tenured teachers already working in their schools—to engage in a participatory process of defining educational goals. This generally occurs through large assemblies, in which parents, students, teachers, school principals, and other community representatives discuss their vision for education. Often, MST activists get permission for the community to rewrite the school's "Political-Pedagogical Proposal" (a school mission statement). With the MST's leadership the writing of this document, which is usually the responsibility of distant bureaucrats, becomes a lively debate about educational purpose.

The MST has also established several educational institutions, or "movement schools," that are independent of the public school system. One example is the Institute of Education Josué de Castro (IEJC) in the city of Veranópolis, Rio Grande do Sul, which has been offering alternative high school courses to MST activists since 1995. Another example is the Florestan Fernandes National School (ENFF), founded by the MST in 2005 near the city of São Paulo, and currently serving as an official educational institution with affiliated faculty.

The focus of the article is not on these MST's "movement schools," or the various educational programs developed at the federal level, but on the conditions that facilitate the MST's participation in the public schools located on MST settlements and camps. Despite the federal laws that support *Educação do Campo*, the devolution of K-12 public schooling to municipal and state governments has continued to produce drastically different educational outcomes. Municipal and state schools are administered autonomously—even when physically located on the same street—through independent administrative bureaucracies. Therefore, the comparison between municipal and state school systems is appropriate because the level of analysis, an administrative unit, is the same.

The Social and Institutional Requisites of Coproduction

Over the past two decades there has been an outpouring of studies that discuss the conditions under which civil society participation in state institutions is possible and effective.¹⁵ This literature rejects the assumption that there is always an antagonistic relationship between social movements and the state, or that oppositional activity is the most effective form of political action.¹⁶ Instead, scholars emphasize the importance of civil society in not only making demands, but also participating in all stages of the policy process.¹⁷

In this article I describe the outcome I analyze as *coproduction*, drawing on Ostrom's definition of the term as a "process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organization."¹⁸ As Ostrom argues, coproduction allows citizens to play a role in producing public goods of consequence to them. Coproduction offers a useful framework for understanding the MST's initiatives in public schools. The government still provides the basic bureaucratic apparatus of the school system, the administrative

staff, teachers, books, and a curriculum. However, MST activists who enter into a relationship of coproduction with the state provide other essential resources, for example developing teacher trainings, cultivating community-school connections, organizing teacher and student collectives, addressing teacher concerns, and offering ideas for new curricular initiatives.

Why, how, and under what conditions do different degrees of MST-state coproduction of public schooling occur? There have been dozens of studies that analyze the social and institutional requisites for these types of state-society relations to develop—whether referred to as synergy, embeddedness, participatory governance, or coproduction. Although there is not yet a consensus on the exact combination of factors that are needed to develop coproduction, I emphasize two explanations that have received particular attention in this literature.

Mobilized Civil Society

One set of explanations argues that a self-organized and mobilized civil society is necessary for coproduction. For example, Heller¹⁹ claims that the history of class mobilization in Kerala, India, is the most important factor for understanding the development of participatory institutions in that state. Others refer to this condition as well-coordinated and articulate social actors,²⁰ a robust sphere of civil associational life,²¹ or stocks of social capital in society.²² Wampler and Avritzer²³ argue that the development of “participatory publics” among organized civil society groups in Brazil after the transition to democracy drove the process of state-society participation over the next decade, as these groups voted for reformist political coalitions that would implement participatory institutions.

This social requisite for coproduction—a mobilized and active civil society—has unique implications for the MST. Rather than state actors implementing mechanisms that activate civil society—through the scaling up of networks,²⁴ pedagogical campaigns, and participatory forums,²⁵ or transforming worldviews and identity formation²⁶—it is the MST that mobilizes civil society. In other words, MST activists are the ones engaging teachers, bureaucrats, community members, and students in a participatory process of defining educational goals. However, although MST activists represent themselves as a united movement nationally and internationally, the MST’s ability to garner the consent of peasant communities for this type of participatory project varies regionally, often due to distinct agrarian histories.²⁷ In many locations, regional leaders no longer have an organic connection to the families living in areas of agrarian reform. Consequently, levels of civil society mobilization vary widely, depending on MST activists’ ability to maintain their connection to these families and mobilize new groups of civil society actors to participate in the movement.

Nature of the Public Sector

Although much of the literature on participatory governance recognizes that a highly mobilized civil society is a necessary condition for the development of coproduction,

these mobilized actors confront different types of public sectors, which also influence outcomes. For example, many scholars consider high state capacity to be an important factor for successful participatory governance to develop.²⁸ High state capacity is broadly defined as the existence of strong state institutions, or in other words, a bureaucratic apparatus with sufficient material resources, autonomy, and accumulation of expertise to implement intended policy goals.²⁹ For example, Heller³⁰ asserts that the bureaucratic-legal capacities of the state are critical for facilitating the participation of mobilized classes. Wang³¹ mentions the importance of strong states capable of going beyond the shortsightedness of special interests groups, while Coelho³² refers to a certain “know-how” that is necessary among officials to implement participatory projects.

The potential issue with this focus on state capacity, however, is that right-leaning governments—which might be ideologically against state-society coproduction—may also have high levels of state capacity. In my research, for example, one of the states with the highest capacity in the country, São Paulo, has prevented the MST’s participation in the public school system for more than two decades. Thus, I find it more useful to characterize the nature of the public sector by differentiating between programmatic and nonprogrammatic government orientations. Moreover, a mutually reinforcing relationship exists between a programmatic government orientation and high state capacity: On the one hand, where public jobs and contracts are allocated on the basis of rational criteria (e.g., merit, efficiency), and thus insulated from political manipulation, parties have little choice but to compete on the basis of programmatic appeals. On the other hand, parties that compete on the basis of programmatic appeals need rational and skilled officials to implement their programs.³³ In my research, the highest levels of coproduction developed in a programmatic context with left-leaning governments, because their politicians were willing and able to implement participatory institutions. However, high state capacity can also have the opposite effect and impede coproduction when governments with right-leaning orientations take power. In these contexts, governments have implemented technocratic mechanisms for dealing with public schooling, or have systematically shut down rural schools and built new schools in urban areas—in both cases preventing MST participation.

The other option is for the nature of the public sector to be nonprogrammatic. In these contexts, generally referred to as clientelistic,³⁴ political allegiance is gained through the dispensing of public resources in exchange for political support, not ideological platforms. These are not one-time exchanges between politicians and citizens but long-term commitments of obligation and reciprocity involving face-to-face contact and inequality.³⁵ A clientelistic government orientation undermines the development of state capacity because jobs are distributed as political favors and not on the basis of competence or expertise, and it tends to reproduce itself, since politicians in such environments have an incentive to trade favors for support.

For many scholars, participatory governance is described as a *transition away* from these clientelist forms of politics.³⁶ In contrast to this literature, however, my research illustrates that clientelist governments with low levels of state capacity, in combination with high levels of MST mobilization, can lead to MST-state coproduction, albeit

not so much as in programmatically left-leaning contexts. Nevertheless coproduction is sometimes more likely in these clientelistic contexts than it is in certain regions with high-capacity states governed by right-leaning parties. The discrepancy between this literature and my findings lies in the programmatic nature of state capacity—and the possibility that these high-capacity governments might be programmatically right leaning and antagonistic to the MST. In these contexts, activists face difficult and perhaps insurmountable barriers to participation. Therefore, relative to high-capacity right-leaning governments, MST activists may be better off under a nonprogrammatic, clientelistic government.

Methods

Case studies in this article are based on data collected over seventeen months between 2010 and 2011 in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, and Pernambuco. In Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo I focused on the state public school systems, whereas in Pernambuco I did research on municipal schools in Santa Maria da Boa Vista and Água Preta.³⁷ I chose the four school systems after nine weeks of predissertation research in the summer of 2009, and I purposively sampled them to compare regions with the distinct outcomes in MST-state coproduction. I selected the state of Rio Grande do Sul because it has been the most famous example of MST-state coproduction in Brazil, an outcome that was radically reversed several years prior to my field research. Similarly, Santa Maria da Boa Vista is also held as a prize example of the MST's successful participation in the public school system; however, in contrast to Rio Grande do Sul, state-society collaboration in Santa Maria has been much more stable. I chose Água Preta because it is the municipality with the highest concentration of MST settlements in Pernambuco; but unlike Santa Maria, no MST-state coproduction has developed. Finally, I chose to research São Paulo because of the difficulties the MST has faced participating in the state public school system for more than two decades.

In summary, I chose four locations where the MST has a significant presence (in terms of numbers of settlements, not necessarily levels of mobilization), but where outcomes in coproduction differed drastically. This allows me to compare the political, economic, and social conditions in each region that produced these different outcomes. I conducted approximately seventy interviews with MST activists in these regions, including both statewide leaders and local activists involved in the MST education sectors. The focus of the interviews was on the history of the MST's educational initiatives, the process of participating in the school system, barriers activists faced, and the bureaucrats and politicians who facilitated or prevented these collaborations. The other half of my interviews, a total of sixty, were with government officials, bureaucrats, and teachers. I asked these state actors about their relationships to local MST activists; how these relationships have shifted over time; the merits and flaws of the MST's educational proposal; and the daily interactions among MST activists, teachers, and principals. Beyond interviews, I also took extensive field notes from informal conversations with state and civil society actors, community visits, classroom

observations, teacher trainings, and participant observation of activities organized by regional MST education collectives. In each of the four regions I lived with MST educational activists in their homes, and I observed the daily tasks these activists undertook in the schools. I analyzed these data and compared my cases to assess the conditions that produced or prevented coproduction in each school system. In an effort to round out my analysis, I add a fifth case where I did not carry out fieldwork, Minas Gerais, with the aid of secondary data. In the conclusion, I review all five cases and offer suggestions for how this research can advance our understanding of coproduction and the ways in which social movements engage the state.

Conditions for MST-State Coproduction of Public Schooling

Through this comparative analysis I argue that MST-state coproduction of public schooling should be understood as a product of two interacting factors: levels of MST mobilization and government orientation. Because the MST is a large national social movement with an explicitly left-wing ideology, having left-leaning government officials in power greatly increases the MST's ability to participate in the public schools. However, my cases illustrate that high levels of MST mobilization are also a necessary condition for coproduction to develop, even when the government has a left-leaning orientation. In right-leaning contexts, on the other hand, MST-state coproduction is unlikely, regardless of the levels of mobilization. In these programmatic contexts, political parties are good proxies for determining whether the government orientation is left leaning or right leaning.³⁸ The other possibility is that the government is nonprogrammatic, or in other words, clientelistic. This means politicians come to power based not on right- or left-wing ideological platforms, but through the relationships of patronage they develop with citizens. In these contexts MST-state coproduction is also possible, as long as activists maintain high levels of mobilization among civil society groups. These different outcomes in MST-state coproduction are represented in Table 1.

As Table 1 indicates, left-leaning governments and high levels of MST mobilization produce the fullest levels of coproduction, and this process is facilitated by the strong state capacity that exists in these programmatic contexts. This finding supports much of the literature that argues that committed government officials (in this case left-leaning governments) in combination with high state capacity and a mobilized civil society produce participatory governance.³⁹ However, as these cases also illustrate, right-leaning governments with high state capacity can counteract the positive effects of mobilization. Therefore, relative to right-leaning contexts, social movements are more likely to engage the state in coproduction in contexts with clientelistic government orientations. In these locations, state capacity is low due to generations of distributing public jobs on the basis of patronage, not meritocracy. The fact that coproduction can develop in these contexts partially supports Joshi and Moore's⁴⁰ argument that coproduction develops where states are weak, Abers and Keck's⁴¹ assertion that civil society is often necessary to mobilize state capacity, and Wolford's claim that the

Table 1. Regional Variation in MST-state coproduction

		Government orientation		
		Left leaning	Clientelistic	Right leaning
MST mobilization	<i>Lower</i>	No coproduction (Rio Grande do Sul, 2011-present)	No coproduction (Água Preta)	No coproduction (Minas Gerais)
	<i>Higher</i>	Very high coproduction (Rio Grande do Sul, 1999-2006)	High coproduction (Santa Maria da Boa Vista)	No coproduction (São Paulo & Rio Grande do Sul, 2007-2010)

MST's high levels of participation in INCRA (the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) is a result of the institution's weakness.⁴² However, in contrast to these arguments, the highest level of coproduction still developed under a left-leaning government with high state capacity.

São Paulo: Technocratic Hegemony

The central east state of São Paulo is the most populous and richest state in the country, with 41.3 million people in 2010, 95.6 percent classified as urban,⁴³ and 33.1 percent of Brazil's total GDP in 2008 (with only 21.6 percent of the population).⁴⁴ In São Paulo, two conditions exist that might make us optimistic about the possibilities for coproduction to develop: high levels of state capacity and significant MST mobilization in civil society. However, the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), in power in São Paulo since 1995, is openly antagonistic to the MST's political goals in the countryside. The government in São Paulo has utilized a technocratic discourse of progress, development, and the scientific application of expertise to delegitimize movement participation, and prevent civil society involvement in schools. High state capacity increases the government's ability to ensure compliance with official educational goals among dispersed state government officials.

Technocracy is a form of governance whereby "experts" in various fields, such as scientists and economists, rather than politicians or partisan interest groups, are in charge of policy making. The educational bureaucrats in São Paulo who I interviewed expressed a belief that only "educational experts"—defined as people working within the state Secretary of Education—should be developing school curriculum and policy. Thus, MST activists are excluded from the educational realm. While the MST administers several "movement schools" in São Paulo,⁴⁵ activists are not allowed to participate in the public school system.

Despite the antagonistic and right-leaning government that has been in power in São Paulo since 1995, the MST has continually maintained high levels of mobilization throughout the state. For example, from 1998 to 2011 there were more land occupations in São Paulo—with more numbers of families participating—than any other state

in the country.⁴⁶ Even in 2011, when many MST regional organizations were in crisis, the state of São Paulo still had the highest number of land occupations with the third highest number of families involved.⁴⁷ In addition, the MST national headquarters are located in the city of São Paulo, which means that activists from across the country are concentrated in this region.

According to MST activists I interviewed, every year the movement attempts to set up a meeting with the state secretary of education, but the movement's requests have always been rebuffed. My interviews with two ex-secretaries of education illustrate that the state government simply regards the MST as irrelevant to the education debate. Maria Helena Castro, secretary of education under Governor José Serra from 2007-2009, told me, "If there was one thing I never saw as important, it was having a conflict with a small group that is very combative. We offer the MST public schools everything other schools have, but we are not going to sit and fight with the MST."⁴⁸ As this quote indicates, the government provides the same quality of schools that exist in other rural areas; however, the participation of MST activists is seen as unnecessary.

In addition to excluding MST participation, the government refuses to implement any of the *Educação do Campo* policies supported at the federal level. Rather than look toward the federal government for "expert knowledge," for the past two decades São Paulo bureaucrats have traveled to the United States to learn about US educational policies and bring these ideas back to Brazil. This flow of knowledge has resulted in the implementation of standardized testing, merit pay, and scripted curricula, which distinguishes São Paulo from other states. For example, in order to raise awareness about *Educação do Campo*, the Brazilian Ministry of Education held twenty-five state seminars on the topic between 2005 and 2006. According to the educational bureaucrat who organized these seminars, "The only state where a seminar did not occur was in São Paulo. The PSDB was in power and the Secretary of Education thought a seminar on rural education was not necessary, because they claimed that São Paulo no longer had any countryside." Despite São Paulo's status as an important agricultural producer, the government claimed an education specific to rural areas was not necessary.

This refusal was not simply a top-down process. A range of officials—from local bureaucrats to school principals and teachers—all expressed the need to have one policy for both rural and urban schools, to give students the opportunity to leave the countryside and participate in São Paulo's urban economy. Interviewees agreed that parents (including MST activist-parents) should be involved in some school activities, such as organizing social events. However, the administration of the schools and the development of curriculum should be left to the "experts."

Sebastião has been the director of the state Secretary of Education regional office in the Pontal da Paranapanema for more than eighteen years. That region has one of the largest concentrations of MST settlements in the country. He explains his position:

We talked with the MST, including some intellectuals that participate in the movement, and they told us they wanted a different type of curriculum. We said no and explained that we

have a single curriculum, which is equal for rural and urban areas. . . . I think that if you want to have a different curriculum then you can contract your own professors and run a school, and this would be your school. However, these are our schools and they are going to follow the curriculum of the State Secretary of Education.

Here the public-private divide is clearly drawn: the state develops the public school curriculum, and if civil society groups want to participate they can administer their own private schools. Sebastião was not alone in arguing for the need to follow one curriculum, designed by educational experts. Dozens of teachers I interviewed expressed this same technocratic belief.

This interview excerpt also indicates Sebastião's distinction between the families who live in areas of agrarian reform—and whose children attend the state public schools—and the “intellectuals” in the MST who are advocating for this alternative educational proposal. The “intellectuals” to whom Sebastião refers are local MST activists who have had the opportunity to take MST-administered university courses⁴⁹ and learn about the MST's pedagogical proposal. In other locations, politicians see these “MST intellectuals,” who have impressive credentials as pedagogical experts, as organic to the movement. In the Pontal, Sebastião differentiates between “MST intellectuals” and “parents on settlements,” which facilitates his ability to disregard MST participation in schools. Although the MST regional leadership in the Pontal attempts to engage rural communities in a participatory process of defining alternative educational goals, the government's refusal to facilitate this process has created a gap between the activists who are advocating for MST participation and the families who send their children to these schools.

The technocratic vision of schooling in São Paulo, and the implementation of state-wide educational policies that emphasize standardized testing and a universal, scripted curriculum, has solidified an educational hegemony in São Paulo that is fundamentally in contradiction to the MST's educational proposal. Although a right-leaning government in power in São Paulo since 1995 has not impeded high levels of MST mobilization and contestation, the government has prevented the crossing of the traditional state-society divide and the MST's coproduction of the state public school system.

Rio Grande do Sul: Shifting Outcomes

Rio Grande do Sul, 1999-2006

Rio Grande do Sul is the fourth richest state in Brazil, contributing to 6.6 percent of the GDP in 2008,⁵⁰ with a total population of 10.7 million people—85 percent classified as urban residents.⁵¹ Between 1999 and 2006, the MST engaged the state in one of the most impressive examples of educational coproduction in the country, a result of the left-leaning government that came to power and the extremely high levels of MST mobilization. However, even before the victory of the Workers Party (PT) in 1999, when a Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) government was still in power, MST activists began to participate in the state public school system. During

this period there was a surge in MST mobilization, with dozens of new land occupations being organized. Hundreds of children living in these MST camps were out of school because transportation was difficult and families were constantly forced to relocate due to police evictions. To address these concerns, the MST state education collective developed a proposal for “Itinerant Schools”⁵²—schools located within MST camps that could travel with the camps through their various transitions. Governor Antônio Britto of the PMDB was not initially sympathetic to the MST’s concerns. However, by the end of 1996 Governor Britto authorized the Itinerant Schools to function as a two-year pedagogical experiment.

Why did a government from a center-right political party decide to support the movement’s coproduction of the Itinerant Schools? There were two major factors, which correspond to the conditions outlined in Table 1: the increasing political pressure on the state administration to provide an educational alternative for the children living in MST camps and the advocacy of several left-leaning bureaucrats inside the PMDB government. An example of the increasing pressure occurred right before the Itinerant Schools were approved, when the MST organized a march with hundreds of children to Porto Alegre and delivered the United Nations “International Convention on the Rights of the Child” to the state secretary of education. This was just one of the dozens of protests MST activists in Rio Grande do Sul organized to support the right to education for the children living in camps. The second factor—the advocacy of left-leaning bureaucrats—is exemplified by the role of Sister Alda, a progressive nun and supporter of the MST. Sister Alda functioned as a “reformist”⁵³ within the PMDB government: aligning with mobilized groups, internally facilitating the policy process, and helping to produce this moment of experimental coproduction.⁵⁴

In this same highly mobilized context, the first PT governor in the country, Olívio Dutra, came to office in 1999. Dutra was ideologically dedicated to participatory governance, and, more than any other PT candidate in the country, followed through on this position.⁵⁵ The new governor gave the Itinerant Schools much more financial support, and his secretary of education hired MST activists to help organize the rural public school system. Very high levels of coproduction developed as the government continued to provide the financial resources, bureaucratic apparatus, and basic curriculum. Meanwhile activists built the schools, chose the teachers, organized teacher trainings, incorporated the MST’s identity into the schools, and changed their organizational structure. State capacity directly facilitated this process, as the government was able to organize and finance statewide seminars about the Itinerant Schools, and offer administrative support for local community-school assemblies to take place.

In 2002, Olívio Dutra lost the gubernatorial election to another PMDB candidate, Germano Rigotto. Although Rigotto was not an open advocate of the MST’s political project, MST activists were already participating in the public school system and Rigotto’s government decided not to interfere. Sonia Lopes dos Santos, an educational bureaucrat in Rigotto’s government, explains: “We did not interfere at all in the pedagogy of the Itinerant Schools, the MST already had a lot of profound publications about these schools and we always respected their ability to drive this educational

process.” Thus, between 2002 and 2006 high levels of coproduction continued to exist, as a legacy of the previous government.

The combination of high levels of MST mobilization and a left-leaning government orientation facilitated the development of very high levels of coproduction between 1999 and 2006. In the meantime, however, a group of right-leaning political actors antagonistic to the MST was organizing within the PSDB in Rio Grande do Sul. At that point, the PSDB was the PT’s nemesis at the national level but the party had never won an election in Rio Grande do Sul.

Rio Grande do Sul, 2007-2010

In 2007, PSDB candidate Yeda Crusius became governor and within two years the Itinerant Schools were closed. The PSDB was more than simply a right-leaning government: state officials were openly antagonistic to the MST and dedicated to weakening the movement’s presence across the state. From 2007 to 2010 an alliance was built between the PSDB government and several lawyers in the state Public Ministry—a nominally nonpartisan legal institution charged with defending citizens’ public interests. With the support of the state government, the Public Ministry opened a series of prosecutions against the MST, and out of these general investigations came a concern about the Itinerant Schools. I interviewed one of the lawyers in charge of this investigation:

We concluded that the Itinerant Schools must be closed because they serve as an instrument of alienation for the kids . . .

[RT: *But how did this process of closing the schools begin?*]

There was an investigation into the situation of the MST in Rio Grande do Sul. But this investigation was not about the schools; it was about the movement in general, the violence in the countryside, general violence in rural areas . . .

[RT: *And what was the role of the secretary of education?*]

There was agreement on the issue. We made contact with people in the secretary of education to find out if it was possible to close the schools. They said they no longer had control over these schools, and agreed this was bad.

As this interview indicates, the investigation of the Itinerant Schools was the result of a general concern with the MST’s presence in Rio Grande do Sul, not an educational assessment. The lawyer went to great lengths to convince me of the MST’s threat to society:

I consider this movement a terrorist movement . . . it is a very intentional teaching, and in these schools they learn techniques of guerrilla warfare.

[RT: *But when you say guerrilla techniques you mean arms?*]

I don't know. We do not have this information. But certainly! Like what happened in Vietnam, everything used in Vietnam to attack American soldiers these people use here.

This description of the MST as an armed terrorist organization was a discursive attempt to delegitimize the Itinerant Schools, not on the basis of quality, but as a reaction against all MST actions in the countryside. As the secretary of education at that time, Mariza Abreu, told me: "Before you understand anything about the Itinerant Schools, you have to understand that the MST is a huge problem."

In addition to the Itinerant Schools, the PSDB government closed approximately 200 other rural schools between 2007 and 2010. These closings reflect a programmatic position that the government took, which prioritized the construction of schools in urban areas. Secretary of Education Mariza Abreu explains, "The population is leaving rural areas. It is concentrating in the cities . . . this is the destiny of the world, to have 2 or 3 percent of the population in rural areas, with agro-business, and the majority in urban centers." While high state capacity had originally facilitated the MST's ability to access the resources necessary to implement the Itinerant School proposal, this same capacity allowed the PSDB to close down the Itinerant Schools—in addition to hundreds of other rural schools—while also standardizing an urban-centric curriculum across the state. Therefore, despite high state capacity and high levels MST mobilization in Rio Grande do Sul, the shift in government orientation between 2006 and 2007 prevented MST-state coproduction from continuing.

Rio Grande do Sul, post-2011

In 2011, PT candidate Tarso Genro defeated the PSDB and became the new state governor. One of the first actions his government took was to reopen the Itinerant Schools, and to issue a statement against the closing of any more rural schools in Rio Grande do Sul. The year 2011, however, marked a serious crisis for the MST state collective in Rio Grande do Sul: due to the increasing value of land, and the relatively high economic development in the region, the MST had found it increasingly difficult to organize land occupations over the previous few years. There was even talk among activists in Rio Grande do Sul about no longer occupying land, and instead, investing activists' energy in developing the economic capacity of already-formed agrarian reform settlements.⁵⁶ Thus, in 2011, there were very few encampments, with only a handful of families and almost no children. Without any children to attend to, the Itinerant Schools only reopened on paper. The state MST education sector was also directly affected by this crisis; while the collective had several active members when I was doing research in 2009 and 2010, by 2011 the "collective" was down to one person. Although the Tarso government implemented many educational policies the MST supported—such as the reopening of rural schools and the development of curriculum specific to rural realities—the MST did not have the capacity to participate in this process.

Santa Maria da Boa Vista: Clientelism and Collective Action

In Pernambuco there are no state-administered public schools located on any MST settlements or camps. The relationship the MST has with the Pernambuco state secretary of education, therefore, revolves around programs outside of the public school system, such as the adult literacy programs.⁵⁷ In addition, the state government does not have any direct influence over the administration of municipal schools, which is why the outcomes in coproduction are dependent on the relationship activists develop with dozens of different municipal governments.

Santa Maria da Boa Vista (henceforth, Santa Maria) is a municipality in the western part of the state of Pernambuco, in a semi-arid region where limited water access restricts small-scale agricultural production. Geographically the third largest municipality in the state, it has a population of 39,435 people, with 62.3 percent classified as rural.⁵⁸ The case of Santa Maria demonstrates that even with difficult preconditions MST activists can learn to navigate the political system and implement coproduction through several different political administrations.

According to the citizens, activists, and politicians in Santa Maria, only one family has held political power since the municipality's founding in 1872. Nevertheless, electoral rivalries are intense due to political splits between cousins who form opposing clientelist networks of support among citizens. Since there are no industries in Santa Maria, government jobs are the most stable means of livelihood for an average citizen. Thus, the mayor's control over hundreds of municipal jobs is an important political tool for maintaining citizen allegiance. Each time a new cousin takes power, all of the municipality's seventy-five school principals are fired and replaced with seventy-five new political supporters. Tenured teachers who cannot be fired are also affected, as their loyalty determines the schools they will teach in, some of which require a several-hour daily commute.

In 1995, the MST held its first land occupation in Santa Maria, with 2,000 families. Within ten years fifteen settlements were created through more land occupations. After these initial land occupations, the movement began to struggle for access to public services, such as roads, agricultural assistance, and schools. Leandro Duarte of the Liberal Front Party (PFL)⁵⁹ was in office, with his cousin Maria Graciliano as the vice-mayor. MST activists were relatively successful in getting schools built during Leandro's first term in office (1997-2000). Sometimes the encamped families would construct a makeshift school themselves and then simply demand a teacher. Leandro was willing to participate in this process because the cost of construction was minimal and it improved his personal reputation. He explained:

After being elected I started to have a bigger relationship with the MST, and we began to improve the schools. I constructed schools in all of the settlements....In one settlement I turned the old master house of the *fazenda* into a school. I always took the opportunity to build a school, even if there was not the proper structure.

[RS: *Did you take these actions because of the MST's political pressure?*]

No, it was not that, this was very much my choice.

MST activists told me, however, that schools were only built after people took to the streets and engaged in protest. Similarly, Burgwall found in his study of clientelism that politicians and settlers often disagree over the meaning of exchange: politicians will stress their goodwill, while the poor will try to highlight that it was the result of collective action.⁶⁰ Regardless of intentions coproduction was developing, as MST activists determined where schools should be built and mobilized community members to build these makeshift schools, while Leandro assumed these initiatives as municipal projects.

An additional struggle was convincing teachers to support the movement's educational proposals. Because teaching jobs are tenured, the MST could not simply request that MST activists replace the teachers in these schools. Instead, activists had to engage in a long-term process of persuading hundreds of teachers to become allies of the movement. Here is Josilena's personal experience as a municipal teacher in Santa Maria:

The opinion I had of the MST was a feeling of fear...but I was invited in 1997 to an MST encampment to teach...The people were collecting watermelons and I helped them. They welcomed me and said they wanted a professor like me in their school. They asked me not just to teach there, but to live there. I decided to move to the MST encampment. I went with my entire family.

Over time Josilena became a member of the MST education collective, attending dozens of MST teacher trainings and earning a bachelor degree in *Educação do Campo*.⁶¹ Josilena now participates in contentious actions, even though she is still a municipal teacher. She became a principal of a settlement school and has been a leader in changing its organizational structure.

Right before the 1999 mayoral election, cousins Leandro and Maria had a huge fight. Maria decided to join the Brazilian Sociality Party (PSB), along with her other cousin, Rogerio Junior, who ran against Leandro in the next election with Maria's support. Despite Leandro's relative openness to the MST in the educational sphere during his first term, the MST regional leadership decided to support Rogerio in this election, because of his new affiliation with the PSB (a left-leaning political party at the state level). After Rogerio took power in 2000, the MST was rewarded with much more freedom to participate in the coproduction of the eleven schools located on MST settlements. Rogerio even allowed MST leaders to choose the principals of their schools—from among his political supporters. In addition, MST activists were paid to run teacher trainings and implement other aspects of *Educação do Campo* in the schools, such as the organization of teacher collectives. These MST activists also implemented a participatory process in which community members, teachers, principals, and students rewrote each school's mission statement to align with the ideals of *Educação do*

Campo. Although there were deep partisan divides between parents, teachers, and principals—who were all part of either Rogerio’s or Leandro’s clientelist networks—activists helped schools and communities rise above these differences and participate in a collective process of defining educational goals.

In the 2005 mayoral election Leandro ran again and beat Rogerio, winning a second, nonconsecutive term. The MST education collective was worried, given their support for Rogerio in the previous election. However, to the movement’s surprise, Leandro did not end any of the MST’s educational initiatives, and instead wanted to expand the movement’s educational proposal. He explained to me that his four years out of office had allowed him to think, mature, and act more calmly. Even though Leandro had not received any electoral support from the MST, he did not want to antagonize the movement any further. He also realized that many of the families living in the settlements now supported the MST’s educational goals. Similarly to Rogerio, Leandro allowed the MST to choose the new principals of the schools in their settlements—as long as they were his political supporters. Luckily, many of the teachers working in these schools during the previous four years *were* Leandro’s supporters, since Rogerio had sent them there as punishment. However, these teachers were also new advocates of the MST’s educational proposal. Elizangela, a principal aligned with Leandro, explains:

I am no longer a professor who just comes, teaches, and leaves. I have a very strong connection to the MST. I see myself as a type of activist...I am in Leandro’s party, but today Leandro has a very strong connection with the MST as well, he lets teachers go to MST meetings and teacher training...I know I am in this position as a principal for a while, but this position is not mine. I was chosen because I am a professor and support Leandro, but also because I am linked to the MST. I wear an MST shirt.

When Elizangela first arrived to teach in an MST settlement she had no previous experience with the movement and was scared that activists would be unfriendly toward her. However, as she began attending MST teacher trainings and learned about the movement’s educational proposals, she became excited about working with the MST education collective. She now identifies as an MST activist, while still being Leandro’s political ally and confidant. She inhabits both a “clientelist habitus”⁶² and a “*sem-terra* habitus.”⁶³ Allowing for these multiple identities is critical; if the MST had tried to convince teachers to switch their political allegiances, the movement would have created enemies. Instead, activists defined the movement’s proposal as independent of party politics—an educational project concerned with quality schools—and therefore teachers on both sides of the political divide could identify with the MST’s goals.

Two years into Leandro’s second term, the MST leadership suggested the creation of an *Educação do Campo* department in the municipal secretary of education. Leandro agreed, but demanded that the department provide services to the entire municipality—sixty additional schools. In July of 2009 I attended the first municipal seminar on *Educação do Campo*, funded by Leandro’s government. All municipal teachers were

required to attend, and MST leaders from across the country came to lecture about capitalist exploitation, socialist alternatives, and the philosophical underpinnings of *Educação do Campo*. I asked Leandro why he funded these seminars, given the MST's Marxist perspective: "I think it is an evolution on our part. I do not agree with the Marxist line, the more radical line of seeing the world. But also, I cannot create an island when the settlements have a relationship with the MST. I did not want to create conflict."

Leandro was concerned about maintaining peace and equilibrium in the municipality. If letting the MST participate in the school system avoided conflict, he supported these initiatives.

In May of 2011 Jetro Gomes of the PSB, Maria Graciliano's brother, came to power after Leandro was removed from office for election fraud. Despite the MST's neutrality in the 2008 election, Jetro continued to advocate for the MST's coproduction of the public school system. I personally witnessed this process, as Jetro asked MST activists to choose new school principals, form teacher collectives, and organize more seminars on *Educação do Campo*.

The case of Santa Maria supports the argument that low state capacity is not always a barrier to coproduction, and in fact, can increase the attractiveness of these forms of state-society collaboration. Leandro, Rogerio, and Jetro were more willing to permit the MST's coproduction of the municipal schools, because they realized the movement had the organizational capacity to support the schools in ways the government often lacked. Additionally, activists' ability to mobilize community members, parents, and teachers in support of their educational project helped convince politicians about the merits of the movement's educational proposals. Thus, a clientelistic government orientation offers a unique opportunity for state-society coproduction, *if* the MST can maintain high levels of mobilization among civil society.

Água Preta: Civil Society Obstruction

Água Preta is located on the far eastern side of Pernambuco, a ten-hour bus ride from Santa Maria. A different world than the semi-arid *sertão*, Água Preta is in the heart of the sugar cane region, an extremely wet area with an intense history of forced and semi-forced labor. Although Água Preta is only a sixth of the geographical area of Santa Maria, their populations are similar in size, with Água Preta containing 33,095 residents. Água Preta is considerably more urbanized, with 43.7 percent of the population classified as rural.⁶⁴ There are also stark differences in the economic and agrarian histories of Santa Maria and Água Preta, which have affected the MST's different levels of mobilization in each region. The clientelist politics in these towns, however, are uncannily similar, with feuding mayors controlling hundreds of political appointments.

As I elaborate in my analysis of Santa Maria, in these clientelistic regions MST activists must learn to navigate the system, convincing politicians, teachers, principals, and community members on opposite sides of the political divide to support their educational goals. A clientelistic government orientation seems to facilitate this process, as politicians are not programmatically opposed to the MST's goals. In addition,

the constant circulation of political appointees prevents the development of high state capacity, and thus, increases the perceived benefit of the MST's participation in organizing the schools. However, as the comparison with Água Preta will illustrate, the MST's ability to sustain these relationships with state actors is dependent on the movement's level of mobilization among civil society.

The MST arrived in Água Preta at an economically opportune moment, in the early 1990s, when the failure of the sugar cane industry meant more openness toward land redistribution. Since those early years more than thirty agrarian reform settlements have been created in the municipality through land occupations organized by the MST and several other rural social movements. Politically, this was also a period of intense feuding between the historically powerful Magalhães and Cultinho families. Iudo Magalhães was the mayor of Água Preta from 1989 to 1992, at that time a member of the Democratic Workers Party (PDT), a party historically associated with the left-wing leader Leonel Brizola.⁶⁵ Unable to run for reelection in 1992, Iudo supported his nephew César Romero do Nascimento—who also ran as part of the PDT—in the election. César successfully beat their family's political rival, Eduardo Cultinho, the grandson of one of the largest landowners in the region. Although Eduardo's family was historically associated with the Brazilian military party, Eduardo ran as part of the PSB in 1992.

In 1996, Cesar stepped down so his uncle Iudo could run against Eduardo, in a bitter election that ended in Eduardo's victory and the PE state courts temporarily banishing Iudo from politics, due to accusations about his involvement in several rural assassinations. The Barreto family, which owned a few local businesses in Água Preta, supported their son—Paulo Barreto—in the next election in 2000, with Iudo's blessings. Paulo—running as part of the PMDB—lost to Eduardo in 2000, beat him four years later in 2004, and then lost again in 2008 while running as a member of the Republican Party (PR). Eduardo, still a member of the PSB, was recently elected for a fourth time in the 2012 mayoral election.

Despite these tense political divides between powerful families—whose political parties have ranged from the PDT to PSB to PMDB to PR—Iudo, Cesar, Paulo, and Eduardo all express similar feelings about their relationship to the MST. For example, Paulo Barreto said, "There are no conflicts between us...whenever MST local leaders came to ask for things we tried to attend to their needs, for example, offering them transportation for an event." Or, Iudo Magalhães told me, "The MST came to ask for transport and money sometimes, and I would help them...it was just to make them happy, to avoid conflict." Eduardo Cultinho said, "I have always had a good dialogue with the MST. Why shouldn't I support a meeting of MST youth? I attend to the needs of the Evangelical church, the local soccer team, a guy who wants to go to the beach, why not fund an MST gathering?" Although none of these politicians claimed to be ideological aligned with the movement, they have been willing to support many of the movement's monetary, political, and educational demands.

During the late-1990s and early 2000s local MST activists were able to convince the mayors of Água Preta to let the movement participate in the public school system. Activists were allowed to visit settlement schools, teach municipal teachers about

Educação do Campo, organize community-school gatherings, and even get time off for teachers to attend state-wide MST teacher trainings. Ines Senna, the municipal secretary of education under Paulo Barreto, described her experience: "I never had any contact with MST activists. I thought they were terrorists, ignorant, but after becoming secretary of education I began having contact with them and I changed. I thought they were marvelous...there was nothing they asked for that I did not give them." The activists who were involved in the MST education collective at this time described the situation slightly differently. For example, one activist said: "The secretaries of education do not fight with us: they pretended to be sympathizers, allowing teachers to go to our gatherings, but in private they told the teachers 'you do not have to go if you do not want to.'"

Despite these different perspectives, it is clear that the local MST education collective in Água Preta did have some degree of political opening to help coproduce the public school system.⁶⁶ The relationship between the MST regional leadership and the actual families living in agrarian reform settlements, however, took a very different trajectory than in Santa Maria. By the time I arrived in 2011 there were few MST activists present in the region, and most of the families in settlements no longer identified with the movement. As for the MST education collective, the two or three activists that still participated had difficulties visiting the settlement schools due to the long distances, a lack of transportation, and heavy rains that washed out the roads for several months each year. More significant forms of educational work, such as hosting community-school gatherings and supporting teachers on a daily basis, seemed impossible.

The critical difference between Santa Maria and Água Preta is not government orientation, but rather, the MST's level of mobilization in the agrarian reform settlements, as the following story illustrates. Elienai is a MST education activist in Água Preta who was hired as a municipal teacher in 2009. Because she is a well-known activist, the municipal secretary of education assigned her to a school in an agrarian reform settlement. Elienai, with permission from the municipal secretary of education, began to incorporate some of the MST's educational pedagogies into her classroom: forming student collectives, teaching the MST national anthem, and discussing the history of agrarian reform. After a few weeks, the parents began to criticize Elienai, and they denounced her to the secretary of education as teaching "the MST, and not education." One municipal education director also told this story:

When I went to Elienai's school the parents told me that she was teaching the *movimento*, and it was polemic. We had to meet with Elienai, and we had to tell her to follow the municipal educational proposal...for me Elienai was forming critical citizens that know their rights, but for [the parents], she was creating troublemakers.

This municipal bureaucrat claims to admire the MST's pedagogical proposals, but she is cautious about supporting these educational practices without parental support.

As the story exemplifies, there have always been opportunities for the MST to participate in the public school system in Água Preta. However, the movement has not

had enough regional strength to capitalize on these opportunities and form lasting relationships with the parents, teachers, and children living on the agrarian reform settlements. This is not a problem specific to the MST education sector; it is representative of a general disconnect between the MST leadership and the families living on settlements. Wolford⁶⁷ elaborates on the reasons for these difficulties in Água Preta—reasons that are connected to the dominance of sugar cane planting in the region and the fluctuating value of sugar over the past two decades. Despite the willingness of local government officials to work with MST activists, it was civil society itself—that is, the lack of significant MST mobilization among civil society groups in support of their educational project—that obstructed the MST's coproduction of the rural public school system.

Reviewing the Cases

In this article I analyze outcomes in MST-state coproduction in four public school systems, which are illustrated in Table 1. In the first case of São Paulo, almost two decades of a right-leaning government in power proves to be an insurmountable barrier to MST participation. Although the right-leaning government orientation in São Paulo has not prevented continually high levels of MST contestation and mobilization, it has prevented the crossing of the state-society divide, as MST activists have never become legitimate actors in the educational realm.

In stark contrast, in Rio Grande do Sul between 1999 and 2006, the MST was able to engage in very high levels of coproduction—organizing teacher trainings, developing pedagogical mission statements, taking school children on political marches. The MST's ability to cultivate this relationship with the state government is the result of two interacting factors: a left-leaning government that took power in 1999 and high levels of MST mobilization across the state. The participatory relationship that developed during this period continued into the following administration, as a legacy of the previous administration. However, when an openly right-leaning government took power in 2007, all schools located on MST camps were shut down, as well as hundreds of other rural schools. Educational practices were homogenized across the state, based on an urban centric curriculum. Although another left-leaning government eventually took power in 2011, by that time the MST itself faced a deep crisis in the state and no longer had the capacity to participate in a process of coproduction with the new government.

In the two cases of municipal school systems, local MST activists engaged with a very different "state" than the activists in São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul. The government orientation in both municipalities is clientelistic, and politicians came to power based on direct exchanges with citizens, not universal programs or ideological platforms. Clientelism has eroded state capacity in these regions, as bureaucracies are filled with political cronies and not skilled public officials. Nonetheless, in Santa Maria the clientelistic orientation of politicians allows the MST education collective to present itself as independent of partisan politics and elicit mass community and government support for the movement's educational project. Furthermore,

low state capacity increases the perceived benefits of MST participation in the municipal school system. Although these opportunities also exist in Água Preta, it is the MST's lack of mobilization itself that undermines coproduction. The families living in agrarian reform settlements—the majority of whom no longer feel an attachment or allegiance to the MST—want nothing to do with the movement's educational proposal.

The fifth case, Minas Gerais, offers an example of the final combination of factors possible in Table 1: a right-leaning government orientation and low levels of MST mobilization.⁶⁸ Similarly to São Paulo, in Minas Gerais the government orientation has been continuously right leaning for almost two decades, with the PSDB in power since 1995 except for one mandate from 1999 to 2003. Unlike São Paulo, however, MST activists in Minas Gerais have not been able to sustain high levels of movement mobilization throughout the state. For example, between 1988 and 2011 the MST organized only approximately one-third of the number of occupations that were organized in the state of São Paulo.⁶⁹ Consequently, the MST education collective in Minas Gerais is also relatively weak compared to the other states. Under these conditions of low MST mobilization and a right-leaning government, the movement has never been able to engage the state in a process of educational coproduction. This outcome is unsurprising given the other cases explored in this article.

Conclusions

The MST arrived on the Brazilian scene in the early 1980s, when the rural school system was marginalized and public school curriculum was determined by a middle-class orientation that assumed all school children needed to learn the same content. MST activists knew they were never going to live that white-collar, urban existence, and they fought against an education system they saw as devaluing their peasant traditions. Through decades of organizing, the movement has successfully brought *Educação do Campo* into the national consciousness. This educational proposal supports a curriculum that values rural life, teaches students about the history of agrarian reform, and emphasizes the importance of collective agricultural production. The proposal also entails a radical reconfiguration of the traditional hierarchy between communities, students, teachers, school principals, and state officials. The MST has had success supporting these educational ideas at the federal level. However, activists' ability to transform the K-12 rural public school system differs drastically across the country.

The MST's successful participation in the public school system in widely varying regions offers a theoretical entry point to analyze the relationship between coproduction, contestation, and diverse political practices such as left-wing governance and clientelism. Four central findings emerge from the case studies explored in this article. While some aspects of these findings support the conclusions of previous studies, others suggest significant revisions of current thinking regarding the conditions under which social movements may successfully engage the state in a process of participatory governance.

First, this research illustrates that although the MST is a controversial social movement fighting for an alternative hegemonic project—often in conflict with the state—activists are able to cultivate a participatory relationship with government actors in diverse political and economic contexts. This finding challenges the traditional dichotomy of social movements as either completely independent of the state, or incorporated and co-opted by the state.⁷⁰ In fact, recent MST studies have illustrated that complete autonomy from the state is a less effective strategy for winning movement demands.⁷¹ The cases explored in this article demonstrate that activists can be part of a process of coproduction while also maintaining their autonomy and continuing to engage in nonroutine politics against the same state that is allowing them to participate.

Second, these cases clearly exemplify that the “state” is not a unitary actor with monolithic interests. As Heller argues, “we must disaggregate the state, recognizing not only the multiple arenas of state-society interactions but also that state authority and state capacity are neither monolithic nor uniform, but rather uneven and contested.”⁷² Interactions between state and movement actors can change the “boundaries of the politically possible.”⁷³ The MST’s ability to coproduce the public school system varies across the country because activists are engaging state and municipal governments with distinct orientations, which affect the types of relationships that MST activists can cultivate.

Third, this research suggests that the MST itself is not a homogenous actor. Previous scholars have argued⁷⁴ that people embody multiple MST identities, which cause them to participate in the movement at certain points in time and distance themselves at other moments. As the municipal cases illustrate particularly well, MST identity has to be continually (re)produced through multiple forms of grassroots work with families living in areas of agrarian reform. MST activists have the opportunity to attend national conferences, regional seminars, and tertiary courses where they learn about the movement’s educational goals. Activists’ ability to put these national goals into practice, however, depends on the relationships they maintain with their local rural communities and their ability to mobilize different civil society groups at the local level to support their alternative educational proposals.

Fourth and finally, these cases complicate previous assumptions about the social and institutional requisites of coproduction, and more specifically, the role of government orientation and civil society mobilization in participatory processes. For example, clientelism is usually assumed to be antithetical to participatory governance, and in fact, scholars have described civil society participation as a transition away from clientelist forms of politics. To the contrary, I found that high levels of coproduction can develop in locations with clientelistic government orientations. Low state capacity—often a product of clientelistic politics—can facilitate this process by making the organizational strength of a social movement appear to be an asset to local government officials. Auyero and his coauthors also argue that there is often “relational support” between clientelism and collective action, so that either the breakdown of clientelism facilitates collective action or ties of patronage function as networks of mobilization.⁷⁵ However, in my research, clientelism never breaks down, nor do clientelist ties serve

as the “networks” of collective action. Rather, MST activists learn to navigate these relations, gradually convincing politicians, school principals, teachers, and community members—embedded in different and oppositional clientelist networks—to support the movement’s educational goals. This is especially significant in light of recent studies that have illustrated the difficulty in implementing top-down institutional reforms that create civil society participation.⁷⁶

Finally, although MST-state coproduction can develop in clientelistic contexts, the best recipe for crossing the state-society divide continues to be committed public officials and a mobilized civil society. In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, a left-leaning government in combination with high levels of MST mobilization produced some of the highest levels of coproduction in the country. High state capacity—a result of the government’s programmatic orientation—facilitated this coproduction as the government was able to create participatory institutions that allowed community members to debate, deliberate, and define new educational goals. This same high state capacity from 2007 to 2011, however, helped a right-leaning government to systematically shut down these participatory experiments, illustrating that high state capacity that is antagonistic negates the positive effects of mobilization. Therefore, although left-leaning governments with high state capacity and a mobilized civil society can produce coproduction, there is always the threat of a right-leaning government taking power and reversing this outcome. Thus, outcomes in MST-state coproduction are the result of a joint combination of government orientation and levels of MST mobilization.

As Dagnino writes, over the past two decades in Brazil there have been countless efforts to deepen democracy through institutionalized forms of participatory governance. She argues that, “As a result, the confrontational relations between the state and civil society have been largely replaced by an investment by social movements in the possibility of joint initiatives and in institutional participation in the newly created participatory spaces.”⁷⁷ Dagnino claims that this direct participation of civil society in state decision making has become one of the most crucial aspects of Brazilian citizenship. The MST has certainly followed this trend, attempting to create new institutions that allow activists to participate in real and meaningful ways in defining the organizational and curricular content of the public school system. As this article has shown, these forms of participation have not precluded continual contestation. The relationships that currently exist between MST activists and state actors had to be built, over time, and sustained through daily moments of collaboration along with protest. The potential that these state-society interactions hold for institutional transformation—and the unexpected conditions under which these relationships develop—remains an important topic to be explored.

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Notes

1. ProNoCampo (*Programa Nacional de Educação do Campo/National Program of Countryside Education*).
2. For more comprehensive analyses of the MST, see Wendy Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Gabriel Ondetti, *Land, Protest, and Politics: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for Agrarian Reform in Brazil* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); Angus Wright and Wendy Wolford, *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil* (Oakland, CA: Food First Books, 2003); Sue Branford and Jan Rocha, *Cutting the Wire: The Story of the Landless Movement in Brazil* (London: Latin America Bureau, 2002).
3. David Plank, *The Means of Our Salvation: Public Education in Brazil, 1930-1995* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 65.
4. *Ibid.*, 174-175.
5. This program was known as FUNDEF (Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Elementary Education and Valorization of Elementary School Teachers) until 2007, when it was expanded to include secondary education and renamed FUNDEB.
6. Fernando Reimers, "Educational Opportunity and Policy in Latin America," in F. Reimers, ed., *Unequal Schools, Unequal Chances* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Simon Schwartzman, "The Challenges of Education in Brazil," in C. Brock and S. Schwartzman, eds., *The Challenges of Education in Brazil* (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2004).
7. There are no comprehensive figures on the number of schools built in settlements other than those of the MST, which are based on reports from each regional educational collective: Movimento Sem Terra, "MST anos 1989-2009," (São Paulo: National MST Office, 2009).
8. To put these numbers in context, in 2012 there were 75,610 state and municipal schools in rural areas, serving 6.2 million rural students (out of 42.8 million): INEP (National Institute of Educational Studies and Research), "Sinopse Estatística da Educação Básica," updated October 3, 2012, <<http://portal.inep.gov.br/basica-censo-escolar-sinopse-sinopse/>>.
9. Here I am referring to Liberation Theology, a set of beliefs about social change dominant in the Catholic Church in Latin America throughout the 1970s and 1980s. See Phillip

- Berryman, *Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987).
10. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, [1970] 2002).
 11. Rebecca Tarlau, "Soviets in the Countryside: The MST's Remaking of Socialist Educational Pedagogies in Brazil," in *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty*, ed. Tom Griffiths and Zsuzsanna Millei (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012).
 12. Woford, *This Land Is Ours Now*, 20-21.
 13. *Ibid.*, 175.
 14. For the MST's own description of their educational proposal, see Movimento Sem Terra, "Princípios da educação no MST," *Caderno de Educação* 8 (1996).
 15. See, for example, Benjamin Goldfrank, *Deepening Local Democracy in Latin America: Participation, Decentralization and the Left* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Rebecca N. Abers and Margaret E. Keck, "Mobilizing the State: The Erratic Partner in Brazil's Participatory Water Policy," *Politics & Society* 37 (2009): 289-314; Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Patrick Heller, and Marcelo K. Silva, "Making Space for Civil Society: Institutional Reforms and Local Democracy in Brazil," *Social Forces* 86, no. 3 (2008): 911-936; Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret E. Keck, *Greening Brazil: Environmental Activism in State and Society* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Gianpaolo Baiocchi, *Militants and Citizens: The Politics of Participatory Democracy in Porto Alegre* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance* (New York: Verso, 2003); Peter Houtzager, "Collective Action and Patterns of Political Authority: Rural Workers, Church, and State in Brazil," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 1 (2001): 1-45; Rebecca Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy: Grassroots Politics in Brazil* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000); Patrick Heller, *The Labor of Development: Workers and the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Peter Evans, ed., *State-Society Synergy: Government and Social Capital in Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
 16. Michelle Williams, *The Roots of Participatory Democracy: Democratic Communists in South Africa and Kerala, India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
 17. Abers and Keck, "Mobilizing the State"; Hochstetler and Keck, *Greening Brazil*.
 18. Elinor Ostrom, "Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development," *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996): 1073-1087.
 19. Heller, *Labor of Development*.
 20. Cornwall and Coelho, *Spaces for Change?*
 21. Wang, "Mutual Empowerment of State and Society."
 22. Evans, *State Society Synergy*.
 23. Brian Wampler and Leonardo Avritzer, "Participator Publics: Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 3 (2004): 291-312.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. Houtzager, "Collective Action and Patterns of Political Authority"; Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy*.
 26. Goldfrank, *Deepening Local Democracy in Latin America*; Evans, *State Society Synergy*; Houtzager, "Collective Action and Patterns of Political Authority."
 27. Woford, *This Land Is Ours Now*, 10.

28. Cornwall and Coelho, *Spaces for Change?*; Baiocchi, *Militants and Citizens*; Heller, *Labor of Development*; Evans, *State Society Synergy*; Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy*.
29. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in P. Evans, D. Rueshemeyer, and T. Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
30. Heller, *Labor of Development*, "Social Capital as a Product of Class Mobilization."
31. Xu Wang, "Mutual Empowerment of State and Society: Its Nature, Conditions, Mechanisms, and Limits," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 2 (1999): 231-249.
32. Coelho, "Brazilian Health Councils."
33. Martin Shefter, "Party and Patronage: German, England, and Italy," *Politics & Society* 7 (1977): 403-451.
34. Clientelist politics as described as direct exchanges that are not programmatic in: Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, "Citizen-Politician Linkages: An Introduction," in H. Kitschelt and S. I. Wilkinson, eds., *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
35. Luis Roniger and Ayse Günes-Ayata, eds., *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994); Kitschelt and Wilkinson, "Citizen-Politician Linkages"; Tina Hilgers, "Clientelism and Conceptual Stretching: Differentiating among Concepts and among Analytical Levels," *Theory and Society* 40 (2011): 56-588.
36. Baiocchi et al., "Making Space for Civil Society"; Vera S. Coelho, "Brazilian Health Councils: Including the Excluded?" in A. Cornwall and V. Coelho, eds., *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Citizen Participation in New Democratic Arenas* (New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2007); Patrick Heller, "Social Capital as a Product of Class Mobilization and State Intervention: Industrial Workers in Kerala, India," *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996): 1055-1071; Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy*; Jonathan Fox, "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship"; Brian Wampler and Leonardo Avritzer, "Participator Publics: Civil Society and New Institutions in Democratic Brazil," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 3 (2004): 291-312.
37. In Pernambuco there are very few state schools located in rural areas, which means the majority of schools in MST settlements and camps are part of the municipal school systems.
38. The coding came from: Cesar Zucco, "The Political Economy of Ordinary Politics in Latin America," (PhD diss., UCLA, 2007). This coding of different government orientations is relative to each other, not based on the absolute spectrum of Brazilian politics.
39. Cornwall and Coelho, *Spaces for Change?*; Baiocchi, *Militants and Citizens*; Heller, *Labor of Development*; Evans, *State Society Synergy*; Wang, "Mutual Empowerment of State and Society"; Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy*.
40. Joshi and Moore, "Institutionalised Co-production." Note: Joshi and Moore argue that coproduction not only occurs where states are weak but is also more likely to occur in these contexts. This latter argument is not supported by the cases explored in this article.
41. Abers and Keck, "Mobilizing the State."
42. Wendy Wolford, "Participatory Democracy by Default: Land reform, Social Movements and the State in Brazil," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37, no. 1 (2010): 91-109.
43. IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), 2010 Census.
44. IBGE, "Contas Regionais do Brasil 2004-2008," Tabela 2.
45. The National School of Florestan Fernandes, created in 2005 in São Paulo, is the location of national MST meetings as well as an official educational institution with affiliated faculty.

46. NERA (Núcleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agrária), "Relatório Brasil 2011: Banco de Dados da Luta pela Terra." Universidade Estadual de São Paulo.
47. Although these numbers refer to land occupations organized by all Brazilian rural social movements, not just the MST, the MST is the organizer of approximately 60-70 percent of land occupations that take place. Therefore, this data is a good indicator of comparative levels of MST mobilization across the country.
48. All translations from Portuguese to English are my own.
49. Here I refer to the tertiary courses the MST develops through PRONERA.
50. IBGE, "Contas Regionais do Brasil."
51. IBGE, 2010 Census.
52. For an extensive discussion on the Itinerant Schools, see Isabel Camini, *Escola Itinerante: na Fronteira de uma Nova Escola* (São Paulo: Editora Expressão Popular, 2009).
53. Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., "State-Society Relations in Land Reform Implementation in the Philippines," *Development and Change* 32 (2001): 545-575; Jonathan Fox, *The Politics of Food in Mexico: State Power and Social Mobilizations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Jonathan Fox, "How Does Civil Society Thicken? The Political Construction of Social Capital in Rural Mexico" *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996).
54. The case of the PMDB in Rio Grande do Sul from 1996-1997 is not included in Table 1. This case suggests that with enough social pressure, even a right-wing government might make concessions and engage in coproduction. However, the case also indicates that if there is that much left social pressure, the right-leaning government might not hold power for long enough to see through the implementation of these concessions. Thus, in Rio Grande do Sul, the PMDB government conceded to creating the Itinerant Schools as a "pedagogical experiment," but it was the PT that took power less than two years later and fully implemented this educational proposal.
55. Benjamin Goldfrank, "The Left and Participatory Democracy," in S. Levitsky and K. M. Roberts, eds., *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 168.
56. These political debates caused huge divides in MST, culminating in thirty-four MST national leaders leaving the movement in November of 2011, sixteen of whom were from RS.
57. Pernambuco has the largest enrollment in the country for the adult education program *Projovem Campo: Saberes da Terra*.
58. IBGE, 2010 Census.
59. The PFL, founded in 1984, has a direct lineage from the military party during the dictatorship, ARENA. The PFL became the Democrats (DEM) in 2007.
60. Geritt Burgwall, *Struggle of the Poor: Neighborhood Organization and Clientelist Practice in a Quito Squatter Settlement* (Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research: 1995).
61. This was a course organized through the federal program PRONERA.
62. Roseanne Rutten, "Losing Face in Philippine Labor Confrontations: How Shame May Inhibit Worker Activism," in J. Lauren, M. Mahler, and J. Auyero, eds., *New Perspectives in Political Ethnography* (New York: Springer, 2007).
63. Kroger, "Promotion of Contentious Agency."
64. IBGE, 2010 Census.
65. Since 1992 Iudo Magalhães has changed parties several times, becoming part of the PFL and most recently the PR.
66. Although this period is not indicated in Table 1, it could be included in the same section of the table as Santa Maria da Boa Vista, indicating both a clientelistic government orientation

- and the high levels of mobilization that were once present in this municipality, under which coproduction developed.
67. Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now*.
 68. I did not conduct any primary research in Minas Gerais, but I gathered secondary information on the conditions present in this state, and outcomes in coproduction. I also spoke to several activists from Minas Gerais, at national MST conferences, throughout my field research.
 69. NERA, "Relatório Brasil 2011."
 70. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).
 71. Markus Kroger, "Promotion of Contentious Agency as a Rewarding Movement Strategy: Evidence from the MST-Paper Industry Conflicts in Brazil," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 2 (2011): 435-458.
 72. Heller, *Labor of Development*, 18.
 73. Fox, *Politics of Food in Mexico*, 2.
 74. Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now*.
 75. Javier Auyero, Pablo Lapegna, and Fernanda Page Poma, "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action: A Recursive Relationship," *Latin American Politics and Society* 51, no. 3 (2009): 1-31.
 76. Baiocchi et al., "Making Space for Civil Society."
 77. Evelina Dagnino, "Citizenship: A Perverse Confluence," *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4-5 (2007): 549-556, 550.

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