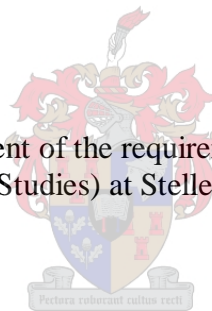# Mobilisation and the power of rural movements: A comparison of the South African National Land Committee with the Brazilian Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra

Regine Erika Koch

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (International Studies) at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Professor J. van der Westhuizen

March 2010

Declaration

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date………………．   Signature...................

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to the following people for their contribution and support during my research:

- o My supervisor, Professor Janis van der Westhuizen, for his continued guidance and encouragement throughout various stages of the thesis development.
- o My partner and friend Jason, for his patience, understanding and willingness to help.
- o My parents Andreas and Kerstin Koch, for their unconditional support and constant belief in me.

Obtained from www.lib.utexas.edu

Obtained from www.reliefweb.int

Table of Contents

Abbreviation and acronyms

AFRA	Association of Rural Advancement
ANC	African National Congress
CEB	Christian Ecclesiastical Base
CONTAG	Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura (National Confederation of Agricultural Workers)
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPT	Comissao Pastoral da Terra (Pastoral Commission on Land)
CUT	Central Única dos Trabalhadores (Unique Workers' Centre)
DLA	Department of Land Affairs (until 2009)
GEAR	Growth Employment and Reconstruction
GNU	Government of National Unity
INCRA	Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (National Institute for Colonisation and Land Reform)
LPM	Landless People's Movement
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development programme
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra (Landless Rural Workers' Movement)
NAFU	National African Farmers' Union
NLC	National Land Committee
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party)
PNRA	Plano Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Plan for Agrarian Reform)
PSDB	Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (Brazilian Social Democracy Party)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party)
RDI	Rural Development Initiative
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SLAG	Settlement Land Acquisition Grant
UDM	United Democratic Front
UDR	Uniao Democratica Rural (Rural Democratic Union)

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to explain the differing levels of rural activism in Brazil and South Africa. As both countries are plagued with similar land and poverty disparities, the varying intensity and national organisation of rural movements is striking. In Brazil a strong and nationally organised rural movement, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra* (MST), established itself as the leading rural movement; whereas South Africa's National Land Committee (NLC) remained weak and ultimately collapsed. Today, South Africa is characterised by a complete lack of a national representation of rural interests and shows only timid attempts at the local level. In order to address the issue systematically and comprehensively, the thesis first provides a historical outline of both countries, thereby discerning similarities and differences in social, economic and political development. Subsequently, and based upon these findings, a systematic comparison of the NLC and MST is conducted. Utilising contemporary social movement theory, a synthesised theoretical framework of political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing processes is proposed to methodically compare movement dynamics. Applying this synthesised framework the protest cycles of the NLC and the MST are compared, namely the emerging phase, the stabilisation and decline/resurgence phase.

The study points to a complex network of reasons for varying rural activism. In South Africa an overall demobilising constellation of important movement dynamics led to the collapse of the NLC and the weakening of the rural grassroots. Political opportunities changed from overly exclusive to overly inclusive in South Africa whereby the NLC's resource mobilisation became narrowly institutionalised; containing most oppositional forces at the national and local level. In Brazil, in contrast, political opportunities remained ambivalent throughout MST existence; thereby providing enough loopholes to achieve partial success and yet maintaining the critical distance and constraints which necessitates and legitimates grassroots mobilisation. In Brazil, land distribution has been singled out early as the prime source for deprivation and consequently served as a vantage point for framing processes which stimulated a coherent idea of landlessness and the legitimation of land occupations. The exclusive/inclusive dichotomy of the South African society with its strong racial overtones led to framing processes which interpret land reform as an exclusive state affair; thereby discouraging land occupations and merging land with the broad context of social injustice in South Africa. The thesis concludes that the historically constructed and contemporarily continued racial dichotomy of South Africa's society has ultimately hampered rural movement dynamics in South Africa.

Opsomming

Die doel van die tesis is om die verskille in aktivisme dinamiek van grondhervormingsbewegings in Suid-Afrika en Brasilië te verduidelik. Die verskillende in terme van nasionale organisasie en intensiteit is merkwaardig gegewe dat beide state gekenmerk word deur soortgelyke grond en armoede ongelykhede. In Brasilië is 'n sterk en nasionaal georganiseerde beweging, die *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais-Sem Terra* (MST) gevestig as die leidende grondhervormingsbeweging, terwyl Suid-Afrika se Nasionale Grond Komitee (*National Land Committee,* NLC) swak gebly het en eindelik as 'n beweging verval het. Suid-Afrika word vandag gekenmerk deur die afwesigheid van 'n nasionale artikulasie van die belange van grondloses met gebrekkige pogings om hul belange op plaaslike vlak te verteenwoordig. Ten einde die kwessie sistematies en omvattend aan te spreek, verskaf die tesis eerstens 'n historiese konteks van die politieke ekonomie van grond in beide state ten einde verskille en soortgelykhede uit te wys. Hierna word die MST en die NLC sistematies vergelyk. Deur gebruik te maak van kontemporêre sosiale bewegingsteorie word 'n gesintetiseerde teoretiese raamwerk – wat fokus op Politieke Geleenthede, Hulpbron Mobilisering en Orienteringsprosesse – voorgestel om metodologies die dinamiek van die bewegings te ontleed. Deur die gesintetiseerde raamwerk toe te pas, word die protes siklusse van die NLC en die MST vergelyk, naamlik die ontstaan fase, die stabiliseringsfase en die verval/herlewingsfase.

Die studie ontrafel 'n kompleks netwerk van redes vir gedifferensieerde grondaktivisme. In Suid-Afrika het 'n reeks demoboliserende faktore gelei tot die verval van die NLC en die verswakking van plattelandse organiasies op voetsoolvlak. Politieke geleenthede het verander van eksplisiet eksklusief na eksplisiet inklusiewe prosesse waardeur die NLC se basis vir hulpbron mobilisering baie nou geinstitusionaliseerd geword het en waardeur meeste aktiviste op nasionale en plaaslike vlak gekoopteer is. In Brasilië in teenstelling het politieke geleenthede tydens die MST se bestaan ambivalent gebly en as gevolg daarvan voldoende ruimte gebied om 'n kritieke afstand teenoor die staat in te neem. In Brasilië is grondhervorming reeds lank gelede geidentifiseer as die oorsaak vir ontneming en het gevolglik gedien as die basis vir mobilisering rondom grondbesit en die legitimering van onwettige grond okkupasie. Die eksklusief/inklusief dichotomie van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing met gepaardgaande ras-kompleksiteit het gelei tot prosesse waardeur grondhervorming as 'n ekslusiewe staats kwessie gesien is wat daardeur onwettige grond besettings verminder het en die debat rondom grondhervorming vetroebel het as net nog 'n geval van sosiale ongeregtigheid. Daar word tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat die historiese

konstruksie en voortgesette rasse konteks waarbinne grondhervoming in Suid-Afrika plaasvind, die moontlikheid vir 'n soortgelyke aktivistiese grondhervormingsbeweging soos in Brasilïe kniehalter.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research question

This study is guided by the question: ***why do two countries with similar rural disparities experience a very different outcome of rural activism*?** South Africa and Brazil are both known for their inequality in land distribution and its associated problems. Yet, both have shown completely different developments in terms of rural organisation; with the result that today there exists a strong nationally organised rural movement in Brazil lobbying for land reform and associated services, whereas South Africa is characterised by a complete lack of a national representation of rural interests and shows only timid local attempts to address land inequality.

In South Africa and Brazil, land distribution is a legacy of colonial practices and the present agricultural sector is characterised by a dual agrarian economy, with large commercialised holdings producing mainly export crops versus community or family farms working at the subsistence level on the margins of society. Land ownership in both countries remains highly distorted and is historically tied to power politics and violence. Brazil has an extremely concentrated landholding structure. According to the 2006 Agricultural Census, 0.91% of landowners have holdings large than 1 000 hectares and occupy 43% of the total farm land, while 84.4% who have less than 100 hectares occupy only 24.3% of the agricultural area in Brazil[1] (Globo, 2009; IBGE, 2006). In South Africa, land inequality has a strong racial background. Available figures that illustrate the racially skewed distribution of land go back to 1936, as land distribution between white and black South Africans was fixed and apparently not altered substantially until 1990. According to these figures, 600 000 white farmers occupied 87% of agricultural land in South Africa, which left black African people, who constitute the large majority of South Africa's population, with 13%.[2] Since 1994 there have been efforts to redistribute 30% to black African people; of which only 6.7% have been transferred so far (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, 2009: 1, Hall, 2009:4).

---

[1] In 1995, 1% of landholders held more than 1 000 ha and controlled 52.7% of the private land. Eighty-three per cent of landholders held less than 100 ha and controlled 11.3% of all agricultural land.
[2] There are national agricultural censuses of 2002 and 2006, yet none of them provide figures on farm size and ownership structure. They instead focus on income, debt and crop patterns.

The existence of these dual and highly skewed agricultural economies is regarded by many scholars and practitioners as one reason for South Africa's and Brazil's persistently stark economic inequalities despite their growing and increasingly advanced economies (Cliffe, 2009; Greenberg, 2009; Hall, 2009a; Pithouse, 2009). These relatively positive economic developments were based on rapid industrialisation, the inflow of foreign capital and the establishment of a strong export sector in the 20th century, and enabled South Africa and Brazil to assume leading positions on their respective continents, which also made them to important middle powers in world politics. The economic inequality has however remained characteristic for both countries despite recent positive changes. According to the 2009 UN Human Development Report, Brazil's Gini-coefficient[3] has decline slightly from 56.7 in 2005 to 55.0 in 2008. The Gini-coefficient for South Africa has declined from 65 in 2005 to 57.8 in 2008 (United Nations, 2009). The scale of the discrepancy also becomes evident when comparing the income or expenditure share of the richest 10% of the population to that of the poorest 10%. Brazil's richest 10% constitute 40% of Brazil's gross national product, while in South Africa it is 35.1%. In comparison, in India this percentage is 8.6 and in China 13.2 (United Nations, 2009).

The highly skewed agricultural sector is generally regarded as one hindrance to a more even development. It is argued that a productive and balanced agrarian sector in the long term will provide a springboard for rural populations to gradually integrate into the secondary and tertiary sector of an economy, while in times of recession it can to some degree absorb the surplus of labour and thereby avoid impoverishment (see for instance Bezemer & Heady, 2008; Lipton, 2005; Ravallion, 2009). It is generally acknowledged, however, that a country can grow and have a striving agricultural sector without the more even distribution of resources. Yet, equal human development in terms of the just distribution of income and equal chances to development requires attention to mechanisms that ensure durable resource distribution. Land constitutes such an economic resource that can empower people in the long term. Land reform, in terms of redistributing land, is therefore regarded as a mechanism to address poverty and inequality, in particular in countries with such persistent disparities as South Africa and Brazil.[4]

Both countries have implemented land reform, but, as seen above, without convincing success, leading to what scholars call the 'unresolved land question' (Greenberg, 2004; Hall,

---

[3] The Gini-coefficient measures the extent to which the distribution of income among individuals or households deviates from perfect equality. A value of 0 represents absolute equality; a value of 100 is absolute inequality. A Gini-coefficient above 50 is considered as 'unacceptably high' by the United Nations.

[4] The relationship between land distribution and economic and human development will be reviewed again in Section 1.2.

2009; Wolford, 2003). Consequently, in both countries land distribution remains factually acute amid a highly stratified society. Nevertheless, non-governmental activism, which raises awareness of this issue, remains highly unequal in South Africa and Brazil. South Africa did experience a period of moderate activism between 1985 and 2005, which was organised nationally and focused specifically on land reform and associated services. Throughout its existence, however, activism in South Africa remained very much detached from the grassroots. Presently, there is no national organisation in South Africa that focuses on land reform and rural issues. Activism is limited to local campaigns with very diverse agendas. In contrast, Brazil experienced the growth and consolidation of a large national grassroots organisation with a strong focus on land reform and presently widespread activism.

One might argue that over time the economic need for land has become less acute in South Africa, since more people are able to generate sufficient income in urban centres or in established rural businesses. This is however not the case. Rural poverty is more widespread in South Africa than in Brazil. According to 2003 data of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 41% of the rural population in Brazil live below the national poverty line, which constitutes a decrease of 10.4% since 1998 (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2009). In South Africa, 65% of the rural population still lived below the national poverty line in 2004 (Machete, 2004). Overall, Brazil has made much better advances in poverty reduction than South Africa. In Brazil, 12.7% of the population lives below two dollars a day; in South Africa, this percentage is 42.9 (United Nations, 2009). Furthermore, the Human Development Index[5] (HDI) indicates that South Africa falls behind Brazil in terms of overall human development. The HDI for Brazil increased from 0.694 in 1985 to 0.813 in 2007. In South Africa it remained somewhat stagnant with 0.680 in 1985 and 0.683 in 2007 (United Nations, 2009). Furthermore, urban-rural population distribution would in fact favour rural activism in South Africa, as its rural population still accounts for 42% of the total population (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2006). In contrast, Brazil's rural population has diminished sharply to only 16% (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2006). This disparity becomes even more evident when looking at the economically active population in agriculture. While in South Africa, 42% live in rural areas, only 8% are active in the agricultural sector, whereas in Brazil, 15% are economically active in agriculture (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2006). Accordingly, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa has placed rural unemployment between 40 and 50% in 2005

---

[5] The HDI is a composite index measuring average achievements in three basic human achievements – a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. With 0.971, Norway maintains the highest rank.

(Human Sciences Research Council, 2005). This translates into a relative larger amount of rural surplus labour in South Africa than in Brazil.

While figures can never provide a full picture, one can reasonable deduce from these statistics that from an economic need perspective, land activism should be lower in Brazil than in South Africa, as Brazil has been relatively more successful in absorbing labour from its countryside and in improving its overall as well as rural poverty rate. Having concluded that land inequality remains an issue in both countries and that rural South Africans are even much stronger affected by it since their economy cannot sufficiently provide for non-agricultural income opportunities, rural activism should theoretically be higher in South Africa as the associated grievances are stronger. Yet, the fact remains that rural activism is much more prevalent and active in Brazil than in South Africa. Based on these considerations, one can conclude that activism does not necessarily depend on grievances, but on other dynamics that cause activism to emerge, to organise and to sustain. Accordingly, this study aims to explore this question of differing rural activism in South Africa and Brazil by looking at other influential dynamics of rural activism.

1.2 Rationale of study

1.2.1 Land reform and rural movements

The important role of agriculture in human development and overall economic growth is a generally acknowledged fact today. There is a truly substantial body of academic work on economic theory, economic history and contemporary empirical analysis that strongly supports this claim. Dorner (1972) and Ghimire (2001) have, for instance, shown that agriculture is a relatively labour-intensive source of employment and therefore creates additional employment with low entry barriers. A growing agriculture sector provides cheap food,[6] raw material and demand for non-agriculture goods and rural infrastructure, triggering the growth of rural non-agricultural businesses that can gradually absorb rural surplus labour. This gradual spiral facilitates overall economic growth and poverty reduction in the long term. In terms of economic history, Adelman and Morris (1988) have put forward an argument that those Western countries that experienced strong agricultural performance in the 19th century subsequently developed most rapidly. The more recent experiences in Taiwan, South Korea and China also point to the importance of pre- or concurrent agricultural development for

---

[6] It needs to be noted however that there is a tradeoff. If food prices stay too low, disposable income of the rural population and thereby their demand for non-agrarian goods is negatively affected.

their industrialisation (Laffont & Qian, 1999). Contemporary empirical analyses have attempted to measure the multiplier effect[7] of the agricultural sector. Bezemer and Heady (2008:1345) conducted an extensive literature review on cross-country comparisons of multiplier effects and state that all studies find that "agricultural gains have the strongest linkage of all sectors to growth in other sectors and to aggregate growth". Due to agriculture's important external effects, discussed above, its contribution to growth and poverty alleviation is significantly larger than its mere gross domestic product share would suggest.

Yet, this positive contribution of agriculture to poverty alleviation is conditional on distributional patterns. There are numerous contributions of scholars and practitioners that show that an egalitarian land distribution favours a pro-poor development path in a multitude of ways. Wegenast (2009) has shown in a study on Brazil that states characterised by a more egalitarian land distribution and less dominance of powerful landlords exhibit better educational coverage. According to Lipton (2005), productivity growth on small family farms is particularly pro-poor due to their lower labour-related transaction costs and more family workers per hectare. For developing countries with a general low capital per unskilled worker, this represents opportunities to gradually (and cheaply) integrate large amounts of people into the economy. Other scholars point to small farmers as the key to regional food security. Most basic food crops are grown by small farmers, often in polycultures, which reduces the need for pesticides and makes more efficient use of water, light and nutrients (Altieri, 1999a). Deininger (1999) and Altieri (1999) further argue that small farms are effectively more productive than large farms. "By managing fewer resources more intensively, small farmers are able to make more profit per unit of output, and thus make more total profit – even if production of each commodity is less" (Altieri, 1999:n.p.). In Brazil, 4.4 million establishments are described as family farms in 2006. They account for 84.4% of all farms and occupy only 24.3% of the agricultural area. However, they were responsible for producing 70% of beans consumed in the country, 87% of cassava, 58% of milk, 46% of corn, and 34% of coffee and rice in 2006 (Globo, 2009; IBGE, 2006). This makes small family farms in Brazil the most productive agricultural entity in Brazil and key players in regional food security.

In order for family farms to substantially contribute to poverty reduction and food security, Lipton (2005:viiii) stresses the importance of eliminating binding land and water constraints in the agrarian sector. Rural poverty alleviation "depends on availability, quality,

---

[7] The multiplier effect gauges the impact of a sector's growth rate on other sector's growth rates, or each sector's growth contribution to the total growth rate.

and distribution of farmland (and water)". This land/water distribution precondition for family farming is largely violated in Latin America and Southern Africa, where large parts of farmland and agricultural growth are not in labour-intensive smallholdings. Land reform consequently remains urgent as a growth-enhancing and poverty-reducing long-term measure (Lipton, 2005).

Redistributive land-reform approaches found in the world can be imperfectly summarised in two kinds: state-led and market-led agrarian reform (often referred to as MLAR). MLAR attempts to create or maintain private property rights for the purpose of establishing a rural market. The transfer of land is based on the willing buyer–willing seller principle, where seller and buyer agree on a price determined by demand and supply of land. Therefore, MLAR inherently follows free-market principles and represented the development policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank during the 1990s. In order to assist poor buyers to acquire land, the state as well as the financial sector is asked to provide credit options and post-settlement assistance (Deininger, 1999; Wolford, 2007). State-led land reform, on the other hand, is conceived and implemented by a national government through bureaucratic top-down modalities. Depending on the political and legal system, state-led agrarian reforms can range from forceful expropriations without compensation to state purchases of freely available land at market prices (Sikor & Mueller, 2009; Wolford, 2007).

The effectiveness of the two approaches in transforming land patterns is still a source of much discussion in the scholarly community. Market-led approaches are accused of being too expensive, despite state assistance, for the rural poor and of facilitating indebtedness. Furthermore, critics note that the market mechanism does not utilise the poverty-reduction function of land reform, as it inherently favours 'economically viable' beneficiaries (Greenberg, 2004). Market-oriented land reform is also prone to price fluctuations and may come to a complete standstill if property prices are sky-rocketing (Sauer, 2006, Wolford, 2007). State-led land reform, on the other hand, is described as an inflexible and overly bureaucratic top-down affair (Pereira, 2007). Consequently, they do not find support from the relevant local actors and cannot sufficiently provide for varying meanings of land and socio-economic contexts (Sikor & Mueller, 2009).

Notwithstanding the limits of the land-reform approaches described above, it is generally acknowledged in the academic and practitioner community that to stimulate and direct land reform towards establishing a prosperous smallholder sector amid commercialised agriculture, an organised and eloquent voice of the landless and poor ought to be present. If land reform, whether market- or state-led, is to venture beyond modernising agriculture and address rural

poverty as a long-term target, constant input from the rural population is required (Hall, 2009a; Lahiff, 2008; Weideman, 2004). Lahiff, for instance, argues with reference to South Africa that without popular participation in the land-reform process, the selection process of beneficiaries is distorted and therefore largely ineffective in establishing successful farmer communities. Furthermore, Wolford (2003) points out that credit, infrastructure assistance and other kinds of settlement support are designed and allocated more efficiently when rural organisations actively participate. In terms of post-settlement assistance, rural organisations can also play a very important part in training settlers. This important role in land reform has been taken over by the MST in Brazil, for instance (Wolford, 2003). As this requires close contact with beneficiaries, regular feedback on progress or failures is established, which may lead to progressively better adjustments in land policy and local livelihood strategies (Sikor & Mueller, 2009).

Malawi is cited as a successful community-based land-reform project, where the early involvement of communities in designing and implementing the reform resulted in a striving smallholder sector that turned the country from a maize importer to a maize exporter (Kanyongolo, 2005; Lahiff, 2008). The case of the Philippines also illustrates the impact of nationally organised peasant movements, which, despite powerful landholding elites, pressured the government to redistribute 80% of the agricultural land to the landless (Feranil, 2005).

Despite the above-mentioned positive contributions of rural activism, a word of caution is required. One cannot argue that rural activism automatically leads to successful land reform. Examples such as Zimbabwe, where productive farms were invaded, causing widespread famine and violence, illustrate the absolute opposite effect. Brazil also shows that the existence of a highly organised rural movement does not necessarily lead to extensive and rapid changes in land distribution, but nevertheless has contributed to reviving and directing land reform in a pro-poor direction, as is outlined below. Instead of seeing rural activism as the ultimate condition for a 'good' land reform, the argument of this section is that rural activism is only one important component of land reform, in particular with reference to equity concerns. Many other dimensions play a part and may, despite rural activism, cause land reform to fail.

1.2.2 Land-reform policies in South Africa and Brazil

South Africa's and Brazil's land-reform policies include elements of state-led and market-led land reform, yet the weighting of the respective policies is different in the two countries. South Africa's democratic government in 1994 opted for a three-pronged land-reform policy, which includes a tenure reform programme, land restitution and land redistribution. Only the last two forms represent an actual change of land-ownership structures. Land restitution involves the transfer of land dispossessed by the apartheid regime after 1913 or the equivalent cash payment to the previous owners. This process is largely state-led, as the South African government buys land at market prices through the Land Claims Commission. However, equity share arrangements have also been established, where the owners continue their respective businesses and the claimant(s) obtains profits shares and a voice in management affairs (Greenberg, 2009a). While initially relatively successful, recent restitution claims are stagnating due to very high property prices and controversial claims including business districts and mining areas.

Land redistribution follows market rules, as it is fully based on the willing seller–willing buyer principle. The government assists the landless through acquisition grants. The Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) provided a once-off payment of R16 000 per household for purchasing land from a 'willing seller'. The relative low grant resulted in large groups (up to 500 households) buying farms that were far too small to support all of the beneficiaries as full-time farmers, which led to a very high failure rate (Hall, 2004:215) From 2000 onwards, this grant was replaced by the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development programme (LRAD), which requires an individual contribution and targets qualified farmers (Weideman, 2004:220). Land redistribution in South Africa has therefore taken the form of supporting black commercialised farming enterprises. Of the 6.7% of agricultural land transferred in South Africa, 46% was transferred through the restitution programme and 54% through redistribution. Hence, state-led and market-led land-reform policies assume approximate equal weights.

Brazil's land-reform policy shows a different picture. The first component of Brazil's land-reform policy is the market-led initiative, introduced during President Cardoso's years (1995–2002) in cooperation with the IMF. Called *cedula* or land credit, it provided credit to landless families and poor smallholders prepared to form associations and buy property collectively, specifically for the north-eastern region (Sauer, 2006:180). Later on, a nationwide Land Bank was established to expand the project. *Cedula* was stopped temporarily during the reign of President Lula da Silva, but in 2004 it was reintroduced as the National

Programme of Land Credit. In Brazil the dominant form of transferring land follows the state-led approach based on expropriations. Eighty-five per cent of land transfers in Brazil take place through expropriations (Navarro, 2009:8). Large private farms, called *latifúndios*, need to meet certain productivity criteria in order to fulfil their legally required social function. If they fail to do so, they become targets for expropriation. Expropriations are solely carried out by the National Institute for Colonisation and Land Reform (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária [INCRA]). Landowners are compensated with cash or public bonds at market prices, which may only fully be redeemed in 20 years (Navarro, 2009:3). Beneficiaries generally also receive post-settlement grants for seed, housing and equipment.

It is interesting to note that a study conducted in 2004 found that 86% of land beneficiaries initiated the expropriation process through movement activity (Leite, Heredia, Medeiros & Palmeira, 2006). Rural activism plays a fundamental role in regularly reviving Brazil's state-led land-reform process and in directing it to pro-poor initiatives, as historically, INCRA has been extremely slow and corrupt in its duties and the landowning elite frequently blocks reform projects. It is a general acknowledged fact that in Brazil "very little land redistribution would have been accomplished in the absence of substantial mass protest" (Ondetti, 2008:229). It has even been argued the market-led land reform was implemented "in order to introduce a market mechanism that could compete with the MST for the support of landless rural workers, and thus reduce the political pressure caused by land occupations and the political ascension of the MST" (Pereira, 2007:7).

As stated in Section 1.2, official figures show that land distribution in Brazil has not changed substantially since 1995, despite a reported total of 60 689 941 hectares of transferred land through land reform, which represents roughly 16.2% of Brazil's arable land[8] (Ondetti, 2008:229). Ondetti (2008:229) argues, however, that in the Latin American context with a history of violent undemocratic land reforms, which have also partially been rolled back, Brazil's democratic and ongoing land reform must nevertheless be considered a "significant political achievement". Notwithstanding the scanty redistributive results, the MST has not only kept a democratic process of land reform alive by repeatedly bringing it back on the political agenda, it also directed land reform on a pro-poor path.

The MST has succeeded in actively providing and stimulating extensive post-settlement service to land beneficiaries (Ondetti, 2008; Rosset, 2001). Thereby they fill a gap, which is

---

[8] Pacheco (2009) notes that is difficult to assess the impact of land reform on land distribution in Brazil since there is no detailed information available on how much public land in relation to private land was in fact transferred, in particular with reference to the Amazon frontiers, which have historically served as a source of 'free' land.

considered a major issue in contemporary land reform, as is the case in South Africa, where the failure to provide infrastructure, market access and agricultural training to beneficiaries has resulted in a 50% failure rate of land-reform projects (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2008; State bungling threatens to turn land reform into a national crisis, 2008). Furthermore, the MST has substantially contributed to the establishment of a nation-wide family-based agriculture sector which, as stated before, contributes considerably to Brazil's regional food security (Navarro, 2009:7). In some cases, villages have developed into small commercial and service-providing centres, attracting other people and businesses (Leite et al., 2006). The 2004 study shows that land-reform settlements provide an important source of rural employment, with 79% only working on the plot and 11% on the plot and elsewhere (Leite et al., 2006).

The MST has been crucial in maintaining state-support in the form of credit programmes, and technical assistance to the rural poor (Wright & Wolford, 2003). The 2004 study has shown that 81% of settler families benefited from development credit, 72% from housing credit and 75% from food credit (Leite et al., 2006). South Africa's land reform, on the other hand, has overly focused on commercially viable farmers and approximately 200 000 small- and medium-scale producers in South Africa have "attracted the least agricultural (and infrastructural) support and investment" (Hall, 2009a:3). In terms of income, most settlers are still considered poor in Brazilian standards. Yet, when asked to assess the change in their overall living conditions, 91% stated that they are substantially better off than they were before being settled (Leite et al., 2006). Despite still belonging to the poorest of Brazil's population in terms of income, evidence suggests that land beneficiaries are eating better, have better housing and schools and have attained a level of security – very important preconditions for future human development.

Compared to South Africa's land reform, Brazil's land reform has maintained a pro-poor outlook by being substantially more effective in settling people on small-scale family farms and providing them with post-settlement assistance (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2009). One can reasonably argue that the MST's influential activism has contributed to Brazil's increased overall human development, as reported in Section 1.1. The lack of an organised and influential rural voice in South Africa has in this regard been raised by scholars as one reason for land reform deviating from its pro-poor function as well as for losing its political urgency in South Africa (Cliffe, 2009; Greenberg, 2009a; Hall, 2009; Lahiff, 2008). Why rural mobilisation has, despite obvious grievances and delivery stagnation, remained weak and eventually collapsed in South Africa will be the focus of chapters 3 and 4.

1.3 Research methodology

Based on the issues raised in section 1.1 one can conclude that activism does not necessarily depend on grievances, but on other dynamics which cause activism to emerge, to organise and to sustain. Scholars have in this regard pointed to the important role of history in shaping the context within which activism takes place (McAdam, 1996:xiii). Thus a *historical study* provides insights into the trajectories of rural activism. In particular, the analysis of protest cycles of rural activism, namely emergence, growth and decline, allow tracing processes and changes over time. The histories of Brazil and South are without a doubt different and therefore provided different environments for activism to flourish. Yet, this conclusion remains too broad and therefore unsatisfactory for social scientists wishing to detect more or less specific similarities and differences between countries that may explain different trajectories for activism despite similar grievances. Charles Tilly (1984) has in this regard brought some theoretical rigor to the scholarly community wishing to compare social phenomena such as activism across countries and across time. When comparing large structures and huge processes, Tilly states that a fruitful comparison is a "generalised comparison" where one "[establishes] a principle of variation in the character or intensity of a phenomenon by examining systematic differences among instances" (1984:93).

Since I wish to explore the variation in character and intensity of rural activism in South Africa and Brazil, I have followed a *generalised comparison by examining systematic differences between instances in South Africa and Brazil*. In this regard, I have selected a specific instance or case of rural activism, namely rural movements. There are very different understandings of what a movement characterises. Some scholars draw a strict distinction between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grassroots groups, arguing that NGOs are completely different expressions of activism due to their hierarchical structures and tactical professionalism (Nauta, 2004; Petras, 2001). Grassroots groups, it is argued, rely more on spontaneous activism, are detached from governmental structures and therefore more radical in their tactics. While acknowledging these differences in movements in the analysis, this study does not categorise movements from the outset but rather adapts the perspectives of Tarrow (1998) and McAdam (1996). They argue that in order to compare movements across countries and across time, scholars should view movement form as a variable. Therefore, they array movements along a continuum from the narrowest institutionalised groups on the one pole to revolutionising efforts on the other. This perspective facilitates an analysis that views movement character and intensity as responding to differences "in the nature of opportunities that set movements in motion" (McAdam, 1996:29). Their definition of movements is

therefore broad and focuses on the interactive as well as cooperative element of movements. They describe movements as "[c]ollective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponent and authorities" (Tarrow, 1998:4).

Employing this definition of movements, I selected two specific movements: for South Africa the National Land Committee (NLC) and for Brazil the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra* (MST). Both movements have the broad characteristics outlined above. The NLC emerged during the democratic opening of South Africa in 1985 and was based on the common purpose of lobbying for land reform and rural advancement in South Africa. It was a union of separate land movements that collaborated on a national level and interacted extensively with elites and authorities. In 2005 the NLC was dissolved, leaving no nationally organised successor movement behind. The MST emerged during Brazil's turn to democracy in 1985. Its struggle is based on the common purpose of land reform and post-settlement assistance. Its nucleus can be found in grassroots groupings of the landless organising their protest in nationwide camps and strike actions. In this way they interacted in a multitude of ways with opponents, elites and authorities.

In my effort to conduct a generalised comparison of these two case studies of rural movements in South Africa and Brazil, I needed to examine differences in a systematic way. This meant to identify generalised triggers of movement activity other than grievances and to contrast them in both countries in a methodical way. For this aim, it was useful to turn to exiting knowledge on social movement theory, which suggests a variety of generalised triggers for movement activity. In Section 1.5 of this introductory chapter I provide a detailed literature outline of this existing theory, evaluate it according to its applicability and arrive at a synthesised approach, which will structure and direct the study on the NLC and MST in the subsequent chapters 3 and 4. Applying the synthesised theoretical framework, the study will utilise qualitative and occasionally statistical data in order to present the empirical cases. A substantial amount of scholarly work of secondary literature has been reviewed. Additionally, annual reports and newsletters of the NLC and to a lesser degree of the MST were used as primary literature sources. Also information obtained from personal email communications with Stephen Greenberg a former NLC activists augmented the study.

The entire study is essentially a *cross-national comparison of rural movement history* between South Africa and Brazil, with particular methical emphasis on two specific movements. It is therefore a very extensive analysis, as comprehensiveness and method is required to minimise bias and to successfully extract some insights into rural mobilisation in general.

1.4 Perspectives on social movements: A literature review

How can one examine differences systematically in order to explain variations of social movements and, in this regard, rural movements? In order to approach this question, the more elementary question of why movements emerge in the first place needs to be addressed. This can provide insights into the constellation of dynamics that motivate people to engage in collective actions. The unpacking of this constellation of dynamics has been a subject of interest for many sociologists and economic and political scientists, as it is a social phenomenon that essentially impacts on all areas of life. For the same reason, social movement theory is enormously complex and diverse, appearing rather as a puzzle than a coherent theory. Attempts to identify and categorise dynamics or mechanisms of social movements have given rise to numerous controversies about the appropriate paradigm. In view of the complexity of the subject, it is understandable and one might deduce from it that it is unreasonable to make such an attempt at all. Consequently, one could argue for a mere focus on specific cases of social/rural movements, explaining their origin, development and outcome within their particular system. Yet, the very essence of social science is to detect mechanisms of social change that apply broadly to different areas of society and therefore can be used to judge or even predict social evolution. The advancement of social theory depends ultimately on our ability to identify such mechanisms without daring to declare them a complete theory. The development of theories that are generalisable, but acknowledge their limits and thereby leave space for further theorising, is one of the goals of science after all. In line with this argument, Campbell reasons "[a]lthough no social mechanism is likely to operate in every situation, some mechanism may operate in several situations, so their specification enable us to generalise beyond atheoretical descriptions of a single case but without necessarily making claims about universal laws" (Campbell, 2005:43).

1.4.1 Grievance perspective

Scholars have suggested several general mechanisms that led to the emergence of social movements. One of the earliest was the grievance perspective, which explains the rise of discontent due to the collective deprivation of goods or resources. This perspective emerged largely in response to the experiences of industrialisation and proletarisation in the 19th century. Marxism views workers' protest mainly, but not exclusively, in this perspective. The increasing exploitation of workers and the underlining class structures were seen as reasons for the emergence of organised social struggles. Yet, although Marx and Engels rightly saw

the social structure as the root of the problem, they underestimated the importance of resources needed to engage in collective action as well as the unifying frame that pools people's energies (Tarrow, 1998:11). Post-World War II social movement theory, often referred to as 'collective behaviour theory', also tended to view protest actions as responding to 'structural strain' (Smelser, 1962) and feelings of frustration and anger due to socio-economic isolation (Kornhauser, 1959). Likewise, the 'relative deprivation theory' developed in the 1960s and 1970s emphasises feelings of grievances; yet it also points to the importance of the difference between expectations and actual treatment of people. Relative deprivation theorists argue that people feel deprived when they do not receive the treatment or rewards they merit compared to other sections of the population (Gurr, 1970). This theory developed amid the American civil-rights movement, which fought against the racial discrimination of African Americans in the USA. In South Africa, the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime gave impetus to this movement theory.

The grievance perspective has also been central to the study of rural movements. With the rise of industrialisation in developing countries such as Latin America and Africa, studies on rural activism have been inspired by Marx's ideas of increasing peasant proletarisation and exploitation by land owners and industrialists. Wolf (1969) and Scott (1976), for instance, have explained peasant activism in general terms as a response to the commercialisation of agriculture, which disrupts the traditional ways of subsistence agriculture and local social hierarchy. Tilly (1964) and Migdal (1974) have also argued that peasant discontent may also grow due to penetration of the state into former isolated areas and may subsequently introduce new regulations such as taxation. At this point it needs to be noted that only a few scholars, writing in the tradition of grievance theory, referred to the actual reasons that sparked protest, as most studies were concerned with the long-term analysis of shifting rural situations fuelling discontent. Scott (1976), for instance, attributed peasant revolts not only to underlining social changes, but to the short-term breakout of famines. Likewise, the emergence of the Shining Path guerrilla movement was due to an immediate food crisis in Peru, as has been argued by McClintock (2001). While these explanations of long-term as well as acute pressure appear logical as one reason for collective action, they can neither suffice as a generalised condition for the emergence of movements, nor account for movements' different growth trajectories. As people feel deprived in one way or another at many moments and in many locations, grievance theory has difficulties explaining why some of these people form movements and others do not. In addition, grievance theory traces different growth trajectories of movements primarily to the varying impact of grievances on people. Yet, South Africa's and Brazil's

situations illustrates that rural activism can differ substantially despite grievances, in this case unequal land distribution being similar and rural poverty being relatively worse in South Africa compared to Brazil.

1.4.2 Resource-mobilisation theory

In response to these conceptual dilemmas, a second influential theoretical perspective emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, which focused mainly on the capacity of groups to organise social struggles. The central idea of the resource-mobilisation theory is that the ability to organise and maintain collective action is facilitated by the presence of certain social structures and resources (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). Scholars of this school distanced themselves from the idea that grievance is the only variable in explaining movement activity. By analysing the means available to actors, they shifted the scholarly attention from why movements emerge to how they accomplish it. McCarthy and Zald (1977) pioneered research into the 'professionalisation' of collective action by demonstrating how movements can organise and expand their activities through external financial resources and skills as well as increasing formalisation of their protest actions. In essence, their theory did not specifically address the emergence of movements, but mapped a new social movement form – the professional social movements – which particularly became active in America during the 1970s and 1980s.

In contrast, McAdam (1982) emphasises the importance of pre-existing grassroots structures in facilitating movement organisation. Small-group associations such as churches, clubs, neighbourhood associations and tribal groups can create incentives to participate in movements. McAdam (1982) reasons that established social networks can facilitate a group consciousness through 'cognitive liberation' that attributes present grievances to the broad social order and thereby strategically directs micro-mobilisation. Furthermore, social networks can contribute with existing skills, a membership base and leadership experience. In this regard, existing organisational structures can be critical in explaining why some groups mobilise and others do not. There are numerous studies demonstrating this often crucial relationship. Houtzager (2001), for instance, has shown how the Catholic Church, through its local mission stations, was very influential in organising rural workers in Brazil before and during the years of military dictatorship.

It has been argued by scholars that in the absence of non-peasant activists such as middle-class intellectuals or party activists, spontaneous rural uprisings are unlikely to be sustainable,

in particular if the movement's base is constituted by poor, uneducated individuals (Huizer, 1972). For example, Bundy (1987), in his study on rural uprisings in South Africa during the 1920s, attributes their weakness to a lack of support by intellectuals of the liberation movements, as their focus was on urban centres and the struggle for civil rights. However, scholars have also pointed out that the influx of intellectuals' skill and finances can lead to an increased institutionalisation of the movement, which might be detrimental to its success (Piven & Cloward, 1977). Nauta (2004) has shown in a detailed account of a small rural organisation in South Africa, the Monti Rural Association, how the increased incorporation of donors, party officials and legislators caused the organisation to lose touch with its local community and hence became dysfunctional.

In this regard, movement analysts have argued that the choice of organisational structure is critical for the long-term prospects of the movement. However, there is no agreement on whether centralised formal structures or decentralised grassroots organisations are more efficient. Tarrow puts forward an argument that "the most effective forms of organisation are based on partly autonomous and contextually rooted local units linked by connective structures, and coordinated by formal organisations" (Tarrow, 1998:124). Tarrow and his colleagues also stress in this respect the importance of tactical repertoires (McAdam, 1982; McCarthy, 1996; Tarrow, 1998). Tactical repertoires are in essence the modes of operation employed by the movement to attain its goals. Rucht (1996) has argued that different organisational structures rely on different modes of operation, claiming that grassroots organisations more frequently refer to disruptive measures, while formalised movements rely on conventional tactics and alliances with politicians. Yet, Rucht also points out that "movements tend to provide ample space to the mushrooming of different structures, ongoing organisational experiments, and flexible forms of cooperation" (Rucht, 1996:185–186). A number of scholars have argued that relative disruptive tactics are more likely to gain adherents and force authorities to cooperate. Conventional tactics, on the other hand, can easily be ignored by authorities (McAdam, 1982; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Tarrow, 1998). However, McAdam also argued that too violent actions may alienate supporters, divide the movement and unite the opposition to resort to more repressive measures. McAdam therefore advises that movements must "chart a course that avoids crippling repression on the one hand and tactical impotency on the other. Staking out this middle ground is exceedingly difficult. Yet failure to do so almost surely spells the demise if the movement" (McAdam, 1982:57).

Resource-mobilisation theory has contributed greatly to understanding the internal and external structures and resources that make a movement 'work'. Furthermore, it demonstrates

how organisational structures, operation modes and existing social networks can have a substantial impact on the long-term development trajectory of a movement. Critics argue, however, that this theory has not sufficient explanatory leverage to account for rapid changes in the intensity of movement activity over time. Social structures emerge only gradually and barring the effects of overwhelming repression, natural disasters or war, they are also changing slowly (Ondetti, 2008). One could argue, however, that movements can relatively quickly change their tactical repertoires by, for instance, forming a radical wing that exerts pressure on authorities. Hence, the debate remains open as to the extent to which resources, structures and repertoires account for movement activity.

1.4.3 Political opportunities

Parallel and in response to the resource-mobilisation theory, a third perspective on movements established itself. The concept of political opportunity has so far been the most influential and controversial theory on the emergences and development of movements. There is still a great variety of definitions, but Tarrow has put forward a description of political opportunity that is widely recognised. Political opportunities are "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow, 1994:85); in other words, a situation of or a change in a governmental structure that makes authorities more receptive or vulnerable to the protest actions of movements, which translates into increased interests of movement supporters to invest time, effort and other resources in the struggle. In contrast, when authorities become more repressive or uninterested, protest activities will dwindle as only the most dedicated members will continue to invest into the movement.

Elements of political opportunity have never been completely absent in the analysis of social movements, yet only in the late 1970s it emerged as an elementary analytical components of movement activity. In particular, the work of Tarrow (1994; 1998) and McAdam (1982) has singled out this perspective. Just like resource theorists they questioned the single validity of grievances as reason for the emergence of movements. In contrast to resource theorists they however place emphasis on the wider political environment, rather than on organisational dynamics. Political opportunity theorists focus particularly on explaining the emergence of movements by expanding political opportunity structures. Some theorists even claim political opportunity to be the most important reason for the appearance

of movements. Tarrow, for instance, declares "movements are created when political opportunities open up for social actors who usually lack them" (Tarrow, 1994:35). Yet, Goodwin and Jasper (1999), for instance, have strongly argued against this assertion, stating that protest often grows under hostile and extremely oppressive authorities and fails to emerge where the political opportunities appear to be open. Also other researchers have presented evidence showing that repression can lead to increased protest activity (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001; Oberschall, 1993). The contradictory findings led scholars to assert that the analytical task should not be to determine whether repression encourages or suppresses protest, but rather to establish "which effect is to be expected under what conditions" (Opp & Roehl, 1990:523).

Scholars have identified numerous possible shifts in the structure of political systems that affect the political opportunity structure of movements and hence their conditions for mobilisation. Gamson and Meyer (1996) describe these shifts along a continuum, ranging from gradual shifts in basic structures to volatile, sudden changes. Opportunities can further be narrow and have an effect only on a certain group of people or region, or they can be very wide and affect the entire polity (Ondetti, 2008). Therefore, the scope and time scale that are under consideration when analysing political opportunity structures can differ substantially in studies. The level of analysis ultimately depends on which variation in protest activity – short term or long term, local or national – one wishes to address. Researchers often attempt to compile lists of political dimensions that contribute to movement activity. McAdam (1996) suggests four broad dimensional shifts particularly for the comparative study of movements: the relative openness or closeness of political systems; the stability or instability of elite alignments; the presence or absence of elite allies; and the state's capacity and propensity for repression. Scholars writing on rural movements have tended to emphasise grievance structures and organisational capacities of rural activism, yet recent studies have started to incorporate political opportunity structures that stimulate or depress rural activism. Ondetti's 2008 study on the Brazilian MST is in this regard a milestone in illustrating how the organisation has successfully interacted with the political opportunities present in Brazil. For South Africa, Mngxitama (2006) has provided an interesting case study on how political opportunity structures have shaped the activities of the NLC. Both studies, among others, have greatly informed this thesis.

1.4.4 Framing processes

The 1980s saw a growing discontent among movement theorists over the lack of attention that scholars had paid to the significance of shared ideas and sentiments in the mobilisation of groups. Erwin Goffman's 1974 book on frame analysis initiated a process that shifted some scholars' focus away from the underlining structural causes for movement activity to the concept of shared ideas that give meaning to action. While Goffman analysed the construction and meaning of ideas within the broad society; Snow and Bendford (1988) applied this concept specifically to movement theory and thereby expanded the theory of movement dynamics substantially. Snow and Bendford argue that the interplay of political opportunities and mobilising structures provides groups with a certain structural potential for action. Yet this structural potential cannot account for the surfacing and maintenance of collective action, since people need to define and perceive the situation collectively as a potential for action. People need to feel aggrieved about some aspects of their lives and be optimistic that it can be addressed collectively. If this is not the case, mobilisation is unlikely to occur even though factual opportunities are present. Creating and maintaining such perceptions is the social psychological mechanism that Snow and Bendford have referred to as framing processes. McAdam et al. (1996:6) skilfully summarise his conception as follows: "[Framing processes are] conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action". According to Snow and Bendford (2000:614), framing is a proactive process that includes agency and contention. It is proactive in a sense that something is being done and is evolving over time. It involves agency through the work of movement members and supporters and entails contention in the sense of "generating interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them". The products of these framing processes are referred to as collective action frames.

According to Snow and Bendford (2000), collective action frames are constituted by two characteristic features. The first one refers to its action-oriented focus. The collective action frames have the prime purpose of gathering and mobilising people for a specific cause. By strategically linking opportunities to actions, people begin to perceive a situation as a potential and therefore are motivated to participate. This mental linking process is the "core framing task" of movements (Snow & Bendford, 2000:615). Snow and Bendford (1988) unpack this core framing task into three important stages: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing essentially entails the identification and agreement on common grievances and the respective source of it. This stage of the

framing process has also been widely referred to as 'injustice framing', a term coined by Gamson. He asserts that "it is insufficient if individuals privately adapt a different interpretation of what is happening. For collective adaption of an injustice frame, it must be shared by the potential challengers in a public way" (Gamson, 1992:73, as cited in Tarrow, 1998:111). But, as Snow and Bendford (2000) point out, the collective adaptation of injustice frames can entail controversies regarding who exactly is to blame for the respective grievances and thereby led to inconsistencies in collective action frames, which in the long run can demobilise or split a movement. In this sense, 'spin-off' movements can emerge, which draw their impetus from the initiator movement, but construct an alternative frame (McAdam, 1995). The second stage of the framing task, the prognostic framing, proposes and diffuses solutions. These solutions can take the form of an alternative to proposed solutions or actions of the respective opposition to the movement. In this sense, movements engage in "counter-framing" (Hunt & Bendford, 2004). The last stage, the motivational framing, provides a rational for collective action, which includes the development of appropriate vocabularies and tactics that regularly communicate the salience of the problem and the way to overcome it (Snow & Bendford, 2000).

These three stages conceptualise the action-oriented component of framing processes and help to unpack the dynamics behind collective frames. However, framing processes have a second important feature, namely the interactive negotiated dynamic of finding agreement within the different stages outlined above. Several scholars have underlined the analytical importance of this discursive component (Kladermans, 1997; Snow & Bendford, 2000 Steinberg, 1998). Discursive processes refer to "the talk and conservations – the speech acts – and written communications of movement members that occur primarily in the context of, or in relation to movement activities" (Snow & Bendford, 2000:623). This discursive process involves the selection and accentuation of certain issues, events and beliefs that have special salience to the movement. These 'slices of experience' are then strategically reassembled in order to present a novel, but culturally entrenched interpretation of the situation. Snow and Bendford (2000) point to two strategic types of framing processes: frame bridging and frame extension. Frame bridging includes the linking of two "ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem" (Snow & Bendford, 2000:624). Frame extension involves the inclusion of new interests and frame(s) that are deemed salient to the movement and potential new supporters within the existing collective action frame. In order for collective actions frames to function over a long-time period, they

need to be constantly reconstituted through interactions in meetings, campaigns and statements.

Kladermans (1997) has furthermore stressed that the discursive character of framing processes, while initiated and fuelled by the movement, cannot be reduced to the movement alone. He states that "it is a process in which social actors; media and members of a society jointly interpret, define and redefine states of affairs" (Klandermans, 1997:44). In this context, movements also engage in 'frame contests' with other societal institutions such as the media, the government, parties and other movements. External actors can discredit or favour a movement by engaging in framing processes that target the public image of a movement. External actors may also construct alternative frames that address the same issue, but the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing processes construct different approaches. Although movements are aware of these external framing processes and respond to them, they are not independent of them. The level of movement mobilisation is highly influenced by the internal and external discursive framing processes.

One way of analysing effectiveness and mobilising the potential of frames is the concept of resonance. this concept evaluates how much collective action frames resound with peoples' lived realities and cultural historical milieu. According to Snow and Bendford (2000), this firstly depends on the credibility and relative salience of the topic addressed. When proposed claims embedded in the frames do not consistently match with the factual situation on the ground, frames become illusionary. Secondly, collective action frames need to target salient and central issues of its potential constituents, which has to do with "how essential the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives of the targets of mobilisation" (Snow & Bendford, 2000:621). In this context, the cultural resonance of frames also plays a significant part. People need to be able to identify with collective actions frames; hence frames need to be congruent and evolve with the values, believes, meanings and narratives that underline a society or the targeted part of it. In this regard, some frames can attain a highly inclusive scope as they are based on broad values and concerns shared by a majority of people. Snow and Bendford (1992) have referred to such frames as master frames in contrast to movement-specific frames that may derive from master frames, but focus on specific, controversial aspects.

There is still only a small number of studies on rural movements that highlight framing processes. This might be due to the amorphous nature of the subject matter. Understanding the evolution and effects of frames requires not so much the analysis of topics or issue contained in the frames but rather the discursive processes that led to them. This in turn

necessitates long-term fieldwork as well as access to documents and recordings. In her work, Wendy Wolford (2003), for instance, has provided scholars with details on internal and external discursive processes of the MST in Brazil. Although she does not explicitly refer to framing processes, her work provides a starting point.

1.5 A synthesised comparative perspective

Recent studies on movements such as that of McAdam et al. (1996), Snow, Soule and Kriesi (2004) and Tilly and Tarrow (2007) have jointly emphasised the importance of all three theories in analysing the emergence and development of movements: political opportunity, resource mobilisation and framing processes. The theory of grievances has lost its analytical significance in explaining movement activity, yet it is certainly not disregarded, as it runs like a red thread through all three frameworks. Grievance, as it was outlined at the beginning of this section, is a feeling of deprivation and can lead to riots and sudden conflicts, yet it cannot fully account for the organisation of sustained movement activity. Grievance is certainly an explosive device in mobilising people and therefore lends itself particularly to framing processes, yet it does not suffice to maintain an effective movement that is recognised as a unified actor in society. Consequently, contemporary scholars generally agree that grievances can lead to collective action, but political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing processes sustain a movement by giving it structure, protest repertoires, shared meanings for action and political and economic access points for interactions that might lead to social change. The configuration of these dynamics constitutes a movement and accordingly shapes a movement's character and development course. A synthesised framework (see Figure 1) that combines all three theories and detects links between them is therefore a suitable tool to explain variation in size, form and degree of success of movements. In particular, this framework allows a systematic study into differences of political systems, socio-economic conditions and cultural aspects of groups, regions and countries and thereby lends itself to comparative studies of movements' dynamics.
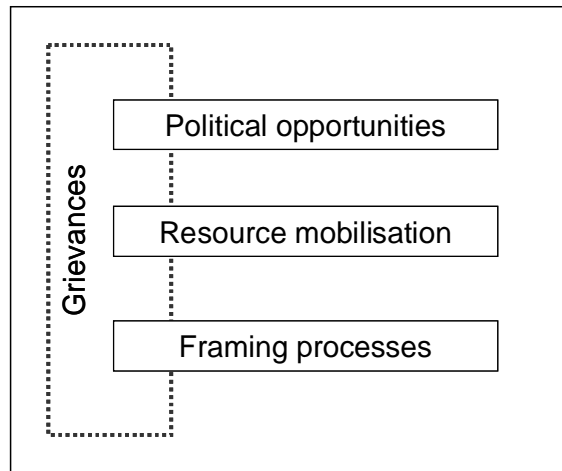
Figure 1. Graphic of synthesised framework

Accordingly, this study employs the theories of political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing processes in its attempt to explain the great variance of rural activism of the NLC in South Africa and the MST in Brazil. The study specifically analyses the trajectories of the rural movements at the national level and over a specific time frame (1978–2009) and thereby pays attention to key differences that led to variances in contemporary movement activity. Admittedly, this ultimately leads to an aggregation and possibly simplification of complex reasons. Yet it is believed that in a cross-national comparative study the focus should remain on broad developmental differentials that trickle down to the actual rural movement and its power and mobilisation potential. As the study has shown, specific differences in form and course of rural movements can essentially be traced to structural differences, which guided political opportunities, resource structures and framing processes of the movement. For this purpose, the study presents in Chapter 2 a historical overview of land issues in South Africa and Brazil in order to embed the concrete movement analysis into the record of history.

Having laid the theoretical foundation and traced the history of South Africa and Brazil, broad developmental variations affecting the dynamics for rural activism in the respective countries have emerged. Building on these variations a comparative analysis of the NLC and the MST takes place in chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The two chapters are divided into three sections according to the movements' protest cycles, namely emergence, stabilisation and decline/resurgence. Following the trajectories of the NLC and the MST, movement dynamics are traced by employing the synthesised framework. Each protest cycle is analysed according to political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes. In a short summary at the end of each section, the effect of three interrelated movement dynamics in shaping the protest cycle is presented. Following McAdam's (1996) suggestion, political opportunities are

firstly assessed by the relative openness or closure of the political and legal systems; secondly by the presence of elite allies; thirdly by the stability or division of the political elite; and fourthly by the state's capacity and propensity for repression. When looking at mobilising structures, the internal structures of the respective movements and their tactical repertoires are examined. Secondly, grassroots structures and existing social networks are evaluated in their contribution to movement activity. With reference to the interrelatedness of dynamics, it becomes clear that the organisation and operation of movements is very much shaped by the political opportunity structure; a relationship which also applies to framing. When analysing framing processes, I specifically address the question whether the movement was able to construct resonant collective action frames to corroborate its actions. The associated framing process is examined as far as information was available regarding the discursive process. Attention is also given to framing contests and how they affected the mobilising potential of the movements. The aim was to demonstrate that all three theories put into historical perspective are of vital importance in explaining the variation of organised rural activism in South Africa and Brazil. By addressing each perspective in the respective country, variations in political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes become apparent as well as important interrelationships, which illustrates that one theory cannot satisfactorily explain the contemporary situation without reference to the other processes.

1.6 Significance of study

While a synthesised approach to movement analysis is generally accepted in the academic community, few scholars have attempted to present a comparative study of movements that affords equal weight to all three perspectives and actively seeks to discern interrelationships. It is however believed that when conducting a cross-national comparative study it is appropriate to approach (at least initially) the topic in a comprehensive fashion. In this way the tendency of theoretical bias can, if not completely avoided, at least be considerably reduced and thereby the justification for finding generalisable mechanisms of mobilisation is substantiated. McAdam's 1982 study, "Political process and the development of black insurgency", can be considered the first study that included all three movement dynamics in an interrelated fashion in order to explain the rise and fall of black civil-rights movements in the USA. Tarrow is furthermore a strong defender of the multidimensional view of movement theory and has applied this framework in various works, such as for instance in his comparative 2005 study "The transnational activism". Another recent example is Ondetti's

2008 analysis of the MST in Brazil. His study provides very interesting insights into movement dynamics and provides this study with invaluable information; in particular on political opportunity structures in Brazil. However, Ondetti does not apply the framework in a comparative fashion; it is rather a detailed collection of key dynamics that shaped the MST's activism.

Overall, the MST as a rather successful rural movement has been analysed by a multitude of actors, who attempt to discern its 'secrets' (for instance Carter, 2009; Karriem, 2008; Veltmeyer and Petras, 2001; Wittman, 2009 and Wolford, 2003) Yet, attempts to contrast the MST with other rural movement are sparse. Foweraker (2001), for instance, has in a general comparison of grassroots movement in Brazil and Chile applied a synthesised framework in order to analyse their varying effects on social service delivery. Scoones (2008), in a study on Brazil, South Africa and India, has compared mobilisation against genetically modified crops. In his study he focuses primarily on external political conditions, but also makes reference to tactic and framing processes within the movements.

South Africa's rural movements have been of little interest to scholars, let alone attempts to analyse movement dynamics. There are comprehensive studies on South Africa's land reform, focusing on political and administrative implementation failures (for instance Hall, 2009 and Ntsebeza & Hall, 2007) Academic studies on the NLC are extremely rare, but there is some interesting secondary literature on rural movements. Walker (2002), for instance, has published widely on gender equality and women movements in the rural sector. There is also one detailed personal account of the local rural movement AFRA (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999), which served as a source of information for this study, since AFRA was once part of the NLC. Nauta (2004) has provided a comprehensive overview of another small rural movement, namely the Monti Rural Association. In his analysis he focuses on the political environment and the structural changes within the association, thereby also providing some input to this study. Lastly, Greenberg (2003; 2004; 2004a) and Mngxitama (2006), former activists of the NLC, have published personal studies of the movement, providing valuable information.

In terms of comparing the MST with the NLC, the researcher is aware of only one article that partially addresses the question of differing rural activism. Wolford, Balleti and Johnson (2008) compared the MST and the South African Landless People's Movement (LPM), a radical movement that quickly emerged and declined between 2001 and 2005 in South Africa. The LPM will also receive some attention in this study. Wolford, Baletti and Johnson's study, in this regard, presents an interesting comparative analysis of the Brazilian MST and a South

African rural movement. Yet, it needs to be noted that the LPM was a short-term spin-off movement, wholly dependent on its parent the NLC. Therefore, a valid comparison needs to start with the NLC. Furthermore, Wolford, Baletti and Johnson focus on the MST's tactical repertoires, but political opportunities and framing processes received only passing attention. This study attempts to broaden the comparative scope much further by systematically exploring movement dynamics in South Africa and Brazil and how they shaped the trajectories of the NLC and the MST differently. In this way the study wishes, on the one hand, to provide a cross-national empirical example of movement dynamics and on the other hand to explain why rural activism is different in South Africa and Brazil.

Chapter 2

The agrarian question and struggles for land before the NLC and the MST

2.1 South Africa

2.1.2 The people and land before 1652

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, two major groups occupied much of Southern Africa. The first group, the Khoisan, comprised the San hunter-gatherers and the Khoikhoi nomadic herders. The second group was the African pastoralists and cultivators. The San did not form permanent settlements, but were skilful hunter-gatherers that roamed the Southern African continent. They were marginalised by the Khoikhoi and African farmers long before the appearance of Europeans. When the first Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape in 1652, the region was predominately occupied by the Khoikhoi. This African group lived as nomads and herded long-horned cattle and fat-tailed sheep. The Western Cape is not suitable for indigenous grain, millet and sorghum due to the dry summer months in this winter rainfall region. As a result, the Khoikhoi did not develop a farming culture.

The second group of inhabitants of South Africa was the African people. Bantu-speaking people were living along the Limpopo River by approximately AD 500. In the following centuries two linguistic groups emerged, the Nguni and the Sotho-Tswana, who gradually migrated southwards. The Nguni and Sotho-Tswana people engaged both in arable and livestock farming. The more their communities migrated into the interior of South Africa, the more their farming activities became dispersed across large distances as deteriorating environmental conditions required seasonal movement of animals and extensive as well as varied crop cultivation. The traditional grain, millet and sorghum of the African people restricted their settlement to the summer rainfall regions of South Africa. In this way a natural barrier was created between the African farmers to the north and east of the country with its summer rainfall and the Khoikhoi herders to the south and west in the winter rainfall region (Feinstein, 2005:13–21; Thompson, 2006:1–30).

African farmers owned their cattle individually and looked after them with great care, since cattle was the principal means of exchange in non-monetary African societies. Hence, large herds were a symbol of wealth and influence. Land was held communally and was managed by the chief, the sub-chiefs and the headmen of the community. They controlled the distribution of land and resources to the people and regulated the entire agricultural process of

tilling, sowing and harvesting as well as the allotment of grazing land. Each married man was entitled to obtain land for housing and cultivation from the community. According to tribal law, this land could not be sold or rented as a means of generating income; only lending or donations were permissible in order to provide a living for other members of the group (Feinstein, 2005:18).

Arable farming, including tilling, sowing, harvesting and trashing as well as vegetable cultivation, were predominantly carried out by women. The handling of livestock was the principle task of men. African farming was generally draining for the soil since no crop rotation or appliance of manure took place. The extensive availability of land made it possible for African farmers to move on when the soil was exhausted. This abundance of land is regarded as one of the primary reasons for the high fragmentation and mobility of African societies (Feinstein, 2005:20). Aspiring chiefs, dissatisfied tribe members or entire groups affected by crop failure could abandon their sites and relocate. Therefore, communities typically remained small and political rivalries and divisions within African societies were prevailing features in their history as well as an important factor in their later conquest by the Europeans.

2.1.3 Colonisation: Conquest and dispossession

The Cape colony

The conquest of South Africa by European settlers started immediately after the first settlers arrived at the Cape with the Dutch East India Company. The Khoisan were the first people displaced as settlers set up their houses and gardens. Initial cooperation turned quickly into conflicts over ownership and usage rights of land. The Khoisan, not accustomed to the Western concept of private land titles, were induced into signing treaties surrendering large areas of land. Khoisan groups attempted to resist this process of expropriation and displacement. However, intergroup organisation was low and the technological capacities of the settlers were overpowering. Recurring smallpox epidemics further reduced the number of Khoisan and thereby accelerated the process of marginalisation. The widespread belief of European superiority among settlers degraded the Khoisan to inferior people. "The tradition early took root among the men of the frontier that the Bushmen[9] were no better than wild animals and that it was justifiable to exterminate them like so much vermin. On their side the Bushmen became fiercer and more predatory as their means of subsistence disappeared before

---

[9] Bushmen is used here as a general term for the Khoikhoi and San.

their eyes" (Marais, 1962, cited in Feinstein, 2005:14). Resistance in the form of open warfare and cattle raids in the Cape colony continued up until 1670, when the last war was organised and lost by Khoisan groups. Due to the loss of their land, the Khoisan were forced to abandon their traditional way of life and to enter into work relationships with the European settlers (Feinstein, 2005:50).

As the economy grew, the colony required more labourers. The Khoisan population was decimated to such an extent that, despite their forceful integration into the colony's workforce, their numbers did not suffice the labour needs. Therefore, in 1658, the first slaves were brought in from Ceylon, Madagascar and Mozambique. Over the next two centuries a continuous import of slaves took place to supplement the local work force. Mixing with the Khoisan they started to form the coloured community in the Cape, working as maids, farm workers, artisans and shepherds for the white colonists who predominately owned the land and means of production.

Colonisation beyond the Cape Colony

From the beginning of the 18th century, settlers drifted beyond the mountain range encircling the Cape colony. In this new terrain, land was plentiful and cheap, while capital and labour were scarce and expensive. Land rights were simply given away by the Dutch East India Company. Anyone could claim a large farm in return for a small fee. The abundance of land resulted in huge farms with an average size of 6 000 acres. These farms became a typical feature of South Africa's agricultural landscape. Up until the late 18th century, the settlers did not penetrate further than the Great Fish River in the east and to the edges of a large dry plateau to the north, which later would be known as the Great Karoo. Repetitive violent conflicts with the sedentary African communities prevented any permanent settlement there. However, with the departure of Dutch administration in 1795 and the permanent installation of British governance in 1806, the possibility of a systematic colonisation of South Africa and further expansion beyond the Fish River was gradually recognised (Feinstein, 2005:25–30).

Responding to social pressure in Great Britain and local wishes of further colonisation, Cape authorities initiated and assisted immigration from the United Kingdom, Germany and other European countries to areas that where contested by African farmer communities. In 1830 a movement of Afrikaans farmers, who were descendents from Dutch colonists, began to oppose British governance in the Cape and also started to migrate into African territory. By 1843 some 12 000 Afrikaans farmers had left the Cape and started to infiltrate African farming land. It was believed that the African communities would in time decline due to

European diseases as the Khoisan did in the Cape, thereby facilitating a rather 'peaceful' colonisation process. But the African people were already conditioned to smallpox and formed a much stronger and complex economy and social network than the Khoisan (Thompson, 2006:71). Consequently, the initiated settlement process was followed by several violent clashes between African farmers and white settlers.

In the following section, one particular African farmer group, the Zulu, is used to illustrate the dispossession and marginalisation process of African people. It needs to be noted, however, that extensive conflicts also took place with other African groups, such as the Lesotho Kingdom of Moshoeshoe, the numerous Xhosa tribes and the Southern Tswana chiefdoms. Struggles ranged all over the country, differing in form and scale, but towards the end of the 19th century the power balance shifted towards the settlers as they successfully drove African people away from their traditional land and thereby negated their means of independent survival (Thompson, 2006).

The Zulu

By 1820, Shaka, originating from a small Zulu chiefdom, had built up a militaristic Zulu kingdom with a standing army that controlled most of the Nguni territory northeast of the country. This Zulu kingdom was the end product of radical changes in northern Nguni society in the late 18th century. Changing climate conditions, population growth and diminishing possibilities for further expansion had triggered a period of fierce fighting among African chiefdoms called the *Mfecane* wars (meaning time of troubles). Shaka's Zulu kingdom, however, did not contribute to a sedation of the situation as Shaka and his descendents sent armies on annual campaigns to disrupt local chiefdoms and capture grain, cattle and people. Militant bands of people, displaced by the unrest, began to roam the region and worsened the situation. By 1830, organised African village life had virtually ceased to exist.

During this time of upheaval and disorganisation, the first Afrikaans farmer, the so-called Voortrekker, entered Nguni territory. Local African communities forged several small-scale attacks against the invaders; however, the settlers adopted the effective method of lashing their wagons together in a circle that the African warriors were not able to break (Thompson, 2006:88). In this way the settlers continued to penetrate the region, supported by newcomers from the Cape colony who restocked their munitions. In 1838, the Zulu king Dingane attained a major victory against a settler group led by Piet Retief. Dingane and his Zulu warriors lured Retief into a trap, killed him and subsequently his entire settler community, capturing 200 coloured servants and about 35 000 cattle. However, in the next months the immigrants

mustered a powerful commando of 500 men and 57 wagons and invaded into the heart of the Zulu kingdom. Lashing their wagons together in a circle, they fought in a strong defensive position with guns and cannons against a 10 000-strong Zulu army. The Zulu had to retreat with 3 000 dead, while the commando did not lose one member. Known as the Battle at the Blood River, it "was a classic example of the superiority of controlled fire … over Africans armed with spears, however numerous and however brave" (Thompson, 2006:90). In response to this defeat, the Zulu kingdom split and thereby advanced the disintegration of Nguni societies. Following their victory, many emigrants settled in this region of Natal, taking over the best pastures and water areas. The complete destruction of the Zulu kingdom followed in 1879 as a British force of 8 000 men invaded the remains of Zululand, culminating in the destruction of the Zulu capital Ulundi.

In order to prevent any Zulu chief from again assembling a strong community, the colony's administrators set Zulu against Zulu, divided the territory under appointed loyal chiefs and made them to salaried magistrates. African people were increasingly compelled to move to selected areas with inferior agricultural conditions, where overpopulation forced many to abandon their communities and to seek employment on large cattle farms owned by white farmers. Church missions started to become centres of refuge for African people. Yet, the ultimate intention of the missions at that time was to 'civilise' African people and to transform them into obedient agricultural workers (Thompson, 2006:120–122).

The problem of abundant land and scarce labour

The story of the Zulu is one illustration of the process of expropriation and subordination of African people in the last decades of the 19th century. There were regional differences in the rate and the extent of erosion of African autonomy, depending on the structure and dynamic of each African society as well as on the present policy of the administration. Major divisions between the African societies leading to reoccurring civil wars accelerated their disintegration and dependency on white farm work. In contrast, European settlers were, despite major disagreements over other issues, united in their will to conquer African territory and destroy independent African farming.

According to Feinstein (2005), this common zeal for land expropriation had, apart from obtaining land for farming and mining, another important motive. South Africa had an agrarian economy that was characterised by an abundance of land and a scarcity of labour. Under such conditions, owners of land would have been unable to profit from it as long as free land exists elsewhere. Hired labour in this case would have been difficult to obtain, as

people preferred to work as independent farmers on the free land. In order to attract hired labour, farm owners would have had to pay wages that were at least as much as what labourers could have earned as independent farmers. Yet, this wage level would have cut considerably into the earnings of the land owner and render his business unprofitable (Feinstein, 2005:33). Slavery was a 'practical' solution to this problem, because denying people freedom of movement and the ability to conduct business independently through a system of coercion and oppression forced them to sell their labour to the landowning nobility.

In the early history of South Africa, settlers resorted to slavery. But slaves were almost always imported from elsewhere and slavery was never imposed on the Indian population, as settlers pursued another way to solve their land labour problem. The method of systematic closure of the escape route to free land via expropriation forced movements to reserves and destruction of African agricultural systems, effectively enabling the settlers to obtain their required labour supply without incurring major costs on their side (Feinstein, 2005:34). Depriving African and coloured people of any means of independent survival to ensure a continued flow of cheap labour to farms and mines became the major policy of the following decades. This strategy was nourished by a deep-rooted belief in white supremacy and hence racism in South Africa. The process of land expropriation and marginalisation was lawfully cemented in 1913 with the Natives Land Act, which limited African land ownership exclusively to reserves. The Act went on to become one of the first steps toward the system of apartheid in South Africa. By that time, however, organised resistance beyond sporadic sabotage and raids had already started.

2.1.4 The segregation and apartheid era

Land situation during the early and middle 20th century

The settlers did not immediately take over all land, as they lacked the administrative and financial resources to control settlement patterns. But, as population density and trade opportunities improved, settlers gradually increased their landownership share. It was therefore not a single act of dispossession, but a continuing process, which gained substantial momentum after the discovery of gold and diamonds (Feinstein, 2005:43). The Natives Land Act of 1913 made it illegal for African people to acquire or rent land outside the existing reserves. By 1913, the land officially reserved for African people had been reduced to 7.3% of the total; whereas the African population constituted two-thirds of South Africa's population. The practice of communal tenure in the reserves as well as the population density caused the

already inferior soil to deteriorate rapidly, causing malnutrition and famines. Recognising the inadequacy of available land, additional land was granted in 1936. This brought the figure up to a mere 13%, which did not solve the problem of overpopulation. Farming in the reserves was rendered completely insufficient to sustain an independent peasant economy, forcing people to migrate to towns, farms and mines in order to earn extra cash.

At the same time, white settlers continued to form huge farms. In the early and middle 19th century, currency was in short supply, so people were often paid with land grants. As a result, capable and ambitious men were able to accumulate vast amounts of land and form a distinctively superior class (Thompson, 2006:99). A farm's size was usually determined by the farmer walking with his horse east, west, north and south for half an hour from a fixed point, resulting into a farm of roughly 2 500 hectares (Feinstein, 2005:25). With ongoing colonisation and settlement, the average farm size decreased in the 19th century to about 800 hectares.[10] These large landholdings were often not utilised productively, as most land was used as grazing fields for livestock. The cultivation of grain and vegetables was frequently done by African people living as rent tenants, sharecroppers or labour tenants on the farms. Rent tenancy (also then known as "Kaffir farming") was a system where white people with too much land allowed African people to work on their land in return for rent payment. Sharecropping allowed African farmers, having to provide their own equipment, to work on the land in return for sharing their harvest with the land owners. Labour tenancy was a relationship where land owners allowed African people to occupy a small plot of land for housing in exchange for their labour. Apart from paying wages, landowners often resorted to payment in kind, such as groceries and alcohol, which in the long run substantially undermined the workers' last remains of an independent lifestyle. African crop sharing and rent tenancy still included some form of entrepreneurial freedom, which for many white working farmers was not acceptable. Also, groups from industry and mining lobbied for the abolishment of rent tenancy and crop sharing, as they were interested in an influx of redundant labour. Therefore, crop sharing and rent tenancies were increasingly suppressed by the government with the Natives Land Act and by several subsequent regulations. By the end of World War II, labour tenancy had become the predominate system on white-owned farms throughout South Africa (Feinstein, 2005:62). With the modernisation and mechanisation of agriculture beginning in the mid 1960s farm size started to grow steadily. According to World Bank data (cited in Van Zyl, Binswanger & Thirtle, 1995:9) average farm sizes increased

---

[10] These were nevertheless huge farms compared to Canada or the United States at this time, where a farm was typically about 65 hectare (Feinstein, 2005:25).

from 738 ha per farm in 1953 to 867 ha in 1960 and to 1 339 ha in 1981. In 1970, the Act on the Subdivision of Agricultural Land made it ultimately impossible to subdivide existing titles on land and thereby essentially froze the land and ownership structure in South Africa (Van Zyl et al., 1995:12).

The creation of a colour bar in the South African economy
Between 1910 and 1948, South Africa weathered the Great Depression, the national income of the country increased more than three times and the mining industry made major contributions to South Africa's industrialisation. At the time, the white population consolidated its control over the state, strengthened its domination over the African, coloured and Asian populations and successfully eliminated British legal power to intervene in South African affairs. By 1910, white people had conquered almost all African land and restricted African people to demarcated reserves or small plots of land and hostels, where they worked for white farmers, manufacturers or mining magnates. During the ensuing years, the government implemented a comprehensive programme of racial segregation and discrimination that reached far beyond land expropriation and ownership restrictions.

Laws such as the Apprenticeship Act (1922) and the Industrial Conciliation Act (1924) prevented most African people from entering the skilled and semi-skilled work force and from bargaining for better working and living conditions. Wages for African workers were notoriously lower than for white workers, and the tax system was discriminating against African artisans and the few independent farmers in the reserves. At the same time, white farmers and manufactures received continuous financial support and tax breaks to stimulate economic growth and self-sufficiency in South Africa. White farmers were able to modernise and thereby commercialise their farms, which in turn made African farm labour gradually redundant. Many of these former farm workers found work in the mining industry, while others migrated to the growing cities in the hope of finding employment. Squatter camps started to grow around urban centres and caused fear among the white, affluent population. The government tried to limit the flow of African people into the cities with a complex set of pass laws designed to prevent African people from living in towns except as labourers for whites. Farm workers were only allowed to leave the farm with a special permit issued by the farm owner. Despite these regulations, the African population in towns increased steadily (Feinstein, 2005:64).

When in 1948 the Afrikaner National Party gained a strong majority, white domination accelerated and racial discrimination turn into an institutionalised and legal system, termed

"Grand Apartheid". With the enactments of several apartheid laws, racial discrimination was institutionalised. The Population Registration Act (1950) classified and officially registered all South Africans into one of three categories: white, black (African) or coloured. Many more race laws followed that regulated every aspect of social and professional life. Under the Group Areas Act and its many amendments, the government divided urban areas into zones demarcated for specified races (Thompson, 2005:188). Large-scale evictions of coloured and Indian communities followed as well as removals of entire African townships situated around urban centres. In 1951, the only official countrywide African institution, the Native Representative Council, was abolished and the administration of the African population subsequently transformed. The government marked out 10 territories, later known as "homelands",[11] in which an African "nation was to develop along its own lines, with all the rights that were denied it in the rest of the country" (Thompson, 2006:186). In 1971, the Bantu Homeland Constitution Act granted the territories 'independence'. Collaborative chiefs were appointed to govern the homelands and public funding was completely stopped, abandoning the African communities to their fate. The government subsequently also began to eliminate so-called black spots in the countryside – white areas that were occupied or still owned by African people. The aim of the government was to herd all African people into the homelands, except those who were needed as workers in industry and agriculture. The evictions and removals resulted in a great intensification of the overpopulation problem in the homelands. By 1950, 39.7% of the African population lived in these areas; by 1980, 52.7% lived there. Despite rigid controls and forced removals, the African populations in the towns increased rapidly, as did the coloured and the Asian population. By 1980, the white urban population of 4 million was greatly outnumbered by 6.9 million African people, 2 million coloured people and 700 000 Indian people (Thompson, 2006:189).

Despite these huge numerical differences, the apartheid system was able to concentrate economic, political and cultural power in the hands of the white population through the institutionalisation of the colour bar. This colour bar is one of the most distinctive aspects of South Africa's economic and social history. Processes of European conquest and dispossession have taken place in other countries as well, but no other country has used its political and legal framework to create and maintain such an extensive and formal colour bar (Feinstein, 2005:74–78).

---

[11]The African reserves were Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

The rise of organised resistance and rural movements

It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that autonomous, organised African resistance and social movements emerged in South Africa. Before that time, African people employed merely the 'weapons of the weak', including deputations to the British queen, petitions and pleading for meetings with the British government, but also acts of theft, sabotage and refusal to work (Plaatje, 1916). During the 19th century, churches and mission stations played a crucial role in providing African people with schooling and higher education. Most mission schools could provide no more than basic education. Some high schools, however, were staffed with relative competent teachers, for instance Adams College in Natal, St. Peter's in the Transvaal and Lovedale in the Eastern Cape province (Thompson, 2006:168). These high schools became centres of early African empowerment, as they formed skilled people influenced by liberation theology and Western ideas of participatory democracy. School leavers from these schools were among the first to recognise the need for African actualisation and organisation in political institutions and movements.

Political organisations appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, which drove to improve the lot of the subordinated people through negotiation with the government on national level. Among these organisations were the African Political Organisation (APO) in 1902, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) in 1923 and the South African Native National Congress, which later became known as the African National Congress (ANC), founded in 1912. However, up until 1940, APO, SAIC and the ANC remained under the control of lawyers, clergy and journalists, who tried to obtain white support to redress the many African grievances by constitutional means. But in the increasingly racist environment, they neither won substantial victories nor were they able to mobilise the non-white masses (Thompson, 2006:169). With the emergence of liberation movements in the early 20th century, the struggle for land rights was intertwined with their general fight against apartheid. The existing colour bar, which suppressed non-whites in essentially every aspect of their lives, became the prime target of most organisations.

Sporadic attempts were made to create more radical movements. The first movement with a clear link to the agrarian struggle was the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), founded in 1919. Initially it drew its membership from the urban African people, but in later years it became a rural protest movement, tapping especially into African sharecroppers' and tenant labourers' land hunger. The ICU captured the rural population with strong Marxism rhetoric, promising land repossession and national liberation. However, the ICU failed to design realistic programmes of action, became corrupt and eventually lost touch with the

masses (Eveleth & Mngxitama, 2003:158). Nonetheless, the ICU gave impetus to a mushrooming of localised peasant movements that were nourished by the increasing land evictions and removals to the homelands under the apartheid regime. In 1957, in the Lehurutshe area of Bophuthatswana, women burned their passes and boycotted traders and schools. The police subsequently raided the village and 2 000 people fled to Botswana. In 1963, in the Timbu district of the Transkei, resistance resulted in violent actions and rivalry among chiefs, cattle was killed, huts burned down and people murdered, yet the disturbances remained uncoordinated and collapsed completely during a severe drought in 1965 (Camay & Gordon, 2007).

In 1949, highly educated and ambitious members of the ANC Youth League were elected as members of the national ANC executive. These members were Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. The new leadership group started to launch resistance campaigns that attracted widespread support. Yet, the rural struggle fell increasingly off the agendas of the liberation movements (Eveleth & Mngxitama, 2003:159). In view of increased governmental oppression in the 1960s and 1970s, including the outlawing of the ANC and other movements, brutal police raids and ongoing evictions in townships, the liberation struggle increasingly shifted to urban centres away from rural communities and agricultural workers. Although all political movements continued to include land and rural issues on their agendas, none of them succeeded in articulating the resolution of the land question as a fundamental requirement of national liberation, and none of the various rural uprisings succeeded in linking their struggles together at a national level.

In the late 1970s, the economic and social situation in apartheid South Africa deteriorated substantially. South Africa run into a serious recession and the complex network of apartheid laws became economically unbearable as a massive shortage of skilled labour slowed down the private industry (Feinstein, 2005:250–251). International economic and diplomatic sanctions began to affect the South African economy and public opinion. The killing of Soweto school children in 1976 and the murder of Steve Biko by police officials marked a new violent peak of the liberation struggle. The late 1970s became the start of a period in which the Apartheid state increasingly lost its legitimacy as government and control over its segregate system. Hereby new political openings were created, which facilitated micro-mobilisation and framing processes, slowly eroding apartheid and building a new idea of South Africa.

2.2 Brazil

2.2.1 Colonisation: Sugarcane and slavery

The native Brazilian tribes

Before the arrival of Europeans in what is now Brazil, the country was inhabited by numerous Indian groups. The people were living in tribal groups, mostly semi-nomadic, on the Brazilian coast and along the banks of major rivers. They engaged in subsistence agriculture, fishing, hunting and gathering (Bakewell, 2004:39). Scholars disagree on the number of native people living in the area that is now Brazil. Estimates range from 500 000 to 2 million people (Skidmore, 1999:14). Brazilian tribes were different to the Indian population that the Spanish colonisers met on the west coast of South America, as they had not reached the complexity of civilisation of, for instance, the Inca in Peru or the Aztec in Mexico. Brazilian tribes neither possessed the strict social hierarchy of these Mesoamerican empires nor did they engage in city building. Hence, social and political cohesion was too low to mount a standing army to defend their territory and cultural autonomy (Bakewell, 2004:39–40; Skidmore, 1999:16).

In 1500, the first Portuguese expedition led by Pedro Álvares Cabral reached the shoreline of Brazil. Historic documents show that the sailors were fascinated by what they saw and described the land as exotic and the Indian population as noble savages. The native women were depicted as graceful, naked and without shame; the soil as endlessly fertile. This initial romanticisation of Brazil assisted in luring adventurers from Portugal to try their luck in this new colony (Skidmore, 1999:6–7). Since initial resistance of the Brazilian tribes was relatively low and the colonisers were rather fascinated by the exotic people, miscegenation of the populations began instantaneously. Up until 1530, Brazil received relatively little attention from Lisbon; instead it became a dumping site for Portuguese outlaws who, together with sailors and adventures, began to mix with native tribes. The shortage of European women facilitated assimilation and acculturation with the native people during these first decades of colonisation. With the steady miscegenation, a substantial population of *mestizos* emerged (Bakewell, 2004:172).

However, diseases brought from Europe took a heavy toll on the native tribes, decimating them drastically within a few decades. Increasingly harsh treatment through forced labour further reduced their numbers and caused many tribes to retreat into the rain forests of Brazil, where settlers had difficulties tracking them. These tribes fragmentised so extensively, that many groups had no contact with one another for the next centuries. Over time the initial image of innocent, exotic people changed to one of wild savages that needed to be civilised.

The discovery of sporadic cannibalism in Brazil triggered a wave of shocking reports to Europe, where throughout the 16th and 17th century European illustrations of Brazil were fixed on cannibalism. It also gave the state Portugal legitimate reason to eventually subjugate the native tribes and to finance extensive church missions (Skidmore, 1999:15–16). The remaining Indians in the Brazilian colony dwindled rapidly due to harsh working conditions and introduced European diseases such as small pox, measles and influenza. By the end of the 18th century, the existence of a native population on the eastside of Brazil had essentially disappeared. Only small isolated groups survived in the interior of the country. This disappearance and scattering of the few remaining people reinforced the historical fact that, unlike in Peru and Mexico, "Brazil has not the glories of a native civilisation hovering over its modern existence" (Skidmore, 1999:16).

The colonial economy and society

In the 1530s, the Portuguese king started to recognise the need for a more organised colonisation of Brazil. He granted large pieces of land to former sailors and placed the right to further distribute land into the hands of local magistrates, called *captians*, who frequently resorted to ad hoc allocations without proper land title documentation (Wright & Wolford, 2003:xxvii). Enormous plantations, *latifúndios*, started to develop, mostly in the north-eastern region, and sugarcane production became the primary engine of growth in Brazil during the 16th to 18th centuries. A highly stratified society based on landownership started to evolve. Power was concentrated in the white *fazendeiro* (landowners) residing in the *casa grande* (big houses) and filtered down to the labourers and slaves in the *senzalas* (slaves quarters) (Skidmore, 1999:19).

Slavery was introduced in Brazil with the beginning of sugarcane production. As also pointed out in the South African colonial history, the abundance of land and the scarcity of capital made it necessary for the land-owning class to employ coercive labour techniques to obtain the required work force. In Brazil, however, the pre-existing population was extinguished to a large extent, as opposed to South Africa, where numerous African farming communities survived colonisation and could be forced into labour via expropriation. Brazil's governance therefore reverted to the import of massive numbers of slaves from Africa. By 1580 the Portuguese were importing more than 2 000 African slaves per year. The African slaves were captured from various regions in central and south-western Africa and therefore brought to Brazil a wide linguistic and cultural mix, which until the present day is recognisable in its society. Brazil imported more slaves in total than any other region in

America. Consequently, Brazil today has the largest population of African descents of any country, excluding the African countries themselves.

In response to the practice of slavery as well as to the aim of civilising the remaining Indian people, religious orders had started to infiltrate Brazil since about 1550. One of these numerous orders was the Jesuit order of the Society of Jesus. This order became the dominant Catholic influence in Brazil through their control of education and the creation of mission stations for African people and native Brazilians. In these missions they introduced a mix of European and Afro-Brazilian traditions, as the Jesuits blended African and Indian songs, dances and language into their liturgy. In this way missions contributed substantially to the mixing of cultures and the slow surfacing of a self-assured non-white population (Castagna, 2000:641–655).

In the 16th century, miscegenation with the native people had already produced a substantial number of *mestizos*. Initially, *mestizos* were just above the slaves in the social hierarchy, but as time went on, some of them rose to higher status, serving as interpreters, guides and salesmen. At the beginning of the 17th century, miscegenation with African people and their descendants started to increase, resulting in a social group called *mullatoes*. Despite existing racial prejudices and discriminating legislation in Brazilian society, the emerging mixed-blood population was able to enter job opportunities that were left open in the economy due to a shortage of European labourers. There are numerous historical evidences that bureaucratic barriers were frequently breached, and that *mullatoes* and *mestizos* managed to attain status through marriage, cleric work or ownerships of plantations. It has been argued that race was seen as a spectrum in Brazil (Skidmore, 1999:24). While in South Africa, racial categorisation and targeted discrimination (albeit not immediately formalised) began very early, Brazil developed a fluent approach to race that facilitated access to education, wealth and status in many cases. This spongy racial system of Brazil allowed the growth and establishment of a mixed-blood population that actively took part in shaping the country.

2.2.2 The Brazilian empire, the first republic and the era of Vargas

In the middle 17th century, newly erected sugar plantations in the Caribbean drove down the price for sugar sharply. Unable to compete, Brazilian sugar exports declined and the entire colonial economy languished. With the decline of sugar, however, the cattle sector, which had evolved to supply the sugar economy, absorbed parts of the idle resources and became a flourishing economic sector. Given the extensive cattle-production methods, large areas in the

colony's interior were settled. In addition to the cattle economy, a mining sector started to develop in the early 18th century as gold and other minerals were found in the south-eastern highlands of Brazil. The subsequent gold rush increased economic activity considerably, as demand for consumer goods and infrastructure surged; resulting in a shift of the colony's economic and administrative centre to the southeast region. Yet, unlike in South Africa, mineral resources were already exhausted at the end of the 18th century, forcing Brazil to turn other valuable export goods, plunging Brazil into the next economic depression (Skidmore, 1999:35, 49). South Africa could rely on mining as a major source of export earnings until the middle 20th century, continuously requiring large amounts of cheap labour, which caused the white minority government to establish a system of forced black labour migrating between their homes and the mines. This decade-long system contributed substantially to South Africa's uprooted rural population, largely depending on wage remittance of the mine labourers.

The Napoleonic Wars forced the Portuguese royal family to flee to Brazil and thereby made Brazil the seat of the Portuguese empire in 1808. The king remained in Brazil until 1820. Upon his return to Portugal, he left his son, Prince Pedro, in Brazil, who in 1822, answering to the pressure of the Brazilian elite, declared Brazil an independent empire. Apart from gaining independence, Brazil also saw a positive shift of its economic situation during the 1820s. The rising world prices for coffee turned the small domestic coffee plantations into a major export sector, producing more than half of the world's coffee supply by 1885. As land was abundant, coffee production expanded easily. The Brazilian elite frequently acquired or added land simply through occupation, as there was a general lack of adequate rules and procedures for land allocation. Furthermore, it became common practice not to specify any boundary limits in the land titles, which led to frequent violent conflicts (Wright & Wolford, 2003:20).

The state of the Brazilian economy was stronger affected by the expansion of coffee than by sugar and mining. The greater complexity of coffee production and trade formed important sectoral links within the Brazilian economy. Furthermore, Brazil came under increasing pressure to abolish slavery, and a series of decrees were introduced that made it difficult to provide the new coffee areas with slaves. In 1888, slavery was officially abolished, but already long before that time the shortage of labour had become so critical that immigrants from Europe were gradually integrated into the economy. During the early 19th century, private colonising companies were common in the southern part of Brazil as state governments made territorial colonisation a priority. The state put private companies in

charge of selling land to the immigrants who arrived regularly from Europe (Wright & Wolford, 2003:414). Those who could afford to buy land became independent small-scale farmers; many others turned to rent and sharecropper agreements or wage labour on plantations. This substitution of slave labour with wage labour meant an increase in efficiency and the formation of a domestic market for consumer goods. Furthermore, a considerable number of small-scale peasants started to compete with the powerful Brazilian elite for the still available free land. Already in 1850, a land law was passed that discriminated against small-scale farmers and favoured large export-oriented plantations. A way to lessen the strong hold of large land owners would have been to impose a high tax on unused land. Such a tax was proposed several times during the 19th century, but was consistently blocked by large landowners' interests (Skidmore, 1999:52). Despite these efforts of the landowning elite to keep immigrants from acquiring land, a substantial peasant class developed in the south of Brazil and along the frontiers in the north and the centre-west of the country (Wolford, Baletti & Johnson, 2008:293).

The Brazilian economy grew significantly in the second half of the 19th century. However, economic growth was not evenly distributed in the regions, as economic development was concentrated in the southeast coffee region. The northeast continued to decline and its population lived close to the subsistence level. In 1889, Emperor Pedro II was dethroned by the army following the desire of the Brazilian elite for more local autonomy. The subsequently formed republic embraced federalism and awarded the states among other things the right to write their own land laws, which ensued into further enrichment of the local landowning elite and haphazard application of land rights. Sharecroppers and rent tenants were often forced to move frequently so that they would not establish claims to the land they worked on. Without long-term prospects for farming, peasants had little incentives to invest into the land and the fertility of the soil. Environmental degradation was therefore widespread in the south of Brazil, aggravating the insecure life of peasants.

During the late 19th and early 20th century, localised peasant uprising started to emerge in the Brazilian country side. Small-scale farmers experienced ongoing pressure from the landowning elite and the state administration to make land and labour available for large-scale commercial farming oriented towards the export sector as well as for foreign investors (interested in infrastructure programmes such as railways, dams and electricity). In 1912, a noteworthy wave of rural protests took place in the state Rio Grande do Sul. Joao Maria, a herbalist and mystic, successfully led peasant farmers and the rural poor in a protest against

their exclusion from land that was meant be allocated to a US investor (Wolford & Wright, 2003:xxviii).

The decades of the 1920s and 1930s were periods of interrelated political and economic changes. The worsening of the economic climate and the eventual financial crash of 1929 strengthened the rationale for a central government in Brazil. In 1930, a revolt by the landowning elite abolished the Old Republic and established Getúlio Dorneles Vargas as provisional president from 1930 to 1934. Vargas dominated Brazilian politics in various posts until 1954 and promoted a national development policy in contrast to the previous federalist approach. Vargas was a member of the land-based oligarchy and had risen through this system of patronage and clientelism, but at the end of his political career the pre-eminence of the agricultural elites had ended and new urban industrial leaders had acquired influence nationally (Schmitter, 1971:62, 78).

With the start of the Great Depression in 1929, the Brazilian coffee economy suffered from a severe decline in world demand and plunged Brazil into an economic crisis, which, however, it managed to weather comparatively well due to an income support programme that bought excessive amounts of coffee and thereby transferred capital back into the economy (Skidmore. 1999:97–98). The result was an overall stimulation of demand, accompanied by a greater investment into the slowly emerging industrial sector. The advance of industrialisation and urbanisation triggered the appearance of regional trade unions as well as the foundation of the Brazilian Communist Party in 1922, which also found a substantial number of followers in the rural communities, as two-thirds of Brazilians were still living in the countryside.

Poverty and ongoing land inequality, aggravated by the Great Depression and World War II, generated frequent resistance, coalescing in the middle 1900s with the Communist Party, the Catholic Church and trade unions expanding their mobilisation efforts to the countryside. In 1955, the first *liga camponesa* (peasant league) was established in Pernambuco, a poor state in the northeast of Brazil. The peasant league fought against large-scale land eviction and obtained legal help from Francisco Juliao, a member of the socialist party and appointed parliament member. Julia was able to pass a bill allowing for the expropriation of three plantations and the subsequent division of them among the threatened tenants and sharecroppers. In response, peasant leagues grew rapidly, if in a disorderly fashion, in the states of Pernambuco, Paraiba, Ceara, Piaui and Alagoas (Schmitter, 1971:210). Furthermore, Brazil's Communist Party started to infiltrate the peasant leagues and founded the Union of Agricultural Labourers and Workers of Brazil in 1954, claiming 122 syndicates with a total of 35 000 members in 1961. The Catholic Church also began in the middle 1900s to mobilise

rural associations through financial help and the realisation of literacy and leadership courses (Schmitter, 1971:210–211).

This accelerated mobilisation of the rural as well as urban population, intertwined with the rhetoric of socialism and communism, increasingly alarmed the government and urged the then President Goulart to make some concessions. In 1962, rural labour unions were legalised and in 1964 comprehensive land reform was proposed in order to appease opponents and to integrate union leaders into the clientelistic and therefore manipulable rural base. But in the Cold War climate and during the rise of Fidel Castro in Cuba, these changes did not agree with conservative sections of the Brazilian elite, and in 1964 armed forces stepped in to establish an authoritarian dictatorship, which radically altered the perspectives of the rural movements.

2.2.3 Military rule

Repression, opposition and the increase of inequality

When the military took over the government in 1964, power rested entirely within the army officer corps. However, these officers were less united than it appeared. The moderates believed that Brazil had been misled by left-wing populists and that the public would come to its senses once the populists and Communists were removed, after which democracy could be reintroduced. In contrast, the conservative wing distrusted all politicians and believed that only authoritarian measures could protect Brazil from the left-wingers. In the first years of military rule, the moderate officers formed the new administration. Therefore, despite open repression of left-wing politicians and intellectuals, the press remained relatively free in the early period, informing the public of the ongoing purge in civil society and government (Skidmore, 1999:159–160). Immediately after the coup, the military began to attack and dismantle peasant groups. The peasant leagues, the Union of Agricultural Labourers and Workers of Brazil, and other 'subversive' organisations and movements were disbanded or forced underground. Many other rural unions were compelled to appointed new 'safe' leaders. In some areas, peasant leaders were harassed and even assassinated. Despite this ongoing repression, the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura [CONTAG]) and the Church in particular continued to actively organise farmers and the landless (Schmitter, 1971:212).

Along with political changes came a major economic stabilisation programme in 1964. The effects of this programme were felt throughout 1964 and 1967 by decreasing wage levels and large cuts in public spending. In response, union members started to organise and strikes

erupted countrywide. These strikes were joined by widespread protests of university students and heated up the political atmosphere. The 'hard-liners' in the government eventually gained the upper hand and quickly introduced tougher measures of control. The congress was purged and all criticism and opposition to the government were banned by introducing strict and thorough censorship. Wire tapping, mail opening and denunciation of dissidents became commonplace in Brazil.

The growing repression of the government gradually provoked armed response in 1969. Guerrilla warfare, inspired by the Cuban revolution, became one strategy of openly opposing the regime. Urban guerrilla groups engaged in robbing banks and the kidnapping of important diplomats such as the US, Swiss, German and Japanese ambassadors. The hostages used to bargain for the release of imprisoned guerrilla members and in each case the guerrillas were successful in their negotiations. Some of those who were released would once again become active in Brazilian politics and therefore continue their fight against the regime. Although these high-profile attacks against the state garnered public attention and publicity, they neither provoked a widespread support for the guerrilla movement nor did they ever pose a serious threat to the military regime. Other guerrilla groups tried to mount a rural front against the government. In the Araguaia region of the Amazon Basin, guerrillas infiltrated the peasant area and gained the trust of local farmers. Yet, the activities of urban and rural guerrilla groups were met with draconian repression by the military. In 1974, all armed opposition was essentially liquidated (Skidmore, 1999:166–167; Wolford & Wright, 2003:5–6).

From 1968, Brazil began to experience rapid economic growth as the six following years showed growth rates of about 11% per annum. The establishment of the central bank, which assisted in bringing inflation under control, continuous financial help from the USA as well as the easing of credit boosted primarily the industrial sector. The industrial wage level improved and consequently the situation of urban workers. However, this also had the effect of widening the earning gap between industrial and non-industrial workers; in particular, it increased the income disparity between the industrialised centre-south and the poorer regions. In view of these high differences in income and living standards, migration from rural to urban areas accelerated substantially and ushered a transformation of Brazil's socio-economic landscape. In the 1950s, 36.3% of Brazilians had resided in urban centres, but by 1991 this figure had grown to 74.7% (Globalis, 2009). Brazil had transformed from an agrarian society to one that was dominated by an urban lifestyle and industrial wage labour. Nevertheless, many urban Brazilians maintained close ties to the countryside either through family relations or business enterprises. The countryside also remained the last resort for many poor urban

migrants. Similar to South Africa, cities and towns in Brazil were not able to absorb the massive influx of people being left over from an increasingly mechanised agricultural sector. This overflow resulted in giant slums around the cities and a general insecure existence for many migrants.

The 'sorrowful' modernisation of Brazilian agriculture

Brazilian agriculture continued to be dominated by large *latifúndios* and a confusing and corrupt system of land titles. Many land owners possessed large sections of land they had never seen in their life and had not put to productive use. The option to redistribute land in order to overcome inefficiencies and underutilisation had been discussed by many Brazilian governments. Before the military coup, some idle land had in fact been expropriated for redistribution under the planned land reform programme of then President Goulart. But the new military government halted the programme immediately and engaged in an agricultural modernisation programme that was in line with their economic stabilisation plan (Wright & Wolford, 2003:27, 31). The modernisation programme entailed the state-supported mechanisation of large farms and the diversification of crops. Important export crops such as soybeans and citrus fruits were added to the cultivation of coffee and sugarcane.

Small-scale farmers continued and increased the production of food crops. Their products, in contrast to the export crops cultivated by large commercial farms, served the domestic market and thereby helped to prevent the escalation of food prices during the boom years. Despite these positive contributions of small-scale farmers, federal agricultural policy favoured the export sector, as it generated foreign capital. The generous rural credit policy, for instance, was only accessible to large commercial farms and therefore heavily discriminated against small-scale peasants (Skidmore, 1999:178–179). Furthermore, the Brazilian government strongly encouraged foreign companies, for example through subsidies and tax breaks, to invest in the countryside as a means of modernising rural areas. Dam projects, railway networks and large-scale commercial agriculture funded by syndicates from Japan, Europe and the USA increasingly displaced small producers; in particular in the southern regions of Rio Grande do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo. Due to generally insecure legal arrangements and land titles of peasant farmers, the federal state and large land owners could easily evict farmers from their land and transfer it to investors. This practice was aggravated by the discriminating land law, which favoured large properties and the maintenance of privileges of the land-holding elite. In Brazil it also became practice to hire gunmen if legal or bureaucratic means failed to clear the way for powerful land owners. Bribery and ingratiation

was commonplace in the administration as well as in the courts (Wolford & Wright, 2003:27–33). In such an environment, dominated by those who had money and large properties, small farmers repeatedly failed to stand their ground. Therefore, the displacement and marginalisation of peasants continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s and provoked a leading Brazilian scholar to call this period modernizacao dolorosa, meaning 'sorrowful' modernisation (Da Silva, 1982).

2.3 Contextualising South Africa and Brazil

After having reviewed the history of the land question and the associated struggle for land in South Africa and Brazil, two important but somewhat patent conclusions can be drawn. There are interesting parallels in the history of both countries. But at the same time and on closer examination there are contrasts in their economic and social developments, which had profound repercussions for their contemporary situation regarding the mobilisation and power of rural movements.

In this context, this chapter gives a short summary of the historical facts that make South Africa and Brazil two very interesting cases to compare. By doing so it becomes clear that despite the similarities, there are differing historical facts that until this day influence the level of activism of the landless in the respective countries. These historical differences have shaped the economic, social and political systems prevailing in South Africa and Brazil and thereby the existing opportunity structures for rural activism. In this regard, the chapter serves to relate key historical similarities and differences to current circumstances in South Africa and Brazil. Thereby, the dynamics of the NLC in South Africa and the MST in Brazil, analysed in chapters 3 and 4 respectively, are contextualised and hence better understood.

Key historical similarities and differences

South Africa and Brazil are both countries with an influential colonial history, where the question of land stood at the centre of colonial control and power. Both countries have been invaded by Europeans, who regarded the acquisition of land as a condition for wealth and influence over the pre-existing population. In South Africa as well as in Brazil the abundance of land was overwhelming for the arriving few settlers and initiated a system of large landholdings. A small, but extremely rich land-holding class developed in both countries, which maintained influence in politics throughout the entire history. South Africa and Brazil were equally characterised by a colonial economy relying on the export of raw materials and

the import of manufactured goods as the Dutch/English and Portuguese administrators wished to chiefly exploit the colonies for resources. This early on generated economies that possessed self-sufficient farms and plantations producing mainly for the export sector and private consumption. In addition, as has been argued before, the abundance of land caused both colonies to resort to coercive measures to acquire the labour force they needed for their large farms and plantations. The closure of the escape route to land has been solved in different ways and with different intensity by South Africa and Brazil. However, the contemporary highly uneven distribution of land in both countries as well as the marginalisation of a large part of their populations finds its origin in the colonial economy employing coercive measures in order to become profitable.

In this context one encounters the first important difference between South Africa and Brazil. South Africa had a large and complex African population, which maintained their independence and strength for about 150 years after the arrival of the first European settlers. South African settlers were therefore able to exploit an existing large pool of labour. To this day, South Africa is dominated, despite miscegenation, by its native population, which comprises 80% of its population (Statistic South Africa, 2001). In contrast, Brazil lost most of its Indian population early on. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) reported in its 2000 census that 0.4% of its population were Indian (IBGE, 2000). Due the rapid decline of the Indian population, settlers in Brazil adopted slavery to compensate for the lack of labour. The import of African slaves changed the racial composition of Brazil tremendously and created a large population of *mullatoes* and *mestizos*, which today amounts to approximately 46% of the total population (IBGE, 2000). South Africa's coloured and Indian/Asian community, in contrast, accounts for 11% (Statistic South Africa, 2001). The comparatively high racial mix between Europeans and Africans in Brazil has been attributed to the lower level of racial prejudices in Brazil compared to South Africa (Freyre, 1978; Skidmore, 1999). Brazil's population has always experienced large numbers of intermarriage, assimilation of cultures and racial miscegenation. To explain the origin of these differing levels of racial prejudices and assimilation is beyond the scope of this study. Yet, the differing number of native populations in conjunction with the varying level of racism had profound long-term consequences for the political and social opportunity structure for rural activism in the respective countries.

Racism against non-white populations groups has been a feature of both countries' histories, yet it was in South Africa where racial discrimination took a more pronounced turn in the form of apartheid. In South Africa, racial policies of dispossession and

disfranchisement were institutionalised and carried over into the independent modern state. This process with its social and economic consequences has been presented in detail in the previous section. What stands out in this analysis, in comparison to Brazil, is the demobilisation of a small-scale land-owning peasantry. The destruction of an independent coherent African agriculture and the proletarisation of the South African peasantry stands in contrast to Brazil, which, during the 19th century, attracted large numbers of European immigrants who, despite various repressive measures, developed into a significant number of small-scale land-owning farmers in certain regions. The almost complete absence of a coherent land-owning African peasantry in South Africa had substantial consequences for the organisational capacities of rural movements in this country. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The historical overview furthermore demonstrates that apartheid did not only dispossess African people, but also disfranchised them to the extent that they lost their legal status as South African citizens. Therefore, the fight for land in South Africa was essentially tied to the general struggle for citizenship. Brazil also experienced dictatorship and hence a restriction of freedom of speech and organisation, yet this affected all population groups and did not exclude an entire group of people from equal participation in the economy. These differences in intensity and targets of oppression had long-term consequences, which to this day shape the strategic focus of rural movements in South Africa and Brazil. This aspect is further discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

The emergence of organised social resistance in South Africa and Brazil took place roughly at the same time. Beginning in the early 20th century, it culminated in the 1970s and 1980s with the slow opening of the authoritarian regimes and the transition to democracy. In South Africa, the existence of a large African population completely excluded from political and economic participation triggered the surfacing of a strong African liberation movement (the ANC), which ultimately became the leading party of the new democratic South Africa and thereby continued the racial/ethnical definition of politics in South Africa. In contrast, Brazil's history did not bring forward a strong political party that essentially represents all marginalised non-white people of Brazil.[12] Brazilian politics is rather characterised by a multitude of different parties organised along class lines and patrimonial structures. The high racial mix of the Brazilian society, mentioned above, could be one reason for this political development. Consequently, the ensuing new democracies in South Africa and Brazil were

---

[12] Brazil had sporadic cases of black movement activity, such as the *Frente Negra Brasileira* in 1930 or the *Associação Cultural do Negro* in the 1950s. However, they never attained political significance.

emerging from a different interpretation and constellation of political and economic power, which would substantially shape the political opportunities and mobilising and framing processes of the emerging rural movements.

This chapter placed South Africa's and Brazil's struggle for land in the historical context before the emergence of the NLC and the MST. Thereby, similarities and differences in their socio-economic and political development were uncovered. These findings point to interesting aspects that in the long run created different opportunity structures for rural mobilisation in South Africa and Brazil. Based on these findings, the following chapters conduct a systematic comparative analysis of the South African NLC and the Brazilian MST and thereby illustrate how different opportunity structures have led to different dynamics of rural mobilisation and power.

Chapter 3

Movement dynamics in South Africa

3.1 The emergence of the NLC amid the liberation movement (1979–1990)

As the historical overview has demonstrated, South African politics have been based on racial grounds since its early history. The long-term discrimination and segregation of the majority of the population has created a deep chasm in South African society, which, despite successful liberation and democratisation, has moulded contemporary activism in South Africa. Political opportunity structures, mobilisation structures as well as framing processes have maintained inherent racial characteristics. Rural activism has been subject to this aspect of South Africa's history from the beginning. The struggle for land has been intertwined with the struggle against the apartheid system, as land grievances were directly linked to the disfranchisement of the non-white population. As a result, the fight for land was incorporated and initially subordinated to the fight for universal civil rights. (This subordination of the land question is discussed in more detail in the following argumentation.) In order to trace the emergence of the NLC in South Africa, one therefore needs to start with the South African liberation movement, which experienced an upsurge during the 1970s and 1980s in South Africa. This increase in movement activity can be traced to changed political opportunities, an improvement in mobilising structures and strategies as well as successful framing processes. In this chapter, I analyse each aspect in turn and establish important links that underscore the interrelatedness of the three concepts. By unpacking the dynamics of the civil-rights movement, aspects of the origin of the NLC emerged that substantially shaped the organisation's later character and development.

3.1.1 Political opportunities: Fragmentation and repression

In the 1980s, the political system of South Africa underwent changes that were intended to pacify the growing domestic and international anti-apartheid lobby as well as to provide some economic relief. The slow opening of the political structure proved to unleash a massive opposition, whose eventual success can only be sufficiently explained by additional reference to their organisational capacities and framing potential. What shifts occurred in the apartheid system and where did they emanate from? The early apartheid state can generally be described as a closed up and repressive system to any anti-apartheid, black activism. The

National Party found sufficient supporters for their discriminating policy, aimed at maintaining a cheap labour force and low competition for skilled and semi-skilled jobs in urban and rural areas. In the 1980s, this alignment started to break down. South Africa was in the middle of a recession and the domestic market felt the shortage of a skilled labour force and the increased demand of middle-income earners. Furthermore, the Afrikaner population, the backbone of the National Party, increasingly moved away from the countryside and settled in urban centres. By 1980, more than 88% of Afrikaners lived in urban centres and 70% were engaged in white-collar jobs. Professionals, business people and absentee landowners had replaced the old rural elites in control of the National Party (Thompson, 2000:216). Being affected by a crippled and segregated economy as well as being amid a worldwide upswing of civil-rights movements, reformative tendencies among the political elite took root and upset the ideological conformity that had dominated the National Party for the last decades. This increasing division of the elite alignment has been convincingly illustrated by Emery (2005). He argues that the fractionalisation of the regime became pronounced in 1987 with the internal publication of a document that addressed the crisis by proposing to scrap all discriminatory laws and the commencement of multiparty negotiations. The document was compiled by top-level bureaucrats and was testimony to partial political will to engage in discussion on alternative solutions. Emery (2005) furthermore illustrates how, in particular, influential members of the Afrikaner community became dissidents to the regime. The Afrikaner leader of the liberal Progressive Federal Party, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, for instance, resigned in order to subsequently launch the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA). This institute later on played a major role in facilitating talks of Afrikaners with the ANC in exile and thereby provided access points for the liberation struggle. A wave of defections from the National Party also signified fractionalisation. For instance, a group of Stellenbosch academics, at that time the educational centre for Afrikaner nationalism, broke with the party and engaged in talks with the ANC directly.

This division in the elite alignment has been identified as an important catalyst for movement activity by numerous scholars (McAdam et al., 1996, Tarrow, 1998; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). All of them have stressed the political space that such break-ups provide for dissident thinking not only in society, but in the government itself. Fragmentations in the political elite make a government vulnerable as policy alternatives emerge and compete with each other. In the South African case, the slow break-up of conformity in the government provided the space for liberal reforms, which translated into a slow opening of the regime to non-white political participation and legal organisation. In 1979, all previously illegal African

labour unions were legalised and allowed to strike. The year 1984 saw a change of the Constitution. Indian and coloured people were awarded with a minority representation in the government, but no African participation was allowed. In 1986, the ban on multiracial political parties and interracial marriages was repealed (Thompson, 2000:218–220). The attempt of the government was to co-opt some sections of the disenfranchised community by allowing some small, decentralised civic activity. Yet the response from society was far from cooperative. The legalised African labour unions soon turned political and radicalised their activities. The established Indian and coloured representations in government were boycotted by the communities through their refusal to vote (Thompson, 2000:222).

The marginal opening of the political system was a signal that the government had become vulnerable, but the reform process had fallen short of providing African people with any political participation and other civil rights and therefore remained elusive for many oppositional groups. While the political opportunities were hence partially expanded, they were not recognised by the civil movements as such and rather regarded as additional grievances. This interpretation of the political opportunity structure by the opposition was further underlined by the increasing repression emanating from the apartheid state. The geographical and occupational division between white and non-white South Africans remained stable. The homelands continued to be officially the only place where Africans were allowed to settle. This regulation was underlined by the Natives Land Act, the Group Areas Act and the Illegal Squatting Act. The most visible and controversial state repression was the ongoing eviction and removal of African communities from their homes and the destruction of squatter camps. Collective resistance against the removals by multiracial activists was met with fierce armed response and imprisonments. During the states of emergency, repeatedly proclaimed in 1985 and 1986, the media was harshly censored, thousands of activists were detained without trial, the police forces raided offices of oppositional groups and spies were employed to track down activists and their supporters. Assassinations took place and repeatedly forced activists out of the country, draining the mobilising capacities of movements (Nauta, 2004:20–21; Thompson, 2000:228–231). This ongoing repression was based on a conservative bureaucracy, policy and army, which remained loyal to the regime. In 1980, South Africa already possessed by far the most powerful military machine on the continent. It maintained a trained operational force of 180 000 men and it could mobilise nearly half a million troops within a few hours (Leonard, 1981:13). The apartheid regime possessed the organisational capacity for continued repression of revolutionary forces.

Therefore, when summarising the political opportunity structure for movement mobilisation during the last years of apartheid, one can detect a contradictory thread. On the one hand the state opened the system for participation for some minority groups, but remained racially discriminatory against the majority of the population. On the other hand, the state resorted to extreme oppression against dissidents who did not co-opt with the newly created, supposedly more liberal, system. In the literature review it was mentioned that increased oppression by states and the way it affects movement activity are still controversial issues in social movement theory, as scholars do not agree on the effects. South Africa's civil-rights movement is an interesting case in point, as it successfully organised resistance and eventual transition to democracy despite harsh oppression by the state.

Rational choice theory offers an analytical starting point. Tilly (1978) argues that dissidents can sustain protest actions amid repression as long as the expected benefits of protest outweigh the costs. This relation may shed light on the question why movements engage in protest action amid repression, yet it falls short of elaborating on the way in which dissidents collectively define or perceive a current or future situation as costs and benefits. These variables of the 'activism equation' are socially determined, since they originate from people, their milieus and daily experiences. Therefore, one needs to scrutinise the condition that led people to judge a situation as worthwhile and gave them the power to act. In this respect, Opp and Roehl's recommendation, "which effect is to be expected under what conditions" is indicative (1990:523). The clear *effect* in South Africa was the strengthening of the civil-rights movement despite segregation, discrimination and repression. The *conditions* that cognitively and structurally activated people over a long period of time amid state repression cannot, however, be reduced to in the marginal opening of the political system. Opp and Roehl (1990) in this regard expand the explanatory base. They argue that state repression does not necessarily reduce movement activity if the repression is perceived as illegitimate and sets off micro-mobilisation processes that target individuals and groups with the goal of recruiting them for further protest activities. Hence, state repression can in fact stimulate mobilisation, if perceived as illegitimate and if the oppressed are integrated into "protest-encouraging groups" (Opp & Roehl, 1990:526). If such conditions prevail, the 'cost-benefit analysis' for sustained protest is defined and perceived in more positive, activating terms.

These insights point to the parallel importance of framing processes that, via the construction of injustice frames, collectively define a situation as an illegitimate grievance that can be addressed. Furthermore, the protest-encouraging groups are indicative of the

concept of mobilising structures, which are instrumental in actually carrying out the struggle and sustaining it beyond several occasions of protest action. As Emery (2005) states, overt protest by apartheid opponents was initially harshly suppressed by the state and therefore not immediately an option for dissidents. Yet, the limited opening of the apartheid system in the 1980s, although it was the source of much criticism and therefore a vantage point for injustice framing, did provided the little political space that was needed to trigger micro-mobilisation processes. This micro-mobilisation created the infrastructure that was needed to form protest-encouraging groups that engaged in targeted actions and framing processes to sustain the struggle. In this way, micro-mobilisation laid the foundation for the national liberation struggle that continued to unfold until 1989. What contributed to micro-mobilisation, apart from the marginal opening of the political system? What enabled the movement to maintain the momentum over several years? The answer to these questions can be found in the interplay of resource mobilisation, tactical repertoires and framing processes. In the next section, I first address resource mobilisation and tactical repertoires of the movements, and subsequently weave framing processes into these dynamics.

3.1.2 Resource mobilisation: Micro-mobilisation and tactical protest actions

As was already mentioned, the split that had developed within the white minority government resulted in ongoing defections of party members, politicians and bureaucrats to the anti-apartheid movement. These defections of elite members did not necessarily translate into them joining the ANC, rather it meant their acceptance of movement goals of non-racialism and universal civil rights (Emery, 2005:220). The emerging civil-rights movement was gradually provided with a pool of skilled and well-connected activists who helped to coordinate and finance the movements' activities. At the same time, they facilitated the recruitment process of new supporters by setting an example of dissidence and thereby underscored the process of delegitimising the government. This pool of human resources was supplemented by university students and graduates politicised by the activities of the 1970s (the Soweto Youth Uprising in 1976, the killing of Steve Biko in 1977) and political prisoners, many of whom were released in the early 1980s. As the movement gained momentum, local actors and particularly businesses and churches also began to underwrite the anti-apartheid struggle (Habib, 2005:676). Private foundations were established to finance activities and foreign governments such as the USA, the United Kingdom and the then Soviet Union sponsored movements.

Micro-mobilisation initially started at the local levels, for instance student groups, youth groups, churches, women's organisations, religious groups and sports clubs. They primarily provided support for affected communities and individuals by providing legal, organisational and financial help, but they also engaged to a larger and lesser extent in debates on political alternatives and thereby were the intellectual nucleus for an anti-apartheid struggle. As mentioned, one of the most controversial issues during the 1970s and 1980s was the forced removal of millions of African people into the homelands, the evictions of coloured communities and the destruction of squatter camps. This publicly visible repression by the state amid an increasingly widespread motivation and capacity to stand up for universal civil rights triggered the emergence of anti-eviction projects dotted in the country. Initiated by concerned, mostly urban, South Africans, these associations had multiracial memberships and were often associated with local churches. There were numerous small grassroots organisations; a specific number cannot be provided, but four of them are highlighted, as they formed the nucleus of the later NLC: the Association for Rural Advancement in KwaZulu-Natal, the Surplus People Project in the Western Cape, the Grahamstown Rural Committee and the Rural Action Committee, which grew out of the social movement the Black Sash in the then Transvaal (Eveleth & Mngxitama, 2003:160). All of these organisations emerged as distinct movements in the early 1980s and provided support to the local struggle against forced removals.

These micro-mobilisations in South Africa predominately took place in urban centres, as the grassroots organisations mentioned above were located in towns where an informed and interested audience was gathering regularly. Furthermore, movement leaders themselves often had urban backgrounds. For instance, they were members of local churches, worked in the local municipality, were union members or white-collar workers. The urban centres of South Africa were, compared to the rural areas, more fluid and heterogeneous, allowing the contradictions of apartheid to become evident on a daily basis in private and public life. In contrast, the millions of black rural workers in the countryside were for the most part geographically and legally excluded from protest-encouraging groups. The grip of the conservative apartheid system was still deeply entrenched in the countryside. The utter dependence of black farm workers on their white landlords, the resulting master and servant attitude prevalent among country people and the restricting pass and organisation laws made the countryside a very difficult place to mount resistance (Greenberg, 2004:8-9). The homelands, although de jure independent, were de facto highly reliant on the apartheid state. Increasingly overcrowded in the 1970s and 1980s, virtually no-one was able to make an

independent living from agricultural production. The vast majority of rural African people in the homelands were migrant workers and relied heavily on wage remittances or government grants for survival. These limited resources, which ultimately depended on the state and its economy, restricted micro-mobilisation in the homelands. Yet one may argue that these constraints might have been overcome by skilful leadership and coordination. The apartheid administration, however, purposefully employed the strategy of 'divide and rule' in the homelands in order to prevent a strengthening of oppositional forces. The homelands were ruled by appointed tribal leaders who had strong ties to the apartheid government and were able to accumulate wealth and influence to their own benefit and therefore were to a large extent interested in suppressing anti-apartheid micro-mobilisation (Greenberg, 2003:102).

In sum, the micro-mobilisation necessary to slowly erode and delegitimise the government under a repressive system mainly took place in urban centres and focused on addressing injustice and violence occurring in the movements' immediate proximity. Forced removals in the countryside, on the other hand, received less attention, although some anti-eviction projects maintained ties with affected communities and carried out protest actions, as will be discussed later. Overall, protest-encouraging groups centred in towns and focused on the practical and rhetorical fight against discriminatory practices. The ANC in this regard also turned its attention to the urban audience and their issues, as they were politicised and organised and therefore more receptive to its campaigning.

The civil-rights movement gained momentum in the middle 1980s due to its decentralised but effective micro-mobilisation and successful injustice framing, which will be discussed below. The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 was a significant step in the anti-apartheid struggle, as it was a loose coalition of nearly 700 civil organisations including sports clubs, student groups, youth groups, trade unions, churches, women's organisations and religious groups (Zunes, 1999:153). Furthermore, the four aforementioned anti-eviction groups joined forces in 1985 and founded the National Committee against Removal (in 1990 it was renamed the National Land Committee [NLC]), which was loosely connected to the UDF (Mngxitama, 2006:45). The NLC operated mainly decentralised through its affiliates in the different provinces. By forming the NLC, the first step towards a national presence of civil movements focusing on rural issues was taken. The formation of the UDF and the NLC marked a significant trend in the liberation movement away from local small-scale struggles to national, anti-systemic mobilisation structures. The extensive micro-mobilisation in South African cities also gradually led to the growth of alternative institutions. Cooperatives, community clinics, legal resource centres and similar offices offered help to

people when existing institutions were discriminatory and inadequate. These institutions effectively created a situation of dual power in South Africa, as they came increasingly to be managed by black South Africans themselves – a situation that again points to the parallel importance of political opportunities in triggering activism, as apartheid administrators increasingly turned a blind eye to these alternative institutions and even cooperated with them.

Mobilising structures reached a peak level with the formation of the mass democratic movement under the leadership of the ANC. It comprised the informal alliance of the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the UDF, UDF affiliates and other civil associations. By that time, the ANC had become the primary organisational vehicle through which black South Africans pursued their rights. It had built up a huge network of international representatives, which outnumbered the embassies of the apartheid state by far and also possessed a powerful domestic network of solitary groups and sympathisers (Marais, 2001:75; Zunes, 2005:139). The ANC also spearheaded the disobedience campaigns, which characterised the civil-rights movements' tactical actions during the last years of the apartheid regime. The aim of these campaigns was essentially to make the country ungovernable by initiating boycotts, strikes, occupations and the general challenging of petty apartheid laws. Scholars writing on the South African liberation struggle agree that the civil-rights movements predominately relied on non-violent protest actions to bring the apartheid system down (Emery, 2005; Marais, 2001; Zunes, 1999). Nevertheless, it needs to be pointed out that the mass democratic movement did not exclusively use non-violent tactics. Rioting, sabotaging, murdering of opponents and other violent acts were part of the anti-apartheid resistance movement. The military arm of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, carried out several bombings of military, industrial, civilian and infrastructural sites since the later 1970s. However, it never constituted a military threat to the apartheid state. The ANC leadership saw Umkhonto we Sizwe rather as a means to force the government to the negotiation table. Strikes, boycotts and the establishment of alternative institutions were regarded as the main element in the organisation's strategy for liberation. Anti-eviction organisations such as the Association for Rural Advancement or the Surplus People Project engaged exclusively in non-violent protest actions, for instance by sit-ins and silent vigils in the cases of removals, by disseminating information on evictions through press statements and by providing general legal advice on social pensions, maintenance grants and work dismissal (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999:99). The Surplus People Project gathered quantitative and qualitative data on the forced removal of millions of African people and published it in a

comprehensive report. In this way, the scale of rural and urban evictions became better known and assisted in delegitimising the apartheid government (Nauta, 2004:18).

Therefore, one can argue that the paramount tactical repertoire of the civil-rights movements was non-violent, but occasional violent attacks were carried out to disrupt the existing order. The extensive mobilisation of human, material and financial resources via domestic and international networks, which collectively organised targeted disruptive actions, allowed the civil-rights movement to attack the state where it was weakest, namely its absolute economic dependence on black workers. By resorting primarily to non-violent boycotts and strikes, the movement made the apartheid system ungovernable and publicly demonstrated that the state needs the consensus of the majority of the people to be functional. This gradual process of weakening the current apartheid government and empowering a strong multi-racial opposition, culminating in the ANC amid ongoing state repression, can be attributed to micro-mobilisation structures, as they enabled actors to carry out tactical protest actions and therefore to sustain activism. In other words, these mobilisation structures reduce the costs for actors to engage in activism and slowly increased their benefits as they observed concessions by the government and increased national organisation.

3.1.3 Framing processes: Common vision, common generalisation

As pointed out earlier, organisation and protest actions alone cannot account for sustained activism and eventual success of the movement. Opp and Roehl (1990) emphasise that a delegitimisation process is equally important to justify and mobilise sustained activism. Framing processes can explore this aspect of the South African civil-rights movement as well as the subordinated role of rural movements in the liberation struggle. Framing constructs the connection between agents, structures and grievances. It links these factual experiences up to a new interpretation that mentally envisages how something can be, if one collectively engages in that action to repeal this particular grievance. A realistic but culturally rooted interpretation is important to cognitively mobilise people within their existing social networks. It thereby strengthens collective identity, forges organisational unity and broadens the circle of participants. In this respect, the mass democratic movement under the leadership of the ANC successfully engaged in constructing a persuasive interpretation that framed their struggle nationally and internationally. The ANC in particular was able to gain the structural and ideational position as the legitimate government-in-waiting of South Africa. Furthermore, the ANC framed its liberation struggle in such broad terms that it became the most inclusive

liberation movement of South Africa, able to absorb and activate most strands of resistance to apartheid nationally and internationally. In the following discussion these framing processes are traced and weaved into the previously described political opportunities and mobilising structures.

The mass democratic movement under the leadership of the ANC manoeuvred within a very broad cultural-ideational matrix in South Africa. This matrix was dominated by the race question and the legitimate governmental form for South Africa. Within this scope, various strands of thinking existed and entered the discussion for an alternative system in South Africa. Debates were led in normative, religious and ideological terms (Klotz, 2002). The emerging global debate on human rights, politically expressed in the United Nations and practically fought for in the USA by the African-American civil-rights movements, provided the ideational backdrop for equal humanitarian sentiments in South Africa. These sentiments were supplemented by fundamental Christian values of charity and non-violence. Yet, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa had used religious values for decades to support racial segregation. Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu became a symbolic religious figure in the fight against apartheid by advocating racial conciliation. Deeply rooted in Christianity was also the Black Consciousness Movement that emerged in the 1960s under Steve Biko. By employing normative Christian values they appealed to African people to recognise their own potential for cognitive liberation and thereby facilitated greater cohesiveness and solidarity among black groups. Ideological interpretations of the apartheid system were strongly influenced by the then actually existing socialism in the Soviet Union and Cuba and the liberal-democratic capitalism of the USA and Western Europe. Marxist ideas of class struggle and economic exploitation were mirrored in the apartheid system. Guerrilla warfare and the intent of proletarian revolution, including expropriation, were therefore part and parcel of certain sections of the liberation movement, including African labour unions, the Communist Party of South Africa and the ANC itself. At the same time, a strong liberal tradition originating mainly from the white South African middle class, but by no means reducible to them, permeated the ANC as well as other movements. They advocated a more 'welfarist' policy aimed at ameliorating the suffering of the oppressed through constructive engagement with the apartheid government, but without a radical emancipatory project (Marais, 2001; Mngxitama, 2006).

The ideational platform upon which a strong oppositional force was to be built was therefore extremely diverse. How was it feasible to enclose such a diverse interpretation of the South African situation under one injustice frame, mobilising national and international actors

to back the ANC and the mass democratic movement in South Africa? Marais (2001) outlines an argument that draws on the Gramscian concept of 'common sense'. By framing the struggle around central and *common* values and aspirations that *make sense* to most actors and their positions, the injustice frame attains a broad resonance, which is highly inclusive. But broad inclusiveness means that the frame is equipped with a certain elasticity and ambiguity that allow multiple oppositional strands to join the coalition without breaking ranks. By focusing on central values and remaining vague on explicit policy proposals, the ANC was able to assemble a broad coalition that grew into a national liberation movement echoing global norms and aspirations. In this respect, it can be argued that the ANC built a master frame that united different classes, traditions and cultures in South Africa around the common purpose of challenging and gradually delegitimising the apartheid system.

This master framing can be unpacked in detail in order to identify the stages and consequences more clearly. According to Snow and Bendford (1988), the framing process can be divided into diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. The diagnostic stage, the construction of an injustice frame, was the most important stage for the ANC in unifying the mass democratic movement. By identifying the apartheid system as the root of all grievances, the movement reduced the origin to one common denominator and linked the fight against poverty and economic decline to the fight against apartheid. The liberation movement agreed in broad terms that the current economic and social situation in South Africa was due to racial discrimination and the marginalisation of the majority of the population. This all-encompassing enemy image of the apartheid system circumvented a positioning towards deeper structural questions such as the economic system, urban-rural disparities and gender issues. Land distribution therefore became a 'victim' of this overarching injustice frame, as it was implicitly identified as a grievance associated with apartheid, but not explicitly recognised as a fundamental requirement for structural liberation. The research project of the Surplus People Project, which gathered data on forced removals of African communities, certainly helped in bringing this rural issue to the attention of a broader public, but at the same time it focused in its analysis of the inhuman practices of the apartheid regime and not explicitly on the underlining need to redress this huge shift in land distribution. The inequality in land distribution remained one of many grievances under apartheid. In this respect, the NLC also agreed on the injustice frame, recognising the need for firstly abolishing apartheid and its discriminatory laws and then addressing land distribution under a new non-racial dispensation (Mngxitama, 2006; Sihlongonyane, 2003).

As a result of this generalised diagnostic framing, the proposed alternatives also remained inclusive and addressed basic human values. As Marais (2001:76) argues, the ANC's conception of a post-apartheid society, the prognostic framing, "remained rudimentary and impressionistic" and modelled around the "sweeping injunctions of the ANC Freedom Charter", which states that "[t]here shall be houses, security and comfort! ... The people shall share in the country's wealth! ... The land shall be shared among those who work it!" (African National Congress, 1955:n.p.). These future perspectives remained barely elaborated on over the 30 years of liberation struggle and therefore left ample room for interpretations from various stances. While uniting South Africans in their fight against apartheid, they would later on lead to much conflict and confusion on the direction of policy.

The motivational framing stage, which addressed the actual actions needed for change, ranged from violent actions through Umkhonto we Sizwe to the non-violent disobedience campaigns outlined above. While emphasis was given to non-violent protest action, space was provided for an armed struggle throughout the ANC liberation history. It can be argued that this two-track approach assisted in building an inclusive resistance front. The armed struggle helped in allying and pacifying the more radical wing of the movement, while the prevalent non-violent campaigns, accompanied by repetitive rhetorical assurances of an inclusive democracy based on conciliation, opened the door for many white South Africans and international sympathisers to join the movement.

In sum, diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing by the ANC and the mass democratic movement remained focused on central values and aspirations, which provided the interpretational elasticity needed to unite most oppositional forces of South Africa. By agreeing on a common enemy and focusing on a non-racial society based on universal civil rights, the ANC could mobilise nationally and internationally, across races, classes and cultures. This process culminated around the imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, whose liberation campaign symbolically framed the national liberation struggle and the legalisation of the ANC. Admittedly, this framework shortens and sums up a long and much more complex process of the South African liberation movement. It is important to note that there were numerous internal fights, break-ups and debates around the idea of liberating South Africa. It was certainly not a smooth process with a clear idea of how to become a national liberation movement. Through many trials and errors, the ANC experimented with different forms of protests and alignments, yet eventually arrived at a strategy that promised mass mobilisation in South Africa as well as international assistance. By assembling numerous oppositional forces under one master frame, the ANC became the authentic voice for a new

South Africa and thereby defied the apartheid system. This process was supplemented by the international community, which recognised the ANC as the government-in-waiting and initiated through the United Nations political, cultural and economic sanctions, which contributed to the symbolic isolation and economic erosion of the apartheid regime.

3.1.4 Summary

In order to gauge contemporary rural activism in South Africa, a thorough analysis of the South African civil-rights movement had to be presented, as the organisational and ideational roots of the NLC and the LPM can be found there. The NLC is essentially a child of the liberation era of South Africa and has retained many characteristics of this time. Without understanding the dynamics of the anti-apartheid struggle, one cannot attempt to describe the evolvement of the NLC and subsequently compare it to the MST of Brazil. As it was shown, the political opportunity structure, mobilising resources and framing processes were dominated by the dichotomy of the apartheid state and the civil-rights movements in South Africa. The NLC and its affiliates were participants of the mass democratic movement and shared their values and aspirations. Its work was directly interlinked with the work of other civil movements in South Africa and it sustained the same repressive state. Hence its trajectory is fatefully connected to the South African liberation movement and the ANC.

The civil-rights movement of South Africa was successful in mobilising and sustaining a national mass movement during the 1970s and 1980s. Ultimately it was able under the leadership of the ANC to enter into negotiation with the apartheid state in 1989 and to gradually phase out apartheid laws, leading up to the first non-racial democratic elections in 1994. Employing the synthesised framework, one is able to discern two fundamental and interrelated reasons for the civil-rights movement's success. Firstly, micro-mobilisation, which progressively evolved into a national mass movement, established an institutional situation of dual power in South Africa and organised defiance campaigns that structurally undermined the apartheid system. Furthermore, it facilitated framing processes resulting in the collective perception of the apartheid state as illegitimate. These micro-mobilisation processes, however, were not solely due to a sudden recognition by South Africans that activism is possible and needed. Political opportunities opened up domestically and internationally, which enabled and justified an intensified struggle. The second reason is to be found in the very successful framing of the liberation struggle. The ANC in this regard engaged in counter-framing by progressively uniting the liberation movement under one

master frame of an alternative 'South African vision'. In essence, the ANC structurally and symbolically undermined the apartheid system and nationally and internationally attained the status of the legitimate South African government-in-waiting.

Having emerged and subsequently becoming a part of these developments in South Africa moulded the NLC in a way that made it substantially different to the MST from its inception. Following the impetus of the civil-rights movement, the nucleus of the NLC can be found in the urban centres. The NLC was founded by four separate already-established anti-eviction projects, which originated from urban micro-mobilisations against forced removal. Most staff members were dedicated anti-apartheid activists with urban backgrounds and non-rural day jobs. As Mngxitama (2006:45), a former NLC member, argues, the NLC was founded on welfarist principles by people wishing to ameliorate the suffering of the oppressed. The actually affected rural people were not the primary initiators of the NLC, they were at the very beginning the receivers and only later absorbed in greater numbers into the organisation as fieldworkers and administrators. The NLC, while later attaining the status of a national rural movement, was in fact largely founded by people not directly linked to a rural livelihood. The situation in the rural sector, as it was shown, was very much dominated by apartheid segregation and marginalisation and thereby missed the potential to actually voice direct resistance from the grassroots. This was reinforced by the focus of the ANC and other civil associations on the urban centres. While theoretically acknowledging the grievances of the rural non-white communities, their 'manpower' was not sufficiently integrated into the nationwide liberation struggle.

Apart from the urban orientation of the NLC, it attained another crucial characteristic resulting from its emergence within the liberation movement. As it was shown, the ANC successfully constructed an almost all-encompassing injustice frame, uniting the people around common values and aspirations. The fight against poverty and oppression meant challenging the apartheid regime and all its discriminating practices. The land question remained one part of this struggle and therefore relatively unspecified. It was interpreted through the mutual fight against racial discrimination and marginalisation in all areas of life. It can be argued that the NLC activists largely adapted this view and carried it over to the post-apartheid era. This encompassing vision of a new and better South Africa would also unite the NLC and delay a more in-depth engagement with the land question.

These characteristics of the NLC and its historical embeddedness into the South African liberation movement are significant features of the NLC's emergence phase. One needs to take cognisance of these findings, as they contrast with the findings of the organisational and

ideational origins of the MST and therefore already point to systemic differences that explain variations in contemporary rural activism.

3.2 Stabilisation and adaptation (1990–1999)

The release of Nelson Mandela and the legalisation of the ANC in 1990 marked the beginning of a completely different political opportunity structure for the NLC and rural activism in South Africa. In 1990, the ANC and a host of other parties entered into negotiations with the National Party in order to bring about a gradual change towards a new inclusive South African administration. The negotiations yielded important results. In 1993, an interim constitution was approved, reintegrating the former de jure independent African homelands and eradicating all racial laws, among them the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act No. 108, which repealed the 1913 and 1936 Land acts. Secondly, it comprised the intention to form a Government of National Unity (GNU) after the first democratic elections in 1994, which echoed the ANC's zeal under Nelson Mandela to reconcile the races and to allay fears of an ANC-dominated government (Thompson, 1998:234–250).

The new political power constellation emerging from the transitional period and the eventual ANC election victory in 1994 opened a new era for rural activism. The ensuing years were characterised by the shared desire of civil society and government to fashion a development path that could redress the legacies of apartheid. Development planning became an official state affair. The new political opportunity structure had profound implications on the organisational structure of the NLC and its further development. In essence, the period 1990 to 1999 can be described as a continuous blurring of state and civil society, of which the NLC was very much part. By examining the development of the NLC during this particular period, the interrelatedness of political opportunities, mobilising structures and the framing of land issues become apparent. The NLC, in this regard, is a very interesting example of the decline of a movement due to the inclusion in governmental structures and attitudes and thereby progressively losing its critical distance necessary to maintain the momentum of collective action.

3.2.1 Political opportunities: Inclusion and neutralisation

The political opportunity structure ensuing after 1990 can in retrospective be described as excessively inclusive and neutralising. This tendency was formalised by the post-apartheid alignment of most of South Africa's progressive forces which, aspiring to form a new

administration, gradually rose to a new political elite and thereby drained civil society of its vibrant and critical segments and framed the new government as the one legitimate entity for development policy. This assimilation was a practical expression of ideas conceptualised in the master frame, emphasising the inclusive ethos of the ANC and aiming at reconciliation and nation building. The tripartite alliance became characteristic of the new political structure. The ANC allied with Cosatu and the South African Communist Party (Nauta, 2006:29). Critics (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004; McKinley, 2008; Nauta, 2006) have pointed out that the incorporation of Cosatu and the Communist Party certainly facilitated the process of transition as the ANC became nationally connected to a well-organised network of supporters and could justify its claim of being the 'united voice' for South Africa. Yet, in the long term it meant the taming and alignment of dissident voices and thereby the gradual loss of an influential opposition in South Africa.

The joint efforts of fighting the apartheid regime, which had united the civil-rights movement during its struggle years, ensued into a euphoric and optimistic will to work together with the new administration for a better South Africa. This led to the co-optation of the vast majority of the former anti-apartheid movements into the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) in 1992. Sanco attained a central role during the early 1990s, in particular through its coordination of local governance structures. However, with the local government elections in 1995/1996, many of the representative roles performed by civics at the local level ceded to political parties and elected councillors and therefore diminished the role of Sanco (Seekings, 1997). In 1995, a new umbrella organisation was founded, namely the South African National Nongovernmental Organisation Coalition (SANGOCO). SANGOCO combined nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), among them the NLC, universities, civic movements and unions. It was mandated to spread the notion of the state's development policy among the public (Naidoo, 2001).

The all-encompassing tendencies of the new South African administration also included the alignment of interest groups from industry and international financial institutions. As mentioned, the ANC "had only slogans and broad statements of principles at its disposal" and "[n]othing resembling an economic policy outline existed" (Marais, 2001:124). The ANC was therefore obliged to cooperate with domestic and foreign economic advisors, but was at the same time willing to listen since the reconciliation policy advocated by Mandela called for the consideration and incorporation of domestic and international business interests. Amid a globally changing development paradigm that shifted from state-led welfarist principles to market-oriented solutions, and guided by the World Bank and local business groups, the ANC

in 1996 disbanded its initial economic strategy, the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and introduced the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) strategy. GEAR has been regarded by numerous scholars as a setback in terms of pro-poor development and as a defeat of the assimilated left-wing voices (e.g. Greenberg, 2003; Hall, 2004; Marais, 2001; McKinley, 2008). GEAR gave impetus to the 1997 White Paper on Land Reform, which stipulates South Africa's present three-pillar land-reform policy: land redistribution based on the willing seller–willing buyer principle,[13] land restitution and tenure reform. It furthermore repealed the 1970 Act on the Subdivision of Agricultural Land and thereby legally paved the way for reducing farm sizes and diversifying ownership structures.

The institutional inclusion of various interest groups into the process of shaping a new South Africa translated into legal structures characterised by the effort to allay different strands of the new 'rainbow nation'. The above-mentioned land-reform policy is one example of an attempt to reconcile social development issues with the perceived need to preserve the basic economic structure, as South Africa's land policy is inherently market-oriented, but maintains through grants and start-up assistance a state-directed welfare component. The 1996 South African Constitution also reflects this dualism. One of the most contentious issues during negotiations was the property clause, which addressed the core question of how to rectify apartheid in terms of asset ownership. The ANC was initially interested in not including a clause protecting private-property rights in order to keep the subject of possible state expropriations open. Yet, in the course of negotiations it became clear that the National Party and foreign advisors would not accept anything less than a property clause. In the end the property clause included the protection of private property rights, but reflected the ANC's point of view in that expropriation would be legally feasible under certain conditions – "for a public purpose or in the public interest", which includes "the nation's commitment to land reform, and to reforms to bring about equitable access to all South Africa's natural resources" (South Africa, 1996:n.p.). Beyond this, it states that "[t]he state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to foster conditions which enable citizens to gain access to land on an equitable basis" (South Africa, 1996:n.p.).

Consequently, the South African Constitution provides the legal space to address land distribution, including the option for land expropriation. Therefore, it can be argued that South African rural movements are provided with a favourable legal framework that is supportive of land reform and can therefore serve as a vantage point for rural activism, as it has been the case for the Brazilian MST. In Brazil, the constitutional condition of land serving

---

[13] Including at this time the Farm Equity Scheme and the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG).

a 'social function' became one of the cornerstones of the MST's success, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. In contrast, the legal space of the South African Constitution has not translated into the same mobilising potential for the NLC. The rationale for this divergence can be found in the complex interrelatedness of movement dynamics. While political opportunities were exceptionally favourable for the NLC in terms of political and legal access points, the political openness ultimately translated into an almost complete absorption of the NLC into ANC branches, making it difficult to distinguish between the organisation itself and governmental structures. Accordingly, as discussed below, resource mobilisation of the NLC became dominated by governmental inputs and structures. The land question was framed in compliance with the government's concept of land reform. This general alignment of dynamics towards the government resulted in a gradual neutralisation of the NLC as an independent rural movement.

In line with their reconciliation policy, the ANC government advocated an orderly, administrative approach to land distribution and called on the NLC to be part of its implementation. The 1997 White Paper on Land Reform (South Africa, 1997:n.p.) spells out this intention clearly:

> The land reform programme emphasises the key role of the non-governmental sector in supporting rural and urban development and land reform policies…. Those who stress good governance and transparency and argue for participation, see a role for NGOs greater than as mere deliverers of services. They seek to involve NGOs and CBOs [community-based organisations] in the policy dialogue and in decision making. In this connection, the strengthening of NGOs and CBOs as separate, specialist institutions is important.

The literature review has shown that such processes can lead to a splitting or radicalisation of organisations, as certain members oppose the increasing alignment with government (McAdam, 1995). This was ultimately the fate of the NLC, as the next section will illustrate. Yet, as outlined in detail in Section 3.1, the common struggle against apartheid had forged a strong alliance between the anti-apartheid movement and the ANC and thereby also delayed a critical engagement of the NLC with its political environment. Nauta (2006:222) boldly describes this alignment as follows: "[T]he NLC and its affiliates were regarded as comrades by the ANC. Comrades who supported the struggle of the people and underground ANC". For this reason, hopes and expectations were high during the first 10 years that the land question could be addressed jointly. As the next section will illustrate, the NLC became an organisational and ideological partner for the national land-reform programme.

3.2.2 Resource mobilisation: Institutionalisation and cooperation

Between 1985 and 1998, the NLC grew from four affiliated organisations to ten[14] (National Land Committee, 1998:1). Thereby, the NLC network became the only segment of civil society addressing land issues in South Africa with a national presence (Mngxitama, 2006:45). With the gradual abandonment of apartheid after 1990, the NLC directed its core focus to joining the discussion and implementation of a national land-reform programme.

This renewed attention to explicit questions of land distribution came at a time when many rural areas in South Africa experienced upheavals due to the political changes promising redress and political participation (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999:122; Mngxitama, 2006:47). With the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, land invasions in rural and urban areas started to gain momentum, but as transitional negotiations were pending, people continued to be arrested and removed. Landless people in South Africa were either urban squatters or loose communities working and living on white-owned farms. As outlined in the historical overview, an independent African peasantry farming on its own or rented land or as sharecroppers had been largely eradicated by the end of World War II. Labour tenancy had become the predominant system and their growing families resulted in an increasing number of idle farm dwellers and rural workers travelling from farm to farm in search of work (Greenberg, 2004:9). In the former homeland alone, remainders of African subsidence farming were present (Vaughan & McIntosh, 1993:1–2). Land needs in South Africa were therefore many-sided, including the wish for ancestral restitution, secure tenure for workers and their families in urban and rural areas, support for subsistence agriculture in the former homelands and land redistribution. Land-reform discussions were consequently multi-dimensional, with a strong focus on rights and support.

During this crucial transitional period, the NLC took a strong stance for the landless and the need for land reform. It continued condemning forced removals publicly and initiated numerous community-based meetings to discuss post-apartheid land-reform options. In 1993, it organised the "Back to the Land" campaign at the World Trade Centre Johannesburg (where the political negotiations took place) to lobby against the inclusion of property rights in the property clause (Sihlongonyane, 2003:30). This campaign was followed by a National Land Conference in 1994 with representatives from more than 700 rural and landless communities gathering to discuss their needs. The delegates drew up a Land Charter, which

---

[14] Association for Rural Advancement in KwaZulu-Natal (AFRA), Grahamstown Rural Committee, Eastern Cape Land Committee, Farmworkers Research & Resource Project, Free State Rural Committee, Southern Cape Land Committee, Surplus People Project, Transkei Land Service Organisation, Transvaal Rural Action Committee, Association for Northern Cape Rural Advancement.

addressed numerous issues, indicating that the right for land was still identified more with a right for equal rights in the new South Africa, e.g. "[l]and must be shared among Black and White. We say, 'One farm, one farmer'! There must be democratic, non-racial, non-sexist local government. There must be affordable, good resources and services" (Association for Rural Advancement, 1994:11, 13, 14).

Shortly after the 1994 elections, both national and local government came to be seen as more sympathetic to home and landless people, triggering numerous land invasions of communities. The monthly NLC newsletters of 1994 report on several invasions of communities in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, Transvaal and the Free State occupying their ancestral land (National Land Committee, 1994), but explicitly called them autonomously organised. The demand for land and the will and capacity to mobilise for land invasions on a grassroots level if given the political opportunity structure became evident to the NLC as well as the new government during this short period of time. In response to these unregulated micro-mobilising activities, the ANC government swiftly enacted the Restitution to Land Rights Bill in December 1994 in order to initiate a process "which aims to deal rationally and in a organized way" with this problem (National Land Committee, December 1994:1). This bill was followed by the Land Rights Court in 1995, mandated to administer the process of land restitution.

Following the widening political opportunities from 1994 onwards and the perceived will of the new government to cooperate, the NLC became increasingly engaged in governmental meetings to debate policy proposals and implementations. The NLC welcomed the land initiatives taken by the government and commented regularly on them in its newsletters. Apart from seeing each other as 'comrades' and sharing a common vision for a prosperous land sector, the NLC also had practical reasons for its increased cooperation. After the elections, the civil society sector in South Africa had started suffering from a funding crisis. With the advent of a non-racial democracy many donors perceived the South African crisis to be over and instead channelled funds to other countries or to the new ANC government, specifically supporting state-directed developmental programmes such as the RDP and state-sponsored social welfare partnerships with 'approved' civil society organisations (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999:157; McKinley, 2008). Therefore, to integrate the NLC into the evolving development agenda of the ANC appeared only logical on factual and ideological grounds.

After 1994, the NLC therefore increasingly changed its work focus from crisis and resistance work to long-term advocacy and development support. After 1994, its primary task

was to assist people in the different provinces to lodge land claims and to gather data on land needs for future land-redistribution projects (National Land Committee, 1994; 1995b). Furthermore, it got involved in so-called strategic task teams, which were set up nationwide to facilitate NGO-government cooperation outlined in the RDP strategy. The positive and to some extent self-sacrificing attitude towards this mutual cooperation is reflected in the following letter extract of an NLC coordinator to a Member of the Executive Council for Land Reform in the Eastern Cape (as cited in Nauta, 2004:204):

> … we believe that in various fields related to land reform, NGOs may have a valuable contribution to make … We would be eager to assist Strategic Task Teams in their work on the understanding that this may involve limited secondment of NGO staff …

The secondment of NGO staff became a widespread practice in the period 1994 to ca. 1998. Many skilful and well-connected staff members joined the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) at national or provincial level. AFRA, as one of the NLC affiliates, commented on this process in 1999: "While this added considerably to the capacity of the Department, it meant that AFRA lost some of its most strategic thinkers" (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999:170). In 1994, NLC chair Richard Clacey was seconded to the DLA, in 1995 Joanne Yawitch and Bahle Sibisi were appointed special advisors to the Land Affairs minister, to name only a few cases of secondment (National Land Committee, 1995a). Consequently, one can observe a progressive bureaucratisation of the NLC and absorption of its staff and projects into the national development agenda. Activism and voluntarism were replaced by a culture where notions of professionalism, management, career and hierarchy came to the fore. While the NLC continuously stressed its critical and independent partnership with the administration throughout its newsletters, the NLC became more or less a formal rural institution carrying out research and administrative tasks.

By 1996, the delivery of land via restitution and distribution had started to stagnate due to considerable budget cuts and an increasing focus on market-oriented solutions outlined in GEAR. This non-delivery accompanied by ongoing farm evictions caused discontent among the landless to flare up and resulted in sporadic land invasions in rural areas, as reported in the 1996 and 1997 NLC newsletters (National Land Committee, 1996; 1997). The slow and ineffective land-reform process became clear to the NLC and the landless, yet it neither resulted in an abandonment of the formal cooperative course the NLC had taken nor in an emergence of a renewed organised grassroots movement, even though discontent and micro-mobilising capacities were present. The master frame the ANC had constructed during the struggle years in conjunction with its political openness towards the NLC caused the NLC to

see the government as the legitimate entity to regulate land reform – an entity that can be wrong sometimes, but whose "sincerity and commitment can not be doubted" (National Land Committee, March 1996:1). In this sense, the NLC throughout 1994 to 1999 engaged in 'containment framing' of autonomous rural actions and thereby continued to include in and somewhat subordinate its struggle for land to the broad national master frame of the ANC.

3.2.3 Framing processes: Containment framing within the national master frame

As stated in Section 3.1, the NLC was since its inception dominated by liberal welfarist views originating from urban activists. During the 1990s, this dominance was gradually challenged by rural fieldworkers, the ANC Youth League, Communist Party members and young graduates who ascended into leadership positions and advocated more radical direct measures for land reform. Yet, as it was argued before, the master frame that had united South Africans during the struggle years was carried over to the post-apartheid years and ensued into an atmosphere of cooperation and optimism to work jointly with the ANC government. This, as Mngxitama (2006) argues, also resulted in an overall harmonious co-existence of different strands within the NLC during the first years of the post-apartheid era, agreeing that the ANC government in consultation with the NLC will design and implement an appropriate land policy. That this internal consensus resulted in an increased institutionalisation of the NLC has been demonstrated above, yet it also led to an alignment of framing processes in a sense that the struggle for land became publicly defined as one technocratic process amid many rural issues.

The ANC called upon civil society to set out to reconstruct the South African society and to participate in an ideological turn from resistance to reconstruction (Marais, 2001). The master frame experienced a redefinition, building on the common values and experiences generated in the anti-apartheid struggle; it bridged the feeling of camaraderie with patriotism and thereby a sense of duty to follow and serve the ANC government in their quest for a better South Africa, whatever this entailed. Land reform was therefore publicly defined through state policies and accordingly framed around technocratic and conformative principles. The framing of the land question by the NLC became through institutional and ideological inclusion subordinated to these 'master frame principles'. As outlined previously, throughout 1990 to 1999 state policy experienced a change as the ANC adapted a more market-oriented approach in the form of GEAR, which had repercussions for diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing processes of the land question. When going through the

various NLC newsletters, one can discern this alignment process. For instance, the NLC diagnostic framing task diverged substantially. In June 1994, shortly after the first democratic elections, the NLC maintained the following with reference to how to overcome poverty and inequality:

> … land reform lies at the heart of this process. It is the starting point in any real debate about redistributing wealth and providing opportunities…. [The government] can embark on as many housing schemes, electrification programmes or health campaigns as it likes. But until it deals with the real problems in the distribution of land in South Africa it is going to miss the point. (National Land Committee, June 1994:1)

In April 1998, this determinism had shrunk to an admission that "land is not viewed in isolation from broader rural development and poverty eradication issues" (National Land Committee, April 1998:1). In fact, in 1998, the NLC newsletter saw a merger with the Environmental Development Trust newsletter and an almost complete abandoning of explicit rural issues such as land invasions, evictions and land-policy discussions, which had featured prominently in its newsletters throughout 1994 to 1997. The merger meant a divergence to stories covering HIV, gender and environmental issues in the rural sector and thereby followed the overall trend of seeing land distribution as one part of rural misery (Rural & Land Digest, 1998–2001).

Also prognostic and motivational framing aligned with state policy. From its "one farmer, one farm policy" outlined in the 1994 Land Charter, which aimed to "redistribute land to the vast majority of landless people", it moved to a position formulated in GEAR that land reform should follow cost-benefit principles and hence target economically viable beneficiaries who are able to engage in competitive commercial agriculture (Mngxitama, 2006; National Land Committee, December 1994:1). Consequently, motivational framing, the rhetoric and tactics chosen to activate landless people, was oriented towards addressing these diagnostic and prognostic interpretations of the land question.

Motivational framing in compliance with the ANC's idea of cooperation therefore took a form of channelling land demand in an organised and rational way, which enabled the NGO-government coalition to direct the process. While the NLC repeatedly maintained that "farm dwellers themselves will have to organize and try to change their situation" (National Land Committee, December 1996:1), it was engaged in containing grassroots mobilisation, following the opinion of Minister Joe Slovo that "land invasions were orchestrated by outsiders who do not have the best interest at heart, but who are instigating such actions for their own personal and political gain" (National Land Committee, September 1994:2). AFRA maintained that "[land invasions] is a sign of failure, not success. It is a sign of desperation,

of giving up hope in the programmes of the government and civil society to deliver land to all people" (Association for Rural Advancement, 1999:134) Land invasions have remained a sensitive topic in South Africa and the state maintains a zero-tolerance policy for reasons that are discussed in Section 3.3. The NLC in this regard was in a *motivational framing dilemma*. On the one hand, it recognised the need for a strong grassroots movement to remind the state of its land-reform promises, on the other hand it considered itself to be in the state's debt in terms of its ideological and institutional partnership. Up until about 2004, this framing contradiction would simmer within the NLC, controlled by the national master frame that was persistently evoked by the government. The NLC therefore embarked on a critical, but organised, land-reform campaign that included workshops, land summits and publications aimed at the landless communities to become aware of their rights, but at the same time to provide a controlled environment to vent their anger. Since the motivational frame of the NLC was embedded in the inclusive national master frame of reconstruction and partnership, it was resonant with most landless communities who to a large extent identified with the ANC. It ultimately led to a cognitive demobilisation of the landless and contributed to the neutralisation of the NLC. The 1990s therefore saw the establishment of state-directed land activism in South Africa.

3.2.4 Summary

The period between 1990 and 1999 changed the political opportunity structure of the NLC entirely. The NLC went from complete political exclusion to excessive inclusion. Theories on political opportunity have generally maintained that political openness stimulates activism, as legal and institutional access points are provided that increase activists' mobilising and advocating capacity. Yet, South Africa and the NLC present an empirical example that underpins the importance of examining the interrelatedness of movement dynamics. When examining the changes that took place in the organisational structure, tactical repertoires and framing processes, one can reason why eventually the NLC lost its activism potential in terms of mobilising the landless and making an impact on land reform. In this regard, McAdam's (1996:29) insight of movement form being a variable of the differences in the nature of political opportunities applies to South Africa's NLC. He maintains that changes in the legal or institutional structure that grant more formal political access to groups are apt to set in motion the most institutionalised movement forms.

Between 1990 and 1999, the NLC developed from a grassroots civil movement to a formalised NGO. The sudden political openness triggered a substantial absorption of project activity and staff members into governmental branches. The NLC in this way became an integral part of the new administration and while de jure independent, became de facto very dependent on public funding and state-initiated development projects. Resource mobilisation occurred around the national development agenda, which included the actual landless communities whose attempted micro-mobilising activities via land invasions were channelled into bureaucratic processes. This change could, however, only happen in conjunction with an overall strong belief in the new government and its good intentions. The master frame of a new and better South Africa generated during the struggle years by the ANC provided the ideological perspective that made people perceive the benefits to be higher when cooperating with the state as opposed to consistently acting against it. By linking camaraderie with patriotism, the master frame became a tool of neutralising and conforming land activism to the new national development agenda. Land activism by the NLC was reduced to a state partnership that did not challenge the major course of the government and contained grassroots activism. Hence, the NLC is an empirical example that illustrates that the nature of political openness ultimately determines the form that activism takes. The political opportunities after 1994 were essentially too inclusive to maintain the independent critical stance of the NLC.

3.3 Radicalisation and decline (1999–2009)

The period 1999 to 2009 saw the collapse of the NLC and the emergence but quick decline of a new national rural movement, the Landless People's Movement (LPM). Today there is little political pressure emerging from landless organisations. It is a regionalised process of contestation and engagement with government. Following the previous Sections, the overall constellation of movement dynamics did not alter substantially; rather an amplification of existing characteristics of political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing processes took place, which, taken together, account for the collapse of a national representation of landless interests. The short lifespan of the LPM was ultimately the consequence of the persistence of these established dynamics. Being a product of perceived grievances, the LPM was generated by the NLC in response to the failure of land reform in South Africa, yet, as the following chapter will show, sustained movement dynamic was not feasible in South Africa given the constellation of political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing.

3.3.1 Political opportunities: Consolidation of top-down approach

Political opportunities for rural activism did not open up in the period of 1999 to 2009. During this time, the ANC government consolidated its dominant position as South Africa's ruling party and as the legitimate institution to bring about change to the countryside. While the early post-apartheid era was still characterised by an atmosphere of cooperation and counselling, this had changed to a gradual closure and professionalisation of the state. The ANC government, supported by its tripartite alliance, was confirmed as the South African ruling party in the 1999 and 2004 general elections. Thabo Mbeki succeeded Nelson Mandela as president of the Republic in 1999 and was subsequently re-elected for a second term in 2004. The ANC had transcended from being a liberation party to a consolidated governing party, defining itself as "a disciplined force of the left" (African National Congress, 2002:n.p.).

By 1999, the economic landscape had changed significantly. Black Economic Empowerment had become the new policy focus – a programme aiming at speeding up the integration of previously disadvantaged groups into the South African economy. Attention was hereby given to 'economic viable' beneficiaries, a policy focus that was in line with the conservative stance of the macroeconomic strategy GEAR. Considerable cuts in social spending, which also affected the budget for land reform, and the establishment of an influential elite of approximately 90 000 black commercial farmers were the results (Driver, 2007: 67). With less than 2% of farmland being reallocated in 1999, it became clear that the goal of redistributing 30% had failed (Lahiff, 2008:23). The majority of the rural population remained poor and in precarious working conditions. The commercial agriculture sector increasingly faced international competition, thus reverting to job cuts and temporary labour in order to decrease costs. Overall, the South African countryside experienced a widening income gap reflecting the general tendency of an unequally growing economy (Aliber, 2003:479)

In response to the slow delivery of land, the entire land-reform programme was put on hold after the Mbeki administration took office and a lengthy review followed, which has been described as a behind-the-door process, since it excluded any input from the non-governmental rural sector (Eveleth & Mngxitama, 2003:163). In 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs issued a policy statement extending the delivery period to 15 years (from 2000 to 2015) and announced the introduction of the Land Redistribution for

Agricultural Development programme (LRAD), which largely replaced SLAG (Hall, 2004:8). LRAD's focus was the creation of a black commercial farmer class, since poverty was not a requirement to qualify for a loan and wealthy farmers could raise much bigger loans (Hall, 2004; Weideman, 2004).

LRAD is an example of the post-apartheid absorption and neutralisation of rural organisations and their gradual embracement of market-oriented strategies, because any opposition to LRAD from rural organisations was early on silenced and channelled into orderly conduct. As outlined before, the late transitional period was already characterised by a 'pacting' between the state, World Bank and white agricultural capital. The Mbeki administration fostered this tendency further, which also affected the course of South African land policy. In 1999, the politically significant class of black commercial farmers joined this elite alignment of business, capital and state. Agri South Africa (Agri SA)[15] and the National African Farmers' Union (NAFU)[16] are the associations that represent established white and black farmers, respectively. In 2000, Agri SA started to embrace a coordinated land reform process and therefore initiated talks with the government. It subsequently joined NAFU in a presidential working group. Both unions enjoy preferential access to the highest level of executive authority in South Africa and meet regularly with the President. These representatives of white and black farmers, together with the state, represent the elite alliance that has shaped South Africa's land policy ever since. Their focus throughout 1999 to 2009 has been the stability and profitability of the commercial agricultural sector and the empowerment of 'qualified farmers' (National Department of Agriculture, 2001:9). Farmers' unions made some advancement in supporting black farmers, but on a limited scale, mostly via small development projects (Hall, 2004:8). However, they have not engaged in any serious discussions on how to make land available to a wider circle of beneficiaries. While rhetorically still defending the role of land reform and rural movements in fighting rural poverty and apartheid injustice, actual policy initiatives have shown different results, indicating an abandoning of pro-poor inclusive land initiatives. As the president of Agri SA has put it bluntly: "Rural poverty is not a problem the agriculture sector can solve. It's government's problem" (Sherry & Paton, 2009).

Space for the inclusion of NGOs and rural movements therefore became increasingly marginalised and conditioned on the submission to the general state development strategy.

---

[15] Agri SA was founded in 1904 and represents small- and large-scale commercial farmers. Since the late 1990s it has actively recruited black farmers.

[16] NAFU was established in 1991 and represents a small but important class of black commercial farmers. Most are individual black farmers, and some are urban business people investing profits in agriculture.

District assessment committees were for instance established across the country. The committees were mandated to determine, in cooperation with the local government, which land-reform projects should be approved (Hall, 2004:9). In some instances, staff were recruited from rural organisations, endowing them with some political leverage and finances, yet strongly discouraging any grassroots mobilisation attempts, as will be seen below. The government's zero-tolerance against land occupations and grassroots mobilisation became even more pronounced during this period. This attitude arose not only from the legacy of Mandela's reconciliation policy, but also from the disastrous economic and social results of land occupations in bordering Zimbabwe.[17] Since 2000, the land-reform policies of President Robert Mugabe have had a significant impact on the South African debates on land reform. Considering South Africa's own stagnating land reform and Mbeki's rather timid attempts to condemn the land invasions, international investors feared a Zimbabwean-style land reform in South Africa too. The South African government became worried about investor confidence and subsequently came down hard on land-occupation attempts. In a 2004 released press statement, the opinion of the ANC government was declared as follows: "South Africans will not tolerate hooliganism that is only aimed at misleading people and creating chaos and discord. Those with designs to deliberately flout the law and occupy land illegally will be met with the full might of the law" (African National Congress, 2004:n.p.).

In recent times, attempts to occupy land have focused on urban and peri-urban land in South Africa. Large-scale land invasions have not been reported to this day. Groups of restitution claimants have however repeatedly tried to speed up the process by occupying land temporarily (Hall, 2004; Pithouse, 2009b). The invasion of land was met with strict eviction by the government. For instance, the land occupations at Bredell outside of Johannesburg or Khayelitsha near Cape Town in 2001 were harshly suppressed (Sihlongonyane, 2003:29). Recent legislations have accordingly focused on the control and regulation of urban land invasions. The City of Cape Town has set up an anti-land invasion unit to stop people from occupying land that has been identified for housing (City of Cape Town, 2009). The KwaZulu-Natal government enacted the Slums Act in 2007 in order to eliminate slums, prevent new slums from developing and control and upgrade existing slums. The Act is currently challenged in the Constitutional Court and has therefore not been implemented yet (Abahlali, 2009). The Act provides authorities with significant powers to force people to

---

[17] In February 2000, war veterans associations organised land invasions on farms owned by white farmers. White farmers' appeals to the government were ignored. Due to a lack of substantial farming experience, the subsequent drop in farm output has been tremendous and produced widespread starvation.

move and to determine where and how they are going to live, resulting into an entirely top-down approach to settlement.

The year 2007 also saw the surfacing of an attempt to speed up land reform via a change in the compensation requirements for land expropriation. Current land-reform legislation requires payment to the landowner according to market value, which has been argued inhibits the purchase of farmland due to the currently high land prices (Van der Merwe, 2009). The 2007 Expropriation Bill would have allowed for expropriation at below-market value if the owner benefited from apartheid subsidies (Hofstatter, 2009). The Bill was shelved in 2008 amid strong opposition from Agri SA, the Afrikanerbond[18] and the Democratic Alliance.[19] They argued as follows: "The Bill is based on the false perception that white South Africans have no moral right to ownership of land in particular, but also property in general, as everything they possess is the result of wrongful deprivation" (Expropriation bill under fire, 2008). This points to the ongoing debate in post-apartheid South Africa on who is the legitimate owner of the farming land. Having farmed relatively successfully for centuries, white South African farmers and in particular Afrikaners still identify strongly with their land. Even though land ownership does not translate into political power as it used to during the 18th and 19th centuries, farm land is still very much part of the Afrikaner culture and used as a kind of defence mechanism for being a genuine white African (Fraser, 2007). As in the past, contemporary South Africa does not link legitimate land ownership to social productivity criteria as it is the case in Brazil, but rather to race. A legitimate landlord was white during apartheid, today a legitimate beneficiary of land reform has to be black. To be expropriated because you are a white farmer even though you are productive (as it happened in Zimbabwe) causes resentment. To have their land taken away essentially means for many contemporary Afrikaners the same that it meant for African people: the renouncement of their productive contribution to South Africa. This racial dynamic has shaped the political opportunity structure tremendously, as the land reform debate is to this day a question of race wrapped up in market-efficient principles.

The 2009 elected ANC administration under President Jacob Zuma faces the same constraints when attempting to tackle land reform with current land redistribution amounting to 6.7% in September 2009 (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, Sept 2009). Yet, as with every new ANC president, initial proclamations of a new and better approach raise hopes among the constituency and mobilise votes. In this regard, discussions on

---

[18] The Afrikanerbond was established in 1994, an association open to anybody who identifies with the Afrikaner community.
[19] The Democratic Alliance is a political party and the governing party in the Western Cape province.

productivity levels and poverty reduction in the land sector seem to have attained renewed attention as well. The government acknowledged the failure of about 50% of black land-reform beneficiaries and promised better post-settlement assistance (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2008; Bernstein, 2008). President Zuma also stated that the government's priority is to "ensure that land reform through redistribution" is linked "to the creation of livelihood for the poor" (Mahlangu, 2009:n.p.). This renewed emphasis on service delivery contributed to the ANC's continued majority rule in 2009, despite the emergence of a potentially influential opposition party, the Congress of the People (COPE) in 2008. COPE was founded by dissident ANC voices and hence might be an indication of increasing fractionalisation within ANC ranks as well as slow detachment of voters from the ANC as the sole legitimate representation of black South Africans. However, COPE does not yet represent an oppositional force in the current parliament. The ANC continues to dominate South African politics based on its established national master frame. Most South Africans still perceive the ANC as their liberator and regard it as their duty to support its policy and to refrain from open antagonistic behaviour or rhetoric.

Consequently, the state with its elite allies essentially remains the only authority to discuss and implement land reform in South Africa. This has once again become evident in recent policy developments. The former Department of Land Affairs has become a separate ministry in 2009, possibly leading to a further bureaucratisation of the land-reform process. Furthermore, the entire land-reform programme is under review at the moment. A Green Paper committee has been set up, mandated to give new perspectives on South Africa's land policy. The composition of the committee is symptomatic to South Africa's situation in the land sector. The committee consists of academics, World Bank officials, land-reform director-general Thozi Gwanya, and other government officials (Hofstatter, 2009). Hence, the overall political opportunity structure in South Africa does not provide for the inclusion of rural organisations' interests and remains a top-down affair.

3.3.2 Resource mobilisation: Collapse of national rural organisations

The mobilising structures underwent changes during 1999 and 2009, yet ultimately, existing constraints prevailed and in conjunction with restricting political opportunities and framing processes led to the collapse of the NLC and the LPM.

As the failure of the land-reform programme and the neoliberal turn of the government became evident to the NLC, an internal discussion on present structures in the land sector was initiated. The introduction of GEAR in 1996 had already sparked the first internal disputes,

yet with the consolidation of President Mbeki's elite alignment, the need for new alignments in the land sector was established. It was decided to facilitate the re-emergence of an independent rural movement or at least some form of grassroots mobilisation to push for land reform on a national scale (Sihlongonyane, 2003:30). It is interesting to note that the need for such a movement was realised by an established rural organisation and not by the landless themselves. This is indicative of the non-existence of a landless identity that progressively frames claims for land reform in modern South Africa and the implicit subordination of activism to state guidelines even at grassroots level.

The first effort to mobilise grassroots activism was the Rural Development Initiative (RDI). In 1999, the NLC held a conference for community-based organisations in an attempt to organise them into a broad coalition. Yet, this initiative collapsed as soon as funding dried out for follow-up meetings (Greenberg, 2004a:16). The NLC continued to support community-based projects with various backgrounds (water access, health issues and agriculture). It also remained committed to its working relationship with municipalities through the organisation of workshops and meetings with international donors and land experts. The period after 1999 was characterised by an increased cross-border activism of the NLC, as it often played an important role in formalising networks in Southern Africa. There was a mushrooming of Southern African networks[20] dealing with all kinds of land issues, often sponsored by foreign-aid organisations or governments (Sihlongonyane, 2003:31–32).

As mentioned before, micro-mobilisation in the form of land occupations around urban centres increasingly became an issue for the NLC, in particular after the events in Zimbabwe. The NLC was forced to confront the issue and take up a stance on whether to support and even encourage such activities in its effort to generate a rural movement or to condemn such moves. Occupations of rural land had remained a symbolic form of protest in South Africa since the end of apartheid. They were aimed at speeding up bureaucratic restitution processes or extorting other kinds of services from landlords or the municipality (Mngxitama, 2006:47). Land occupations took an unorganised form; there was usually no intention to settle or to engage in crop cultivation. In this regard, it needs to be noted again that South Africa's landless cannot be equated with full-time farmers. As mentioned before, the apartheid system had largely eradicated an independent African peasantry. In the former homelands, subsidence farmers developed a strong reliance on wage remittances from urban workers. Labour tenants and farm dwellers often lacked the managerial skill and resource capacity to commit to

---

[20] For instance the Southern African Network on Land, the Agrarian Reform Network and the Land Rights Network of Southern Africa. International links were established to UK Oxfam and Food First in the USA.

independent farming. While these characteristics point to the current high failure rate of land-reform beneficiaries, it can also partially explain the reluctance of South Africa's landless to carry through with land occupations. Yet, the inadequate farming background can only be a partial reason, because the mobilising dynamics of land occupations are also influenced by political opportunities, which were rather oppressive and therefore discouraging in South Africa, as seen in the previous section. Furthermore, grassroots micro-mobilisation needs to be supported by some kind of external guidance that can draw the landless' attention to legal and political loopholes (McAdam, 1982). This combination happened extensively with the MST in Brazil. In South Africa, the NLC was also faced with the question of whether to support land occupations by providing resources and emphasising the constitutional right to land reform.

During the transitional years, the NLC had taken a strict anti-land invasion stance since occupations run counter to its efforts to bring about change to the countryside through bureaucratic channels. The increasing closure of political access points and the neoliberal turn of the ANC government had convinced the organisation that some form of organised grassroots pressure is necessary; yet the question of whether land occupation should be used as a tactical repertoire divided the organisation. Being interrelated with governmental structures through funding, project work and some sort of comradeship did commit many members to follow state policy and conventional forms of protest. On the other hand, there was a rising radical wing in the NLC, mainly comprised of field workers and young graduates eager to speed up the reform process through land invasions (Mngxitama, 2006:48–49). This wing continued mobilisation at the grassroots level and drew parallels between South Africa, Brazil and Zimbabwe, seeking to generate an alternative frame of landlessness in South Africa that would stand in firm opposition to the government (Wolford, Baletti & Johnson, 2008:301–305).

This wing of the NLC took advantage of a big United Nations event in South Africa in order to raise funds and draw public attention to its cause. In 2001, the World Conference against Racism in Durban brought together more than 3 000 landless delegates from communities across South Africa and from around the world. At this conference, the LPM was founded with a radical oppositional outlook, encapsulated in its demand to transfer "land to those residing and working on it" (Greenberg, 2004a:2). The LPM emerged during discussions on a land charter that sought to carry forward their campaign motto, "Landlessness = Racism", which is indicative of the previously discussed interpretation of landownership in South Africa as not directly linked to beneficial production, but race. By

accentuating this connection, the LPM could reach a wide audience during the conference and indirectly brought land reform back onto the agenda. The LPM's attempt to construct a counter-frame that is resonant with the landless is discussed further in Section 3.3.3.

Following the events at the conference, the LPM quickly mobilised, primarily with the help of the NLC, a national structure. However, the LPM remained largely structured at the top with a national council assembling representatives from each province, but at the bottom members remained tied to their local organisations and NLC affiliates. The LPM was highly dependent on the supportive wing of the NLC in terms of financial and organisational resources and was therefore reliant on its consensus (Greenberg, 2004a:21). These constraints on resource mobilisation were a partial reason why the LPM remained an agitating organisation throughout its lifespan. As soon as finances were refused by the NLC, the LPM reversed its activism. It made a strong public appearance at the 2002 United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development by organising a landless march with 25 000 participants. Furthermore, it issued press statements threatening land occupations if the government did not respond to its claims. Yet, its tactical repertoires never included concrete projects such as occupations or strikes (Greenberg, 2009a). The LPM in this regard remained a 'spin-off' movement from the NLC (McAdam, 1995). It drew most of its human and material capacities as well as its range of tactical repertoire from the NLC. Its foundation was based on the NLC's wish to establish a national grassroots organisation that stands in opposition to the government. The LPM was therefore essentially a generated movement with a national structure, but with no sustained input from the bottom and no tactical repertoires that forged nationwide solidarity and community.

This immobility of the LPM was also a reflection of the internal dispute in the NLC on the feasibility and acceptability of land occupations in South Africa. Throughout 2000 to 2003, the NLC fought in numerous meetings, but did not agree on a common stance. The LPM was seen by some NLC affiliates as a radical, anti-systemic movement that did not conform to the NLC's vision on how to implement land reform in South Africa. The supportive wing of the LPM pressured for a tactical and visionary readjustment of the NLC and accused the NLC of exorbitant salaries and financial mismanagement. In 2003 it came to a rupture: NLC affiliates in the Eastern Cape, North West and Northern Cape withdrew from the movement and the NLC director, who had publicly supported the LPM, was dismissed (Donors ditch land NGO, 2005). Associations with the LPM were cut completely. The LPM did not survive this crisis. National structures were dismantled and projects cancelled. According to Stephen Greenberg,

a former NLC/LPM activist, the LPM exists only by name today, since some local communities and journalists continue to use the label in the media (Greenberg, 2009a).

The NLC did not survive the crisis either. As internal fractionalisation became evident and accusations of nepotism became louder, donors withdrew from the NLC, which aggravated problems even further. In addition, the ANC government increasingly distanced itself from the NLC and referred projects to smaller local organisations. Between 2003 and 2005, the NLC still attempted to streamline its head office and finances, yet disagreements and financial difficulties could not be solved, and in 2006 the NLC was disbanded (Mngxitama, 2006). Each affiliate continues to work separately in the provinces, but there is no national coordination of activities and therefore no national representation of landless people lobbying for land reform any more. Today, most of the remaining organisations[21] represent shack dwellers in and around urban areas in South Africa, while some of them also engage in post-settlement assistance to land-reform beneficiaries. But their work is more a regionalised engagement with government with very little political pressure emerging from them.

Over-dependency on the government in terms of project work, finances and land-reform policy therefore continued to guide the NLC during 1999 to 2006. Alternative resource mobilisation through the LPM did not succeed, as the NLC was not able to reconfigure its dependent and inclusive relationship to the state and as landless people were rather reluctant to express their discontent in organised state opposition. Resource mobilisation remained constrained. The emerging grievances: the stagnating land reform programme within a neoliberal economic policy did therefore not suffice to trigger a sustained grassroots mobilisation or a renewed activism by the NLC. As the following section shows, part of the reason was also the failure to construct an alternative resonant frame of landlessness in South Africa.

3.3.3 Framing processes: Dominance of the national master frame

The period 1999 to 2009 did not see an alteration in framing landlessness in South Africa. There were attempts to construct a new collective action frame that would counter the existing national master frame and thereby trigger a specific identity of landlessness, mobilising for a push to speed up land reform. Ultimately this attempt failed and the South African landless' claims remain part of the national master frame, which calls for a state-led development strategy and sees landlessness as one of many issues amid the racially skewed South African

---

[21] For instance Abahlali baseMjondolo, the Anti-eviction Campaign and the Rural Legal Centre.

society. This section attempts to explain why the LPM's counter-frame generated by the NLC was initially successful, but ultimately failed to produce sustained mobilisation.

From its inception, the NLC identified with the national master frame of the ANC. This has been shown in the previous Sections. The crux of the matter is that the NLC was never able to detach itself from this frame by gathering enough support for an alternative frame. This, in combination with resource dependency and closure of political opportunities, sealed its decline. The 1990s saw the ascent of a more radical wing within the NLC, increasingly competing with the more liberal welfarist-oriented leadership (Greenberg, 2004a:19, Mngxitama, 2006:47). As the previous section showed, this group pursued the build up of the LPM by disseminating and amplifying ideas of an alternative approach to carry out land reform. Constructing an alternative frame of landlessness was part and parcel of this goal. The frame was supposed to stand in opposition to the national master frame by radicalising diagnostic, prognostic and motivational components. In this regard, the former apartheid and current governments were seen as the primary stumbling blocks. The ANC government was accused of mismanagement and overly neoliberal tendencies and charged with selling out land reform. Prognostic framing was rather vague, reflecting the diversity of land claims in South Africa. There were claims to obtain small plots, large commercial farms, legal titles for shacks and many tribal restitution claims. Motivational framing comprised the most controversial component of the LPM's counter-frame as it called for land occupations to pressurise authorities.

At its outset, this collective action frame seemed to draw the attention of the landless and was recognised by the South African media, as the LPM received considerable publicity. In retrospective, it needs to be argued that this collective action frame was resonant among the landless as long as it was used as a tool to draw public attention. The campaign motto of the LPM (Landlessness = Racism) at the 2001 United Nation conference was resonant, as it firstly fitted into the theme of the conference and secondly evoked elements of the national master frame constructed during the apartheid struggle years. As previously argued, race is the dominating feature of the land question in South Africa during and after apartheid and to associate landlessness with racism in such plain terms would ensure the attention of the press, the government and the ordinary person. It is indicative that the LPM was most active during big conferences where it was secured national attention by using radical banners such as "Land now! Organise and unite!", "Take back the land!", "No Land! No Vote!" (Landless People's Movement, 2003).

The vague prognostic framing initially ensured the interest of a vast pool of land claimants. As Greenberg attests, LPM members came from all backgrounds, even successful black commercial farmers joined wishing to take advantage of the public attention the LPM drew. During 2001 and 2002, the LPM generated considerable press coverage with debates on expropriations and the land question in general. Amplified by the events in Zimbabwe, this was purely achieved through agitating rhetoric, as there was no real grassroots organisation or activism. The frame failed to translate its ideas into actions; in particular the diagnostic and motivational component did not transform or match sufficiently with existing interpretations of the situation. Several interviews conducted by Stephen Greenberg show that most LPM members did not share the same radical views on the ANC government. Greenberg states that "the view was widespread that the LPM's first task was to speak to the government" (2004:29). In support this allegation, Greenberg (2004:29) cites two LPM members interviewed in 2003:

> "We want to meet with the government to discuss our grievances. If they don't listen then we must protest. Government should rectify the situation."; "We held a meeting with the public to ask the council to make land available. We haven't yet spoken to the council. We will first speak to councillor Nkomo, and if there is no response we will occupy the land."

A strong conviction prevailed among the landless that the institutional space, won together with the ANC during the apartheid struggle years, must be used to achieve the goals of land redistribution as far as possible. There were dissident voices denouncing the ANC, such as Mr. Gini (cited in Greenberg, 2004:34), a shack owner and former LPM member: "… I am sick and tired of the ANC. The mouth is talking nice[ly], but when it comes to the hands the politicians do nothing". However, the majority of LPM members interviewed by Greenberg remained loyal to the ANC. For instance, Mrs Makhanya, a farm worker (cited in Greenberg, 2004:34) stated: "We need to vote ANC, because they are the only organisation here. The DA rules here, we need a change of power in this area. Even if the ANC won't deliver, we will be able to go to them …". Ultimately, most landless people do not want the government to fail and strongly identify with the ANC administration. The enemy images that some NLC and LPM activists tried to build up did not (yet) resonate with the majority of the local population.

The same applies to the tactic of land occupations. As previously argued, there are objective reasons why long-term occupations were not feasible, yet there is also a sense that land occupations are only a tactic to raise concerns about 'proper' access to land, which should ultimately be achieved in cooperation with the government. In this regard, some

members even expressed the expectation that the government should assist with occupations: "We must take the land. But the police and farmers prevent people from occupying it. If we want to occupy the land, we must go to the government and tell them to stop the police" (LPM member cited in Greenberg, 2004:29). Furthermore, the indecisive stance of the NLC leadership on land occupations affected perceptions of the acceptability of land occupations on the ground: "Occupations are not a good idea because they lead to confrontation. Although we could try to occupy unused or unoccupied land. There is nothing wrong with that. People are ready to occupy. They have been calling on leadership, but the leaders have been delaying …" (LPM member cited in Greenberg, 2004:34). Overall, land occupations remained a symbolic protest form with no long-term idea of how to stay on the land or how to use it productively. Hence motivational framing could not bring about the long-term stimulus of activism and sense of community as it did in Brazil through land occupations and post-settlement solidarity.

The collective action frame of the LPM remained an *engineered* frame, which was not sufficiently resonant with the people on the ground as it did not match or gradually transform deep-rooted perceptions formed during the apartheid years. After political democratisation, the national master frame of the ANC continues to provide the ideological background for most South Africans. The ANC is regarded as the liberator and therefore the inherently benevolent state, which, despite current delivery bottlenecks, is to be trusted and supported in its ongoing efforts to build a new South Africa. The broader purpose of this national master frame calls for nation building and the joint fight against poverty. Any attempts to design alternative channels of activism are rejected as detrimental interferences and are referred to political access points that the ANC has ostensibly established for all South Africans. The following press statement (African National Congress, 2004) voices this claim of exclusivity clearly:

> If the LPM has legitimate concerns regarding the land restitution process, these can and should be dealt with through the appropriate government departments.… If any organisation believes they have better policies than the ANC – on land reform or anything else – they should test the support of the electorate for these policies through the democratic process.

The dominance and implicit acceptance of this national master frame ultimately led to the demise of the NLC and the LPM as representatives of landless people. The emergence of an active oppositional force with national scope is politically suppressed and more importantly not sustained by genuine grassroots level support.

3.3.4 Summary

The period 1999 to 2009 witnessed the collapse of national representation of the landless in South Africa. Today, rural movements still exist on the local and provincial level, yet no nationally coordinated lobbying for land reform takes place any more. Activism focuses on rural-urban issues and is predominately carried out in accord with government projects. This chapter has shown how the constellation of movement dynamics that were planted during the apartheid years, evolved in the following years, were solidified from ca. 1999 onwards and eventually led to the breakdown of the NLC and the LPM.

While the government rhetorically continued to evoke the spirit of camaraderie of the apartheid struggle years and linked it to the present day duty to consider the state as the only legitimate entity for development policy, it actually increasingly closed political opportunities for rural movements. There were no vital alternative channels for activism, as land occupations were strictly suppressed and the NLC was gradually marginalised from the national debate on land reform and replaced by a state alignment with white and black commercial farmers. Although the NLC did not critically contribute to land policy any more, its resource mobilisation continued to be dependent on state structures in terms of funding and project work. The NLC became a formal agency providing services to land-reform beneficiaries and coordinating Southern African land networks. Essentially, the NLC turned into a disguised governmental department.

As the failure of the market-led land reform became more and more evident, internal voices started to question the institutionalisation of the NLC and its partnership with the state. In response to the perceived grievances, the LPM was engineered by NLC activists, in the hope to establish a powerful grassroots movement that can articulate its demands and thereby direct land reform back to its pro-poor roots. The LPM emerged not from a change in political opportunities, resource mobilisation structures or framing processes, but purely in response to perceived grievances. It was a planned initiative by NLC activists, temporarily backed up by other rural organisations and landless people as a tool to draw attention. Yet, the initiative ultimately lacked the dynamics that sustain movement activism, namely vital political access points, committed and somewhat organised grassroots activists, a powerful tactical repertoire and a collective action frame that counters existing interpretations. The specific constellation of movement dynamics that was established shortly before and during the transitional period and had widely demobilised independent rural activism persisted. Essentially, there was no ideological and structural space for an oppositional rural force on a national scale. The national master frame of the ANC continued to dominate political thinking within the NLC

itself and the ANC's mainly black electorate, which also comprises the majority of the landless. Therefore, the land question has remained largely a matter of racial redress and is continuously treated as one of many apartheid legacies that need to be addressed exclusively by the state. The temporarily emerging discontent within the NLC is minor proof of dissident thinking, yet the collapse of this opposition illustrates that South Africa at the bottom and the top is not ready for the kind of political pluralism characterising the Brazilian case.

Chapter 4

Movement dynamics in Brazil

4.1 The emergence of the MST (1978–1985)

The MST emerged amid the democratic opening of the Brazilian state. The year 1978 saw the rise of major strike movements in the Sao Paulo district, which ensued in a national wave of protests accelerating liberal reforms. Opening political opportunities enabled the landless to raise their voice and to organise predominately in the southern states of Brazil. At the same time, the local political structure remained overall hostile, encouraging activism through this ambivalent opportunity structure. Existing strong religious networks in conjunction with shared meanings of landlessness facilitated the emergence and positioning of the MST.

4.1.1 Political opportunities: National opening and legal access points

As in South Africa, Brazil experienced a gradual and negotiated opening of its political system in the 1970s and 1980s. The strong conservative alignment of the Brazilian military, which had characterised the military government during the 1960s, started to change, providing access points for oppositional forces to enter into negotiations with the narrow governmental circle. General Geisel, who had assumed the presidency in 1974, and his political adviser Golbery initiated behind-the-door talks with the Catholic Church and union leaders. The moderate voices in the military government identified with General Geisel and Golbery's strategy. While rooted in the military tradition, many of them had legal backgrounds and therefore tended to believe that ultimately only a popular election would legitimise the Brazilian government. The moderate wing was furthermore strengthened by the still partially functioning Congress, which remained directly elected and had thereby maintained a link to the civilian constituency (Skidmore, 1999:184-185).

As in the South African case, the gradual shift towards the moderate wing in the Brazilian military government was also guided by the international context. The global debate on human rights and universal suffrage had its affect on Brazil's political elite. The country identified strongly with the North American democracies, in particular the USA, and maintained close economic ties with them. Reports of torture and abuse of human rights had brought Brazil massive international criticism and thereby facilitated an international and domestic process of delegitimising military rule (Skidmore, 1999:184–187).

Consequently, the 1970s and 1980s saw a general strengthening of the moderate, pro-democracy forces within the military circle, and conservative officials started to align to the moderate wing, which in turn established ties to civil society. Several liberal reforms were introduced, for instance, censorship and policy surveillance were partially removed (Ondetti, 2008:55). With the electoral reform of 1979, new parties were allowed to form. Intended to divide the opposition, it however prompted the founding of influential oppositional parties, e.g. the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro [PMDB]) and the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT]) under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, popularly known as Lula (Dabene, 2003:7). The opening of protest structures enabled oppositional forces to become more articulated in the different states as dissidents returned to Brazil and media campaigns became feasible.

In 1981, Congress enacted a law restoring direct state elections of state governors and thereby reintroduced a strong federal component, which paved the way to the first multi-party elections in 1984. The loosening of state repression and the opening of political participation generated increased cooperation between state agents and oppositional groups in rural areas in an effort to exploit regional issues to their political advantage. The 1982 federal state elections eventually opened doors for oppositional parties to gain political ground. This represented great political opportunities for rural groups to tie votes to the promise of addressing land questions. In several southern states, governors inclined to carry out land expropriations for the sake of redistribution were elected and thereby provided an effective political access point for rural grassroots activism (Wolford, 2003:73). The revival of direct state elections and thereby federalism in Brazil enabled groups to bring regional conflicts to national attention by making governors, who assembled in Congress, accountable to their state policies (Cheibub, Figueiredo & Limongi, 2002).

These emerging political access points were underpinned by the relatively long legal tradition for land reform in Brazil, attempting to regulate often illegitimate land titles and thereby gradually neutralising the power of the landowning elite. Surprisingly, the military regime had brought about an important change in the legal framework concerning this policy. A land statute was signed in November 1964, shortly after the military coup, which acknowledged de jure the need for land redistribution, declaring that land not serving a social function is subject to expropriation. If effective use could be demonstrated, which meant cultivation for a year and a day, then that person could legally claim the holding (Hecht & Cockburn, 1989:168). The statute's main focus was to develop ways of dealing with unproductive *latifúndios* amid the national plan for agricultural modernisation. It furthermore

eased potential exportations by stipulating that landowners would be compensated with public bonds only redeemable 20 years after being issued. Thereby, cash payment according to market value could be avoided. It also established that only the federal government would be entitled to decree expropriations for the purpose of land reform (Navarro, 2009:3).

Although the political participation and the influence of Brazil's rural population increased progressively amid the political opening of 1978 to 1985, direct opposition of local governors and landowners towards changes in land distribution remained strong in the Brazilian states. Landowners frequently resorted to violence towards rural activists and imbedded legal processes. Instead of allocating plots of land from exiting unused landholdings, local administrators pressured landless people to settle at the frontier regions of the Amazon forest, which most landless people rigorously rejected (Wright & Wolford, 2003:42–43) The local struggle for land therefore remained highly controversial and hazardous even though a favourable political and legal environment was evolving at the national level.

This ambivalence of national and regional political opportunities, which would become more pronounced in the following decades, spawned the 'creative political tension' that mobilised the work of the MST in Brazil. While the favourable legal and participatory framework was used to inspire landless people, the hard-fought implementation at the regional and local levels facilitated the emergence of a 'foe image' towards local landlords, regional administrators and judges. Thereby, the creative political tension underpinned mobilisation and framing processes, as people could not trust an exclusive bureaucratic solution and therefore deemed it necessary as well as legally and morally justified to resort to collective actions. Consequently, the political opportunities emerging during this time of democratic opening laid the context for rural activism in Brazil. The translation of this political tension into creative efforts required micro-mobilising and framing processes, which activated the landless and sustained their actions.

4.1.2 Resource mobilisation: Grassroots initiatives and land occupations

The regime's institutional liberalisation and loss of political legitimacy encouraged social movement activity as the threat for repression reduced and the potential for political concessions increased. The upsurge in protest actions began in the late 1970s with the Sao Paulo automobile strikes under Lula, who was the president of the Steel Workers' Union. The government's failure to suppress these activities and its willingness to make compromises

signalled its relative weakness to dissident groups and thereby facilitated the spread of protest nationwide. In this sense, the automobiles strikes have been called an 'initiator movement', as it triggered a mass protest cycle in Brazil during the late 1970s and early 1980s by demonstrating that a favourable political structure exists (McAdam, 1995; Ondetti, 2008:95).

Amid this national struggle, protest activity also emerged in the rural areas. Previous mobilisations through the peasant leagues in the northeast and the rural trade unions in the south during the 1950s and 1960s (as outlined in the historical overview) had established rudiments of micro-mobilisation in these regions. The rural protest activities erupted over a variety of issues, such as interest rates, crop prices, labour conditions and land evictions (Carter, 2009:13; Ondetti, 2008:57). Taking advantage of the arising political opportunities, rural workers responded to the effects of the 'sorrowful' modernisation in Brazilian agriculture. In the most dynamic agricultural regions, the south and southeast, the number of farmers, tenant farmers and sharecroppers declined sharply in the 1960s and 1970s. Due to the ensuing economic crisis in the early 1980s, urban centres were not able to absorb this surplus labour, leaving large numbers landless and jobless (Skidmore, 1999:181–183).

The genesis of the MST can be found at this concurrence of increasing political opportunities, mobilisation capacities and grievances, which were framed successfully to sustain its actions. The existence of a large contingent of landless people, in particular in the southeast, whom had lost their own land or tenancy relatively recently, represented a pool of aggrieved but skilled farming people. Ondetti maintains that the MST "emerged mainly in 'colonial' regions, where small, owner-operated farms predominate and much of the population is of Italian, German or Polish extraction" (Ondetti, 2008:71). Many of the people who joined the movement therefore had a peasant-immigrant background and in some cases their families still owned farms, but did not have enough land to divide them among their children.

However, the existence of this pool of landless people did not sufficient to activate sustained movement activity. In order to stimulate organised actions, micro-mobilisation processes needed to take place. As aforementioned, the Brazilian countryside was already comparatively politicised through a network of union activity and localised peasant leagues. However, suppressed and eroded through the military regime, another social actor had gained substantial micro-mobilising potential in rural areas. In the 1960s, the Brazilian Catholic Church began to organise thousands of grassroots Bible study groups, known as Christian Ecclesiastical Base Communities (CEBs) in the Brazilian countryside. These communities preached according to the ideas of liberation theology, which by that time was widespread in

Latin America and placed social justice and equality at the centre of their attention. In the countryside the most important manifestation of the Catholic Church was the Pastoral Commission on Land (Comissao Pastoral da Terra [CPT]). Reflecting the liberation philosophy, the CPT perceived its role within rural communities as principally advising and supporting attempts by the landless to help themselves (Karriem, 2008:4). During regular services and social meetings, rural people discussed their problems with the priests and thereby gradually isolated the land question as the principal reason for their problems. In this way, the CPT provided a social network where the base for organisational structures as well as for framing processes was laid. As aforementioned in the theoretical overview, McAdams's (1982) concept of 'cognitive liberation' is indicative in this regard. The CPT was actively involved in diagnostic framing by making people aware of their common situation and by pointing to land distribution and overall corruptive practices as the root of the problem. This framing aspect of the land question is discussed in greater detail below.

A very interesting aspect during the emerging years of the MST was the active involvement of state agents and professionals, interested in supporting dissident voices amid the national struggle for democracy. In Rio Grande de Sul, the nucleus state of the MST, a Kaingang tribe, in an effort of indigenous self-actualisation, expelled 970 farmer families from their land in 1979 (Wright & Wolford, 2003:15). The families set up squatter camps along roads and talked of launching a counterattack on the Kaingang tribe. In this tense situation, local priests from the CPT, political activists and an agronomist of the state government arrived in the camps and encouraged people to reflect more deeply on their situation. Through their discursive influence, the anger of the farmers was redirected to the skewed land distribution in Rio Grande de Sul. Mobilisation and framing processes were initiated, based on the aggrieved landless families forming the nucleus mass and political and religious activists who interpreted their situation in terms of political opportunities and spiritual concepts.

Joao Pedro Stedile, the state agronomist, was crucial in pointing the landless to the existence of unused land with dubious legal histories (Wright & Wolford, 2003:27). Political activists and lawyers added their legal expertise by explaining the social function of land as stipulated in the Land Statute. CPT priests legitimised self-help with reference to the given 'sinful structures' in Brazil (Ondetti, 2008:53, 66–67). Therefore, a tactical repertoire was developed that relied symbolically and practically on the occupation of unused land to pressurise officials for land redistribution. The first successful land occupation was carried out in Rio Grande de Sul by the expelled farmer families in 1982. The local political opportunities

were favourable, as a sympathetic state governor had been elected amid the revival of direct federal elections. This occupation can be called the initiator movement of the MST, as it was followed by several other land invasions, more or less successful, during the early 1980s in the south and northeast of Brazil, following similar micro-mobilisation patterns (Wright & Wolford, 2003:73). As subsequent Sections illustrate, land occupations became the MST's principal tactical repertoire and developed into an almost routine course of action, adhering to certain rules and standards.

CPT leaders nationwide recognised the need for an entity representing the landless across Brazil. In 1982, the CPT began organising regional meetings of landless people, which paved the way for a national meeting. However, at the national meeting efforts to unite the struggle stalled, as some CPT activists believed that local struggles for land redistribution needed more time to mature. At this point, landless activists from the state Rio Grande de Sul organised another meeting in 1984, which was dominated by voices of landless people who had experienced successful occupation campaigns. This meeting ultimately led to the formal founding of the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra* (MST), the Landless Rural Workers' Movement. In 1985, a national conference was organised, assembling 12 300 people from countrywide encampments. At this conference, the MST was formally defined as a "workers-led national organization, independent of church, political parties, and unions" (Ondetti, 2008:90).

While the national organisational structure was still more an idea than reality, the basic resource-mobilising characteristics of the MST were already present. A strong grassroots element can be discerned: landless people with a farming background as well as deep connections to the Catholic Church. In this way, occupations were facilitated through their existing knowledge and partially existing resources necessary to construct and maintain occupation settlements. Furthermore, they were receptive to the CPT and could take courage from their strong religious beliefs. Apart from this grassroots element, a small contingent of professionals became part of the struggle, and in some regions members of rural unions and political parties such as the PT and PMDB were also present (Ondetti, 2008:73). Partially driven by a benevolent disposition and partially interested in organising a strong rural front in the emerging new democracy, they constituted an invaluable source of legal and political knowledge as well as financial support in carrying land occupation through the legal processes.

This interrelationship of state-critical professionals, CPT activists and landless people constitutes the crucial mobilising capacity of the MST to this day. As subsequent Sections

show, the equal involvement of professionals and grassroots activists from the start was part of the reason why the MST was able to sustain its activism over 25 years. Furthermore, the choice of tactical repertoires in combination with the political and social feasibility to carry out land occupations provided the MST with a strong mobilising advantage.

4.1.3 Framing processes: The *sem terra* and land as a gift from God

The previous Sections have already touched upon the significance of framing processes in the emergence of the MST. The accomplishments of the MST during its early years, 1978 to 1985, were firstly the transformation from a local struggle to a national consciousness of landlessness. Secondly, it devised tactical repertoires that enabled the landless in cooperation with experts to take advantage of the political opportunity structure. While the organisational and political capacities were elaborated on above, it remains to be discussed how the MST was able to connect objective conditions of poverty and exploitation to a collective action frame that legitimised land occupations, and how this action frame transcended regional borders and became an effective nationwide mobilising device among the landless.

As aforementioned, the Brazilian Catholic Church played a profound role in giving meaning to the land struggle in Brazil. Liberation theologians endowed the struggle with its basic values, norms and shared narratives by combining factual grievances with well-known religious concepts that were mixed with local folklore. Activists sought to frame landlessness as a collective problem that found its roots in both the longstanding social structures and elitist state policy in Brazil. The diagnostic framing process therefore focused on the agrarian system of huge but often fallow *latifúndios* and the corrupt and inefficient administration, which inhibited access to land rights. Land scarcity and poverty were related to the recent modernisation policies that favoured large producers. Landless people were therefore not simply unfortunate or incompetent, but rather *sem terra* (without land), a class of discriminated and marginalised people (Ondetti, 2008:76).

The diagnostic process therefore paralleled the emergence of a nationwide landless identity, the class of *sem terra* whose oppositional class character was at that time also influenced by Marxist-Leninist theory. Its basic ideas of structural exploitation and proletarisation were incorporated into activists' interpretational tool kits. It was argued that "as small farmers in rural Brazil, the settlers are exploited by a capitalist system whose chief engineers are large landowners, politicians and corporations" (Wolford, 2003:507). Participation in the MST thereby became an expression of a collective class struggle whereby

the denial of land rights was perceived as the principal exploitation mechanism by the land-owning elite. The diagnostic interpretation of the situation was therefore rather straightforward for most landless people, as the 'enemy' was clearly discernable. Everyday experiences of evictions and discrimination matched with the proposed structural analysis. Furthermore, the realisation of commonalities among the landless strengthened their sense of solidarity as a class of *sem terra*.

The formation of a strong class identity was underpinned by prognostic framing processes, as Brazil's landless people were essentially united in their belief that access to land will lead to a dignified life based on Christian values. As mentioned before, a large percentage of the landless mobilised by the MST had a farming background, having experienced small-scale family farming through their parents or grandparents who were often direct descendants of immigrants attracted in the 19th and 20th century to colonise Brazil. In this regard, it can be argued that a common idea of and appreciation for a prosperous independent farming community based on past personal experiences and inter-familial narratives still existed (Wolford, 2003:46). The loss of one's land or the right to cultivate a plot was therefore regarded as a humiliation and disfranchisement and consequently the source of much frustration. This shared understanding of a family farm being the source of a dignified and prosperous life was substantiated by the CPT's communitarian social vision, which saw the smallholder village as the ideal social context to propagate Christian values (Medeiros, 1989, cited in Ondetti, 2008). Prognostic framing therefore focused on the establishment of an egalitarian small-scale farming community, where agricultural production served the family and the regional market. The community was to attain village status by constructing churches, hospitals, markets, schools and artisan workshops. The redistribution of land was regarded as the prerequisite for the realisation of these goals. At its first national conference in 1985, the MST established its long-term target as a "fight for an agrarian reform that distributed land to those who would work it, and for the development of a just, fraternal society" (Wolford, 2003: 500).

Motivational framing, which essentially constructed the reason for carrying out land occupations, was strongly influenced by religious concepts. Group discussions would start with a Bible reading and prayers, after which activists would ask: "Does God want it to be this way? If not, what can we do about it?" (MST activist, cited in Ondetti, 2008:76). The struggle for land was justified on the basis of the scripture by comparing it with Moses' trek across the desert in search of the 'promised land'. Therefore, the struggle for land was just and the landless had a right to land as it was a gift from God. In asserting land as a social

good, priests contested the sacrosanct notion of private property, which was crucial, as respect for private property was deeply entrenched in the rural social relations. Religious justification provided a new meaning to the ownership of land and thereby legitimised land occupations. As one MST member suggested: "Land is a gift from God and if we are the children of God, you have to have access to it" (MST activist, cited in Karriem, 2008:4). In attempting to legitimise land occupations, activists also persistently pointed to the political and legal opportunities present in Brazil. The state itself has declared through the 1964 Land Statute that fallow land should be distributed to the landless. Therefore, the *sem terra* had a legal right to land and by putting pressure on the government they were merely asserting their right. Furthermore, earlier concessions by state governors in the Rio Grande de Sul had demonstrated that the state is responsive in this regard.

The collective action frame of the MST was therefore constructed around the moral and legal right of the *sem terra* to access land. This was based on their mutually shared notion that small-scale family farming could secure a dignified and prosperous life in the Brazilian countryside. Land occupations were framed as a legitimate tool to assert this right nationwide, taking advantage of political and legal access points as well as their existing farming knowledge. It needs to be argued that this frame enjoyed a high resonance among Brazil's landless as well as the broader public. It was compatible with existing cultural frames and successfully extended by including new concepts and norms of social justice.

Apart from tapping into and broadening the religious background of the landless, mobilising activities of the CEBs and the CPT fitted comfortably with local practices and traditions. As Wright and Wolford (2003:10) argue, the discursive element of the meetings that encouraged people to engage in critical debates with each other and the priest matched very well with the love of conversation and sociability in Brazil. Furthermore, the priest acted as an equal among the landless, often not wearing a clerical garb but jeans and a t-shirt. In the southern states of Brazil, the special facilitator of sociability is the *chimarao*, a large gourd in which *erva mate*[22] is brewed. The *chimarao* is passed around and everybody takes a sip. This practice has also become an integral part of CEB and CPT meetings and therefore contributed to a sense of belonging and togetherness. The ability of early activists to tap into the folklore of the landless facilitated framing processes, as people entered an environment they knew and trusted and thereby displayed an increased openness to new radical ideas of mobilisation.

The collective action frame, which included land occupation as tactical repertoire, received a comparatively positive public response during the emerging phase of the MST. In

---

[22] *Erva mate* is a species of holly. Its dried leaves are used to prepare an infused drink.

this way, the fight for agrarian reform via land invasions was also publicly legitimised in Brazil and eased the way to making it the principal tactical repertoire of the MST. The call for land reform was not a new idea in Brazil. As the historical overview has shown, the skewed distribution of land is regarded as one of the primary reasons why Brazil's economic development lagged behind. In Brazil, the legal tradition of linking land ownership to responsible and productive use for society had therefore started early. The 'social function principle' had appeared in the 1934 and the 1946 constitutions, yet only the 1964 Constitution eliminated the strict financial requirements for expropriation and thereby eased the process considerably (Navarro, 2009:3; Wittman, 2009:123).

The first successful land occupations in the early 1980s in Rio Grande de Sul were facilitated by the fact that the fallow *latifúndios* had been previously earmarked for state expropriation, but due to dubious legal records, corruption charges and administrative delays it never materialised. The ambivalence of legal and political opportunities, which theoretically acknowledged the need for land reform but practically denies access, once again became apparent. Therefore, the idea of transferring this land to the landless enjoyed enormous public and media support (Wright & Wolford, 2003:28). In this regard, Wright and Wolford (2003) point to a tendency in Brazilians that may have facilitated the public acceptance of land invasion throughout Brazil. They maintain that due to historical records and personal experiences,

> Brazilians have little respect for the specifics of the laws that protected private property, even when those same people supported the inviolability of private property in principle. As with the civil rights movement in the United States, there would prove to be considerable public sympathy, even among judges and legislators, for those who broke the law that was known to be a sham for perpetuating injustice. (Wright & Wolford, 2003:24)

Hence, one can argue that public support of land invasions underpinned the construction of a nationwide injustice frame that mobilised the landless as well as the general public to regard land invasions as a legitimate tool to fight for land reform. The MST's collective action frame provided an effective interpretation of the land question that stood in relative opposition to the government and united the *sem terra.*

4.1.4 Summary

By the end of 1985, the MST had become a significant rural movement of national scope. Admittedly, the movement was most organised and successful in southern Brazil. However, landless rural workers started to organise in many areas in Brazil and there were strong efforts

to unite the struggle at the national level. The MST, like the South African NLC, had emerged amid a democratic opening, whereby both movements were driven by national and international civil protest movements during the 1970s and 1980s. Activists of the MST and the NLC therefore took advantage of changed political opportunities and translated them into mobilising and framing processes to sustain their activism. Yet, both organisations developed fundamental differences in their movement dynamics that would in the long run faithfully define their struggle.

The political opportunities were of varying degrees in South Africa and Brazil. The NLC emerged amid an extreme repressive and discriminating system, denying civil rights to the majority of the population. Therefore, its early struggle years were characterised by a marginal and slow opening of political structures, making activism a matter of cautious, small steps of opposition, mainly focusing on the immediate support of eviction victims. The decade-long system of apartheid had stratified the countryside; amid the white commercial farms there existed only a very small number of independently farming African people. Most non-white rural workers had been tied up in feudal-like relationship for decades. Rural surplus labour was flowing into urban centres, forming squatter camps and maintaining only weak ties to their rural relatives due to pass laws. Therefore, the political system of apartheid substantially undermined the mobilising potential of the rural non-white population, which also changed only slowly with the opening of the system.

In Brazil, on the other hand, political opportunities were of an ambiguous character. While certain land legislations and former immigration policies favoured small-scale farmers, actual policy implementation was persistently detrimental. Although the liberalisation process increased political and legal access for rural activism, the inherent ambivalence of the political system was never entirely eliminated. In Brazil it triggered the growth and establishment of a small-scale peasantry that became the nucleus mass of the MST, basing their struggle on favourable legal access points already introduced in 1964. The military government also allowed the flourishing of rural CEBs, which once again demonstrates the fluidity of the Brazilian political system as opposed to the strict ban of any non-white organisation in the South African countryside under apartheid. Thereby, the MST could be built on an already established grassroots network in the countryside, which proactively encouraged rural communities and the landless to assert their rights and legitimised land invasions in religious terms. The still close relationship to farming, the recent disappointment of agricultural modernisation and the ongoing religious socialisation triggered framing

processes that made the Brazilian landless to identify themselves as *sem terra*, a class for itself with a strong rural background and with an early focus on agrarian reform.

This constitutes a major difference to the NLC, as South African activists were initially urban-based workers who established ties to rural evicted communities. These communities were not the prime movers of the organisation as the *sem terras* were. Furthermore, the NLC could not construct an equally unifying identity of landlessness as the MST had achieved in its first years of existence. Due to apartheid politics, the South African landless remained too dispersed, unorganised and comparatively detached from a mutually shared idea of land ownership as a way out of poverty. The principal alignment of communities along tribal lines, in particular in the homelands, may also have inhibited the growth of a unifying landless identity. Landlessness therefore did not acquire the same urgency in South Africa as it did in Brazil. The South African landless' problem was inherently intertwined with apartheid's denial of universal civil rights and therefore early on subordinated to the more urgent issue of fighting apartheid under the leadership of the ANC.

The legacy of apartheid therefore presented the NLC with a different configuration of movement dynamics at its early formation. The many-sided issue of landlessness in South Africa, which affected rural as well as urban non-white South Africans, the stratified and unorganised countryside in combination with a national urban struggle for universal civil rights, did not allow the formation of a rural-based movement, entirely focused on land issues. Although the MST emerged amid a repressive government as well, citizenship and prosperity were not linked to the institutional suppression of certain races, as was the case in South Africa. In Brazil, citizenship and prosperity were directly tied to land-ownership patterns and elitist policies. Hence, the land question obtained from the outset a different political and social interpretation as well as mobilising capacity in Brazil and South Africa.

4.2 Growth and stabilisation (1985–1999)

The year 1985 saw the first democratically elected president of Brazil after years of military dictatorship. Despite the ongoing consolidation of democratic rule in Brazil, the political opportunity structure remained ambivalent in nature, providing the MST with sufficient loopholes to sustain its activism, but at the same time with enough resistance to necessitate and legitimise activism in the eyes of the landless. In terms of mobilisation, the MST experienced tremendous growth and territorialisation. Its protest methods matured and through its successful conversion of occupation camps to settlements the MST established a

'self-preserving' tactical repertoire that concurrently provided resources for further activism as well as framing opportunities that strengthened the sense of community and ideological identification.

4.2.1 Political opportunities: The ambivalent democracy

The period from 1985 to 1999 saw the establishment of democratic rule in Brazil, the enactment of a new constitution in 1988 and the implementation of a significant land-reform programme in 1995. The specifics of political access points, political alignment and scale of repression were therefore altered, yet it can be argued that the overall political and legal ambiguity towards the land question continued. The creative political tension underpinning mobilising and framing processes of the MST was maintained and facilitated the growth and stabilisation of the landless movement.

The first decade of civilian rule proved to be a period of political and economic disappointment. Debt and inflation caused the economy to stagnate during 1985 and 1994. In contrast, agriculture continued to grow. Yet due to ongoing mechanisation and commercialisation the sector continued to shed jobs, resulting in continued migration to urban centres and stagnating rural poverty rates. The first president chosen to lead the new regime, President Neves, died unexpectedly. Sarney's presidency (1985–1990) was plagued by clientelism and was not able to lift Brazil from its deteriorating economic situation. His successor, Collor (1990–1992) initiated market-orientated reforms, yet his presidency proved to be even more corrupt than Sarney's and did not succeed in containing inflation. Economic recovery resumed under President Franco (1992–1995) and his finance minister Cardoso, who attained popularity through its economic recovery plan, the *plano real*. Benefiting from his reputation, Cardoso assumed the presidency in 1995 until 2002 (Skidmore, 1998:189–232).

Despite the inclusion of a variety of parties, the governing coalitions were generally conservative in outlook, consisting predominantly of landholding elites and former military officers. With the appointment of President Franco (who identified with the centrist PMDP), and later President Cardoso, a slight shift occurred in the coalition alignment, reflecting a more urban-based centrist electorate. President Cardoso, affiliated with the Social Democratic Party (PSDB), assembled a heterogeneous coalition dominated by the centrist PMDP. This centre-left coalition promised at least theoretically to give more attention to social issues, including the land question. While not in the governing coalition, the PT, under Lula, had turned into a formidable party and allied openly with the MST by promising fundamental

social reforms, including land reform (Ondetti, 2008:102). The rise of the PT in Brazil was accompanied by the increased cooperation of the government with the World Bank and the IMF. As South Africa, Brazil during the 1990s experienced a wave of neoliberal reforms targeting industry and agriculture in an effort to align development policy with free-market principles.

The return to democracy therefore ushered in a period of new governmental alignment strategies and the growth of extra-parliamentary opposition parties. The political opportunity structure hence became more fluid and receptive to protest actions. Yet, at the same time, it is argued that the political capabilities to represent popular interests were weak due to a highly fragmented party system and clientelistic practices, such as vote-buying (Carter, 2009:8; Meszaros, 2000:526; Wright & Wolford, 2003:65). Since the advent of democracy in 1985, Brazil's government had been characterised by a multi-party system, with numerous political parties sharing the vote. Since there is a 0.04 election threshold, the Brazilian congress consists of numerous minority parties. Unlike in South Africa, no single party had the chance of gaining power alone, leading to the formation of heterogeneous coalition governments. The agendas of the different parties show an 'ideological fluidity' in order to form loose coalitions if required. Party discipline is low, resulting in difficulties and delays in passing legislation. It also led to the formation of the *bancada ruralista*, a caucus that acted mainly in the interests of large landowners, but for strategic purposes sometimes aligned with small-holder interests (Linz & Stepan, 1996:184). Consequently, the democratic structure did not fundamentally change the political opportunities for the MST, despite evolving loopholes through the PT and temporary alliances with minority parties. The general over-representation of conservative rural interests in Congress insured a containment of popular interests. Yet, the new democracy maintained its inherent tendency of acknowledging the land question, which resulted in occasional concessions or even comprehensive reform plans to address it. The 1988 Constitution, in particular the Land Law, represented such a compromise, as it did not fulfil the MST's requirements for agrarian change but enabled it to continue its tactical repertoire of occupations into the new democracy.

The post-transitional constitutional debate included questions on the legal conditions for land expropriation. In 1985, President Neves initiated the drafting of a national agrarian reform plan, the *Plano Nacional de Reforma Agraria* (PNRA), which envisaged large-scale expropriations and settlement projects (Wolford, 2003:102). However, with his death, this plan lost its most influential supporter and became the target of harsh criticism by the landholding elite, which strategically founded the *Uniao Democratica Rural* (UDR), a rural

democratic union, to oppose any changes in connection with the right to private property. Ultimately, the Constitution maintained the right to expropriation based on the 1964 Land Statute. It reaffirmed the 'social function', but excluded productive[23] properties from expropriation. This was a partial defeat for the MST, which aimed for the expropriation of any farm over 600 rural modules[24] to break the stronghold of large *latifúndios* (Wright & Wolford, 2003:105). Yet, it was also a partial defeat of the rural conservative class, as expropriation was still legally feasible. The provision provided a loophole just large enough to make the occupation of large unproductive rural estates a relatively effective tactic to pressurise state governors. Given this legal framework and the mobilising capacities of the MST, the post-dictatorship governments were not able to block occupations altogether.

The ambivalence of political opportunities comes to the fore again when looking at the actual implementation on the ground and the repression that the MST camps had to face. The legal process of expropriating land and distributing it to the occupiers takes between two and ten years after having invaded the land. INCRA, the institute charged with carrying out expropriations, had the legal powers, but its administrative capabilities were insufficient and corrupt, necessitating year-long court fights and bribes (Foweraker, 2002:136). Frequently, violent conflicts broke out between the occupiers and the military police force, which was controlled by the state government. Assassinations of MST activists, political activists and even occupying families were common in all regions.

The scale of political tension between the occupying landless and landowners, who via their political influence could in many cases employ the state police, became publicly visible in two deadly massacres. The first one occurred in the state of Rondonia in 1995. Nine occupiers and two policemen were killed and there were reports of torture and execution. The second incident was even more deadly; the killing of 19 and injuring of more than 60 people in the state of Para in 1997. The killings provoked considerable media coverage. The second massacre was partially filmed and broadcasted on Brazilian television. Following these events, the agrarian question was discussed extensively in the national media and also caused the international press to comment. Even the Vatican issued a letter condemning the killings and urging renewed attention to the land issue (Ondetti, 2008:153; Meszaros, 2000:521).

The new Cardoso government responded by making some concessions. President Cardoso created a new agrarian reform ministry for INCRA and appointed a new minister with an

---

[23] Productive meant the effective utilisation of 80% of the farm's surface as well as adherence to ecological and labour standards. In addition, a productive farm exists where its use is of common benefit to land owners and workers. This definition is applied in Brazilian courts to this day (Wright & Wolford, 2003:105).

[24] One rural module is the regional-specific quantity of land considered sufficient to sustain a family of four.

activist background in order to speed up the land-distribution process. Several expropriation cases were quickly pushed through the legal process. Furthermore, he pledged to introduce some favourable legislative initiatives,[25] but all except the summary rite were watered down considerably by the congress. Cardoso's renewed commitment to land reform was also publicly expressed in his cooperation with the World Bank and the set-up of a land-reform programme based on market principles in 1996. It followed the willing buyer–willing seller principle. A land bank, partially funded by the World Bank, issued credit to landless people to buy property. Initially, this project functioned well because land prices were relatively low, yet it never replaced or outnumbered the traditional method of state expropriations (Navarro, 2009:8). After 1995, the settlement of landless families progressed faster than ever before in Brazilian history. According to official figures, Cardoso's land-reform efforts amounted to the settlement of 288 000 families during his presidency. Yet, most of the INCRA settlement activity took place in the backward Amazon frontiers, which was criticised by the MST as not changing the overall distribution of land in Brazil. Nevertheless, the increased speed of land reform amid the national debate on land caught on with the MST, as political opportunities improved to settle camping families quickly all over Brazil. This was further facilitated by the temporary diminishing of violent conflicts in the aftermath of the massacres (Nucleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agraria, 2007).

The political opportunity structure during 1985 and 1999 maintained the creative political tension that activated and sustained the MST's struggle. The continued ambivalence of partial support and partial opposition towards MST activism underpinned its organisational growth and tactical maturity, as seen below. By providing a legal and administrative framework that allows expropriation, its core strategy could be applied and more members could be recruited, in particular during the Cardoso years. A strong mobilising incentive was furthermore established by the federal government through its practice of only settling landless campers who had participated in the occupation process (Ondetti, 2008:133). This political opportunity translated into avoiding free-rider problems when organising occupations and subsequent land distributions.

It also needs to be mentioned that the public support of the landless during and after the two massacres points to the interrelatedness of framing and political opportunities in Brazil. The public support for the landless urged the government to respond and in this way opened political and legal opportunities for activism. Analogous to the public acceptance of land

---

[25] Reform of the rural land tax, a measure to limit the capacity of judges to order for expulsions and the summary rite, which gave INCRA possession of a property 48 hours after the President's signing.

occupations, the injustice frame of the MST was resonant with the public and thereby widened the MST's operating range by impacting on the political opportunity structure. However, these favourable aspects of the political environment contrast strongly with severe restrictions. Bureaucratic barriers, local violence and overall undisciplined and fragmented governing coalitions in regional states corroborated the MST's antagonistic stance on the government and its commitment to land reform. Thereby, the injustice frame maintained its diagnostic element of the state being essentially an adversary. Furthermore, the objective need for efficient resource mobilisation to organise occupations and legal challenges remained and therefore sustained and even encouraged activism.

4.2.2 Resource mobilisation: From occupations to settlements

When the MST held its first national conference in 1985, it was essentially only a loose alliance of local activist groups, concentrated mainly in the south and very dependent on the Catholic Church. Over the next years, this coalition developed into a relatively autonomous and cohesive organisation with a presence in 24 of Brazil's 26 states (Nucleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agraria, 2007:32). Between 1985 and 1999, the MST experienced growth in terms of membership and land occupations. This shift occurred geographically, as occupation density in the south was maintained but grew in other regions.[26] Data from the CPT shows that from 1989 to 1995, 63% of total occupations were organised by the MST (CPT, cited in Ondetti, 2008:112, 159). Land occupations experienced a substantial spark after President Cardoso pledged to address the land question. From a total of 186 occupations in 1995, it increased to 459 in 1996, 514 in 1997, 828 in 1998 and reached a peak in 1999 with 903. The relative weight[27] of MST camps decreased between 1996 and 1999 due to the rise of autonomously organised land occupations by families, rural unions and the CPT, anticipating that political opportunities to quickly obtain land would open up.

The expansion of the MST was made possible by extensive travelling of activists through poor rural and urban areas, informing people about their right to land and the MST strategy of land invasion (Karriem, 2008:6). By 1990, the MST had hundreds of well-trained activists, who predominantly originated from relatively prosperous and more literate southern smallholder families. Most of them used to be MST occupiers before and had obtained land (Wolford, 2003:506). As the MST spread over the various regions, the composition of the

---

[26] Percentage growth of occupations by region (1988–1999): centre – west 34; north 25; northeast 70.9; south 39.3; southeast 30.0 (Ondetti, 2008:110, 159).

[27] MST occupations as percentage of total: 1996 – 44.2; 1997 – 37.4; 1998 – 22.0; 1999 – n/a (Comissao Pastoral da Terra, 2008)

rural population changed. The smallholder tradition from the south faded and people accustomed to wage labour and other forms of non-independent farming took on a larger role. Local social networks were not as established in other regions as in the South, where CEBs had created a strong presence. Thus the spot recruitment of hundreds of people as it was possible in the South, was not an option in other more socially stratified regions. Yet, the majority continued to have a rural agricultural background and was directly or indirectly affected by the ongoing liberalisation process of the 1990s in the agricultural sector which due to international price pressure and tight credit conditions reduced agricultural jobs. Amid an urban sector which did not provide a robust enough growth to counteract this rising rural unemployment, a 'favourable' rural context was created for the landless movement (Ondetti, 2008:172). Adapting to the changed social settings by going from door to door to recruit people and capitalising from the rural grievances, the MST successfully expanded its membership base (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra, 2005b).

Throughout the late 1980s, a decline in the activist role of the Catholic Church was visible. The MST was actively driving to become independent from Church leaders, but the Brazilian Church also argued that with the advent of democracy, the need to represent the landless had lost relevance (Ondetti, 2008:108). In lieu of religious activists, political activities took a more influential role in the MST. In particular, the PT of Lula was popular among MST members. Activists often assumed leadership positions in both organisations. While at the national level the MST maintained relations with the national labour union (Central Única dos Trabalhadores [CUT]),[28] at the state and regional level activists took a more hostile stance. The MST's relationship with CONTAG generally remained distant (Ondetti, 2008:126, 127).

The national structure of the MST became increasingly centralised in the 1990s. Policy decisions were made by the National Coordination Office and National Directorate. Administration and collective activities were managed by the National Secretariat in Sao Paulo. The recruitment and training of young leaders was a key strategy of the movement and a primary task for many leaders (Wolford et al., 2008:296). A national congress was held every five years, which set out policies and activities for the next five years. In terms of funding, the MST was very successful in diversifying its financial resources. It draws its income from national and foreign NGOs (in particular European religious organisations), the Brazilian Catholic Church, sympathetic business groups and public officials. As occupiers were not in a position to contribute much to the organisation, the duty fell to the MST

---

[28] CUT was formed in 1983 and is to this day the chief union federation in Brazil.

settlements already generating produce. By the 1990s, most of the settlers' financial contributions originated from subsidised government credit programmes (Ondetti, 2008:121). By providing special subsidies to small-scale farmers, the government therefore indirectly helped to fund the MST, which points once more to the ambivalent relationship of the MST with the federal state.

One of the key factors that enabled the MST to grow and consolidate nationally was its organisational praxis. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the MST diversified its tactical repertoires by devising effective mobilising strategies to extend and sustain its activism. The problem the MST has been constantly faced with is how to maintain a high level of participation of members who had already obtained land. The essence of its strategy lays in its active conversion of occupations to *assentamentos* (settlements), which serve as material and ideological facilitators for further land occupations. During the occupation time, which often meant hardship and risk, the foundation is laid for a feeling of community and duty to the MST. Already at this stage, the MST organises the campers into family groups, called nuclei. These nuclei, comprising 20 to 30 families, elect coordinators who represent the families at the settlement council and its committees.[29] These committees assign each individual person a task or action that benefits the camp or settlement as a whole and seeks to foster a process of self-education and responsibility in each person. This level of decision making also seeks to break with the history of patronage and dependency that had characterised the political relationship of landless workers with the rural elites (Wittman, 2009:124).

After acquiring land, most settlers have established strong ties with the MST's organisational structure as well as its principle beliefs. The identity frame of being a *sem terra* was bridged with being a dedicated MST member. The MST developed a concrete method to stimulate this process within its camps and settlements. This framing process will be discussed further below. Being an MST member meant discipline and cooperation. Once land was obtained, MST members were expected to contribute to further site developments, such as erecting buildings for schools, nurseries and latrines and cultivating the land. The post-occupation time involved the active settlement of families on the land, which further integrated people into the organisational structures of the MST. But above all, productive settlements enabled the MST to extract resources needed for further activism. Settlers were asked to participate in occasional protest actions such as road blockades, marches and the occupation of public buildings. They also had to make food and material available for the ongoing land occupations. From its settlements, the MST also frequently recruited new young

---

[29] Committees include production and environment, health, security, political formation and education.

leaders into its national leadership structure, which thereby experienced a regular reshuffle from the grassroots. Often the new activists were also sent to campaigns in other regions, diffusing knowledge of occupation and settlement strategies (Wright & Wolford, 2003).

Overall, the MST employed land occupations as a permanent mobilisation mechanism. By actively engaging in post-settlement processes it maintained a high commitment among its members and utilised resources for future mobilisation. Therefore, the tactical repertoire of occupations leading to settlements must be seen as pivotal to the MST's success. The motivation to remain in the MST can, however, not be reduced to these activities alone. Settlers are required by the Brazilian government to have a membership in some kind of formal organisation to benefit from agricultural credit, housing material, seeds or equipment made available by INCRA (Carter, 2009:22; Wittman, 2009:123). This political condition certainly facilitated the MST's organisation. Yet, it does not account for the MST's dominant position in the land sector. The MST stood in competition with other movements because members who disassociated with the movement sought membership in other rural associations. The MST's region-wide presence and high land occupation rate were therefore a direct result of the fruitful interrelationship between political opportunities, mobilising processes and framing.

4.2.3 Framing processes: Community and controversy

The configuration of the collective action frame in terms of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational components remained relatively stable given the continuance of an ambivalent political opportunity structure, the ongoing economic and social marginalisation of rural people and the focus on land occupations as tactical repertoire. What became more pronounced during the late 1980s and 1990s was the increasing connection between being *sem terra* and being a loyal MST member. The MST succeeded in using its camps as privileged spaces for political indoctrination and to foment a strong collective identity as MST members. Apart from establishing organisational structures to ensure human and material resources, the MST engaged proactively in framing processes that made the landless perceive the MST as the legitimate organisation to fight for land reform. In this section, some of the most important framing tactics are addressed as well as the reasons why they were resonant among the *sem terra*.

Many authors (Hammond, 1999; Karriem, 2008; Veltmeyer & Petras, 2001; Wittman, 2009; Wright & Wolford, 2003) argue that the MST was exceptionally successful in

constructing a community feeling that reached beyond the camp or settlement site. MST members saw themselves as "part of a family" (MST member, cited in Carter, 2009:24) and therefore mutual assistance and respect were generated, which facilitated the dissemination of ideas and principles encapsulated in the collective action frame. The community feeling was more or less an imagined concept, because most members never actually met each other (Wolford, 2003:506). This 'imagined community' was built upon common past, present and future events and beliefs and was created through a discursive process that involved the selection and reassembling of certain aspects that have special salience to the movement.

The central discursive elements of this community building were the meetings and in particular the tradition of *mistica* (mystic). Being a legacy of liberation theology, *mistica* builds on a "combination of worldliness and idealism by creatively using songs, theatre and chants to help form new ideas and mould behaviour" (Wolford, 2003:510). Symbols of the struggle for land such as the machete and past resistance leaders were combined with the joyful presentation of their harvest in plays. Every camp had a committee responsible for the planning and execution of the *mistica*, endowing the play with local characteristics. All members were encouraged to participate in the play through singing, poems or jokes. According to an MST publication, *mistica* "reduces the distance between the present and the future, helping us to anticipate the good things that are coming" (Wolford, 2003:510). In this way, *mistica* is a crucial framing facilitator by encompassing all three framing tasks: it points to reasons for struggle; it presents the results of the struggle and thereby motivates future actions. Above all, this was done in a participatory fashion, stressing community and solidarity within local settlements, and established connections to distant MST struggles.

Education is another significant framing component that is inherently interwoven with the MST's aim to raise rural people to critical, self-assured citizens. The MST established more than 1 200 primary and secondary schools in and around its settlements, which were recognised by the government. It provides adult literacy classes and established partnerships with 60 Brazilian universities to offer degrees for its members (Carter, 2009:23–24; Meszaros, 2000:529). Teaching material was designed by the MST's own educational team and was inspired by Paulo Freire.[30] In this way, the MST allowed thousands of children to regularly attend school, which was regarded by many MST members as important as obtaining land, since it enabled families to break out of the circle of patronage and dependency on the rural elite (Wittman, 2009:124). Apart from direct schooling, information

---

[30] Brazilian educator and influential theorist of pedagogy, who introduced teaching methods that emphasised critical thinking and student participation in class.

on agricultural techniques, health issues and political affairs were disseminated through workshops, newsletters and booklets.

The tactical repertoire of occupation and settlement programmes therefore became the groundwork for framing processes, because they offered the ideal social venue to practice the above-mentioned framing tactics. On the one hand, a sense of organisation-wide community and personal empowerment was fostered; on the other hand, activism was channelled into a certain directions favoured by the organisation.

The amplification of the MST's collective action frame was facilitated by substantial public resonance. During its first decade, the MST maintained a certain isolation from the media, yet the 1990s saw increasing media attention contributing to a public framing of the MST and the land question. Hammond (2004:75) argues "that the MST can reasonably claim that it has won the battle to frame its main issue, the land question, in the Brazilian media". The media generally portrayed agrarian reform as a necessity, *latifúndios* owners as reactionary and unproductive and the struggle for land as just (Hammond, 2004:75). In particular, the two massacres of 1995 and 1997 brought the organisation positive feedback, culminating in the screening of the telenovela[31] *O rei do gado* (the King of Cattle) in 1996/1997. Even though it showed a romanticised picture of land occupations, the issue became known to and was discussed by millions of Brazilians. Even President Cardoso visited the set and was shown on the evening news with the actors (Hammond, 2004:82). The impact of this media attention was reflected in a poll taken in 1997, according to which 52% of Brazilians were favourable of the MST and 85% approved of land occupations as long as they were not violent (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, cited in Brazil Justice Net, 1997).

While the land question generally received favourable coverage, the MST itself was framed in various terms, cultivating an image of controversy and sympathy. The two most reoccurring themes depicted the MST as a militant socialist movement and alternately as a possible solution to national problems (Hammond, 2004:75). In essence, these two themes corresponded with the image the MST presented of itself and thereby amplified its collective action frame. As discussed above, the MST portrayed its tactical repertoire as beneficial for the *sem terra* as well as a viable solution to change land patterns in Brazil. Its ideological background had from its earliest moments been inspired by socialist ideas, manifested in its

---

[31] Telenovelas are the most viewed shows in Brazil and significantly influence public opinion. A topic featured as the theme of a telenovela represents the peak of recognition in Brazilian culture.

class consciousness as *sem terra* and its diagnostic, prognostic and motivational analysis of the situation in the land sector.

When describing the MST as a solution to Brazil's land and poverty problems, some authors (Carter, 2009; Karriem, 2008) have tried to devalue this framing component of the MST, possibly in an attempt to make the MST more broadly acceptable to a global society characterised by market liberalism. While the emphasis given to socialist concepts certainly varied in MST settlements (e.g. the implementation of collective vs. individual farming, usage of socialist symbols during meetings) and the MST openly allows for a diversity of worldviews, its antagonistic stance on capitalism cannot be denied and hence must be seen as an integral part of its counter-frame against the government and its land-reform programme. Particularly during the 1990s, as neoliberal reforms such as the market-assisted land-reform programme were introduced in Brazil, the MST remained in opposition and argued for the continuation of active state interference in the land sector. During the early Cardoso years, while exploiting the renewed political opportunities, the MST became the most articulated dissident voice publicly defending state expropriations and state assistance as the only viable solution (Hammond, 1999). Through its practical social assistance at the grassroots and its persistent animadversion on the Brazilian state and the capitalistic system, the MST maintained its socialist image, which has been demonised by as many people as it has been praised. Ultimately, it contributed to the plurality of Brazilian society by keeping channels open where alternative collective actions could flourish.

4.2.4 Summary

The MST experienced tremendous growth and territorialisation between 1985 and 1999. As the above Sections have illustrated, political opportunities in the new Brazilian democracy became more favourable, yet overall remained ambivalent in nature, which enabled the MST to take advantage of the institutional loopholes and at the same time presented the MST with constraints that justified the framing of the state as hostile and necessitated long-term mobilisation.

In this regard, political opportunities during the MST's growth phase were very different to South Africa's political structures in the post-apartheid era. Even though Brazil established a working democracy in 1985, the relationship of the MST with the government remained distant and was rather characterised by a creative political tension than partnership. The PT started to emerge as a potential political ally but, being a leftist party, remained in opposition for the next 17 years. The government was led by centre-right coalitions and more or less

dominated by the *bancada ruralista*. Although President Cardoso assembled a centre-left coalition in 1995, his land policy overall remained hostile. Only between 1996 and 1999 did President Cardoso show ambitious efforts to address the land question nationally. It is interesting to note again that during this time the percentage of MST activities to total land occupations declined sharply, illustrating that if an administration appears to be sympathetic the ability to pool activism declines. Hostility and organisational constraints also existed at the state level in Brazil. Throughout history, landowners of *latifúndios* had resorted to their political and economic leverage to defend their property. Amid a climate of lawlessness and corruption, this led to extremely serious and frequent violent conflicts, which made land occupation a dangerous protest action. Consequently, national land policy maintained its overall conservative outlook and implementation on the ground was constrained by red tape and violence. On the other hand, activism was made possible by very effective political access points. The 1988 Constitution continued to allow expropriations and INCRA continued to respond to land occupations and even increased its settlement rate in the 1990s. Furthermore, subsidies were transferred to small-scale farmers that were vital for the maintenance of the MST. Lastly, INCRA's practice of only assigning land to those who actually occupied land continued to set a strong precedent.

South Africa's first democratic years offered a completely different political opportunity structure. The transitional period was characterised by the alignment of the most significant progressive forces into the tripartite alliance and the establishment of structures that incorporated former anti-apartheid movements in the new government alliance. The ANC emerged as the majority party in the 1994 and 1999 elections and thereby established themselves as the new ruling party of South Africa without any significant oppositional forces or the need to assemble a coalition. South African politics, contrary to Brazil, was therefore characterised by a power block that founded its claim of supremacy on its large black constituency established during the apartheid struggle years. In Brazil, frail coalition governments had prevailed since democracy, making it necessary for the president to incorporate various policies by making concessions and compromises. Hence, the dominance of one party and one agenda was not feasible in Brazil. The ANC, on the other hand, which had emerged from a repressive regime, became the symbol of change and betterment, endowed with the kind of unprecedented powers enjoyed by de facto one party dominated systems elsewhere. From the outset, the ANC made it clear that it plans to work for the people and with the people. In addition, the land question was relatively swiftly addressed by passing a new constitution to allow for expropriations and the detailed outline of a land reform

programme, which incorporated land restitution and distribution, two of the most important elements for the South African landless. Consequently, the government became the only legitimate entity for land reform and development policy in general – a status that not one democratic Brazilian government has ever attained in Brazil, not even under the two 'friendly' Cardoso years or the present Lula administration.

These highly differential political opportunity structures provided a very different context for mobilising and framing processes. The dominance of the ANC in South Africa triggered the institutional inclusion of the NLC into the state-directed land-reform projects. The NLC became essentially a government agency, as its staff was seconded, its finances were overly dependent on state projects and its tactical repertoire dominated by administrative tasks. The NLC became a servant to the state and did not design or encourage an alternative tactical repertoire, as the MST did to speed up the land-reform process. The bureaucratic channels that the ANC had established appeared to offer a viable solution to the land problem in conjunction with the ANC's willingness to cooperate during its early years. In this process, the NLC lost touch with the grassroots, which in the early transitional period had shown willingness to mobilise for land occupations. Yet, the landless never attained the same strength and capacity to carry through with land invasions as did their Brazilian counterparts. Apart from the lack of skill, resources and a mutually shared vision for prosperity through land, as mentioned in Section 3.3.2, the South African landless did not receive the same encouragement from established organisations as the *sem terra* in Brazil. The NLC was from the outset against land occupations and therewith in line with ANC policy. During the transitional period, land occupations were regarded as a threat to the conciliation process and the South African economy and therefore repressed. The ANC had successfully extended its national master frame, which called upon all South Africans to follow the government to reconstruct a new South Africa. Efforts to open up alternative channels were perceived as detrimental and deviationist. Therefore, the NLC was firstly not willing and secondly not able to construct a counter-frame that could mobilise the landless specifically around the land question, although a favourable legal framework existed.

The MST in Brazil, on the other hand, was able and willing to exploit its legal framework and enforce expropriations through extensive grassroots mobilisation and framing processes that portrayed the MST as the legitimate institution to bring about change. In stark contrast to the NLC, the MST remained largely independent of the Brazilian state. The creative political tension facilitated mobilisation and counter-framing. The MST made extensive use of the political opportunity to occupy land and to remain there until granted ownership. These

occupation campaigns became the nucleus for its growth, since they were used by the MST to first of all provide a living to the landless and secondly to instil a sense of belonging to the organisation. Land occupations were thereby used to frame MST membership as a viable alternative. Furthermore, once a settlement was established, the MST continued to work with the people and extracted human and material resources from it, thereby sustaining its struggle. The tactical repertoire of land occupations therefore needs to be regarded as pivotal in the MST's mobilisation and framing processes during this period. The capability and willingness to carry them thorough provided the MST with a very strong advantage compared to the South African NLC. Additionally, the MST maintained an ideological distance from the Brazilian state by adhering more or less to a socialist outlook in its framing activities and portraying the state as their common enemy, who will not provide land without force. Throughout its growth period, the MST proclaimed that equal distribution of land is the condition for pro-poor development in Brazil and succeeded in bringing the land question and its activism to national attention during the 1990s. In contrast, the NLC, due to its extensive inclusion in governmental structures, its consequent restrain in tactical repertoires and the historically multilayered interpretation of land versus poverty remained one movement among many in South Africa and was never able to prioritise the land question nationally.

4.3 Decline and resurgence (1999–2009)

The movement dynamics of the MST saw an interesting change in the period 1999 to 2009. Between late 1999 and 2002 the MST experienced a decline in activism, which was due to a concurrent change in political opportunities, tactical repertoires and framing processes. Having enjoyed public sympathy and a responsive government in the previous period, the MST became more radical and broad in its tactical repertoire as well as in its framing of collective action. President Cardoso answered with strategic repression, which seriously dampened activism. Yet, due to the MST's mobilising and framing strengths and the election of President Lula da Silva in 2002, the MST experienced a great resurgence, leading to a broadening and diversification of tactics and frames that made the MST a globally acclaimed as well as a condemned rural movement.

4.3.1 Political opportunities: Repression and revival

When looking at the period 1999 to 2009 coherently, political opportunities continued to be of an ambivalent nature, which enabled the MST to maintain its activism by remaining in opposition to government policy and concurrently nurturing from its legal and financial

access points. The period, however, reveals an interesting political dynamic that temporarily caused the MST to decline in terms of its tactical occupations, but subsequently enabled it to regain its former strengths. Overall, political opportunities never changed in such a fundamental way that they would undermine MST activities completely, yet readjustments in political alignments, repression tactics and elite support occurred and had an impact on movement activity. This period illustrates once again how influential political changes are in levelling the ground for activism and thereby contribute to movements' trajectories.

President Cardoso had been re-elected for a second term in 1998 amid an economy that showed small but positive growth rates. Unemployment had, however, increased from 6% in 1994 to 15% in 2000 and real income decreased, triggering rising social tension (Sanders, 2004:5). The neoliberal reformism of the Cardoso administration had led to substantial cuts in the land reform budget and INCRA's budget for settlement projects decreased considerably from 1999 onwards. Accordingly, public spending on compensation payments for private land expropriations declined, reducing the chances for the MST to obtain private farm land through land occupations. Yet, apart from these budget cuts, which constrained the MST in its mobilising activities, another more significant political shift occurred that hampered MST activism temporarily. In 2000, the Cardoso administration shifted from grudgingly supporting the MST via selective concessions to openly opposing the MST in all its activities. But at the same time it publicly assured the landless of its commitment to land reform by opening up seemingly alternative channels of land reform[32] (Pereira, 2007:36).

The Cardoso administration undertook specific measures to undermine the mobilising capacity of the MST, such as enacting repressive measures that made land occupations rather useless. The 'provisional measures' rendered occupied land ineligible for expropriation for two years. If occupied a second time, this ban would be extended to four years. The people and organisations participating in the occupation would not receive any kind of public assistance (Karriem, 2008:6; Ondetti, 2008:184). Technical assistance and educational funds for MST settlements were cut off completely after 2000 (Petras, 2000). In this way, the government had purposefully closed off important political access points for the MST, namely state funding and the potential for land expropriation via occupation.

This abrupt change of political attitude towards the MST by the same administration occurred in response to an increased radicalisation of the MST. As outlined in detail in the next Sections, the MST's tactical repertoire was extended to occasional loathing and the

---

[32] For instance, INCRA established a system of 'land reform by post', where people could register for land by filling out a registration form in their post office and mailing it to INCRA. Furthermore, INCRA continued, albeit at a slower pace, to lobby for settlement projects on state land and land at the Amazon frontiers.

occupation of public buildings, triggering negative framing processes by the media and the government. The increasing radicalism caused friction within President Cardoso's coalition and generated a sense of social chaos in Brazil. President Cardoso immediately responded with a suppression campaign and warned the MST that he would not tolerate more 'troublemaking' (Ondetti, 2008:185). As seen below, this crackdown constituted a major blow to the MST's mobilising and framing processes; yet due to its temporary nature and the MST's subsequent tactical adjustments, the MST survived the closure of key political access points.

In the wake of these incidents, the PT of Lula, which had progressively won political ground in Brazil amid a sluggish economy and rising social tensions, distanced itself from the MST. Lula did not as usual participate in the MST national congress in 2000. In a ministerial interview in 2000, it was also noted that the government had expected more open resistance from the left to its crackdown on the MST (Gomes, 2000). Notwithstanding the public disregard, the PT remained an ally of the MST and by temporarily curbing land occupation activity the MST sought to facilitate a PT victory in the 2002 general elections. Lula's election as president in November 2002 marked a turning point for the MST's political opportunity structure. The arrival of a party with a historic commitment to land reform and strong ties to pro-land reform groups created expectations of speedier settlement activity (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra, 2005a).

It has been argued, however, that President Lula's election victory was based on the PT's shift toward the political centre, thereby capturing votes from disappointed Cardoso supporters. Lula's early lead in the polls had provoked uneasiness among investors fearing that a PT administration would default on its debts to introduce radical social measures (Abreu & Werneck, 2005:17). As the financial markets showed signs of distress, the government's economic team approached the leadership of the PT to negotiate initiatives that could control the turmoil. By that time, efforts to soften the radical wing of the party were already underway, as moderate PT members perceived the destabilisation process as threatening to Lula's election victory and his future government. In an open letter, Lula tried to reassure the national and international stakeholders that he was committed to stringent macroeconomic policy (Abreu & Werneck, 2005:17). In a further attempt, he appointed Jose Alencar, a wealthy industrialist and leader of the conservative liberal party (PL), as his running mate. The PT transformation from a radical labour party to a centre-left party was consolidated during the 2002 campaign. This alignment of the PT with more conservative forces even before the election did not go unnoticed by the MST, but it did not dampen their

hopes for progressive change in Brazil given Lula's poor past as shoeshine boy and factory worker and his party's long-standing leftist credentials (Tilly, Kennedy & Ramos, 2009).

Lula's presidency,[33] however, proved to be of an ambivalent nature. As was common for Brazilian governments, the institutional power base of President Lula was rather weak and therefore the chances for deep structural changes were slim. The PT remained a minority party in the Upper and the Lower House of the National Congress. Its alliance with other left parties and the PMDB provided it with a working majority, yet a very fragile one (De Souza, 2006). It needs to be argued that Lula's leftist background in fact put more pressure on him to follow a neoliberal economic policy in order to assure capital and gain a workable coalition; similar to the ANC administration in the post apartheid era. President Lula's economic programme followed Cardoso's focus on fiscal and monetary discipline. He passed reforms associated with neoliberalism, including cuts in the national pension system and the approval of genetically modified seeds in Brazil, which was strongly opposed by many leftist groups, including the MST.

During President Lula's first term in office, the Brazilian economy experienced a modest recovery. This enabled President Lula to pass some of his promised social programmes, the most visible one being the Family Grant, which provides families with monetary assistance if they send their children to school. As a result of economic revival and the social transfers, poverty fell by 12.9% between 2002 and 2005 and bolstered President Lula's re-election in 2006 (Ondetti, 2008:207).

Likewise, there was a mixed performance in relation to land reform. President Lula essentially continued with Cardoso's early land-reform policy by reducing the expropriation of private farmland, but accelerating the settlement of the landless via the placement of families on existing settlements and vacant public land (Tilly et al., 2009). While this kind of land reform does allocate land to people, the inherent land inequality of Brazil is not addressed, since the system of large landholdings is maintained and the land distributed to the landless is often of inferior quality or lacks market access (Caldeira, 2008:140). Therefore, Lula's land-reform policy remained a point of criticism for the MST and, notwithstanding the historical bond between the MST and President Lula, gave rise to a new wave of protest and land occupations, as made clear below. This renewed activism would however not have been possible without the lifting of Cardoso's repressive measures. President Lula did not officially revoke the provisional measures, but they were in general not enforced. In addition, President

---

[33] Lula's first term was from 2002 to 2006, He was re-elected in 2006 for a second term until 2010.

Lula reintroduced funding for the MST (Ondetti, 2008:214). The organisation benefited greatly from this re-opening of political opportunities and quickly started to remobilise.

While the national political system regained its partial supportive elements with the Lula administration, federal policies remained antagonistic. As a result of the MST's renewed activism and in response to President Lula's centre-left administration, landowners began to organise again in many states and a large increase of land-related violence in Brazil was observed (Comissao Pastoral da Terra, 2009). In 2009, authorities in Rio Grande do Sul made attempts to classify the MST as a terrorist organisation, whereby they took advantage of the internationally proclaimed fight against terrorism. State administrators laid charges against MST leaders, which were based on crimes of 'political nonconformity'. The National Security Law that served as the basis for these complaints was promulgated under the military dictatorship and had recently been revoked to file the case (International Federation for Human Rights, 2009).

Today, land reform seems to have entered a time of crisis. The latest available figures of 2008 show a stagnation of land reform in Brazil. It is estimated that in 2008, the number of families that were assigned land titles decreased by 80% compared to the results of 2007 (International Federation for Human Rights, 2009). Above all, in August 2009, the Upper House where President Lula falls short of a majority passed a bill that eliminated the official index used by INCRA to measure the productivity of land. This happened amid discussions on updating the index, which currently still uses productivity criteria from 1970.[34] If updated, the government will technically force large-scale farmers to boost production to avoid expropriation (Reuters, 2009). The MST would benefit from such a revision as more properties become eligible for expropriation. The elimination bill has sparked heated debates within the government and the MST, as it is seen as an attempt by the *bancada ruralista* to block any future expropriations. Currently, the bill is pending and is being discussed by the Lower House.

The year 2009 saw another important legislation by the Lula administration. Provisional Measure 458 will privatise 67.4 million hectares of public land, which is currently occupied illegally in the Brazilian Amazon. Those occupying land could receive legal titles if they meet certain conditions, including having peacefully obtained the land and keeping it in productive

---

[34] With the modernisation of agriculture, the productivity potential of Brazilian agriculture has risen substantially. According to these new productivity standards, many large farming areas are underutilised. However, landowners are able to defy expropriation by adhering to the minimum standards of 1970, which for instance classify the herding of cattle once a year on the property as productive use. In times of food shortages, the opposition to this practice has grown and there is widespread support for an official updating of productivity criteria.

use (Hirsch, 2009). While it is too early to judge this bill properly, it does represent an opportunity for occupying people to obtain legal status and thereby assistance from the state. On the other hand, such an across-the-board land transfer is in fact counterproductive for the MST, as it eliminates the incentive to join the movement in this region. In addition, the MST does not officially support the settlement on rainforest land, as long-term sustainable farming is not feasible due to the soil and climate conditions (Meszaros, 2000:523). While it is claimed to be a once-off measure, it has set a precedent and will encourage people to occupy land in the Amazon Basin. It remains to be seen how the MST is going to deal with this new legislation. It raises new questions in terms of tactical repertoires and framing landlessness. On the one hand the government has taken a proactive step towards land allocation, which has always been part of MST campaigning and is therefore welcomed. On the other hand, the MST's goal is the redistribution of existing farmland and not the encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas that do not offer a viable livelihood.

Overall, the period 2000 to 2009 demonstrated once again the interrelatedness of the MST with its political environment. The repressive measures undertaken by the Cardoso administration were partly the consequence of radical tendencies within the MST and immediately provoked a reduction in activism, but also a crucial readjustment of tactical repertoires, as the following section shows. Temporally, the MST experienced a decline, but its solid mobilisation structures as well as international linkage enabled it to sustain its organisation. Yet, it needs to be argued that without Lula becoming president in 2002 and re-opening political access points, the MST might have seen its demise. The Lula government however continues to usher the creative political tension that has empowered the MST since its inception and has contributed to its renewed and expanded activism since 2002.

4.3.2 Resource mobilisation: Adjustments, diversifications and internationalisation

As already discussed briefly, resource mobilisation underwent some changes between 2000 and 2009. Mobilisation structures and tactical repertoires did take on new forms, but an intensification of existing practices also took place. The situation in the countryside saw some positive economic shifts. Contrary to the general economy, commercial agriculture experienced a boom between 2000 and 2005. But the size and composition of farm workers did not change much throughout Brazil, indicating the inability of the agriculture sector to absorb labour. Poverty and the underlining demand for land continued to exist and landlessness remained a widespread problem (Ondetti, 2008:193). Nevertheless, the MST

experienced a decline in occupation activity in 2000 to 2002. Overall, land occupations decreased by 52% relative to the previous three-year period (Nucleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agraria, 2007:8). This decline was observable across the country.[35] As mentioned, this decline is attributable to the changed political opportunity structure of the late Cardoso years. The provisional measures that made land occupation essentially ineffective caused many landless people to refrain from such activities. It is arguably harder to motivate people to engage in land occupations if the chances for success are very low. Hence, the benefits did no longer outweigh the costs and occupation activity dwindled. Yet, it is interesting to note that the MST's share of land occupation rose in this period to 48.9% of total occupations (Ondetti, 2008:191). This reflects the MST's greater capability and willingness to actually challenge Cardoso's measures. This defiance was largely based on the MST's ability to maintain its close cooperation with established settlements, serving as reception camps for evicted occupiers as well as resource bases.

The increasing political repression came in response to growing ruthlessness of the MST in the late 1990s and early 2000. In April 2000, the MST launched a 'day of struggle', which involved land occupations, demonstrations and other protest actions. The MST engaged in some of its most controversial campaigns, including the destruction of the Para state secretariat of security and the occupation of a sugarcane plantation that had already been transferred to CONTAG. In May 2000, the MST invaded federal buildings in 13 state capitals, including the capital Brasilia. More than 30 000 people participated and in some cases damage was caused to properties. The occupiers refused to leave the buildings until President Cardoso himself or one of his economic ministers would agree to talk to them and make concessions. Military police attempting to stop the MST from entering the state building in Brasilia killed one settler (Ondetti, 2008:195). Ultimately, the MST withdrew from its occupations given President Cardoso's determination not to enter into any negotiations.

The growing boldness in activism can be traced to tactical decisions made by the MST leadership in those years. They were fuelled by an overestimation of the MST's political invulnerability, as the early Cardoso years had brought the MST widespread publicity and public support for land occupations. It can be argued that the inclusion of bolder tactics in their tactical repertories avoided the slipping into the adaption and acceptance of given land-reform measures. On the other hand, however, some initiatives certainly did not further

---

[35] Decline in land occupations in percentage: centre-west: 58.1; north: 32.8; northeast: 50.3; south: 76.7; southeast: 40.3.

agrarian reform policy, but only undermined their image as a rural movement. This process of changing public perceptions is addressed below.

The ruthlessness of activities became less evident with Lula entering the government, although the MST did not refrain from using protest tactics to pressure President Lula as his conservative policy turn became more evident. The relationship with President Lula remained ambivalent. While many MST members are loyal to President Lula and exercise a certain restraint in criticising the government, others are expressing their anger about the slow pace of land reform and lobbying for overt protest actions (Kenfield, 2007). The first term of President Lula (2002–2006) saw clear signs of restraint in protest tactics. While occupation activities increased between 2002 and 2005 by 41% compared to the previous three-year period, MST protest actions sustained a more engaging quality (Nucleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agraria, 2007:8). In 2005, the single most ambitious campaign of the MST was a 17-day march to Brasilia with 12 000 activists participating. In Brasilia they met with the President and obtained some settlement concessions (Branford, 2005). In their march to the capital, the MST leaders were determined not to enter into quarrels with the police. In a public statement in 2005, Stedile, a well-known MST leader, announced the start of protest actions, but also cautiously pointed out that actions were not aimed "against the government, but to force the government to change its economic policy" (Machado, 2005).

This restraint in protest actions has however seen a gradual decline in recent years. In particular, since President Lula's re-election in 2006, the MST has returned to controversial protest actions such as the destruction of genetically modified crops, the occupation of state offices, theft of tractors and raiding of police stations (Karriem, 2008:7; Tilly et al., 2009). In particular, the occupation of INCRA offices has increased during the last two years, judging from news reports in the two major newspapers *Folha de Sao Paulo* and *Veja*. At the time of writing this thesis, the MST had launched major occupation campaigns of the INCRA offices in Porto Alegre, Sao Paulo and Recife in order to pressure the government to update productivity criteria (Mendes, 2009, Ogliari, 2009).

Recent years have also seen a diversification and internationalisation of MST activism. While organising occupations and protest actions remain the core of the MST's tactical repertoire, the MST has taken on new tasks such as the introduction of agro-ecological methods in its MST settlements and the widespread lobbying thereof. In 2004, it founded its own seeds cooperative, Bionature, which supplies its settlements with organic seeds (Karriem, 2008:7). The adoption of agro-ecological practices is part of the MST's emerging extended injustice frame, which not only focuses on land inequality in Brazil, but also on the practices,

politics and relations that constitute the whole agrarian production system. Arguing that modern commercialised agriculture harms nature and the health of human beings, the MST has adapted a strong stance against agribusinesses, genetically modified crops and "the commodification of nature by capital" in general (Karriem, 2008:7).

The global debate on climate change has in recent years turned the focus on Brazil's biofuel production and the need to protect the Amazon forest as carbon storage. Brazil has become the leading supplier of sugarcane-based ethanol, which requires large-scale commercial plantations. This has come at the expense of small-scale farmers in the south and the rain forest in the Amazon Basin. The ongoing deforestation of the Amazon has further been aggravated by large soybean plantations and the uncontrolled encroachment of landless people into the rain forests (Tilly et al., 2009). As an organisation that relies on land occupations and the settlement of people, the MST needs to address the tactical dilemma emerging in the Amazon region. Being known for supporting and motivating land invasion for the sake of land redistribution, the MST is accused of having popularised occupations in Brazil, which now also affect the Amazon.

The MST, as the biggest social movement in Brazil, has joined national and international discussions on these topics and thereby substantially broadened the scope of its activism by organising numerous conferences, workshops and cross-country cooperation. In 2002 it organised a national plebiscite against the Free Trade Agreement (FTAA) with more than 90% voting against the FTAA. The MST is also a regular guest at the World Social Forums and an important contributor to the international peasant movement *La Via Campesina* (Borras, 2008). It furthermore maintains more or less strong ties to other international landless movements[36] (the NLC and LPM used to be two of them) and organises exchange and study programmes for members (Wolford et al., 2008). Consequently, the MST has become an internationally active movement whose organisational structure and tactical repertoires extend far beyond its traditional land occupations. Whether this diversification and internationalisation of activities is in fact detrimental to its core strategy, as it may divert attention and resources away from the actual occupations and settlements, remains to be seen in the next years.

---

[36] For instance, the Movimiento Campesino Paraguayo, the Indonesian Peasant Union, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and the Vietnamese National Farmers Union.

4.3.3 Framing processes: Alternative framing and demonisation

As outlined above, the recent years have seen a broadening of the MST's agenda, reflecting on the one hand the MST's organisational capacity and influence and on the other hand the diverse political and economic meaning that land has attained in Brazil. The MST's collective action frame has consequently experienced a very broad extension to issues and goals, which were originally not part of the action frame. The extension of the collective action frame has enabled the organisation to become an internationally known rural movement, because organisations, donors and individuals with a diverse background can identify with the MST's broad collective action frame.

In particular, the diagnostic framing element has been extended over the last years. The MST moved away from seeing the government and the existing land distribution in Brazil as the sole reason for landlessness and poverty. Today, the diagnostic analysis includes the global agricultural system as the ultimate source for inequality and deprivation: "… we work from the perspective of confronting the current agricultural model imposed by the multinationals" (MST activists, cited in Karriem, 2008:7). The MST argues that the current model, which includes agribusinesses, the global food chain and the commercialisation of food, undermines rural livelihood in Brazil and all over the world. It claims that this "commodification of nature by capital" displaces workers from their land, prioritises export crops over stable food, further concentrates land and income and is detrimental to the environment (Karriem, 2008:7). In this regard, the MST concludes that the current economic system has lost its 'social function'. An MST activist stated the following:

> [The MST] go[es] beyond the economic vision of productivity that the legislation talks about. We ask 'what productivity is of interest to society'? From the point of view of social gain and from the point of view of necessity, the public interest should be above purely economic interests" (cited in Wittman, 2009:123).

Its diagnostic analysis therefore goes far beyond the initial national analysis and touches upon deeply entrenched economic structures in the present world, namely free-market principles, the right to private property and profit as the overriding goal of production. It can be argued that this broadening causes the injustice frame to become very diffuse and aimless. It is difficult for the MST to point to one specific 'enemy' today and to explain these complex economic structures to the people on the ground.

This diffuse 'enemy picture' also applies to the current administration. As mentioned before, the MST's relationship with the Lula government remains ambivalent. MST organiser Jonas da Silva, for instance, claimed: "We campaign for Lula even though we are critical of

him for shaping his discourse for the middle class" (cited in Tilly et al., 2009). This statement also illustrates that the MST, unlike South Africa's NLC and LPM, makes a more pronounced distinction between its president and his policy. While President Lula is seldom attacked personally, his policy receives harsh criticism by the MST. It appears as if the MST portrays President Lula as the 'lesser evil', since they do not agree with his policy, yet are afraid of someone else in stark opposition to the MST.

The prognostic frame has consequently also experienced an extension. The MST is known today as an organisation that lobbies for an alternative approach to agriculture and rural livelihood. MST leader Stedile details the MST's conception of a future agrarian model as follows:

> We want an agrarian practice that transforms farmers into guardians of the land, and a different way of farming, that ensures an ecological equilibrium emphasis on the environmental and social function of land and also guarantees that land is not seen as private property (cited in Karriem, 2008:8).

Yet, its current prognostic frame goes beyond the sketching of an alternative land sector and includes a wide spectrum of rights and duties. The following quote from an MST activist enumerates some of them:

> The right to participate, the right to leisure, schools, health, roads … all the public goods that citizens have a right to. [It is a land relation that] respects labor rights … a healthy environment preserved for future generations, and democratizes access to land (cited in Wittman, 2009: 123).

Its current prognostic frame is therefore highly inclusive, as it incorporates essentially all grassroots demands for a 'better life for all'. By offering such a wide collective action frame, which essentially portrays an alternative society based on a sustainable and equalised land sector, the MST offers ideological access points for a variety of contemporary movements, lobbying for a 'better world'. In this regard, it has been argued that the MST has become an anti-systemic movement, as it criticises the current neoliberal order and envisages an alternative system (Karriem, 2008; Petras & Veltmeyer, 2006).

It however needs to be pointed out that the MST's prognostic framing suffers from the same vagueness as its diagnostic analysis. Due to its ambitious and highly inclusive counter-framing, objectives have become less tangible for the ordinary landless person. The core strategy of the MST, namely land settlements, has enabled the MST to present a concrete alternative approach to commercialised, large-scale agriculture. Land is a very tangible fact and if political opportunities and resource mobilisation are favourable, it can easily be used to frame 'change' and 'betterment', as outlined in the previous Sections. On the other hand,

democratic rights, sustainability, environmental protection or the right to leisure, to name but a few, are arguably more abstract ideas and therefore much more difficult to translate into concrete results, which then may serve as springboard to perpetuate the counter-frame. Overall, the MST, as many other anti-systemic movements, lacks a concrete alternative blueprint in its efforts to extend its prognostic frame.

The extension of the collective action frame is also evident in its motivational component. As outlined previously, the MST has experienced an intensification of non-occupational tactics, which at times have become comparatively ruthless. This turn is a reflection of its extended diagnostic and prognostic frame. Since the MST essentially portrays the entire economic system as its 'modern enemy', attacks against the 'system' are exercised for the sake of a 'better world' and are therefore perceived as legitimate. Nonetheless, this kind of motivational interpretation is still controversial within the MST and it remains to be seen whether it may lead to a spin-off movement that adheres to either more moderate or radical methods.

The internal controversy was also sparked due to a public image change that the MST underwent. From about 1999 onwards, the then Cardoso government and Brazilian media, which despite thousands of radio stations and hundreds of TV channels remains highly concentrated, begun to disseminate an image of the MST as a terroristic and criminal organisation. The media coverage of the MST generally "underscored the growing threat the MST poses to 'democracy' and the 'rule of law' and applauded the fact that Cardoso was 'finally' getting tough on the MST's unruly tactics" (Ondetti, 2008:186). In 2000, an issue of the *Veja* was titled as follows: "The tactic of troublemaking: The MST uses the pretext of agrarian reform to preach socialist revolution" (A tactica da baderna, 2000; Ondetti, 2008:186). In its effort to condemn the MST, the media was joined by a number of prominent intellectuals. José de Souza Martins, the country's best-known rural sociologist, branded the MST as luddites. Zander Navarro, an acclaimed sociologist and former MST supporter, stated that the MST is "propelled by the 'childish Leninist' ideas of a small revolutionary cadre" (cited in Carter, 2009:2–3).

During the last decade this public condemnation has diminished national popularity of the MST to a point were only 30% of Brazilians are in favour of land occupations[37] (Ondetti, 2008:187). The public framing of the MST as an "autocratic, violent, shady and revolutionary organization" will be detrimental over the longer term as it causes political allies such as the

---

[37] The poll was taken in 2000 in the city of Sao Paulo by the conservatively rated newspaper *Folha de Sao Paulo*. Hence, results might be biased as more urban, white-collar workers were interviewed.

PT to withdraw their support for the sake of preserving their electorate from the centre (Carter, 2009: 3). On the other hand, it needs to be pointed out that the MST has clearly maintained its independent voice in Brazil and the world by engaging in discussions about an alternative agrarian model across the board and by actively extending its land occupation strategy through the inclusion of ecological principles. This dissident thinking and practice continue to be resonant among the Brazilian landless and urban poor, as the MST presents a vital institutional and ideological alternative to the repetitively disappointing Brazilian state. Brazilian academics, professionals, foreign organisations and individuals are however also among the MST's sympathisers and supporters, valuing the maintenance of diversity as one way to progress.

4.3.4 Summary

The period from 1999 to 2009 saw interesting movement dynamics for the MST. The movement experienced a temporary decline, but also a quick revival lasting to this day. This trajectory is the result of the interrelatedness of political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes. Overall, the political opportunity structure remained ambivalent, which translated into the possibility for the MST to continue its traditional activism and to include new tactical repertoires. Based on its solid mobilising structures and collective action frame, the MST was also able to sustain the last two repressive years of the Cardoso administration. With the advent of President Lula's reign, the political structure was re-opening again, yet remained partially hostile to the MST, which to some degree was due to the MST's increasing boldness in protest actions and broadening of its collective action frame. Except for the two last Cardoso years, the political opportunity structure in Brazil between 1999 and 2009 therefore maintained its creative political tension, keeping the MST somewhat distant from the government, yet enabling the MST to mobilise around the legal and financial access points the administration offers.

Current land measures, in this regard, point to a continuance of this political ambivalence. The recently implemented land law for the Amazon Basin has led to new controversies around the occupation methods used by the MST as well as to an unlinking of MST membership and land transfers in this region. On the other hand, the Lula government is showing political will to update productivity criteria, which would greatly enhance the MST's activities. Yet, at the same time, the *bancada ruralista* continue to obstruct and delay land-reform measures in Congress as well as on the ground via their political and economic

leverage. Thereby they contribute in an odd way to the sustainability of the MST, since they 'create' an enemy picture and organisational difficulties that motivate and direct the struggle.

In South Africa, the political structure between 1999 and 2009 presents yet again very different opportunities. In essence, it was a continuance of the transitional period 1990 to 1999, yet it showed an amplification of existing constraints. The ANC remained the ruling party in South Africa and with it the state-directed activism, already identified in the previous period. However, the advent of President Mbeki in 1999 meant the start of a period with increasingly closed political access points in terms of recognition of rural interests and the NLC. While the NLC continued to be part of governmental structures through municipality work, its voice as the representative of the landless was disregarded amid the consolidation of elite interests. Land reform itself stagnated and the Mbeki government did not show political will to adjust land policy or to open alternative channels of activism. Land occupations, for instance, remained a strict taboo, in particular after the invasions of productive farms in Zimbabwe, which instilled horrendous fears into the government and the public.

The NLC therefore acted in a political environment characterised by artificial access points. Whereas the MST was able to exploit legal and financial opportunities that were functional and responding to its activism in Brazil, the NLC essentially campaigned in an environment that did not offer effective support for alternative activism, as this was not in line with government policy. Furthermore, the NLC itself continued to adapt to the few access points that were offered and did not challenge the course of the government. This is a direct result of its institutionalisation of mobilising structures and its integration into the national master frame during the transitional period. Interestingly though, there has been the desire by some NLC members to embrace a more radical approach, drawing their inspiration in fact from the MST in Brazil. Yet, as it was outlined in detail, their ambitions to construct a similar rural movement were not met with the required dynamics to sustain the movement as the very same constraints that choked the NLC also restrained the LPM. The LPM remained overly dependent on the NLC and thereby indirectly on the government. Its organisational structure remained a generated national committee and lacked appropriate grassroots structures. Its tactical repertoire was tightly constrained by firstly the active suppression by the government and secondly the implicit reluctance of landless people to actually carry through with land occupations and strikes, whereby the national master frame effectively tied most landless to the ANC government and their proposed policies. Lastly, land ownership, as mentioned before, did not attain the same meaning in South Africa as in Brazil. It remained one of many items on the 'racial redress agenda', along with education, health, houses and employment. In

this regard it was argued that the landless themselves do not link land to personal prosperity and freedom as strongly as the *sem terra* in Brazil do. Consequently, land never attained the same urgent social and political status in South Africa as it did in Brazil, affecting framing and mobilising efforts of the NLC and the LPM.

Recent mobilising and framing processes in Brazil have also seen a diversification of the land question and a divergence of its original narrow meaning. These changes were largely initiated by a changing political and economic significance of land in Brazil due to its increased ethanol production, ongoing environmental destruction, particularly in the Amazon forest, and the related global climate talks. Being a well-established and resourceful organisation, the MST took up these matters and included them in its campaigning repertoire and collective action frame. The land question is today regarded by the MST as much more than only a national distribution problem; it is seen as a global issue that affects every country and every part of a person's life. While on the one hand it means an extension of issues and thereby a wider recognition of the MST nationally and internationally, it may on the other hand also lead to a similar tendency as in South Africa, namely the divergence away from the root problem, the distribution of land. However, one can argue that the MST started with a very narrow and tangible action frame and mobilised successfully around it amid ambivalent political opportunities. Therefore, the MST enjoyed and still enjoys a solid grassroots foundation with people ideologically and practically connected to land and its associated issues. In this way, the MST might be able to handle a broadening of its agenda as a critical and proactive rural grassroots is ever present. The NLC, on the other hand, could never build onto such a national grassroots with precise goals and concrete 'enemies'. Its action frame and mobilising structures were from the outset characterised by interpretational and structural broadness that inhibited the formation of a cohesive idea of landlessness and landownership in South Africa. The national master frame in this regard substantially contributed to the shifting of responsibility for land reform to the government, whereby land distribution gradually lost its social and political urgency.

Whether the new Zuma government will offer a changed political opportunity structure in South Africa remains doubtful. Although Zuma rhetorically brought the land question back to national attention by proposing some controversial measures, land reform will remain a top-down affair and simply another item on the agenda, since there is presently no capable national representation of the landless in South Africa that could articulate urgency and precise demands. The election of Zuma might, despite his overt pledges for cooperation and rhetorical promises to work for the people, represent a step back in terms of movement

dynamics in South Africa. President Zuma greatly re-evoked old feelings of a benevolent state, which South Africans need to respect and serve and thereby he corroborated the national master frame. A significant grassroots mobilisation and counter-framing are therefore not to be expected.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this thesis I have sought to present an explanation for varying rural activism in South Africa and Brazil. The guiding question was why two countries with similar rural disparities experienced a very different outcome of rural mobilisation. I have focused on tracing the protest cycles of the South African NLC and the Brazilian MST, namely the emerging phase, the period of stabilisation and the period of decline and resurgence. In this analysis, I have been guided by the three widely acknowledged perspectives on social movements, namely political opportunities, resource mobilisation and framing processes. In particular, I have tried to demonstrate the interrelatedness of these dynamics and how grievances weave into them. In this concluding chapter I briefly review the key findings of the preceding chapters by addressing each movement dynamic, and subsequently arrive at an overall conclusion.

The NLC faced from the outset a very different *political opportunity structure* compared to the MST. None of South Africa's political systems were conducive to rural activism. The critical feature of South Africa's political systems has been and still is the question of race and the fight for equal representation and recognition of both black and white people in politics and the economy. In this regard, South Africa's political systems have been characterised by *ethnic power blocks* that were either overly *exclusive or overly inclusive* towards rural activism. Apartheid politically, economically and socially excluded the majority of black South Africans in order to ensure the consolidation and stabilisation of white minority rule. Rural activism favouring black rural workers and farmers was essentially not feasible, as political participation and the establishment of organisations were prohibited through a highly discriminating political and legal system. Illegal alignments among and with white sympathisers were an option and utilised, in particular towards the end of apartheid, to establish a network of rural organisations. Yet, despite this slight window of opportunity, the system remained overly repressive and discriminating in all aspects of people's life and triggered the emergence of an all-embracing African party promising general redress. The post-apartheid period constituted the complete opposite of apartheid and was a comparatively quick change from utter exclusion to extensive inclusion of activism. The ANC, being the legitimate new government for all South Africans and for all problems, absorbed activists, resources and project work, thereby draining civil society from it mobilisation and framing capacity. This over-inclusion was ultimately detrimental to the NLC, because land reform,

despite a favourable legal framework, became the sole responsibility of the ANC-led government and thereby an entirely bureaucratic process. In terms of political opportunities for rural activism, the relative quick change from exclusion to inclusion brought about by a widely acclaimed liberation movement had a demobilising effect in the long term.

Brazil, on the other hand, has shown throughout its history an *ambivalent political opportunity structure*. Compared to South Africa, power blocks based on ethnicity did not exist. In Brazil, politics was and is characterised by a multi-racial elite that historically attained its status through large landholdings and an extensive system of patronage. Therefore, compared to South Africa, Brazil's politics and party system have a much more direct emphasis on class issues, wealth and power imbalance. These matters are not leveraged against race as much as in South Africa, where the black-white dichotomy has constrained political life to evolve around substantive matters. In South Africa, party affiliation has not been and is still not based on programmatic agendas as in Brazil, but on race and narratives of domination and dispossession. The majority of South Africans do not directly identify with a class, a profession or an ideological background, but with their historically assigned racial category and the attached burden. Although the race/class distinction is slowly being blurred as South Africa's middle class becomes more multiracial; race continues to remain a salient identity marker. Therefore, developmental issues such as education, health, employment and land are not sufficiently singled out as vantage points for competitive party and politics formation as in Brazil, where a multitude of left-, centre- and right-wing parties exist. A resulting consequence is that legitimate land ownership in South Africa remains linked to race and not to social productivity criterions as it is the case in Brazil. In South Africa, social and economic issues are bundled in a coherent 'redress package' that needs to be delivered by the 'appropriately racially mixed' government. Brazil's political system has various parties with programmatic agendas, competing for votes in a stratified, but racially more heterogeneous society which is not burdened as explicitly as the post-apartheid society by a recent history of excessive segregation.

In Brazil, politics has therefore been more of a balancing act between the interests of a wealthy elite, the urban middle class and the poor, often rural, population. Although the elite, in particular the landholders, known as the *bancada ruralista*, has dominated politics, there was and is a need to forge coalitions and therefore to make strategic compromises. As yet, this has repeatedly resulted in favourable political access points for rural movements, yet without becoming overly inclusive, as conservative forces have generally maintained the upper hand. This characteristic of Brazil's government was less accentuated during the military

dictatorship. Yet, compared to South Africa, it was a regime that suppressed its entire population on ideological grounds for fear of communism and kept certain channels open, such as Christian-based communities. The military regime also passed and extended the Land Statute and thereby laid the legal foundation for land reform. Above all, no political system in Brazil had eroded small-scale farming as systematically as the apartheid regime did with the African farming communities by forcing them into wage labour and work migration. While local policies in Brazil have been rather unfavourable for small-scale farmers, the country's government never employed the institutionalised displacement tactics of the apartheid regime.

With the turn to democracy in Brazil, political opportunities opened up for rural mobilisation, yet never as wide-ranging as in South Africa. The rather fragile and conservative coalition governments of the democracy never attained the same symbolic and political acceptance as the ANC did in South Africa, which left considerable mobilising and framing space for the MST and other oppositional forces. Brazil's democratic governments were however never able to completely ignore the ensuing land demand from the MST, as the legal framework presented a detailed and extensive agrarian legislation that emphasised the social function of land. Numerous political allies, such as the PT, labour unions and legislators, which remain in opposition, supported their struggle for land. In contrast, landowners, politicians and other conservative sectors have demonstrated a vigorous will and power to prevent or slow down land-reform implementation.

Overall, Brazil's political opportunity structure has been consistently ambivalent compared to South Africa's change from utter exclusion to over-inclusion. As resource mobilisation and framing processes illustrate further, an ambivalent political structure was comparatively more conducive to long-term powerful rural activism than opportunity extremes, since it provided just enough legal and political loopholes to make activism partially successful – a precondition to persistently motivate people. But it also presented activists with tangible constraints that required ongoing mobilisation

Accordingly, *resource mobilisation* as one movement dynamic has shown substantial differences between South Africa and Brazil. The key finding of the MST's success was its adaption of *land occupations* as a major tactical repertoire across Brazil. It is a tangible protest action, which after years of mutually shared deprivation, brings material success to the community and thereby stimulates a sense of belonging. This tactical repertoire was possible in Brazil because of three major reasons. Firstly, there were political opportunities that allowed expropriation based on the social function of land as well as political allies that financially and ideologically supported land occupations. Secondly, the MST could build onto

an existing grassroots structure of small-scale farmers or their relatives, in particular in the southern states. CEBs had substantially instilled a sense of community, but also an idea of rural prosperity and independence. With the democratic opening of Brazil, middle-class intellectuals started to support the movement at the grassroots level as well, thereby providing the MST with legal expertise and leadership skills. The third key reason for the feasibility of land occupations is the historically grown conviction of land distribution being the ultimate source of power imbalance and poverty in Brazil. This conviction was early on reflected in the legal framework and later on politically embodied by INCRA. The MST has certainly contributed to this prioritising of the land question, yet *latifúndios* owners have been regarded as corrupt and unproductive landlords hindering economic and social development in Brazil before the emergence of the MST. To a greater or lesser extent, land occupations were therefore considered a legitimate method to alter social injustice in Brazil, in particular in view of a political body largely unwilling to implement land reform.

In South Africa, resource mobilisation never had the same influential intensity. Compared to the MST, the resource-mobilisation capacity of the NLC was characterised by weak grassroots structures and an overly *bureaucratic tactical repertoire*. Two of the three major reasons, summarised above, which facilitated land occupations in Brazil, were not present in South Africa. With regard to political opportunities, it can be argued that South Africa possesses an agrarian legislation, which in theory supports expropriation in the public interest and for an equitable access of South Africa's resources. The NLC has furthermore cooperated extensively with political allies and received substantial amounts of state assistance, yet this political alignment took place in a very different manner compared to the MST. As aforementioned, the NLC was absorbed into the government, thereby adapting its projects and policy agendas. In contrast, the MST aligned itself with forces from the political and civil society opposition, which remained comparatively vivid and influential in democratic Brazil and maintained an alternative agenda to the government, thereby approving rebellious actions.

The presence of a small but coherent grassroots structure of small-scale farmers that shared a common idea of agricultural prosperity and thereby served as the mobilising nucleus for the MST, did not exist in South Africa. The black rural population of South Africa was and partially still is today a diverse mix of farm dwellers, wage tenants, migrant workers and subsistence farmers in the former homelands, all of which had from the start very different ideas of land reform and its associated service deliveries. There were no comparable Christian-based communities in the South African countryside to reach out to the poorest of the poor and unite them around their common grievances. Such institutions would have

profoundly undermined apartheid's goal of black subordination and dependency. Hence, the NLC's work was limited to localised support of displaced communities and assistance to individuals and families. As essentially a part of the post-apartheid government, the NLC became an institutionalised entity carrying out administrative tasks and joining policy discussions. The landless were encouraged to be patient receivers of land reform's slow output instead of active demanders. Land occupations were and are seen as an unnecessary disturbance of the national effort to address apartheid legacies collectively and coherently. In this regard, the last important reason for the acceptability of land occupations in Brazil was also not present in South Africa. While land distribution is seen as an important agenda item, it is only one task of the 'redress package'. Apartheid left South Africa with so many substantial disparities affecting people's lives that land distribution is not regarded as the *primary* problem, as is the case in Brazil. In this regard South Africa's landless do not link land to personal prosperity and freedom as strongly as the *sem terra* in Brazil do. Land occupations were therefore not seen as a legitimate way to solve social injustices in South Africa, even more so as the government seemed to offer suitable channels for land reform.

Overall, the resource mobilisation of the MST showed that the possession and feasibility of a tactical repertoire, which maintains ties to the grassroots and at the same time necessitates substantial interaction with the political elite, contributed to its movement strengths. In stark contrast, the NLC lost its tactical independence and connection to the landless in the post-apartheid period and predominately engaged with political actors. The resulting unwillingness and inability to carry out land occupations in South Africa, as compared to the MST, contributed to the demobilisation of the NLC.

Framing processes as an important movement dynamic that provides the struggle with meaning and thereby may activate people if the frame is sufficiently resonant, have seen different characteristics in the MST and NLC. Overall, the MST constructed a very *resonant collective action frame*, which started with a very narrow, but highly resonant interpretation of the struggle and then gradually broadened as the MST grew and attained international recognition. Its initial high resonance can be explained by the match between existing grassroots structures in the southern states of Brazil and the relatively straightforward explanation of their common grievances offered by first CEB and later MST activists. In this way, the MST focused early on land issues at the local level and amplified the notion of land ownership as being a way out of poverty. It directly involved the landless and small-scale farmers with their narratives, religious beliefs and customs in the framing process. The communities started to see themselves as *sem terra*, and through ongoing mobilisation and

framing processes in the camps and settlements a strong association between being *sem terra* and being an MST member was established. Based on general awareness of land issues in Brazil, this frame also received recognition by the Brazilian public and the media, at least during the 1990s, and thereby corroborated the MST's collective action frame. Throughout the MST's existence, its collective action frame represented an alternative model of agricultural livelihood nationally and internationally.

In South Africa, the NLC did not start off with a narrow and straightforward collective action frame at the local level. Having emerged amid the anti-apartheid movement, its frame was intertwined with the national injustice frame of the civil-rights movement, which broadly interpreted grievances and focused on the apartheid regime as the source of all problems. While this frame facilitated a national anti-apartheid movement, it oversimplified rural problems and attained an urban bias, as the shared ideas of benevolent urban middle-class people were the dominate drivers of the collective action frame. This lack of a unifying and coherent idea of landlessness driven by the rural population resulted in a post-apartheid vacuum regarding visions and actions for the rural sector. The existing broadly resonant *national master frame* quickly filled this gap and was augmented with ideas of rural development theory by the World Bank. Therefore, unlike to the MST in Brazil, the NLC did not actively construct a counter-frame to defend alternative notions of land reform and landlessness. Its incorporation into governmental structures and its initial unconditional support of the ANC government caused the NLC to fully identify with the national master frame. It accordingly became the official rural representation of the national development project of the new government. As parts of the NLC showed signs of disagreement and encouraged a stronger grassroots structure in the form of the LPM, this was met with strong resistance by NLC members as well as by the government. The rejection and ultimate failure of the LPM was underpinned by a rural population which, unlike that of Brazil, identified with the government and its national master frame and therefore for the most part refrained from rebellious actions. In South Africa, land reform therefore took the form of an inclusive national project, whereas in Brazil land reform remained a populist project given that the national and local administrations were perceived as overall hostile.

Framing processes have therefore been dominated by the national master frame in South Africa. Attempts to construct a counter-frame have been undertaken, yet existing rural movement constraints are too entrenched in South Africa to allow for the sustainment of a nationally organised rural movement based on oppositional grassroots structures. In contrast,

the MST established and subsequently broadened a collective action frame that unifies at the grassroots and is in opposition to state policy, thereby having a strong mobilising dynamic.

Overall, the two case studies have provided an empirical example for the interrelated importance of movement dynamics to sustain power and mobilisation of movements over time. An ambivalent political opportunity structure proved more conducive to activism than an overly inclusive one as resource mobilisation and framing processes tend to maintain their independence and thus mobilising momentum amid an ambivalent structure. A tactical repertoire overly characterised by bureaucratic structures appears to be particularly detrimental for rural activism as the movement loses touch with the affected rural population and engages in a kind of fabricated rural activism. Collective action frames which are in opposition to the prevailing land policy and construct mutually shared ideas of landlessness and landownership are specifically powerful in maintaining motivation for rural activism.

With reference to the initial question of why rural activism differs substantially in South Africa and Brazil despite similar land and poverty disparities, the study has shown that there is certainly no straightforward answer. The study points to a complex network of cause and effect. In an attempt to reduce the outcome of the study to a more tangible conclusion, the differing level of rural activism in South Africa is due to an overall demobilising constellation of important movement dynamics. Political opportunities changed from overly exclusive to overly inclusive and thereby amplified the chain of demobilising dynamics. Due to the inclusive nature of the political system, resource mobilisation became narrowly institutionalised, containing most oppositional forces at the national and local level. This development was underpinned by a missing coherent rural African population with a strong independent farming background. The exclusive-inclusive dichotomy of the South African society with its strong racial overtones led to a national master frame interpreting land reform as an exclusive state affair and merging land with the broad context of social injustice in South Africa. Accordingly, this study concludes with the awareness that the historically constructed and contemporarily continued racial dichotomy of South Africa's society has hampered rural movement dynamics. Perhaps only a new generation, unburdened by the direct experiences and narratives of the past, may gradually diffuse a new sense of equality and a constructive critical approach to politics.

References

Abahlali. 2009. *Eliminate the Slums Act* [Online]. Available at
http://www.abahlali.org/node/1629 [14 October 2009].

Abreu, M.P. & Werneck, L.R.F. 2005. *The Brazilian economy from Cardoso to Lula – An
interim view* [Online]. Discussion paper 504. Department of Economics PUC-Rio.
Available at http://ideas.repec.org/p/rio/texdis/504.html [14 October 2009].

Adelman, I. & Morris, C. 1988. *Comparative patterns of economic development, 1850–1914*.
Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.

African National Congress. 1955. *Freedom Charter* [Online]. Available at
http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html [12 October 2009].

African National Congress. 2002. *Declaration of the 51st National Conference of the ANC*
[Online]. Available at
http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/conference51/declaration.html [24 September
2009].

African National Congress. 2004. *ANC keeps to land reform commitments* [Online]. Available
at http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2004/pr0304.html [15 October 2009].

Aliber, M.2003. Chronic Poverty in South Africa: Incidence, Causes and Policies. *World
Development* 31(3):473–490.

Altieri, M.A. 1999. Agroecology, small farms, and food sovereignty. *Monthly Review*
61(3): n.p. [Online]. Available at http://www.monthlyreview.org/090810altieri.php [13
October 2009].

Altieri, M.A. 1999a. Applying agroecology to enhance productivity of peasant farming
systems in Latin America. *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 1:197–217.

Association for Rural Advancement. 1994. Land Charter. *AFRA News* Jan/Feb [Online].
Available at
http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=Afn2694.1562.8
140.000.026.Jan1994.8 [27 August 2009].

Association for Rural Advancement. 1999. *20 years in the land rights struggle*.
Pietmaritzburg.

A tactica da baderna. 2000. *Veja* 10 May [Online]. Available at
http://veja.abril.com.br/100500/sumario.html [15 October 2009].

Bakewell, P.J. 2004. *A history of Latin America: c. 1450 to the present.* Second edition.
Oxford: Blackwell.

Bernstein, A. 2008. State bungling threatens to turn land reform into a national crisis. 2008.
Sunday Times 25 May [Online]. Available at
http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/article90260.ece [13 October 2009].

Bezemer, D. & Heady, D. 2008. Agriculture, development and urban bias. *World Development* 36(8):1342–1364.

Borras, S.M. 2008. La Vía Campesina and its global campaign for agrarian reform. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8(2/3):258–289.

Branford, S. 2005. Brazil's landless squeeze government. *BBC* 16 May [Online]. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4550773.stm [11 October 2009].

Brazil Justice Net. 1997. *Widespread approval of land occupation tactic of MST* [Online], Available at http://www.braziljusticenet.org/268.htm [14 September 2009].

Bundy, C. 1987. Land and liberation: Popular rural protest and the national liberation movements in South Africa, 1920–1960. In S. Mark & S. Trapido (eds.). *The politics of race, class and nationalism*. New York: Longman:254-285.

Caldeira, R. 2008. Up-dating its strategies and amplifying its frames: The Landless Rural Workers' Movement in Brazil and the displacement of the struggle for land. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 7(2):133–149.

Camay, P. & Gordon, A.J. 2007. *Race, repression and resistance: A brief history of South African civil society to 1994*. Johannesburg: The Co-operative for Research and Education.

Campbell, J. L. 2005. Where do we stand? Common mechanisms in organizations and social movements research. In G. F. Davis, D. McAdam & M.N. Zald (eds.). *Social movements and organization theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press:41–68.

Carter, M. 2009. *The Landless Rural Workers' Movement and democracy in Brazil* [Online]. International Peasant Day, American University's School of International Service, April 17. Available at http://www.landaction.org/spip/spip.php?article436&var_recherche=Carter [16 October 2009].

Castagna, P. 2000. The use of music by the Jesuits in the conversation of the indigenous of Brazil. In J.W. O'Malle (ed.). *The Jesuits: Cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540–1773*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press:641–655.

Cheibub, J.A., Figueiredo, A. & Limongi, F. 2002. *The politics of federalism in Brazil: The role of governors in the Brazilian Congress*. Paper presented at the Seminar on Taxation Perspectives: A democratic approach to public finance in developing countries, Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, October 28–29.

City of Cape Town. 2009. *City's anti-land invasion unit to stop land grabs* 17 July 2009 [Online]. Available at http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/Pages/Citysantilandinvasionunittostoplandgrabs.aspx [14 October 2009].

Cliffe, L. 2009. New institutional mechanism? In R. Hall (ed.). *Another countryside? Policy option for land and agrarian reform in South Africa*. Cape Town: Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies:233-245.

Comissao Pastoral da Terra. 2008. *Acompanhamento dos conflitos no campo* [Online]. Available at http://www.cptnac.com.br/?system=news&action=read&id=2787&eid=6 [29 September 2009].

Comissao Pastoral da Terra. 2009. *Conflicts in the field decreased, but violence is growing!* [Online]. Available at http://www.cptnac.com.br/?system=news&action=read&id=3311&eid=6 [23 September 2009].

Dabene, O. 2003. *Party fractionalization and democratic consolidation in Brazil* [Online]. Political parties and democratic consolidation in Latin America European. Consortium for Political Research joint session workshop. Edinburgh, UK, March 28–April 3. Available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ECPR/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/edinburgh/ws1/Dabene.p df [11 October 2009].

Da Silva, J.G. 1982. *A modernização dolorosa: Estrutura agrária, fronteira agrícola e trabalhadores rurais no Brasil.* Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

Deininger, K. 1999. Making negotiated land reform work: Initial experience from Colombia, Brazil and South Africa. *World Development* 27(4):651–672.

De Souza, A. 2006. Lula's first term of office is as good as it gets. *Wilsoncenter* [Online]. Available at www.wilsoncenter.org/news/docs/AsGoodasitGets.doc [14 September 2009].

Donors ditch land NGO. 2005. *Mail&Guardian Online* 1 April [Online]. Available at http://www.mg.co.za/article/2005-04-01-donors-ditch-land-ngo [12 October 2009].

Dorner, P. 1972. *Land reform and economic development.* Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Emery, A. 2005. Revolution without the revolution: On the unintended consequences o illegitimate state repression in South Africa. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 33(2):209–230.

Eveleth, A. & Mngxitama, A. 2003. The struggle of South Africa's landless. In S. Greenberg (ed.). *Development update – Piecemeal reforms and calls for action, land reform in South Africa* 4(2). Johannesburg: Interfund.

Expropriation bill under fire. 2008. *Mail&Guardian Online* 2 July [Online]. Available at http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-07-02-expropriation-bill-under-fire [13 October 2009].

Feinstein, C. 2005. *An economic history of South Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Feranil, S.H. 2005. Stretching the limits of redistributive land reform: Lesson and evidence from the Philippines under neoliberalism. In S. Moyo & P. Yeros (eds.). *Reclaiming the land: The resurgence of rural movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.* New York: Zbooks:257–282.

Food and Agriculture Organization. 2006. *The state of food and agriculture 2006: Food aid for*
food security? [Online]. Available at
http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0800e/a0800e00.HTM [6 October 2009].

Foweraker, J. 2001. Grassroots movements and political activism in Latin America: A critical comparison of Chile and Brazil. *Latin American Studies* 33(4):839–865.

Foweraker, J. 2002. *The struggle for land: A political economy of the pioneer frontier in Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fraser, A. 2007. White farmers' dealings with land reform in South Africa: Evidence from Northern Limpopo province. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 99(1):24– 36.

Freyre, G. 1978. *The masters and the slaves (Casa-Grande and Senzala): A study in the development of Brazilian civilization.* Second edition. New York: Knopf.

Gamson, W. & Meyer, D.S. 1996. Framing political opportunity. In D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy & M.N. Zald (eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing.* New York: Cambridge University Press:141–152.

Ghimire, K.B. 2001. *Land reform and peasant livelihoods*. London: ITDG.

Globalis. 2009. Brazil: Urban population. *Global Virtual University* [Online] Available at http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=30&Country=BR [12 October 2009].

Globo. 2009. *Distribuição de terras no Brasil é a mesma há 20 anos, diz IBGE 30/09/09* [Online]. Available at http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/Mundo/0,,MUL1324404-5602,00DISTRIBUICAO+DE+TERRAS+NO+BRASIL+E+A+MESMA+HA+ANOS+DIZ+IBGE. Html [27 September 2009].

Goffman, E. 1974. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of the experience*. New York: Harper Colophon.

Goldstone, J. & Tilly, C. 2001. Threat (and opportunity): Popular action and state response in the dynamics of contentious action. In S.R. Aminzade; S. Tarrow,D. McAdam, W. H. Sewell, J. Goldstone, E. J. Perry, C. Tilly. (eds.). *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press:179–194.

Gomes, E. 2000. O MST se perdeu. *Veja Online* 15 November [Online]. Available at http://veja.abril.com.br/151100/entrevista.html [24 September 2009].

Goodwin J. & Jasper, J.M. 1999. Caught in the winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory. *Social Forum* 14(1):27–52.

Greenberg, S. 2003. Redistribution and access in a market-driven economy. In S. Greenberg (ed.). *Development update – Piecemeal reforms and calls for action, land reform in South Africa* 4(2). Johannesburg: Interfund.

Greenberg, S. 2004. Post-apartheid development, landlessness and the reproduction of exclusion in South Africa. *Research Report* 17:1–42. Durban: Centre for Civil Society.

Greenberg, S. 2004a. The Landless People's Movement and the failure of post-apartheid land reform. *Research Report* 26:1–39. Durban: Centre for Civil Society.

Greenberg, S. 2009. Personal communication, 14 September.

Greenberg, S. 2009a. *Thinking beyond share equity schemes in land reform: How about going small?* [Online]. The South African Civil Society Information Service. Available at http://sacsis.org.za/site/News/detail.asp?iData=357&iCat=253&iChannel=1&nChannel=News [12 October 2009].

Greenberg, S. & Ndlovu, N. 2004. Civil society relationships. In D. McKinley & P. Naidoo (eds.). *Development update – Mobilising for change. The rise of the new social movements in South Africa* 5(2). Johannesburg: Interfund.

Gurr, T.R. 1970. *Why men rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Habib, A. 2005. State-civil society relations in post-apartheid South Africa. *Social Research* 72(3):671–692.

Hall, R. 2004. A political economy of land reform in South Africa. *Review of African Political Economy* 100:213–227.

Hall, R. (ed.). 2009. *Another countryside? Policy options for land and agrarian reform in South Africa*. Cape Town: Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies.

Hall, R. 2009a. A fresh start for rural development and agrarian reform? *Policy Brief* 29. Cape Town: Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies.

Hammond, J.L. 1999. Law and Disorder: The Brazilian Landless Farmworkers' Movement. *Bulletin of Latin American Research.* 18(4) 469-89.

Hammond, J.L. 2004. The MST and the media: Competing images of the Brazilian Landless Farmworkers' Movement. *Latin American Politics & Society* 46(4):61–90.

Hecht, B.H. & Cockburn, A. 1989. *The fate of the forest: Developers, destroyers, and defenders of the Amazon*. New York: Verso.

Hirsch, T. 2009. Brazil's Lula signs Amazon bill. *BCC* 26 June [Online]. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8120209.stm [29 September 2009].

Hofstatter, S. 2009. *Reform does not mean expropriation* 21 August [Online]. Available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200908210008.html [13 October 2009].

Houtzager, P.P. 2001. Collective action and political authority: Rural workers, church, and state in Brazil. *Theory and Society* 30:1–45.

Huizer, G. 1972. *The revolutionary potential of peasants in Latin America*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.

Human Sciences Research Council. 2005. *Trends and policy challenges in the rural economy: Four provincial case studies* [Online]. Available at http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2100&freedownload=1 [22 October 2009].

Hunt, S.A. & Bendford, R.D. 1994. Identity talk in the peace and justice movement. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnology* 22:488–517.

Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). 2000. *População residente, por cor ou raça, segundo a situação do domicílio e os grupos de idade – Brasil* [Online]. Available at http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/tendencia_demografica/indigenas/defa ulttab.shtm [23 September 2009]

Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). 2006. *Censo Agropecuraio 2006* [Online]. Available at http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/economia/agropecuaria/censoagro/2006/agropecu ario.pdf [5 October 2009].

Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies. 2009. *Umhlaba Wethu* 8 September [Online]. Available at http://www.plaas.org.za/publications/newsletters/umhlaba-wethu [5 October 2009].

International Federation for Human Rights. 2009. *Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders Annual Report 2009 – Brazil* 18 June [Online] Available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a5f301317.html [16 October 2009].

International Fund For Agricultural Development. 2009. *Rural poverty in Brazil* [Online]. Available at http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/brazil [12 October 2009].

Kanyongolo, F.E. 2005. Land occupations in Malawi: Challenging the neoliberal legal Order. In S. Moyo & P. Yeros (eds.) *Reclaiming the land: The resurgence of rural movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. New York: Zbooks:118–141.

Karriem, A. 2008. The rise and transformation of the Brazilian landless movement into a counter-hegemonic political actor: A Gramscian analysis. *Geoforum* 40(3):316–325.

Kenfield, I. 2007. Landless rural workers confront Brazil's Lula. *Land Research Action Network* 18 June [Online]. Available at http://www.landaction.org/spip/spip.php?article172 [26 September 2009].

Kladermans, B. 1997. *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Klotz, A. 2002. Transnational activism and global transformation: The anti-apartheid and abolitionist experiences. *European Journal of International Relations* 8(1):49–76.

Kornhauser, W. 1959. *The politics of mass society*. New York: Free Press.

Landless People's Movement. 2003. *LPM rejects NLC board's efforts to crush landless struggle* [Online]. Available at http://www.landaction.org/display.php?article=97 [23 September 2009].

Laffont, J.J. & Qian, Y. 1999. The dynamics of reform and development in China: A political economy perspective. *European Economic Review* 43(4-6):1105–1114.

Lahiff, E. 2008. *Land reform in South Africa: A status report 2008* [Online]. Research Report 38. Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies. Available at http://www.plaas.org.za/publications/research-reports/PLAAS_RR38_Lahiff.pdf/ [12 October 2009].

Leite S.P., Leite, C., Heredia, B., Medeiros, M. & Palmeira, R. 2006. Regional impacts of land reform in Brazil. In P. Rosset, R. Patel & M. Courville (eds.). *Promised land: Competing visions of agrarian reform.* New York: Institute for Food and Development Policy:277–280. Also available online at http://www.fao.org/docrep/008/y7218t/y7218t08.htm [18 October 2009].

Leonard, R. 1981. Mobilizing for total war. *Southern Africa.* January/February XIX(1):13-15.

Linz, J.J. & Stepan, A.C. 1996. *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-Communist Europe.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Lipton, M. 2005. The family farm in a globalizing world: The role of crop science in alleviating poverty. *Discussion Paper* 40. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Machado, C. 2005. MST quer forçar mudança na política econômica, diz Stedile Folha de Sao Paulo. *Folha Online* 7 January [Online]. Available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u66582.shtml [17 October 2009].

Machete, C. 2004. *Agriculture and poverty in South Africa: Can agriculture reduce poverty?* [Online]. Paper presented at the Overcoming Underdevelopment Conference, Pretoria, 28–29 October . Available at http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001005/index.php [18 October 2009].

Mahlangu, D. 2009. Zuma wants less costly ways of land acquisition. *The Times* 18 August [Online]. Available at http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/article27138.ece [12 October 2009].

Marais, H. 2001. South Africa – Limits to change the political economy of transition. Second edition. Kenwyn: UCT Press.

Marais, J.S. 1968. *The Cape coloured people 1652–1937.* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

McAdam, D. 1982. *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930–1970.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D. 1995. Initiators and spin-off movements: Diffusion processes in protest cycles. In M. Traugott (ed.). *Repertoires and cycles of collective action*. Durham. N.C.: Duke University Press:217–240.

McAdam, D. 1996. Conceptual origins, current problems, future directions. In D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy & M.N. Zald (eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political   opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing*. New York: Cambridge University Press:23–40.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D. & Zald, M.N. 1996. *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J.D. 1996. Constraints and opportunities in adopting, adapting, and inventing. In D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy & M.N. Zald (eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing*. New York: Cambridge University Press:141–152.

McCarthy, J.D. & Zald, M.N. 1977. Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology* 82:1212–1241.

McClintock, C. 2001. Peru's Sendero Luminoso rebellion: Origins and trajectory. In S. Eckstein (ed.). *Power and popular protest: Latin American social movements.* Berkeley: University of California:61–101.

McKinley, 2008. The crisis of the left in contemporary South Africa. *Mediation – Journal of the Marxist Literacy group* 24(1):69–92.

Mendes, K.L. 2009. MST diz que não desocupará prédios do Incra sem atendimento de reivindicações. *Folha de Sao Paulo* 13 August [Online]. Available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u609242.shtml [17 October 2009].

Meszaros, G. 2000. Taking the land into their hands: The Landless Workers' Movement and the Brazilian state. *Journal of Law and Society* 27(4):517–541.

Migdal, J. 1974. *Peasants, politics, and revolution: Pressure toward political and social change in the Third World.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mngxitama, A. 2006. The taming of land resistance: Lessons from the National Land Committee. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 41(1/2):39–67.

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra. 2005a. *Agrarian reform under Lula: Marching to a historic crossroads* 26 February [Online]. Available at http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=node/86 [15 October 2009].

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra. 20005b. Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement occupies land, sees widespread support. *Issueonline.org* 9, June [Online]. Available at http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=juditeinterview [23 September 2009].

Naidoo, K. 2001. Rethinking governance: Case of South Africa. *Development Outreach* 3(1):24–28.

National Department of Agriculture. 2001. *Strategic plan for agriculture.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

National Land Committee. 1994. *Land update* February/April/May/June/July/September/October/December.

National Land Committee. 1995a. *Annual report: January 1994 – April 1995.* Braamfontein: Media Unit of the National Land Committee.

National Land Committee. 1995b. *Land update* February/April/May/July/August/October/November/December.

National Land Committee. 1996. Land update January/February/March/May/June/November/December.

National Land Committee. 1997. *Land update* January/April/May/June/July/August/September/October/December.

National Land Committee. 1998. *Land update* March/April.

Nauta, W. 2004. *The implications of freedom.* Munster: Lit Verlag.

Navarro, Z. 2009. Expropriating land in Brazil: Principles and practices. In H.P. Binswanger-Mkhize, C. Bourguignon & R. van der Brink (eds.). *Agricultural land redistribution: Toward greater consensus.* Washington DC: World Bank Publication:n.p. Also available online at http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0002693/Expropriating_land_Brazil.pdf [14 October 2009].

Ntsebeza, L. & Hall, R. (eds.). 2007. *The land question in South Africa: The challenge of transformation and redistribution.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Nucleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos de Reforma Agraria. 2007. *Dataluta – Banco de Dados da Luta Pela Terra Relatorio 2007* [Online]. Available at http://www4.fct.unesp.br/nera/projetos/dataluta_2007.pdf [21 September 2009].

Oberschall, A. 1993. Rational choice in collective protest. *Rationality and Society* 6:79–100.

Ogliari, E. 2009. MST ocupa sede do Incra em Porto Alegre. *Estadao.com* 8 September [Online]. Available at http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/nacional,mst-ocupa-sede-do-incra-em-porto-alegre,431465,0.htm [12 October 2009].

Ondetti, G.A. 2008. *Land, protest, and politics: The landless movement and the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil.* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University.

Opp, K.D. & Roehl, W. 1990. Repression, micromobilization, and political protest. *Social Forces* 69(2):521–547.

Pacheco, P. 2009. Agrarian reform in the Brazilian Amazon: Its implications for land distribution and deforestation. *World Development* 37(8):1337–1347.

Parliamentary Monitoring Group. 2008. *National Agricultural Marketing Council Budget and Strategic Plan 2008/09* [Online]. Available at http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20080318-national-agricultural-marketing-council-budget-and-strategic-plan-200 [18 October 2009].

Pereira, J.M.M. 2007. The World Bank's 'market-assisted' land reform as a political issue: Evidence from Brazil (1997–2006). *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 82, April:21–49.

Petras, J. 2000. *The Rural Landless Workers Movement. The movement gains momentum* [Online] Available at http://www.mstbrazil.org/petras0300.html [30 October 2009].

Petras, J. 2001. *Non-governmental organizations in a conjuncture of conflict and war psychosis* [Online]. Available at http://petras.lahaine.org/b2lhart_imp.php?p=101&more=1&c=1 [17 October 2009].

Petras, J. & Veltmeyer, H. 2006. Social movements and the state: Political power dynamics in Latin America. *Critical Sociology* 32(1):83–104.

Pithouse, R. 2009. *Hard choices ahead* [Online]. The South African Civil Society Information Service. Available at http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/334.1 [10 October 2009].

Pithouse, R. 2009a. *Land occupation and the limits of party politics* [Online]. The South African Civil Society Information Service. Available at http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/290.1 [15 October 2009].

Piven, F.F. & Cloward, R. 1977. *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Plaatje, S.T. 1916. *Native life in South Africa* [Online]. Available at http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1452 [2 October 2009].

Ravallion, M. 2009. Are there lessons for Africa from China's success against poverty? *World Development* 37(2):303–313.

Reuters. 2009. *Brazil, Congress clash on agrarian reform report* 11 Aug [Online]. Available at http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN11508429 [12 October 2009].

Rosset, P. 2001. *Access to land: Land reform and security of tenure* [Online]. World Food Summit. Civil Society Input. Available at http://www.landaction.org/gallery/Acces%20To%20Land%20Report-Rosset.pdf [18 September 2009].

Rucht, D. 1996. The impact of national contexts on social movement structures: A cross-movement and cross-national comparison. In D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy & M.N. Zald (eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing.* New York: Cambridge University Press:185–205.

Rural & Land Digest. 1998–2001. Newsletters.

Sanders, H. 2004. *Lula, the Partido dos Trabalhadores and the New Brazil* [Online]. International Institute of Social History. Available at http://www.iisg.nl/collections/ptbrasil.pdf [14 October 2009].

Sauer, S. 2006. The World Bank's market-based land reform in Brazil. In P. Rosset, R. Patel & M. Courville (eds.). *Promised land: Competing visions of agrarian reform.* New York: Institute for Food and Development Policy:177–190.

Schmitter, P.C. 1971. *Interest conflict and political change in Brazil.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Scoones, I. 2008. Mobilizing against GM crops in India, South Africa and Brazil. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8(2/3):315–344.

Scott, J.C. 1976. *The moral economy of the peasant: Rebellion and subsistence in southeast Asia.* New Haven: Yale University.

Seekings, J. 1997. Sanco strategic dilemmas in a democratic South Africa. *Transformation* 34:1–30.

Sherry, S. & Paton, C. 2009. Solving SA's food crunch: Raising the stakes. *Financial Mail* 4 September [Online]. Available at http://secure.financialmail.co.za/09/0904/cover/coverstory.htm. [24 October 2009].

Sihlongonyane, M.F. 2003. *Land occupations in South Africa* [Online]. The National Land Committee. Available at http://www.landaction.org/display.php?article=137 [25 August 2009].

Sikor, T. & Mueller, D. 2009. The limits of state-led land reform: An introduction. *World Development* 37(8):1307–1316.

Skidmore, T.E. 1999. *Brazil: Five centuries of change.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Smelser, N.J. 1962. *Theory of collective behaviour.* New York: Press of Glencoe.

Snow, D.A. & Bendford, R.D. 1988. Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization. In B. Kladermans, H. Kriesi & S. Tarrow (eds.). *From structure to action: Social movement participation across cultures.* Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press:197–217.

Snow, D.A. & Bendford, R.D. 1992. Master frames and cycles of protest. In A.D. Morries & C.M. Mueller (eds.). *Frontiers and social movement theory.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press:133–155.

Snow, D.A. & Bendford, R.D. 2000. Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26:611–639.

Snow, D.A., Soule, S.A. & Kriesi, H. 2004. *The Blackwell companion to social movements.* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

South Africa. 1996. *The South African Constitution, Bill of Rights, Section 25, Property* [Online]. Available at http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm#25 [15 October 2009].

South Africa. 1997. *White Paper on Land Reform. 1997. Section 6.11 NGOs and non-statutory service providers* [Online]. Available at http://www.dla.gov.za/white%20paper/white8.htm [15 October 2009].

Statistic South Africa. 2001. *Digital Census Atlas* [Online]. Available at http://www.statssa.gov.za/census2001/digiAtlas/index.html [23 August 2009]

Steinberg, M.W. 1998. Titling the frame: Considerations on collective action framing from a discursive turn. *Theory and Society* 27:845–881.

Tarrow, S. 1994. *Power in movement: Social movements, collective action, and politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. 1998. *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics.* Second edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. 2005. *The transnational activism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, L. 2006. *A history of South Africa.* Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

Tilly, C. 1964. *The Vendee.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tilly, C. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution.* Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

Tilly, C. 1984. *Big structures, large processes, huge comparison.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Tilly, C., Kennedy, M. & Ramos, T.L. 2009. *One step forward, one step back: Land reform under Lula* 20 July [Online]. Available at http://www.grassrootsonline.org/news/articles/land-reform-under-lula [12 September 2009].

Tilly, C. & Tarrow, S. 2007. *Contentious politics.* Boulder: Paradigm.

United Nations. 2009. *Human Development Report 2009* [Online]. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/ [5 October 2009].

Van der Merwe, K. 2009. *Land distribution in crisis* 16 September [Online]. Available at http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71627?oid=143721&sn=Detail [14 October 2009].

Van Zyl, J., Binswanger, H. & Thirtle, C. 1995. *The relationship between farm size and efficiency in South African agriculture.* Policy Research Working Paper. Washington: The World Bank.

Vaughan, A. & McIntosh A. 1993. State and capital in the regeneration of a South African peasantry. *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 27(3):439–461.

Veltmeyer, H. & Petras, J. 2001. The social dynamics of Brazil's Rural Landless Workers' Movement: Ten hypotheses on successful leadership. *Canadian Review of Sociology* 39(1):79–96.

Walker, C. 2002. *Agrarian change, gender and land reform: A South African case study* [Online]. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Social Policy and Development Programme Paper No. 10, April. Available at http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/C1DBAEB28DE8D074C 1256C08004694EE?OpenDocument [13 October 2009].

Wegenast, T. 2009. *Of latifundia and coronéis: Agrarian structure and educational inequalities in Brazil* [Online]. Paper presented at the conference A Comparative Approach to Inequality and Development, Madrid, 8–9 May. Available at http://www.uc3m.es/portal/page/portal/instituto_figuerola/investigacion/programas/progra ma1/conferencia/programme/wegenast_euronet2009.pdf [15 October 2009].

Weideman, M. 2004. Who shaped South Africa's land reform policy? *Politikon* 31(2):219–238.

Wittman, H. 2009. Reframing agrarian citizenship: Land, life and power in Brazil. *Journal of Rural Studies* 25(1):120–130.

Wolf, E. 1969. *Peasant wars of the twentieth century*. New York: Harper & Row.

Wolford, W. 2003. Producing community: The MST and land reform settlements in Brazil. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 3(4):500–520.

Wolford, W. 2007. Land reform in the times of neoliberalism: A many-splendored thing. *Antipode* 9(3):550–570.

Wolford, W., Baletti, B. & Johnson, T.M. 2008. 'Late mobilization': Transnational peasant networks and grassroots organization in Brazil and South Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8(2/3):290–314.

Wright, A. & Wolford, W. 2003. *To inherent the earth – the landless movement and the struggle for a new Brazil*. New York: Food First Books.

Zunes, S. 1999. The role of non-violent action in the downfall of apartheid. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(1):137–169.