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Chapter 1
Exodus: Mobility and Citizenship in Developmentalist Brazil, 1930-1964

"My father came to the state of São Paulo because there was that news that São Paulo was the state of progress, that it needed *nordestinos* (northeasterners)," recalled Maria Andrade Saraiva de Alencar. In her hometown in Sergipe, a small, poor state in northeastern Brazil, pick-up-trucks circled the town with loudspeakers advertising that good-paying jobs were to be had in the booming economy of São Paulo state, over 1,000 miles to the south. In 1951, Saraiva was a young child when her family decided to head south just as a catastrophic drought pummeled the Northeast. Her family packed into a flatbed truck called a *pau-de-arara* or "macaw's perch" for the retrofitted thin rails passengers clung to in the back to make the exhausting 600-mile trip to the northern terminus of the Central do Brasil railroad in Minas Gerais state.

The "state of progress," however, did not live up to their hopes. Maria Saraiva recalled arriving at the Estação do Norte, the grand ornamental English-style train station in downtown São Paulo, where agents of a plantation owner whisked her family away to his land in the western coffee growing region of São Paulo state.[1] The coffee plantation owner paid very little; other landowners paid in script useable only at the plantation store. Workers did not receive healthcare, pensions, or time off. Overwhelmingly illiterate, few opportunities existed to get an education. Like millions of other rural Brazilians, Maria Saraiva decided to head to the capital city instead. She recalled that she "had always wanted to go to school" and to be able to read her favorite genre of literature, history. In the city, she ultimately made her way to its outlying urban

[1] In the text, "São Paulo" refers to the capital city of the state of the same name.

periphery, where she could afford land to build a house.[2] Nordestinos like Saraiva composed a plurality of migrants to São Paulo, but Brazilians from rural areas of Minas Gerais, Paraná, and western São Paulo state also sought out the rapidly industrializing city. Their aspirations mirrored those of Maria Saraiva: an education, a good paying job, a home of their own, healthcare, labor rights, adequate food to eat, and more.

While her journey crossed no international borders, Maria Saraiva traversed two boundaries—between rural and urban, Northeast and south—that divided Brazil into zones of inclusion and exclusion. Under president Getúlio Vargas (1930-45), Brazil consecrated what scholars have termed the "developmentalist pact" in which labor and social rights were extended to workers in select industries essential to industrial development. To gain the support of powerful landowning interests, however, the state did extend these rights to rural Brazilians.[3] Formal sector industrial jobs overwhelmingly concentrated in industrializing cities in the south, especially São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, with relatively few in the Northeast. Moreover, disproportionately high illiteracy rates in rural areas and the Northeast disenfranchised during a period of democratic rule (1945-64). This regional disequilibrium seemed to confirm for many contemporary observers racialized stereotypes about nordestinos as supposedly unsuitable for inclusion in a modern, industrializing society, a sentiment often extended to rural Brazilians as a

[2] Maria Andrade Saraiva de Alencar, interview with author, 20 April 2018, São Paulo, Brazil.
[3] On the exclusion of rural Brazilians from the developmentalist pact, see Brodwyn Fischer, "Urban Informality, Citizenship, and the Paradoxes of Development," in *State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain*, ed. Agustin E. Ferraro and Miguel A. Centeno, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 372–402. The accommodation reached with rural landowners in Brazil to support state-led industrial development mirrored the contemporaneous accord between Franklin D. Roosevelt and segregationist southern Democrats to exclude African Americans as well as Mexican and Japanese immigrants from New Deal reforms and labor protections. On this agreement as seen through the New Deal Farm Labor Camp Program, see Verónica Martínez-Matsuda, *Migrant Citizenship: Race, Rights, and Reform in the U.S. Farm Labor Camp Program* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 18-59.

whole.[4] For the majority Afro-descendent nordestinos and other rural Brazilians, these exclusions directly impacted their material lives in myriad ways, not least through maintaining a landowning system dominated by *latifúndios* (massive estates) and excluding them from the wealth generated by Brazil's industrialization.[5]

In response, rural Brazilians exercised mobility to claim inclusion in developmentalist Brazil. As citizens, these Brazilians used their right to mobility within their country to transverse dividing lines within Brazil's unequal citizenship regime between the rural and urban, and often between the Northeast and the south. By migrating to São Paulo, they laid claim to the fruits of industrial modernity as well as its attendant rights and protections. Widespread poverty as well as a complete lack of basic infrastructure and state services, however, thwarted these aspirations as migrants found themselves relegated to the city's outlying urban periphery.[6] Nonetheless, their mobility initiated a struggle to construct a more inclusive citizenship in São Paulo even as Brazil came under authoritarian rule in 1964. For these Brazilians, migration and later organizing in the city constituted two parts of their larger struggle for full citizenship.

[4] Beginning in the late nineteenth century, white elites in São Paulo and the Northeast constructed racialized conceptions of region and nation in which the former's economic dynamism was associated with its relative whiteness and the latter's relative decadence with its proportionally large Black and mixed-race populations. See, Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: Sao Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, Latin America in Translation/En Traducción/Em Tradução (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); and, Stanley E Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nationality: Race and Regional Identity in Northeastern Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

[5] Historian Paulo Fontes estimates that up to 70% of Brazilians who migrated to São Paulo were Afro-descendent. See, Paulo Roberto Ribeiro Fontes, *Um Nordeste em São Paulo: trabalhadores migrantes em São Miguel Paulista (1945-66)* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2008), 70.

[6] This chapter uses the term "migrant" in the text only after the actors in question reached their ultimate destination. Instead, it uses terms like "mobile Brazilians" or references to their rural or regional origins to preserve a sense of possibility and agency in the face of the teleology implied by terming such actors as migrants.

This perspective situates rural-urban migration as integral to the conflict over the contours of citizenship and democracy that dominated twentieth-century Latin America.[7] Rural-urban migration transformed Latin America into the most urbanized region in the world with 80% living in cities in 1990 compared to just 40% in 1950. Yet, despite its enormous scale and scope, rural-urban migration has received far less attention from historians than forms of migration that crossed national or imperial borders. By drawing extensively on oral histories, this chapter demonstrates that rural-urban migration constituted a key means for such overlooked actors to contest their exclusion from full citizenship. This is especially relevant given the relative invisibility in historical scholarship of rural Latin America, where a disproportionate number of the region's Black, Indigenous, and poor residents lived.[8] The mobility of these actors intimately linked the rural and urban realms in a constant dialogue, especially through the family networks that facilitated chain migration as in the case examined here. While histories of citizenship have often treated urban and rural as inherently separate spheres, moving between them, often on multiple occasions, emerged as a primary tool for overlooked actors to contest their exclusion from full citizenship in Latin America's most populous country.[9]

[7] See, Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, Updated ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) and Jennifer Adair, *In Search of the Lost Decade: Everyday Rights in Post-Dictatorship Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

[8] On the invisibility of rural Brazil in historical literature, see Jacob Blanc, *Before the Flood: The Itaipu Dam and the Visibility of Rural Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

[9] One important exception is Paulo Fontes' examination of the role of migration by nordestinos in the formation of the industrial working class in mid-twentieth century São Paulo in *Um Nordeste em São Paulo*, 41-88. As Fontes notes, both Brazilian and U.S. labor scholars generally cast the rural origins of the urban industrial workforce in Brazil as an impediment to forming class consciousness, where they discuss it at all. See also, Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights*, 89-151 on rural-urban migration and its implications for the law in Rio de Janeiro. While the historical literature is more limited, especially in terms of recent works, sociologists and anthropologists have more commonly linked the rural and urban in Latin America. See, for example, on Indigenous rural-urban migration and citizenship in Bolivia, Sian Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City: Self and Citizenship in Andean Bolivia*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) as well as Valentina Napolitano, *Migration, Mujercitas, and Medicine Men: Living in Urban Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For a comparative perspective on the Great Migration in the U.S., see Keneshia Nicole Grant, *The Great Migration and the Democratic Party: Black Voters and the Realignment of American Politics in the 20th Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020).

To best understand mobility as means for challenging exclusion in developmentalist Brazil, this chapter interweaves oral histories of Brazilians on the move with the politics of internal migration from the 1930s until the military coup of 1964. With some earlier exceptions, these oral histories mainly offer insight into the perspective of Brazilians who migrated to São Paulo in the 1950s and 1960s. While many became grassroots activists under the dictatorship (1964-85), others did not. Taken together, both groups demonstrate that the aspirations of rural Brazilians for a better life compelled the state and Catholic Church to grapple with the exclusionary citizenship regime of mid-twentieth century Brazil.

Internal migration in Brazil is a complex phenomenon. The movement of rural Brazilians to urban areas that peaked in the 1950s and 1960s built on previous cycles of migration, some of which were rural-rural and other also directed towards cities. Mobile Brazilians in this period, moreover, also directed themselves towards other cities in the south, especially Rio de Janeiro, as well as secondary cities such as Belo Horizonte, Recife, and Porto Alegre. Many studies focus solely on nordestinos, who as a racialized regional identity group represented perhaps the most visible contingent of arrivals to São Paulo.[10] This chapter looks at nordestinos in conjunction with other groups who migrated to São Paulo in equal numbers, especially those from Minas Gerais and western São Paulo state. Even the term "nordestino" flattened differences among

[10] Still others went to the Amazon or to expanding agricultural frontiers in the vast interior around Brasília. See, Isabel Cristina Martins Guillen, *Errantes da Selva: histórias da migração nordestina para a Amazônia* (Recife: Editora Universitária UFPE, 2006). On nordestino migration to São Paulo in English, see the translation of Paulo Fontes's 2008 book, Paulo Roberto Ribeiro Fontes, *Migration and the Making of Industrial Sao Paulo*, trans. Ned Sublette (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). See also, Alceu Maynard Araújo, *Pentateuco nordestino (Um estudo das migrações internas)* (São Paulo: Brasbiblos, 1972); *Os Nordestinos em São Paulo: depoimentos*, O Povo Quer Viver (São Paulo: Paulinas, 1982); and, Maura Penna, *O que faz ser Nordestino: identidades sociais, interesses e o "Escândalo" Erundina* (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1992).

Brazilians from the Northeast, who like other rural Brazilians were more likely to identify according to their state, municipality, or even more local place signifiers. Racial self-identification was fluid among rural Brazilians and race assumed significantly different meanings depending on the region in question.[11] While nordestinos were the subject of significant racialization in which racial mixture was assumed, for example, Brazilians from the *sertão*—the vast, arid backlands from which most Brazilians from the Northeast migrated—descended from Afro-Brazilians from the coastal sugar zone, Portuguese colonizers, and often Indigenous nations to varying degrees depending on the local.

This chapter begins comparing internal migration by Brazilians in the 1930s and 1940s with previous waves of European immigration. After subsidizing ostensibly white European immigration since the 1890s, the state turned to Brazilians for labor on coffee plantations only after immigration declined in the 1930s. Though they were Brazilian citizens, the state and intellectuals regarded the mobility of nordestinos as stemming from supposedly inherent racial characteristics. These stereotypes played a role in the state declining to extend labor protections for urban workers in the important 1943 Consolidation of Labor Laws or CLT (*Consolidação das Leis Trabalhistas*) to their rural counterparts.

It then looks at how the devastating drought of 1951-52 in the Northeast shifted the target of rural Brazilians from expanding agricultural frontiers to the city, above all São Paulo. As testimony from nordestinos and other rural Brazilians attested, the drought accentuated growing unhappiness with the extremely unequal distribution of land in favor of a small class of

[11] The literature on region and race in Brazil is significant. For a recent take, see Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity*. See especially, Edward Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

landowning elites. Given their mass disenfranchisement, and absent meaningful land reform, mobility offered a means to contest this system.

Under President Juscelino Kubitscheck (1956-1960), the developmentalist state reached its pre-dictatorship pinnacle through projects such as the construction of a new federal capital city, Brasília. For rural Brazilians, this fueled the so-called "rural exodus" in which expectations for a better material life and labor and social rights afforded to urban workers led unprecedented numbers to seek out cities. Those aspirations, however, were ultimately thwarted. Migrant Brazilians found themselves relegated to the urban periphery of São Paulo, which lacked basic infrastructure and state services. After over two decades of inaction, the administration of João Goulart's attempts to enact land reform and extend rights to rural Brazilians fueled a fierce backlash among rural landowners that contributed to his overthrow by a military coup in 1964.

Region, Race, and Mobility, 1930-1950

The mobility of unprecedented numbers of Brazilians in the 1930s placed new demands on the state at a crucial turning point in Brazilian political history. The nationalist government of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945) imposed restrictions on foreign immigration, ostensibly favoring domestic workers, even as it extended labor and social rights to parts of the formal-sector urban working class in rapidly industrializing cities in the Center-South, above all São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Those rights came as part of the foundations for a developmentalist state whose goal was to drive Brazil's industrialization and modernization. For the most part, rural Brazilians were excluded from the rights extensions that accompanied the advent of the developmentalist state.

Drawing on racialized depictions of the Northeast and its people, state officials in the 1930s and 1940s conceived of the mobility of nordestinos as tied to supposedly inherent racial characteristics, a conception that extended in some form to rural Brazilians from other states who migrated during this period.[12] Officials regarded nordestinos as useful labor for expanding agricultural regions where it had formerly sent European immigrants or for fulfilling developmental ambitions on distant frontiers, but only begrudgingly acknowledged their status as Brazilian citizens. From the earliest days of the developmental state, moreover, calls to extend social services to Brazilians enjoyed by European immigrants in the earlier period went largely unrealized, underscoring their position on the peripheries of citizenship at the dawn of Brazil's developmentalist age.

The mass intra-regional migration that began in the 1930s was not the first instance in which race played a role in shaping relationships between the state and nordestinos bound for São Paulo. In the late nineteenth century, the sertão was a major transshipment point for the internal slave trade in Brazil where São Paulo planters sought enslaved Afro-Brazilians from the Northeast whose economy lagged the booming coffee trade in the Center-South. This involuntary migration was accompanied by a small number of nordestinos who made the journey of their own accord in the last decade of the nineteenth century. As historian Ely Souza Estrela writes, the *sampauleiros*, as these early migrants became known in the sertão, built on a long tradition of mobility as a strategy for survival in the sertão that ultimately expanded to include reflect the agricultural rhythms of the Center-South.[13]

[12] This process resembles the concept of "racial scripts" in which understandings of race applied to distinct groups is applied in a relational manner. See, Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).
[13] Ely Souza Estrela, *Os Sampauleiros: cotidiano e representações* (São Paulo: Humanitas FFLCH/USP : Educ, Editora da PUC-SP, 2003), 45-47.

São Paulo had the third largest population of enslaved people of any state in Brazil when slavery was abolished in 1888. Afro-Brazilians abandoned the plantations in large numbers as abolition approached with many heading to the capital city where they formed vibrant communities. Influenced by trans-Atlantic ideas of scientific racism and Social Darwinism, the state's planter elite had ruminated on replacing enslaved Afro-Brazilian laborers with ostensibly white European immigrants since the 1850s. Abolition made such work seem more desirable to European immigrants who had previously balked at working alongside enslaved Afro-Brazilians.

In 1895, the state's Department of Agriculture took over and greatly expanded previous efforts to subsidize European migration to the state's agricultural regions. Agents recruited immigrants in Europe, especially Italy, with paid passage to Santos, São Paulo's port city. From there, they traveled by rail to the capital city where the immigrant processing center, the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes, fed, clothed, and offered medical assistance. The Hospedaria then dispatched the immigrants along the railways emanating from the capital to the state's interior to planters who had solicited labor or to state-sponsored agricultural colonies. Ultimately, 1.5 million Europeans would immigrate to São Paulo between 1890 and 1914 with a majority of their passages paid by the state government. As historian George Reid Andrews writes, "by choosing to invest funds in European workers and refusing to make comparable investments in Brazilians, the [state's] planters, and the state apparatus which they controlled, had made their ethnic and racial preferences in workers crystal clear."[14]

The shift to incentivizing internal migration came as the Great Depression and political discontent among other Brazilian state elites broke the economic and political power of São Paulo's coffee barons. During the Old Republic, São Paulo alternated the presidency with

[14] George Reid Andrews, *Blacks & Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 89.

oligarchs from the state of Minas Gerais in an arrangement known as the "politics of coffee and milk." When São Paulo broke that agreement—President Washington Luís (1926-1930) supported fellow paulista Júlio Prestes in the fraud-ridden 1930 presidential election—other states banded together to put Getúlio Vargas in the presidency by force during the so-called "Revolution of 1930." Concurrently, the Great Depression caused coffee prices to nosedive in 1929 after a long period of trouble in the 1920s and deprived both São Paulo's state government and the federal government of their primary revenue source.[15]

Raimundo da Cunha Leite likewise remembered that "it was the migration service that stimulated the arrival of nordestinos to São Paulo, so that [the state] could develop its agriculture." In 1939, he took a steamship at age 17 along the São Francisco River to the terminus from the sertão. He remembered that "it was the migration service that stimulated the arrival of nordestinos to São Paulo, so that [the state] could develop its agriculture." Leite recalled that for nordestinos weary of the power of the coronéis, rural landowning strongmen, the end point of the 600-mile train ride from northern Minas "was the great Canaan that was São Paulo." Raimundo da Cunha Leite passed through the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes in the city, a migrant processing center run by the state government of São Paulo, where he too departed for the coffee country, in the town of Colina where he had relatives. After only a few months in Colina, Leite went to find work in the burgeoning auto and steel industries in the city's industrial suburbs.[16]

Prior to the first decades of the twentieth century, the states in the northern half of Brazil's vast territory did not constitute a coherent socio-cultural region in the popular

[15] Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy*, Updated ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-12.
[16] Raimundo da Cunha Leite, interview with Sônia Maria de Feitas, 22 November 2000, São Paulo, Brazil.

imagination. Faced with the economic divergence of states in the South and those in northeastern Brazil, elites in both regions sought explanations. In literature, song, and sociological works, the Northeast emerged as a space characterized by deprivation, suffering and utopia, a discourse encouraged by Northeastern elites seeking federal aid as early as the Great Drought of 1877 and invoked with increasing frequency throughout the early twentieth century. Authors and intellectuals from across the political spectrum invoked a stable of tropes such as the *cangaçeiro*—an outlaw representing both the supposed propensity for criminality but also independence of the inhabitants of the sertão—that contributed to a heady nostalgic yearning for days past across these mediums. These conceptions posited the South, above all São Paulo, as the modern, dynamic counterpart to the Northeast, a supposition enthusiastically encouraged by the former's intellectuals and political elites.[17]

Intellectuals across the political spectrum asserted the supposedly inherent capacity for mobility of nordestinos, above all s*ertanejos* (inhabitants of the sertão), in ways that drew on and reinforced this racialized imaginary. Gustavo Barroso, a prominent intellectual from the Northeast who became the first director of Brazil's national history museum, wrote in his widely cited book on the Northeast that sertanejos "resulted in their majority from the mixing of the Indian and the Portuguese. Some carry, in their love for nomadic life and their features, tiny amounts of the restless blood of gypsies that the Metropolis (Portugal) sent to populate the valley of Jaguaribe."[18] Like many other commentators, he remarked upon the supposed fatalism of

[17] Albuquerque, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 14-35.
[18] Gustavo Barroso, *Terra de sol (natureza e costumes do Norte)*, 6th Edition (Fortaleza: Imprensa Universitária do Ceará, 1962), 136. Barroso was elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1923 and served as its president on four occasions (1932, 1933, 1949, 1950). Virulently anti-Semitic, he became an important member of the Ação Integralista Brasileira, a fascist group that launched a failed putsch against Vargas in 1938, for which Barroso was imprisoned but ultimately acquitted. Barroso played an important role in shaping academic production about Brazilian folklore, of which *Terra do Sol* (1912) was among his first publications and the most widely read.

sertanejos in the face of devastating droughts and grinding poverty attributing it to the "remnants of Indian character."[19]

While less likely to evoke explicitly racial characteristics, the tropes of the *retirante* and the *flagelado da seca* (literally, "one flagellated by the drought") cast the mobility of sertanejos in the face of the cyclical droughts as a fatalistic, apocalyptical struggle. A major component of northeastern regionalist literature since the late nineteenth century, "drought literature" (*literature da seca*) made the retirante perhaps the iconic image of mobile Brazilians from the Northeast as well as a stand-in for the ostensibly desperate poverty and climactic doom that kept the region from economic and social progress. While widely applied to nordestinos in the twentieth century, the retiradas ("withdrawals") referenced the practice of fleeing to the coast in times of drought employed by inhabitants of the sertão since at least the late eighteenth century.

Leftist authors in the 1930s and 1940s turned to the figure of the retirante to denounce social inequality and demand reform, or in many cases revolution. The 1938 novel *Vidas Secas* ("Barren Lives") by Graciliano Ramos, a member of the Brazilian Communist Party, played a major role in elevating the suffering of nordestinos affected by the droughts as a social issue. Likewise, celebrated modernist painter Candido Portinari, also a member of the communist party, produced perhaps the most iconic image of the retirante in his 1944 painting, *Os Retirantes*. The haunting skeletal figures of the retirantes in Portinari's painted reflected both his condemnation of their suffering, and of state inaction, but also reproduced a stable of tropes of Northeast that reinforced the region and its inhabitants as a kind of internalized "other" within the Brazilian nation.

[19] Barroso, *Terra de sol*, 139.

That sense of otherness extended to early planning for a national developmentalist state. In 1936/7, the Vargas government invited the International Labor Office (ILO) of the League of Nations to help develop a plan for development that would encompass all of Brazil. Over a three-week visit, ILO Assistant Director and economist Fernand Maurette met with state officials in Rio de Janeiro and traveled across Brazil. His report reflected the dim view that officials in São Paulo had of nordestinos:

> In the eyes of many people in São Paulo this immigration from the north is admittedly a makeshift, and they look forward to a system which will enable them to replace it by increased immigration from abroad. They argue that although the workers from the north have the twofold advantage of being already in the country, and thus immediately available, and of being Brazilians, that is to say, needing no assimilation, at least theoretically, this is only half true in practice. For although, in the case of northern Brazilians, there is none of the danger of the formation of national groups which is feared in the case of some European or Asiatic immigrants, it is nonetheless true that the northern Brazilians will never become assimilated to the population of São Paulo to the extent of adopting the latter's industrious ways. According to the standards of São Paulo the output of the northern Brazilian is poor; he has few needs, and he prefers to work little and earn little rather than to increase his earnings by working harder.[20]

The problem according to Maurette's informants was the mobility of nordestinos. The "northern Brazilian," he wrote, had refused to enter into any work contract of even the "moderate term of a year" because they wished to be able to return home at the earliest opportunity, citing the case of migrants from Ceara who returned to their state after the latest drought had subsided. These migrants took "full advantage of this freedom" compared to foreign immigrants for whom national borders complicated their mobility, though return migration had been high among this group as well.[21] Brazilians could make full use of their mobility, since the borders they crossed existed only in the national imaginary. For Maurrette and Brazilian state officials, the "most

[20] Fernand Maurette, *Some Social Aspects of Present and Future Economic Development in Brazil*, (London: P.S. King & Son/International Labor Office, 1937), 80-81.
[21] Maurette, *Some Social Aspects*, 81.

important standard for judging the qualities of a group of migrants in São Paulo" was their rate of permanent settlement, a standard by which nordestinos supposedly scored poor marks.

Still, repeated droughts in the sertão and the extraordinary hardship of the migration pathways through the center of Brazil underscored both the necessity of mobility as a survival strategy and the cost to those who exercised it. A 1939 report on the migration routes to São Paulo emphasized that "the most vulgar error in the consideration of this problem, is to judge that by way of the S. Francisco River…that only flagelados impacted by the specter of hunger and of death [are migrating]. Rather, the Brazilians who migrated did so because of the "difficulties of their lives, the desire to better [them] "searching to better them" emphasized the report's author, who then described the system employed by the state of São Paulo to recruit nordestino labor. Private agencies contracted by the state government sought to maximize the profit as they transported migrants from cities in the sertão resulting in harsh conditions on the steam ships. Nordestinos huddled in the second-class deck "in dozens of hammocks crisscrossed, in the heat of the furnace, in the cold of the temperature fall [at night], like a cargo of cattle." Still, the report noted with perhaps some incredulity that those "baianos" or "Bahians," used in this case as a pejorative term that lumped together nordestino migrants regardless of their state of origin, that made the return trip to the Northeast did not do so out of disillusionment but rather to catch the next harvest before returning south once more.[22]

The remainder of the trip, typically taken by train, offered little improvement. As one report commented, migrants became "baianos" the moment regardless of origin they gathered in Montes Claros to board the train, where migrants from the Chapada Diamantina region of Bahia tended to concentrate alongside large numbers of *mineiros* (inhabitants of Minas Gerais).[23]

[22] Augusto Miranda, "A emigração," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro*, February 1939, 106.
[23] "A Hospedaria dos Immigrantes," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro*, December 1939, 53.

Migrants from Sergipe, Alagoas, Ceará Piauí, and Pernambuco tended to begin their trips in Pirapora, where the São Francisco River met another spur of the Central do Brasil. In December 1938, inspectors of the CIC remarked on "the sad spectacle" they witnessed in Montes Claros:

> Dozens of families housed beneath the mango trees, waiting, starving, for the state to act with the goal of continuing on to São Paulo. Tattered men, women, and children, without money, without a home, without food, some begging so as to not die of hunger, presented a truly painful picture.[24]

From northern Minas Gerais, nordestinos and mineiros took what became known as the "*trem baiano*" or the Bahian train to the city of São Paulo. Lauro José Teixeira recalled the train ride from Montes Claros as a harrowing experience even after the difficulties of arriving there from his hometown in Bahia in 1942. In the packed, wooden train cars, Teixeira jockeyed for a corner to sit in. He recalled sleeping "seated, in the position that you found yourself. There was nowhere to lie down, only a bench." Over the 18-day journey, Teixeira remembered that the train never stopped for passengers to use the bathroom. But the worst stretch by far when the train broke down in a three-kilometer-long, narrow tunnel. With the coal-fired engine idling, the passengers suffocated "as if drowning" for a full-day beneath the earth until the train was repaired.[25] While a smaller number went by sea to São Paulo, the train route remained by far the most common route until the opening of the Rio-Bahia highway in 1949 created a new artery for mobile Brazilians.

The increasing numbers of Brazilians making the migration, and the deplorable conditions cited by federal agents and journalists along the major routes, caused state officials to propose broader measures after the drought of 1938 sent a surge of Brazilians to Montes Claros

[24] "A Hospedaria dos Immigrantes," 55. Decreto 3.010, art. 226, letra j passed on August 20, 1938, tasked the Conselho de Imigração e Colonização, a mostly deliberative body that offered guidance on immigration, migration, and colonization policy, with studying internal migration. See, "Atividades do Conselho de Imigração e Colonização durante o ano de 1949," Revista de Imigração e Colonização XI, no. 1, 1950, 21.
[25] Lauro José Teixeira, interview with Sônia Maria de Freitas, 16 December 2004, Livramento (SP), Brazil.

and Pirapora. The state of São Paulo, whose immigration and colonization agency maintained agents in both cities, temporarily suspended its subsidy program in November 1938 due to concerns over its legality. At the behest of the federal government's Immigration and Colonization Council, which as a deliberative body lacked a significant presence along the migration route, São Paulo's state government reinstated its subsidy program in 1938-1939 to attend to those gathered there while the federal government subsidized medical services to agglomerated Brazilians there, especially due to outbreaks of chickenpox and dysentery.

As a result of these fact-finding trips, the director of the National Department of Migration, Pinheiro Machado, proposed a massive expansion of services to Brazilians on the move in a proposal on May 5, 1939. Broadly, Machado called for the creation of a new system of migration and agricultural colonization for "national migrants" identical to the one that already existed for foreign immigrants. This included creating new agricultural colonies in southern states for nordestinos and paying for their transport southward, just as the state of São Paulo had done for European immigrants since the late nineteenth century. Perhaps more significantly, Machado proposed a massive expansion of social and labor rights to Brazilians who migrated. The national Department of Health would provide medical services while the labor ministry would ensure fair wages, access to social welfare, and juridical assistance in labor courts. In a commission uniting various federal bureaucracies on the issue of migration, the head of the national agency in charge of infrastructure to prevent droughts, the Inspetoria de Obras Contra as Secas, proposed technical assistance and irrigation services for planned agricultural colonies. In short, the proposal sent to President Getúlio Vargas on August 10, 1939, presented a massive expansion of citizenship to rural Brazilians, above all nordestinos, that would put them on more

equal footing to foreign immigrants.[26] Notably, the proposed expansion resulted from their mobility, tying citizenship and the right to have rights to the migration that mobile nordestinos had initiated.

Ultimately, however, neither the full-fledged migration assistance system nor the expansion of social and labor rights to rural migrants from the proposal materialized. As a 1950 retrospective published in the CIC's magazine lamented, the only measure that came of the proposal was the establishment of temporary shelters for migrants in Montes Claros and Pirapora. Likewise, the Vargas government issued a limited number of free passes to the south "to aid the retirantes nordestinos" gathered there, a one-time effort to clear them of migrants. The report bemoaned that the 1939 plan would have offered a "solution to the big problem" of the intra-regional migrations had the "federal government conceded resources to the relevant departments, so that they could, fully, execute it." [27] In other words, the funding never materialized during either the authoritarian Vargas government or the democratic Dutra (1945-1950) administration that followed it. Vargas did subsidize nordestino migration to the distant territory of Acre on the border with Peru and Bolivia; others went to the Amazon during WWII to assist in rubber collection during the so-called "Rubber Battle" of 1943.[28]

At the same time, Vargas consecrated Brazil's first national labor code, the Consolidation of Labor Laws or CLT (Consolidação das Leis Trabalhistas) in 1943. As its name suggested, the law agglomerated various separate labor agreements and social assistance won by previous union efforts, most of which were in the transportation, clerical, or industrial sectors. Modeled after corporatist systems in fascist Spain and Italy, the law created state-approved unions in key

[26] "A Hospedaria dos Immigrantes," 57-58.
[27] "Atividades do Conselho de Imigração e Colonização durante o ano de 1949," 21.
[28] See, Seth Garfield, *In Search of the Amazon: Brazil, the United States, and the Nature of a Region*, American Encounters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 127-170.

industrial and logistical sectors, almost all of which concentrated in urban areas in the south. With a signed work card (*carteira assinada*), these workers could access labor courts, a pension, social assistance, and healthcare, among other benefits.[29] In 1944, Vargas passed a subsequent law that theoretically extended the same rights and judicial oversight enjoyed by urban workers to their rural counterparts. In practice, however, the rural unionization law was widely ignored by landowners and courts. From Vargas onward, the developmental state neglected to spend significant sums confronting the entrenched poverty of rural Brazil, not least to avoid upsetting powerful rural landowners.[30] Between 1945 and 1964, rural workers managed to form just *one* union in all the Northeast. In effect, this also ensured that rural workers also did not have any social rights, since rights such as healthcare and pensions were extensions of formalized employment.[31]

Ultimately, this set the pattern for how the developmentalist state dealt with Brazilians on the move from rural areas, and in particular, the Northeast. Rather than extend labor or social rights to rural Brazilians and nordestinos affected by displacement, Vargas and his immediate successors restricted government aid to humanitarian measures or those that served developmentalist goals such as incorporating distant regions into the national economy.

Mobility and Anti-Mobility in the Rural Exodus, 1950-1955

[29] On the CLT, see John D. French, *Drowning in Laws: Labor Law and Brazilian Political Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
[30] Fischer, "Urban Informality, Citizenship, and the Paradoxes of Development," 380-81.
[31] See, Thomas D. Rogers, *The Deepest Wounds: A Labor and Environmental History of Sugar in Northeast Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 130-131. Rogers argues that the landowning elite viewed workers as indistinguishable from the land that produced their wealth, a "laboring landscape" which, as the intense social conflict between workers and landowners attests, was a conceptualization hostile to the expansion of workers' rights.

In 1951 and 1952, scenes of desperation played out along the migration route from the sertão to São Paulo. The worst drought in a generation led over 1 million to head to the terminals of the Central do Brazil railroad in northern Minas Gerais state. An observer who took the trip with the *flagelados* described how they sold their meager belongings to buy passage south, only to pack nearly 500 people onto "trains whose capacity is 96 people, and which are so narrow that they are forced to undertake, in the most anti-hygienic form, their physiological functions" causing the passengers to universally bemoan the "unbearable smell."[32] A doctor sent to Monte Azul found emaciated sertanejos afflicted by leprosy, typhoid fever, dysentery, and cases of trachoma causing blindness in addition to the generalized state of starvation. In Corinto in Minas Gerais, the station chief declared that he regularly took dead children off the train as it headed south, in addition to having witnessed births and abortions caused by the conditions of the journey. They arrived in São Paulo "thin, pale, and sick" before being whisked away to hard labor in the western agricultural frontiers of São Paulo and Paraná states.[33] The horrors caused by the droughts captivated Brazil as they were widely reported on in newspapers and radio who helped facilitate a national aid campaign for afflicted regions.

But as the observer, Luiz Fernando Maria Teixeira noted, the droughts did not originate these migrations, but merely accelerated them. In conversations with 868 passengers, he found that few cited the droughts as their reason for leaving the sertão, which they expressed a deep affection for. Rather, they cited how a small elite owned all the arable land; the exhausted, degraded land they had to farm; the absence of "any social assistance, meaning a hospital, doctor, pharmacy, public health center, rural education, or basic and secondary instruction"; as

[32] Luiz Fernando Maria Teixeira, "Reitrantes e flagelados em Monte Azul," *Revista de Imigração e Colonização*, 8, no. 2, Apr-Jul. 1952, 88-89.
[33] Teixeira, "Reitrantes e flagelados em Monte Azul," 90-91.

well as the poor quality of life due to a complete lack of water, electricity, and sewer systems. Nearly 60% of the travelers, moreover, had made the journey south before, part of the seasonal agricultural workforce that traversed Brazil in the 1930s and 1940s. This time, Teixeira noted, they felt instead the "natural seduction of the great urban centers," above all the metropolis of São Paulo.

The mass movement of people from rural areas to cities—called the *êxodo rural* or "rural exodus" by contemporaries—transformed Latin American society during the mid-twentieth century. In Brazil, that migration was often also an intra-regional one, in which perhaps the most remarked upon contingent of rural-urban migrants, the nordestinos, came to represent all rural-urban migrants in the national imagination. This marked a shift from the previous waves of nordestino migration, which had largely been a rural-rural one incentivized by the state government of São Paulo. As testimony from mobile Brazilians from other regions underscores, the inadequacies of rural life were not restricted to the Northeast, but rather afflicted Brazilians in other regions as well: The Brazilian state, once again led by Getúlio Vargas (1950-54), went through familiar cycles of limited humanitarian responses without extending the rights and protections that made urban life increasingly attractive to rural Brazilians. Instead, debate over what to do about the rural exodus came to center on either "fixing" migrants in place or directing them towards distant frontiers where they would provide agricultural labor.

Even prior to the 1951 drought, previous, lesser droughts had led to calls for the federal government to do more. In a 1949 article, the São Paulo congressman Benedito Manhães Barreto bemoaned that the federal government had left the state of São Paulo to deal with the migrant influxes on its own. Reflecting on the poor physical state of the nordestinos who arrived in São Paulo, he affirmed "they are Brazilians just like us, and they deserve our help and protection."

He advocated that the federal government pay for the passage south of Brazilians as the state of São Paulo had, though as he admitted it had done so "motivated by its own interests [rather than] than due to humanitarian duty."[34] In a message to Congress, President Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1945-1950) acknowledged the need to "extend the benefits of tutelage of the State to the entire collectivity, including the man of the countryside, who has been so very forgotten in his privations and in his desire to participate in the benefits of progress." Dutra said it was the goal of the state to "contain the exodus to the cities" and even to "attract to the countryside part of the existing marginal population in the urban centers" by elevating the quality of life in rural areas and promoting access to land.[35]

Any effort to persuade Brazilians to remain in rural Brazil would have to address the deeply unequal landowning system. In São Paulo state, Ophélia Nascimento ultimately migrated to the capital because of this system. While she enjoyed planting crops and raising animals, she found the sharecropping arrangement with the landowner increasingly onerous. She recalled that "he gave you the seeds, and the profit from the seeds, what you planted, half was his and half yours. Later, this became [divided by] thirds. He got two thirds and you got one. Three parts, and we only got one!" The decision to move to São Paulo resulted from both this hardship and because "I wanted a school for my children" where there was none on the farm where they sharecropped.[36]

In Minas Gerais, Odete Marques likewise enjoyed rural life before migrating to São Paulo, but saw little opportunity there for anyone outside those who already owned all the land.

[34] Originally printed in *Diário de São Paulo*, 22 April 1949, reprinted in R. Manhões Barreto, "Migração interna," *Revista de Imigração e Colonização*, 11, no. 1, March 1950, 138.
[35] Leopoldo P. da Silva, "A solução do problema humano ou sertões pela colonização nacional," Revista de Imigração e Colonização, 11, no. 2, June 1950, 305.
[36] Ophélia Nascimento, interview with Moara Passoni, 2004, São Paulo, Brazil.

Of her hometown, she recalled that "it was a good life, but only for those who already had much, the big planters." Like Nascimento, Marques lived on the plantation where she worked. As she recalled, she and her husband "did not even have a house, we lived in the house of the owner of the fazenda," an arrangement she found deeply unsatisfactory.

Even still, by the early 1950s, calls for the state to address the rural exodus and "fixing" the rural population in place as the preferred remedy reached new levels. In an article "The Solution to the Human Problem of the Sertões by National Colonization," published in the *Revista de Imigração e Colonização* in 1950, the author called the rural exodus "the exponentially growing problem of our current moment," the instability of which allowed "communists to acquire followers, do their proselytizing and take key positions in the rural arena."[37] The article maintained "the rural exodus infests urban centers with a population of socially and economically maladjusted pariahs" who fed the rise of favelas. The solution, he argued, was that "the aid and social welfare works tied to labor legislation for the man of the city, the industrial worker, must be extended to the countryside, so as to satisfy the interests and needs of the rural worker."[38] Additionally, a robust land reform would grant the landless majority a means to sustain themselves. In particular, the author pointed to ongoing efforts by the state to populate the central interior of Brazil as an opportunity to shift landless Brazilians to rural areas that would serve national development. The combination of a dehumanizing, pejorative view of rural Brazilians and the recognition of their lack of rights was not uncommon among commentators and state officials as the droughts struck the Northeast in the 1950s.

Moreover, while migration directly from the Northeast to the south occupied the attention of national leaders, rural Brazilians across the country headed increasingly towards the cities,

[37] Silva, "A Solução do Problema Humano," 302.
[38] Silva, "A Solução do Problema Humano," 305.

including in São Paulo state itself. In 1951, the state's Secretary of Agriculture published a report on the increase in migration from the interior of the state to the capital city. The problem, the report surmised, was that the large number of people headed to the city of São Paulo were overwhelming city official's ability to provide housing, basic urban infrastructure, access to running water, and other necessities.[39] In some part, those coming to the city were descendants of the European and Japanese immigrants who had went to the coffee growing frontier in the early twentieth century. Another part were the nordestino men who had replaced them in the 1930s and 1940s but who, according to the report, "were nearly always *flagelados*, who did not find in their country a treatment equal to that given to foreign immigrants."[40]

As the rural exodus picked up steam in the 1950s, the sense of racial difference between rural Brazilians and their urban counterparts shaped state official conceptions of the meanings of that kind of migration. The 1951 report stated that rural-urban migration in São Paulo was an "identical phenomenon [to that] observed in the United States of North America, with relation to Black [people], that have left the South for urban areas in the East and North." The report made this comparison to the Great Migration in the United States specifically in reference to *pardos*, a reference to the census category corresponding to "brown" or mixed-race, who upon migrating to the capital ostensibly experienced greater chances of social advancement like Black migrants in the U.S. Though the interior of São Paulo state was classified as majority white at 84.93%, the report noted that pardos were nearly twice as likely as whites to migrate to the capital, even though the latter made up the large majority of such migrants.[41]

[39] Vicente Unzer de Almeida and Octavio Teixeira Mendes Sobrinho, *Migração rural-urbana*, (São Paulo: Secretaria da Agricultura, Estado de São Paulo, 1951), 17.
[40] Almeida and Sobrinho, *Migração rural-urbana*, 27.
[41] Almeida and Sobrinho, *Migração rural-urbana*, 30. Based on a survey of nearly 30,000 migrant school children in the city of São Paulo, the report concluded that 12.96% per 1,000 pardos in the interior migrated to the city compared to 7.86% of Asian descendants, 7.83% of whites, and 5.5% of Black interviewees.

Since internal migrants did not pass through formal national borders, relatively less contemporaneous data exists on them than on immigrants. Social scientists working from census data help paint a broad picture of the heyday of internal migration in Brazil from 1950 to 1970. By the 1970 census, 18.79 million Brazilians lived beyond their region of birth; São Paulo state was the most popular destination with ¼ of the total or around 4.65 million.[42] Minas Gerais sent the most migrants with around 1.2 million total, but the Northeast collectively contributed 1.4 million. Paraná had the highest percentage of migrants whose destination was São Paulo at nearly 70%. While smaller, Paraná state sent a significant number, but like Brazilians who migrated from western São Paulo state, a significant portion of these might have been descendants of migrants from the Northeast or Minas Gerais.

Numbers from the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes, the national migration service, and São Paulo's port city, Santos, offer a more detailed snapshot of the impact of the drought of 1951/52. Between 1951 and 1955, a record 762,707 Brazilians entered São Paulo at a minimum followed by another 517,624 from 1955 to 1960. A restrictive landowning system compounded by catastrophic droughts led to the largest influx of people in São Paulo's history, exceeding even the peak of immigration to the state in the early twentieth century. These figures doubled the number of Brazilians who had come as part of the state-run migration-colonization scheme that provided labor to coffee producers in the 1930s and 1940s.[43]

All told, 2 million Brazilians passed through the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes in this period. Bahians were the largest contingent followed by Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, and

[42] Milton da Mata, Eduardo Werneck R. de Carvalho, and Maria Theresa L. L. Castro e Silva, *Migrações internas no Brasil: Aspectos Econômicos e Demográficos* (Rio de Janeiro: IPEA/INPES, 1973), 47-49.
[43] Oracy Nogueira, *O desenvolvimento de São Paulo: imigração estrangeira e nacional e índices demográficos – demógrafo – sanitários e educacionais* (São Paulo: Comissão Interestadual da Bacia Paraná-Uruguai, 1964), 28.

Alagoas, in descending order.[44] As with previous Brazilians who made the migration south from these states, those affected came from the vast sertão that stretched across the interior of the Northeast into northern Minas Gerais. A 1955 report from the National Commission of Agrarian Politics offered unusual levels of detail on migration to São Paulo (see Figure 2.). For one, the effects of the drought of 1951/52 on the rural exodus were significant. The states most effected saw out-migration 2.5 to 4.5 greater than in previous years. New transportation options also played a role. In 1950, only 12% of nordestinos and mineiros arrived by road. By 1952, that had increased to at least 38%.[45] The completion of the Rio-Bahia highway, which connected to São Paulo's own road network, was completed in 1949 and subsequently paved. The pau-de-araras, retrofitted flatbed trucks, came to ply this route after previously being used mainly to transport those making the journey south from the sertão to the heads of the railroad network in Northern Minas Gerais.

The typical practice of exercising mobility via family networks, where one member who had migrated brought family and friends to their new local, also shaped where refugees from the droughts came from. As a result, a small number of municipalities furnished nearly all of those who took the migration. In 1952, in Bahia, 27 municipalities composing around 18% of the state's total furnished 89% of those who made the trip south, a pattern which repeated in Alagoas, Minas Gerais, and Pernambuco. Unsurprisingly, those concentrated in the sertão, which would become the basis for a federally declared "Polígono das Secas" in 1951, which would become the basis for federal intervention against the droughts in the Northeast.

[44] Report, "Estatística dos trabalhos executados, pelo Departamento de Imigração e Colonização, durante o ano de 1961," Departamento de Imigração e Colonização, Secretaria de Estado dos Negócios da Agricultura, Estado de São Paulo, 1963, p. 42 in Biblioteca da Fundação SEADE, São Paulo, Brazil.. These numbers reflect only those Brazilians who took engaged with the state-run migration system run through the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes. As a result, those who migrated from the South, western São Paulo, and parts of Minas Gerais are less represented.
[45] T. Pompeu Accioly Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, (Rio de Janeiro: Comissão Nacional de Política Agrária, 1955), 16.

The drought did seem to disrupt the previous pattern of circular migration to and from the Northeast, though mobility remained significant into the 1960s. Cities in the sertão which had annually sent thousands south—part of the circular migration revolving around harvest seasons—now sent far smaller numbers. Conversely, cities that had sent relatively few people south, and which were relatively untouched by the drought suddenly saw large numbers decide to migrate.[46]

Increasingly, those Brazilians did not return to their place of origin. By some calculations, the seasonal mobility of nordestinos had already declined by the 1940s: between 1921 and 1934 around 35% remained in São Paulo while 85.3% did so in 1941-1945.[47] The nordestinos and mineiros, however, were increasingly not remaining in the coffee plantations of western São Paulo and Paraná (see, Figure 2). As the 1955 report found, 90% rural municipalities in São Paulo state reported losing workers despite planters soliciting nordestinos for agricultural labor; in Paraná state 70% reported the same.[48] Their destination had shifted toward the city, and above all to Brazil's largest metropolis, São Paulo.

In 1952, the National Commission of Agrarian Policy conducted a massive survey of rural municipalities to discover why rural workers were leaving and what impact this had on agriculture. The dissatisfaction with the rural economy recalled by migrants to São Paulo, even more so than the drought itself, prevailed. On the one hand, rural municipalities blamed higher wages in the cities, or in the case of the Northeast on better pay in the South. The report surmised that rural political leaders may have exaggerated the number of workers lost, as in-migration and

[46] Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, 18-19. One example of a consistent contributor to migrant flows, the town of Paratinga in Bahia, saw its annual average decrease from 6,882 people to 1,040. This pattern repeated itself in a survey of eight towns with high migration rates from 1941 to 1950 in Bahia, Alagoas, Pernambuco, and Ceará states.
[47] Nogeira, *O desenvolvimento de São Paulo*, 27.
[48] Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, 23.

production levels remained strong. In a sign of shifts in the migration patterns, families made a far larger portion of those who came to São Paulo than before, when individual men worked the coffee harvest in the south before returning north. Many of these families went to smaller cities before São Paulo, often those where they had family who had worked in the coffee plantations. Nonetheless, the conclusion that greater numbers ultimately sought the city was unavoidable.[49]

The yawning pay gap between rural and urban, Northeast and south paralleled other data that revealed Brazil's profound social inequalities. Out of 200,000 Brazilians who passed south between 1950 and 1952, 96% were illiterate.[50] In 1950, rural areas of Brazil had a total illiteracy rate of 72% compared to 26.8% in urban areas of any kind. That gap became even more extreme when comparing rural areas in the Northeast to cities in São Paulo at 83.8% against 20.3%. As demographer Milton da Mata noted, few rural municipalities offered anything beyond a primary education, where it existed at all.[51]

This meant that most Brazilians could not vote by the terms of the 1946 constitution, especially from rural regions and the Northeast. From the first election after redemocratization in 1945 through the last free election in 1960, Brazil's electorate doubled from 5.9 million to 11.7 million.[52] Still, even the 1960 total represented less than half of Brazil's adult population in 1950.[53] Taken together, the literacy requirement and the lack of schools in the countryside, especially in the Northeast, disenfranchised rural Brazilians disproportionately compared to the urban working class. Moreover, this had the effect of limiting political rights to much of Brazil's Afro-descendent majority. State officials collected data about the racial composition of

[49] Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, 22-25.
[50] Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, Quadro VII Pessoas entradas no Estado de São Paulo, vindas de outras unidades da federação, em 1950 e 1952, anexo.
[51] Mata, *Migrações internas no Brasil*, 21.
[52] Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930 - 1964* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 192
[53] *Brasil, censo demográfico* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE Conselho Nacional de Estatística, Serviço Nacional de Recenseamento, 1953), 1-2. The total adult population above the voting age of 18 in 1951 was 26,824,768.

Brazilians who migrated to São Paulo only sporadically. In 1950-52, one study found that migrants who passed through the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes were 16.6% Black, 33.3% brown, and 50.1% white.[54] In another from 1960-1964, state officials recorded an average racial composition of 19.88% Black, 34.5% brown, and 46.74% white.[55] Thus, the literacy requirement disenfranchised a multi-racial rural laboring class, but one that contained a slight majority of Afro-Brazilians.

Those exclusions took on spatial dimensions, the borders of which rural Brazilians used mobility to traverse. By moving from the Northeast to the south, and from rural areas to the city, Brazilians disenfranchised by the literacy requirement voted with their feet against the manifest inequalities of rural life and their exclusion from political rights. Politicians and state officials issued frequent calls for "fixing" rural populations in place and extending certain rights to rural Brazilians. But these measures did not materialize before yet another drought hit the Northeast in 1954, causing another surge in nordestinos seeking refuge in the south.

Periphery and Center under Fifty Years of Progress in Five (1956-1960)

The staggering inequality between rural and urban Brazil and between the Northeast and south became a key focus of President Juscelino Kubitschek's (1956-1960) ambitious development plan, "Fifty Years of Progress in Five." Kubitschek embraced the ideas of the economist Celso Furtado, himself a native of Paraíba in northeastern Brazil. Furtado conceived of economic inequality in spatial terms as divided between an underdeveloped periphery and

[54] Borges, *Migrações internas no Brasil* Quadro VII Pessoas entradas no Estado de São Paulo, vindas de outras unidades da federação, em 1950 e 1952, anexo.

[55] 1965-xx-xx_estatística-de-imigração-1960-1964_seade Hospedaria de Imigrantes "Visconde Parnaiba," "Estatística de imigração," Departamento de Imigração e Colonização, Secretaria da Agricultura, Estado de São Paulo, 1965, p. 1 in Biblioteca da Fundação SEADE. Averaged across the five years surveyed (1960-1964), the racial composition of migrants passing through the Hospedaria dos Imigrantes was 19.88% Black, 34.5% brown, and 46.74% white.

developed center.[56] At a global level, Latin America was a peripheral zone exporting raw primary materials to the United States and Western Europe, the centers of the global capitalist economy. Center-periphery divides existed at the subnational level as well. The Northeast served as an economic periphery to the industrializing Center-South, above all São Paulo. For Furtado, center-periphery divides were not natural products of market forces, but rather the result of unequal social relationships.[57]

Under Kubitschek, the Brazilian state ultimately made unprecedented investments in the Northeast and rural Brazil under pressure from the progressive Catholic Church and rising rural unrest in the Northeast. Like his predecessors, however, he neglected to challenge either the power of rural landowners through agrarian reform or remove the literacy requirement that deprived most Brazilians of their political rights. Among rural Brazilians, aspiration for the better quality of life enjoyed by their urban peers led to sustained levels of migration to São Paulo into the 1960s as well as increased rural organizing through the Peasant Leagues. Alongside an education, rural Brazilians recalled in oral histories desiring better pay, labor rights, a pension, childcare, basic sanitary infrastructure, and healthcare. In their memories, the geography of rights during the heyday of developmentalism was clear, and São Paulo offered an opportunity to claim the fruits of Brazil's industrial development.

In this context, mobility constituted a claim to labor and social rights enjoyed in urban areas. For rural Brazilians and nordestinos, mobility allowed them to traverse the boundary that divided the center of Brazilian citizenship from its periphery. As oral histories with those Brazilians evidence, a revolution of rising expectations fueled the challenge to their fragmented,

[56] See, *O Nordeste e a saga da SUDENE* (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto/Centro Internacional Celso Furtado de Políticas para o Desenvolvimento, 2009).
[57] Jonas Rama and John Battaile Hall, "Celso Furtado as 'Romantic Economist' from Brazil's Sertão," *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy* 39, no. 4 (December 2019), 658–74.

unequal citizenship. In response, the state announced measures in 1956 and 1959 to provide social assistance to Brazilians on the move beyond the limited humanitarian measures of the past.

If mobility constituted the claim to full citizenship, family networks offered the means to make that claim. Brazilians on the move typically went where they already had family, who could aid, connections, and security where the state did not. This often led those seeking betterment through multiple stops prior to arriving in São Paulo, such as smaller provincial towns in their state of origin, secondary cities along the migration route, and towns in São Paulo state's coffee country. For Sebastião Galdino, born in rural Alagoas in the Northeast, he moved to the city of Recife in Pernambuco to study before his grandfather took him to an industrial suburb of Rio de Janeiro at age 16.[58] The glass factory where he worked later transferred him to São Paulo, where he brought over other family members. From her hometown in Lavras in Minas Gerais, Celina de Oliveira recalled that "we had family [in São Paulo] already, when we decided that our family would go, I had two sisters here…They encouraged my father to come."[59] As Raimundo da Leite recalled, news spread "by word of mouth (*de boca a boca)*" among familial networks stretching from São Paulo through the Northeast.[60]

For would-be migrants, these networks offered the opportunity of a better job. In Guaxupé in Minas Gerais, Maria Tura remembered that after she married her husband that he simply could not find good work there. So, the young couple "resolved to try life" in São Paulo, where they initially were received by her mother-in-law who had already taken up residence in the city. While many left rural areas due to a lack of access to land, the city offered greater

[58] Sebastião Galdino de Lemos, interview with author, 8 May 2018, São Paulo, Brazil.
[59] Celina Maria José de Oliveira and Luzia da Silva Pinto, interview with author, 12 December 2017, São Paulo, Brazil.
[60] Leite, interview.

opportunity for advancement. In the coffee country of western São Paulo, Aparecido Cesário de Souza left his grandfather's small farm that he was born to a nearby town before heading to the capital where his cousin lived.[61] For Raimundo Félix the decision to leave his hometown of Cratéus in the sertão of Ceará was simple. He recalled that "I resolved to come to São Paulo to try to do exactly what I wanted, which was to be an electrician. There [in Cratéus], there were no resources, no schools."[62]

For rural Brazilians like Félix, the chance to get an education was a powerful motivator. For others, especially women, they recalled the desire for education as a personal matter. In her hometown Marila in western São Paulo, Zulmira Alvarenga recalled that she had wanted so badly to study, but that her mother did not have the resources. While Alvarenga and Nascimento reflected the great majority of migrants to São Paulo, the capital's educational offerings also drew the descendants of previous waves of immigration to the capital. Jorge Kayano, the child of Japanese agriculturalists in São Paulo state, remembered that his small town did not possess anything beyond a basic education, so his family built a small house in the capital for his grandmother. Kayano was the sixth in his family to make the journey to the capital to finish his education or find work.[63]

The ability to own one's own home in São Paulo exhibited a powerful draw on many Brazilians. Like Ophélia Nascimento, many had lived in rented housing while working on large estates or had small houses without running water and plumbing. Born in Pernambuco in the Northeast, Severina Cioli recalled that her mother's family already lived in São Paulo, and that they "had jobs, housing, they were already owners of their own homes." As she recounted, when

[61] Aparecido Cesário de Souza, interview with author, 8 November 2017, São Paulo, Brazil.
[62] Leite, interview.
[63] Jorge Kayano, interview with author, 28 March 2018, São Paulo, Brazil.

"the difficulty with the drought arose in Pernambuco, we resolved to go to São Paulo."[64] Her relatives being established there provided both the means to do so and an example of what would be possible should they do so.

Similarly, rural Brazilians sought out São Paulo because of greater options for healthcare. The rural Northeast and northern Minas Gerais had few hospital beds and doctors, where they existed the poor often could not afford their services. As one migrant reported, he had once sold all his belongings to pay for a doctor to see his pregnant wife and tragically, the doctor "killed the child [since] did not know how to do a cesarean section."[65] Vaccination rates were also far lower in the Northeast and rural Minas Gerais. In 1970, the state health secretary of São Paulo reported that migrants had reintroduced several diseases that had been eliminated or never seen before in São Paulo, including malaria, smallpox, polio, and snail fever.[66]

These same conditions led rural Brazilians to undertake ambitious organizing efforts to demand the rights afforded by labor legislation and to enjoy the fruits of Brazil's economic modernization. Under the charismatic leader Francisco Julião, landless rural laborers began organizing into autonomous Peasant Leagues (*ligas camponesas*) beginning in 1954. Initially, these groups offered mutual aid and supported attempts at rural unionization. But increasingly, they countered the violence of the landowning elite and the police with direct occupations of land.[67]

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[64] Severina Cioli, interview with author, 6 September 2018, São Paulo, Brazil.

[65] Alvírio Morés and Alberto Romano Zambiasi, "A realidade sobre a migração brasileira," Pasta 002/A/003, 404 A 413, CEM-SP. Morés and Zambiani gave this report as part of the Semana do Migrante in June 1970 at the Centro de Estudos Migratórios.

[66] Walter Leser, "Saúde e os migrantes nacionais em São Paulo," Pasta 003/002/A MFN-1248, CEM-SP. Walter Leser gave this report as part of the Semana do Migrante in June 1970 at the Centro de Estudos Migratórios. In 1966, for example, the health secretary Walter Leser reported 1,604 cases of malaria in the state of which 1,036 were "imported" by migrants.

[67] See, Sarah Sarzynski, *Revolution in the Terra Do Sol: The Cold War in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

The mass migrations and increasing unrest among rural Brazilians compelled action by the Catholic Church. In 1956, bishops in the Northeast called a conference to address the poverty of their region as President Juscelino Kubitschek issued his developmental plan, Fifty Years of Progress in Five. In their declaration, the bishops called for the state to make the migration of nordestinos a key focus of its developmental plans. In their final statement, the bishops declared:

> We denounce the current departure of nordestinos (to whom we concede, it goes without saying, the natural right to migrate), less as an authentic migration, than as a movement of retirantes…who without documents; without specialized assistance, without equipment; with no destination; with no assistance of any kind, who end up if not as *favelados*, then at least as sub-proletarians in the South of the country.[68]

The characterization of the migration by nordestinos as "inauthentic" and rather as part of the survival mechanism long employed by retirantes in the face of droughts reflected common understandings of internal migrations still prevalent in the 1950s. Doing so allowed the Church to reiterate previous calls for fixing rural nordestinos in place through the large-scale state-led development efforts. The northeastern bishops focused in part on the conditions of the journey south that led in their eyes to becoming "favelados" or "sub-proletarians," references to informal living and employment conditions in the south. They also called for agrarian reform coupled with the extension of social services to the sertão. Moreover, the conference also stipulated that nordestinos should be organized into deliberative bodies that would partner with the federal government to implement infrastructure provision and basic state services.[69] Such a move would represent a massive expansion of citizenship to the large swaths of Brazil's population.

[68] Dom Jaime Vieira Rocha,: Declaração dos Bispos do Nordeste" in Dom Jaime Vieira Rocha, *Sob os signos da esperança e da responsabilidade social: anais do I e II Encontros dos Bispos do Nordeste (Campina Grande, 1956 | Natal, 1959)* (Campina Grande: EDUEPB, 2016), 99-100.
[69] "Encontro dos Bispos do Nordeste," *O Observador Econômico e Financeiro*, xxi, no. 244, June 1956, 51-62.

While several government entities participated in the conference, state action restricted itself to modest improvement to the conditions of the journey south. These included regulations to restrict the recruitment of nordestinos by private individuals, who would then transport them self in precarious flatbed trucks, the infamous "macaw's perch" (pau-de-arara). Not infrequently, the owners of these trucks would pressure their passengers or force them into exploitative labor arrangements upon arrival. To better regulate the migration, the federal government also established new migration posts, including at the heads of the Central do Brazil railroad in Minas Gerais at Monte Azul and Pirapora as well as in southern Bahia and central Minas Gerais.[70] These posts offered medical assistance, food and lodging, and free passage south to migrants. Still, a lack of funds led the federal government to delegate much of the functioning of this system and the reception of migrants in the south to the state government of São Paulo, who continued operating its labor recruitment scheme as it had in previous decades. The poor state of funding, moreover, meant that other proposed migration posts never materialized.[71]

The continued flows of rural Brazilians south—and increasing restiveness of Francisco Julião's Peasant Leagues—led the Church and state to take further action in 1959. At a follow-up conference that year, northeastern bishops met with Brazilian officials including President Juscelino Kubitschek and his chief economist Celso Furtado as well as representatives of the U.S. government concerned with rising unrest in the Northeast. In their declaration, the bishops called for the full conversation of the still-functioning immigration-colonization system to assist

[70] "Instalação de vários postos de migração nos estados de Pernambuco, Sergipe e Bahia," *Folha de Manhã*, 20 June 1956, 14. See also, "O "Comerciante de Gente" vai voltar ao Nordeste a fim de trazer outros homens para "distribuir" em São Paulo," *Folha de Manhã*, 6 March 1959, 10.
[71] "Acordo para assistência a migrantes nacionais," *Folha de Manhã*, 20 December 1959, 9.

internal migrants rather than foreign immigrants while reiterating their calls to include nordestinos in expanding state services and basic infrastructure.[72]

The conference also heralded two major initiatives to tackle poverty in the Northeast, especially relative to the industrializing south. In December 1959, Kubitschek announced the creation of a new federal agency, SUDENE (Superintendência de Desenvolvimento do Nordeste), headed by Celso Furtado. SUDENE aimed to invest unprecedented government funds into development projects in the Northeast focusing on promoting industrial development rather than agriculture and large-scale infrastructure, such as hydro-electric dams. The agency received support from an unusual coalition which included northeastern bureaucrats interested in development, industrialists, and U.S. aid officials as well as progressive sectors of the Catholic Church and even the Peasant Leagues. Predictably, rural landowning interest fiercely opposed the agency's threat to their primacy.[73]

The United States also took an acute interest in the Northeast and rural Brazil in the years after the 1959 meeting, especially after the success of the Cuban Revolution that year. The rising unrest in the region as the Peasant Leagues became increasingly assertive in seizing land into the early 1960s seemed to herald a communist uprising that would yield "another Cuba" as U.S. officials consistently fretted. Under the Alliance for Progress and related USAID programs, the United States invested in development projects it hoped would dissuade nordestinos from supposedly more radical alternatives like the Peasant Leagues.74

[72] Dom Jaime Vieira Rocha, *Sob os signos da esperança e da responsabilidade social: anais do I e II Encontros dos Bispos do Nordeste (Campina Grande, 1956 | Natal, 1959)* (Campina Grande: EDUEPB, 2016), 311-323.
[73] Celso Furtado et al., *O Nordeste e a saga da Sudene: 1958-1964*, Arquivos Celso Furtado 3 (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto : Centro Internacional Celso Furtado de Políticas para o Desenvolvimento, 2009).
[74] See, Felipe Pereira Loureiro, "The Alliance for Progress and President João Goulart's Three-Year Plan: The Deterioration of U.S.-Brazilian Relations in Cold War Brazil (1962)," *Cold War History* 17, no. 1 (January 2017), 61–73.

These extensive measures resulted in no small part from the refusal of rural Brazilians and nordestinos to accept exclusion from full citizenship and the benefits of Brazil's modernization. While migration and organizing might seem like opposing actions, for rural Brazilians they both offered a means to realize their rising expectations for a dignified life. The catastrophic drought of 1951-52 catalyzed new flows of migration south that would set the pattern for the following two decades. Through familial networks, many of which now spanned the Northeast and Center-South, rural and urban Brazil, news spread of better living conditions in São Paulo and facilitated the mobility of millions. In doing so, those networks offered a bridge between the peripheries of Brazilian citizenship and its ostensible center. Belatedly, the Brazilian state looked to combat poverty through large-scale developmental projects but declined to include nordestinos in their implementation as the Catholic Church called for. Ultimately, the bid for inclusion in Brazil's developmentalist pact emanated from rural Brazilians themselves rather than the state.

From Periphery to Periphery and the Coup of 1964

The tide of expectations continued to rise after Kubitscheck left office in 1960. For many rural Brazilians, the path to São Paulo was a long one involving numerous intermediate stops spanning years and even generations. Upon arrival, however, migrants found those hopes dashed on two fronts. On the one hand, their expectations for a better life in São Paulo ran into the harsh realities of their relegation to the outskirts of the city, to the urban periphery completely devoid of basic state services and urban infrastructure. On the other, the promising efforts of Kubitscheck's successor, the left-of-center João Goulart (1961-64), to convert the migration post system into the basis for real land reform and expand labor and social rights to rural Brazilians engendered fierce opposition from the powerful landowning class. With their backing, and the

support of the United States, Brazil's military overthrew Goulart in a coup on April 1, 1964. Taken together, the realities of urban life in São Paulo and the end of democracy seemed to put full citizenship for rural Brazilians ever further from reach.

Those who came to São Paulo had high hopes for their lives there. Before she left Ponte Nova in southern Minas Gerais, Luzia Alves Basílio recalled "I had a dream that São Paulo was a paradise, something from another world, something very beautiful, out of the ordinary. We heard on the television, on the radio beautiful things about São Paulo, so we brought this image of São Paulo [in our minds]."[75] In Barreiros, Pernambuco, Antônia Rozendo Araújo had heard similar news about São Paulo. In her community deep in Pernambuco's sugar growing region, São Paulo was "the land where we would earn money, where everything was easy. So, for the nordestino who lacked work there, they were eager to come to São Paulo to work, to have a better life." Like Basílio, Araújo believed that "it was all true, that São Paulo is a place blessed by God, a place that had an immense job market."[76] This image of São Paulo as a land of bountiful opportunity resonated deeply with those who sought out the city in the 1950s through the 1960s at a time when the city's industries had a seemingly insatiable appetite for labor.

Upon arrival, however, São Paulo seemed a large and alienating place. When Aparecido de Souza disembarked the train from Ceára, he remembered how cold and foreign São Paulo felt compared to the sunny Northeast. To ease the transition, he recalled leaving the train station and immediately going to a bar, where he ordered a whisky (without ice) to warm up since he figured that São Paulo would not have *cachaça*, the sugar cane rum popular in his native state.[77] Located high on the central plateau near the Atlantic rainforest, the cool temperatures were matched by

[75] Luzia Alves Basílio, interview with Moara Passoni, 2004, São Paulo, Brazil.
[76] Antônia Rozendo de Araújo, interview with Sônia Maria de Freitas, 24 November 2000, São Paulo Brazil.
[77] Souza, interview.

how cold the city's people felt after the close-knit rural communities that new arrivals had left. Ana Dias, born in western São Paulo to mineiro and nordestino migrant parents, found the metropolis a "very cold, very distant place very distant from your friends, of your knowledge" as a person from the countryside. To illustrate this sense of alienation, she pointed to the experience of using a crosswalk in downtown São Paulo. She likened the sudden rush of people to when she would let a herd of cattle *(boaida*) loose on the farm where she worked. But in the crosswalk, "did you know who there is João, who is Zé, who is Maria? No. You are just there with your destination, independent of everyone around you, no?" Building the kind of community lost in their rural places of origin would be necessary to "make it so that we had some kind of identity" in this new, unfamiliar place.[78]

Unfortunately, many found their hopes for a better life dashed by their living conditions in the only place they could afford to live in São Paulo — the outlying periphery. There, new arrivals to São Paulo could buy cheap land—often without legal title—and construct their own homes on weekends. In the city's eastern periphery, Celina de Oliveira remembered her neighborhood A.E. Carvalho "had nothing. You walked around the neighborhood, it was just mud…Just mud, mud, mud, mud, it did not have anything but mud." A.E. Carvalho, moreover, did not have "pavement, it did not have basic sanitary [infrastructure], it had no [potable] water, the water came from a well, there was no telephone service, no health clinic… no police station, no school, it lacked everything."[79] Luzia Basílio described her feeling of deception as having "fallen into the periphery here in São Paulo, we went to live in a shack, a shack half filled with water" from the frequent floods. Her new home reminded her of the sheds they would keep the cattle in back in Minas Gerais. Other recent arrivals recalled having to deforest the land to build

[78] Ana Maria do Carmo Silva, interview with author, 23 March 2018, São Paulo, Brazil.
[79] Oliveira and Pinto, interview.

their new homes, which were miles away from the city center. Basic tasks such as buying food became day-long journeys over precarious bus lines to the city center.[80]

Around 3 million people migrated to the urban periphery of São Paulo between 1950 and 1970, a pace which continued until the 1980s until the city overflowed into surrounding municipalities.[81] Many migrants did find aspects of São Paulo appealing. Odete Marques from rural Minas Gerais remarked that she loved the city for its modernity and for seeing a television for the first time, the hustle and bustle of its streets. But as she and other periphery residents would experience, overcrowding coupled with a lack of basic infrastructure led to a deteriorating quality of life, rising hunger, and rampant disease in the 1960s and 1970s.

This sense of a revolution dashed upon the rocks of daily life in São Paulo did not go unnoticed by local and state officials. In the early 1970s, the state government conducted a sprawling planning review in response to deteriorating living conditions in the city. The report summarized São Paulo's experience in the context of the rapid urbanization of Latin America:

> The intensification of rural-urban migrations created widespread expectations of access to the products of economic development for those populations agglomerated in metropolitan areas. However, the very dynamic of this development did not create mechanisms capable of equitably redistributing the fruits of industrial progress, neither did it adequately appreciate attending to needs in the social sector (making life in the metropole less traumatic). This generated, without a doubt, "a revolution of growing frustration…"[82]

That "revolution of rising frustrations" is the subject of subsequent chapters that examine how rural Brazilians, now migrants in a new challenging city, organized grassroots movements to address the gap between their aspirations for and the reality of life in São Paulo.

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[80] Basílio, interview.
[81] Walter Sidney Pereira Leser, "Relacionamento de certas características populacionais com a mortalidade infantil no município de São Paulo, de 1950 a 1970," *Problemas Brasileiros* n. 109 (Sept.,1972), 2.
[82] Cheywa Rojza Spindel, "Dinâmica populacional," Região Metropolitana de São Paulo — Diagnóstico 75 — Desenvolvimento Sócio-Econômico, 1975, p. 50-51, EMPLASA.

Even as conditions in cities like São Paulo worsened, the Brazilian state under the center-left President João Goulart (1961-64) made serious attempts to extend rights and enact agrarian reform as part of his Base Reforms (*reformas de base*). In response the 1959 meeting of northeastern Bishops attended by Kubitschek, the director of the Department of Migration under Goulart, Aníbal Teixeira de Souza, published a report that called for far broader changes to address the causes of mass migration in Brazil. Souza argued that Brazil's unequal citizenship regime, that is the structure of the law that attributed rights only to the urban arena, had created a permanent motive for rural Brazilians to migrate. Moreover, the lack of an agrarian reform to redistribute land had resulted in a large class of itinerant landless agricultural laborers with little reason to remain in rural areas.[83] To address the latter, Goulart made the federal migration post system a part of his new agrarian reform agency, SUPRA. While they still assisted migrants south, the posts also now oversaw the distribution of landless rural Brazilians to newly expropriated lands. This land reform concentrated initially on state-owned lands adjacent to railways in regions with high levels of migration, exactly the areas where the migration posts were located.[84] Alongside this incipient land redistribution, Goulart passed the 1963 Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural which extended the rights and protections enjoyed by urban workers to their rural counterparts.

Predictably, these moves emboldened rural Brazilians even as it infuriated powerful landowners. On the farm where she worked in western São Paulo, Ana Dias remembers how her then-boyfriend Santo Dias ran afoul of the local *coronel* (rural strongman) for attempting to organize the workers there for better working and living conditions. Ultimately, rather than

[83] Aníbal Teixeira de Souza, *Os Bispos do Nordeste e as migrações internas*, (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Nacional de Imigração e Colonização, Departamento de Estudos e Planejamentos, 1961), 14.
[84] "Criada a Superintendência de Política Agrária (SUPRA)" *Folha de São Paulo*, 13 October 1962, 13. See also, "Superintendência da Política Agrária," *Jornal do Brasil*, 27 April 1963, 7.

engage with the organizers, the coronel expelled them from the land leading Santo to join Ana in the city where the two married. The 1963 law led to a wave of expulsions of migrants in São Paulo state, so much so that by 1967 the rural population declined by 40% in just five years. Overwhelmingly, as state reports affirmed, those expelled went to the capital.[85]

Meanwhile, land appropriations by SUPRA and rumors of seizures by landless workers created a frenzy among the landowning classes and their political supporters. In 1964, as tensions reached a fever pitch, the governor of São Paulo Adhemar de Barros loudly denounced supposed "nuclei of agitation" that were using SUPRA land appropriations to invade and occupy private properties. The appropriations became one of the rallying cries of right-wing groups such as CAMDE, the Women's Campaign for Democracy, who staged mass protests against what they saw as Goulart's attempts to install communism in Brazil. On April 1, 1964, the military staged a coup against Goulart in what they called the "Revolution of 1964."

For most rural Brazilians who had already gone to the city, the coup and the installation had little immediate effect on their day-to-day lives. The immediate moves of the incipient dictatorship, however, abruptly ended Goulart's attempt to extend rights and enact agrarian reform, including through the migration post system. Under the new dictatorship, Brazil's military rulers immediately shut down SUPRA and left the migration post system in limbo for two years. Ultimately, in 1966, the dictatorship reoriented the posts as job training centers and to direct rural Brazilians to work on large-scale developmental projects in distant frontiers as part of "Operation Directed Migration." This included projects such as the construction of the Trans-

[85] Santa Helena Bosco and Antonio Jordão Netto, *Migrações: estudo especial sôbre as migrações internas para o Estado de São Paulo e seus efeitos*, (São Paulo: Departamento de Imigração e Colonização, Secretaria da Agricultura do Estado de São Paulo, 1967), 3-10.

Amazonian Highway, which saw large numbers of nordestinos relocate to the Amazon.[86] In addition, the dictatorship rounded up and exiled rural organizers as well as many of the chief architects of Goulart's ill-fated agrarian reform.

The 1964 coup put an end to the most significant effort to extend to rural Brazilians the same rights and protections as members of the formal urban working class. At the same time, worsening conditions in the cities seemed to preclude realizing those hopes by means of migration. In this context, the urban periphery became a key front for contesting the persistence of exclusion from full enjoyment of the benefits of Brazil's developmental modernization, a door seemingly slammed shut by the military coup. Nonetheless, the urban periphery emerged as a terrain of possibility for rural Brazilians, a place from which to insist upon their inclusion even as Brazil entered two decades of authoritarian rule.

Conclusion

Moving to the city came to symbolize full citizenship and enjoyment of the fruits of Brazil's rapid industrialization. For rural Brazilians, the city represented a space in which they could realize their aspirations for material improvement and self-fulfillment. Yet, despite recognizing that stronger rights and material conditions led Brazilians to migrate to the city, the developmentalist state drew on racialized understandings to limit democratic inclusion at least until Goulart's short-lived attempt in the early 1960s. Rural Brazilians fiercely contested their exclusion through mobilizations and direct action both before and during the dictatorship. But for millions, mobility became a way to contest that exclusion. The status of rural Brazilians as citizens meant that no formal borders existed to impede their movement throughout Brazil, an

[86] "Milton Campos afirma que o decreto da Supra é illegal e inconveniente," *Jornal do Brasil*, caderno 1, 1 December 1964, 4. See also, "Trabalhador rural migrante," *Diário de Notícias*, 12 November 1966, 8.

unintended, but ultimately crucial aspect of Brazil's fragment citizenship regime. As a result, mobility formed the basis for a larger claim on citizenship from its peripheries, one that spanned the ostensibly distinct spheres of rural and urban Brazil in the form of the mass exodus that remade Brazilian society in the twentieth century.

At the dawn of Brazil's military dictatorship in 1964, the exclusions that had emerged with the developmentalist state along rural and urban lines as well as between the Northeast and the south remained frustratingly persistent. Where industrialization concentrated in southern cities, above São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, so too did formal sector jobs entitled to labor and social rights under the 1943 labor law, the CLT. Likewise, poor access to an education in rural areas, and especially in the Northeast, caused mass disenfranchisement and weakened their ability to challenge an unequal landowning system under democratic rule (1945-64). In practice, this meant that the vast majority of Black, Indigenous, and mixed-race as well as a sizable number of working-class white Brazilians were excluded from holding meaningful rights.

The rising tide of expectations that propelled the rural exodus, moreover, crashed into the harsh realities of life in São Paulo and a military coup that restricted political avenues for redress. Even still, the mobility of rural Brazilians made the urban periphery into the key battleground to contest their continued exclusion from full citizenship as the military government expanded the developmental state. As the next chapter examines, migrants in São Paulo found themselves in a liminal space on the peripheries of both Brazilian citizenship and the city itself. The state allowed migrants to remain in São Paulo but relegated them to the urban periphery of the city where even the acquisition of formal sector employment did not guarantee effective rights. The military coup, moreover, had weakened the populist system through which urban residents in São Paulo had negotiated for urban improvements and other favors. As a result,

migrants as well as elements of the progressive Catholic Church and leftist activists looked for ways to construct inclusion while building democracy from the margins of Brazilian society and the city.