

A struggle for land

Reclaiming or invading land in Mato Grosso do Sul

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Abstract

There is currently a struggle about land between indigenous people and farmers in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The conflict has already caused deaths, and both sides point to the other as the instigator. This thesis attempts to study this conflict both from the point of view of the farmers and the indigenous people utilizing interviews and participant observations. By adopting an analytical framework of moral economy and structural violence I try to gain an understanding of how each side justifies their claim to the land and point to the other as the aggressor. The indigenous see themselves as legitimately reclaiming, retomando, land that is theirs, while the farmers see them as invaders that do not respect legally acquired land.

Acknowledgements

Then I am done. I have many times during this thesis period thought about how I would go about when writing this acknowledgement chapter, and I have had nearly every idea in the book. What I have struggled the most with however has been how to express my gratitude to those having participated in this thesis: I hope most of you will read it and say “He got it right.” If it did not turn out like you wanted it to be then know that I did my best.

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To my Brazilian family Ana and Miguel for making me feel just as much at home in Brazil as in Norway: obrigado. And last but not least my favorite Brasileira who has been with me every step of the way, and even became my wife in the process: If the thesis is any good, it is yours as much as mine.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Time line of the conflict	3
1.2	Guarani Kaiowá	3
1.2.1	Claims in the conflict	4
1.3	Farmers	5
1.3.1	Claims in the conflict	5
1.4	Institutions and the process of demarcating land.....	6
1.4.1	Funai.....	6
1.4.2	The Rural Caucus	8
1.5	Research questions	10
1.6	Objectives of the study	10
1.7	Structure.....	10
2	Background	12
2.1	Brazilian history	12
2.2	Mato Grosso (do Sul) and the agribusiness expansion.....	15
2.2.1	Agribusiness	16
2.2.2	Family agronomy	18
2.3	Poverty and land – the struggle of social movements	20
2.4	Indigenous social movements.....	21
3	Analytical framework.....	25
3.1	Moral economy.....	25
3.2	Violence and concepts regarding violence	27
3.2.1	Social justice	30
4	Methodology	32
4.1	Qualitative approach.....	33
4.2	Reliability	34
4.3	Validity	34
4.4	Fieldwork.....	35
4.5	Snowball sampling	37
4.6	Interviews	38
4.7	Participant observation	39

4.8	Role as researcher	40
4.9	Limitations	41
4.9.1	Translation	42
4.10	Ethical considerations.....	44
5	Analysis – Guarani-Kaiowá.....	46
5.1	How they are perceived and the racism they experience	46
5.2	Violence and social exclusion as a consequence of racism	49
5.2.1	Lack of government presence	53
5.2.2	Brainwashing	57
5.2.3	Summary.....	59
5.3	Why do they reclaim and how do they justify the retomada?.....	60
5.3.1	Reintegration of ownership or attack.....	65
5.4	Moral economy of the Guarani-Kaiowá	66
5.4.1	What works in their struggle.....	71
5.4.2	Summary	72
6	Analysis – Farmers	75
6.1	Being portrayed negative	76
6.1.1	Who feeds Brazil?.....	78
6.1.2	Responsible farmers or polluters	80
6.1.3	Thieves.....	81
6.1.4	Summary	82
6.2	Being invaded - The violence suffered by the farmers	83
6.2.1	Reintegration of ownership or attack.....	86
6.2.2	Summary.....	87
6.3	One Brazil or two nations?.....	88
6.3.1	Indigenous knowledge as not trustworthy.	93
6.3.2	Hypocrites.....	94
6.4	Accept that you are colonized.....	96
7	Conclusion	100
	References.....	106

List of figures

Figure 1: Map of Brazil.....	12
Figure 2: Map of Mato Grosso do Sul.....	15
Figure 3: A Typology of Violence	29
Figure 4: Where there is justice, there is space for everyone.....	89
Figure 5: Guess what land belongs to the indios.....	91

List of terms

CIMI - Conselho Indigenista Missionário – Indigenous Missionary Council

FAMASUL - Federação da Agricultura e Pecuária de Mato Grosso do Sul - Federation of producers of Agriculture and Livestock in Mato Grosso do Sul

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FUNAI - Fundação Nacional do Índio – National Indian Foundation

ILO - International Labour Organization

ISA - Instituto Socioambiental

MS - Mato Grosso do Sul

MST - Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - Landless Workers' Movement

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

SENAR - Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Rural - National Service for Rural Knowledge

SESAI - Secretaria Especial de Saúde Indígena - Secretary of Indigenous Health

SNL - Store Norske Leksikon

SPI - Serviço de Proteção ao Índio - Service for the protection of the Indian

SSB - Statistisk Sentralbyrå

1 Introduction

During one of my first trips driving around in Mato Grosso do Sul Kristin and I marveled at the sad sight of field after field with soya, a green desert, in a state that is called the lush forest.

On the same roads almost a month later I drove with Jorge, and looking out on the fields admiring its beauty he said: “In twenty days this will all look beautiful. It will be green and beautiful, it will be a like a garden”

What is the difference between a beautiful garden and a sterile desert? Apparently nothing, except who is looking.

Between 2003 and 2016 a total of 1009 indigenous people were murdered in Brazil (Cimi 2017: 78). Of these 444 were killed in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (MS).¹ A census from 2012 put the number of the indigenous population in Mato Grosso do Sul at 61 737 (Oliveira 2012). An average of 31 people killed each year is almost identical with Norway's average of 31, 5 (Kripos 2017).² The big difference however, is that Norway's population (SSB 2017) is about 80 times as big as the indigenous population of Mato Grosso do Sul.

There is currently a struggle about land between indigenous people and farmers in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The largest indigenous group in Mato Grosso do Sul consists of the Guarani Kaiowá and they number about 31 000 in that state (Meliá 2008). They live both in the cities but also on the eight reservations spread throughout the state (Ibid). Having a history of being forcefully removed from their land the Guarani Kaiowá has long pushed for the Brazilian government to demarcate their traditional lands. Seeing how this process has slowed down or come to a halt, various groups of indigenous people have started to retake, or *retomar*, the land that they consider theirs.

This has been met with resistance by the farmers located in this state, which consequently refers to these acts of retomada as invasions (Famasul³ 2017). They call for the indigenous people to respect legally acquired land, and furthermore, to challenge land ownership in the court of law and not by invading legally possessed land (Ibid).

This thesis will seek to gain an understanding of how and why this conflict is taking place, and how the two sides understand the conflict. Essential in this task is to try to explain how both sides see the other as the aggressor and how they justify their claims in the conflict.

¹ This report says nothing about who committed these crimes. This will be addressed later.

² Utøya massacre omitted.

³ Federation of producers of Agriculture and Livestock in Mato Grosso do Sul (Federação da Agricultura e Pecuária de Mato Grosso do Sul) is an umbrella organization currently consisting of 69 local farmer's unions. Under the headline Mission on their homepage they write that it is their intentions to "Represent, organize and strengthen the producers and rural unions and promote the agribusiness of Mato Grosso do Sul."

1.1 Time line of the conflict

Crespe (2015: 11) dates the beginning of the colonization of Mato Grosso do Sul to the 1830s, when the first farms were established in the region. First and foremost among the colonizer were the company Matte Laranjera, who received monopoly on the exploration of mate herb in this region. Matte Laranjeira dominated the economic activities in the state until the 1940s, when the rate of farms established in the region greatly increased.

In order to make land available for cattle breeding, cultivation of soya and more recently sugar cane, the indigenous were removed from their land and placed in eight small reservations created by the Service for the Protection of the Indian (SPI).⁴ These reservations were created between 1915 and 1928 and the process of bringing the indigenous into the reservations took place gradually (Ibid: 11).

With the process of democratization taking place in Brazil in the 1980s the Guarani Kaiowá started to politically organize themselves in order to be able to return to their traditional homelands. The mobilization of the indigenous also led to a mobilization among the farmers, and there have been various incidents of violence between these two groups (Ibid).

1.2 Guarani Kaiowá

Archaeologic and linguistic studies have traced the origin of the Guarani culture as a separate and independent branch from the Tupi family, to the fifth century. The geographical extension of the area occupied by the Guarani when the Europeans arrived stretched over a large area from costal Brazil beginning in Cananéia going south to Rio Grande do Sul, and into the interior parts, including parts of Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Uruguay (Meliá 2008).

Kaiowá denotes a branch within the Guarani family, corresponding to a distinct dialect. Thus other Guarani subgroups such as Guarani Mbya and Guarani Ñandeva speak

⁴ Service for the protection of the Indian (Serviço de Proteção ao Índio) was a government institution who worked for the pacification and protection of indigenous groups and it was active in the period of 1910-1967. It was later replaced by Funai.

dialects that are mutually comprehensible with the Guarani Kaiowá, and in some articles and contexts they are merged into only one group, namely Guarani (Ibid).

The Guarani Kaiowá has historically had a sparse population pattern with a lot of area at disposal for each family and tribe, with access to water and fertile land to cultivate and feed the livestock. First and foremost the Guarani Kaiowá is a people of the forest who have depended on it for hunting, gathering of fruits and medicine plants, first-quality wood to construct houses and artefacts, and rivers and lakes with plenty of fish (Ibid).

1.2.1 Claims in the conflict

Although the reservations were created in the period from 1915 to 1928, many of the Guarani Kaiowá continued to live on their homelands, either hiding in the forest or representing cheap labour for the newly established farmers. However from the period from 1950 to 1970 a new period of dispossession took place, when the monopoly of Matte Laranjeira ended and the Brazilian government allotted land for farmers. Various Guarani Kaiowá families resisted the forced relocation and in the 1970s the resistance was organized (Benites 2014: 41-43).

The Guarani Kaiowá met in what is called Aty Guasu,⁵ the great assembly (Ibid: 42). The objective was, and is, to make a collective resistance against the organized process of dispossessing the Guarani Kaiowá. In one of these encounters, the leaders protested publicly the general level of violence perpetrated against the indigenous people living along the border region. They pressed charges against those who had committed assassinations against their people, and they demanded that the process of demarcation of the land would be concluded (Ibid).

The Guarani Kaiowá demands the right to return to their ancestral homeland Tekoha,⁶ and that they are granted the rights to their land on their own premises. Seeing that the process of demarcating land has slowed down or come to an end, the Guarani Kaiowá

⁵ Benites (2014: 258-259) explains that Aty means meeting and Guasu means big, thus “Big meeting.” This is where various political and religious leaders of extended families meet. At the Aty Guasu various issues are discussed and important decisions made that will affect everyone. Decisions regarding reclaiming land are one such example. As such the Aty Guasu is defined as the general assembly for the political and religious leaders of the extended Guarani Kaiowá families and it is considered the only legitimate forum for discussions and making decisions regarding the Guarani Kaiowá.

⁶ Crespe (2015: 25) breaks down the word Tekoha and explains that Teko means way of being and Ha indicates a place. Therefore, the most common understanding of the word is that Tekoha is a place where Guarani Kaiowá lived, lives or will live in accordance with their way of being/way of life.

take action into their own hands, and instead of waiting for the government they proceed and reclaim, *retomar*, their land by moving into it. They are only interested in what they consider their ancestral homeland, and the Guarani Kaiowá is not indiscriminately reclaiming land.

1.3 Farmers

As addressed in the preceding sections of this chapter the colonization of Mato Grosso do Sul started in the 1830s, and the Brazilian government had an intention of “populating” this region. The farms that were established were within the area of cattle breeding. After the Paraguayan war⁷ (1864-1870) the company Matte Laranjeira received a monopoly on the exploration of herb mate and it was dominating the economic activities in the region until the 1940s, when a new wave of farms was being established. These farms in addition to cattle cultivated soya, and from the 1980s, sugar cane and mills also became more important (Crespe 2015: 51-53).

1.3.1 Claims in the conflict

The Supreme Court ruled the 27.09.2017 regarding an incident where one indigenous man was killed and five other were wounded that took place in June 2016, that the five farmers who were initially taken into custody but later released should go back to prison (dos Santos 2017). This incident took place in Mato Grosso do Sul and received quite a lot of media attention. This was at the retomada where I stayed, which we shall return to.

The farmers’ organization (Famasul) issued an official statement the 28.09.2017 in regards to the decision by the Supreme Court, but Famasul’s statement is highly relevant for the retomadas, or land invasions, in general. Although there are certainly farmers and others who are neither a member of Famasul, nor support their political stance, I consider their statement to be fairly representative for farmers in the region as a whole since their mission is to represent the farmers of their state. Part of their statement reads as follows (Famasul 2017):

⁷ This war is also called the War of the Triple Alliance since the warring parties consisted of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay on one side and Paraguay on the other.

[...]

The producers related to the episode have legally acquired the titles of their areas, they live there, they are well regarded people in the cities where they live and they work on their properties.

This situation is experienced by a significant number of rural producers who, even though they have acquired their areas legitimately and have peacefully possessed the land for more than half a century, are having their titles questioned and their properties invaded.

Unfortunately, conflicts such as these result from a lack of a definitive response from the Government, which should uphold peace, law and order.

There are currently 123 rural properties invaded by indigenous people in Mato Grosso do Sul, as well as 5 other located in urban areas.

Their statement does not need much elaboration but to sum it up they stress that their land is legally acquired and they want the government and the state to uphold the laws protecting private ownership. They seem to suggest that a failure to do so will result in lawlessness, which will have serious consequences.

1.4 Institutions and the process of demarcating land

The third party in this conflict is the Brazilian government and the various branches acting on its behalf. I will not go into details and address all the actors; rather I will focus on Funai (Fundação Nacional do Índio - National Indian Foundation) acting on behalf of the executive branch regarding indigenous questions, and on the congress and their role in regards to their proposed legislative amendments.

Under the subsection of Funai we shall outline the process of demarcating land: This is how the right to land should ideally be solved.

1.4.1 Funai

Funai was created in 1967 to execute government policy regarding indigenous people. Its mission is to protect and promote the rights of the indigenous peoples of Brazil. Among its tasks Funai is responsible for the process of initiating scientific studies with the aim of identifying, delimitating, demarcating, register and regulating land

traditionally occupied by indigenous people (Funai 2017a). Since the aspect of demarcating land is vital and essential to understand this conflict, we shall go into more detail explaining this process.

The process of demarcating land

First, Funai names a qualified anthropologist to carry out studies with the aim at establishing Indigenous Land (IL).⁸ These studies include, but are not limited to, ethnohistorical, sociological, juridical and cartographical studies, and land surveys (Funai 2017b).

Second, the resulting report is submitted to the president of FUNAI who will either approve or reject the study. Third, those who want to, including states and counties can protest either entire or parts of the result. Fourth, FUNAI forwards their final report with its various objections and contestations, to the Department of Justice.

When the report is delivered to the Department of Justice, they can a) issue a decree with corresponding boundaries and area to be demarked, b) order alterations to be made to the report or c) reject the report.

Fifth, the area to be defined as indigenous land is physically demarked, which is carried out by Funai, while another government institution will assist in the eventual resettlement of non-indigenous inhabitants. Sixth, the demarcation procedure is completed by an official approval by the President of the Republic. Finally, the land is registered in the national real estate registry (Ibid).

That is the formal proceedings of how land is transferred back to the various indigenous groups. The problem arises in several of these stages where areas of land can be identified but contested by various actors, or delayed by the Department of Justice, with the latter being a frequent case (Povos Indigenas no Brasil 2017a).

⁸ The concept of Terras Indigenas (Indigenous Land) dates back to the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, where it was established that the Indigenous Peoples were the first and natural inhabitants of the land today called Brazil. This is the source of all their other rights, which as a consequence comes before all other peoples' rights.

The definition of land traditionally occupied by indigenous people is defined in article 231 who states that traditional indigenous land is the area which is permanently inhabited by them and which is necessary for their productive activities, preservation of the natural resources for their wellbeing and their physical and cultural reproduction according to their customs and traditions (Cimi 2017).

The area where the fieldwork of this thesis was carried out is in one of these 44 areas that are identified and approved by FUNAI, but are still pending in one of the various stages of the finalization process (Ibid). Since these areas have been marked, but not transferred, actors who have lost faith and do not think that it will be completed have decided on taking action on their own. Thus they are *retomando*, reclaiming their own land. Consequently, they are not indiscriminately taking whatever land they want but rather what has been marked for transfer. However, the various farmers living in these areas rightfully claim that the land has not (yet) been transferred and as such it is still theirs to hold.

1.4.2 The Rural Caucus

The legislative branch has long had a strong presence and domination from the Rural Caucus, *Bancada Ruralista* (Costa 2012). The Rural Caucus has existed going back to the period before the military dictatorship (1964-1985) but it was formally founded in 2003, although its official name is the Parliamentary Front, *Frente Parlamental* (Simionatto and Costa 2012: 219). It is one of the oldest and most established caucuses and it has had a lot of success acting on behalf of the agroindustry (Ibid).

As outlined in the section detailing the process of demarcating land this takes place within the executive branch. However the congress, with its strong agrarian presence, has recently made two attempts at changing both who makes the decision, and how that decision is made. These issues were frequently addressed by my indigenous informants during my fieldwork and merit an introduction.

Pec 215

Pec 215 (Projeto de Emenda Constitucional) is a draft of 2000 to make a constitutional amendment taking the power to demarcate land away from the executive branch, and give the final responsibility to the congress. In addition to removing the power to make this decision from the executive to the legislative branch this amendment also gives deputies and senators the power to review and revert land that is already demarked and registered as indigenous land (Brazilian Congress 2017). This draft is of this date not effectuated

Marco Temporal

The Marco Temporal is a juridical-political discussion regarding the concept of *Terras Indigenas*, Indigenous Land. The Supreme Court in Brazil was going to decide what date to set for when the indigenous people had to occupy land in order for it to be their traditional homeland. The suggested date in the proposition of Marco Temporal was to set the date to the 5th of October, 1988, the date the Brazilian Constitution was promulgated (Peruzzo 2017). This would be a major change from the understanding that the indigenous are to be consider the first and natural inhabitants of Brazil.

The Supreme Court did however make it clear that the Marco Temporal should not be applied in the cases where the indigenous population had been violently expelled. This has not done much to ameliorate the indigenous resistance to this proposed thesis, as they question how the concept of being violently expelled would be practiced.

Summary

What we essentially observe is how the Brazilian authorities are split, both within the executive branch but also between the executive and the legislative assembly. On one side Funai is demarcating land on behalf of the executive power. In regards to the case mentioned above relating to the imprisonment of the five farmers after the killing of an indigenous man Funai stated that the indigenous have a right to the farm since the farm is located within the demarcated land (ISA 2017a).

In Cimi's (2017) annual report a total of 836 areas demarcated are still pending some sort for finalization, and the big majority of these lands have not had any administrative measure taken. As such the process of demarcating and finalizing this process is frequently stopped within the executive branch. The disagreement thus runs right through Brazilian authorities, giving the retomadas partially an official approval. The attempt at moving some of the decisive power from the executive to the legislative branch is also interpreted by some actors to further damage the demarcation process.

1.5 Research questions

- I. What factors affect the way the actions of the farmers and the indigenous to gain control over land are perceived and how do these perceptions influence the conflict?

1.6 Objectives of the study

In answering the research questions four themes will be addressed and explored. They will thus constitute the main sections in the chapters analyzing the conflict from the point of view of the indigenous people and the farmers:

- I. To understand and explain how each side is and wants to be represented in the conflict.
- II. To explore how violence in the conflict is experienced and explained by each side.
- III. To explain their different views on farming, the state and the possibility for an alternative way of life.
- IV. How actors involved in the conflict envision a solution to it.

1.7 Structure

I have in this first chapter introduced the conflict, the main actors and the research question. I will in the second chapter expand on the historical background to the conflict and address important subjects such as the agribusiness, family agronomy, poverty and indigenous social movements. An introduction to these themes will facilitate the later analysis as my informants will frequently address these issues. In the third chapter the central analytical concepts will be addressed which will help to shed light on the conflict. In the fourth chapter the methodology will be presented, together with reflections regarding the fieldwork done in this thesis. In the fifth and sixth chapter the conflict will be analyzed; first from the point of view of the indigenous and then the

farmers. Last in the seventh chapter the findings will be summarized and we shall see both what the indigenous and farmers agree upon and what they see different from each other.

2 Background

In the first chapter I made a brief introduction to the conflict between indigenous people and farmers in Mato Grosso do Sul. I will in this background chapter flesh out and expand on the context by addressing Brazil's history as a colony, expansion of agribusiness, indigenous land rights and land reform. What are the historical roots to the conflict we address in this thesis, and how are the consequences felt today? It might seem too comprehensive to start the presentation with the discovery of Brazil, but seeing how the ramifications of these first acts are felt today, it is essential to start at the beginning.

2.1 Brazilian history

- They say Brazil was discovered. But Brazil was not discovered; Brazil was invaded and taken from the indigenous of Brazil. This is the true story. (Harari, Rubio and Klein 2015)

- Marçal de Souza Tupã'i



Figure 1: Map of Brazil

In April 1500 Pedro Cabral reached the north-eastern coast of Brazil in what today is close to the city Porto Seguro (Fuglestad, Løtveit and Eian 1994: 71). Cabral was heading an expedition consisting of 13 ships and he sailed on behalf of the Portuguese crown. Whether he chanced upon Brazil or its location was already known by the secretive Portuguese is uncertain (Fausto and Fausto 2014: 6; Bueno 2014: 26). The treaty of Tordesillas signed in 1494, where the Portuguese and Spanish divided the world, initially made for the Americas to belong to the Spanish. The Portuguese however discovered that Brazil lay east of the line of demarcation, thus belonging to the Portuguese crown (Fuglestad et al. 1994: 71-72).

Little is known about the original inhabitants of entire Brazil as there is a shortage of data. Estimates regarding population size range from as little as two million in the entire territory to five million living in the Amazon region only (Fausto and Fausto 2014: 8). How many nations, languages and ways of living that existed in 1500 is unknown; what is known is that the remaining indigenous Brazilian population of today consists of 215 nations that speak 170 different languages (Bueno 2014: 25). The original population must therefore have been a lot vaster and diverse back in 1500.

The discovery of Brazil did not initially lead to much enthusiasm, as Brazil's potential as a colony and geographical features were unknown (Fausto and Fausto 2014: 9). It was to a large extent the French and their interest in the territory that spurred the Portuguese to occupy and colonize the land that would come to be known as Brazil, as it was only by possessing the area that the French would respect their claim. As a colony, Brazil's role became one of supplying Portugal with foodstuffs and minerals. The land was divided into large landholdings, captaincies, which were run and owed by individuals receiving grants from the Portuguese crown to do so (Ibid.: 10-17).

Brazil was from the beginning a colony and it is necessary to understand its past in order to understand the Brazil of the present: 3.5 % of landowners control over half of Brazil's arable land (Wittman 2009: 121). The link between land possessions and political power has been a formative part of Brazilian society since colonial time: access to land goes a long way to decide political influence.

Wittman (2009: 121) writes that

land administration in Brazil has served a dual purpose: to ensure Brazilian sovereignty over its inland territory, and to ensure access to land and labor for elite sectors of society by excluding workers from direct political participation in the daily affairs of the nation. In colonial Brazil, land grants to elites with political ties to the Crown were a mark of social prestige, with the possession of property guaranteeing political voice and substantive citizenship rights. Eligibility requirements for voting established in 1822 limited suffrage to those with income from property and industry, explicitly excluding wage laborers, women, and the rural landless colonial Brazil land administration.

Even after the end of slavery and monarchy, and with a new constitution in 1889 the rule of coronelism, a feudal-like system where local oligarchs ruled, continued. Civil rights were granted through these *senhores da terra* (landed elite), fostering a relation of violence and patronage (Ibid). Pereira (2003: 42) writes

Land in Brazil has traditionally been not merely a factor of production but a reward for service and proximity to power, as well as a foundation for the accumulation and maintenance of more power and privilege. This power includes the ability of large landowners to direct the legal and coercive apparatus of the state in the region. It also entails landlord control over and obligations to subaltern populations.

Pereira goes on to write that Brazil has never had a political rupture that has weakened the landed oligarchy, which goes a long way to explain the fact that 3.5 % of landholders control over 50 % of arable land. Hammond (2000: 160) points out that Brazil has the second-most-extreme concentration of land in the world. Brazil also has as of 2015 a Gini coefficient⁹ of 51.3, which is one of the highest in the world (World Bank 2017). The Gini coefficient addresses the country as a whole, and suffices to say it is not only in the area of land possessions that Brazil is characterized by large inequalities.

In this thesis however we shall limit the focus to the distribution of land. This short introduction to parts of Brazil's history, with a focus on colonization, is necessary in order to understand the current challenges that Brazil is facing. In the proceeding chapter we shall go into the specifics of the colonization of Mato Grosso, and furthermore, the expansion of agribusiness.

⁹ Oxford Dictionaries defines the Gini Coefficient as “A statistical measure of the degree of variation represented in a set of values, used especially in analysing income inequality.”

2.2 Mato Grosso (do Sul) and the agribusiness expansion



Figure 2: Map of Mato Grosso do Sul

Mato Grosso do Sul means thick/lush forest to the south, and got its name as it in 1977 was separated from Mato Grosso. Some of the historical background will thus be about Mato Grosso, but this would include Mato Grosso do Sul (Conceição 2017).

The historical relations of coronelism that characterizes Brazil also apply to Mato Grosso, and Wittman (2009: 122) writes that from the period 1889-1943 the state “was known as the Republic of the *Coroneis* for the violent struggles over land by armed bandits organized by the rural oligarchy in disputes over political and economic power.” This can to a large extent be explained by the fact that the federal authorities failed in their attempts at stimulating internal migration to Mato Grosso during the first half of the 20th century.

This changed by the Land Statute draft proposed by the newly elected Brazilian president João Goulart in 1964, which aimed at land redistribution. However after the military coup later that same year the draft lost its emphasis on redistributing land and instead became an administrative policy designed to reduce rural conflict through colonization of the land.

As Wittman wrote Brazilian colonization protocol has often been about the need to establish Brazilian sovereignty over territory, and seeing how Mato Grosso is a border state this only increased its importance. Furthermore, the final land draft protected the already established land holdings from the threat of expropriation, and the 60.000 families receiving land in Mato Grosso in the years from 1940 to 1995 were given “new” land, that is by displacing indigenous populations (Ibid).

The lack of infrastructure in the state led to many families abandoning their plot of land shortly after receiving it, and as a consequence these plot allotment, unlike shifting the power structure away from the large land holders, cemented their position and fostered capitalist development. The challenges with farming in a state lacking infrastructure, plus a governmental focus on direct colonization with attention on possessing the area, led to an unequal distribution of land in this region. Integrating and maintaining strong ties with central government has been a focus of Brazilian colonization politics, and politically costly projects of distribute political power has not been prioritized (Ibid).

We shall in the next two subsections go into the specifics of agribusiness and family agronomy. These two issues will become vital when we address the empirical material later in the thesis, as they relate to the moral economy of each side.

2.2.1 Agribusiness

Lourenço and de Lima (2009) define agribusiness as a business-oriented approach towards agriculture, with the goal of generating economic profit. Within this concept of agribusiness the entire chain is included, from production and distribution of agricultural supplies such as fertilizers and seeds, the various production stages on the farms and the processing and distribution of the final product. The essence is that agronomy is approached with a capitalistic revenue-generating outlook.

Lourenço and de Lima (2009) traces the historical root of the agribusiness going back to the tree giving Brazil its name, the Brazilwood, and they detail the various economic booms having taken place in Brazil’s history, such as the sugar cane exploration in the Northeast, the rubber extraction from the Amazonas, and coffee and more recently soya, with the latter being a big commodity of Mato Grosso do Sul (Sindicato Rural Dourados 2017).

According to Lourenço and de Lima (2009) Brazil's potential for generating revenue in the area of agribusiness is great. They point to Brazil's abundant access to land, favorable climate, a large reserve of fresh water and renewable energy. They also highlight the large capacity of the companies in the country, all indicators that agribusiness should represent the biggest industry of Brazil. They are however also aware of various limiting factors, first and foremost the lack of infrastructure such as roads, railroads and effective ports.

The agribusiness' importance for Brazilian economy is quite significant and over one third of the gross domestic production stems from this area (Ibid). Furthermore, the agribusiness contributes heavily to the Brazilian trade balance, and in the year of 2016 the agribusiness stood for almost 50 percent of the revenues from exportation from Brazil (Department of Agriculture 2017)

Castilho (2012) addresses the property prices in Mato Grosso do Sul and he states that the price of land is determined by three factors: The estimated income that can be generated from productive use of the land, easiness of resale and the cost of maintaining the area. The main asset of generating revenue in MS is cattle breeding and soya, with MS being the second biggest producer of soya in Brazil. With China's increasing demand for soya the prices of land has increased significantly in MS, and MS is one of the four states in Brazil with the highest demand for land (Ibid: 20-36).

A factor that for a long time has negatively affected the price of land in MS and the center-west region of Brazil has been the long distances from harvest to port, and the lack of efficient infrastructure. Castilho (2012: 28) however asserts that in spite of the distance to the consumer and the ports that MS suffer the introduction of new technology which has significantly modernized Brazilian agriculture has been so great as to offset the limited infrastructure. As a consequence large agricultural areas in Brazil that used to be too secluded and distant in order to be competitive have risen in value due to improvements in production efficiency.

Lourenço and de Lima (2009) to sum up take the approach that agribusiness is generating large revenues for Brazil, and furthermore that it has the potential for further growth. When listing challenges that agribusiness has to deal with they did not address the displacement of indigenous people, or the unequal distribution of land. Challenges

posed by genetically modified products where neither addressed, and in general the concept of agribusiness as something desirable was not challenged.

We shall in the next section address family agronomy which to a certain extent represents the alternative to agribusiness. The reason for including a discussion about family agronomy is similar to the reason why we shall also address the phenomenon of social movements: The struggle is similar to that which is taking place between farmers and indigenous people.

2.2.2 Family agronomy

The first challenge with a concept such as family agronomy is how it should be defined, and more importantly, how different actors understand the concept. In Brazil the official law states that family agronomy is defined by a small property,¹⁰ utilizing mainly family labor, a minimum source of income stemming from the property and the farm being run and led by the family (Brazilian Government 2006). The entire definition is more comprehensive, and there is also a requirement of a sustainable use of the environment but also an endorsement of agro-industrialization.

That leads us to a discussion of how family agronomy is commonly understood. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2013: 175) family agronomy is to be understood as something more than just agro-production; it is rather a way of life which respects the environment, protects biodiversity, traditions and cultures, and promotes a territorial development. Without directly opposing the definition of the Brazilian law, it clearly encompasses something more and different than the juridical definition presented above.

As we can observe the two understandings of family agronomy differs to some extent, and this might explain why different actors estimate the importance of family agronomy differently. According to Müller (2011) from the Ministry of Agrarian Development family agronomy feeds 70 percent of Brazil. FAO (2013: 175) writes that family agronomy produces 87 % of the cassava, 46 % of corn, 70 % of beans, 58 % of the milk and 59 % of the pork in Brazil. FAO (Ibid: 17) in the same vein concludes decisively

¹⁰ There is no absolute definition in terms of size: rather the measurement unit is relative to the average size of other farms in the region.

that the most efficient tool in combating rural poverty is to promote and stimulate the growth of family agronomy. Hoffmann (2014) however criticizes the notion that family agronomy feeds 70 percent and his calculations end up on 21.4 percent.

This issue might seem more confusing than revealing, and to a certain extent it is: Family agronomy cannot both correspond to 21.4 percent and 70 percent of the nourishment consumed in Brazil. The point of this thesis however is not to find the correct answer, but to inform the reader about how each side understands the issue at hand. So although it would be possible to arrive at a definitive answer it would still be beside the research questions of this thesis, which relates to each side's understanding.

While Lourenço and Lima (2009) concluded that agribusiness would be the preferred approach in terms of generating revenues for Brazil, FAO's conclusion is more about which agronomy model would benefit the rural poor. Therefore, while the discussion between Müller (2011) and Hoffmann (2014) highlights that there is a factual disagreement, Lourenço and de Lima (2009) and FAO (2013) shows that there need not be a disagreement about the facts but rather priorities: Combat poverty or generate revenues. Needless to say the question of who feeds Brazil carries great normative value, and in the analytical section we shall see that my informants have different answers to that question.

In the next section we shall address questions relating to poverty and land, which might help to understand why different actors have different goals as illustrated above.

Although the social movements involved in land occupation to a large extent involve non-indigenous people there are still various similarities in the way their struggle takes place. They might argue their right to land on a different basis than indigenous people, but the process in itself is quite similar. We shall also go into the specifics in the analytical chapter, but suffice to say there was cooperation taking place between the retomadas and MST (Landless Workers' Movement)-activists in my field studies, and my impression was that they considered each other allies.

2.3 Poverty and land – the struggle of social movements

As we saw in the section regarding the history of Brazil uneven distribution of land has been a feature of Brazil since colonial times. We will in this section look into the struggle for land, and more specifically, land occupation. Organizations such as MST argue for the necessity of an agrarian reform in light of the unequal distribution of land, and they refer specifically to how land and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small and wealthy minority (Friends of MST 2017). In the introductory chapter the process of demarcating land was outlined. The process however is often not concluded, and the indigenous people then decide to occupy land instead.

The right of landless people to occupy unproductive land is articulated in the Brazilian constitution of 1988 (Brown, Brown and Brown 2016: 332). The process of occupying land can take place in various ways, but there is generally a common pattern present: Families consisting of up to hundreds of individuals will mobilize and quite suddenly appear close by or at the property they wish to expropriate. They will often set up temporarily encampments at or close by the area they are interested in, sometimes along the roads.

The landowners will often resort to court orders in order to evict the squatters, and this can be challenged by the lawyers of those occupying the land. This process can go on for many years until it is resolved, and while it goes on the landholders may attempt to intimidate or even use violence in order to scare the squatters away (Ibid).

In regards to violence occurring during these confrontations Hammond (2009: 161) writes that it often takes place after a local court, which are often sympathetic to the local landlords, order an eviction.¹¹ These evictions can turn into a big political event with courts, police, landowner organizations and supporter on each side involved, and it is in these moments that the landowners are most likely to resort to violence.

¹¹ Alston et al (2000: 162-163) write “In Brazil, there is inconsistency between civil law that supports the title held by land owners and constitutional law that supports the right of squatters to claim land that is not in “beneficial use.”” As such the different rulings between district courts and the Supreme Court must not only be interpreted as an expression of bias on behalf of the local courts.

As mentioned the process of settling land claims can go on for years, and there can be repeated cases of occupations and evictions before it is finally settled. In the end the landlord can be in possession of his land, or the land will be marked for expropriation. The landlord will in the latter case get some form of compensation and the land is transferred to the squatters with the approval from the Federal Land Reform Agency (Brown et al. 2016: 332). Settlers can then receive government support and help in order to establish their farms and homes.

What kinds of organizations are leading these land occupation projects? There are a number of social movements who engage in these activities, and the most known is the recently mentioned MST. Other groups include Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), the Federação dos Trabalhadores Rurais (FETAGRI), Central Único dos Trabalhadores (CUT) and local Sindicatos dos Trabalhadores Rurais (STR) (Ibid). This illustrates that the struggle for land is not a marginal phenomenon only involving a few actors, but rather an issue that involves various segments of the Brazilian society. We shall therefore in the next chapter address indigenous social movements, and go into the specifics of indigenous land rights.

2.4 Indigenous social movements

The official policy of all the Latin American countries up until the 1930s was one of assimilation (Ortiga 2004: 1). This was done with tools such as Christianity, compulsory use of the colonizers language and war. At its foundation lay a wish for a national unity, with the belief that the indigenous culture was savage and primitive.

Consequently, there was about two ways of thinking about indigenous people in Latin America before the Second World War: (i) how to integrate or assimilate indigenous people into the modern nation, and (ii) to understand their internal structure by way of ethnography. An aspect in understanding concept (i) is how the traditional indigenous society was a brake on the process of modernization,¹² and that this opposition to modernization was a problem (Wade 2010: 40-45).

¹² Modernity, as understood by Escobar and Alvarez (1992: 67): “[...] can be seen as an attempt to provide a foundation for society that is grounded in reason, the economy, and a project of global emancipation.”

Indigenous social movements have been around for a long time, but really started to materialize in the 1960s all over Latin America. They have gained force, and from the 1980s started having more influence. Social movements was not a new phenomenon in itself, but the indigenous social movements differed from for instance trade unions in that their focus was not so much on modernization and revolution, but rather on creating a political sphere for them to exist as indigenous people (Ibid: 113). By taking a short detour into the juridical area we shall expand on this issue.

The ILO (International Labor Organization) convention 169 regarding indigenous and tribal people is the most important international law that guarantees the rights of indigenous people. For instance, article 2 states that

1. Governments shall have the responsibility for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, co-ordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these peoples and to guarantee respect for their integrity.

2. Such action shall include measures for:

[...]

- (b) promoting the full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions (ILO 1989)

The implication of the ILO convention of 169 is a clear break away from the assimilation policy that has historically dominated in Latin America. The convention explicitly states that indigenous people have a right to exist as a separate people with their own social and cultural identity.

Carvalho (2000: 464) contends that Brazil has a history of treating indigenous people in a discriminatory and marginalizing way compared to other Latin American countries. She illustrates this with the fact that until the 1988 Brazilian Constitution indigenous people were treated as minors. In order to understand the treatment of indigenous people in Brazil we must repeat what was written in the section regarding historical treatment of indigenous people and the policy of assimilating indigenous people into the

nation-state: It is challenging to respect the autonomy of an independent culture and people and at the same time try to create a unified nation and people.

Another important aspect of understanding the treatment of indigenous people in Brazil relates to the security concerns of the government: The military and other nationalist sectors viewed the Amazon as a democratic vacuum and vulnerable to foreign influence, and this area needed to be integrated both socially and economically into the rest of Brazil (Ibid: 465).

In addition to the security aspect the military and civilian authorities' attitude about land in the hands of indigenous has in the words of Carvalho (Ibid: 469) been "too much land, which they do not need". The close ties between the private and governmental sector is important in order to understand this relation. There is however also a governmental rationale for preferring economic exploitation of the land: this provides the state with valuable foreign income that can be taxed.

As I wrote above indigenous social movements started to appear during the 1960s. It was however not until the 1970s that they rose to a more prominent position. As a consequence of these organizations, together with the ILO Convention 169, the plight of indigenous people in Brazil started receiving more attention and gaining ground. The rights of indigenous people stated in the Brazilian constitution are a testament to the success of this movement (Ibid).

Carvalho (Ibid) however points out that the international support to indigenous groups meant that the issue was politicized. Sectors such as the landed elite, mining sector and conservative nationalists interpreted this international involvement as an attempt to undermine national interests. In their eyes the indigenous people were being used in an attempt to reach ulterior motives and indigenous rights were being denounced on the basis of it being imperialistic (Ibid: 467). We shall in the analytical section approaching the conflict from the point of view of the farmers hear this argument being presented as the real reason behind the retomada movement.

Carvalho (2000: 469) discusses the strategic advantages and disadvantages of politicizing the indigenous cause and even though the international support has caused national backlashes in Brazil, she contends that it was the only viable option: Seeing

how the indigenous people had no backing and support within the governmental apparatus it was only with pressure from outside that they were able to achieve anything.

Carvalho (2000: 475) in her concluding chapter tries to sum up the position of indigenous rights in Brazil and she writes

In spite of a democratic transition process in the 1980s, the policy process in this arena is still asymmetrical granting disproportionate access to politically and economically powerful sectors that historically have had clientelistic ties to the state's legislative and executive branches. The capacity of historically excluded social actors to place their issues on the political and policy agendas and to shape policy formation remains limited.

Consequently, the only viable and effective tool of indigenous rights activists is to politicize the conflict, in spite of the downsides to such a strategy. We shall hear this argument being presented by one of my indigenous informants later in this thesis. Furthermore, rights that are won are constantly being challenged, and Carvalho (2000: 475-476) writes that the ongoing struggle over indigenous rights policy has left Brazil without a clear direction in regards to indigenous land rights. The latter we saw an example of in the introduction and how the different branches of Brazilian authorities work against each other.

3 Analytical framework

We have in the introduction and background chapter presented information and context that facilitates an understanding of the conflict at hand. In this chapter the analytical tools and how to understand the conflict will be presented. It might seem as an unnecessary detour as the facts should be able to speak for themselves; however, how can we explain that both sides see themselves as victims of aggression, and that they feel that their aggressor is left virtually unpunished?

We will begin this chapter with a presentation of the concept of moral economy, which will provide the main lenses of how we understand the actors involved in this conflict. As we shall see this concept provides an understanding of both parties' worldview. We shall also expand on the concepts of violence and scales of justice, in order to enhance our understanding of the conflict.

3.1 Moral economy

The use of a concept such as moral economy might seem normative in itself and indicate that one has already taken up a position. And in many ways this is correct: As Wolford (2005: 243) asserts, the concept of moral economy has almost always been used to differentiate subaltern notions of solidarity from elite notions of market rationality in association with (neo) liberal Western capitalism. Wolford (ibid) however argues that the concept can equally be used to understand the agrarian elite, and she explains how she employs the concept. I will in this thesis adhere to her understanding and shortly go into the specifics of her understanding, but first, how did this concept come by?

Arnold (2001: 86) writes that it was E. P. Thompson (1971) who popularized the term moral economy. Building on Polanyi ([1944]) and his distinction between societies where the economy is embedded in society and societies where the economy is embedded in the market economy, Thompson detailed how the period from the first to the latter 18th century England generated social and political unrest. Those coming out unfavorable found this transition unjust, and food riots occurred as a consequence. Arnold (2001: 86) writes

Generalizing from the particulars of the food riots, Thompson conceives moral economy as a popular consensus about what distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate practices, a consensus rooted in the past and capable of inspiring.

Merriam-Webster (2017) defines moral as a concept “[...] relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior.” James (2015: 53) defines economy [...] as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material expressions associated with the production, use, and management of resources.” If we shall try to sum up these two definitions, aided by Arnold (2001) and Thompson (1971), into a colloquial understanding of moral economy then moral economy could be understood as a normative view of how resources should be allocated, or more specific, what principle should decide how material goods are distributed among people. Within such a concept different ideologies as communism, capitalism and pre-modern tribal societies can all be explained.

Wolford (2005) in her paper about *Competing Worldviews in Brazil* discusses and analyzes the conflict between the agrarian elite and MST in Santa Catarina, Brazil, by using the concept of moral economy. My study is similar and as such it justifies a deeper enquiry into her research design.

As I wrote in the introduction, by quoting Wolford, the concept of moral economy has more often been related to the subaltern challenging the established system. Wolford (2005: 244) expand on this issue and explain how the MST members struggling for land are doing so by challenging the system that they find unjust. On the other hand the moral economy of, in her study, agrarian elite, becomes invisible, since it is a part of the dominating ideology: the sanctuary of private property is deeply embedded in the Brazilian society, and by challenging this foundation the MST alienates many people. What Wolford finds however, is that when the position of the agrarian elite is challenged, which is the case when MST successfully occupy (their) land, the moral economy behind how the agrarian elite justifies their holdings becomes apparent.

A second argument for using the concept of moral economy in this thesis is related with what Alston, Libecap and Mueller (2000: 162-163) wrote when they considered the Brazilian constitution as somewhat contradictory in that it both upholds the right of

private property, but at the same time allow occupation and expropriation of unproductive land.

This inconsistency is also present in the conflict between indigenous and farmers in that the article 231 of the Brazilian constitution upholds indigenous peoples' rights as first and original inhabitants of Brazil, but that the constitution also upholds the right to private property. What Wolford (2005: 244) writes is that when the land law in Brazil is institutionally weak in the sense that both claimants can justify their claim legalistically, then the moral economy, or moral justification, becomes more important.

Wolford (2005: 243) explains how she uses the term moral economy:

[...] I use the term 'moral economy' to refer to the moral arguments (ideal models or ideology) used by a particular group of people to define the optimal organization of society, including most importantly an outline of how society's productive resources (in this case, land) ought to be divided."

I will in my thesis adhere to her definition, and will interpret the arguments of both the Guarani-Kaiowá and the farmers using this concept. In the next section violence will be addressed, and how to think about this phenomenon.

3.2 Violence and concepts regarding violence

As we saw in the introduction chapter, 444 indigenous people have been murdered in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in the period from 2003 to 2016. In 2016 there were 18 victims of aggravated assault in MS (Cimi 2017: 77). These numbers could be located in the background chapter, as they are without doubt facts. However since we need to access other sources in order to interpret and contextualize these numbers it seemed more appropriate to include a discussion of the murder rate in this section.

The statistics say that 444 indigenous have been murdered. But who killed them? In regards to the statistics Cimi (Ibid) writes that the facts do not permit a more profound analysis as there are too many details left out. By reading a description of 15 of the cases from 2016 it is however possible to discern something: six of the victims were probably killed by family member, one was killed in confrontation with farmers and in the other cases the suspect is less clear (Ibid). There is however often alcohol and robbery involved. The question remains though, and that is who killed them? And why

does it matter? We shall see in the analytical chapter that it is indeed quite important for those involved, and consequently explore the idea of violence.

Johan Galtung has written extensively on the theme of peace, and in doing so he has suggested a classification of different types of violence. I will rely heavily on his article *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research* (1969) in this section.

Galtung (1969: 167-168) begins by stating that peace is absence of violence. This definition necessitates a study of violence, and different forms of it. Galtung (Ibid: 168) writes that “violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.”

Such a definition is obviously more encompassing than the act of person A being violent towards person B. It includes highly unacceptable social orders as incompatible with peace. An example of this would be the difference of dying of tuberculosis in the 18th century compared with today, and that since we today have medications and know-how to prevent such an outcome it could be interpreted as a violent act in our world. This is similar to the difference between direct and indirect violence, which corresponds to the act of killing versus withholding resources that could treat the disease.

Galtung (Ibid: 169) distinguishes between various types of physical violence: actions that do bodily somatic harm and “physical violence as such” which includes constraint on human movement, typically exemplified with prison. It does however also include cases where access to public transportation is unevenly distributed, keeping a large segment of the population in one place.

Galtung (Ibid: 169-170) also separates between physical and psychological violence, where the latter works on the brain. It includes lies, brainwash, indoctrinations and treats. Treats also affect the physical in that it often limits areas where people and groups of people feel that they can safely stay, in addition to the fact that psychological wellbeing correlates with somatic wellbeing.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Galtung’s (Ibid: 170-171) understanding of violence is that he distinguishes between whether or not the perpetrator of the violent act is a person. If the violent act cannot be traced back to an individual then it is built into the structure. So if someone is starving while this could be avoidable then this is

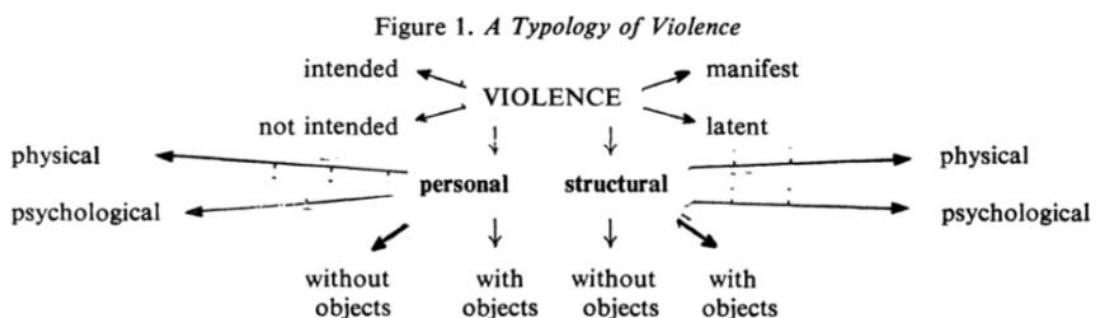
indeed an act of violence. As such there is an element of Marxist criticism of capitalism embedded in Galtung's concept of structural violence.

Galtung (Ibid) also discusses the distinction between intended and unintended violence. This distinction overlaps with personal versus structural violence, but it is important to highlight because in order to decide guilt it is common in Judaeo-Christian ethics to address the presence of intent. When there is no obvious person to blame a traditional way of holding someone responsible become challenging. This still remains an important point, because if one is concerned with peace then addressing the presence of violence is necessary.

There is also a distinction between manifest and latent violence, where the former is observable and the latter is "[...] when the situation is so unstable that the actual realization level 'easily' decreases." (Galtung 1969: 172) What this means is that there is latent violence when, in a more colloquial expression, violence is in the air: Small situation can be capable of triggering considerable violent responses, and Galtung observes that this is often the case in connection with racial fights. What this concept is meant to do is to draw attention to the situation of living in an unstable equilibrium that is every minute prone to explode.

In the figure below the various forms of violence are organized in relations to each other:

Figure one 1: *A Typology of Violence* (Ibid: 173).



Galtung (Ibid: 172-178) discusses the tradition of thinking about violence as only a personal act, and he states that he understands this logic: After all the personal violence is observable, both by others but in particular by the victim. Furthermore, the underlying premise is that personal violence in a static society shows, while structural violence in its very nature can be seen as natural: “In a static society, personal violence will be registered, whereas structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the air around us.” (Ibid: 173).

He does assert however the necessity of being concerned with both and he writes that if we are concerned with the objective consequences, then it is essential that we understand all the types of suffering caused by violence, whether it is the one or the other. Galtung (Ibid: 184) makes it clear that he does not argue that one type should be prioritized in science or be considered as more important than the other, and he argues for the inclusion of both:

We may summarize by saying that too much research emphasis on one aspect of peace tends to rationalize extremism to the right or extremism to the left, depending on whether onesided emphasis is put on 'absence of personal violence' or on 'social justice'.

As Galtung writes the very factual concept of violence is deeply embedded in ideology. We shall see in the analytical chapter that the different views of who is committing and suffering violent act is closely related to the tendencies of emphasizing one type of violence over the other. The act of personal violence seems quite clear cut and does not merit further explanation. The concept of social justice however should be addressed more thoroughly.

3.2.1 Social justice

Nancy Fraser (2010) in her paper about the social exclusion of the global poor addresses the concept of social exclusion, and she states that this concept encompasses more than just economic deprivation or cultural disrespect (Ibid: 364). Social justice will be present when there is no social exclusion, and we shall therefore detail what defines social exclusion. But first, what is justice? Fraser (Ibid: 365) writes that “justice requires social arrangements that permit all members of society to interact with one another as peers.”

There is no social justice when social exclusion is present, and social exclusion takes place on three arenas: the economic, the cultural and the political. These three arenas are separate but also intertwined, and their antitheses are redistribution, recognition and representation. One can be excluded from one arena but not another, and there is also a scale involved in the sense that some groups can be more excluded than others (Ibid).

We will in the analytical chapter analyze how the Guarani-Kaiowá informants relate their experience of exclusion and the interaction between the different arenas. By analysing how these three aspects interact we will hopefully gain a deeper understanding of the conflict taking place.

4 Methodology

The first interview that I did with the union leader of the farmers, I did together with Kristin, a journalist, researcher and activist with sympathies with the indigenous activists. When we left the union leaders' farm after conducting an interview stretching for over an hour, she made it clear that she disliked him. Among various charges levied against him, she found his racism the worst. All I remember thinking was that I had not heard the same as she had. Moses and Knutsen (2012: 169) write "naturalists understand patterns and regularities to be an essential part of nature; constructivists trace these patterns back to the mind that observes them."

This study was conducted using mainly interviews and participatory observation in order to understand the conflict between farmers and indigenous people in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. After reading about this conflict in the media and seeing how it was portrayed I was curious and wanted to go to this area in order to conduct the study. What immediately stuck me when reading about this conflict was how identity figured into the conflict, and more precise, how the different sides justified their claim to the land.

I thought from the outset that the question of identity and moral justification would be central to my research topic, and that I therefore should adopt a constructivist method using qualitative tools. With the help of Kant we can get to the essence of constructivism, which relates to the patterns of the Real World that we claim to observe. What Kant concluded however, was that rather than describing the Real World, the *noumena*, we can only grasp the *phenoumena*; how the human mind attempts to map what it observes (Moses and Knutsen 2012: 176). Or as Moses and Knutsen (*ibid*) write: "[...] the only thing we can really observe are our perceptions of the world: how the world appear to us."

With a background in political science at a department with a focus on quantitative research, I was not initially very familiar with qualitative research. I was however well familiar with the debate between these two traditions, and I often recall what my history professor said when he described the political scientist as having his feet in the oven and his head in the freezer, claiming to have a perfect body temperature of 37 degrees.

Without taking part in this polemic, and heeding the words of Moses and Knutsen (2012: 17) encouraging methodological pluralism, it was quite easy to recognize that for my project I would need to use the tools of qualitative research: After all I wanted to know how my informants described the world; their phenomena.

In an interview I made with one of the farmers I initially met quite a lot of resistance, and he made it clear that if I were some NGO-activist then he would just leave immediately. I think various factors made it possible for me to win his and the other farmers trust, but what I said explicitly was that I would attempt my best at explaining and detail how this conflict appeared from their point of view, and if they, after reading the final paper, would shake their head and say “he understood nothing”, then I had failed.

As such my attempt with this thesis is to show how the world and this particular conflict appear to the farmers, and how it appears to the indigenous. Conversely, I will not attempt to make one unified portrayal of the conflict; a concluding presentation of how the conflict *really* is to be understood. Brockinton and Sullivan (2003: 72) explain this position well when they argue “that qualitative research is essential if we are to understand what makes our world meaningful for people.”

4.1 Qualitative approach

As established in the previous paragraphs the data for this thesis was collected with qualitative tools, founded in constructivist ontology. Qualitative research is characterized by attempting to understand the world through interaction with those people constituting the world. Second, one should collect the data in its natural settings. Third, it generates theory rather than testing it (Brockinton and Sullivan 2003: 57).

My main concern, and a common objection, towards the use of qualitative method is that it is anecdotal in nature. And in a certain way it is correct: it will never reach the number of participants that a questionnaire would. But why, and when, should we use qualitative method? We should use them when, as Brockinton and Sullivan (2003: 59) write “[...] when our questions require them.” As established in the previous paragraphs, the research question of this thesis demands a qualitative approach: I wanted a detail-rich and “thick” description of how this conflict is experienced. Having

said that I have tried to be conscious of representativeness, and questioned whether what my informants tell me is relevant to how everyone else of that particular background understand the issue at hand. This leads us to the question of reliability and validity.

4.2 Reliability

Bryman (2008: 31) writes that “Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable.” A classic example is a tool designed at measuring intelligence, or IQ. For the tool to be reliable you should expect a given person to perform quite similar in two different tests. As such the concept is closely related to replication, or the ability to perform the study again with similar results.

In qualitative research a concept such as reliability is naturally less obtainable, for various reasons. As shown with the example I described in the introduction, Kristin and I had somewhat different experiences from the interview with the union leader. And this was not even two different interviews, but the exact same. How then can a qualitative study live up to the requirements of reliability? Bryman (2008: 32) writes “if a researcher does not spell out his or her procedures in great detail, replication is impossible.”

Key words in that sentence are to spell out procedures, or in simpler words, playing with open cards. In addition to detailing what happened, what questions were asked, how much time spent with the informants and other information, it is essential to explain where you come from, both in a geographical sense but also more abstract. I would never be able to replicate the findings of Kristin simply because I am not her. But I can gain an understanding of her findings by knowing something about her background, and in an extension, her way of “mapping” or creating a phenomena of the world. This will shortly follow.

4.3 Validity

Validity is a concept with various sub-categories. One of these, measurement validity, is mainly related to quantitative studies. It relates to whether a measure actually reflects the concept it is supposed to measure (Bryman 2008: 32). In a qualitative context, it

could be related to language and common understanding: Was my Portuguese sufficiently good enough for me to understand what my informants told me? The question of language and communication will be addressed in a separate section as this merits extra attention.

Internal validity refers to causality, that is, whether we really know that X caused Y to happen (Bryman 2008: 32). This study was not mainly concerned with mapping the Real World and presenting a final answer to how it *is*, but rather how people *express* a causal relationship. As such this aspect is of less importance. We will only concern ourselves with how people understand the relationship between factors.

External validity is concerned with whether the findings in a study can be generalized beyond the specific context (Bryman 2008: 33). As this was a qualitative small-N study, its generalizable potential is less than a large-N study. I was however conscious about this aspect and I would often ask my informants whether he or she considered their answer representable for the population as a whole. Obviously this cannot substitute a large sample of respondents, but at least this was an issue that I discussed frequently, and will address in the analytical part of this thesis. But as Bryman (2008: 55) writes: “It is important to appreciate that case study researchers do not delude themselves that it is possible to identify typical cases that can be used to represent a certain class of objects, whether it is factories, mass media reporting police services, or communities.” I would do well to heed this warning, and whether the findings are generalizable would be up to people living in the in the region to decide.

4.4 Fieldwork

I spent October 2016 in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, with the city of Dourados as the place I spent most time. My wife and her family live in the city of Campinas, in Sao Paulo, where I stayed both before and after going to Mato Grosso do Sul. I stayed about four months in Brazil in total.

It was my intention from the beginning to study the conflict related to the retomada movement, but I initially encountered difficulties. I sent e-mails to various organizations

and people, and I met with *Instituto Socioambiental* (ISA).¹³ After meeting with the latter I got the impression that they recommended me to go to another place, as they (rightfully so) stressed how complicated and violent the conflict was.

As luck would have it however my supervisor put me in contact with Kristin, mentioned in the introduction in this chapter. She had through her job already been in MS and had established a contact network there. She was going back there in to do a job, and she offered me to go with her. She constituted my gateway into this area and the people living there.

When Kristin left MS I continued to stay with Denise, Kristin's friend, and attended a university seminar about indigenous culture. At that seminar I met Samuel again, whom Kristin had introduced me to, and when I asked whether I could come and stay with him for some days at the *retomada*, he answered positively.

I spent five days living with him and his group at a *retomada*. In order to access the area where they lived we had to drive for a little more than an hour from Dourados, with roads of varying quality.

After my stay with Samuel I went back to Dourados. I did some interviews with other indigenous activists, such as Antônio, before I decided that I needed the reminding ten days with the farmers. I therefore moved from Denise's house and into a hotel, where I established contact with Jorge, an employee in a firm where my father-in-law is a stock holder.

Jorge's job was to sell the agronomy products of the company, and as a consequence he drove around to the farms in the region talking to potential clients. I was allowed to go along provided that we said I was an employee in the same firm, visiting from Sao Paulo, as Jorge made it clear that it would not be good for his business if he was seen bringing along an indian-NGO activist. This provided a lot of insight, although I did not do any interviews. What I did was to memorize as much as I could from the discussions with the farmers, and then when we got into the car I would write it down. Or I would ask Jorge to repeat what we had just discussed, and tape what he said.

¹³ From their home page (ISA 2017b): "ISA is a non-profit non-governmental organization founded in 1994, which focuses on social and environmental questions."

Lastly I went back to the farmers union and did some more interviews. Sabrina, a representative of the union, took me around so I could see some of their work and meet people. I met some indigenous that cooperated with the union, and visited a health clinic. In total I gathered about 30 interviews with give or take 35 people. The interviews were from anywhere between 2 minutes to over two hours. In total I have 268 pages of Times New Roman, 12, one and a half spacing, transcripts of interviews. In addition to this I have my field notes and notes taken during some of the interviews.

Did I reach a saturation point in regards to information? No. I started to hear some answers being repeated, but I would without a doubt have had more to learn had I stayed longer. Especially considering that “land conflict” is such a vast theme, and having an inductive approach, little over a month is far from being enough.

I had two reasons for ending the gathering of information at this point. First of all, I was technically staying illegal in Brazil from about the 20 of October. To prolong visa in Brazil beyond the three months granted on arrival is normally not an issue. I was however denied this when I approached the police station in Dourados. I can only speculate as to why they would say no, but instead of arguing with the police I just left and hoped not be controlled for the remainder of my stay (when back in Campinas I went to the police and payed a fine before leaving for Norway). As Dourados and the surrounding area is a frontier area, there was a strong presence of police and military forces, with check points along the roads. I was extremely nervous a couple of times driving past these check points after my visa had expired, but luckily was not stopped.

My second reason for stopping at this point was for the simple fact that I had already, as mentioned above, gathered quite a lot of data. All these interviews had to be transcribed and processed, and considering the scope of a master thesis I reckoned I already had enough for me to handle.

4.5 Snowball sampling

As I mentioned in the preceding part in this chapter getting access to this area and people was not easy. I needed some sort of contact person, a way in, and for me it was in the first instance Kristin. Bryman (2008: 184) writes about the snowball sample that “With this approach to sampling, the researcher makes initial contact with a small group

of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others.” My other two “snowballs” would be Samuel, and Sabrina. Both of them put me in contact with various other people.

Bryman (2008: 185) writes that “The problem with snowball sampling is that it is very unlikely that the sample will be representative of the population...” We addressed this question in the section regarding reliability, but then with a focus on the limited scope of a qualitative study. I remember thinking when Sabrina brought me around to do some interviews with indigenous people she knew, that I did not want to talk to these Uncle Toms.¹⁴ This obviously revealed quite a lot of prejudices from my side, among many aspect that I only wanted to talk to the “rebel indian.” It also made me aware of the fact that the snowball from a certain person will only roll in a specific direction. Looking back on it I am grateful for the possibility this gave me, as I had the chance to speak to both those indigenous people fighting the system, and those adapting to it.

4.6 Interviews

Weiss (1994: 61) writes “Your first concern should be to establish a good interviewing partnership.” I would generally talk quite a lot with potential interviewees before asking if I could make a recorded interview. I would generally express sympathy with the one I talked to, and most times this was genuinely felt.

Before starting the recorder I would tell the potential informant about my research project and ask whether they wanted to participate. I also told them that I would anonymize them, even though a majority expressed interest in not being anonymized. I did not receive negative answers towards participating in the study. I did however refrain from asking certain individuals, and I will go into the specifics of data gathering without consent in a later section.

I tried my best at making the conversation flow, and as Weiss (1994: 80-81) writes about, managing transitions. Weiss (1994: 81) writes “It is good practice to try to follow the respondent’s associations so long as they remain within the interview’s frame.”

¹⁴ Merriam-Webster defines Uncle Tom as (i) a black who is overeager to win the approval of whites (as by obsequious behavior or uncritical acceptance of white values and goals) and (ii) a member of a low-status group who is overly subservient to or cooperative with authority.

Weiss also talks about the process of flustering someone, and I see from my transcripts that I spent a lot of time phrasing the question whenever I wanted to change subject in order to give the interviewee time to start thinking.

Another issue I was not much prepared about beforehand, but that I found of importance, related to the interviewer's responsibilities. Weiss (1994: 127) writes "While interviews are extremely unlikely to introduce pain or trouble in respondent's lives, they may well elicit in respondents an awareness of pain they had pushed out of their consciousness." Many of my informants had suffered quite devastating losses, both of life, health and land, and they naturally found it emotional to talk about. Weiss (Ibid: 128) generally advocates for the interviewer to be sensitive, yet remain as neutral as possible: "The interviewer has been granted no right to attempt to modify the respondent's feeling." Looking back retrospectively, I see from my transcripts that I have tended to do some of the things Weiss warns about when he urges the interviewer to avoid being an appraising audience.

In general I left with a feeling that the respondent felt good about having participated in the interview, and that their voice had been heard. In this conflict many of the participants felt that their side of the argument was seldom heard, and as such it was good to express their feelings to an attentive audience.

4.7 Participant observation

The very first word that I wrote in my field diary from the time that I stayed at the retomada with Samuel was thirst. I then go on to write about how much more I drink compare to the others, and I still feel thirsty all the time. The second item I address are how many insects there are, and that everything is covered in dust: I can without reading my field notes see which pages belong to the days I stayed at the retomada, because all these pages are colored reddish by dirt and dust.

Brockinton and Sullivan (2003: 59) write about participant observation that "By living closely with the people you are studying it is possible to empathize with their way of looking at and interpreting their world." By observing and taking notes, recording and making interviews, taking photos and filming I tried my best at observing as much as possible. I listened to their conversations and arguments and drove around and ate with

them; in general taking part as much as possible in their everyday life. The key word however, is participant: My main take away from the time spent with Samuel, his family and friend, is that they live a hard life, at least compared to my standards of living.

Syse (2001: 229) calls participant observation a “sympathetic art” in that you are not only listening to and seeing what the informant experiences, but also try to feel how it is to walk in his shoes. Syse also discusses whether it is possible to retain an analytical distance from the informant, and she concludes that most probably this is quite challenging. She does however add that with some distance in time and geography it may be possible to become somewhat more distant. We shall return to this aspect in the section regarding ethical considerations. What Syse (2001: 229) stress is that “One of the most important ethical considerations of all is to give your informants dignity.” This is something you as a researcher own your informants considering that they have given you the favor of participating in their life.

4.8 Role as researcher

In line with the introduction to this chapter where we established the founding principles of constructivism, we find the words of Geertz (1973: 9) when he writes that “[...] what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to”. So what then is my construction founded on?

I have lived on and off Brazil for about two years so I am quite familiar with the language, culture and customs. I am however an outsider in that country both as understood by myself but also how Brazilians see me. There is however degrees of outsidersness and I recognized more of the life the farmers live than that of the indigenous. The first time I met and talked with someone who was Guarani-Kaiowá they jokingly gave me nicknames such as thunder and lightning. I suspected why they would give me such names, and when I asked some of the others in my group why I got those nicknames they said it was because I looked like the quintessential white man who would come and take their land and homes.

Among the farmers however, due to the large amount of German descendants living in MS, I could largely go unnoticed when I was with them. My uncle here in Norway, for whom I have worked, is a farmer, and my Brazilian father-in-law is an agronomist. The life I live when I am in Brazil is that of the farmers, and my references when it comes to music and food is more similar to theirs than that of the indigenous.

I have the impression that when it came to feeling empathy with my informants I felt the same and just as strongly for both groups. Naturally, I would in some instances think a certain action strange or not what I think I would have done, but in general I have as far as possible tried to sympathize and understand where my informants came from. I have found myself agreeing a hundred percent with different informants, and seen during the process of writing the thesis that the different positions are incompatible. So I have to a certain extent had to embrace a cognitive dissonance. In the end my view of the conflict is irrelevant.

I have strived towards portraying the conflict as experienced by my informants as accurately as possible. I am however not free from my own background, and this naturally affects how I have perceived the conflict: Am I a white man from Europe with farmer ties naturally inclined to support the farmers? Or am I an activist researcher from a left-leaning university naturally inclined to support the subaltern? I hope I have evaded those positions but the case could probably be made for both.

4.9 Limitations

I have briefly touched upon the question of time at disposal to this master thesis, but it bears to be repeated: A little over a month is not enough to grasp every aspect of the conflict in Mato Grosso do Sul. I have however chosen to focus on a limited part of the conflict, in order to gain a better understanding of a part of the issue at hand.

The other limiting factor relates to language. It is never easy to estimate what level of language proficiency a person is at, as it is among many things context-dependent. What I can say however is that I have spoken Portuguese nearly every day since 2012, whether living in Brazil, Portugal or Norway. The latter is largely thanks to my Brazilian girlfriend, now wife. This does not mean that language has not been a factor. I for instance tried to transcribe my interviews, but found it immensely challenging, and

as a consequence my wife did all the transcribing work. Going through the transcribed records I discovered information that I had never understood during the interviews.¹⁵

In total however I feel that my Portuguese was good enough to make the transfer of information flow. There were a few instances where I interviewed Guarani-Kaiowá that did not speak Portuguese, or opted to speak Guarani, and where some of my other informants would translate what they said into Portuguese. My informants also have Guarani names for the different retomadas and certain other phenomena, which could be difficult to understand both while interviewing but also transcribing (as my wife is a stranger to Guarani). The use of other informants as translators is hardly ideal, but considering that it only applied to a small part of my material I have chosen not to emphasize this to any extent. I will in those instances where I use material translated by a third party make the reader aware of this.

4.9.1 Translation

My main challenge has been translating from Portuguese to English during the writing of the thesis. I am not native to either language nor do I have training in translating. I have drifted between reproducing the wording and the meaning, and when doing the former I have felt the need to insert my own comment in order to clarify what my informant tries to express. By doing this I am literally interpreting and not rendering, and as such might go outside of my jurisdiction.

To show with an example: In one interview my interview subject tells me that he brought a man accused of murder from the reserve to the highway, and he said in Portuguese: “*ai eu trouxe ele até a BR*” which means “and then I took him to the BR.” There is quite a lot of information hidden in this sentence that might not be apparent if you do not know the context: BR means Brazilian Highway and these road networks are a federal response.

So when he says he brought the man to the BR he without saying so explains that he took the man to the nearest place outside of the reserve. Knowing the rest of the context

¹⁵ For instance I would often hear my indigenous informants talk about a government order or instruction called Marco Temporal, which would change the reference date that the indigenous had to occupy an area in order for it to be considered their native land, to the date of the Brazilian constitution in 1988. Government order is called *portaria* in Portuguese. I however always thought they said *porcaria*, with translates filth or shit.

and how the police are very reserved about going into the indigenous reservations it is implied in the sentence that my informant and the accused man was met by the police at the BR, who then took the man into custody. If I had not added a comment behind my informant's sentence it would come off as "I brought the man to the highway and left him there".

The alternative has been to try to translate meaning rather than wording, and in some cases I have considered it within the limits of translation to do so. I have also had to change the syntax of some of the phrases to make them more readable, by moving the dependent clause back or forth depending on the context.

I have however tried to translate as direct as possible in spite of how the text comes off as less readable and disjointed. By putting my interpretation/clarification between parentheses I have also shown the reader that the sentence could perhaps be understood differently than what I have indicated.

Indio and indigenous

The Norwegian dictionary Store Norske Leksikon (SNL) has just recently removed the word "indianer" as this is a "common but incorrect concept for the indigenous population in the Americas" (NRK 2017). I asked Samuel what he thought about the word and he answered that he preferred to be called Guarani-Kaiowá, as this is what he is. I did however not get the impression that whether people said "indigenas" or "indio" mattered a lot, and my general impression was that among both the farmers and the indigenous the word indio was a rather neutral expression. I mention this because I do not want the reader to assume that when an informant uses the word indio he is necessarily expressing racism. It could obviously still be racist without the person saying the word having this as an intention, but the point to be made is that indio should not necessarily be understood as a derogatory term. I have in any case translated directly so it is up to the reader to assess the context and how it is used. I have myself consequently used the word indigenous as this is the most accepted and least contested term.

4.10 Ethical considerations

I have mentioned Syse's encouragement of maintaining your informants' dignity, and the challenges this poses. Sometime the informants say and do things that put them in a bad light, but their actions are nevertheless quite revealing. The informants are anonymized, but some might dislike how they are portrayed in certain instances. And even if they themselves do not recognize how their actions appear, the responsibility to protect your informants' dignity still apply. I have opted not to link certain actions or comment to any person in particular when these acts are considered to be improper.

All those that participated in the study were informed about it and that I came from a Norwegian university. In general people were excited about the international perspective and that their conflict and struggle would be "known to the world." This attitude was particularly present among the indigenous, as some of them felt that they were invisible. The feeling of invisibility was quite present when some of my informants asked to be named. Knowing the nature of the conflict however, I have chosen to anonymize the participants.

There were some instances where I accompanied Jorge without revealing what I was doing. In these instances I could obviously not seek any form of consent, and as Jorge pointed out, I would get none. I did however not record anything without consent, and what I recorded was my own and Jorge's rendering of what had just been discussed and talked about. This is obviously not an ideal approach but I have decided to include some of the observation, and justify it since there is no possibility of connecting what was being said to any person.

There is a climactic scene in the movie «Terra Vermelha» when one of the farmers confronts the indigenous group standing on his territory. He screams at them that this land has been in his family for three generations. The leader of the indigenous group looks at him silently, and fills his hands with soil and put it into his own mouth.

5 Analysis – Guarani-Kaiowá

The research question of this thesis ask what factors affect how the actions of the farmers and indigenous to gain control over land are perceived. The indigenous naturally see their actions of reclaiming, *retomando*, land, as legitimate and justified. In this chapter we will explore how the Guarani-Kaiowá understands the retomada.

The four objectives of the study will constitute the four main sections of this chapter: We will begin with addressing how the indigenous are perceived and how they want to be perceived. Within this section the issue of racism will be important in order to explain the representation that the indigenous find unjust. The second section will try to gain an understanding of the violence the indigenous suffer. We will both address the violence on the reservations, but also on the retomada and in society.

It might seem counter-intuitive not to begin with the issue at hand, which is the retomada. The argument for doing it this way is that the racism and violence constitutes the backdrop against which the retomadas must be understood; the push-factor. By addressing these issues the retomada phenomenon can be understood as a vindication against an unjust system.

The third section will address the question of why they are reclaiming land and how they justify their actions. We will in this section touch upon the pull-factor; that which makes the retomada an attractive alternative. In the fourth section we shall explicitly address the moral economy behind the Guarani-Kaiowá way of thinking. We shall elaborate on the alternative way of life that the Guarani-Kaiowá's are able to find on the retomada and how they envision a solution to the conflict.

5.1 How they are perceived and the racism they experience

- *Even if we try not to be indigenous we will always be indigenous, and even if we are well educated we will never be like the non-indigenous. Thus we can be doctors or lawyers, but even so we will always be índios.*

Samuel

Samuel, whom I mentioned in the method chapter, was my key informant among the indigenous people. He was in his mid to late 20s and a student at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD) and was a leader figure in the indigenous movement. I never saw him addressed formally as the leader at the retomada, but he was treated and acted as the one in charge.

As a university student, Samuel had a foot both in the academic arena but also in the struggle for land. The quote in the beginning of this chapter came in regards to the importance of knowing their own culture and traditions. The feeling of not being accepted in society, and feeling excluded was prevalent among the indigenous that I interviewed. Samuel talked about the importance of his son knowing about their culture, language and customs, since they will always be reminded that they are outsiders, *indios*.

Samuel also expressed some concern over the fact that his son had started to feel ashamed about performing the traditional dance of the Guarani-Kaiowá, and for Samuel it was important to reinstall a feeling of pride in his son. I understood Samuel as saying that since the non-indigenous will not let you forget what you “really are” you should know yourself what you are; your culture, and embrace it. Samuel also expressed the more everyday feeling that when they went into town the farmers and the people there gave them looks that make them not feel welcome.

The same story was told by a white Brazilian Funai employee that I interviewed, and when he spoke of the racism the indigenous suffered he said:

It is possible to detect that when people see indigenous people walk by they are turning the other way. This behavior is often very subtle, but it is possible to perceive.

Later during my fieldwork, after I had left the retomada, I interviewed a pastor of the evangelical church and who was of Terena indigeneity that lived at a reservation close to Dourados. The Terenas belong to another indigenous branch than the Guarani-Kaiowá, and their language is a sub-group of the Arauak language family (Povos Indigenas no Brasil 2017b). The pastor, who was in his 40s, had worked together with the chief of the indigenous community on the reservation for seven years. He was also a representative for all the different church communities on the reservation, 28 in total.

Pastor Francisco was of another ethnicity than the Guarani-Kaiowá, but with his central position within the indigenous community he was a knowledgeable informant.

Pastor Francisco, like Samuel, also told about the racism that they experienced every day. In this regards he told about one morning that he found his youngest son crying

I asked him what was going on and he said “dad, at school no one wants to play with me because I am indio. They call me bugre.¹⁶ When I walk up to them they run away and scream at me not to come close because I am a Bugre; an indio.”

I have to be psychologically well prepared in order to support and help my son so he is able to break these barriers, because if I take him out of that particular school (and enlist him into a school with mainly other indigenous children, my comment), he will still grow up and go to college, and he will face the exact same discrimination there. So we are really suffering under all this discrimination, incredible as it may be.

Rayane, a mid-20s teacher with an Argentinian father and Kaiowá mother, went with me when I went to visit Antônio, to whom we shall return later. In relation to the question of racism and to feel like an indio she told me that it had been hard for her growing up and that she had experienced quite a lot of bullying for her indigenous background. She told me that her sister, who looked more like their Argentinian father, had escaped this treatment. Rayane also talked about the challenges of belonging to two cultures but maybe feeling it difficult to really be 100% part of one place.

These examples, by turning to Galtung’s typology of violence, are personal, psychological and intended in nature. By why consult Galtung? Should it not suffice to call it bullying, and leave it at that? If there was nothing more to the story than these isolated cases then it might be reasonable. We will however address the underlying structure facilitating these attitudes, and as such this type of behavior must be seen in relation to how society is organized. This will be the focus of the next part. Another issue that I encountered, and which we shall address before proceeding to the next section, related to the prejudice felt by the indigenous as to whether they were able to act on independent agency or rather that they were manipulated minions of the NGOs.

¹⁶ Technically a word for non-Christian indigenous people but also a word used in a pejorative way about indigenous people.

By addressing this issue before we have had the chance to delve into the retomada we might be anticipating the events. It is however a short detour, and since this issue will be addressed from the point of view of the farmers it does merit some attention. So when I asked the representative from Funai about the allegations that I had heard, which states that Funai, Cimi and other NGOs are manipulating the indigenous to act and retomar, he had this to say:

Once again I have to return to the issue of the conservative wave that is upon us, with its attempt at criminalizing the institutions. This is an interesting phenomenon because I as a non-indigenous will go to my house, decide whether to get married or not, whether to buy a car, move to another neighborhood; I can do all these things and no one will say “Look, you were influenced to do this by this person or that institution.”

No one will say that about me, and they only say it about the indigenous. And why should I believe that the indigenous are incapable of making their own independent decisions? These people saying that Funai or Cimi make the indigenous invade land are simply treating the indio as an individual incapable of independent thinking.

And at the same time these people, when it is election time, go to the reservations and villages in order to ask for votes. Now this decision the indigenous person is capable of making for himself!

According to the Funai employee the idea that the indigenous are not acting on independent agency constitute a form of prejudice. This he contrasted with a comparison to how the non-indigenous is not faced with these allegations. But what are the consequences of the prejudice and racism we have outlined in this section? In order to answer this question we must transit into the second objective of this thesis, which ask how the violence is experienced by each side, and in this chapter, the indigenous.

5.2 Violence and social exclusion as a consequence of racism

In an interview with Celso, a professor at UFGD, I asked him about the view that I had frequently encountered that said that the indigenous people were hypocritical for demanding land based on their native background while they at the same time using material goods produced by the industrial society. This was an example of what the indigenous referred to as racism and that I heard various indigenous informants having

experienced. This idea stated that by using modern articles such as phones and cameras the indigenous were less indigenous. This my indigenous informants contrasted with the fact that the white man could eat a papaya, an indian fruit, and still be a white man.

In a way the indigenous people found themselves trapped: By using and being integrated into the modern society they lost the right to reclaim land as indigenous people. At the same time, as we shall see, society never let them forget that they are indeed índios. If they claim land based on their indigenous and native identity they must refrain from all modern equipment, an impossible demand, while if they try to integrate into the white man's world they will always be looked down upon because of their appearance. What I understood my informants to say was that while the identity for being a white Brazilian could be flexible, changing and evolving, they as indigenous were trapped by the Brazilian society in a static and almost pre-modern definition of what it meant to be indigenous.

Celso argued that there was a relationship between the attitude painting the indigenous as hypocrites, and the high death rate among indigenous people walking along the highways and the frequent cases of the rape of indigenous women walking these stretches. Celso argued that these cases, in general understood as road accidents, were a form of racist violence, and that this originates in how the Brazilian society deals with differences. Celso explained that:

For example, it is not necessary the differences that are most important, but rather the access to material goods. If, for example, you choose to live in a certain way you have a right to do so as long as you do not require anything material. And this attitude ignores that in order to live a certain way according to your culture then it is necessary that there are certain material goods available. Racism and prejudice are symbolic racism that materializes itself in physical violence.

So if for instance an indigenous woman is walking along the highway, it is as if she does not have ownership over her own body. So why are there cases where indigenous women are raped along the highway? Because she is an indian! (In this and the next example Celso is exposing the underlying attitude of some people, my comment). Or for example, if someone is drunk and walking along the highway and gets run over by a car, it does not matter if it was an indio. Or put differently, the numbers of indigenous people hit by cars indicates according to my analysis a hidden form of murder. In other words, he can be run over by car; he deserves to be run

over by a car since he was drunk. The indian is drunk and he does not deserve to live.

And if, let say, the drunk person walking along the road was a white person? Then the driver should be more careful when driving. The indio continues to be a subcategory of a living being, and by the very fact that he wants to live in another way makes it so that he should not have access to material goods, no access to water, not even his own body and life.

What I am trying to say is that the symbolic violence is translated into physical violence, because the rate of violence committed against indigenous people is much higher than that against the non-indigenous population. It is a simple mathematical question that should be taken into consideration and that simply cannot be ignored. The indios are victims of systematic violence that carries the characteristics of genocide, or put differently, he suffers this violence for the simple fact that he was born an indio, and he tries to live like an indio.

What Celso is saying is that the overwhelming numbers of indigenous people who are run over by cars, raped and suffer the violence on the reservations is of a magnitude that to a certain extent is intended: It is intended if it could be prevented. To support this argument Celso makes the point that if this were to happen with a white person or if the level of violence that is affecting the indigenous population would affect white people, something would be done. By going back to Galtung and his argument that to die of something that could be remedied, which represents the withholding of resources, we can observe that structural violence is taking place. This specific example of structural violence is according to Celso founded on racism deeply embedded in Brazilian culture and society.

This idea that the structure was the cause of violence was confirmed by one of my informants at the retomada. Robson, a friend of Samuel and a man in his 40s, was someone I spent a lot of time with while I stayed at the retomada. He had before he moved into the retomada lived at the reservation close by. He told about how it was to live there:

While we wait we are living in a confined space; we are crowded together without freedom and our people the Guarani-Kaiowá, wanting our freedom, peace, we are pushed together in a small area like an ox. And like the ox that becomes angry when it is confined, things are bound to happen. This is why there is so much death, killings and suicides in the village.

Robson seems to point to the structure when he argues that they like the ox in a small and confined space, becomes angry and as such has a higher propensity to violence. So while the violence is personal in nature and affects individuals living at the reservations, the structure is the backdrop against which the violence takes place. Melia (2008: 19) argues in the same vein when he addresses the high rates of violence among the Guarani-Kaiowá, and he writes that

[...] the main motive is the situation of confinement and lack of land where they can live in peace.

Going back to Celso and how the racism and prejudice would materialize itself in physical violence, we can also address the lesser consequences of having a stereotypical view of the indigenous people. Celso talked about how the Brazilian society holds stereotypical views of indigenous as lazy and a hindrance to business. This negative view of the indigenous is reinforced by the Brazilian media, and Celso stated that you for instance would never hear a favorable view of the demarcation of land on the radio.¹⁷ The inability to get a job, except as a garbage collector, was also pointed out by the Funai representative. When I asked him about the consequences of the racism he referred to how as an indigenous it was difficult to get a job:

We observe that in the shops in Dourados you will basically not see indigenous employees. At the universities, except for at the indigenous faculty, you don't see many indigenous studying law, administration, medicine; the high-status educations.

This latter example of discrimination leads to a lack of indigenous people in various jobs. This represents a form of social exclusion and in this case first and foremost in the economic area. By not getting a job the poverty trap becomes difficult to evade.

We shall in the next section return to the issue of structural violence as “violence if it could be prevented.” In this case: the lack of government presence in the indigenous communities. Many of my informants, both among the farmers and the indigenous, complained about the high crime rates on the reservations, and as we remember from the introduction the murder rate among the indigenous is very high. This we shall address in the next section.

¹⁷ In a rural area such as MS, where a lot of people work in the fields or behind a steering wheel, the radio can be just as much of a mass media as the TV or the newspapers.

5.2.1 Lack of government presence

Pastor Francisco, whom I mentioned in an earlier section, talked extensively about the question of security. He began by saying that with 18 000 indigenous people living within an area of 9000 hectares conflicts were bound to happen. It did not help that those living at the reserve belonged to different ethnicities, which further provoked conflict. Pastor Francisco talked of the high level of suffering he encountered, of murders, drug- and alcohol abuse, child prostitution and suicides. The lack of government presence exacerbated these problems.

Francisco told me how government institutions such as the police, ambulance and firefighters would not attend when they called for assistance. In one instance of domestic violence Francisco was on the phone with the police and he asked for assistance. The police would not respond to his plea for help and they told him:

Pastor, if you are so concerned about this woman then bring her to your house.

Francisco said that this was representative for the response they would get when they called for help. As a consequence of the absence of government authorities people like Francisco felt that they had to take on the role of police, doctors and other professions. When asked whether he and the church had come to substitute the state Francisco said:

The church has already taken over the role of the state [...] Within the reservation pastor Francisco is first and foremost pastor, but also police and firefighter: I am also the nurse because I am tired of leaving people to themselves, so I help people who are stabbed in the stomach, in the back, terrible things. I put them in my car and race to the hospital. Because the firefighters do not come, neither the ambulance; we call but they never come. It is very difficult.

Pastor Francisco told an especially heartbreaking story about the murder of a young mother. He had gone to the police, the child protection department and the municipal government to report the lack of help and protection offered to this woman and her child. This woman was beaten every night and her four year old daughter had been sexually abused by the stepfather, and an aunt of the child had taken her out of the home. The stepfather was finally apprehended by the police but was shortly released, and he continued his behavior. After Francisco again went to the child protection

department to have them make a new assessment they arrived at the home where the violence and abuse was taking place:

But then they did not find him (the stepfather, my comment) at the place, but they encountered the child and the mother. They did however not want to take the child out and bring her to a safe home, and when they (the child protection department, my comment) stopped by my home they told me that they could not take the child out of a good home. And I told them “they are my neighbors, I have followed their situation for some time; take this child away! Please come back some other time and arrest this man; he is going to kill the mother, he is going to kill the child, are you waiting for this to happen?”

She just answered me “Pastor, we cannot take the child”. Three days later the stepfather killed her; he killed the mother in front of the child. I was the first to arrive and see the body in the morning, with the guts all outside. In that moment I asked God for protection so these things will not happen to us, because we are abandoned by those that should protect us.

This feeling of being abandoned and left to fend for themselves is prevalent on the reservation. Francisco went on to tell how he, after finding the woman killed, brought with him three other people and went to arrest the killer.

I went to his house with three other indigenous and arrested the killer, and I put the blood-soaked killer in the trunk of my car and I drove to the highway (which lies outside of the reservation and where presumably the police took the man into custody, my comment). When I drove back to the body of the victim the people who had gathered there started attacking my car, and one of the aunts of the victim went straight at me.

We have to be prepared for these things to happen and we have to endure these things; you are helping but then attacked because there is an image among indigenous that they are abandoned and that there is no safety for them. When we manage to arrest these criminals it is not because the police arrive, it is because we do the work and run the risk. But I have my own family to think about as well.

In addition to the violence and the feeling of abandonment Francisco talked about the prevalence of drug abuse on the reservation. He frequently tried to help people get out of their bad habit, but he found little help from other agencies, including Funai. What he found especially hard was to see children and teenagers succumb to drugs:

It is very sad because you see your people, you see future teachers destroying themselves in prostitutions. Children as young as eight years old turn to prostitution, we work so hard and then we see these kids; if you go out at night between 20.00 to 23.00 between Wednesday and Sunday you will see young girls, 12 to 15 years old, selling themselves in order to buy drugs.

These stories that Francisco told about the life at the reservation clearly show that those living there are suffering a lot. I also observed the violence, albeit indirectly: The last day I stayed in MS before going back to Campinas I brought my wife and drove over to the reservation and retomada to return a chip with photos and say goodbye to those I had spent the time with. I also wanted to show Nicolle that it was not so dangerous to be in a place like that as the media would have you believe.

When we arrived the first person we met was Robson. He told me that two days ago his brother and his brother's son had been stabbed and killed, and he showed us photos of the dead bodies on his cell phone. The photos were horrible to look at and displayed mutilation. Robson told us that the four indigenous men who had committed the crime were well known bandits who had already committed a lot of crimes and murders; among other they had killed two taxi drivers. At the moment we talked to Robson one of the suspected killers was in custody but the others were not.

By again returning to Galtung (1969) and his typology of violence we might gain a better overview of what is taking place. The personal violence is present, and easy to observe. But what triggers all this violence?

From Galtung we remember that highly unjust social orders are incompatible with peace, and consequently, facilitate violence. With a history of being dispossessed and placed against their will in reservations, with limited access to public services in various forms, it should not be contested to claim that the structural violence have significantly affected the indigenous population living at the reservations. Various indigenous living at the reservation spoke about feeling abandoned and not safe, and this certainly enables violence. Robson in section above argued that they are confined like an ox and that violence was bound to happen.

Galtung (1969) also included constraint on human movement as a form of violence, and within this he included imprisonment but also less obvious examples such as a lack of

access to public transportation. Various informants told me regarding living on the reservation that the buss would only come very early in the morning, and return late in the evening. The buss would come and charter the workers who were going out to work in the fields, and would only return late with them. The regular bus service was small to non-existent, and the roads were horrible.

Driving to and from the retomada I had to pass through the reservation, and the roads were in a very bad state. The roads were of mud, and giant pools of water would form after rain. There were times that I was afraid that the car would get stuck, and it would take me about 45 minutes to drive from the reservation/retomada to the town. The distance was about 15 kilometers so on a paved road this would take about 12-15 minutes.

The severe lack of mobility among the indigenous in the form of a limited access to public transportation but also degraded road network clearly constitute a form of constraint on human movement, and the reservation was significantly more isolated than one would assume if one were to plot the distances into Google Maps. One could argue that the road network in general is of low quality in large part of MS, and that would be correct. By having access to four-wheel drive cars however, which was very prevalent in the cities, the lack of road quality could be offset. This was however not something most of the indigenous on the reservation could afford.

Related to the concept of structural violence is Fraser's (2010) paper about social exclusion, and in an extension, social justice. She stated that social exclusion takes place on three arenas; the economic, the cultural and the political. These areas are not mutually exclusive and they are to some extent interchangeable, and we have in the section above seen example of exclusion on all the different arenas.

In the first section we addressed how the indigenous feel that they are perceived, and how this in many aspects is rooted in prejudices. In these cases the focus has been on how the indigenous see the non-indigenous peoples' understanding of the indigenous as erroneous and wrong. We shall in the next section address a related theme, which is attempts at, in a bombastic wording, to brainwash the indigenous. Or in other words, attempts at changing the indigenous peoples perceptions of themselves. The areas of study will be the school and the church.

5.2.2 Brainwashing

In regards to her job as a teacher, Rayane described her passion for teaching as going beyond just teaching kids to read and write. She also talked about the importance of maintaining and preserving their indigenous culture. When kids start school they already come with a social, historical and linguistic understanding of the world:

When the children start at school they already carry with them a cultural, social and historical baggage. They have their language, their way of behaving, how they see the world.

The problem as Rayane saw it was that historically the school has not taken the cultural background of the indigenous children into consideration, or as mentioned in the background chapter; the school has been the arena where the assimilation policy has been conducted. In the words of Rayane:

The school has for a long time dominated and decultured the índio.

This sentiment was echoed by other indigenous people. At a seminar that I attended one of the members of a rap group told about how he did not know anything about indigenous history and culture until starting high school. This was a recurring theme at the seminar expressed by several of the Guarani-Kaiowá, and what people said was that if you wanted to conquer a people the most effective way of doing it was to conquer the children.

When I was driving around with Denise, a colleague of hers showed me around on a school at a reservation. This teacher told me that she had been to Acre in the Amazon, and she had observed schools that were identical to this one. This made her ask why they would construct identical schools, knowing that the indigenous of Amazon and those of Mato Grosso do Sul were different.

Although Brazil has signed the ILO convention 169, which states that the signatories should and must protect the distinctiveness and cultural characteristics of the indigenous population, this is according to my informants not complied with in practice. By applying Galtung's (1969) concept of psychological violence and how this can be manifested in brainwashing and indoctrination, we see that by not facilitating indigenous education the Brazilian authorities are not complying with convention 169.

One might object and say that this is not necessarily an intentional policy of the government, and knowing the general standard of public education in Brazil it might be a stretch to level such allegations. Without performing a normative judgement of the Brazilian indigenous policy we can by returning to Galtung see that it is not a requirement for a party to act on intent in order for it to constitute a form of violence. Rayane is also clear in her evaluation of the school, which she sees as an instrument of de-culturalization

Another institution that has traditionally been important in Brazil is the church. We shall in the next section address the role of the church and its position within the indigenous community.

Role of the church

Views on the church and Christendom differed quite a lot among the indigenous people with whom I spoke. From the background chapter we saw that much of the official policy of Latin American countries up until the 1930s was one of assimilating indigenous people into the modern civilization, and the church and Christianity was one of the main tools. There is probably no surprise that the role of the church is disputed.

Rayane had a critical view on the role of the church saying that

The church belongs to the non-indigenous; the church is not indigenous and the church like the school is dominating and deculturing the índio. As a consequence the índio does not want to sing or pray anymore (in the Guarani-Kaiowá-tradition, my comment).

She talked about how the church made the indigenous person start to think about their own traditions as barbaric and something of the demon. The indigenous would then start to feel ashamed of his own roots.

However Rayane recognized how the church constituted a positive factor in many indigenous people's lives, especially as a means to combat alcoholism but also in regards to drug use. One of my other informants told me he had stopped a destructive drinking pattern thanks to his church. Faith in Jesus was also of great support and something that would give people the strength to endure a hard life.

Antônio, to whom we will return to later, made many of the same critical arguments that Rayane made, but he was also critical of the commercial aspect of the church:

Today the churches in the villages have become a business. Instead of strengthening unity the churches has turned into businesses, and everyone has himself a small church.

Like Rayane he echoes the fear that the church is a part of a cultural genocide. Furthermore, he explicitly criticizes the racist aspect of the church:

So I meet these white people, or even people of indigenous background, and they do not know what constitutes a culture or a tradition. They think being white is prettier; they want to whiten the indigenous people and turn everyone white. What I think is pretty are the differences.

In Antônio's opinion the church is part of a 400 year long process of both internal but also mental colonization that attempts to make everyone Brazilian. This is indeed an historical fact for the period from 1500 up until the 1930s, as addressed in the background chapter. Antônio however seem to be of the opinion that the church never really stopped being a means of cultural extermination.

As I wrote however, the role of the church is debated within the indigenous community. Pastor Francisco naturally did not see the church as a negative force. He did however confirm some aspect of what Rayane pointed out, and that was in regards to the idea that the church is deculturing the indigenous:

In my family and in our culture we have various traditions from other sources than the Bible. After I got to know the Bible I stopped performing certain traditions of my culture, but other aspects I still keep. For instance my dance, have you seen the traditional Terena dance?

Although Francisco said that he had stopped practicing some parts of his own tradition he retained others. Francisco seems to opt for an integration of culture, and rejects both assimilation but also segregation. Thus the church of Francisco becomes something that is both indigenous and non-indigenous: Something new.

5.2.3 Summary

This section and these examples show that the historical assimilation policy of Brazil is to some extent still operational. The indigenous population suffer racism, both personal

but above all else structural. We have in the chapter addressed aspects of how it is to live as an indigenous in Brazil, and especially living on a reservation in MS. This constitutes the backdrop against how the retomada initiatives must be understood. We shall in the next section go more into detail about the retomada: Why do they reclaim, how do they argue, and how do they go about when they initiate a retomada.

5.3 Why do they reclaim and how do they justify the retomada?

Ida sem volta: But one time he left to hunt he didn't come back. He died there. He was shot and it was not possible to bring back his corpse because it was all rotten. He was killed and until this day he is still there. This happened in 1973. He never came back to his family. He always went and came, and one day he never came back.

In the quote above Samuel is talking about the father of his sister-in-law, and how this man would keep returning to the area that had been taken away from his family. This story was not unique, and I heard various stories during my fieldwork of indigenous people walking back to where they came from, long after they had been dispossessed into reservations.

From the introduction the general pattern surrounding how a retomada takes place was outlined. But how did my informants explain this process? I will in the following section break up various parts of an interview with Samuel, and address the different aspects separately.

Why do we initiate retomadas? The first thing is that the government is not demarcating the indigenous land; the government had an obligation to demarcate indigenous land within five years but the government is not complying with its duty.

The Brazilian state was supposed to demarcate all land within five years after the promulgation of the constitution in 1988. This means that all land should have been demarcated by 1993, which has not happened.

Second, it is only by demarcating land that we can guarantee our territory, in Guarani *Tekoha Guasu*, which means big territory. So this is our life, our way of living as Guarani-Kaiowá. Our way of living is in this Tekoha

Guasu, this territory, because this is where we find our culture, all that we have, all that was destroyed back in the days, our liberty, our happiness as a people, the future of our children; it is all there.

So from the historical moment the reservations were created we started having a lot of problems. Many indigenous communities were taken away, by force, to the reservations, and this brought a lot of problems upon the communities.

The Guarani-Kaiowá people never left our territory; we have always lived in these areas even after they were turned into private property. This territory is ours, even if the state sold it and turned it into private property. But as I said we never left, we continued to be around in these areas. So like Robson is saying we know our history; the collective memory of the people is passed along from generation to generation. It is our history and we know where we come from, where we belong.

In this section Samuel is making it clear that they are righting a historical wrong: The Guarani-Kaiowá never left their territory. This has a dual meaning: First, the fact that they were forcibly removed, and second, that many of the people in the community never actually left. He also point out that they know the land and that it belongs to them.

This is what we think about a retomada: The retomada represents our right to return to that which is ours. The important part is that we are reclaiming what we lost, and not only land, but also our freedom, our life, culture, medicine, and the destroyed nature. So this is what we think, and we also see ourselves not just as fighting for ourselves but also for life itself: The wellbeing of the world and the planet, not just our people but all the people that walk on the earth.

In Samuel's comment he also stresses that while being in possession of the land is important in itself, it is also essential for so many other aspects: By reclaiming the land they are also taking back control over their own future, and the freedom to live life according to their culture. This comment makes sense in light of all the tales of racism that we addressed in the previous section. Samuel also makes the argument that they are reclaiming for the wellbeing of the world and for the planet. This last argument is one that we shall leave and return to shortly.

So this is what we are doing and why, and it is not like it says in the local newspaper, that we are here invading. We know about our right to this specific territory and we also know that our organization should be respected.

We, the Guarani-Kaiowá have a big movement, the Aty Guasu, the big assembly of the Guarani-Kaiowá people. We decided collectively that now is the right time for the retomada, and as a consequence the community of the Guarani-Kaiowá in the entire state started to reclaim farms and our traditional land. We did not want to wait any longer for the government because if we waited for the government to do the right thing we will never have our territories demarcated. So this is why we started to *retomar*, to guarantee our territory.

In this section Samuel is making various arguments: First, he stresses that they are not indiscriminately invading land. They are on the contrary reclaiming the specific territory that they know belong to them. Second, Samuel is criticizing the media for communicating a distorted view, which is to label their actions as invasions. Third, he points out that the decision to *retomar* is not decided by a random group of people but a legitimate institution, the Aty Guasu. Samuel explicitly says that the assembly of the Guarani-Kaiowá should be respected, and it is implied that this is not the case.

Like Celso explained in regards to how the media is portraying a distorted view of the conflict and indigenous people Samuel also finds it frustrating how the media says that they are invading the properties. By portraying the indigenous as invaders and criminals the fact that the decision is made in the legitimate organ of the Guarani-Kaiowá, Aty Guasu, gets lost.

Samuel also legitimates their actions by comparing the way they work the land with how he sees the farmers work the land:

All the destruction comes from the agribusiness. We believe that the unjust economy is a product of the agribusiness and from that originates the violence that is affecting our people here in Mato Grosso do Sul and Brazil in general. We know that the constitution guarantees our right to demarcate our territory and the federal constitution is the highest law, in our case article 231 and 232.

In this last paragraph Samuel is stating that all the destruction comes from the agribusiness. But what does he mean with destruction? This is a central aspect and one that I will address more thoroughly in the next section, where we will approach the moral economy of the indigenous way of life, and their agricultural tradition. What we shall continue exploring in this section is the second part of Samuel's statement, which

is that the constitution guarantees their right to the land. If that is the case why is the land not demarcated?

Antônio made it clear that one could not expect much from the Brazilian authorities:

The politicians are all on the side of the agribusiness, they have seats in the congress. The congressmen are all landlords and businessmen; they will take all that we have.

In Antônio's view, confirmed by Samuel's comment about the fact that the demarcation process is not being completed, the Brazilian government is not neutral and therefore will rule in favor of agribusiness. This comment also explains the resistance from the indigenous people to the idea of moving the power of demarcating land from the executive to the legislative branch; the PEC 215 that we addressed in the introduction. The argument is that the indigenous will never be treated favorably by official agencies, but in particular not by the congress. Antônio elaborates:

I will tell you how the Brazilian government works: The policy of the Brazilian government is anti-indigenous, all the way from the councilmen to the president of the republic. They have policies for everything; agribusiness, health, education, they even have a policy for how to mine on indigenous lands: Everything except how to demarcate land.

The Brazilian state is anti-indigenous and it must be challenged. We have rights according to the federal constitution, everyone knows it. It is also written in the ILO convention of 169, thus the laws and rights are there but still the Brazilian government is having a hard time complying with these rights.

In this comment Antônio is explaining how it is not a lack of judicial framework that is keeping the indigenous people from their rights; it is rather power. This is similar to the struggle we saw between the MST and the landlords, and how the law could be used to support both sides. Thus ideas such as moral economy become more important, since both sides argue that they have backing in the constitution and the laws.

As a consequence of the government seeing the retomada as an illegal activity, instead of actions decided in the legitimate organ of the Guarani-Kaiowá, the Aty Guasu, Samuel talked about how the life is hard at the retomada:

At this moment I am tired because of the struggle we are experiencing, and we are having a hard time. In relation to support here at the retomada we have none, and there is no policy directed at the indigenous community, and we are because of this being criminalized by the federal government.

This is also in contrast to how things are at the reservation, where there is at least some government presence. This was a story that was confirmed by other people I interviewed, such as an elderly man at 79 living on another retomada. He told about their struggle and how they were suffering:

Here at this place, to tell the truth, we are suffering and being choked. The last five months we have not received any basic basket, no help at all. [...] What we need help with is water, electricity, food, health services, everything.

I observed how they live and while the general standard of living was not very high on the reservation or the retomada where I stayed, these people lived in utter poverty. In an interview that I later conducted with a representative of Funai I asked about this, and whether it was an international policy from their side to not help the indigenous at the retomadas, in order to have them give up and move back to the reservations. The Funai employee had this to say:

At the moment we have about 800 basic baskets that should only be used in emergency cases. We are in addition to this working with the national food security agency and with the state government and the municipalities to work out a system that can meet the needs of these families. The real problem is, like we say in Brazil: The blanket is too small.

The Funai employee is saying that there is no intentional policy from their side to refrain from helping the indigenous living at the retomadas. And he also pointed out, in regards to health, the responsibility lies with the Secretary of Indigenous Health (SESAI).

In general the question of government presence and help was central, both in relation to the reservations but also the retomadas. But also important was the experience that they were being criminalized by the authorities and by being portrayed as invaders in the media. This is part of the backdrop when we now address the specifics of what happened at the retomada where I stayed.

5.3.1 Reintegration of ownership or attack

As we have addressed the process of initiating a retomada is done according to a certain pattern, from the decision-making to the concrete act. As Samuel explain:

The first thing we do when we enact a retomada is to notify Funai and the authorities. We give the farmers 24 hours to take with them all their belongings, their cattle and other material belonging to the farm.

Samuel stressed that they never used violence when they reclaimed an area, and they gave the farmers time to take away all their belongings. What happened when they reclaimed the area of the retomada where I stayed however did not go according to plan:

So they came to talk with us, and together with them came the federal police, the civil police and the National Guard. And then we informed them about our decision and that we wanted them to take away all their belongings within 24 hours.

They did not come back the next day to get their belongings. Instead violence erupted. During my time at the retomada I met two of those who had been shot in the altercation, and one of them had been very close to dying. This is what Samuel had to say about what took place on that day:

So the following day, from about 7 in the morning, the cars started appearing. Between 7 and 9 o'clock the cars came one after the other, and they were getting together in groups. At 9 o'clock I called a colleague of mine in Dourados to find out what was going on, and he told me that he was reading on a page on the internet that the producers were organizing themselves in order to go and understand the situation. What "understand the situation!?" I told him this is surely an attack.

[...]

Then we heard fire crackers and it seemed like a signal to notify the others, and then first the group of cars stationed bellow attacked, shooting real bullets. They attacked from two sides and they were well organized. The same people that came here with the police, with arms, they are involved with the politicians, the militias and private security, they all came together.

This is why we call it a paramilitary attack because it involves everyone, the politicians, police, private security and the farmers. This is the type of attack, this massacre, which they carry out. There was no petition for reintegration of possession.

Talking with other informants I heard this story counted various times, and they all said that there had been between 70 and 90 pick-up cars present. During the attack one man was killed and other five people wounded, among others a 12 years old boy. Pedro, who himself was shot and had to be rushed to the hospital, talked about the situation when his brother was shot and killed:

When I saw him there I shouted to him, I always called him buddy,¹⁸ I shouted “hey buddy, get away from there, let’s go!” The moment he turned and looked at me he was shot. The shot made him fall. But since he is a big guy with a lot of power he got up, but then he was shot again. If anyone says that my brother was not shot that day they are lying. He was indeed shot.

The person who was shot and killed was buried at the retomada where I stayed. My informants, first and foremost Samuel, often talked about him with affection. The case received quite a lot of media attention, also outside of Brazil. Samuel stated that this attack represented a massacre, and he justified this by referring to how they were defenseless and did not constitute a threat. He also called it a paramilitary attack, since government representatives acted in tandem with the farmers. We shall return to this issue in the chapter discussing violence, and how it is understood by the two sides.

We addressed in a section above how Samuel said that all the destruction comes from agribusiness, and the unjust economy. He is also saying that they have had to start reclaiming land, since nothing will happen if they sit around waiting for the government. In an interview I did with Antônio he talked comprehensively about the Guarani-Kaiowá way of life, and their moral economy. He also had experience with negotiating with the government, and he explained how this process (does not) work. We shall in the next section expand on Antônio’s position.

5.4 Moral economy of the Guarani-Kaiowá

- *It is not only the indigenous people that are dying. The planet itself is dying*

- *Antônio*

¹⁸ The word Pedro used was *guri*. This is slang and an informal word used for boys, or young men. To some extent similar to how one would use the word buddy.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether indigenous people are better suited to preserve the ecology and live in a sustainable way than people of the consumer/industrialized society. For studies confirming this relationship see Stocks (2005); Schwartzman et al. (2000) and Vogel (2001); for studies critical of this assertion see Stearman (1994) and Fisher (1994). I will in my thesis not take part in this debate; I will rather address the moral economy and normative discourse of how my informants argue and see the world.

During one of the first days of my time in Dourados I attended a seminar about indigenous culture, and one of the speakers got my attention. In addition to being charismatic he seemed to have a clear position in regards to culture and the environment, and he seemed to have a strong position in the indigenous community. In regards to the different approaches of the white man and the indigenous he said that the white man works to transform, while the indigenous works to preserve.

I arranged an interview and a visit to his place. I was showed around on the farm and then made an interview with him. When I asked Antônio about the relationship the indigenous have with nature and if he could expand on this he said:

So for us, the indigenous, the earth is our mother: She produces and (breast) feeds us. This is different than how it is for the white man because for us the earth is a part of us, and it is through the earth that we exist. It is from the earth that we find raw material, wood and water, and it is the earth that gives us strength. It is from this environment that we make medicine and build our houses. According to our way of thinking we belong to the earth; it is not the earth that belong to us. This is why we must take care of the earth. This is different than how the white man thinks.

We can see from Antônio's comments that he considers the relationship the indigenous have with the land is different than that of the white man. While the white man has a relationship with nature, the indigenous forms an integrated part of nature. This is highlighted when he says that it is not the land that belongs to man, but rather man that belongs to the land.

Rayane, whom I mentioned in a section above, told me about making artisanal craftwork, and in particular earrings. One of the earrings they would make needed the feathers of a particular bird. It was however vital that you only killed one bird and

You cannot kill two birds because if you kill more than one bird then the soul of that bird will come and haunt us and the one that is going to use the earring. Thus according to the cosmology of the Guarani-Kaiowá you cannot kill more than one bird in order to make earrings.

This little anecdote shows how the culture and beliefs permeates into the practical, and although the reason for not killing two birds is rooted in a belief that the spirit will haunt you, it is easy to see that this line of thinking fall within a conservationist and ecological view on nature.

Antônio did his TCC (equivalent to a bachelor or master thesis) on Guarani Kaiowá nourishment, and he started out by asking himself how it was that so many of the indigenous people today depended on the basic basket, and what they did in the past. What he found, or rediscovered, was that they already had technology and know-how regarding agronomy. Furthermore, their traditional agrological approach did not involve pesticides and he found that agroecology was something the Guarani Kaiowá had always known and practiced:

Agroecology is a part of Kaiowá-Guarani culture but we have a lot of work to do in order to find back to this knowledge, because it is not necessary to use pesticides and these things the non-indigenous use. It is not necessary to practice monoculture.

Comparing the agroecological model, or permaculture,¹⁹ of Antônio and the indigenous with Western agriculture and permaculture, one of the separating elements is the spiritual: The land and the seeds of Antônio were all blessed by prayers. Antônio said that

For the Kaiowá-Guarani the plants have a soul, everything has a soul, thus it is important ask for permission, talk with the plant. They say that even if a plant has a lot, it will be lonely if it is left alone. I am sounding like a poet now, hehe.

The plants, like humans, are social beings and would talk among themselves. Antônio is saying that even if you give the plants plenty of nourishment, they will feel lonely if they are left alone, which they are, in a monoculture. This is in line with permaculture

¹⁹ Oxford Dictionary defines permaculture as “The development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.” As such it is similar to organic farming but takes it one step further: By being self-sufficient there is, ideally, not leakage of energy.

principles of creating a sustainable balanced ecosystem that, ideally, does not depend on outside input.

Antônio contrasts the indigenous approach to agronomy with how the white man does it, and what he sees as an overexploitation of the earth:

If the planet is well then people are well. The white man, exemplified by agribusiness, does not have this spiritual aspect. His spirit is the economy; for him making money is more important than life, but for us life is more important than making money.

[...]

I always say that I am not the problem of Brazil; I am the solution, whether it is in relation to agroecology, knowledge and language. The white man has no solution, his solution is to explore, explore and explore, until there is nothing left. The white man has no life plan for his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great grandchildren. For him there is today and tomorrow, and nothing else. For him the land is not an integrated part of his life.

As we saw in the section about moral economy the concept is about how different groups of people see the preferable way to organize a society, and how the society's most productive resources should be divided. Antônio is criticizing how the white man is practicing agriculture and his way of life, which he contrasts with the traditional Guarani-Kaiowá way of life.

First, the white man is mainly concerned about generating a profit and make money, and second, this way of practicing agriculture is not compatible with sustainability. By criticizing the moral underpinnings of how the farmers work and relate with the earth Antônio shows the advantages of having land in the hands of the indigenous people: The nature and land is harvested in a sustainable way, which taxes the ecosystem less.

Antônio also seems to attack the very foundation of capitalism and suggest that the harvest from of the indigenous are divided according to other principles than purely market principles. By highlighting the sustainable and redistributive moral economy of Guarani-Kaiowá culture Antônio is proposing an alternative to the current model, one that is better for both human beings and the environment. In this way of thinking Antônio is echoing the position of family agronomy versus agribusiness. According to FAO (2013: 175) family agronomy respects the environment, protects biodiversity,

traditions and cultures, and promotes territorial development. All these elements seem present in Antônio's model for how agronomy should be practiced.

I wrote in the introduction to this section that my concern was not to partake in any debate to assess the empirical validity of the idea that indigenous and particularly the Guarani-Kaiowá live in a more sustainable way. However in regards to Antônio and his garden there is no doubt that he practices what he preach. I was showed around his garden by his son who explained to me what kind of fruits and vegetables they had planted, why these were chosen and how they interact. Antônio also confirmed that what he produced was to be consumed in Brazil and not for exportation.

One could ask whether the indigenous activists wanted to recreate a past, or go back to living in a premodern way. Both Antônio and Samuel made it clear that the forest that used to cover Mato Grosso do Sul will never come back. As such they are not trying to revive an earlier way of life that is forever lost. I also asked various informants on the retomada if they wanted to plant trees and make the forest come back. All of them however said that they harbored no such plans or illusions. So what I understood was that they were trying to create a new way of life, retaining what they could of their past way of life and culture but knowing that it would be a new amalgam.

A last point made by Antônio reflects what I wrote in the introduction regarding how land and power have historically been intertwined in Brazil. In addition to pointing out how many indigenous today depend on the basic basket Antônio elaborated:

Today we depend on the basic basket, but also importantly, the majority of people work in the schools or as health care workers. The way forward is to take back the land, and to work the land. It is still something new for us, so it is important to encourage people.

Combining this comment with Antônio's assessment that the Brazilian congress is in the hands of the landlords (or more specific, the congressmen are landlords), Antônio pointed out that they need land in order to gain influence and power: By working as functionaries for the government they will never gain an influential position. Since land and territory equals power in Brazil Antônio sees it as imperative that they reclaim their land. When I asked Antônio about the struggle and dangers of retomando, reclaiming land he had this to say:

Here in Brazil we have never had land demarcated and transferred to us, quite the contrary, everything has been a struggle [...] The struggle is a part of our life, whether you fight or not you will die, but if you fight you will die fighting, and if you don't fight you will still die. The policy of the Brazilian state is oppressive so we have to fight.

An important and fundamental step in the indigenous people's struggle for power and influence is thus to gain control over land. In a country where riches and money are largely tied to land this becomes imperative and Antônio see this struggle as essential for their survival. But how are they going to have any success in their struggle, if the Brazilian government is firmly in the hands of the landowners? The retomada is clearly a response to this question, as it is only by opposing the status quo that the indigenous can have any success. But if they cannot work within the state what tools do they have available, outside of the retomada itself? This is the subject for the next section.

Summing up so far we see that the moral economy, that is the optimal organization of society (Wolford 2005: 243), of the Guarani-Kaiowá is to emphasize two aspects: their environmentally sustainable way of life and how the food produced on their land ends up being consumed in Brazil by Brazilians.

5.4.1 What works in their struggle

We mentioned how my informants felt that the local media portrays the indigenous people in a negative light. However not all the media is treating the indigenous unfavorably. Antônio, talking about how negotiations with the government are futile, said that international pressure is effective:

What works is international denunciations and external pressure; that works well and affects the government. All you get from these negotiations are good food, fancy drinks; you sleep well in nice apartments and hotels. You get everything except demarcated land: It is just a waiting game.

[...]

What they fear is the international level; that they do respect. Just a small news article from abroad will have an effect

In this section Antônio is making much of the same argument that Carvalho (2000: 475) makes when she writes that

The capacity of historically excluded social actors to place their issues on the political and policy agendas and to shape policy formation remains limited.

Carvalho discussed the necessity of politicizing and taking a domestic conflict to the international level, and she contends, like Antônio, that the benefits outweigh the downside: As an excluded social actor there is no alternative.

The issue of the role of the media is also one that we shall return to in the section addressing the conflict from the farmers' side. The Funai employee confirmed the view of Antônio and had this to say:

We are already seeing big companies that are refraining from buying sugar produced in MS, and official banks²⁰ are recommended by the public prosecutor's office not to give loans or finance to production on indigenous land.

And in a country like Brazil with 205 million inhabitants and where the agribusiness corresponds to 20 % of gross domestic production (GNP), any disturbance in the agriculture section will greatly affect the commercial balance. It will affect the GNP and as a consequence the income that the government needs in order to carry out its investments and pay its costs.

The Funai employee confirms the view of Antônio and he further explains why international attention matters significantly: Since the commodity produced in the agricultural sector to a large extent goes to exportation any negative publicity might affect negatively the attractiveness of Brazilian commodities. We shall return to these issues in both the next chapters; the one analysing the conflict from the point of view of the farmers and the chapter discussing these findings.

5.4.2 Summary

We have in these last two sections seen why the Guarani-Kaiowá reclaims the land; how they do it and the opposition they meet. We have also addressed their moral economy and how they argue that land in their hands is preferable because they live in a more sustainable way. It is as such better not only for the dispossessed Guarani-Kaiowá but also for the planet itself that they get back their territory. Their way of farming

²⁰ These are government banks tasked with developing Brazilian economy.

differs from the exploitative agribusiness in that it is more ecofriendly but also because the incentive is not to produce riches but rather feed people living in Brazil.

The straightforward answer to how they envision a solution to this conflict is for their land to be demarcated. Seeing how this is not being complied with they are reclaiming the land. By reclaiming the land they are to a certain extent coming to terms with an understanding of the state as an adversary, or in the words of Antônio; the Brazilian state is anti-indigenous. We discussed how in particular the congress is anti-indigenous since the congressmen are often landlords. What the retomada implies however is that the executive branch also constitutes an adversary: The power to demarcate land is not (yet) moved to the congress, but the land is still not transferred to the indigenous.

We shall in the last chapter return to these issues, and contrast them with how the farmers understand the situation. We shall now proceed with an analysis of this conflict as seen by the farmers.

6 Analysis – Farmers

The research question of this thesis was how the retomada is understood both as an act of vindication but also an act of invasion. The farmers see the retomada as a criminal activity and as a consequence an act of invasion. In this chapter like the previous we shall substantiate the arguments with references to moral economy.

We shall in this chapter largely follow the same pattern as we did in the chapter analysing the conflict from the point of view of the indigenous people. First we shall address how the farmers are perceived and in particular what they experience as an unfavorable portrayal. We shall then explore the process of retomando, or in this case, being invaded. Like in the chapter addressing this conflict from the point of view of the indigenous the background and context will be addressed before the retomada or invasion: The argument is, like in the previous chapter, that we need to know the world view of my informants in order to understand how they understand the phenomenon retomada or invasion.

In the third section we get to the core argument of the farmers, which is that there is, or should be, only one Brazil. In the last section we shall build on the assertion that there is no longer room for another Brazil and how this realization holds the key to solving the conflict according to the farmers.

Before starting the analysis however, we should ask: who is the farmer? Are we referring to landlords with territories stretching for kilometers after kilometers?²¹ Or do we refer to small scale farmers with jobs outside of their farm? The simple answer is that we are referring to both, and everyone in between. In the methodology chapter I referred to the president of one of the local farmers unions in Mato Grosso do Sul (MS), and asked about requirements for joining the union he said.

Every union has their rule: Our rule is that one has to have a minimum of two fiscal modules, which equals 60 hectares. But in practice no one will stop a person from joining if he wants to.

²¹ While driving with Jorge we drove through a farm that took us about half an hour to get from one side to the other. This farm has both a homepage and a Facebook side. I was however not able to find any information regarding the concrete size of this farm.

I will in this chapter refer extensively to the two interviews that I did with Otávio; the first I did together with Kristin at his farm while the second was conducted towards the end of my time in MS. At the second interview, which was carried out at the union's location, Adriano, the vice-president of the union, and Marcio, an associate of the organization, also participated.

Famasul, which we addressed in the introduction, is the union organization for the farmers in MS. This organization consists of 67 local unions which together constitutes Famasul. Regarding the average size of the farms and properties in MS Otávio said:

In MS the average property is 300 hectares. But there are also bigger and smaller properties. I personally have 325 cultivated hectares.

In relation to the size of the property Otávio was quite representative. Since I shall rely on him quite extensively in this chapter, it might be interesting to know his background:

I came here in 1972. When I came there was no asphalt here. Back in São Paulo I had access to running water, sanitary facilities and asphalt. Here however there was nothing. I came because I needed a job. I came to learn how to produce soya and wheat.

Otávio's background made him quite representative for the farmers as a group. He also arrived some 40 years ago, which seemed representative for many of those I spoke to. And as the president in one of the farmers' unions I considered that Otávio had a keen understanding of the politics in the region and the opinion of his members. After all it is his job to represent their interests. We shall now begin with how the farmers are perceived, and how they find this image unjust.

6.1 Being portrayed negative

In the chapter analyzing the conflict from the point of view of the indigenous people, racism was an important factor. The farmers told no such stories but they talked about being portrayed wrongly or unfavorably. One of the first things Otávio addressed in the interviews was how he and the farmers were being portrayed. The word *fazendeiro* (farmer) had come to carry a negative sound and this Otávio thought was unfair:

Today in Brazil people have this image of the fazendeiro as someone who enslave workers, who invades areas, deforest, polluting and poisoning the

earth. So when you hear NGO-representatives talk about the fazendeiro, it is always derogatory in nature.

Otávio went on to say that even if the land that was reclaimed, or as Otávio saw it, invaded, was small and the owner was a *sitiantes*²² the indigenous, media and NGO-activists would label him fazendeiro as the term had already turned pejorative. This view of the farmer as the big bad wolf they contrasted with how especially the international community saw the indigenous as a poor little thing (*coitadinho*). Otávio himself preferred the term *produtor*, producer, as that was both what he was but also a term that was not carrying the same baggage as fazendeiro.

Sabrina, a mid20s woman who worked for Senar (National Service for the Rural Knowledge) and who worked closely with Otávio and the farmers' union also talked about how the word fazendeiro had come to acquire a negative sound, and she pointed to the media and especially the telenovelas and how they portrayed the farmer as made in the image of *coronelismo*, the old oligarchic feudalism-like ruler.

She also pointed to the lack of knowledge on behalf of the general public, and she exemplified it with a reference to the debate concerning the *vaquejada*, a competition where two men mounted each on a horse tries to knock down a bull. For people not knowing about the life on the farm this would look like animal cruelty. What Sabrina said was that if she needed to have a veterinary look at an animal then she needed someone to help her take control of the animal. The process of knocking down a bull looks violent and bad, but it is done with the best interest of the animal in mind. The competition is simply a way of training people to perform this task, and maintain the knowledge among the cowboys.

In general, as we shall see, the idea that society and “big city people” did not understand what was going on, was prevalent among the farmers. We shall later try to address more specifically what persons or organizations the farmers refer to when they criticize the misrepresentation that they experience.

²² When my informants used the word *sitiantes* I interpreted this to mean farmers holding a small tract of land, and often depending on other sources of income. Hammond (2009: 173) writes that “Fazenda is best translated as “large agricultural property.” It may be a farm or a ranch, but neither term conveys the connotation of large size.” The image stirred in people’s imagination would thus differ whether one was labeled sitante or fazendeiro.

We shall in the next subsection address another one of these misrepresentations that the farmers identify, and begin with the question of who feeds Brazil. Initially this issue might seem beside the central question of how the retomada is understood. The question is however vital in order to understand the moral economy of the farmers, and how they justify their cause. This issue relates closely to the discussion regarding agribusiness and family agronomy that we addressed in the background chapter.

Last in this section we shall sum up the representations that the farmers are critical of and their implications. Without anticipating the events it should be pointed out that what the farmers see as a consequence of being misrepresented is that this fuels the invasion wave. What it does not do however is to restrict their access to political or material goods: After all the farmers' objective is to protect status quo, which is the opposite of what the indigenous are doing.

6.1.1 Who feeds Brazil?

In my interview and conversation with Otávio, Adriano and Marcio they spent quite a lot of time discussing how to define family agronomy. If family agronomy was to be understood as its labor force consisting of family members, or that a company was family owned, then they thought it would be correct that 70 percent of the nutrients consumed in Brazil came from that branch. However the definition they assumed was that family agronomy was ecological and organic, without the use of sophisticated technology and often subsistence based. With the latter definition in mind, they considered it a myth that family agronomy feeds Brazil. Otávio said:

The population in Brazil is going to increase but the amount of land will stay the same. We have to maintain production on the land we have, stop the degradation and recover the land that is already degraded. If we don't do this there will be a lack of food, and this demand is not going to be met by family agronomy.

[...]

There is no more room for subsistence agronomy. Family agronomy; you know the biggest soya producer is a family, so it is not this we are talking about. But yeah, the government had this idea about stimulating this family agronomy, which is a rudimentary agriculture, but there is no more room for this inefficient agriculture. Today we have to be highly productive.

[...]

Today land is very expensive and there are a lot of taxes that we have to pay. At the same time the market is pressing the prices on our products down, which means the market is working. But what this also means is that we have to harvest about 60 bags per hectare to make an acceptable amount of money, and even that does not leave us with much profit.

We also saw in the background chapter that the price on land has gone up in MS. This, with a highly competitive market means that the pressure on the farmers to every year produce more is high, and Otávio said that while they now need to harvest 60 bags each hectare, 30-40 years ago you could make a living by harvesting 20 bags each hectare. In such a competitive market it is illusory in the eyes of the farmers that family agronomy should represent the preferred agronomy model.

In addition to providing food for the Brazilian population the farmers see themselves as essential for the Brazilian economy. In a question from Kristin as to whether the farmers felt abandoned by the authorities Otávio responded:

No; how could they abandon us, their hands are deep down in our pockets. Look at the trade balance of Brazil, it is being upheld by agribusiness.

As we saw in the background chapter agribusiness stood for almost 50 percent of the revenues from exportation generated in Brazil in 2016. And when Otávio says that the government has their hand into their pockets he is implicitly saying that they are taxed quite extensively, and that it is through the farmers that Brazil acquire foreign currency. The Brazilian economy, and as an extension government transfer programs such as *Bolsa Familia*²³, is financed by taxing the farmers.

So the farmers find it unjust that they are portrayed as a selfish group of people only trying to enrich themselves, while in their eyes they are both putting food on people's tables and providing revenues for the government. Furthermore they see it as a myth that family agronomy feeds Brazil, and this myth put them in a bad light. This can be related to the fact that *fazendeiro* has come to acquire a negative sound, producing an

²³ Bolsa Familia, Family Allowance, is a government program where poor families receive some financial aid, provided the children attend school and vaccination programs. Proponents of the program say it is one of the best anti-poverty programs in the world, while critics says it stimulates inactivity and fuels corruption.

image of the *fazendeiro* as someone only trying to enrich himself while his countrymen go hungry.

The next issue that we shall address, which is whether the farmers are environmentally conscious or polluters, follows a similar pattern as the question of who feeds Brazil: It is not directly linked to the retomada, but rather the moral economy justifying their right to their own land. The idea that the farmers were polluting and degrading their own land was met by resistance from my informants, as we shall explore in the preceding subsection.

6.1.2 Responsible farmers or polluters

Proponents of family agronomy will often point out the lack of sustainability in agribusiness, and how agribusiness is a large polluter. In the chapter where Antônio explained his idea of how the Guarani-Kaiowá practiced agriculture he criticized the way agribusiness was run with the use of pesticides and monoculture.

This image of the fazendeiro as a polluter was known among the farmers I interviewed, and this was a portrayal they found unjust. Otávio mentioned that the negative image of the farmer is related with the view that they are using an excessive amount of pesticides, both damaging the land and contaminating the food. This image, in addition to being unjust Otávio also found ridiculous:

Do you think that I as a producer will intentionally use pesticides that will contaminate my harvest? That I will intentionally poison the earth?

Otávio considered it a lack of knowledge on the behalf of the public in regards to the use of pesticides, in vernacular Portuguese aptly or revealingly called poison (*veneno*). Otávio's point was that the same substance can be both medicine and literally poison, but that it depends on dosage and in what situation it is used. Otávio stressed that he did not want to say that the products they use are harmless, because they are not. What he wanted people to understand was that they, the farmers, are professionals and know what they are doing: There are rules based on scientific work, when you can use the product and what dosages should be applied.

Furthermore, Otávio said that he was against the use of aerial spraying of pesticides as this leads to a lack of control, as you cannot to the same degree control where the

spraying falls down. Otávio also argued for the use of rotation where cattle are left grazing on the fields after harvest, in order to return nutrition and leave them in the ecological cycle. And in regards to the loss of nutrition, Otávio argued strongly in favor of the recycle of bodily wastes, as it both pollutes rivers and areas but also because it would diminish the need for fertilizers.

A third wrongful image of the farmer that my informants addressed was the idea that they had stolen the land. They acknowledged that the land had been taken from the indigenous against their will: However they argued that the fact that the state had illegitimately acquired the land did not turn the individual farmer into a thief. This is the subject for the next section.

6.1.3 Thieves

As written in the paragraph above indigenous people who lost their land argued that it was stolen either by the state or individuals or companies. One could argue that the important factor was that the land had been stole by someone, and who did it was less important. It was nevertheless an important issue as this would either implicate or acquit the farmer of having committed a crime (or in most cases; turn the farmers into descendants of someone having committed a crime).

Land in Brazil would historically have been acquired by either buying from the government, taken for free with the consent of the government, or it could simply be taken and later presented as legal with the use of fake documents that appear to be old and original, in Portuguese called *terra grilada*.²⁴ Celso, in regards to Brazil as a whole, said that:

It is important to remember that there is an enormously large quantity of land, millions of hectares, that has not been acquired in good faith; they are indeed *terras griladas*.

When I asked the lawyer of Fátima, to whom we shall return later, about the question of land grabbing, or terra grilada, he said that this was the copy paste response that Funai and the indigenous would use when they defended the invasions. According to him this

²⁴ *Grilo* is the Portuguese word for cricket, an insect similar to the grasshopper. In order to make the documents look old and genuine one technique involved leaving the documents in a box with crickets. So *terra grilhada* directly translated means cricketed land.

is not the case for Mato Grosso do Sul as its history as territory conquered from Paraguay make it clear that it was an intentional policy of the government distributing land rights, first to Erva Mate Laranjeira and then later to big land lords. He said that the case for other regions of Brazil, such as the North, Rondônia and Roraima the issue of land grabbing certainly was real. His point however was that the particular history of Mato Grosso do Sul was a different case, one in which it was government policy to colonize and establish control over a newly acquired region.

The lawyer also went into great detail explaining how many of these conflicts in MS are based on misunderstandings or imprecise measuring tools. For instance if the government by decree delegated 3600 hectares of land to a specific reservation in 1917, the tools of measuring would later reveal that the reservation was only 3539 hectares. The lawyer then said that the indigenous would argue that the farmer took parts of their land while the farmers would say the area was never bigger than 3539 hectares.

As I wrote in the first paragraph of this section it might be of less importance for the indigenous to discuss by whom their land was stolen: For the farmers however this was important as it decided whether they or the state was the guilty perpetrator. And the image that they had stolen the land was another representation of them that they wanted to combat. Fátima's lawyer said

The guilty actor in this is not the farmer, not the indio; the guilty perpetrator is a government who committed the crime over a hundred years ago.

6.1.4 Summary

We have in this section and subsections addressed how the farmers criticizes the, in their eyes, wrongful image of what persons they are and how they work. It is especially the ideas that they are not feeding Brazil and that they are polluting the environment that they find incorrect. They are also critical of the notion that they are thieves, or descendants of thieves.

These representations are both important in order to understand why the farmers think the retomadas are taking place, but also why those retomando are successful at gaining

support. In the next section we shall go into the particular experience of retomada, and how it is for the farmers to be on the receiving end.

6.2 Being invaded - The violence suffered by the farmers

In the section analysing the conflict from the point of view of the indigenous we addressed how the indigenous go about when they are reclaiming an area. They point out that it is done without the use of violence, and that they never act violently. How then is a retomada experienced from the point of view of the farmers? I interviewed Fátima, a woman in her 30s with three children who had recently lost her house and farm, which had been in her family for over 50 years, to a retomada. This is her experience:

Well, the invasions are never announced and you never know or imagine that it will happen, and you hope you will never experience it. They are well organized, well-articulated, they arrive painted and with cloths covering their face. They are armed with knives, sickles, machetes and bows and arrows. Some are even armed with guns.

When they invade they normally start at dawn and always on the weekends. They do this because they know that if we go to the police or the court, nothing will be done during the weekend. They enter on your property without asking permission, without announcing their presence, they just come and destroy everything, tear down the fences, if you have cattle they spread them all over the place. They put the grass on fire and if you try to defend what is yours then you will really have a conflict; people will even die.

Since they invaded our property on a Saturday my husband, thank God, was home and not away at work. Since we have a small property we are not able to make a living only by the farm so one of us has to work outside in order make a living. So my husband was home when they arrived and they came in great numbers, more than you would imagine. We don't have the necessary conditions in order to hire security that can come and defend us. So when they came they took everything and divided it among themselves; pigs, chickens, cattle.

Since my children are young; one is three, one ten and one is eleven, we thought it best not to resist and that it was better to leave the house. We went to the police station to press charges in the hope that the state would

support us and that the police would come and remove them. The reality however, is that you are left completely alone, no backup and no one even came to escort us safely out of the house. And the moment we left our house they made a big party and went into my house. They took my home and they are still there today.

It is really traumatizing to experience something like that, to see your kids scared. The indigenous yelling and talking in their language, you are not going to stay behind only to be hit by an arrow, a knife or something worse. If you have young kids you will at least try to protect them so we thought it best to leave and try to find justice in the law.

As we see from Fátima's story this was a traumatizing experience, although they did not suffer physical abuse. She went on to tell about the long-term effect this experience had had on her children, and especially her three year old son:

My little son would for weeks wake up at dawn, tugging at us, screaming and crying. He is really afraid of indios now, he is saying "mom they are not human." If you or a stranger would come to our house today, he will run and hide. He was already shy but now he does not even want to talk to people or see other people.

From the chapter and section about life at the indigenous reservation we remember the story told by Pastor Francisco about how he called for help but that he got no support. Fátima had a similar story:

When they invaded my house I called the police, I called for God and the entire world but no one came to my rescue. When I talked to the police on the phone the officer said: you are very nervous, aren't you? We were left there without help and the only people that came and saved us was God and my brothers. My brothers came to our rescue and got my family to safety.

Fátima went on to say how she had lost all faith in the fact that justice could exist in Brazil: They did not get any help when they needed it from the police and the court of law did not manage to produce an eviction order (or took a very long time doing so). Fátima was also very frustrated at the impotence showed by the police when they actually confronted the indigenous: In her case, the police had indeed arrived at the outskirts of her property, but they had been chased away by the indigenous:

So when the police cruiser arrived, full of police officers with Captain Nascimento²⁵ in charge, men in uniforms and armed, clothed in power and authority, to the outskirts of my property, they were met by about 15- 20 indios. The indios, armed with machetes, started running against the police cruiser yelling, and the police officers just drove away, with their tale between their legs. How is it possible to do something like that to the authorities, where is the respect, where is the hierarchy. There is no order in this country.

[...]

This is a shame; it was the bandits chasing away little boys.

Fátima went on to say that if a white person killed an indio then he went to prison but if the opposite were to happen nothing would be done. This she exemplified when she mentioned a case that had happened some years ago:

They killed a retired police officer; they invaded his farm, about ten years ago. They beat him while they themselves filmed it, he was begging for his life in the name of God.

Although I am not sure it was the same video, Sabrina showed me a video of a man being beaten and tortured to death, which was horrible to watch. In general the idea that the indigenous could commit crimes without being prosecuted was one that I frequently encountered, and Fátima referred to the killing of the retired police officer as a case where the indigenous perpetrator was not apprehended.

I interviewed a man who while working as a police officer had been assaulted together with his two colleagues. The man I interviewed had been tortured and abused severely, and his two colleagues had been killed. The man leading the group and assumed to be the guilty was according to my informants still free, and he had never served time for the crime. The case was covered quite extensively in the news, and the case was well known among my informants.

My informant Jorge, whom I mentioned in the method chapter, had some years ago experienced running into a road block by indigenous people while driving, and they had stopped his car and ordered him out. While surrounding him they had shouted insults

²⁵ The lead character of the movies *Tropa de Elite* I and II: A police officer both understood as a hero and an anti-hero, uncompromising in his fight against crime: Very authoritative and to some extent the Brazilian version of the cop in the *Dirty Harry*-movies.

and screamed that they were going to kill him. Jorge however escaped unharmed because he earlier that same day had offered a ride to an indigenous woman who was in the group, and she had said to the group that he was a friend. This incident had severely scared Jorge, and he was sure that they would have killed him if it had not been for that woman vouching for him.

Another case that we addressed in the chapter approaching this conflict from the point of view of the indigenous was the case which happened at the retomada where I stayed. How did this particular incident appear from the point of view of the farmers?

6.2.1 Reintegration of ownership or attack

Fátima, when talking about the invasions as a general phenomenon, said that there were 122 cases of invaded properties in MS. Regarding the incident taking place at the retomada where I had stayed she said:

In order for you to have an idea; right now there are four producers in jail because they allegedly killed an indio. You needed four guys to kill one indio, right? (this remark was said in way that I interpreted her to be ironic and questioning the truth of that statement: That the man was dead and had been killed was not in doubt; she was rather questioning whether it had been the farmers that had killed him).

These men are in jail; family fathers and hard workers. And also in that same instance the indios took three or four police officers as hostages and they burned and destroyed the police car. They also made the firefighters (who came to put out the fire, my comment) hostages so they could not leave. So I ask you; why are there two different scales of justice? Because not all are equal before the law! You see: how many of the indios are imprisoned for beating the police officers? No one.

Otávio argued quite similar, but his focus was on the instigator of the incident. This is a part of the dialogue between him and Kristin regarding what had happened at the retomada:

Kristin: But do you think they are justified? For instance what happened at Londrina (not the actual name, my comment) when the farmers went over there to remove the indigenous people?

Otávio: The indio can... For instance, if you go my house you have to ask for permission right? And if I go to your house, I have to ask as well. So

there is no such thing as a peaceful invasion. Those committing the invasions and attacks are the indios.

Kristin: But does this justify the shooting? Because there were six people at the hospital and one was killed.

Otávio: Did you hear about the case with the *sitiante* who was tied on his back and defenseless, and slowly cut to pieces and killed by the indios with a machete? This is normal, and where is the Cimi when these cases happen?!

No; what happened (in Londrina where the indigenous was shot and killed, my comment) is not justified, but then stop invading my property! Someone is going to become desperate. There are people this happens to; you know people call them *fazendeiros*, but we are talking about people with areas of 20 hectares. The guy (the *sitiante* to whom Otávio refers to and who was killed, my comment) can hardly survive and feed himself; the place is so small that he doesn't even have a place to fall down and die. And the indios kick him out.

Otávio is making three arguments: First, whenever violence happens to the farmers there is no attention from organizations such as Cimi, and their only focus is on the suffering of the indigenous. Second, he repeats what he said earlier stating that the farmers are systematically labeled *fazendeiros*, even if they only hold a small plot of land and should rather be called *sitiante*. Third, Otávio makes it clear that there is no such thing as a peaceful invasion. The indigenous are, by reclaiming, being the aggressor and it is therefore natural that some people become desperate and retaliate. According to Otávio the aggressor is the indigenous, and he does not see the act of reclaiming as holding any legitimacy.

6.2.2 Summary

By applying Galtung's concept of violence there should come as no surprise that we encounter frequent examples of personal violence that is both physical but also psychological in nature. Although the structural violence represented by poverty does not affect the farmers directly they are affected indirectly as they live in an area where violence produced by this structure can produce personal violence.

The structural aspect very much present and which affects the farmers directly however, is the idea of latent violence: They live in a dangerous society and they are left without

protection. What further exacerbated their mental stress was the assumption that if you were attacked by an indigenous person you could either defend yourself and go to prison, or be killed. Whether this was said as something they really thought would be the case, or if it was just a comment to testify the impotence or powerlessness they felt, I cannot say for sure. It was however quite descriptive for how trapped they felt in this conflict.

I will in the last chapter attempt to discuss the experience with violence as told by the indigenous and the farmers, and try to contrast and compare. The moral economic implication of this section is to show that for the farmers they are on the receiving end of a violent conflict. In those cases where the farmers do act violent they are doing it in a defense. The indigenous are according to the farmers the aggressor in this conflict and violence is bound to erupt when they invade the properties of the farmers.

In the first section we addressed misrepresentations that the farmers are critical of and that they are challenging. In the next section we shall more explicitly address their approach to farming and their criticism of the idea that the indigenous can live according to an alternative way of life.

6.3 One Brazil or two nations?

- *The majority of the indios want to live like us, in the modern world*

- *Otávio*

As I mentioned in the section above Otávio referred to the retomadas as invasions, and he corrected me whenever I said retomada. So the short answer to the question of how the farmers see the retomada is that they are invaders. But how did the farmers argue?

When asked by Kristin or myself about the fact that the indigenous were removed from the land against their will and that their land was stolen and a crime had been committed against them, Otávio made the following argument:

Look at Europe and study their history; the Vikings, didn't they invade other people? Or the English? Everyone has at some point invaded somebody else.

He added that the indigenous themselves at one point in history have taken the land from some other group of people, and consequently, we are all descendants from people who have conquered land. Confronted with the argument that the retomadas are an attempt to rectify mistakes in the past Otávio said:

And in Norway, where are the Vikings? Do the Norwegians still invade other people? I want to make a comparison: No, the Vikings have stopped invading. Civilization arrived and made some demands: This is private property which is measured and divided into mine and yours. So when I buy property I go to the notary's office and I register the completion of the trade. I bought it and paid for it so it should be OK.

Fátima expressed some of the same sentiments as Otávio. When I asked her about the fact that although her farm had been in her family for over 50 years, it had at some point been taken from the indigenous, she said:

If they want their land back they would have to ask for all of Brazil because if you look at a map you see that it all belonged to the indios. The first inhabitants of Brazil were indigenous, if I am not wrong there is only two or three states in Brazil that don't have indios: Brasília, Pernambuco and Sergipe. So if this is the case they should get back all of Brazil, right, and send the rest of the people back to Portugal.

Otávio's argument was that now, living in a civilized world, problems and issues should be resolved by a court-of-law. Invading land is no longer an acceptable way of resolving problems. An illustrative image of Otávio's argument, which I was made aware of in Crespe's (2015: 161) doctoral thesis, was a poster made by Famasul:



Figure 3: Where there is justice, there is space for everyone

The poster says in big letters: Where there is justice, there is space for everyone. On the right side it says "It is time to start working for the productivity and the subsistence,

without conflicts.” What I interpret this poster to communicate is that indigenous people and farmers can live side by side and work towards a common goal, but in order for that to happen, laws and order must be respected.

There is no direct reference to the retomadas, but it seems to be linked to this phenomenon. It could also be a coincidence, but while the indigenous man stands in front of a house the white man stands in front of a fertile and budding field. There was a general impression that many indigenous people were incapable of producing food. In a question as to whether the drug traffic across the border represented a problem for the farmers Adriano said no. He did however say that:

But the indios and MST are a problem. For about 12-15 years ago the indios weren't a problem, it was only the MST. In the society and in the big cities such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, people were saying “ah look how much land the *latifundiários* have, they have to give some of it to the *coitadinhos*.”

They did have some success with this tactic. We always fight and argue with these people from the cities, they seem to think that spaghetti comes from the spaghetti-plant; they really don't know how it works. But after a while people started to see all the problems these people created and the society turned against the MST; it even put the MST back. The same process is now unfolding with regards to the indios.

Now they are saying “poor little indio who is being massacred here in Brazil, they don't have a chance, they don't have opportunities and are being discriminated”. And here we have always lived peacefully and gotten along fine with the indios, until this invasion wave started. This has created a lot of fear and people are now afraid of having anything to do with the indios. For instance if you hire an indio to do some work on your farm you're going to be afraid that he is scouting how to invade, where he will enter and how he will do it.

This is really happening because of all these invasions, but the society is now starting to turn against the indios like they turned against MST, because they see the barbarity of these acts.

Adriano went on to say that while the Brazilian society was starting to see all the problems the invasions caused, Marcio pointed out that this was not the fact for the international society, which still saw the indio as a *coitadinho*. Adriano then went on to say:

If you had the opportunity I would like that you went and visited the indigenous reservation that lies by Dourados, the area is about 3500 hectares. I don't know if they let you enter but if you do go there you will see that they have not planted anything, not even manioc: You will find 3500 hectares of bush, weed and litter; there is absolutely nothing there. Maybe you will see one or two producing there.

Marcio: They don't want to, they don't want to work.

This idea that the indigenous did not want to work or produce was prevalent, and I was made aware by Celso of a photo that had circulated some time back. I am not sure if this exact photo is the one Celso was referring to, but in a blog post by da Veiga (2012) a photo was posted with the heading "Guess what land belongs to the indios." The text in italics under the photo is also written by the author:



Figure 4: *To the right side of the road on the indigenous land of Panambizinho in Mato Grosso do Sul, the crops were removed and replaced by bush and trash. On the other side, on a private property, the fertile land permits the production of corn, rice and soya.*

In addition to resisting the retomadas as illegal invasions the farmers argued that land in the hands of the indigenous was left unproductive: Why should the indigenous claim more land, if they were not producing on the land that they already had?

Fátima expressed some of the same feelings in regards to losing her farm:

So you are going to remove those who are producing and generating jobs and paying taxes, and give the land to the indios who are just going to abandon everything. [...] If you go to the areas they have invaded you will not see them work. Oh, they claim that they are retomando the land so they can produce but I suggest you go along the highway and observe: You are not going to see them with a hoe or a sickle at work, they will be sitting in chairs or laying in hammocks waiting for the government to give them one of the innumerable assistance programs; family allowance, student allowance; there is allowances for everything.

If you go there you see them sitting and waiting for the *cesta basica*, pans, food; everything they need they get. We as small producers will sometimes have difficulties getting finance from the bank in order to invest on our property, but they don't have this challenges: everything they need they get, and they claim that the federal government doesn't help them! That the government don't help them is a lie, they receive a lot of support, they just don't know how to take advantage of it.

The view that the indigenous are not producing is both explained by a lack of willingness and incompetence. The lack of willingness to produce is related to the support the indigenous get from the state, and how this has turned them into passive recipients of government support.

The aspect relating to a lack of competence is somewhat similar to the criticism directed at family agronomy and how that way of producing cannot survive and thrive under the current market conditions. Otávio saw the farmer as a producer integrated into the market, and a specialist in his own field:

Even if the farmer is educated as an agronomist he will seek out expert help in other areas, such as in the areas of herbicides and fertilizers. We are highly productive and there is no longer room for errors.

When the farmer is seen as a producer this not only integrates the product of the farmer into the market, but the farmer himself constitutes a part of the market: Running a farm and running a factory is thus done according to the same principles. This further emphasizes why the farmers see the indigenous as incapable of being highly productive and running a farm with the use of the latest technology.

Related to the idea that there was no room for indigenous way of producing food was the skepticism towards indigenous knowledge. In general my informants among the

farmers argued that the state and congress should be respected, and implicitly that only after completing the juridical process of demarcating land could the indigenous people get back their territory. However the farmers argued that more land in the hands of the indigenous would not be beneficial, since they were incapable of utilizing the land in a proper way.

There was also a general skepticism towards the validity of indigenous knowledge and in an extension, anthropological research. We shall address this in the next subsection.

6.3.1 Indigenous knowledge as not trustworthy.

From the chapter analysing the conflict as experienced by the indigenous we remember that Rayane considered it vital that the teacher should include and understand where the indigenous children come from, and integrate the cosmology of the Guarani-Kaiowá in their teaching. During one evening I spent at Jorge's house his wife told the story of their daughter's colleague, also a teacher, who could not get a job at a school on the reservation because "the indios didn't like her." This they, Jorge's family, thought was hypocritical since it was through mainstream Brazilian culture that the indigenous had learned how to read, write and access and use technology. Implicit in this view is that indigenous knowledge is inferior.

This we can relate to how some of my informants were critical of the trustworthiness of indigenous knowledge, and in an extension, their claim regarding ancestral lands.

Fátima's lawyer said:

And the indios themselves today have difficulties with pointing to where their tekohas used to be, because they don't have written documents, they have nothing of that kind. What they have are memories and memories, but old people's memories have never been, especially in our modern society, a reliable instrument to define where an area used to be. How can you trust what an indio heard from his father, who heard from his father, who heard from his father?

What he is saying is that although the indigenous can state that their parents and grandparents are their actual anthropologists these claims are not something that for instance can hold up in a court of law. The process of demarcating land is obviously more complex than just listening to old people, as I detailed in the background chapter.

The point to be made is that on one side the indigenous are clearly disadvantaged in that they do not have a written record of their beholding's. On the other hand this word of mouth oral tradition does not hold much credibility among the farmers. As a police officer I interviewed in another context told me:

Now I'm going to tell a joke but it is funny because it is the truth: When they invade your land they say: "The jawbone of the dog of my grandfather's brother is buried at that place." You see? How is it possible to prove something like that; you can't. It is hypocrisy, it is ridiculous.

In addition to undermining the legitimacy of the demarcation process this way of portraying indigenous knowledge takes place within the larger context of saying that there is no more room for living differently: Indigenous culture cannot produce food, manufactured goods or knowledge. We shall in the next section expand on the issue of whether there is, according to the farmers, room for two different Brazil's, or whether this is illusory.

6.3.2 Hypocrites

As I wrote in the introduction to this chapter the farmers saw the retomadas as invasions; a criminal activity. In relation to this the farmers talked extensively about the double standard that the indigenous adhered to: On one side they wanted the goods produced by civilization but the same time they wanted the right to ignore expressions of the same civilization, such as complying with the laws. This is what the indigenous people experienced as racism and which was addressed in the chapter analysing the conflict from the point of view from the indigenous. Marcio explained how he saw this conflict:

The indio is a citizen of Brazil just like us. There is no more room for the indio to be wild and live like that; he does not want that anymore. We have to understand what the indio wants; look, he is already within the urban limits of Dourados. What he wants is to have all the comfort that comes with the city life and he wants a job. There is a lot of indios studying to get a degree; they are enrolled at the universities. He wants to live the life we live and it is not by giving land to the indio that this situation will be resolved, that is for sure.

Look, this is my personal opinion: the solution is not to take, expropriate or have the government buy land for the indigenous people. This might solve

the problem right now but in 5-10 years when the indigenous population has continued growing the problems will still be there. My advice: Give the indigenous all the conditions that we have and make him equal before the law, like us.

Otávio in the same vein asked rhetorically whether you liked using the phone, take a hot bath or to catch a flight. And if you got sick then you needed (Western fabricated) medicine. Getting used to and depending on these goods you had to accept that all these goods were a product of civilization, and explicitly, capitalism. Otávio said:

But it is industrialization, the advance of capitalism and specialization, which provide us with all these goods.

For Otávio there was thus some hypocrisy to the idea that indigenous people reclaimed their land and stating that they wanted it in order to live as they did in the old days, while at the same time demanded goods produced from the very civilization they were criticizing:

If they try to live according to their indigenous culture on their settlements, they only survive thanks to the basic baskets and the money that the society gives them. He is not sustainable. Because when the government stops transferring money, it all ends.

What is more, Otávio argued, the ancient way of life is impossible to recreate. Living as hunter and gatherer you could over-exploit an area, and when there was no more food there, you could simply move on. Otávio said that such a way of life was impossible in most of today's Brazil, and he asked rhetorically whether the 200 million surpluses of people should be sent back to Europe.

By turning to the concept of moral economy we see that the logic behind the way Marcio, Adriano and Otávio argue is that their, the farmers, way of life is integrated into the system that provides all the desirable goods that the indigenous people want. A short recap said that moral economy is the way a particular group of people argue is the optimal organization of society, and how society's productive resources should be divided. So by linking their way of producing food, their ownership to the land and integration into the capitalist market, the farmers argue that there is no room for any alternative way of life. In particular, there is no space for living a life like a pre-modern indigenous person.

We will in the last section of this chapter address why, according to actors on the farmers' side, the conflict has not been solved. We have already suggested that the root of the problem according to the farmers is that the indigenous are not integrated into the modern Brazilian state, and that other rules apply for the indigenous. This last section will try to answer concretely how the farmers envision a solution to the conflict.

6.4 Accept that you are colonized

The indios have to understand that the creation of a Guarani state that they want is utopic: It will never happen. They have to come to terms with the fact that they are Brazilians. It is sad but the truth is that they are a colonized people.

In the quote above Fátima's lawyer is making two points: First, he says that the indigenous have to come to terms with the fact that they are a colonized people. By saying so he does not only say that there is and should be only one Brazil, but he also makes it clear that this Brazil is the modern and Western Brazil: it is not the Brazil of the indigenous. The second point, or rather assertion, that he makes is that the ulterior motive among the indigenous is to create a separate Guarani state. We shall return to this issue shortly.

But why has there not been a solution so far? Fátima's lawyer had been involved in this conflict for a long period of time. He had lawyered for both parties and as a consequence felt that he had a good grasp on the conflict. He was of the opinion that the conflict had not been resolved because actors on both sides have and have had an interest in prolonging the dispute:

So what you have is basically two sides deeply invested in prolonging the conflict and not finding a solution. And this very much describes the rural caucus, because those most interested in continuing the conflict is the agrarian politicians.

I am so tired of approaching the rural caucus to ask for help only to have them disturb and exacerbate the conflict. Why do they do this? To receive votes in the elections! [...] Politically, neither side wants to resolve the conflict; not those defending the indigenous and not those defending the farmers.

As the lawyer stated in the quote above the rural caucus sees the conflict as a constant source for votes, and this source would disappear if the conflict was to be resolved. But why should the indigenous supporters have an interest in exacerbating the conflict? As written in the section above the lawyer thinks that the long-term goal of the indigenous is to create a separate Guarani state. So by instigating conflict and violence the only alternative will be to create a separate state.

I did not during my fieldwork hear any of my indigenous informants say that they wanted a separate state, so this was new information for me. So why was there a perception among the farmers that the ulterior motive was to create a separate state? Adriano explained this position:

If you look at the indigenous territory here, you see that their project is to make almost all of MS into indigenous land, take some from Paraguay and link it down to Argentina. Below this area you have the aquifer Guarani, which is the biggest source of drinking water in the world.

Up there at the Raposa Serra do Sol²⁶ they did this act of barbarity: They found about half a dozen of indios and gave them an area almost the size of Europe. In reality it is all about niobium;²⁷ it is about natural resources which lies underground. So what these NGOs are really doing is taking control over the area and if you, a Brazilian, want to enter you have to ask for permission. And then you will see that those in charge are Germans, Dutch, Americans: They will be the ones in charge.

Marcio: There are respectable NGOs, and there are the types that Adriano just mentioned.

Adriano: But they have interest that we don't even know what are, there are bigger interests involved. We are located above the biggest fresh water source in the world, and that is what they are after.

Wittman (2009) asserted in the background chapter that Brazilian colonization policy have been about establishing sovereignty over its territory. What Adriano is expressing is a fear that the indigenous and the NGO's have ulterior motives that will undermine the sovereignty of Brazil, and that they represent a fifth column. So by linking indigenous rights to territory with American interest the situation is suddenly turned upside down, and the indigenous become the colonizer. What it also does is to relate

²⁶ Raposa Serra do Sol is an indigenous territory which is located in the northern part of the Brazilian state of Roraima. At 1,743,089 hectares it is one of the largest reservations in the world.

²⁷ Niobium is a chemical element used in high-grade structural steel.

indigenous rights to separatism, a challenge against the Brazilian state, and the need for the indigenous to understand that there is only one Brazil.²⁸

Sabrina, Otávio, Marcio, Fátima and the lawyer all expressed the view that the conflict would only be resolved if the indigenous were integrated into the Brazilian society. They had to be made equal before the law and treated as Brazilian citizens. Fátima said:

Teach them how to produce, teach them how to work the land, give them titles to their land. [...] We are only one people, not two or three peoples. They have to stop thinking that each represents a different people; we are one people, we are all Brazilians.

In this phrase she is making the argument of the lawyer, which is that the indigenous would have to accept their situation as a colonized people. But it was not only the indigenous that had to make concessions. The lawyer said:

The farmers need to understand that the indios want land, and that they should get land (but not necessarily any particular land, my comment). The government needs to understand that the conflict will only be resolved when the farmers are well compensated for any loss of land.

Ortiga (2004: 1) wrote that up until the 1930s the common policy of states in Latin America was a policy of assimilation into the modern state. If we shall summarize the position among the farmers their policy is quite similar to this stance. I want to make a reservation though: None of my informants made any statements sounding, in a lack of a better word, totalitarian: For instance, prohibiting the use of different languages or making Christianity the obligatory religion. By defining their position as one of integration and assimilation I want to communicate that they did not think multiculturalism would work; neither as a policy nor as a preferred societal model. Their moral economy stated that there was room for one Brazil and that was the modern Brazil they were living in.

The retomada is therefore understood as an act of invasion: it is an invasion since it does not respect the law of private property. In chapter five we pointed to the structural

²⁸ In an article dated 14.12.2017 the pre-selected presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro asked “Is the Amazon still ours? In 1982 the Argentinians said that the Malvinas (The Falklands, my comment) were theirs. They lost it. Today I often hear that Amazonas is hardly ours.” Regarding the demarcation of the territory of the Yanomami’s territory Bolsonaro said “this can turn into new countries within Brazil.” For the rest of the article, see: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2017/12/1943457-bolsonaro-questiona-soberania-sobre-a-amazonia-e-compara-terras-indigenas-a-zoologico.shtml>

violence that the indigenous suffer, and how they by retomando are “responding” to violence: The farmers however did not question the legitimacy of the system, and as a consequence they only “see” the violence when their farms are being invaded. We shall in the next chapter discuss and compare the findings of the last two chapters. An important question remains, which is, where is the state?

7 Conclusion

We will in this chapter sum up the positions of the different sides and compare them. What do they agree on and what do they see differently? We will see that although they are on opposite sides they are able to agree on certain facts. The different issues will be addressed thematically. What we shall begin with is the question of the state, or more precisely, where it is.

Where is the state?

Funai is the institution that no one likes: The farmer doesn't like it, the indio doesn't like it and even those working for Funai don't like it.

The comment or joke above was told by the Funai employee in a response to a question of how it was to work for a government institution that was being heavily criticized from various sides. We have in this thesis addressed the conflict from both the indigenous point of view and the farmers' point of view. While both of them have criticized the other they also address the Brazilian state and its absence. It is also quite revealing that both Francisco and Fátima told a similar story of calling for the police, but not getting any help or assistance.

So what is the position of the Brazilian state? With the exception of the Funai employee, and to a certain extent the retired police officer, I did not talk to any government officials. The Brazilian state is therefore a black box in this thesis in that I have not presented a comprehensive and uniform political stance of the government. It could also be the case that the Brazilian state is indeed not uniform in its approach, and that its lack of presence reflects this dual position.

What we can do however, is to compare the view the indigenous have on the state with the view the farmers have. On some areas they seem to agree: The state is predominantly on the side of the farmers. Antônio made it clear that the Brazilian state is anti-indigenous and that the problem is not a lack of laws and rights, but rather that the government is not complying with these very rights.

Otávio, with other words, confirmed this view when he said that the Brazilian state would never abandon the farmer since they have their hands deep down their pockets: Revenues and taxes are generated by the farmers, so the state has no other choice.

They seem to differ as to whether the state also supports the indigenous. Fátima argued that the indigenous receive innumerable allowances and help from the federal government. The indigenous on their side told about feeling abandoned and not getting much help. Samuel said explicitly that they did not get any support: on the contrary, they were being criminalized. The general understanding of the state however is that it is more supportive of the farmers and the agribusiness. The issue of violence on the other side is one that they are clearly seeing different.

Violence

We have spent substantial time and space in this thesis on the issue of violence; what it is, when it takes place and who are affected. Hammond (2009: 171-173) illustrates the challenges with this subject when he writes that

Calling a land occupation an “invasion” and referring indiscriminately to violations of property and acts of physical violence against people alike as “violence” are common rhetorical moves designed to discredit the movement [...] This is an important difference of legitimacy. The “violence” of tearing down a fence and invading private property is not the same as the violence of a massacre [...] The occupations and the retaliation differ in legitimacy, however: landowners inflict violence to protect privileges that have often been acquired illegitimately; land occupiers act to assert their rights and achieve justice in the countryside.

It should not be contested to state that Hammond makes an argument that the indigenous would support while the farmers would oppose him. By referring to Galtung and his concept of structural violence I have in this thesis argued that the indigenous and the farmers differ on a definition on violence. Otávio made it clear that if the indigenous wanted to avoid violent confrontations then they should stop invading. There is no such thing as a peaceful retomada according to Otávio, and by invading the indigenous were initiating the conflict. Celso on the other side said that

In order to live a certain way according to your culture then it is necessary that there are certain material goods available.

According to Celso and my indigenous informants they were already suffering violence, and this violence originates in that they are bereft of their land and material goods. The state should have demarcated their land many years ago, so by retomando their land they are exercising their constitutional right. Consequently the controversial aspect of Galtung's understanding of violence, which labels something as violence even if it cannot be traced back to an individual; structural violence, is only acknowledged by the indigenous. As a result of this the indigenous see the violence in the aftermath of a retomada as initiated by the farmers, while the farmers see themselves as defending against an attack. This is how both can point the finger at the other and say that they started the conflict.

On a higher level it boils down to an understanding of the current political system and whether this is a system that is desirable and just. The farmers defend this system and see all infringement on it as initiating violence and attack. The indigenous on the other hand are revolting against what they see as an unjust system; a system of social exclusion and they are conversely not initiating a confrontation as they are already under attack. The two opposing views on violence and the political system are related to the moral economy of each side.

Moral economy

The moral economy of the farmers and the indigenous differ as they envision different ways of organizing the society. What they essentially disagree about is whether there is room for another way of life: The indigenous wants to create a space for their culture and way of life to thrive, while the farmers see only one way of living.

This is first and foremost manifested in their different views on agriculture: The indigenous wants to produce in a sustainable way that is better both for people and the environment. Within this approach the agribusiness is seen as exploitative and only concerned with making economic profit. The farmers on the other hand see no alternative to their way of producing food, and they make it clear that there is no longer room for family agronomy or similar practices: The indigenous must learn to be highly productive so they are able to participate in a competitive market.

An illustrative comment by Antônio is when he said “What I think is pretty is the differences.” Fátima on the other hand talked about how they were all Brazilians and belonged to the same people. To some extent the discussion is whether there is room for different ways of life or whether all must submit to the modern Brazilian state.

We have in this thesis dedicated time to the various misrepresentations the two sides feel they are the victim of and in the section on violence in this chapter Hammond (2009) address what he calls rhetorical moves: Attempts to label invasions as violence in order to discredit the movement. We shall therefore in the next section address the discourses present in this material.

Discourse

The power and authority to label an activity as illegal or an act of violence is central in this conflict, and both sides point to various misrepresentations that they are the victim of. Regarding the local media Celso and Samuel both said that the indigenous were labeled as invaders, and Celso said that you would seldom see a favorable portrayal of indigenous people in the media. Not all the media would portray them negatively however, and especially the international news agencies could be supportive of the indigenous. Antônio said that what the farmers feared was the international media; this they respected and feared.

The farmers on some parts seem to agree with the view on the media presented by the indigenous: Adriano talked about how the national media in the beginning of their conflict with the MST portrayed the MST as victims, but that they gradually came around and took a critical stance towards this movement. The same process was now unfolding in regards to the indigenous movement of reclaiming or invading land. So in this aspect he seemed to agree with Celso and Samuel in that the national, or at the very least the local, media was supportive of the farmers and critical towards the indigenous.

Sabrina, without necessarily arguing the opposite of Adriano, pointed to the image created and upheld by the telenovelas of the farmer as a coronel. She pointed to the lack of knowledge when this misrepresentation was presented, and Adriano argued in the same vein when he remarked that people from the cities seemed to think that spaghetti came from the spaghetti tree.

When Otávio was asked who it is that is producing an image of the farmer as a polluter and someone who deforest he said:

It is ideology; we are fighting against an ideology.

He did not go into detail regarding what person or organization that is creating this ideology that they are fighting. We shall expand on this last point the next section, which ask what phenomenon should be the case for further studies.

Further research?

Discussing possibilities for further research might seem like an obligatory post in a master thesis and the answer never seem to be “no, we have researched enough”. In this case however, I do feel that this conflict merit more, and more thorough, studies. I spent a little over a month in Brazil, and there would certainly have been more to learn had I stayed longer. I have already referred to academic material originating from Brazil and MS, and these sources are very educating for those wanting to know more about the conflict.

With this thesis in mind however, further research into the state and government would be interesting and revealing. What are the different factions within the civil service and executive powers? Why are the police, apparently, so reserved about getting involved when some of the actors are indigenous? Doing a discourse analysis and trying to form a picture regarding what images are produced, by whom and why would also be interesting.

Last words

We began this chapter with a joke from the Funai employee regarding the position of Funai, and in an extension the Brazilian state. It might therefore be appropriate that he should also get the last word. What was his hope for the future, and his vision of a solution to the conflict?

I personally believe that the solution is to be found in a conciliation of the different organizational models; the indigenous should have their traditional land and be able to produce according to their traditional way; the agribusiness should continue generating revenue for the country,

making progress in the area of research and production of food, generating jobs.

I think there is room for both of them, but it will not be easy.

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