Supplemental Reading 1: "The End of the Road?"

Mexico City was not the only Latin American megalopolis to reach its city limits during the 1980s. São Paulo, at the other end of the region, also experienced a slowing of the spectacular growth that had made it South America's largest metropolitan area.

"From 1940 to 1980, [São Paulo was] a very strong pole of attraction for migrants," said Lucio Kowarick, one of Brazil's leading experts on migration and urban growth. Both peaked during the economic miracle of the 1970s, when thirty million Brazilians left their rural homes to seek a better life in the country's cities. A booming São Paulo, with half of Brazil's industrial jobs, was their most popular destination.

But during the economic crisis of the 1980s, to the surprise of the pundits, the population growth of the areas on the edge of São Paulo slowed by two-thirds, while that of the inner city accelerated and surpassed it. The poor, including the working poor, were leaving their suburban shantytowns for inner-city slums. "It is a new phenomenon," Lucio Kowarick pointed out, but one that "you are beginning to see in Buenos Aires and Montevideo as well. What you see in São Paulo today may be what happens in other large cities of the region in the next two decades."

It was, Kowarick acknowledged, a pessimistic forecast. "Before, living in a *favela* in São Paulo, a family had to work hard, day and night, for ten to twenty years, but at the end of that time you had your own house. But if you are renting a room in an inner-city tenement, at the end of ten years you will have nothing."

Today Greater São Paulo has more than twenty million people, multiple centers, heavy traffic, and high pollution. It is a difficult city to live and work in, even for the professional with a car, phone, and maid. For a worker who lives in a suburban shantytown and has to commute to work four hours a day on crowded buses, it is a purgatory. For the unemployed poor, it can be hell. With over a million workers unemployed, São Paulo is a hard place to look for a job, while the consolidation of *favelas* in its suburbs has made land expensive, squatting more difficult, and evictions common. In the inner city, at least there are jobs to be had in the service enterprises that have replaced industry as the leading economic sector, and it is possible to rent a tenement room cheaply and save time and money on commuting as well. It is little wonder that poor people are moving back to the center, returning to a pattern of lower-class housing that prevailed before 1930, but in far less auspicious circumstances. By 1990 it seemed as if the limits of São Paulo's urban sprawl had finally been reached.

Many others were leaving São Paulo altogether, heading for more dynamic industrial zones in the region, such as São Bernardo, or to smaller cities in the western part of São Paulo state like Campinas. New migrants are still arriving in São Paulo, but far fewer than in the past. Increasingly, they are bypassing São Paulo for greener pastures elsewhere.

This is particularly true for rural migrants, who in the absence of industrial opportunities are heading instead for the western part of the state or the adjoining regions of Mato Grosso, the new centers of export agriculture. There they can find work as *boias frias*, the "cold lunch" workers who are bused daily from *favelas* on the outskirts of small cities hundreds of kilometers away to harvest soybeans or cotton and return home at night. The work is hard, the pay is low, and the commute is long, but it is a job in an unstable economy and the cost of living is cheaper than in São Paulo. Significantly, Brazil's small cities—with twenty to fifty thousand inhabitants—grew faster in the 1980s than the large ones like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro that had led the way before.

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Megalopolis: *a very large urban area, usually consisting of several cities that have grown so that there is no visible border between them. Also called a megacity or a primate city.*

Pundit: *a learned person or authoritative voice; in this case, someone who offers political opinions such as an editorial columnist.*

Working as a *boia fria* might put rice and beans on the table, at least for part of the year, but there was no future in it, unlike the industrial jobs São Paulo had offered in the past. There was no land available for squatters and "the landlords want everything for themselves," Avelino complained in a Campinas shantytown. Here he "just worked to be able to eat." For those with higher aspirations and greater resourcefulness, the agricultural regions of western São Paulo and southern Mato Grosso became a jumping-off point for a far more ambitious migration north through the Mato Grosso wilderness to [the states of] Rondônia and Acre in the farthest reaches of the Amazon rain forest. When asked what he would do if he won the lottery, Avelino replied, "Ave Maria! I'd buy a farm in Rondônia."

The draw of rain forest land was part of a new Brazilian migration pattern, a flow this time to the north of Brazil, into the vast expanses of its last frontier, the Amazon. During the 1980s more than one hundred thousand Brazilian families migrated from the south to Rondônia, attracted by the government's lure of free land. They burned down a quarter of Rondônia's rain forest, spread diseases that decimated the small remaining indigenous population, and helped turn the state into a wild west frontier. Yet, by 1990, Rondônia was looking like another illusory El Dorado. Its leached soils could not support the growing of rice and beans. Coffee prices were too low to feed a family and the rubber trees migrants planted often failed to produce. Today, abandoned farms dot the landscape and more than half of the cleared land is overgrown with brush and trees. Environmental concerns pressed on Brazil by international agencies have now limited lumbering and mining as well. As a result, migrants have gravitated increasingly to Rondônia's towns, turning them into cities. Its capital, Pórto Velho, is even beginning to develop big-city problems. "People are abandoning the countryside," said Francisco José Silveira Pereira, the state's environmental chief. "In 1980, Rondônia was seventy percent rural. Today, it is sixty percent urban." Hoping to escape São Paulo, the new migrants seemed to be re-creating it inside the Amazon instead.

SOURCE: PETER WINN, "THE END OF THE ROAD?" IN *AMERICAS: THE CHANGING FACE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN* (BOSTON: PETER WINN AND WGBH EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, 1992), 224–227. (USED BY PERMISSION OF PANTHEON BOOKS, A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE, INC.)

Supplemental Reading 2: "Life in the *Favela*"

Carolina Maria de Jesus is a poor African-American woman who lived in an urban favela *(shantytown) earning her living by picking over trash and doing odd jobs. She came to the* favela *as a migrant from northeast Brazil after her boyfriend and employers deserted her when she became pregnant. Her story is unusual because the publication of her diary documenting life among the impoverished earned her an income that enabled her to move her family out of poverty. Her story tells of the violence, squalor, indignity, and drudgery of* favela *life—and also of her undaunted perseverance. The diary has been translated into dozens of languages and has a worldwide audience.*

May 23, 1958 … The sky is beautiful, worthy of contemplation because the drifting clouds are forming dazzling landscapes. Soft breezes pass by carrying the perfume of flowers. And the sun is always punctual at rising and setting. The birds travel in space, showing off in their happiness. The night brings up the sparkling stars to adorn the blue sky. There are so many beautiful things in the world that are impossible to describe. Only one thing saddens us: the prices when we go shopping. They overshadow all the beauty that exists.

Theresa, Meryi's sister, drank poison. And for no reason. They say she found a note from a woman in her lover's pocket. It ate away her mouth, her throat, and her stomach. She lost a lot of blood. The doctors say that even if she does get well she will be helpless. She has two sons, one four years old and the other nine months.

May 26 At dawn it was raining. I only have four cruzeiros, a little food left over from yesterday, and some bones. I went to look for water to boil the bones. There is still a little macaroni and I made a soup for the children. I saw a neighbor washing beans. How envious I became. It's been two weeks that I haven't washed clothes because I haven't any soap. I sold some boards for 40 cruzeiros. The woman told me she'd pay today. If she pays I'll buy soap.

For days, there hasn't been a policeman in the *favela*, but today one came because Julião beat his father. He gave him such a violent blow that the old man cried and went to call the police.

May 27 It seems that the slaughterhouse threw kerosene on their garbage dump so the *favelados* would not look for meat to eat. I didn't have any breakfast and walked around half dizzy. The daze of hunger is worse than that of alcohol. The daze of alcohol makes us sing, but the one of hunger makes us shake. I know how horrible it is to only have air in the stomach.

I began to have a bitter taste in my mouth. I thought: is there no end to the bitterness of life? I think that when I was born I was marked by fate to go hungry. I filled one sack of paper. When I entered Paulo Guimarães Street, a woman gave me some newspapers. They were clean and I went to the junk yard picking up everything that I found. Steel, tin, coal, everything serves the *favelado*. Leon weighed the paper and I got six cruzeiros.

I wanted to save money to buy beans but I couldn't because my stomach was screaming and torturing me. I decided to do something about it and bought a bread roll. What a surprising effect food has on our organisms. Before I ate, I saw the sky, the trees, and the birds all in yellow, but after I ate, everything was normal to my eyes.

Food in the stomach is like fuel in machines. I was able to work better. My body stopped weighing me down. I started to walk faster. I had the feeling that I was gliding in space. I started to smile as if I was witnessing a beautiful play. And will there ever be a drama more beautiful than that of eating? I felt that I was eating for the first time in my life…

June 13, 1958 I dressed the boys and they went to school. I went to look for paper. At the slaughterhouse I saw a young girl eating sausages from the garbage. "You should get yourself a job and you'd have a better life."

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She asked me if looking for paper earned money. I told her it did. She said she wanted to work so she could walk around looking pretty. She was 15 years old, the age when we think the world is wonderful. The age when the rose unfolds. Later it falls petal by petal and leaves just the thorns.

The prices mount up like waves of the sea. Each one is stronger. Who fights with waves? Only the sharks. But the strongest shark is the thinking one. He walks on earth. He is the merchant.

Lentils are 100 cruzeiros a kilo, a fact that pleases me immensely. I danced, sang and jumped and thanked God, the judge of kings! Where am I to get 100 cruzeiros? It was in January when the waters flooded the warehouses and ruined the food. Well done. Rather than sell the things cheaply, they kept them waiting for higher prices. I saw men throw sacks of rice into the river. They threw dried codfish, cheese, and sweets. How I envied the fish who didn't work but lived better than I. …

August 14, 1958 Ditinho, Lena's boy, is a veteran of the *favela*. But he's bald and never learned to read, never learned a trade. Only learned to drink *pinga*. Lena has a nicely built shack on Port Street. But Tuburcio tricked poor Lena. They traded shacks and he gave her a badly built one and kept hers. Afterward he sold it for 15,000 cruzeiros.

I went to the junk yard and got 15 cruzeiros. I passed by the shoemaker to tell him to fix Vera's shoes. I kept hurrying up the streets. I was nervous because I had very little money and tomorrow is a holiday. A woman who was returning from market told me to go and look for paper at Porto Seguro Street, the building on the corner, fourth floor, apartment 44.

I went up in the elevator, Vera and I. But I was so frightened that the minutes I stayed inside the elevator seemed to me like centuries. When I got to the fourth floor I breathed easier. I had the impression that I was coming out of a tomb. I rang the bell and the lady of the house and maid appeared. She gave me a bag of paper. Her two sons took me to the elevator. The elevator, instead of going down, went up two more floors. But I was accompanied, I wasn't frightened. I kept thinking: people claim they aren't afraid of anything but at times they are frightened by something completely harmless.

On the sixth floor a man got into the elevator and looked at me with disgust. I'm used to these looks, they don't bother me. He wanted to know what I was doing in the elevator. I explained to him that the mother of those two boys had given me some newspapers. And that was the reason for my presence in his elevator. I asked him if he was a doctor or a Congressman. He told me he was a Senator.

The man was well dressed. I was barefoot. Not in condition to ride in his elevator.

I asked a news vendor to help me put the sack on my back, and that the day I was clean I would give him an embrace. He laughed and told me: "Then I know I'm going to die without getting a hug from you, because you never are clean."

He helped me put the rest of the paper on my head. I went in a factory and after I went to see Senhor Rodolfo. I earned 20 more cruzeiros. Afterward I was tired. I headed toward home. I was so tired that I couldn't stand up. I had the impression that I was going to die. I thought: if I don't die, I'll never work like this again. I could barely breathe. I got 100 cruzeiros.

I went to lie down. The fleas didn't leave me in peace. I'm so tired of the life that I lead. …

SOURCE: CAROLINA MARIA DE JESUS, "LIFE IN THE FAVELA," IN *CHILD OF THE DARK*, TRANS. DAVID ST. CLAIR (NEW YORK: DUTTON, 1962), 44–45, 57–58, 97–98. (PERMISSION PENDING.)

Shark: *In Portuguese slang, shark is the name given to anyone who tries to make high or illicit profits from others.*

Supplemental Reading 3: Reports on movements to improve rural life in Brazil
"Analysis: Fight for land in Brazil"

The fight for land in Brazil provides a startling illustration of social inequality.

According to the government, just 2% of farmers own more than half of all arable lands in the country—one of the highest concentrations in the world.

On the other hand, it is estimated that about 25 million landless people have to survive on temporary jobs—most of them working for the big land owners for extremely low wages.

This situation has led to a permanent agrarian conflict in the country, with hundreds of land occupations, public buildings invasions and violence spread across Brazil.

From 1991 to 1998 more than 350 people were killed in rural battles for the land, according to the Land Pastoral Commission.

Most of the dead had links either with the Catholic Church or with the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST)—a group created in 1985 to keep pressure on the government to speed up its land reform programme.

The MST claims to be the largest and one of the most organised social movements in Latin America, sponsoring primary schools and food co-operatives around Brazil.

"To occupy, to resist, to produce"

The group's main tactic is to invade farms and stay there as long as possible to force the government to redistribute the land to its members.

Inside their camps, the landless operate in a fashion and do whatever they can to make their motto come true: "to occupy, to resist and to produce."

The MST say the government is doing little to help 100,000 families who are camped all around Brazil waiting for a piece of land to live on.

Land reform

However, the government says it has settled more than 287,000 families since 1995—the highest figures yet.

Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has also accused the group on more than one occasion of being "fascist" and breaking the law.

In this wave of protests, the MST has been demanding a public audience with the president and Finance Minister Pedro Malan.

The government, however, has decided not to talk to the landless.

Analysts say the lack of dialogue will only maintain the stand off and may delay any solution to the acute problem of land reform in the country.

SOURCE: AMERICO MARTINS, "ANALYSIS: FIGHT FOR LAND IN BRAZIL," BBC BRAZILIAN SERVICE, BBC NEWS ONLINE. 4 MAY 2000. HTTP://NEWS.BBC.CO.UK/1/HI/WORLD/AMERICAS/735225.STM. (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.)

Arable: *land that can be used for agriculture.*

"Brazil landless march for reform"

More than 1,000 landless workers in Brazil are marching to the capital to call for wide-ranging land reform. Their 180-kilometre (112-mile) march to Brasilia is in support of plans to settle one million landless families over the next four years.

It comes as the government is drafting a national land reform programme which is due to be presented to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The marchers are expected to meet him when they arrive on 20 November.

Tense relations

Lula's Workers' Party, which leads the governing coalition, has always had a close relationship with the Landless Movement (MST).

However, the MST has recently been invading farms and imposing blockades to try to force the government to adhere to its election promises of land reform.

The president of the Workers' Party, Jose Genoino, spoke to the workers as they set off and promised that he would arrange a meeting with Lula for them.

Jose Valdir Miesnerovicz, of the MST's national leadership, told the BBC that a national land reform plan was needed to resolve Brazil's "historic problems" of concentration of land ownership, unemployment and poverty.

He said the MST march was not intended as a protest against Lula's government, and added that he hoped the movement could help the government implement its plan.

Correspondents say land distribution in Brazil is among the most uneven in the world, with 20% of the population owning 90% of farmland and the poorest 40% owning just 1% of the land.

Rural boost

In another initiative aimed at improving life in rural Brazil, Lula has launched a $2.5bn government programme, Light For All, aimed at providing electricity for several million families in remote areas.

Three-quarters of the money will be provided by the federal government, the rest by state authorities.

The programme will run until 2008 and mainly benefit poor Brazilians.

Earlier this year, the president initiated his Zero Hunger plan, which is also aimed at improving living conditions for the poorest Brazilians.

SOURCE: "BRAZIL LANDLESS MARCH FOR REFORM," BBC NEWS ONLINE. 11 NOVEMBER 2003. HTTP://NEWS.BBC.CO.UK/1/HI/WORLD/AMERICAS/3261773.STM. (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION.)