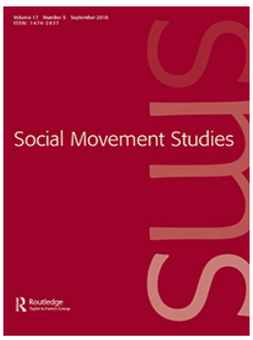

Social Movement Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/csms20

The temporal nexus of collective memory mediation: print and digital media in Brazil's Landless Movement 1984-2019

Markus Lundström & Paola Sartoretto

To cite this article: Markus Lundström & Paola Sartoretto (2021): The temporal nexus of collective memory mediation: print and digital media in Brazil's Landless Movement 1984-2019, Social Movement Studies, DOI: 10.1080/14742837.2021.1905510

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1905510

Published online: 01 Apr 2021.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1905510

The temporal nexus of collective memory mediation: print and digital media in Brazil's Landless Movement 1984-2019

Markus Lundström [a] and Paola Sartoretto [b]

[a]Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden; [b]School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Social movement scholarship has increasingly shown how continuous mobilization depends on collective memory construction. This article sets out to study this formative activity in a changing media landscape. It asks how activists navigate the temporal nexus of collective memory mediation. The empirical focus is on Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), a well-established organization that since the early 1980s has communicated its collective memories on several media platforms. This article also demonstrates, through a corpus analysis of MST's internal newspaper, *Jornal Sem Terra* (1984–2014), and its Facebook page (2014–2019), how collective memories of *rural violence* serve various functions in these different media. The empirical study verifies the formative implication of rural violence for Brazil's landless movement, but also unveils notable differences between the newspaper and Facebook in this regard. Whereas *Jornal Sem Terra* employed a *horizontal* collective memory construction through contemporary documentation of ongoing and upcoming events, the Facebook posts primarily engaged in the *vertical* extraction of already established memories. In other words, the print media *produced* a narrative around collective memories of rural violence, and these memories were *re-produced* through digital media platforms. These empirical findings implicate that renewed methodologies are needed in future studies of social movements.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 21 October 2019
Accepted 15 March 2021

KEYWORDS
Temporality; social media; Facebook; historiography; MST; Brazil

Introduction

Social movements have become increasingly articulated through digital media platforms. Whereas these communication channels show mobilizing potential, they may have other, less direct, limitations. In this article, we focus on a temporal aspect of digital activism, namely, how short-lived, *ephemeral* media interplay with a key feature of social movement formation – the construction and maintenance of collective memories. As a collaborative process of 'critical engagement with the past in the present' (Merrill et al., 2020, p. 14), *collective memories* are frequently used in social movement mobilization. Considering mediatization as a meta-process in society through which media become constitutive of social phenomena (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Krotz, 2009; Schulz,

CONTACT Paola Sartoretto markus.lundstrom@cemfor.uu.se School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University, Jönköping, Sweden

2004), we investigate how collective practices of memory construction intersect with media-oriented practices that in turn become constitutive elements of collective memory construction. We ask: how are movement practices of remembering and objects of remembrance (re)configured through transient digital media platforms?

To explore this temporal nexus, we turn to the case of Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), one of the world's most long-standing and well-organized social movements, which has vividly engaged in both collective memory construction and digital media communication (Lundström, 2017; Sartoretto, 2015). An interlinking aspect in this regard is the display of rural violence. The broad social movement for land distribution in Brazil, a milieu in which MST is a key actor (Ondetti, 2008), has a stark history of being assaulted, assassinated, and massacred (Medeiros, 2015; Ondetti, 2008). Violent repression has accordingly become a formative collective memory, a narrative cornerstone, in the movement's historiography. When President Jair Bolsonaro refers to MST activists as 'terrorists' – while movement participants experience severe police brutality and assaults by local armed groups (CPT, 2018; Girardi, 2019) – collective memories of rural violence become reactivated. But to what extent is it possible to retrieve and reproduce these memories through accelerated communication flows? Ephemeral as they are with vanishing objects of remembrance, how are digital media producing practices of remembering? In order to investigate how MST's collective memory of rural violence is nurtured in a communicative landscape characterized by ephemeral digital media platforms, we have compiled and systematized two types of media sources: the internal newspaper *Jornal Sem Terra* (1984–2014) and MST's Facebook page (2014–2019). These different sources have allowed us to analyse the temporal interplay between mediated and non-mediated practices of collective memory construction.

We start this article by sketching how notions of temporality, collective memory, and narration have emerged in the field of social movement studies. We highlight how the practice of historical writing, and its building blocks of collective memories, constitute an imperative resource for social mobilization. Against this scholarly backdrop, we then ask how social movements, in an era of accelerated communication and ephemeral digital media, continue to produce and maintain collective memory. Subsequently, we provide some methodological notes, followed by a brief introduction to the collective memory-making of Brazil's landless movement, before embarking upon the empirical inquiry into MST's mediated experiences of rural violence. Finally, we engage in a concluding discussion on the temporal nexus that entangles collective memory construction through ephemeral media.

Temporality and social movement narration

The notion of *temporality*, the experience and perception of time, has become increasingly topical in social movement studies. This line of research has begun exploring insubordinate temporalities (Halberstam, 2005; Lilja, 2018), how alternative timeframes are used to evaluate and promote social change (Gillan, 2018; Maeckelbergh, 2016), as well as the internal difficulties of coordinating temporal variability within social movements (Wagner-Pacifici & Ruggero, 2018). Theorization of temporality has to some extent been elaborated in the seminal work on contentious politics and political

opportunity structures: McAdam and Sewell (2001) have charted what they call temporal rhythms of social movements: the long-term change process; its related protest cycles; the punctual, transformative event; and the cultural epochs of contention that hold certain repertoires of collective action.

Translated to the narrative logics of media, Merrill and Lindgren (2018) have displayed how such temporal rhythms interchangeably work in harmony and dissonance – across digital and non-digital platforms utilized by social movements. On a similar note, a growing body of scholarship has observed how the parallel growth of digital media platforms and social movement mobilization have enabled interconnections across spatial boundaries (Downing, 2008; Drinot, 2011; De Jong et al., 2005; Silverstone, 2013). Scholars are in this vein analyzing the dynamics of mobilization in digital media platforms (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013), on-line communication as a constitutive aspect of mobilization (Sartoretto, 2016), its potential for social movement formation (Mattoni & Treré, 2014), its function as a motor of social change (Milan, 2013), and the interplay with direct action on the streets (Gerbaudo, 2012). Studies have documented promising potential in the use of digital media platforms (Leong et al., 2019), how digital media platforms add to a personalization of politics (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), and how social movements show ambivalence towards their use (Custódio & Sartoretto, 2020; Sartoretto, 2015). Recent studies focusing on the intersection between collective memory and digital media highlight the interconnection between online and offline practices (Zamponi, 2020, p. 164), and how that interconnection complicates participation of marginalised social groups (Bisht, 2020, p. 190).

As digital media function in dynamics and aesthetics of constant flow, continuously running through a screen in present time, scholars have increasingly grappled with the temporal implications of navigating a socio-political topography characterized by accelerated communication flows and ephemeral digital media (Kaun, 2015, 2016; Rosa, 2013; Sodré, 2014). As we argue elsewhere (Lundström & Sartoretto, 2019), contemporary social movements now seem to find themselves in a *timeless time*, where a constant presence emerges from the communication flows of our late modern societies. In a similar vein, empirical studies have increasingly ventured into the dynamics of resistant temporalities through the notion of collective memory (Doerr, 2014; Keightley, 2013; Zamponi, 2018). Drawing on historiographic exposures of power dynamics embedded in historical writing (Chakrabarty, 2000; Trouillot, 1995), scholars have explored the formative aspects of a *social movement narration*, how stories of resistance link past events to present actions and alternative futures (Lundström, 2017; Polletta, 2009; Polletta & Chen, 2015). Movement narration is thus constructed and transmitted through time (Benford, 2002; Daphi, 2017); social movements articulate their demands by drawing a collective past into present time (Florini, 2016; Leal, 2017).

Collective memory is in this sense imperative as a component for every social group (Halbwachs, 1980, 1992), and thereby constitutes a vital resource for social movement formation and endurance (Farthing & Kohl, 2013; Guenther, 2012). As collective memory construction depends on its public articulation (Neiger et al., 2011, p. 4), attention has been brought to how digital media platforms interplay with collective processes of remembering and forgetting (Hoskins, 2017). In this sense, Zamponi (2020, p. 164) argues that the ephemerality of social media places doubts on its collective nature. A useful conceptualization in this regard is offered by Garde-Hansen et al. (2016)

through their distinction between a *horizontal* collective memory construction, activated through contemporary documentation of ongoing and upcoming events, and *vertical* extraction of the past through rituals of remembrance. In this article, we use these two axes to analyze collective memory construction in the print and digital media of Brazil's landless movement. In subsequent sections, we explore empirically how social movement narration and its foundation of collective memories adapt to the ephemeral nature of digital media flows. Inspired by scholarly work on temporality and social movements, we analyze the *temporal nexus* – the past, present, and future orientations of collective memory mediation – in the internal newspaper and Facebook pages of Brazil's Landless Movement.

The story of Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement

The engaged and enacted narration of *Movimento dos trabalhadores rurais Sem Terra* (MST) is indeed a linchpin to the movement's formation and reconfiguration. The MST story begins in the late 1970s with rural mobilizations that materialized into land occupations. As these resistance activities became increasingly interconnected, Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement was established in 1984 as a nationwide actor. Through successful land occupations, hundreds of thousands of families have over the decades gained legalized access to farmland. Yet, the struggle continues. The MST story is not finished; it is frequently reinvigorated – enacted – by ever more people becoming narrative protagonists, becoming *Sem Terra*. As detailed by Lundström (2017), MST's own historiography has proved a potent resource for the movement's mobilization, one that stimulates resistance throughout the political opportunity structures that characterize Brazil's contemporary history.

MST's historiography is arguably produced in alliance with academia; it's history is frequently repeated in compulsory introductions to the movement in scholarly texts (for a meta-analysis, see Lundström, 2017, pp. 61–70). Standard references in this regard can be found in geographer Bernardo Mançano Fernandes (1999) dissertation, and in his subsequent interview with João Pedro Stédile (Stedile & Fernandes, 1999). Stédile is a central MST figure who two years before Fernandes edited and co-authored an influential anthology on the movement's history (Stédile, 1997). This joint knowledge production of Fernandes and Stédile notably informed Mitsue Morissawa's (2001) historical textbook, which is still frequently used in MST's educational settings across Brazil. The historiography of Fernandes and Stédile was also the basis for two key monographs that introduced the MST to English-speaking audiences in the early 2000s (Branford & Rocha, 2002; Wright & Wolford, 2003). Although academic historiography has indeed reproduced and consolidated the MST story, this narrative is also revisited, and revived, by movement participants themselves. As documented in several studies (Alvaides & Scopinho, 2013; Pasquetti, 2007; Vreeswijk, 2013), collective memories compose imperative building blocks for this movement narrative.

Violence against the *Sem Terra* is an especially important collective memory. The MST's harsh experiences of rural violence over past decades are well documented in the literature (Elke Debiasi, 2019; Girardi, 2019; Hammond, 2009). As inferred in Rolf Straubhaar's (2015) analysis of an influential MST magazine, rural violence stands as a shared experience that is actively linked to past insurrections in the history of Brazil.

This formative function of the violence theme is arguably also propelled by *Commisão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT), a progressive faction of the Catholic Church that for decades has documented this pressing issue. Rural violence thus seems to constitute a most formative collective memory in MST's historiography. Its recharged topicality – particularly under President Bolsonaro – prompts us to diagnose collective memory production through digital media platforms.

MST is ambiguously engaged with digital media platforms. Sartoretto (2015) reports that the decision to start communicating through Facebook was preceded by an intense internal debate, before finally being initiated in 2010. Today, MST's communication with society-at-large and its reports of ongoing rural violence depend heavily on this media platform since *Jornal Sem Terra*, once a key communication vehicle for the MST, was officially shut down in 2014. This symbolic move – from print to digital media communication – has a critical historiographic implication. The movement no longer has a textual archive for documenting violence: these reports now dissolve in the ephemeral nature of digital media platforms. Our question, then, is how collective memory is produced in such a transient context. The following section provides some brief methodological notes on how we have investigated that issue.

Research design

The purpose of this article is to analyze how MST's social process of collective memory construction is (re)configured and materialized through a communicative context of short-lived, ephemeral media. To empirically explore this temporal nexus, we began compiling empirical data from two different corpora. The first consisted of the entire publication of *Jornal Sem Terra* (1984–2014), an internal monthly/bi-monthly newspaper distributed for small-group collective reading at movement centres across the country (Bezerra, 2011). Published issues were retrieved from various online sources, passed through an Optical Character Recognition procedure, and systematized into a searchable corpus comprising 4.9 million words. The second corpus was built from approximately 8,000 posts published on MST's Facebook page from the site launch in 2010 through to September 2019, when the study was completed. Since we were primarily interested in the collective practices of memory construction oriented towards media rather than reception of collective memories, we considered for the study only the posts and not the commentary threads. The Facebook corpus, consisting of 400,000 words, was built with the open-source software Facepager. The different volumes of material between Facebook and *Jornal Sem Terra* can be explained in two ways: (1) the publication of *Jornal Sem Terra* spans over a time period three times longer than the Facebook publications and (2) texts on Facebook are significantly shorter than those in *Jornal Sem Terra*. Our judgement is that this discrepancy did not impact the study's validity; on the contrary, applying a consistent coding procedure on different materials proved quite useful for exploring practices oriented towards dissimilar technologies.

For analysing the corpora, we used SketchEngine, an online linguistic tool for exploring large corpora. We examined our specific keyword – violence [*violência*] – through a variety of techniques borrowed from the field of corpus-linguistics. Through *collocate analysis* we identified a recurrent and most significant short-phrase that appeared across both corpora – *violência no campo* – which in English translates as 'violence in the field',

or 'rural violence'. Beyond its literal translation the term is loaded with meaning in Portuguese; it does not refer to interpersonal violence in general, but to the specific violence directed against farm workers and landless peasants. Based on this key term, we conducted *concordance analysis*, a computer-assisted extraction of each mention of the key term in its immediate context. After de-selecting entries invalid for analysis in each corpus (duplicated posts in Facebook updates, table-of-content entries, reader letters, interviews, and external reports), we had 250 entries of rural violence to code. Dates ranged between 1984–2014 in *Jornal Sem Terra* and between 2014–2019 in the Facebook corpus. Given the dissimilar corpora sizes, the highest number of entries naturally appeared in *Jornal Sem Terra*, although the highest frequency of the term rural violence was found on Facebook (222 entries and 39 instances per million words in *Jornal Sem Terra*, compared to 28/55 in the Facebook corpus). Through a coding procedure we categorized each entry of rural violence according to its *communicative aim* and *temporal orientation* along with the geographic and historical location indicated. Our coding categories and variables were jointly constructed and then independently tested for interrater reliability (Korolija & Linell, 1996).

Communicative aim referred to the content of the message and how it addressed the audience in the process of memory construction. We identified six different categories to qualify the communicative aim: *contextualization* messages that placed rural violence within MST's historical struggle for land; *remembrance* referred to as commemorative acts or specific historical episodes of rural violence; *account* reported from meetings or gatherings addressing rural violence; *call to action* included imperative appeals to collective action events on the theme of violence; *report* referred to text on rural violence authored by MST or its allied organizations; *demand* were the pleas to governments and private actors to end rural violence. *Temporal orientation* had five different categories that differentiated between the temporalities of MST's collective memory construction (cf. Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Neiger, 2017): *far past* denoted Brazil's historical past before the establishment of MST; *near past* referred to the distinct MST history; *present* referred to events unfolding when the message was published; *near future* represented the short horizon of MST demands; *far future* included long-term political and social visions. The following section presents the empirical results from this analysis.

Mediated memories of rural violence

Our empirical analysis of *Jornal Sem Terra* and MST's Facebook page indicated that 'violence' [*violência*] had formative implications for the movement's collective memory construction. Violence was typically used to flesh out negative experiences of oppression faced by landless rural workers and settled MST-farmers across Brazil. Remembrance and memorialization of these experiences seems to have served as a mobilising force in a context of conscientization regarding oppression imposed on organised rural workers (Freire, 2005). Our collocate analysis showed that repressive rural violence [*violência no campo*] was the significantly most common violence-constituent in both corpora. On Facebook and in *Jornal Sem Terra*, violence was signatory to the MST historiography – and causally linked to an inexistent agrarian reform. In other words, processes of collective memory construction, engendered through rituals and pedagogies, were objectified in these mediated messages. However, our investigation also uncovered some

telling differences in how violence was being used in these corpora. We found that the most common verb collocated with violence, in both corpora, was 'denounce' [*denunciar*]. In *Jornal Sem Terra* the second most frequently collocated verb was 'continue' [*continuar*], followed by 'increase' [*aumentar*], although on Facebook the verbs 'provoke' [*incitar*] and 'respond' [*responder*] were more frequent. This finding indicates that violence in *Jornal Sem Terra* had stronger historiographic implications – it was used to locate present experiences in historical context – whereas most Facebook posts imperatively connected violence to ongoing struggles. The notion of rural violence had different functions due to its communicative aim and temporal orientation.

Communicative aim

We found that the communicative aim of rural violence could be clustered into distinguishable categories. The term was employed to provide *contextualization* of collective experiences and *remembrance* of past assassinations and massacres. Rural violence was also used to give an *account* of a meeting or activity, and as a direct *call to action*. Some entries also mentioned rural violence in reference to some published *report*, or in a political *demand* directed at the authorities. Figure 1 illustrates the intensity of these communicative aims in the two corpora.

The sharp difference in contextualization and remembrance, as shown in Figure 1, indicates that *Jornal Sem Terra* primarily used rural violence to build a movement narrative, to produce collective memories. Facebook posts, on the other hand, predominantly took stock of that very archive to articulate ongoing and upcoming events. Hence, rural violence was comparably more pronounced in calls to action on Facebook. Accounts from meetings and activities were slightly more represented, which also designated a contemporary focus. Moreover, these accounts served a documentary purpose as they assembled potential fragments for collective memory construction. In this regard, we saw a qualitative difference between the corpora: Facebook accounts communicated ongoing events while news reports in *Jornal Sem Terra* became building blocks for collective memory construction. The following excerpt (Jornal Sem Terra,

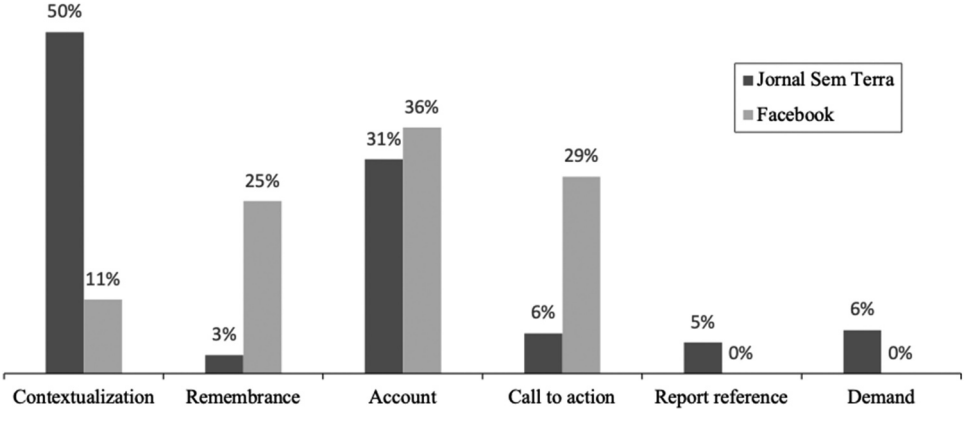

Figure 1. Communicative aim of rural violence. Displayed in relation to entries in *Jornal Sem Terra* (n = 222) and on MST's Facebook page (n = 28).

1986, p. 5) gives an ornate account from one of MST's first major protest marches, a 400 kilometer walk from occupied *Fazenda Annoni* to the state capital in Porto Alegre:

> With strength and faith they defied more than 20 days of sunlight, darkness, cold, rain, with swollen knees and blistered feet. What gave them faith and strength was the solidarity they met from people along the way. Urban and rural workers came to their meetings and invited them into their towns and communities to eat and rest. On the road they walked past banners and placards supporting their march for agrarian reform and the end of rural violence.

This committed reportage offers more than a journalistic account; it is an ardent piece of historiography, an ongoing collective memory construction. The account hardly claims objectivity but paints a passionate picture of popular struggle. Subsequently, the intensity and force of this formative period, MST's mass occupation of *Fazenda Annoni* and its aftermath in the mid-1980s, seems to have established a powerful collective memory that is still recounted and revived today. For example, an interview with MST women occupying land in 2013 (as cited in Lundström, 2017, p. 86) exhibits how this collective memory is recalled to assemble hope in times of struggle, bringing past and future into the present:

> We've gone through a similar struggle to that of the first fazenda occupation, many years ago, called Annoni. [. . .] With us it's the same thing. [The Annoni settlement] is no longer an *assentamento*, to me they are rich. I find it so beautiful over there. [. . .] We're still in the beginning, but in a few years, we'll get there.

The collective memory of *Fazenda Annoni* was closely reported, and then frequently recollected, in *Jornal Sem Terra*. This collective memory produced and maintained the notion of rural violence. Our empirical analysis showed that throughout the publication history of *Jornal Sem Terra*, there was a steady decline in the mentions of the term rural violence, although actual violence, documented for instance by CPT, had not decreased. Hence, the word 'decline' arguably showcases a gradual integration of violent repression into the movement narrative; the silence indicates that rural violence has become a most significant experience for MST as a political subject.

When displaying the distribution between the communicative aims in our corpora, it became clear, as shown in Figure 2, that contextualization and account have been less important communicative aims over time (except for the period between 2009 and 2013, which might be explained by the very few issues published during this period). Rural violence was instead increasingly used to articulate political demands and call to actions. The significance of 29% of the category 'call-to-action' on Facebook compared to the six percent on *Jornal SemTerra*, can be linked to the platform's function as a mobilizing medium: a digital call-to-action can work as an invitation that can be endlessly shared and reproduced.

Remembrance also appeared considerably more on Facebook, but then usually referred to events extensively reported by *Jornal Sem Terra* (like the massacres in Corumbiara and Eldorado dos Carajás). Between 2014 and 2019, on Facebook, rural violence was significantly used more for remembrance and call to action, while contextualization became decreasingly central. Moreover, the *quality* of the account also transformed; the careful, historiographic appeal from *Jornal Sem Terra* gave way to slim notices of the accelerated communication flow characterizing digital media platforms.

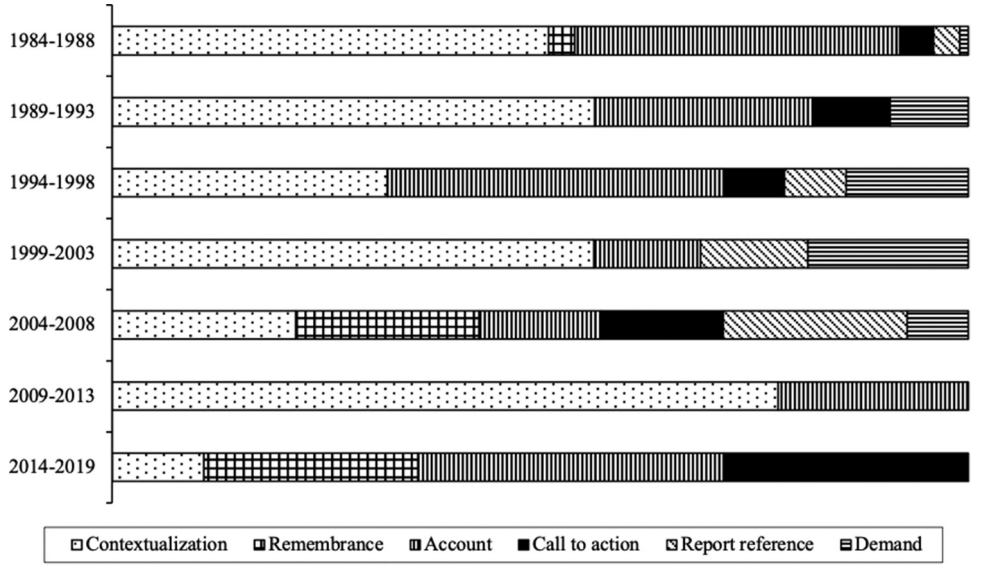

Figure 2. Development of communicative aims. *Jornal Sem Terra*, 1989–2014.

Although remembrance occurred in *Jornal Sem Terra*, especially in the mid-2000s when the criminalization of MST revitalized collective memories of repression (Ondetti, 2008), it was on Facebook where rural violence served to communicate remembrance, as exemplified in this post from August 2014:

> IF WE REMAIN SILENT, THE STONES WILL SCREAM! On 9 August 1995, Brazil witnessed one of the most gruesome episodes of rural violence in Rondônia. On this date, MST-families, occupying the Santa Elina ranch since the 15 July that year, were caught by surprise when Military police, together with the landowners' hired gunmen, brutally attacked them. That night, the families tried to resist. Twelve peasants were murdered, among them a seven-year-old child. FOR OUR DEAD, NOT ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE, BUT A WHOLE LIFE OF STRUGGLE!

As we can see in this Facebook post, published on the Memorial Day 25 years after the Corumbiara Massacre in Rondônia, that collective memory is actively recollected from a near past. The remembrance here serves to infuse ongoing and future actions, to once and for all put an end to rural violence. The antidote prescribed is agrarian reform. On Facebook, and especially in *Jornal Sem Terra*, as we saw in our first excerpt, MST activities were notoriously accounted in terms of a struggle 'for agrarian reform and the end of rural violence' (Jornal Sem Terra, 1986, p. 5). In this sense, violence was commonly used as a generic reference point. Whereas the mention of rural violence referred to specific events, particularly the mid-1990 massacres in Corumbiara and Eldorado dos Carajás, 85% of the entries in *Jornal Sem Terra*, and 54% on Facebook, did not refer to any particular event but to rural violence in general.

The difference between the corpora in this regard is telling. Newspaper articles used the notion of rural violence *to produce* a narrative around this connective experience, while Facebook posts mainly *re-produced* already established collective memories.

Moreover, the signification of rural violence in the corpora also depended on its temporal orientation.

Temporal orientation

We have seen that repressive rural violence triggered stark collective memories that fuel MST's present-day struggle for an alternative future. Rural violence, in other words, connoted a variety of temporal orientations. Inspired by Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Neiger (2015, 2017), we identified in the coding procedure five different categories of temporal orientation – far and near past, present time, near and far future – which enabled us to differentiate between various temporalities in MST's collective memory construction. Figure 3 demonstrates how the temporal orientation of rural violence here differed between the two MST corpora.

Figure 3 shows how the *far past*, events of rural violence located in a history predating MST's chronology, was a non-existent temporal orientation on Facebook and rare in *Jornal Sem Terra*. Political imaginations of rural violence abolished, visions located in the *far future*, were even less frequent. This indicates that the newspaper attained a comparable wider temporal orientation, one that exceeded MST's own history and impending actions. Facebook posts submitted to the ephemeral nature of this digital media platform were temporally oriented towards the near past and future, but especially towards the present.

Present time (present at the time of writing) was the predominant temporal orientation in both corpora. It should be noted that all media communication (bar live broadcasts) is obviously confined by the time delay between event and report, which typically generates texts in the past tense. Therefore, while coding this variable we overlooked the grammatical tense to instead ask whether rural violence was depicted as a present reality. In doing so, we found some noteworthy variances. Just like the communicative aim of giving an account had different qualities in the corpora, the vanishing notion of the present also conveyed multiple meanings. Submitted to the communicative logic of the

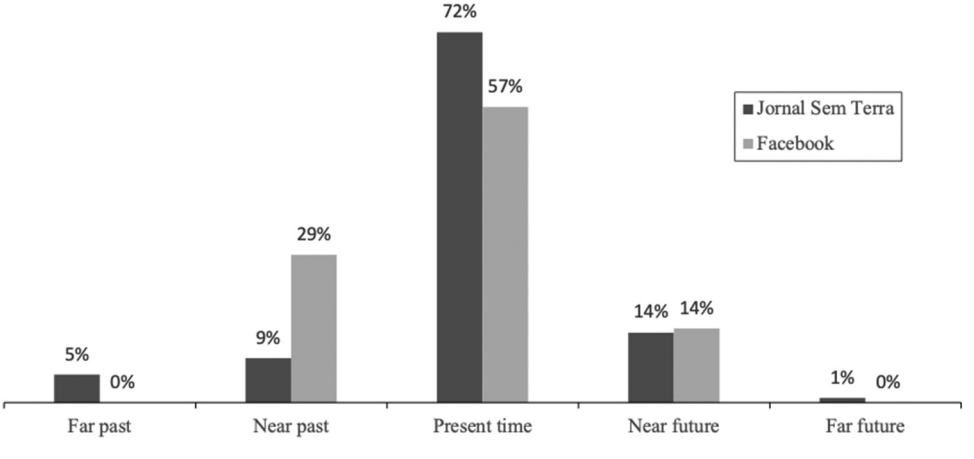

Figure 3. Temporal orientation of rural violence. Displayed in relation to total entries in *Jornal Sem Terra* (n = 222) and Facebook (n = 28).

Facebook platform, MST posts on rural violence that were temporally oriented towards the present typically had a character of registering or noting ongoing events, rather than commenting on or analyzing them. By contrast, the articles in *Jornal Sem Terra* put considerably more emphasis on situating registers of rural violence in a broader narrative. We can see this applicability in the following article excerpt, from *Jornal Sem Terra*'s September issue in 1989 (p. 7), concerned with MST's political reality:

> Rural violence is increasing because we have strengthened our struggle and mobilizing capacity. We have become more organized and the bourgeoisie's only response is repression.

In this excerpt we see how rural violence is found to be increasing, a statement immediately followed by a causal explanation linked to MST's organizational progress. Repression is here depicted as a predestined effect to social movement growth; whereas rural violence refers to an ongoing reality in the present, it also brings historization and a prognosis of repression to come. In *Jornal Sem Terra*, the present became entangled with past and future; present material conditions were depicted as stemming from a problematic past that needed to be addressed to change the future. Accordingly, the *near future* is comparably noticeable in both corpora as a temporal orientation involving prognoses of rural violence and calls to action against it. However, the *near past* was considerably more frequent in the analyzed Facebook posts. This inference aligns with the aforementioned observation about Facebook as a digital media platform suited for reproduction, rather than original production, of collective memories.

From these observations we would argue, drawing on Garde-Hansen et al. (2016), that MST's Facebook post primarily articulated collective memories *vertically* through select extractions from the movement history. *Jornal Sem Terra*, a media platform more dependent on careful editing and analysis, mainly articulated collective memories *horizontally* through situated accounts of a vibrant present and near past, as exemplified in the following excerpts from an article published in July 1996 (p. 17):

> The women that participate in the struggle for agrarian reform are, together with their husbands and children, suffering from the hard and uncertain life in the camps, as well as from the unbearable pain of losing comrades to lethal bullets from landowners and the police. For this reason, the Articulação Nacional de Mulheres is calling for a national mobilization on 12 August to demonstrate how they feel about rural violence and the lack of agrarian reform. On this date, in 1983, Margarida Alves was murdered. She was a brave woman from Paraíba, and the Rural Workers Union's chairwoman in Alagoa Grande, when she was murdered on the orders of landowners. To date Margarida is recognized as a symbol of passion and force in the struggle of female rural workers.

Here we see an account of a present mobilization, and a call for a future action, closely linked to an assassination in MST's near past. The remembrance, or memorial, of Margarida Alves is retrieved from the past to historically anchor a present struggle against 'rural violence and the lack of agrarian reform'. What is at work here is an ongoing collective memory construction: the formation of a female rural workers' faction was added to the MST historiography via the memorial and at the same time archived as a collective memory through this article. In other words, *Jornal Sem Terra* instigated a horizontal memory construction, a *making* of collective memories, while the Facebook page prompted a vertical memory construction bound to their re-making.

Concluding discussion

Our empirical analysis offers longitudinal insight about how an enduring social movement continuously appropriates print and digital media in its collective memory construction. Rather than focusing on the roles of digital media in social mobilization (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Gerbaudo, 2012; Treré, 2015), we have analyzed how the mediation of collective memory construction changes with available technologies. *Jornal Sem Terra*, a print media starting in the early 1980s, shaped the MST as a social movement, documented MST's actions, and served as a pedagogical instrument for its members. MST's Facebook page, launched three decades later, primarily serves as a medium to commemorate and relay MST's history. In comparison to reports in *Jornal Sem Terra*, MST's Facebook page is directed more to members of the public who are external to the movement (Sartoretto, 2015) and broadcasts MST's history rather than constructs new collective memories. The print media constructed collective memory *horizontally*, the Facebook page constructed it *vertically*, striking a delicate balance between needs, goals, and affordances that have entailed MST's strategic debates over digital media appropriation (Sartoretto, 2015, 2016). Its Facebook page has primarily been utilized as a medium for commemoration of movement-formative events, summoned from the distant and near past. With MST's move from print to digital media, the functions of contextualization, reporting, and documentation once fulfilled by the newspaper have not fully transferred to the digital platform. This may be related to the Facebook page being driven by a small team of MST activists, whereas *Jornal Sem Terra* was largely produced collectively by local MST groups across Brazil.

Thus, the temporal nexus of collective memory mediation is conveyed for social movements both in peril and with potential. Our study shows that collective memories of rural violence are indeed formative for Brazil's landless movement, although differently constructed in MST's internal newspaper and on its Facebook page. Rural violence was in *Jornal Sem Terra* mainly used to contextualize and retell ongoing events, thus assembling fragments for collective memory construction. On Facebook, rural violence was more comparably employed to announce remembrance, call to action, or communicate ongoing events in the present. Submitted to the platform's communicative logic, Facebook posts about rural violence typically had a character of registering or noting ongoing events, rather than commenting on or analyzing them. By contrast, the articles in *Jornal Sem Terra* typically situated such registers in a broader movement narrative. In this regard, *Jornal Sem Terra* employed a *horizontal* collective memory construction by carefully documenting ongoing and upcoming events, whereas Facebook posts primarily engaged in *vertical* extraction of already established collective memories. Differently put, print media predominantly produced a narrative around collective memories of rural violence – which were then re-produced through digital media.

Our investigation highlights a need for refined historiographic tools, geared towards capturing collective memory construction of social movements that primarily archive their actions through Facebook and other ephemeral media platforms while using them for organizational purposes. Social movement research focused on collective memory construction must also consider technopolitical mechanisms entailed to the inception of digital media in social mobilization practices. This has historiographical implications as well. Digitally organized movements that are now in an initial phase of history writing,

such as the climate activism network Extinction Rebellion (XR), leave few historical sources from their collective actions. Predominantly organized through digital media platforms, XR focuses on calls to action while posting very brief accounts of ongoing events. This arguably generates a considerable thin basis for horizontal collective memory construction; future XR activists will have little information to extract for recollecting collective memories vertically. At the same time, non-access to written archives could also trigger revived oral traditions, prompting more articulate and positioned historiographies. Black Lives Matter (BLM) exemplifies how such struggles can at once can be physical and virtual. BLM groups often use digital media platforms to mobilize physical manifestations that aim to resignify a certain place of remembrance, typically done in the US by exposing and protesting artefacts linked to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Digital technologies for social interaction could in this sense engender new practices of remembering. To investigate this temporal nexus of online/offline mobilization, an amalgam of oral history and digital humanities methods might be required for social movement studies to come.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The study has received no funding.

Notes on contributors

Markus Lundström is a historian and sociologist focused on extraparliamentary political thought.

Paola Sartoretto is a communications scholar focused on social mobilization and digital media.

ORCID

Markus Lundström http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3579-2143
Paola Sartoretto http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5638-6606

References

Alvaides, N., & Scopinho, R. (2013). De sem-terra a sem-terra: Memórias e identidades. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, *25*(2), 288–297. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-71822013000200006

Benford, R. (2002). Controlling narratives and narratives as control. In J. Davis (Ed.), *Stories of change: Narrative and social movements* (pp. 53–75). State University of New York Press.

Bennett, L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action. *Information, Communication & Society*, *15*(5), 739–768. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661

Bennett, L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Bezerra, A. (2011). *O Jornal dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra e seus temas 19812001*. São Paulo.

Bisht, P. (2020). In between old and new, local and transnational: Social movements, hybrid media and the challenges of making memories move. In S. Merrill, E. Keightley, & P. Daphi (Eds.),

Social movements, cultural memory and digital media: Mobilising mediated remembrance (pp. 173–196). Springer.
Branford, S., & Rocha, J. (2002). *Cutting the wire: The story of the landless movement in Brazil*. Latin America Bureau.
Chakrabarty, D. (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press.
Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Polity.
CPT. (2018). *Conflitos no Campo Brasil 2018*. Comissão Pastoral da Terra.
Custódio, L., & Sartoretto, P. (2020). Counter-hegemonic media production among urban and rural social movements in Brazil. In J. Lugo-Ocando & S. G. Santamaria (Eds.), *Media and governance in Latin America: Towards a plurality of voices*(pp. 203–223). Peter Lang.
Daphi, P. (2017). *Becoming a movement. Indentity, narrative and memory in the European global justice movement*. Rowman & Littlefield.
De Jong, W., Shaw, M., & Stammers, N. (2005). *Global activism, global media*. Pluto Press.
Doerr, N. (2014). Memory and culture in social movements. In B. Baumgarten, P. Daphi, & P. Ullrich (Eds.), *Conceptualizing culture in social movement research* (pp. 206–226). Springer.
Downing, J. (2008). Social movement theories and alternative media: An evaluation and critique. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *1*(1), 40–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2007.00005.x
Drinot, P. (2011). Website of memory: The war of the pacific (1879–84) in the global age of YouTube. *Memory Studies*, *4*(4), 370–385. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698011409290
Elke Debiasi, R. Percepções sobre a violência no processo de estruturação do MST no Nordeste brasileiro (19851995). (2019). *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, *45*(1), 104–114. [Article]. https://doi.org/10.15448/1980-864X.2019.1.31379
Farthing, L., & Kohl, B. (2013). Mobilizing memory: Bolivia's enduring social movements. *Social Movement Studies*, *12*(4), 361–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.807728
Fernandes, B. (1999). *Formação e territorialização do movimento dos trabalhadores rurais sem terra - MST (1979 –1999)*. Universidade de São Paulo.
Florini, S. (2016). Disrupting the past, reframing the present: Websites, alternative histories and petit récits as black nationalist politics. In A. Hajek, C. Lohmeier, & C. Pentzold (Eds.), *Memory in a mediated world: Remembrance and reconstruction* (pp. 113–128). Palgrave Macmillan.
Freire, P. (2005 [1970]). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.
Garde-Hansen, J., McEwen, L., & Jones, O. (2016). Towards a memo-techno-ecology: Mediating memories of extreme flooding in resilient communities. In A. Hajek, C. Lohmeier, & C. Pentzold (Eds.), *Memory in a mediated world: Remembrance and reconstruction* (pp. 55–73). Palgrave Macmillan.
Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets*. Pluto Press.
Gillan, K. (2018). Temporality in social movement theory: Vectors and events in the neoliberal Timescape. *Social Movement Studies*, *19*(5-6), 516–536. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1548965
Girardi, E. P. (2019). Questão agrária, conflitos e violências no campo brasileiro. *Revista NERA*, *22* (50), 116–134.
Guenther, K. (2012). A movement without memory: Feminism and collective memory in post-socialist Germany. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, *17*(2), 157–174. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.17.2.p8334vt163677676
Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultual lives*. New York University Press.
Halbwachs, M. (1980). *The collective memory*. Harper & Row.
Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.
Hammond, J. (2009). Land occupations, violence, and the politics of agrarian reform in Brazil. *Latin American Perspectives*, *36*(167), 156–177. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X09338589
Hoskins, A. (2017). Memory of the multitude: The end of collective memory. In A. Hoskins (Ed.), *Digital memory studies* (pp. 97–121). Routledge.

Jornal Sem Terra. (1986, June). *Pé na estrada, em busca da Reforma Agraria*. Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra.
Jornal Sem Terra. (1989, September). *Forjar dirigentes na luta*. Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra.
Jornal Sem Terra. (1996, July). *Mulheres rurais organizam movimento nacional*. Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra.
Kaun, A. (2015). Regimes of time: Media practices of the dispossessed. *Time & Society*, *24*(2), 221–243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X15577276
Kaun, A. (2016). Archiving protest digitally: The temporal regime of immediation. *International Journal of Communication*, *10*(2016), 5395–5408.
Keightley, E. (2013). From immediacy to intermediacy: The mediation of lived time. *Time & Society*, *22*(1), 55–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X11402045
Korolija, N., & Linell, P. (1996). Episodes: Coding and analyzing coherence in multiparty conversation. *Linguistics*, *34*(4), 799–832. https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1996.34.4.799
Krotz, F. (2009). Mediatization: A concept with which to grasp media and societal change. In K. Lundby (Ed.), *Mediatization: Concept, changes, consequences* (pp. 21–40). Peter Lang Publishing.
Leal, T. (2017). Elas merecem ser lembradas: Feminismo, emoções e memória em rede. *Intercom-Revista Brasileira De Ciências Da Comunicação*, *40*(2), 169–185. https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-58442017210
Leong, C., Pan, S., Bahri, S., & Fauzi, A. (2019). Social media empowerment in social movements: Power activation and power accrual in digital activism. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *28*(2), 173–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085X.2018.1512944
Lilja, M. (2018). The politics of time and temporality in Foucault's theorisation of resistance: Ruptures, time-lags and decelerations. *Journal of Political Power*, *11*(3), 419–432. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2018.1523319
Lundström, M. (2017). *The making of resistance: Brazil's landless movement and narrative enactment*. Springer International Publishing.
Lundström, M., & Sartoretto, P. (2019). Memória Coletiva e Mobilização em um Tempo Atemporal [Collective Memory and Mobilization in a Timeless Time]. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias de la Comunicación*, *18*(32), 108–117.
Maeckelbergh, M. (2016). The prefigurative turn: The time and place of social movement practice. In A. C. Dinerstein (Ed.), *Social sciences for an other politics: Women theorizing without parachutes* (pp. 121–134). Springer International Publishing.
Mattoni, A., & Treré, E. (2014). Media practices, mediation processes, and mediatization in the study of social movements. *Communication Theory*, *24*(3), 252–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12038
McAdam, D., & Sewell, W. (2001). It's about time: Temporality in the study of social movements and revolutions. In C. Tilley, D. McAdam, E. Perry, J. Goldstone, R. Aminzade, S. Tarrow, & W. Sewell (Eds.), *Silence and voice in the study of contentious politics* (pp. 89–125). Cambridge University Press.
Medeiros, L. (2015). Rural social movements, struggles for rights, and land reformin contemporary Brazilian history. In M. Carter (Ed.), *Challenging social inequality: The landless rural workers movement and agrarian reform in Brazil* (pp. 68–89). Duke University Press.
Merrill, S., Keightley, E., & Daphi, P. (2020). Introduction: The digital memory work practices of social movements. In S. Merrill, E. Keightley, & P. Daphi (Eds.), *Social movements, cultural memory and digital media: Mobilising mediated remembrance* (pp. 1–30). Springer.
Merrill, S., & Lindgren, S. (2018). The rhythms of social movement memories: The mobilization of Silvio Meier's activist remembrance across platforms. *Social Movement Studies*, *19*(5-6), 657–674. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1534680.
Milan, S. (2013). *Social movements and their technologies: Wiring social change*. Springer.
Morissawa, M. (2001). *A história da luta pela terra eo MST*. Expressão Popular.
MST. (2014, August 9). *Se calarmos, as pedras Gritarão Facebook*. Facebook / Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra.

Neiger, M., Meyers, O., & Zandberg, E. (2011). *On media memory: Collective memory in a new media age*. Springer.
Ondetti, G. A. (2008). *Land, protest, and politics: The landless movement and the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil*. Pennsylvania State University Press.
Pasquetti, L. (2007). *Terra ocupada: Identidades reconstruídas, 1984-2004*. Universidade de Brasília.
Polletta, F. (2009). *It was like a fever: Storytelling in protest and politics*. University of Chicago Press.
Polletta, F., & Chen, P. (2015). Narrative and social movements. In D. D. Porta & M. Diani (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of social movements*.
Rosa, H. (2013). *Social acceleration: A new theory of modernity*. Columbia University Press.
Sartoretto, P. (2015). *Voices from the margins: People, media, and the struggle for land in Brazil*. Karlstads universitet.
Sartoretto, P. (2016). Mobilization as communication: A Latin American contribution to the study of social movements. *Commons: Revista de comunicación y ciudadanía digital*, *5*(2), 93–117. https://doi.org/10.25267/COMMONS.2016.v5.i2.05
Schulz, W. (2004). Reconstructing mediatization as an analytical concept. *European Journal of Communication*, *19*(1), 87–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323104040696
Silverstone, R. (2013). *Media and morality: On the rise of the mediapolis*. Polity.
Sodré, M. (2014). *A Ciência do Comum - Notas para o método comunicacional*. Editora Vozes.
Stédile, J. P. (1997). *A reforma agrária e a luta do MST* (2 ed.). Editora Vozes.
Stedile, J. P., & Fernandes, B. M. (1999). *Brava gente: A trajetória do MST e a luta pela terra no Brasil*. Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo.
Straubhaar, R. (2015). Public representations of the collective memory of Brazil's Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra. *Latin American Perspectives*, *42*(3), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X15570891
Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K., & Neiger, M. (2015). Print is future, online is past: Cross-media analysis of temporal orientations in the news. *Communication Research*, *42*(8), 1047–1067. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214558260
Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K., & Neiger, M. (2017). Temporal affordances in the news. *Journalism*, *19*(1), 37–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916689152
Treré, E. (2015). Reclaiming, proclaiming, and maintaining collective identity in the #YoSoy132 movement in Mexico: An examination of digital frontstage and backstage activism through social media and instant messaging platforms. *Information, Communication & Society*, *18*(8), 901–915. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1043744
Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*. Beacon Press.
Vreeswijk, A. (2013). *O MST em cena: Imagens e subjetividades dos Sem Terra no documentário brasileiro (1987/2008)*. Universidade de Brasília.
Wagner-Pacifici, R., & Ruggero, C. (2018). Temporal blindspots in occupy philadelphia. In *Social movement studies*, *19*(5-6), 675–696. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1474096.
Wright, A., & Wolford, W. (2003). *To inherit the earth: The landless movement and the struggle for a new Brazil*. Food First Books.
Zamponi, L. (2018). *Social movements, memory and media: Narrative in action in the Italian and Spanish student movements*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Zamponi, L. (2020). #ioricordo, beyond the Genoa G8: Social practices of memory work and the digital remembrance of contentious pasts in Italy. In S. Merrill, E. Keightley, & P. Daphi (Eds.), *Social movements, cultural memory and digital media: Mobilising mediated remembrance* (pp. 141–171). Springer.