

**Lessons from the Eco Sítio: Mapping Emergent Alternatives  
in Rural Second Homes**

By

Mariah Ray McCoy

Supervised By

Deborah McGregor

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies

York University, Toronto, Ontario, Turtle Island (Canada)

July 31<sup>st</sup> 2020

## **Abstract**

Rural secondary homes (RSH) are experiencing an influx of homeowners, recreationalists, tourists, ideas, and threats. Cottage, cabin, and sitios are some of the fastest growing land tenure types in the world and are woefully under analyzed. This research looks at RSH region in northern Ontario, Canada, as well as a RSH region outside of São Paulo, Brazil, and begins to map the emerging efforts and desires for sustainable, just, futures. Ethnographic interviews carried out in each community with key informants comprise the data, and ultimately place RSH regions in the Global North and Global South into conversation with each other. This paper also trains a critical eye on the neo-liberal style development in these regions, as the houses grow more extravagant and the communities more insular and tracks the losses this separating creates. Marx's metabolic rift serves as starting lens by which to evaluate the information gathered in the interviews, asking whether certain themes aid in repairing the rift between centers and peripheries, or worsen it. Finally, this research outlines suggestions for further research in RSH regions globally, as their potential for alternative world building, interdisciplinary agri-food justice, sovereignty, and community building is only beginning to manifest.

**Keywords:** Rural secondary homes (RSH), the metabolic rift, solidarity, food sovereignty, eco-tourism, neo-liberalism, centers and peripheries, pluriverse

## Foreword

I began this research as a question for myself and the spaces I occupy. From Alaska, I have a fluency in rural homes, having constructed them, lived in them, raised animals there and practiced subsistence food systems. I have had the opportunities to visit similar regions in quite different corners of the globe, including Mongolia, Brazil, and Mauritius. I have long wondered about these regions, how I am invited into them and thrive there, as well as their seemingly insulated atmosphere. As a white, cis, privileged young academic, I felt the need to utilize this MRP to examine environmental possibilities horizontally. A short discussion with friends of mine in Brazil, and we knew that I could combine my question with their interest in learning options for their operation.

My plan of study for this program focuses on solidarity with subaltern populations. Rather than researching down onto communities struggling with extraction or continuing to analyze why the subaltern cannot speak (Spivak), I looked to food. No movement for justice is without a dream for the future, for an alternative set of futures. Solidarity is an unfolding process, but as Dr. Lisa Myers pointed out to me, futures cannot be made without food. This project aligns itself with food sovereignty, problematizing and radicalizing land tenure, and catalyzing activism in RSH spaces frequently overlooked. Ideally this work could continue and connect to other RSH regions that are mobilizing in ground-breaking new ways, taking a page from the grassroots movements globally and spreading till communities can no longer remain insular but instead engage in praxis with their neighbors, helping to seed a sustainable and just set of futures.

## Acknowledgements

I first have to acknowledge Shi, who invited me to work with her for a month in Lao Luiz, patiently corrected my Portuguese, and sat through every interview to act as my translator and to provide background. I would have been unable to fully comprehend the stories that the sítio owners shared, and wouldn't have met many of them without her assistance. Shi has a way with animals and an impressive knowledge and curiosity about sustainability—I will always treasure our afternoons mulching manure by hand to plant mahogany saplings. Obrigada Shi, from the bottom of my heart. I also want to thank every other member of Eco Sítio, and all the folks I spoke to in Brazil for their participation, kindness, support, and wisdom. Thank you Yujo, Marcia, Erika, Marta, Luna, Wilson, Margarida, José, Nelson, as well as the jungle, mountains and streams of the sitio.

In Ontario, I cannot thank my advisor—Dr. Deborah McGregor—sufficiently for her guidance and patience. She aided me in handling this broad study, preparing for travel, my writing process and so much more. Deb, I am deeply grateful. I am also grateful to Megan for listening with a sympathetic ear to my concerns with this work, and supporting me on my journey. To the participants in Ontario, I am honored that you shared time with me during a global pandemic. Thank you Lynn, Gilbert, Robin, Shannon, and Kelli.

To my trusty editing team of incredible women, Kate, Melissa, Riddhi and Emily, I owe you all wine. Don't let me forget. I am grateful to my partner, Kyle, for your endless support and for being a shoulder to cry on. I am also thankful for the support of my parents, Bill and Connie, for all the foot work and emotional guidance they provided to get me into this program, and into Canada, in the first place.

Without the care and love of many different support networks this project would not have been possible. Thank you all.

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....  | 1  |
| Part 1: Background and research questions.....                                    | 1  |
| Part 2: Case backgrounds and literature review.....                               | 8  |
| Part 3: Research approach and methods.....  | 13 |
| <b>Chapter 2: Brazilian Sítios and the Mata Atlántico</b> .....                   | 16 |
| Part 1: Description of findings .....   | 16 |
| Part 2: Themes.....   | 17 |
| <b>Chapter 3: Northern Ontario and Cottage Country</b> .....                      | 38 |
| Part 1: Description of findings.....  | 38 |
| Part 2: Themes.....   | 39 |
| <b>Chapter 4: Analysis: The Metabolic Rift and Food Sovereignty</b> .....         | 54 |
| Part 1: The metabolic rift: bridging centers and peripheries .....                | 54 |
| Part 2: Summary of analysis.....  | 62 |
| <b>Chapter 5: Conclusions and Further Research in Rural Secondary Homes</b> ..... | 63 |
| <b>Works Cited</b> .....  | 65 |
| <b>Appendices</b> .....   | 67 |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Part 1: Background

Rural secondary homes (hereafter abbreviated as RSH<sup>1</sup>) are becoming increasingly popular around the world, at a time when the stakes could not be higher. This MRP is concerned with RSH regions; areas where a high percentage of homes are only seasonally occupied and overall serve the same function: Relaxing, recuperating, and re-connecting with family and nature<sup>2</sup>. These regions are widespread globally, and expanding in scale and population (Støa 2008). This is due to increased mobility and ease of transport, economic factors, cultural shifts that center “nature” and traditional aesthetic, social media, climate change heating up cities, and lifestyle ideals. Long established regions of cabins, cottages and small farms are seeing massive shifts culturally, materially, and politically as more people strive to own small escapes from urban-life or to re-embrace plots of family land (Støa 2008). These changes are being navigated and adapted to on the ground but have yet to be sufficiently studied in wider contexts such as climate change, neo-liberal development, and food sovereignty. In many ways RSH are a type of land tenure that demonstrate the paradoxical spread of neoliberal and colonial power structures through supposedly traditional, rustic, earthy and slow<sup>3</sup> lifestyles. In another light, they are some of the most flexible and least surveilled and regulated parcels of land, possibly situating them well for catalyzing alternative ways of being that can prefigure the worlds we want to live in.

These alternative ways of being are the copious suggestions and actions that come from populations that hegemony has positioned at the margins, and who’s work to reignite and imagine systems that will outlast capitalism, patriarchy, carbon dependency, and the nation state for the base of this paper. As presented by David Held, Mary Kaldor, and Danny Quah in

---

<sup>1</sup> A RSH is a place, generally outside of a metropolitan center, where people go to temporarily live from time to time such as a cabin, cottage, sitio, or camp. RSHs is plural (homes). RSH regions include persons who live in the area full time at a single home, but often are entangled with say cottagers through economic and social regional typing and realities. Example: Cobalt Ontario, a rural town with a mining history, is not the same in population, economy, or spatial make up as the Muskoka’s.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of “Nature” in this paper will be used in the colloquial sense used by a majority of interviewees, however it is recognized that the division of human from nature is a dangerous dichotomy in the analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Slow food and slow economies imply ethical alternatives to unsustainable, mass-produced goods

their article *The Hydra-Headed Crisis* (Held et. al 2010), the Earth is understood to be facing several wicked problems simultaneously. Effective contemporary work requires examining these crises as separate heads to a single disastrous system, creating an inherently far-reaching and multidisciplinary theoretical and praxis-based approach. Focusing on lopping off just one head will create more problems. Furthermore, poorly thought-out, and compartmentalized efforts of solidarity delay and damage efforts to build these alternatives (Slocum, Cadieux, Blumberg 2016). Much environmental justice and critical development work researches “up” to the wealthy and corporate class or “down” to the subaltern. Alternatively, this paper will ethically entangle the middle class in its own land ownership practices, researching horizontally to middle class RSH owners with a problematic presence on Turtle Island<sup>4</sup>. This research seeks to fill a gap in political ecology literature on RSH regions and to make praxis suggestions that could enable future works and emergence of community, sustainably, sovereignty, and care.

Analysis of two case studies will be carried out to this end, one RSH region in the global developing South and one in the over-developed global North. The first case study comes from Brazilian *sítio* territory outside of São Paulo in the valley district of São Luiz do Paraitinga and the neighboring Natividade do Serra. This area is part of the once massive Mata Atlântico rainforest, which stretches all the way to Rio along the coast and is sometimes called “Serra do Mar” or mountains by the sea. This is the same region that challenged the violent colonialists who arrived on the coast of modern day Brazil in 1500, the dense and steep Mata Atlântico forest blocking their advances deeper inland. Brazil’s second largest forest, the Mata was once more biodiverse than the Amazon, though in the past 500 years hit has been reduced to 8% of its original majesty (Colombo, Joly 2010). Mostly surrounded by agricultural and ranch land today, the conservation of the Mata Atlântico is drawing more and more tourism into the mountains and near by beaches.

---

<sup>4</sup> Turtle Island is a non-colonial term includes North and Central America



Figure 1: Chapel in São Luiz do Paraitinga



Figure 2: Map of the Mata Atlântico

“Sítio”<sup>5</sup> (pronounced see-tchu) in Brazilian Portuguese means site, location, or place. In the valley of São Luiz do Paraitinga, roughly three hours outside of São Paulo, it is also used to refer to small plots of land owned by lower/middle class families. A sítio is usually a couple acres, enough to have a private cultivation, a bit of wilderness, and a small rural home at the end of a dirt road. The demographic of these landowners is varied, extending from white Brazilians, indigenous decedents, gauchos, a large number of Japanese decedents<sup>6</sup> and many others. My work will be based out of a sítio called Eco Sítio das Cerejeiras, or the Eco Site of the Cherry Blossoms. A family owned plot seeking to become a certified permaculture producer, the site is roughly 14 acres on the side of a mountain and is surrounded by similarly sized lots owned by other family members. Eco Sítio has a history of being used as ranch land for raising cattle and horses almost a hundred years ago. This land is now a thick second growth rainforest

---

<sup>5</sup> Sometimes these lots are also called roca, though that term is more used by full-time residents in the region. Different sized lots have different colloquial terms, but here are generalized as sítios

<sup>6</sup> A complex 100+ years of Japanese migration to Brazil have included indentured labor, separation of families, resilient cultural practices, and WWI and WWII immigration policies; all of which have all contributed to Brazil hosting the largest Japanese identifying and speaking population outside of Japan itself

and hand constructed family homes. They use part of the land to farm and the rest to forage pine nuts, heart of palm, bamboo, and other raw ingredients or materials.

As the primary country governing the world's largest rainforest, Brazil holds a primary position in recent environmental concerns and studies. Academic research has produced numerous papers that involve Brazil's landless peasant farmers and the world's largest grassroots environmental organization, La Via Campesina. On the other side, "researching up" has brought a critical lens to the crimes of colonization, capitalism, the patriarchy, and the Brazilian government. However, the middle-class section of Brazilian society, neither landless nor wealthy, has received less attention as possible agents for change despite their expanding presence in the countryside.

This under-examined middle class section reappears in the second case study of cottage country in Ontario, Canada. Indigenous struggles against large-scale development or the Canadian State dominate current research on environmental issues, and for good reason. However, much like *sítios* the region of northern Ontario known as "cottage country" is deserving of closer analysis. In this region residents of Toronto and other metropolitan areas escape to private cottages on the cooler lakes in the summer. Interspersed between the lakes are year-round farms and towns, many of which are remnants of extractive logging and mining operations in the region. Some older cottages are bare bones while others are being built or remodeled into suburban quality homes on waterfront property. Areas such as the Kawartha Lakes and the Muskoka region are some of the fastest growing recreational real estate markets in the world<sup>7</sup>. These retreats are viewed as an escape to the natural world and as a place to relax and host family events and get-togethers. Cottage popularization has brought a whole host of eco tourist lodges, spas, golf courses, bed & breakfasts, and excursion-based outdoor businesses into the region.

---

<sup>7</sup> Muskoka ranks second behind the Cote d'Azur in France as the world fastest growing recreational real estate according to the Canadian Real Estate Wealth Magazine (Randall 2015)

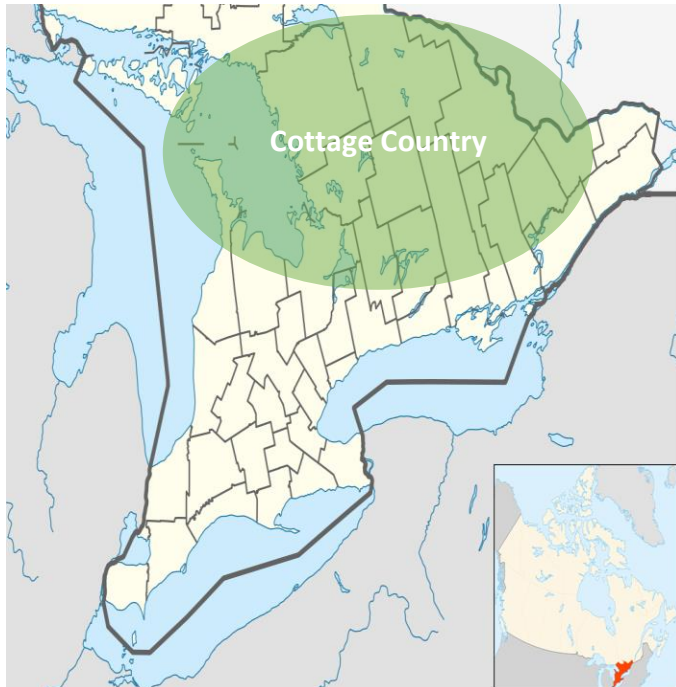


Figure 3: Map of Ontario Cottage Country



Figure 4: A typical lakeside cottage

As of colonized history<sup>8</sup>, northern Ontario hosted mining, timber, or farming towns, but now it is overwhelmingly checkered with lake houses that are only occupied seasonally. Prior to colonization, the area was inhabited—some continually and some seasonally—by various First Nations including the Anishinaabeg, Ojibwa, Wahta Mohawk, and Chippawa amongst others (Peace 2012). Much of the areas indigenous history has been actively omitted, and only recently have educational efforts from local city boards and museums begun to discuss information such as the massive man-made stone structure found underwater at MacDonald Lake, or metal working in the area (Tiffin 2018). In addition to a lack of analysis of indigenous history, current land claim struggles, and ecological change this cottage country region of Ontario has yet to be widely analyzed in tandem with other RSHs, and hopefully this research will add another layer of understanding to the area.

---

<sup>8</sup> “Historically” frequently omits long and detailed indigenous histories in an area. Prior to the violence of colonization, the area was occupied by the Anishinaabeg and other First Nations and Metis peoples. The treaties should be honored and the land should be returned, as proposed by the Yellowhead Institute’s red paper *Land Back* (2019)

The focus of this study will be firstly mapping RSHs and their evolving communities, politics, food systems, and relationships with the environment. Second, I will seek to identify the potential of RSH for prefiguring future worlds; particularly alternative agricultural practices, environmentalism, bridging the rural and the urban, and community organizing. The objectives of the paper are:

1. First, by using interviews with community members, the research will highlight current themes in RSH realities, desired futures, and dangers.
2. Second, this research seeks to explore the potential of RSH regions to a.) contribute meaningfully to community building, resiliency, solidarity, food sovereignty, or b.) to continue damaging trends in insular living, pollution, and neoliberal development. This MRP utilizes the lens of the metabolic rift to measure these potentialities and their ability to repair or worsen rift.
3. Lastly, provide a summary of the findings through the lens of the rift bridging the North and South distant yet similar communities to bring these spaces into conversation and catalyze further praxis in RSH regions, and to make suggestions for further research.

This research is positioned at the intersections of landownership and tenure, solidarity efforts, and alternative world building. A grounded and praxis-based approach is arguably the most effective in this area, and as such the research takes the form of community involvement and strengthening relationships with rural homeowners I already have established. Through interviews as well as getting to know the spaces and lived realities of both cottages and sítios I had hoped to map direct lines between these two cases that could encourage further exploration. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Canadian study was drastically reduced in scope. Nevertheless this work is enthusiastic and optimistic about what work could continue on this topic in the near future. Some members of the Eco Sítio are already looking into becoming a permanent education facility to teach about re-purposing, permaculture, bird and wildlife populations, and community building. Currently however it is a home, nestled at the foot of a jungle clad mountain and holding the people who live in and visit the region.

RSHs are emerging in peoples mindsets as possible futures, such as seem by growing interest in co-ops, permaculture, tiny homes, zero waste systems for water, food and electricity. This research desires to instigate both critical investigations and creative radical enthusiasm in the increasing human occupation of RSH and aims to map tactics for creating and growing alternative futures along these creek beds and dirt roads.

This MRP will outline the relevant literature, give brief backgrounds on the case regions, and explain the methodological approaches below. The seconds chapter will list the themes found in the Brazilian case study, and the third chapter the themes from Ontario. The fourth chapter will analyze the cases through the lens of the metabolic rift and map out some similarities and possibilities for solidarity between the North and South. The research questions that structure this paper include;

- What are RSH regions? How do people conceptualize of them?
- What pitfalls, threats, or challenges to the future can be anticipated and avoided? What work is effectively creating just and sustainable options for the future?
- What forms of assistance or organizing are most beneficial for people working towards alternatives in these regions?
- What work can I as the researcher do that aids the communities in São Paulo and Ontario?

This paper, in fulfillment of the requirements of an MRP and my plan of study, is asking these questions both to the benefit of community members who already work and live in these regions, and for the aide of myself as a researcher with history, fluency, and relationships with these regions in several contexts internationally. If alternatives are to emerge to outlast the collapse of the systems producing the hydra-headed crises, such as capitalism and colonialism, then solidarity efforts are necessary in all corners, including the often neglected regions of RSHs, which I hypothesize contain many possibilities for such work if catalyzed. Below are descriptions o the cases, the literature this MRP builds upon, and a report of the methodological and research approaches employed to answer the research questions.

## Part 2: Case Backgrounds and Literature Review

Below I will provide some background for each case study. By no means extensive, these brief histories help to acknowledge the realities that formed current arrangements in São Luiz and northern Ontario. Afterwards I provide a review of the literature that is key to this MRP's analysis and suggestions for further research.

### *Background for Brazil's Mata Atlántico*

The rolling sea of rounded jungle mountains and tilled valleys that skirt the Mata Atlantico succeed masterfully in hiding away small farms, personal stories, livelihoods, and worlds. On the eight hour drive from São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro a passerby might interact with the region so little as to stop by a restaurant or barraca<sup>9</sup> and purchase some Pamonha<sup>10</sup> or take an Instagram worthy group photo at one of the many waterfalls. This strip of forest runs up the Atlantic coast collects the precipitation that rolls off the ocean which sinks it into red clay earth, making it extremely fertile and arable.

These secluded bowls offer up vibrant flavors of life. This research project focuses on Natividade do Serra and São Luiz do Paraitinga, two sister counties roughly three hours north of São Paulo. Prior to colonization the area was occupied by the Tupi<sup>11</sup> indigenous peoples, who still live in the area despite the fact that the language is considered extinct. The name São Luiz do Paraitinga comes from "Parahytinga" meaning clear waters in what remains of the Tupi language. When the Europeans invaded the Mata Atlántico's fierce and steep mountain front stalled their advance into the interior. Once the colonial government was able to settle the hills the culture of the Caipira<sup>12</sup> emerged. The Caipira is a specific type of rural culture for southern central Brazil, and is similar to the cowboys of the American West. These ranchers, hustlers, and breeders collectively developed a distinct dialect, set of traditions, and unique folk music. The

---

<sup>9</sup> A small shop front constructed on the side of the road where families sell goods from their sítio

<sup>10</sup> A treat made from sweet corn paste and steamed in corn husks. Pamonha can be savory or sweet, with additives such as honey or coconut milk

<sup>11</sup> This indigenous tribe was the main group that encountered the Portuguese on the Atlantic coast, and suffered extreme losses to disease and Bandeirantes (colonial scouts), taking a society of over 1 million residents to a handful of isolated communities confined to Brazilian indigenous territories.

<sup>12</sup> "Kaipira" has Tupi linguistic roots and translate as "bush cutter"

foothills of the Mata Atlántico were leveled to create grassland for their cattle, and the area experienced severe deforestation and soil nutrient depletion. The region has remained agriculturally focused for centuries, though in 2002 São Luiz do Paraitinga was declared an “estancia turistica” or tourist destination and many of its waterways and colonial buildings protected. Since then, there has been a shift in local organizing and governance to re-growing the forest and preserving the historical and influential sites. In 2010 São Luiz do Paraitinga was declared a national heritage site by the National Institute of Hispanic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) enabling the city to receive almost R \$115 million in repairs and infrastructure after a massive flood devastated the valley in 2010. Today the area is mostly comprised of small lots that have been in the families of regional farmers for a few generations, with tourism and partial residence on the rise. Much of the available data on the Mata Atlántico in recent years has been backed by government funding for conservations, and focuses on flora and fauna populations and ranges.

### *Background of Ontario’s Cottage Country*

The second case study takes place in Ontario’s cottage country. This term cottage country can be used for a variety of such regions, but this paper focuses on the area roughly two hours north of Toronto, reaching from Hunstville, the Muskokas, Algonquin, the Kawarthas to Bancroft. This region is seated on the Canadian Shield<sup>13</sup>, one of the oldest rock structures (roughly 2.5 billion years old) on the surface of the earth and used to house mountains that would have dwarfed the Himalayas. This terrain was scraped away by innumerable glacial advances and recessions, leaving the Shield, a flattened root system of those mountains. As such the region is littered with craggy rock outcroppings and dark green forests full of towering pine and maple trees. Glacial scaring left millions of kettle lakes<sup>14</sup> and ponds. Cottages are nestled into these polka dot lakes, lining their shores as country roads wind through the ridges in between.

---

<sup>13</sup> Geology database, Ontario Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines  
<https://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/en/mines-and-minerals/geology>

<sup>14</sup> Seriously, they stopped counting at 250,000 lakes, unlike Minnesota (land of ten thousand lakes) Ontario houses about one-fifth of the worlds fresh water <https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-ontario>

Prior to the violence of colonization there were many thriving and advanced nations and communities throughout modern-day Ontario, including but not limited to the Anishinaabe, Algonquin, Haudenosaunee, Ojibwa and Huron-Wendat peoples. Ontario today has 133 First Nations communities (as identified under the Indian Act), Metis communities, Inuit peoples who have moved south from Nunavut, in addition to many other unrecognized or under reported indigenous peoples and workers.<sup>15</sup> The region this study specifically examines is treaty territory covered by the Williams Treaties<sup>16</sup> signed in October, 1923 by seven Anishinaabe First Nations and representatives of the Crown covering approximately 52,000km<sup>2</sup>. There is a complex, singular, and incredibly painful relationship of coloniality in the region, which informs this work, though it cannot be sufficiently illustrated here. The relevant concepts for this paper include problematizing landownership and tenure on treated and stolen land, challenging indigenous erasure from the region and cottager mindsets, and examining the possible alternatives moving forward such as traditional education, interdisciplinary and cooperative food organizing, and land trusts and alternatives to privatization. This paper acknowledges that many of the alternatives proposed below are not new to the land or the traditional peoples of Turtle Island.

Since the establishment of colonial Canada, the region north of Toronto/Tkaronto has been utilized for its natural resources, as a peripheral region that feeds the urban centers. Heavy mining practices in the region have pulled gold, cobalt, silica, silver, graphite, uranium, phosphates such as apatite, and more commonly today aggregates. Logging founded many of the towns on the road map today, and aided in the creation of new waterways and locking channels. It continues to employ many locals in the region though past deforestation has led to increased concern and regulations in the area.

This case study builds from an existing critical analysis of Ontario's cottage country, which has been examined through lenses of tourism, social reproduction, nationalism, identity,

---

<sup>15</sup> This includes indigenous peoples from so called Canada who have lost their status due to marrying colonial settlers, obtaining higher education, serving in the Canadian Military, residential schools, ect. as well as other indigenous peoples from Turtle Island and Abya Yala (North and South America)

<sup>16</sup> Williams Treaties First Nations Settlement Agreement <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1542370282768/1542370308434>

and pollution in the past (Halseth, 1999, Wall, 2009, Harrison, 2014). The interviews held via phone inquired into the sustainability and solidarity efforts in the region, as experienced by a variety of people—cottage owners, farmers, community organizers, and families. The goal was to understand what unique aspects of this region could point towards the future and opportunities for the local and transient populations. Despite being a primarily place-based inquiry, regrettably, this case study was unable to take place in the areas discussed as COVID made it impossible to go to people’s properties. This diminished the chance of inquiring about specifics of the lakes, lots, and fields in a manner that informs the research about daily habits and experiences of the key stakeholders. Luckily, many participants were willing to send me images to publish so that that spatial and visual gap could be somewhat filled.

#### *Literature Base for Solidarity and the Metabolic Rift*

For this research, I engage with a variety of authors to provide context and focus on small plot ownership and stewardship. One major building block is the work of Panhke et. al in *Understanding rural resistance: contemporary mobilization in the Brazilian countryside* (2015). The authors outline seven key characteristics of agrarian resistance in Latin America—many of which match the work on sitios—and argue that analysis of this resistance increases awareness of alternatives to development, hegemony, patriarchy, and oppressive politics, which grows more resistance. This MRP research seeks to contribute to that awareness of alternatives and resistance tactics.

Working towards this goal, this project recognizes a diversity of knowledges and futures, such as the pluriverse. As described by Janet Conway and Jakeet Singh, “Perception of the world as a pluriverse implies recognition of multiplicity, including political and ethical grammars” (2011). When looking at environmental justice conflicts and development, it is imperative not to situate the dispute as between two groups living in the same reality, but to extend into a plurality of “grammars” and recognize multiple realities. This can imply, for example, the different uses of the word ‘treaty’ by colonial v. indigenous actors in the colonial state of Canada.

A similar research concept is that of alter-globalization, which leads into my main lens of Marx's metabolic rift. Alter-globalization as discussed by Ariel Salleh in *From Metabolic Rift to "Metabolic Value": Reflections on Environmental Sociology and the Alternative Globalization Movement* (2010), describes the space where capitalism interferes with the planet's ability to continue reproductive life cycles. Alter-globalization centers subaltern thought and alternative ways of being, knowing, and living in the spaces where capitalism cannot place an economic value on people, places, or processes. These alternatives can be disseminated—catalyzing ecologically minded politics, economies, activism, and art. Many traditional ethnographic methodologies find the concepts within the pluriverse and alter-globalization illegible. By centering these principles, I align this research with subaltern creative organizing and transformative works and spaces alongside my community partners in Brazil. Utilizing neo-Marxist additions to the metabolic rift (Salleh 2010, Schneider and McMichael 2010, Foster and Clark 2012) I analyze the two case study's potential to repair or worsen the rift between capitalism and reproductive cycles, the human and the natural.

Solidarity with subaltern organizers, one of the pillars of this MRP, in this research seeks to map RSH regions onto the webs of the metabolic rift, and locate potential for alter-globalization, to fight the hydra. To build a critical understanding of allyship, I build from decolonial and feminist theories of Angela Davis (1983), Chandra Mohanty (1984), and Peter Gelderloos (2005). These authors offer strategies that exist outside of the traditional activist sphere, providing new insight into community-based tactics, land and material based solidarity, and subversive artistic methods. Their insight will provide a broader context for allyship tactics—through gender, class, and race—that I will then employ in my analysis of repairing the metabolic rift and in turn restoring community relationships that have been rifted between the center and the peripheries (Salleh 2010, Bond 2016).

This paper will endeavour to ethically and spatially engage RSHs in praxis and allyship, through an analysis of the metabolic rift. While no singular framework can suffice to analyze the under studied RSH regions presented here, as one of the main environmental and anti-capitalist theories it makes for a solid start to the work of bringing solidarity research to RSHs. Ideally the simple visual presented by the metabolic rift will also accomplish my goals for

dissemination and sharing the information discussed here across borders, languages, and the global North and global South.

### *Part 3: Research Approach and Methods*

This project takes a very tangible methodological approach: data takes the forms of in-person interviews in Brazil and phone conversations in Ontario, research journaling, the gathering of photos, maps, and family photos to serve as records for the RSH spaces. Casual ethnographic interviews, which lasted roughly an hour, were conducted with a schedule of questions through conversation organically shifted to the particular interests of each participant. I chose to begin with people I had established research relationships with, and through them build a network of nearby and interrelated community members. In Brazil I spoke to eight *sítio* owners and workers and in Ontario I spoke to six residents of cottage country. In Brazil I spoke to five women and three men, and in Ontario I spoke to four women and two men. In both case studies there was a mix of white and brown racial identities, though I spoke to no self-identifying indigenous peoples. Roughly half of each study were full-time residents of the region as farmers, laborers, rental and lodge owners, while the other half of each case study were rural secondary home owners, *sítio* goers and cottagers with a main residence elsewhere in an urban center. I chose to gather information both from full-time and part-time residents to gain a more holistic understanding of the region. I spent a month in Brazil visiting and working on the land with my friends and community members. The original goal had been to visit properties in Ontario and have homeowners speak to me in the spaces which we were discussing, but because of the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic it would have been unethical to approach Ontarians in any way other than virtually. Thankfully many community members were still able to send me photos of their cottages, farms and lodges.

For the Brazilian section of this research, I traveled to São Paulo to stay with friends of mine—the family who owns Eco *Sítio*. I had lived with them three years prior to learn Portuguese and was invited back to help at the *sítio*. In October 2019 I traveled for a weekend to São Paulo to meet up and discuss the possibility of incorporating work at Eco *Sítio* into my MRP. Over dinner in a noisy downtown seafood restaurant, we decided that the greatest

assistance for them at this time would be a.) physical assistance meeting the planting requirements of 600 new saplings this year for the agro-forestry project they've entered called Connections of the Mata Atlântico (CMA) and b.) to hear of other opportunities being pursued in similar regions that could inform their next steps. This decision was vital to my MRP—cooperatively designed praxis rather than researching “subjects” for knowledge production that doesn't benefit them is a pillar of solidarity *with* subaltern peoples. Reciprocity can function as an ethical guide for community based research (Maiter et. al 2008) and help value community partners as equal contributors to the project (Minkler 2004). Transparency in the goals of the project and my goals for my MRP allowed my friends in Brazil to author in the exchange of information they most desired from Canada. Additionally, the findings will focus on possible futures and alternatives, rather than centering a damage-based narrative (Tuck, 2009).

For the interviews I utilized a recording device to be sure to accurately quote and capture people's information, and stored the data in a secure laptop and notebook that was constantly on my person or secured in my possessions. All participants were given the chance to be anonymized, although the unanimous decision was to identify by first names only. My translation of all Portuguese interviews has been with the assistance of a dictionary, online translating software, my own passible Portuguese, and the immense help of Shirly, the motivator behind Eco sítio and my research partner at every interview in São Luiz.

There are normally few risks associated with speaking to middle class people about their privately-owned land. However, the policies of the newly elected Bolsonaro administration created a significant issue with its unfriendly stance on environmentalism. I spent a majority of my time in São Paulo in 2019 speaking to my friends at Eco Sítio about this very issue. They assured me that it is not a concern. Sítio owners are not activists, and even some of the organizers at Eco Sítio reject the label. Much like cottages in Ontario, Brazilians view sítios as traditional, quaint, and healthy for the economy rather than as political or activist spheres. Additionally, recently the organizers of Eco Sítio received a grant from a large bank to kickstart their farming and educational efforts as part of the government-backed Connections of the Mata Atlântico. This ensured relative safety for the ongoing work at Eco Sítio, and possibly the start of a long-term agreement certification from the regional government as a forestry

corridor. The ethical implications for the Canadian portion of this project were much lower, and all participants were similarly offered anonymity, though as I found many of these connections through friends and community networks everyone felt secure with first name identification and recording for quotation.

Findings will be disseminated in the form of this paper, its mapping, and the suggestions for further work. This research will return information to both audiences at the Eco Sítio and cottage country in Ontario, and academics and organic intellectuals alike. Regrettably some of the participants from São Luiz were illiterate, and instead Shirly will be relaying this information verbally and with photographs<sup>17</sup>. As will be mentioned below in the conclusion, this MRP is suggesting a new engagement of RSH regions, and points how more work that is widely dispersible is gravely needed to activate these spaces. I had hoped to incorporate these finding into a project Eco sítio is working on—a series of educational videos—but due to the pandemic this project is currently on hold.

This work geographically and critically captures part of this moment in land tenure and asks critical questions about RSH futures and potential. RSH regions occupy a type of messy space that bridges supposed contradictory ways of being rural and urban. These bridges are necessary for fundamentally transformative organizing that prefigures the future communities and environments we want to live in. Below I outline the themes of each case study, detailing the perspectives of the people who lent me their time.

---

<sup>17</sup> COVID-19 dependant, I may receive a copy of Yujo's notebook to translate and to turn into a visual reference book

## Chapter 2: Brazilian Sítios and the Mata Atlântico

“Adjust your life in the region; you can produce a better life that suits you, there at the sítio. Better it. Actually, the reality is that life out there betters you. For example, here you have the TV, hop on Netflix. You don’t need that at the sítio, there is plenty to do. The most you need is the radio.” -Erika

### Part 1: Description of Findings

This research identifies shared and salient themes from the residents of São Luis and Natividade through ethnographic interviews. These emerged from my conversations with approximately 8 people in the area in January of 2020. Many of these themes tie directly back to the conversations that I have had with these community members continuously over the past few years through my work at the sitio. This ethnography presented the opportunity to speak to persons with different social and spatial occupations in the region, and to map their concerns, opinions, and futures of the region. These themes paint only a small portion of the perspectives in this diverse and pocketed mountain forest, and yet they shed light on the important themes of regional conflicts and threats, community relationships, sustainability, and social justice. Below are the details of four central themes and some details about the people



Figure 6: Eco Sítio with the mountain behind it and flowers in bloom



Figure 5: Yujo and I building shelves for more saplings

who participated. Each section recounts the information shared with me verbally, visually, and as recorded in my journaling practice. Then a bulleted summary of the theme synthesizes the findings, before moving onto the next theme.

## Part 2: Themes

### *1: Conflicts and Threats*

One of the themes was regional and neighborly conflicts, and any possible foreseen threats to the valley in future. Responses to my inquiries about threats ranged widely in topic and scope, which is likely partially due to the interpretation of the question and partially to the breadth of concerns in the region. For two lifelong locals, Margarida and José, the threats are minimal. Margarida is one of the few female landowners in the area and lives on the same dirt road as Eco Sítio. Her lot mostly consists of eucalyptus, banana, coffee, and vibrant tropical flowers which she gifts to neighbors and children. She works occasionally at Eco Sítio and other sítios as a cleaner and she upkeepes the local church. Having received little schooling, she is illiterate. She is a life-long resident, and moved one hill over when she married her husband 50 years ago to this plot, where they built their house together. Her husband has passed away but she still lives in this house, and for our interview we sat on her porch surrounded by hammocks that she made from cattail reeds for her son to sell in town. She responded to my inquiry of threats by stating that she had lived 12 years alone in her home and had never once worried about break-ins.

José is hired for manual labor at the Eco Sítio, and is in his 70's. His job is to clear the forest as it re-engulfs the hillside. He does not believe in using machinery for this and instead uses a two-meter scythe to level the encroaching jungle. While I was there, he cleared two hectares in two days by hand. He leaves the severed plants to create a type of mulch. He makes less than \$20CAD a day on average working for sítio owners. At Eco Sítio he is always welcome to whatever fish he can catch from the lake. Also illiterate, he has been working since he was 12 on farmland, and has been a ranch hand, milker, cattle and horse castrator, and lasso braider. He is a devout Christian and volunteers lots of time at the church. When asked about possible dangers he veered in the direction of rising tourism. José told me that "Tourists are good

people, they are educated. But they bring the pickpockets. They have them in Rio and São Paulo and Taubate, now Ubatuba. And robbers don't just hit tourists they rob locals too. And now we're monitoring São Luiz." Apparently due to an increased interest in the regionally specific Carnival of São Luiz and the overall charm and history of the valley, more tourists are treating the area as a destination in and of itself, rather than as a refuel station on the road to Rio.



Figure 7: Official maps of Eco Sítio and its neighbors

A different concern reported was the enforcement of private property lines. Much of the current sítio properties were gained through squatters rights and homesteading legislations, and originally did not have clearly established borders. For example at the Eco Sítio

there was a disagreement over a boarder with a neighbor by 2 meters in 1977. The neighbor had cattle that had overgrazed his plot and was hoping for the extra two meters along the property boarder to graze them on. Luckily there were documents signed by the previous owner establishing the lines.

Transitioning to more economic threats, I spoke with one of the only mushroom farmers in the region, Nelson. We met him at his family's barraca.<sup>18</sup> Previously Nelson worked at an electrics firm in Japan, before returning to Brazil to buy rural property and start his life anew. He studied a variety of agricultural avenues before deciding on mushrooms. He and his family have been growing mushrooms for seven years now. When asked about threats to the region Nelson shared that;

---

<sup>18</sup> Family owned and operated roadside farm stands for selling goods from sítios.

We have economic swings and climate swings that could lower production. Because we work with various matrices. So say I select a winter variety, if in the winter it starts to get warm, that disturbs production as well. And the inverse is true: working with a warm weather strand during a cold snap is dangerous. I think that the biggest disturbances are economic, who's in the government, the lack of money circulating in the market. Because mushrooms are not part of the basic Brazilian diet, like beans and rice. So any movement in the government or if the economy goes bad, it's one of the first things that the consumer will cut.

The market has shifted in this way for Nelson a numerous times. Whenever the market changes he studies a new strand of mushroom and transitions his operation—for example switching from medicinal mushrooms to restaurant quality champion do Paris or shimeji. He must start completely from scratch each time, learnin about the different methods of cultivation.



*Figure 9: Nelson in one of his mushroom houses. Each sterilized sack of substrate can produce two dozen mushrooms or more, and takes 45 days from start to finish*



*Figure 8: This is one of the sterilization machines Nelson has invested in, and keeps his harvests from disease and contamination in his lab*

Perhaps the threat mentioned with the largest literal radius is nuclear power from the reactors near Rio de Janeiro as outlined by Yujo, the owner of Eco Sítio and one of my main guides for this ethnography. Yujo is extremely knowledgeable about the forest and medicinal

plants, having arguably spent the most time on site in São Luiz at the sitio. He and his brother built the main house of the sitio<sup>19</sup> in 1980, and have since worked to build additional storage, ponds, roads, etc. Yujo and his wife Marcia are most at home in the forest, and split their time between the sitio and São Paulo for family medical reasons. Regular occurrences precipitated by a conversation with Yujo include eating random leaves of medicinal herbs from the forest, driving dirt roads in a 1968 Ford f100 he keeps alive, and hiking through the jungle with a facao<sup>20</sup> in hand to find and clean up the sunken spring water catchment systems that feed the sitio's taps and gardens.



*Figure 10: Yujo and the crew doing the bi-annual clean/ reset of their gravity-based water system. Sunken plastic canisters wrapped in mesh feed into hundreds of meters of pipe that snake down the mountain to the Eco Sitio. They do not filter or treat the water, and it has been functional for decades.*

---

<sup>19</sup> Eco Sitio is currently the media handle and name that the group is trying to get off the ground for permaculture work. In conversation with the family and neighbors though it is simple recognized as the Uehara sitio, much how Ontarians do not label their cottages till they are actively selling a product or experience.

<sup>20</sup> Like a machete, but a bit shorter, and in the case of this region frequently fashioned out of scrap metal.

Prior to his ownership the plot was used to rear cows, bison and horses. The upper part of the lot has almost always been forest. Yujo, his wife Marcia, and his daughter Erika all lived in Japan for a few decades, and he credits his time in Japan for his knowledge about the dangers of the nuclear plant. Central Nuclear Almirante Álvaro Alberto (CNAAA) is right outside of Rio and has two reactors. Eco Sítio falls well within the 200km risk zone. This fact was new to Shi, his daughter, who thought the plant was much further away.

The last type of threat this project found was the parceling and purchasing of land by government and business entities and the privatization of water. Erika is part of the family that owns and operates Eco Sítio, and spends as much time as she can there while living and working in São Paulo. She works at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) in the curation and installation department. Her concern was with the parceling<sup>21</sup> and buying of land. She presented the example of Coca Cola FEMSA, the companies largest independent bottler—mostly located in South America and Southeast Asia—which is well known as the target of workers protests and human rights and health complaints.<sup>22</sup> FEMSA has recently expanded its water grab in the region. Erika said “We are no longer owners, and neither is the state of Brazil as subterranean water is sold to multinationals such as Coca Cola... In the state of São Paulo and where the sítio is, most is owned by Coca Cola. It was a very basic plan of privatization disguised as talk about sanitation.” This concern about multinational intervention in the region was present in other conversations, as many sítio owners have been approached a few times about selling their land for eucalyptus farming, ranching, and carbon off-setting. The growing interest in the region of São Luiz is not only for RSHs, but also these attempts at purchasing natural land for tax or industrial reasons

---

<sup>21</sup> I use this term to refer to the trend of ever smaller and more geometrical plots of land

<sup>22</sup> New York times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/14/world/americas/mexico-coca-cola-diabetes.html>



Figure 11: This image is from the FEMSA report filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission 2013. It outlines the areas in Brazil in which they bottle, presumably by taking and processing natural water sources. Could not find a more up-to-date map

The threats and dangers detected in São Luiz included a wide range of factors, including but not limited to economic, social, local, and regional concerns.<sup>23</sup> Yet the concerns each key informant shared were distinct from the others, displaying little overlap or symmetry. Again, the main concerns were;

- Local crime and tourism increasing crime rates
- Property borders
- Economic shifts that could endanger niche produce markets
- Nuclear power risk radius
- Land parcelling and privatization

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that the range of concerns, hypotheticals or trends reported here I had to persist in hearing as a researcher, as the initial response by all participants other than Yujo was a thoughtful shaking of the head and to say that there was no conflict or threats. The area of Sao Luis is certainly not perceived by this sampling of its residents to be in any immediate danger.

In each case, with the exception of Nelson who is looking to diversify his mushroom cultivation, these threats merited concern and conversation but not risk or emergency planning. As was pointed out by Yujo, most folks in the region either have a garden at their *sítio* or know how to survive a couple of days from food the forest and lakes—making emergencies such as the 2010 flood seem a bit less pressing. This region, with many hidden valleys and realities, frequently is read and simplified as “rural” and the possible risks it faces as being “simple.” The breadth of the concerns presented here point to a more complex understanding of the area its permanent and part time residents, as well as the different understandings of participants of the question.

## *2: Socio-spatial Organization and Community Relationships*

The urban centers of Brazil, as part of the economically grouped BRICS<sup>24</sup> are rapidly developing in the manner of the Global North, while much of the country remains subjected to the sub-optimal living standards of those who provide and produce this development. The region of São Luiz and Natividade are economically peripheral yet geographically situated between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro has enabled the urban and rural to become intermixed—creating interesting hybrid communities.

The cooler mountains of the Mata Atlântico house many *sítios* that are full-time residences, but seasonal get-away *sítios* and tourist styled ranch stays are on the rise. As with many secondary home regions, many people are attracted to the region because they are drawn by the lifestyle. Nelson desired to re-start his life when he left his manufacturing job. Yujo and Marcia retired there for a peaceful, healthy, and natural life. Of the people I spoke to, 3 were fulltime residents and 5 lived partially in São Luiz, partially in São Paulo. Erika explained “There are different values that are important there. Because those who really truly love to live in nature go there. A very urban person wouldn’t be interested in that lifestyle.” She went on to point out how those who move from São Paulo to the countryside take with them the activities they enjoy doing, “Prospective house makers here go out there and make a house. It is like a laboratory for you to create a practice and come back to the city to do it from another form.” In this way the region is experiencing both an affirmation of the rural lifestyle it is expected to

---

<sup>24</sup> An acronym to represent the five emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

have and an update in activities, knowledge, and perspectives from the ingress of fulltime and seasonal urban property owners and visitors.

Partially because of this search for simplicity and relaxation, almost every participant mentioned that their operation and property is self-reliant. The perceptions of the community from key participants interviewed for this research was surprisingly unanimous: Sítios are insular and isolated, there is little community organization or interaction. Whenever I asked a key informant their opinion about the community there was a nervous laughter and a deflective comment, they do not see themselves as part of a community.

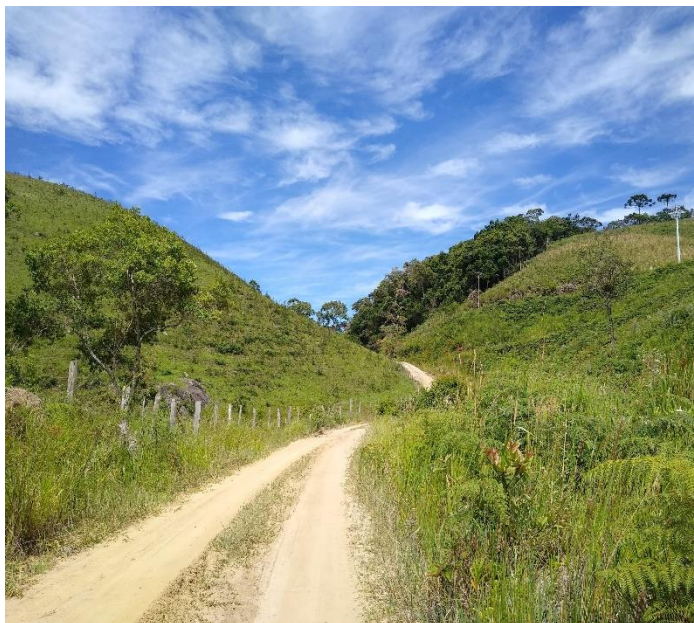


Figure 13: The road to Eco Sítio, most of the interviewees live and work here      Figure 12: A typical barraca

Shi (the nickname for Shirly) is one of the main catalysts behind the Eco Sítio das Cerejeiras. She had been heading up the sítios involvement with the Connections of the Mata Atlântico (CMA) conservation project and has studied and investigated a variety of permaculture, forest gardening, and natural material building methodologies to use at the sítio. She explained that while she frequents her father's sítio and sometimes helps out at her uncle's, it has been many years since she has worked another sítio, as it is difficult for the younger generation to build partnerships in the region when they only visit seasonally and center their lives and work more in the city. Nelson and his wife shared that it is hard to feel a sense of community when they're the only mushroom farmers in the region, and as such their

work is totally independent. Nelson's wife pointed out the only exception is in the case of emergencies or car trouble, in which case neighbors are happy to help, just not with everyday cultivation. José felt more of a community from the local church, and emphasized the moral obligation to help those who need it. Yujo described to me the community as solitary and shared how grateful he was to share a property border with his brother, with whom he has a lovely working relationship. Every person who participated from São Luiz and Natividade described cultivation as solitary and individualistic, pointing to how each farmer must work their own *sítio*.

This is starting to change however to include wider senses of community. For example, Erika and Shi spoke about a rafting company that has recently popped up on the Paraitinga river. Originally the city and residents didn't care for the recreational rafting, seeing it as a disturbance. But during the flood in 2010 the raft guides helped rescue people from their rooftops when the waters rose and covered the town, and have since become accepted by the community. Additionally, there has been a socio-spatial shift in the region with the rising popularity and success of agricultural co-operatives. Mata Dentro is a cooperative of larger *sítios* with a popular brand of sugarcane liquor, *Cachaça*, and a hotel with guided horseback tours of the sugar cane fields. According to Erika, Nelson has talked of starting a Shitake mushroom co-op in the past, but the idea didn't gain enough traction with other *sítio* owners in the region. She also spoke of how in the region even before Yujo bought the *sítio* there would be work camp groups of neighbors who would help with building homes and farming—"They'd gather all the neighbors, and each that came had an assignment, and the owner would give directions "You make food and you all clear forest." In the future when it needed cleared again, the people cleared it. Today we don't have this, you don't see it, it's very difficult." Erika cited generational differences in communication and occupancy—such and most of the younger folks having grown up in São Paulo—as the cause for this shift, though she noted that in co-ops like

Mata Dentro some sítios and fazendas are becoming more interlaced in their work, though the majority are very solitary.



Figure 14: The 2010 flood of the town of Sao Luiz. Many buildings destroyed predated 1775

This project found the following features in the community and socio-spatial organization of the São Luiz do Pariatinga and Natividade do Serra valleys:

- Hybrid rural and urban populations (people who live in two homes, one urban one rural)
- Insular cultivation practices
- Growing community around crises
- Increasing presence of co-ops

Most residents expressed feeling of general isolation at each sítio. Yet conversations surrounding community and spatial organization reveal that change is coming to the valley, as more communal work emerges in crises responses, tourism, and agricultural co-ops.

### *3: Sustainability and Agriculture*

Another theme was that of climate change, as I inquired what people knew about it and if they had noticed any shifts in their daily lives in the region. Every single participant was able to note something changed. Margarida noted that it is colder, and summers shorter. Nelson said it had been dry the past few years, and a particular dryspell can reduce the spring he uses to irrigate. Yujo, Shi and Erika all noted that the flora and fauna at the sítio had changed, with warmer climates bringing new fruit trees up the mountain and flocks of strange birds with

them. José was able to cite specific biblical scriptures with similar happenings as the past few years, and believes that the globe is currently experiencing the End Times. He shared the following examples:

It's moved a lot, my child. Before when it came time to plant, there was a certain month of heat and a certain half month of rain. Nowadays we don't have this certainty, everything is disorganized. Because the scriptures say in the endtimes, the temperature will change. It's cold in Rio when it's supposed to be hot. Another thing, the Bible tells us that at the end of times a third of the fish in the river will die. And it's happening. This river Paraiba, we used to fish there for half an hour and have enough to pack up and go home to cook dinner. So now I must go fish at a river near my friends... I don't remember the place, but 10 years ago millions of tonnes of fish died in the Amazon and Pantanal basins. They piled up on the beaches. People said it's poison it's poison, its not poison. It's the fulfilment of the Word. This is what I'm going to tell you, and I don't want to know your religion, to each their own, but I will discus my religion. But this is all telling of the second coming of Lord Jesus. More is coming, earthquakes like no one has ever seen in Brazil. The scientist talk and talk and talk, but they don't know the Word where it is already been written thousands of years ago in the Bible. Those who know the Word know. They are discovering what we're known for a while. Hunger in various places, pestilence, plague like what's happening in China, I hope to God it doesn't come to us in Brazil. <sup>25</sup>

The final reference to COVID-19 has been icing over my research folder the past few months. José's understanding of climate change and global crises via his religion is tied to an astute observational skillset earned after a life spent outdoors. It also problematizes the standard Northern perception of conversations with Christian rural persons about climate change as difficult. Though their descriptions of what is being observed differ widely each participant was adamant they had noted a form of climate change in their daily lives, and it is clear that conversations about climate change are a frequent topic on ranches, sítios, church halls, and markets.

Another environmental theme in this long-time agricultural region is switching fomr monoculture to organic and permaculture based cultivation. Organic produce and its associated cost came up frequently, and Nelson pointed out how it is a common topic of conversation for small farmers like himself who sell to regional restaurants, as organic goods cost almost double their counterparts. He himself is not certified organic, and sometimes relies on uses an

---

<sup>25</sup> This was the first mention of COVID-19 in my data collection, and became a much larger feature in the months to come, more below.

insecticides and antibacterials. Shi uses neem oil as a natural insect repellent at Eco Sítio, and there is a bit of a disagreement between Yujo and her on this front. Shi hopes to create a biodiversity reifying permaculture business out of Eco Sítio, and to work with the Mata Atlántico forest. This is a stark contrast from Yujo, who optimized the sunlight for their current plot by peeling the bark from the base of trees in the space so that they would parch and die but remain standing. In conversation about organics as a new method for cultivation in the region Shi said:

But that's how it was in the old days. The little bit of studying that I have done has been about monoculture. The way that it pushes deforestation. But I'm still studying and practicing at the sítio to see if it's true. I want to plant the vegetables with the Mata Atlántico. I perceived that the rule (of this method) was to preserve the forest, and that you would have a greater return. Planting one with another... the research that I have read says that one plant helps another. But you need to know what plants these are, that like to live together, and then you go and make it happen. I plan to start doing this in two years. But we need money so that I can work here directly. Right now I cannot.



Figure 15: Shi spreading Neem oil on the cultivated portion of Eco Sítio

Shi's interest in starting a permaculture business at the sítio is hindered by her job in the city, medical bills for her parents, and her daughter's education which would have fewer options for classes and extra curriculars if transferred out of the city.

Nevertheless, Shi is tirelessly educating herself on these principles and tactics.

The other issue with environmentally friendly cultivation with deviating opinions surrounds eucalyptus and soil quality. Originally from Australia<sup>26</sup>, the tree grows happily

---

<sup>26</sup> The idea of "invasive species" requires critique. Many plants cultivated and utilized in RSH in both Brazil and Canada include non-native species, such as potatoes, bamboo, cherries, and rhubarb.

in the Mata Dentro and requires little work and yields a great return. However, it is becoming common knowledge for people such as Shi that eucalyptus owe their fast growth to astounding soil depletion, leaving it weak and in dire need of fertilizer. The Environmental Justice Atlas has eucalyptus farming in São Luiz labelled as a “green desert”<sup>27</sup> wherein deforestation has damaged the natural reproduction of food systems that sustain poorer rural communities. Shi mentioned that the endemic forest grows extraordinarily quickly and dies in situ, replenishing the ground cover and getting processed back into soil by millions of insects, fungi and microbes. It is difficult to begin an organic or permaculture set-up in the Mata because many of the properties for sale have been clear cut in the past which ruins the soil.

Participants frequently referenced two regional changes in regulation and government involvement, namely a tree conservation law, Código Florestal Article 3, and a planting program, Connections of the Mata Atlântico (CMA). Brazil’s Código Florestal or Forest Code has been around since 1934, and in its most updated version Article 3 states that all “private domain forests” must keep 20% of their territory as part of a “legal reserve” with the purpose of ensuring sustainable economic use and assisting in the conservation of ecological processes that shelter and protect wild flora and fauna.<sup>28</sup> It is responsibility of the rural land owner to register their legal reserve with their state. Once a reserve is registered it may only be logged with permission from the overseeing government agency. The legal reserve can be explored but there are limits under the law such as the need to replant what is cut—the usual accepted circumstances to alter the legal reserve are cases of agroforestry and ecotourism. When speaking to Margarida about the legislation for property owners in the Código Florestal she shared “They take pictures with the helicopter and if there’s changes they tax you. They also told us its bad to plant eucalyptus, but the soil is too poor to plant anything else. For every tree you cut you must plant 10 more.” Her property is one of the few in the area with no legal reserve, as it all has been replaced with eucalyptus by her son. Eucalyptus is a non-native species and damages the soil, so it is not qualified as part of a legal reserve.

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/the-eucalyptus-plantations-in-sao-luiz-do-paraitinga-sao-paulo-brazil>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.oeco.org.br/dicionario-ambiental/27492-o-que-e-reserva-legal/>

Yujo explained that this legislation changed the property values. Previously ranch land which was already cleared and was desirable, but now forested property is more valuable (both original Mata Atlântico and second growth). This includes both private rural landowners as well as large industrial firms who are looking to purchase green spaces. A year ago Yujo was approached by a Chinese chemical firm looking to buy a swath of Eco Sítio to count towards its carbon off-set program. He says such firms have approached almost every sítio owner with jungle on their property, and are buying plots at prices that the ranchlands couldn't dream of in this market. He has also been approached by other ranchers in the area who are looking to reduce their taxes by purchasing forested land and to comply with the 20% law, as they have clear cut their own or inherited land with no jungle.

The second governmental initiative this project focused on is the Connections of Mata Atlântico (CMA)<sup>29</sup>. Shi entered Eco Sítio Das Cerejeiras in this project the past year. The goal of CMA is to protect the headwaters of the rivers in the region, which flow from the streams in the mountains of São Luiz and Natividade. Shi needs to meet certain criterion to remain in the program. The CMA coordinators helped her design and set a goal of planting 600 agroforestry saplings on the property, and to transition cultivation to natural pesticides only. The species Shi selected include coffee, acai, jicara, palmito (heart of palm), guaranji, and mahogany. Once these trees, each of which is registered, is grown Shi can buy them back from the CMA to cut and sell so long as she replenishes the forest. The benefits of participating in the CMA— sponsored by Interamerican Bank of Development, Global Environment Facility (GEF), the state of São Paulo, and various conservation and forestry foundations—is that participants receive direct support. Shi explained:

The cool thing about this project is that an agricultural engineer will come, and we don't have to pay. And they come and help you choose what to plant... They recommend what to do to increase your returns. This agroecological style works, planting next to the forest. They'll tell you how to do this, and if you have any issues or doubts you can contact them. I've contacted them once or twice via WhatsApp. They also pay us for the conservation.

---

<sup>29</sup> Dope video for those who can speak Portuguese

Having access to this bank of information and support has encouraged hundreds of small producers and *sítio* owners to participate.<sup>30</sup> The goal of CMA is to create a certification process by which small producers can acquire recognition as sustainable without going through the official organic certification process, which is targeted towards larger producers with a substantial budget. It also seeks to train an entire generation/region in agroforestry and biodiversity protection. Erika remarked on the work of CMA, saying that because of the forestry corridors created they have been seeing more wild cats at the *sítio*. To her, it is important to protect the regional biodiversity because “Once you lose it there’s nothing to be done. That is a sustainability project for the whole world. It’s not for a *sítio* owner or a proprietor, it’s for everyone, even those who live in the city.” Almost all of the small rural cities in the valley near São Luiz have agreed to work with the CMA.

Environmental knowledge has an apparent presence in the São Luiz valley. Knowledge of medicinal and edible crops and forageable flora is gifted freely and frequently. Yujo shared with me a journal

he’s been compiling—a children’s off-brand Barbie notebook with every color ink scrawled illegibly across the pages—which information about plants and herbs that he has learned from YouTube and personal experience. Excerpts include how turmeric root cooked into the dog’s food helps battle fleas and ticks, and how the citronella grass that is planted in a protective circle around the house wards off mosquitos. Many of the herbs in the garden are medicinal, and help with kidney stones, headaches, stomach upset amongst other ailments. From the forest, we collected wild orchids to make into tea which is used for bone hardening, prostate

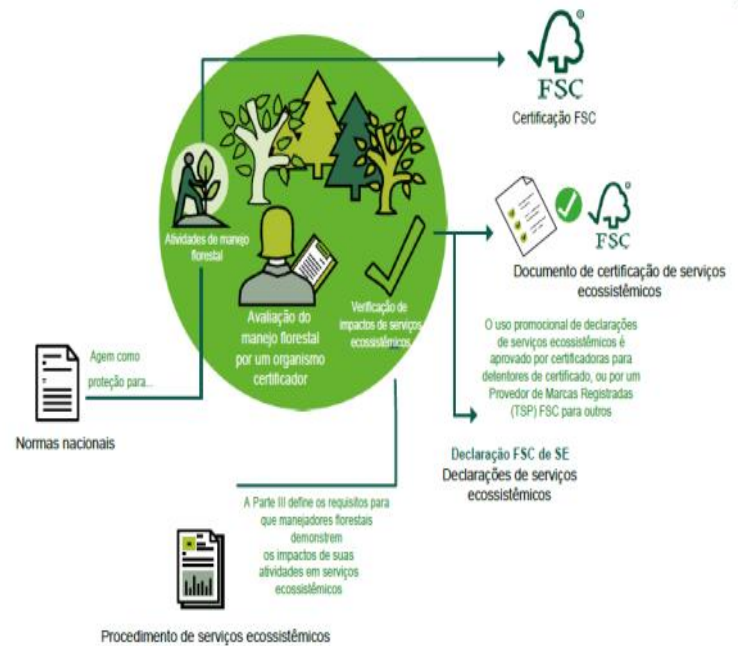


Figure 16: Diagram from the CMA webpage outlining their program services, including access to agricultural engineers, certification for organic sales, and access to research

<sup>30</sup> In the past few months, to adapt to COVID-19, CMA has greatly expanded their online training services and extended their involvement deadline.

cancer, and growing hair and nails. Additional agricultural environmental knowledge came from Margarida, who gave Shi some coffee seeds that Margarida had acclimated to the colder ranges of the Mata Atlantico, as Shi's batch of purchased coffee was growing slowly. Nelson also gifted Shi some acclimated seeds and to help reach the goal of planting 600 saplings.

The enthusiasm for planting in conversations with participants extends beyond resourcefulness with food into a thriftiness with all aspects of living at a sitio. Many people of the Mata Atlántico are not wealthy, and must make do with what they have. Particularly for families like the one at Eco Sítio, many of the items present have come from their full-time residence in the city. Shirly and I potted almost 600 saplings in dirt pulled from the forest and mixed by hand with horse manure, into milk cartons and labelled each batch with the species written onto slivers of beer bottle with old nail polish. These were then placed into the a three-sided dilapidated garage which Yujo hammered holes into to place logs and create shelving. It is



*Figure 17: Milk cartons filled with hand tilled fertilizer, with strips of beer cans and old nail polish for identifiers. Saplings will be planted in the forest when hardy enough*

irrigated by a garden hose that is stuck into a bamboo stalk to create a rain sprinkler. The roof of this room will be a massive tarp covered in a tessellation mural from Dutch artist M. C. Escher which Erika salvaged from an exhibition at the São Paulo Museum of Art. Whilst cleaning much of the garage area we moved and re-stored hindered more milk cartons, glass bottles, beer cans, and bits of wire, iron, and machinery that Yujo and Shi plan to use to create cabanas or sheds in the future.<sup>31</sup> This nigh on zero-waste level of

resourcefulness is common place in the regions

---

<sup>31</sup> Field methodology note: I was quite enthusiastic in my cleaning efforts as a form of reciprocity and was only deterred for one morning when I inserted my foot into my boot to find a tarantula and then to encounter a second in an old speaker we were removing from the garage. We bathed the horses for the rest of that day instead (ticks and fleas are easier than tarantulas)

of São Luiz and Natividade, but to a researcher from the over-developed North was ubiquitous and marvellous.

The environmental facets of life in São Luiz and Natividade reflect a deep-seated knowledge of the natural world and a willingness to both listen to the more-than-human-world<sup>32</sup> and to rely on a variety of human resources for information. Again, the notes of environmentalism this research uncovered in São Luiz include:

- Climate change observations
- Permaculture and organic agriculture
- Plant and medicinal herb knowledge
- Reuse and repurposing items
- Código Florestal and Connections of the Mata Atlântico

These topics carry more than just observational weight for the region, as any shift economically, climactically, legally, or in information can create ripples in people's commerce, personal gardens, and access to natural medicines. It was tremendously clear that this information is shared amongst the community and present in conversations.

#### *4: Race, Alternatives, and Indigenous Rights*

The final theme this research wished to identify in the São Luiz and Natividade valleys are the emergence and re-kindling of alternatives lifestyles such as permaculture, the creation of bio-digesters to handle human waste, and subsistence food systems. However, some people who are actively supporting and living alternative lifestyles, but who themselves do not share a hardline critique of modernity. Shi for example is extraordinarily educated and has worked the most to create alternative growing practices at Eco Sítio, yet she does not completely disagree with Jair Bolsonaro's politics. Shi shared her goals for the Eco Sítio, "As for future ideas for the sítio we have many. Very naturalist, and still capitalist. I like having my cellular and notebook," items which she and Yujo research and document features of the forest. This research is unabashedly moving to identify the possibilities for anti-capitalist work in RSH spaces yet

---

<sup>32</sup> More-than-human implies all beings and objects on the planet, and subverts the typical hierarchy of humans at the apex of life (Abram 1997, Soren and Johnson 2016, Fregoso 2014)

recognizes it would be damaging to ignore the realities and perceptions of research partners and participants.

The Eco Sítio Das Cerejeiras has multiple family members and friends on its hillside and they all have individual visions for its future. Erika spoke to me about how she would like to involve the local schools and universities. This would be accomplished by bring youth to the property and demonstrating for them how you can live a modern life a the sítio—comfortably with modern amenities alongside nature. She wants to teach the younger generation how to plant, and teach them how to write up an agricultural plan of business. Erika’s partner Marta plans to continue to visit and enjoy the sítio, relaxing where she can see nature; hummingbirds, wildflowers, and flocks of parakeets. Yujo is prepared to act as a teacher or guide, and share his knowledge of medicinal plants and how to harvest from the forest. Yujo wants to retire at the sítio fulltime, and to live a natural life; “My vision is to better the lives of people, the best medicine is the sun and pure water! That the best medicine. Not water from the city with chlorine, pollution, no sun. The best life is natural, together with the plants.” Shi has a similar view, focusing more on protecting the clear spring water that originates on their property, and keeping things green and fresh for her daughter and the next generation.

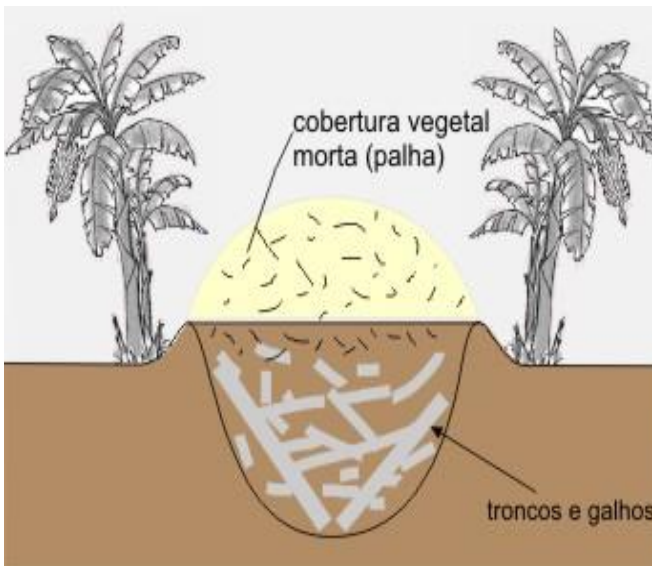


Figure 18: All natural grey water treatment Shi intends to try



Figure 19: The main house at Eco Sítio, with many uncycled tools

Shi and Yujo aspire to become an eco-tourism destination and host bird watchers. They would accomplish this by building bungalows out of recycled materials that they could then

rent. Another aspect of community involvement they aspire to is hosting excursions for residents of senior homes, as residents rarely get to visit such wild places. To accomplish any of this, funding will be necessary to create bathrooms and facilities for the visitors. Shi has already secured some funding for the saplings under CMA, but all the organizers at Eco Sítio recognized the immense amount of initial footwork needed to create a truly sharable and accessible space.

Another hope for the future came from Erika, as a desire for prudence and caution. I was able to speak to her about the inherent risks of tourism and she shared some very stark observations on the state of São Paulo and the near by beach city of Ubatuba. Erika said:

In Brazil, tourism is thought of as a big thing and is mostly seen as predatory development, of exploration for capital in that region... São Luiz do Paraitinga has a Carnival that is characteristic of that region. If São Luiz had not taken certain measures to protect the culture of the area, it's likely that we wouldn't have this specific carnival and musics anymore... The tourist wants an attractive area so you have to maintain the attractiveness of an area. The beach at Ubatuba is predatory tourism. Very commercial, there is not returns to the poorer populations... You see is very easy to not think about the community, just build two, three cabanas there and rent them. No, what type of tourism do you want? Do you want to develop a social tourism, a cultural tourism? And how much time do you want it to last? Because there could be an explosion, and afterwards people will not go back.

Erika's choice of "predatory" succinctly displays her concerns for the future; that the São Luiz Valley could go the way of Ubatuba, where an increase in tourism has divided and polluted the city she has visited since she was young. Ubatuba and other beach locations along the coast of the Mata Atlântico have higher rates of secondary home ownership, with seasonal cabanas and weekend homes that are owned and rented by a transient land-owning class, fundamentally separated from the people who live in Ubatuba and work in the service industry. Such an industry, as Erika points out, attempts to universalize the tourist experience and eliminates regional culture in the process. São Luiz has protected its specific Carnival with certain rules such as no music other than traditional marchinhas can be played in the city during the week, and a ban on coolers, foam spray, and glass cups.<sup>33</sup> Erika's final questions raise the notion of an

---

<sup>33</sup> <https://g1.globo.com/sp/vale-do-paraiba-regiao/carnaval/2020/noticia/2020/02/19/sao-luiz-do-paraitinga-cria-manual-para-folhoes-no-carnaval-veja-lista.ghtml>

intentional and negotiated tourism within the specifics of the regional context. This hope finds some roots in the limitations of São Luiz's Carnival, but more measures will be needed to preserve the area and to prevent the class division between land-owners and workers.

The final theme was an omission—indigeneity and indigenous rights were not known or spoken about in my interviews, and very little racial justice is at play in the area. Many of the residents of São Paulo, such as Erika, Yujo, Marcia, and Shi are of Japanese descent—Brazil has the world's second largest Japanese population behind Japan itself. Following the end of World War II Brazil was the first country to re-open to immigration from Japan, and the following decades encouraged more immigration through targeted agricultural labor policies<sup>34</sup>. This history is a frequent topic of conversation at Eco Sítio, however indigenous history and current issues are missing. The only mention of indigenous rights was by Erika in conversation about Ubatuba where she pointed out:

When you go to Ubatuba from Rio you see many indigenous folks selling produce and items from the forest. You see its predatory because there is no assistance for the local indigenous, not even just indigenous but the most needy populations in general. There is no way for them to gain a better life, no opportunities beyond manual labor.

Again noting the damages of predatory tourism, Erika outlines the dire impacts this has on indigenous persons regionally. Other sítio owners reported little knowledge about the effects of such regional development on indigenous populations. This project chooses to count a lack of knowledge or involvement as data, revealing that while efforts such as the agroforestry and permaculture proposed by Shi, the natural medicine knowledge Yujo shared, and Erika's analysis of the racial and class divide caused by tourism all have ties to indigenous knowledge systems and rights, there is very little known about indigenous organizing by sítio owners.

The themes of justice and future alternatives that this research was able to identify in the region include:

---

<sup>34</sup> The Ethnic Japanese in Brazil Robert J. Smith – The history of Japanese Brazilians is complex, including aspects of slavery, imperialism, forced assimilation, and resiliency.

- Hopes and goals for Eco Sítio, development of an agroforestry/educational/ecotourist center
- Protecting regional culture and environments from predator tourism
- Lack of conversation around indigenous rights and racial justice

This presents quite a range of predictions for the future. By highlighting people’s desires for the years to come this project hopes to map avenues for work and organizing, and to relay that information in a way that promotes action.

The themes from this research and the interviews in Brazil only represent a small amount of the world tucked away in the mountains of the Mata Atlántico. The research presented here is a suggestion of the vitality and creativity of an underexamined part of Brazilian society. Through a careful analysis of the discussion themes were identified as, regional threats, social and spatial relationships, environmental concerns, and work towards alternatives and desired futures. Fascinating work and is taking place in these mountain homes, and in the next section this paper will examine a similar region in Ontario Canada, to see what themes stand out or overlap with the salient findings from Brazil.



*Figure 21: Yujo putting sugar cane through a woodchipper for the horses*



*Figure 20: Yujo and Shi harvesting wild watercress in the forest at Eco Sítio*

### Chapter 3: Northern Ontario and Cottage Country

“We need to be nourished, and empowered to know how to grow and preserve good food, and its incredible how this COVID crisis has transformed peoples mindset in such a good way. As fearful as they were at the beginning, we’ve sold more garden seeds than any year before as people come in—who’ve never grown a garden in their lives—are going for it. It’s really sweet.” - Kelli

#### *Part 1: Description of Findings*

Due to COVID-19, there were regrettably some alterations to the original research plan in Canada. I had desired to work with identical methods as I did in Brazil, meeting people at their property to fully understand the space. Despite the pandemic, through April and June 2020 cottagers that I know were willing to participate in phone interviews and recommend me their acquaintances. The photos included in this chapter were emailed in by participants with consent for inclusion in this paper. The themes outlined below illustrate the main points of interest that emerged from conversations with five different community members—two of



Figure 22: Lynn's mother's cottage

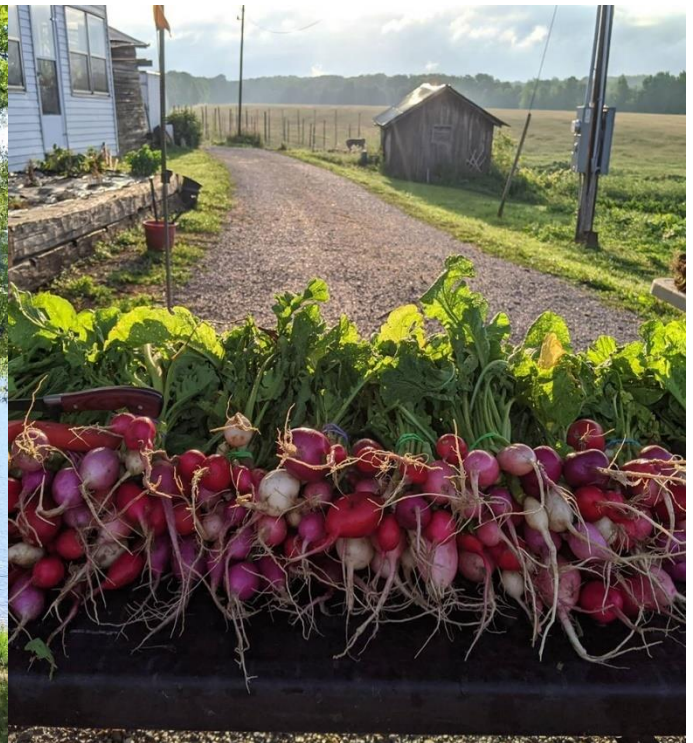


Figure 23: Rainbow radishes harvested at The Roost

whom full-time workers in the area, two who own seasonal cottagers, and one lodge owner—and provide a map into a handful of perspectives from the region just north of Toronto.

## *Part 2: Themes*

### *1. Environmental Knowledge, Small-scale Agriculture, and Sustainability*

As one of the questions I asked relates to climate change, many Ontario residents spoke about their observations of climate change in the region—which simultaneously displayed their knowledge of flora and fauna in the region. One resident of the region is Shannon, who’s family runs The Roost near Darymple, Ontario. She and her husband were raised in the area and The Roost was previously her husband’s grandparent’s farm. They produce a wide variety of goods including eggs, meats, preserves, produce, honey, maple syrup, and have recently begun harvesting hops. Shannon is not a cottager, though when she was younger their family did have a lakeside cottage. She clarified that “The term ‘cottage country’ isn’t one that is typically used by local people outside of conversations about tourism and economic development. It is terminology that was given to the area to help promote tourism and regional development.” As a small-scale local producer, she has noticed shifts in spring planting seasons and unpredictable summer weather, which effects yields. Additionally, as a family that has been harvesting and making maple syrup on that plot of land for over 50 years, the late winter temperatures and lack of ground frost are damaging maple output. She did explain that despite these difficulties, “In agriculture, everything we do requires adjustment and adaptability. Fortunately, as small-scale producers, we are able to adapt more easily and quickly than larger producers.” Shannon’s personal and familial knowledge of the region’s climate has aided in this adaptability.

On the tourism side of the region is Robin, owner and operator of the Algonquin Eco-Lodge and Call of the Wild backcountry guided tours. The lodge is grandfathered into the Algonquin Provincial Park border, and sits 12km from the nearest neighbors. Previously the site was hut-to-hut cross-country skiing but is now a year-round eco-lodge with an impressive hydro turbine that runs through a waterfall and produces up to 9.5 kilowatts of constant power (or a constant nine households worth of power). He hires small staff teams for the lodge each year,

and as an avid outdoorsman leads many of the backcountry tours himself. On the point of climate change he shared;

I have noticed huge changes, and it's funny most people haven't noticed because they're inside most of the time. I'm concerned about the amount of rainfall that we're getting, last year we lost our lake, Moffit Pond. Its about 30 acres in surface area but in depth, it's a pond, maybe three meters deep. This past summer it basically turned back into a river, our waterfall dried up, and there wasn't a drop of water going through it, so for a month and a half, there was no electricity, we had to used a gas-powered generator, and we've never had to do that."

He also explained that on the way into the property there is a gravel pit that usually floods in the spring, and there's water stagnating into the middle of June, but it has been drying up sooner and sooner. During the spring of 2019, one of his employees went down with a bucket and collected as many tadpoles as she could to relocate, fearing the pond would dry up before they finished metamorphosing. In spring 2020, the tadpoles didn't even get laid before the water had evaporated. He thinks it is because they had half as much snow as they usually do. They also see a lack of bats, though he's not sure if it's an environmental change or the spread of white nose syndrome<sup>35</sup>.

Some community members were unsure of the climate changes they noticed and their ties to global trends. Gilbert is a cottager who met his wife on a lake near Canarvon ,Ontario, growing up together and having raised their own family with a seasonal cottage on the same lake. His family has an extended presence, with his mother and father in law also owning cottages on the same lake. They have easy summer access, but must snow mobile in during the winter months. Gilbert is an outdoor enthusiast, and frequently hikes, water skis, fishes, and taps for maple syrup at his cottage. In regard to climate change he said;

Many times you think that you're seeing something different, and you blame it on climate change, but you look into it, and you realize this happened ten years ago... You can always find a cycle of cold weather and hot, where it has happened in the past. Without much better information it's hard to attribute things you do see to climate change. And we're here at different times of the year. I'd be hard-pressed to 100% attribute something to climate change, but the general feeling is yes, the summers are

---

<sup>35</sup> A disease decimating bat populations in almost all eastern North America

hotter, we seem to have much more violent weather...I'm not educated enough to know for sure if that's climate change.

His humility demonstrates a willingness to acknowledge changes he sees but an admiration for the complexity and enormity of the natural world. This position is positively predisposed to learning and adjusting to new information and lifestyle options.



*Figure 24: Gilbert's cottage in winter and summer. Ontario cottages have to contend with vastly different seasonal climates than those in Brazil.*

This reflects another sub-theme of changes in appreciation and education about the natural world and more-than-human others. Gilbert, who goes to his cottage for the isolation and tranquility, pointed out that cottages are becoming bigger and bigger,

I see changes that have already happened. Essentially, the size of the buildings, the number of buildings, and what I am noticing is official plans that are making it so you can't make more lots on this lake... Nobody builds a small cottage anymore. Everything that's been built in the last twenty years, let's say, has been quite large. And not a cottage in the sense, they're homes... It's not a cabin in the wood. Nobody has done anything like that in quite a while, myself included".

With this change in the region comes a contradiction—many cottagers go to the area to enjoy the wildness and isolation but utilize many carbon-heavy modes of transit and recreations while there, and adding increasingly more to their cottages rather than reducing and reusing like they used to. Gilbert was laughing with a long time friend, reminiscing about how "Our fathers always having a can of bent nails on the workbench that you would straighten and reuse, you

didn't throw away nails just because they were bent. That's a level of re-use you won't likely see again." This reuse isn't just a lifestyle, but also a knowledge base that is becoming rarer in the region.

Lynn is another life-long cottager in the area, who remembers when her cottage near Haliburton was only accessible by boat and had no power. The region had been a logging town in the past, and home to a massive turpentine chemical plant, the skeletal architectural remains of which can still be seen through the trees along the dirt road. She shared that she used to come up in the spring by herself and open the cottage—turning on the power and hooking up the water pump, placing the dock, and launching the boats to get ready for fishing. Now with many changes to the water system she can no longer do this—which gave her a more direct understanding of the seasons and water quality. Many cottagers do not possess this level of aptitude, and pay for maintenance and hookups at their properties.

Despite the trend in cottages becoming less traditional and environmentally friendly, some forms of sustainability are taking off in the region, particularly in local agricultural efforts and revitalizing food connections. Kelli is a long-time community organizer in Huntsville. In 2013, she worked with a small group of people to identify gaps in the access to local food markets. They started a farmers market in Huntsville, and then helped develop the Muskoka Food Shed Report. This led Kelli and her team to write a Food and Agriculture Charter in Muskoka so that they could mobilize the local government around projects and development around food. This project was a joint endeavor between Kelli and another food organization, Savor Muskoka, the District of Muskoka, and the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit. They carried out stakeholder interviews, community consultations and heard back repeatedly that communities wanted to buy more local food if there was just a singular place to get it. The food producers were completely willing to scale up production if they had somewhere to sell more. After the charter report, the team decided that a physical and permanent space was the only way to meet this demand. The big grocery stores are not flexible enough to work with local producers, but having a grocery-styled store is easiest for patrons. Kelli and a small dedicated group decided to start a registered not-for-profit cooperative—The Muskoka North Good Food Cooperative (MNGFC)—with the goal of supporting local food producers by allowing them

name their price for their goods. When the co-op was registered in 2013 it was running entirely on volunteer and donations, and in 2018 finally received a grant for a brick-and-mortar facility. In 2019, MNGFC made over \$800 thousand in sales for their producers, which is remarkable for the first year of a new co-op.



Figure 25: The store front of MNGFC, near Huntsville, Ontario.

From her perspective, the co-ops success thus far has been partially due to changes in people’s purchasing priorities in the region. Kelli commented, “It’s becoming more and more clear that people are opening to localizing our thoughts and energy, and to recognize how that is better for our health and our economy.” The cooperative puts on a big party every year—a farm-to-fork style dinner—that allows customers to meet their producers who work the food tables at the event. Customers begin to

recognize their favorite farmers and buy their produce later even as its being unloaded at the co-op. Quite a few of the members of the co-op are locals, and many are seasonal cottagers who may only be in the area for 2-3 weeks of the year, but all have been incredibly enthusiastic to join Kelli and her team of dedicated good food organizers. The changes in purchasing priorities is difficult to trace, but seems to be stemming from urban populations moving to Huntsville to retire at their cottage, drawn by the natural landscape and healthy agricultural options like MNGFC.

## 2. COVID-19 and Regional Threats

Unforeseen at the outset of this research, the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn some stark lines across all landscapes and was a central piece in talking to Ontarians about the future.

Crises amplify societal ills, and as such would be remiss in proper critical studies to exclude this topic as an emergent theme. Gilbert shared that he and his family have been at the cottage since the lockdowns were first announced, staying safe and socially distanced. Lynn and her family have not made it to the cottage, as it was closed for the winter, and they have chosen to hunker closer to the city and where there are more comforts for Lynn’s mother. Robin’s accommodations at the Algonquin Eco-Lodge are usually populated by people from Toronto, Ottawa, and Europe. Cottagers instead, choose to spend time at their cottage, rather than pay for hike-in lodge fees and so are not usually part of Robin’s patronage. However, as restrictions began to lift in June 2020, Robin has been receiving bookings for “staycations” as Ontarians who had planned overseas trips for the summer attempt to make the best of the situation. Of course, he’s also had many cancelations from Europe due to the pandemic but is managing to cope, for example having his manager also act as both a chef and perform lawn care.



Figure 27: The Algonquin Eco-Lodge



Figure 26: The Eco-Lodge's water turbine system

This ‘muddling through’ perspective on COVID is not shared by Shannon and Kelli in their agricultural spheres—as they’re busier than ever. At the beginning, many rural mayors told cottagers to stay home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to small towns. Kelli saw the situation differently, realizing that this is the time at which good food access is most important. She explained, “Nutrients need to get into bodies right now for immune systems to remain strong enough to fight anything that comes our way. We closed our doors immediately, and I,

overnight, made a full listing of all of our products and am going to send this out every single week in a MailChimp newsletter.” There’s no price attached because she did not have time to adjust for prices that change constantly, and yet the co-op customers were fully supportive and had groceries carried out to their vehicles for the first three months. She had cottagers calling her and saying they felt incredibly unwelcome in any grocery stores in town, and that the co-op’s quick action was a saving grace. COVID has brought people to MNGFC that never would have been interested before and others from nearby towns are asking Kelli how to start a food co-op in their area after realizing the resiliency of the model in the case of an international health crisis.

Shannon has had a similar outpour of support at The Roost. As people are avoiding grocery stores and flocking to car side pick up and home delivery of fresh vegetables, preserves, eggs, and meats have risen. Her thoughts are;

I think a real shift has finally occurred (that) I hadn’t thought would happen before I retire. Seeing the ways in which farming has been affected by COVID, really shines a light on how fractured the agricultural system is in Canada. And I think it’ll be hard for government to ignore. Because businesses like us, we’re booming right now, partially because people feel the need to support locals, partial because they don’t wasn’t to go to the grocery stores, and partially the disruption of supply chains.

Her positivity did not reflect a realistic outlook for the whole region. She acknowledges that this virus is a threat to cottage rentals, events, and agricultural or culinary tourism. Still she hopes this marks a permanent change in people’s mindset and a shift in buying practices.

The support of local farmers connects to other threats that are tangentially related to the pandemic. For example, Kelli is concerned about population apathy: She understands that not everyone can afford to eat local, and it has never been the intention of the co-op to sell cheap food. However, if the people who can afford to support it do so, over time they make it more accessible to those with less disposable income. She shared severe critiques of Loblaws and Galen Weston paying workers minimum wage while making off with fortunes. The \$800 thousand that the MNGFC made last year was directly fed back into the community, whereas shopping at a large commercial chains, such as Loblaws, removes that funding from the region. Kelli warned, “it really frightens me...apathy and not recognizing the power that we all have as

consumers.” Robin, on the other hand, is mostly concerned with the water situation at the lodge, and additionally mentioned the erasure of ski and horseback trails during their area’s turn under the twenty year logging cycle. These regional concerns are valid but were eclipsed in my interviews by conversations on COVID-19 and the uncertain futures in the region and everywhere.

### *3. Cottager’s Associations and Community Relationships*

One of the stand-out conversations with Ontarians in the north is their experiences with cottage, lake, or producer associations. Almost every road, product, or lake in northern Ontario has an association that meets at least once a years to decide on important community matters. Lynn illustrated the various facets of the Ontario association landscape. Firstly, her and her father were involved in many meetings and decisions for the lake and road associations—a road her father helped get built for access to their part of the lake. Sometimes the associations are a boon and have backed her up in the past when property owners without lake access tried to gain a right-of-way through her property to the water. Other times the associations have been frustrating, such as when they began drinking at meetings making her recovered father uncomfortable attending or when they decide to hike the annual fee so that the road can be plowed for winter access though its only a handful of residents who live there through the winter. Additionally, she shared how broader regional information has reached her through the associations, stating,

I think people are more aware now, whereas back in the 60’s they weren’t aware of pollution, or fire prevention, or thinking about conservation... I think more of the education is there, about water pollution... coming from different departments, Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment. It’s up to them to make sure all these different cottage associations...they’ve learned that that’s the way to reach people; through the association meetings. Sometimes they come and actually talk to people.

The existing network of cottage and lake associations is decades old and so ingrained most residents belong to at least a few. The usage of these associations by departments to spread information has had a tangible effect on cottagers practices, including Lynn, who remembers when her family ceased bathing in the lake due to contamination reports.



*Figure 28: Maple Syrup taps and production at The Roost*

Shannon is likewise part of numerous associations, mostly for producers, such as the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association, of which she is one of the youngest and only women to attend the meetings (though there are women and new producers who are part of maple syrup production in Ontario). Shannon suggested that the lack of women and younger producers in attendance slows the growth of new ideas, initiatives, and information within the group, particularly as it pertains to social media and technology. She emphasized the purpose of experiences in the agri-tourism age, stating that visitors “want to be connected with the rural and the community, that’s the trend in tourism, everyone wants an experience. So whatever you can offer them, be it a sit down dinner or taking 10 minutes to pick your vegetables while I talk to your kids. It’s kinda masterful if you can pull it off! In a way that doesn’t disrupt your day to day business.” To create a space for this momentum, she has unofficially cultivated a group of similarly aged women producers who support each other via coaching and business advice, and are creative about how they can work together. All have lots of educational backgrounds that they dumped to be farmers. She says that it is encouraging to see more women coming into the area as owners and community leaders, but are often only able to afford a farm if their partners have well-paying jobs off the farm. Shannon admits, “It’s just unrealistic to think that you can as a couple buy a farm and work on the farm and make enough to keep the farm unless

you can manage to do so on a very small plot of land.” Her goal at The Roost is to create a space for community outreach and connection, and to that end, they put on a farm-to-table dinner to thank all of the friends, family, and community that helps support them (canceled this year due to COVID). Shannon explained;

Our farm is pretty different from the others in the area, we’re trending in the way agro-tourism is, but it has been slow to reach this area. The farmers here are very traditional; they grow cattle, they take them to the sale barn, they cash crop. It’s a lot of older-style farming, and there’s not a lot of engagement with the community. That was out intention when we bought the farm, to showcase locally made foods and try to be a leader in the local food movement.

The Roost and other small scale agriculture efforts in rural Ontario that are working on community engagement, ethical and local food systems, and organic produce all occupy a specific niche—being fortunate enough to have the means to own and operate a farm, having the support of the community and local associations, and having received educations and training outside of the region before purchasing their farm.

Gilbert is a long-time member of a lake property owners association. He pointed out that they have been increasingly active the past 20-30 years, hosting annual picnics reminiscent of the annual regattas he grew up around, complete with kids races, boat races, canoe gunnel bobbing, all held at one of the lake’s camp grounds. Despite this presence he views the cottage as more insular and its purpose as isolation. He shared, “I never think of it as a community, which is interesting that you call it that. To me, a community implies a spot, a feeling, and I don’t know if I get that feeling when I’m here.” He went on to point out that many of the small businesses that were present on the lake, such as convenience stores and coast accessible restaurants have closed down, as they struggled to maintain a viable business model in such a seasonal region. He believes that other factors, such as consistent power at cottages and refrigerators, have also contributed to this loss of small business owners. Now cottagers often bring their own food and fuel from the city for the weekend, as opposed to when Gilbert was young, and the lakeside stores would store ice blocks carved from the lake in winter to sell to cottagers come summer, along with chopped wood, homemade bait, and other supplies. The

lake association has survived, but other aspects of community have dwindled, and the area has become more insular.

Kelli, as a community organizer, spends time with a variety of people in the region and has developed a different perspective on community in the cottage region north of Toronto. She shared that while somethings are missing, there is mobilization and hope for further work, “Inclusiveness. I think that’s the largest gap in communities these days, so many people don’t feel like they’re a part of anything. Our communities are so disjointed, insular, and families don’t live together anymore and it’s just difficult to get that key community belonging piece and that’s what the co-ops for.” The MNGFC wants people to come through their doors and to be present as people, not as just consumers. If someone can’t afford a bowl of soup, then it is on the house. MNGFC is designed as a triple bottomed line model<sup>36</sup> that prioritized people over profit. Cottagers from the city are augmenting a demand for ethical and organic foods in the area, and co-ops such as MNGFC are kickstarting widespread interest in agri-food justice. While in many cases cottages are isolated and represent a disassociation from other, cottage country also hosts dozens of lake associations and is witnessing the emergence of local and organic food community models.

#### *4. Futures of the Region and Social Justice Struggles*

One of the questions asked of participants was what supports could help promote sustainability and easy access to information and community in the region. Shannon posited that farmers need more support with hiring and employment. If she could get a grant for a few years to hire seasonal staff to work on the farm, she’ll be able to grow the business to the point where she wont need grants. This past year she fortunate to receive the Canada Summer Jobs grant, and it helped her hire young people to work a hard at a valuable job where they are learning about the food system and sustainable agriculture. She also pointed out that another barrier in Ontario is that farmers are not allowed to hire their own children—even if the children are in their 20’s or 30’s—and can’t collect EI. She feels that there should be an exception to this law for rural farms, where there aren’t many hiring options or it is a family

---

<sup>36</sup> An accounting framework that weighs three performance values; social, environmental, and financial



Figure 29: Harvesting hops at The Roost

business. She also shared from this long-term perspective that sustainability and organic farming efforts are taking off in the region, though she cautioned others by saying;

I don't have a lot of faith that they will be beyond a small pocket of the industry in our small area. While there is certainly a trend for organic method, sustainably produced food, there also remains a huge industry of cash cropping and agricultural exportation. Most of the farms in our area have been sold to large conglomerate numbered companies, and are used solely for the purposes of cash cropping. Until the provincial and federal governments take a stand on better regulation of these industries, they will continue to poison and pillage the soils and environment.

Government funding and involvement in sustaining small businesses was a theme for Kelli as well, as the MNGFC co-op has received generous assistance in opening their brick-and-mortar storefront. The site is equipped with an industrial kitchen and a full café, as Kelli was insistent that educational cooking opportunities and community events be a feasible part of the space. In an effort to bring good food to wider part of the community, Kelli has recently partnered with The Door, a youth group organization, and Community Family Connections, a group that helps families on the welfare system get resources, to create a joint application providing twenty five local food boxes to families for the next six to eight weeks. They are also doing a Food Not Bombs styled free lunch in the park for the community. If they get the grant for the food boxes it's a start or pilot for cooperation with other groups. Then the money is going to the local producers, many of whom are willing to give a discount for the boxes, and distributed to the areas families in need. They also have a daycare that was working on opening in Hunstville right before COVID, which asked the food co-op to

supply all their ingredients for two snacks and lunches for sixty families, opening the co-op model to these families many of which they have never seen before. Additionally, Kelli is working on free classes for the parents on healthy eating habits and health on a budget.

When asked about indigenous history and indigenous people in the region currently, Ontarians delivered a variety of responses. Unsurprisingly, many cottagers do not know the exact nations that historically occupied the location of their cottage, and some were unsure if the area had ever been occupied at all, as suggested by Lynn. However, the lake has an indigenous name and the YMCA camp on the lake has a land acknowledgment page,<sup>37</sup> though it does not give exact tribe names or identify the indigenous groups by name.<sup>38</sup> Gilbert, whose



Figure 30: Lynn's cottage in the winter

cottage is also on a lake with an indigenous name, was also unsure of which peoples had occupied the area. He made a point to recognize how, while he enjoys collecting berries and tapping for syrup, he wishes he knew more about the woods and subsistence. He shared, “People sustained themselves in places like this with what grew and came from the woods... But

Ontarians like myself I don't think walk through the woods looking at stuff thinking maybe I'll eat that, though I'd be interested in a guided walk.” Robin shared that the Eco-Lodge sits on Algonquin territory, as their access is grandfathered in through the Algonquin Provincial Park. He hasn't noticed any indigenous rights issues in the area, but shared that some of his indigenous staff have hunting rights in the park, which they utilize. Shannon has a bit on her website for The Roost, stating “The farm sits on

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.ymcahbb.ca/Wanakita/About-Us/Land-Acknowledgement>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.haliburtonecho.ca/indigenous-history-of-the-area-draws-large-crowd>

original Chippewa Territory, which, post-colonization, came to be the site of an operational mill called Mill Valley.” When researching small farm websites in Ontario, this was one of very, very few that mentioned previous indigenous occupation. When asked to explain the inclusion, Shannon replied;

I think its important, in order for any reconciliation to move forward, it starts with acknowledgment. I don't think I won a lot of points with the family. But I think it's critical. Especially for us, as we're trying to do farming another way and food is so important to social justice, I think its critical to acknowledge all of the different roles we could play. It's important that we recognize our neighbors and the ancestry of the land. Also, in our community the Rama First Nation has a farm on the reserve that is doing amazing work.

She and other residents of the region who received outside higher education had the more rounded understanding of the historical context of indigeneity in the region, though many cottagers have little information or knowledge. This demonstrated educational, generational, and access gaps within the rural community of Ontario's cottage country.

Kelli has years of experience working with food programs in first nations communities in the far north of Canada. Her experiences informed her strategy of beginning with good food to cross-catalyze other justice efforts. She shared;

We have to create our communities through good food, and if we don't have that element then everything else is kind of lost, including looking at community housing, co-op daycares, community health centers—all have food as a main element...I worked for a not-for-profit that funded school breakfast programs, and I would go up there and we'd talk about okay, you have 150k to feed all your student healthy breakfasts this year how are we going to do that? And I'd ask where are the hunters in your community? Okay, so instead of spending this money on shitty cereal at your crappy grocery store let's start giving the hunters some money. Let's start making porridge with moose meat so it's savory and doesn't require sugar. And soon they were telling me that the kids couldn't get enough of it. It's changing the paradigm, decolonizing you know, we don't need Kellogg's in the far north, we don't need them anywhere!...I talked to the nurses at these stations where these suicide rates are out of hand, some of the highest in the world, and I would ask, “why are all these young people trying to do this?” And they told me one of the first things they ask once the patient is healthy enough to talk after attempting suicide is “when did you eat last?” And they were saying four or five days ago, and, no shit, you're trying to kill yourself! At these big conferences these government officials would talk to me, knowing that I worked in the north, and ask me what we can do to help these people, and I'd tell them for Christ's sake feed them! And

don't feed them your crappy food, ask them what they need to eat, and get them back to the land and food that they know so well.

While this example isn't from the region of this research, Kelli has now brought such experiences into cottage country and is attempting to create similar interdisciplinary organizing, beginning from her base—good food. Non-indigenous residents and cottagers, both in the region examined and indeed throughout so-called-Canada are in desperate need of education and information about indigenous struggles, rights, and accomplishments. Kelli has a unique perspective for the region and is attempting to utilize praxis through the MNGFC.

Overall, the case study from Ontario reveals the distinct and ever-changing nature of the secondary rural home regions. It offers a juxtaposition of the area as slow to activate and relatively insular. The emergent themes include environmental knowledge, small-scale agriculture and sustainability, COVID-19 and other threats, cottage associations and community relationships, social movements, and the need for education on indigenous issues and rights. These themes are reflective of the research questions and conversations taking place in the Huntsville, Muskoka, and Kawartha regions, as interviewees were all enthusiastic to share about the region they call home—or rural secondary home—as something dear to them and their families. These themes illustrate what futures and actions are likely in the region looking forward, as the next chapter seeks to outline further through theoretical analysis of development, the metabolic rift, and solidarity.



*Figure 32: Muskoka chairs on a dock, named for their popularity in the region*



*Figure 31: More of the Algonquin Eco-Lodge*

## **Analysis: The Metabolic Rift and Food Sovereignty**

For its analysis, this research will theorize the case study findings using the Marxist metabolic rift. I will look at Brazil and Ontario for opportunities to repair the rift and for practices that divide it further. This research foresees various possibilities for these regions, and seeks to identify how these different futures are influenced by current lifestyles and mobilizing in sites and cottage country. Through this lens this paper seeks to navigate the constellations of potential RSH region work on agro-justice and food sovereignty, repairing planetary debt, environmental education and knowledge, decolonial efforts and land trust development, subverting and avoiding neoliberal tendencies of eco-tourism and leisure spending, etc. etc. This analysis constitutes a mapping of the factors currently witnessed and reported in RSH regions and the possible alternative futures being seeded therein. The map offers entry points of meaningful, reflective, and decisive solidarity work for RSH owners and workers that can only develop from a thorough understanding of the world-building potential, constraints, and pitfalls of current configurations.

### *Part 1: The Metabolic Rift: Bridging Centers and Peripheries*

The case studies of Brazilian and Canadian secondary rural home regions share many social and spatial realities. One is their occupation as peripheral zones, while hosting residents from the center. To answer the research questions—What are the futures of RSH regions? What work is effectively creating just and sustainable options? What pitfalls are to be avoided?—this research will begin by analyzing these case studies through Marx's conception of the metabolic rift and the neo-Marxists' contributions to the theory. The classical interpretation of this theory sits upon Marx's interpretation of labor as a process of mediation between man and nature. As succinctly illustrated by Wittman in conversation with Moore,

This theoretically sustainable, metabolic relationship between society and nature prior to the advent of capitalism was broken by the creation of labour markets and the commodification of nature, and of land in particular. The widening separation of rural producers from urban consumers disrupted traditional nutrient cycling, causing extensive soil depletion and an increasing dependence on imported fertilizers. It also fostered, according to Marx, 'antagonistic relations between town and country', as well as between core and periphery.

The metabolic rift is a two pronged divide—between man and nature(material) and between the rural and urban(social)—and though Marx began with a case of soil nutrient “robbery” that was exacerbated by the urbanization of certain populations, the theory of the metabolic rift has been expanded by Marxist theorists since to include a wide array of critiques and insights. The following analysis starts by;

1. Examining the two prongs of the original metabolic rift (material and social) and connecting it to examples from the case studies.
2. Explaining that Marx’s theory, originally slightly masculine and euro-centric, has since been expanded by theorists to include an array of critical applications.
3. Demonstrating that if RSH regions avoid worsening the rift through neoliberal development and further social insulation, there is potential for a radical and diverse land-tenure solidarity
4. Outlining the similarities between cottage and *sítio* regions, and mapping entry points for engaging these zones in praxis and solidarity

Beginning with the material rift as pointed out by Foster and Clark in their analysis of Marx, capitalism is stuck in a seemingly endless crisis, quickly exceeding many of the Earth’s planetary boundaries. This planetary emergency—similarly to the conception of the hydra-headed crises by David Held, Mary Kaldor, and Danny Quah (2010)—cannot be solved easily and endangers not just fragile ecosystems and declining species but most human societies and social reproduction systems<sup>39</sup>. Foster and Clark share Marx’s critique, “For all its stinginess, capitalist production is thoroughly wasteful with human material, just as it is very wasteful of material resources, so that it loses for society what it gains for the individual capitalist.” The wastefulness with material resources leads to overshooting nature’s capacity to sustain economic activities as well as social and natural reproduction, and our global ecological debt increases exponentially. This debt is currently sitting at (look this up) two and a half Earth’s

---

<sup>39</sup> Most endangered are the high capitalist classes and their nations, which are brittle, unadaptable, and susceptible to collapse in crises, much to the devastation of the classes they have subjected for their wealth

worth per year.<sup>40</sup> Most of this debt is located in the over-developed North, and if everyone were to live as the average American it would require six earths to sustain capitalism.

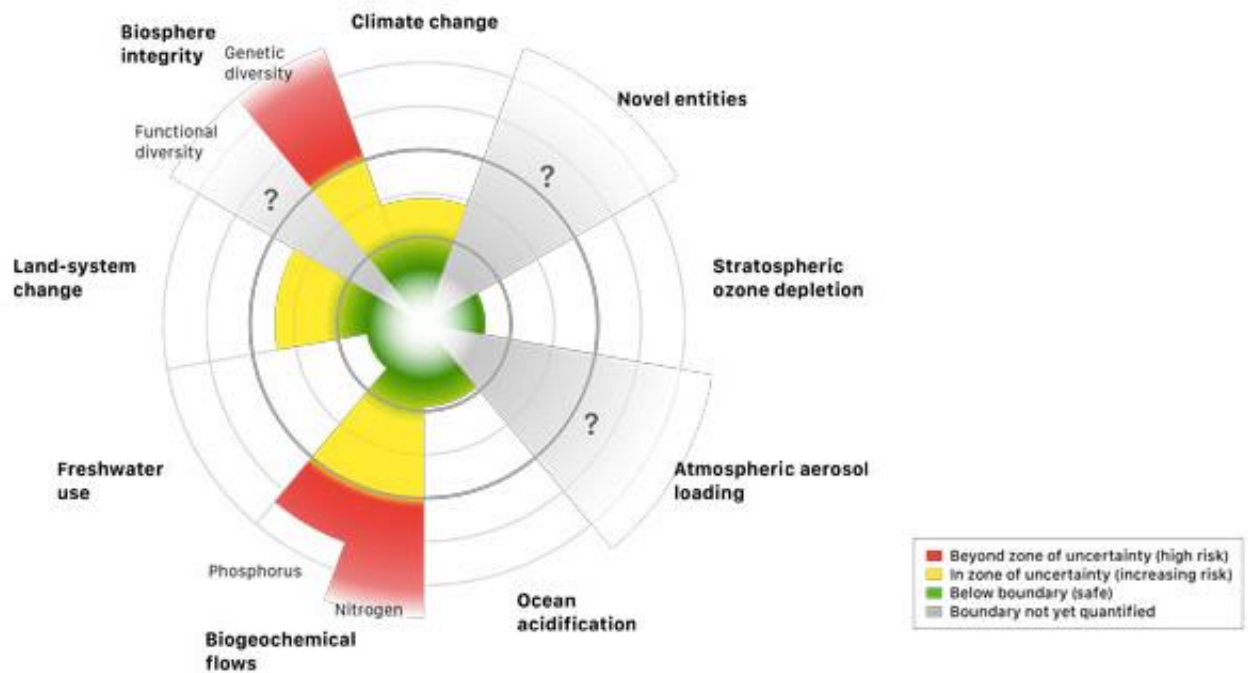


Figure 33: Diagram of planetary Boundaries, from Steffen et al. 2015 and the Stockholm Resilience Center

The overwhelming majority of the duty to reduce the ecological debt then falls on the North. This is contrary to all “carbon-off-setting” initiatives, which seek sharing debt with the global south—who frequently do not benefit from the system—and making no strategy to return to balance within the ecological limitations of the planet. The Chinese chemical firm who sought to purchase part of Eco Sítio to this end is such an example, as are the ranchers seeking tax reduction on deforested land through purchasing from rural sítios rather than engaging in forestry or planting programs.

Foster and Clark also tap Murray Bookchin, and present the notion that “green” capitalism is doomed by the inherent nature of capitalism as a system of endless growth. The limitations of physics and the tendencies of capitalism itself will subvert all good intentions, which speaks volumes in RSH regions where eco-tourism, lodging, and other for-profit industries are often the only source of income, and as the capitalist system is non-optional, mandatory parts of RSH lives. The Algonquin Eco Lodge, an impressive and well-thought out site

<sup>40</sup> Reference

of sustainable work, is having to contend with these constraints of mandatory profit: such as the need to buy batteries and increased reliance on gas and generators when climate stressors deplete the water source. Eco Sítio organizers Erika and Shi would like to live full time in São Luiz working on the farm, but cannot accomplish this and afford medication and education for the members of their family.

Furthering their critique of the rift, Foster and Clark also de-bunk the voting-with-your-dollar dialogue, pointing to how with one out of every twelve American dollars spent annually on marketing costs, so that consumer sovereignty is practically an illusion. The way we consume under capitalism is largely dependant on the manner of production, as such it is the production that deserves analysis and reconstruction. This problematizes much of the agricultural messaging in rural regions and food movements. The Roost and the MNGFC are working hard to alter the production system behind our food, but are honest about the difficulty of doing so in the face of an apathetic, transient, and under-informed populace in RSH regions. Co-op solutions offer one of the most salient alternative flows of material food and goods from production to consumption, and unite the two in a way that reverses the rift.

Many of the projects this study identified work to repair the material aspect of the rift. Planetary boundaries and debt benefit from forestry projects like CMA and the creation of local food sovereignty movements such as those present in Ontario. Additionally education programs and efforts like those emerging from Eco Sítio sit poised to reduce the rift, bringing humans and nature back into sensuous conversation with one another, as the divide was a false silence propagated by capitalism since the beginning. Likewise education and traditional knowledge resurgence such as Yujo's medicinal herb journaling or Kelli's involvement of hunters in far-north school food programs and food-rescue education at the co-op kitchen present a resurgence of knowledges about material, food-based, earth-centric systems of natural and human re-production.

The second prong of the metabolic rift—wastefulness with human societal material—highlights the disconnect in communities. Capitalism on a planetary scale is generating ever growing rifts that threaten the metabolism of the Earth. Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic

display the precarity of the system: As of June 2020 Canada's unemployment rate reached 13.7% <sup>41</sup>and Brazil's climbing to 23.8%.<sup>42</sup> Unemployment percentages give a guess as to the number of people who won't be able to afford rent or groceries in the wake of this crisis, not to mention medical treatment. As global monopoly finance is battling increasing crises it in turn crosses all ecological boundaries on which all life depends—perhaps the most insidious of which is life's dependency on a reproductive and nurturing network. This forms in the alienation of humans in the rural peripheries from the consumers in the urban centers through the division of labor, and in the wider context the value of peoples in the over-developed global North and the developing South. Examples here include the lack of community felt by many *sítio* owners and cottage goers in the peripheral regions, and the isolated feeling small agriculturalists encounter when looking for sustainable partners and support. Cottage and lake associations are an attempt at organizing community, however this research's findings show a sense of futility and frustration from community members. This echoes the decay of Brazilian work parties, which would rotate between neighbor's plots and clear the jungle and construct barns, or the reduction of Ontarian lake-front businesses and regattas that supported lively events annually. Capitalism profits from generating and exacerbating rifts within society, increasing the expendability of producers and emphasizing the need to consume for those in city-centers. Secondary rural homes and the regions that accommodate both the centre and periphery especially feel this divide politically, spatial, and economically.

Despite the various pitfalls that RSH regions present in widening the rift, they are also part of the reconstruction of agriculture taking root beyond the regime of capital in the form of peasant ecology and solidarity movements. Theorists since Marx see this as the most promising method of repairing the rift, as outlined by Schneider and McMichael (2010);

Accordingly, we argue that a reunification of the social and the ecological, in practice and in thought, is the key to understanding how to address and possibly resolve ecological crises. Given the centrality of agriculture in creating environmental, including climatic, degradation, this reunification starts there, in repairing the consequences of

---

<sup>41</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/7029601/canada-may-unemployment-rate/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://brazilian.report/coronavirus-brazil-live-blog/2020/04/12/study-covid-19-could-double-brazil-unemployment-rate/>

the metabolic rift. Arguably, the food sovereignty movement offers a multiplicity of socio-ecological experiments which are thoroughly political in re-linking the social and the ecological at democratic scales. The food sovereignty movement also practices an epistemic restoration in positing the renewal of forms of agroecology among small-scale biodiverse farms.

Food sovereignty—the ability to decide on when, how, where, and by who your food is grown and returning food systems to democratic, grassroots, situated epistemes—functions to reverse the rift from various social entry points. Examples from the case study include the MNGFC and its community building and education efforts with local producers, members, and partners such as the daycare. The organizers at Eco Sítio are also en route to food sovereignty methods, choosing agro-forestry and permaculture to cultivate with the forest and thus pluralize the property's use value to a variety of persons, be they purchasers, students, the elderly, or birdwatchers, as well as to respect it as a natural space. The Roost's farm-to-table dinners likewise build a sense of sovereignty through food and partnership with producers.

These forms of community repair through food sovereignty align with theories of agri-food justice and radical solidarity through alternative land tenure. Solcum et. al. describes in their paper methodology for what they term agrifood justice, or an understanding and engagement with underlying structures evident in the social and spatial organization of food justice, such as racism and trauma. They suggest a series of entry points for solidarity, and point heavily to the need to radicalize land. They suggest the following work:

Land: create innovative ways to equitably control, use, share, own, manage, and conceive of land, and ecologies in general, that place them outside the speculative market and the rationale of extraction: Understand 'resources' in a more-than-human relational context. Support agro-ecological land use systems to build equitable societies. Build on diverse knowledge systems to grow food, make change, and sustain societies. Prevent food projects from stimulating gentrification; mitigate gentrification with community control (including but not limited to land trusts and reducing rent exploitation).

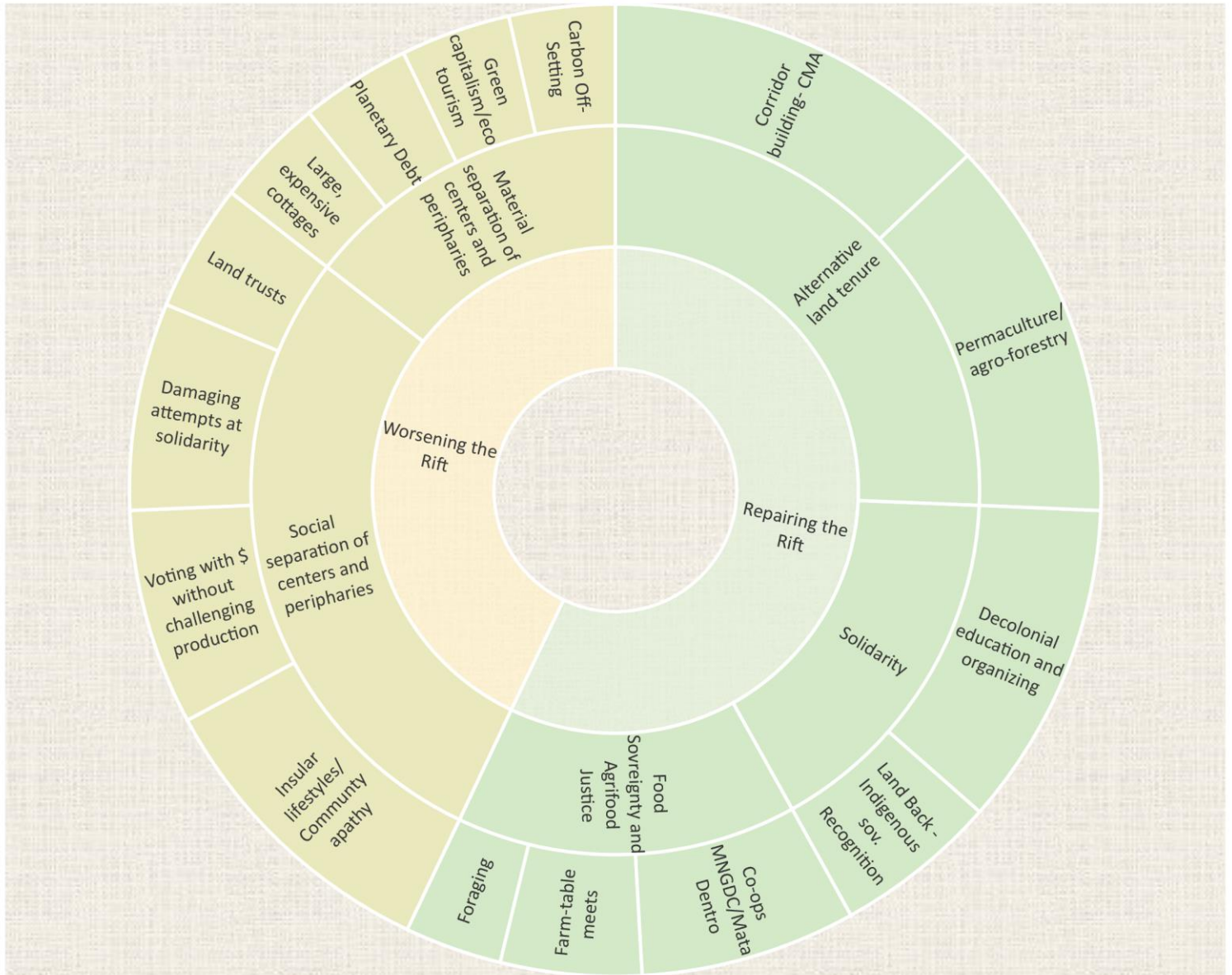
Problematizing land in this way and suggesting new/resurgent tenure practices is bound to be difficult in RSH regions which are particularly private. However, some of this work has already gained momentum though it has not been effective in the manner require to repair the rift.

Land trusts—private, non-governmental organizations that focus primarily on acquisition and

preservation of natural spaces—such as the Oak Ridges Moraine in Ontario have attempted alternative land tenure (Gerber 2011). However, land trusts are also performing a commodification of nature and are implicated in neoliberalization and race/class/colonial privilege through who owns them and has decision making power and oversight (Logan, R. Wekerle 2006). While land trusts, co-ops, and associations problematize the social and material divides, they leave private property intact, and by extension leave a social rift between communities of owners and non-owners. The type of solidarity requested by a fundamental restructuring of food systems would call into question the very existence of private property and beg for serious engagement with indigenous land claims and sovereignty movements. This is one of the future avenues of research this project posits, however for immediate praxis focus is laid on the solidarity practices possible in the current configuration of RSH regions to *begin* to repair the rift so that future work may begin to inhabit spaces and realities that have yet to be prefigured.

The social and material divides articulated in Marx’s metabolic rift have been critiqued and reconfigured by theorists since, creating wider applications and deeper understandings of the divides the current paradigm propagates. The metabolic rift is by no means able to contain the immenseness of food sovereignty, indigenous rights and land critiques, and all counter-capitalist grass roots organizing. Many valuable contributions to the theory, such as gender and racial analysis from Angela Davis and Ariel Salleh, have made efforts to push the boundaries of the analysis from Marx. Because of their efforts, the question of “does this repair or worsen the rift?” offers an optimal beginning point of analysis that can be understood and widely shared by community members from various perspectives. For example Kelli’s work in founding a co-op that created alternative and localized food systems or Eco Sítio and Shi’s work to join CMA and plant and register over 600 trees—each very different projects but with similar goals that can be mapped into a constellation of attempts to repair the damaging divide between humans and nature, the periphery and the center.

## Secondary Rural Home Regions and the Metabolic Rift



This diagram is not meant to erect a binary. Contrary, there is much grey space involved in each of the sections—it is simply a guide of where this research suggests starting to ask questions. Such critical questions could be; what other cities in the world have large RSH peripheries? How are these mobilizing? Could one of these sections be applied to x work? Many of these sections, both yellow and green, are found in both Brazil and Canada. This research found the two areas more similar than dissimilar. For example, I found a singing Billy Bass novelty wall mount in both Lynn’s cottage and in Eco Sítio. Both have rustic water systems, long drives, and atmospheres. Both are usually owned and frequented by families. Both are

peripheral zones to urban centers, and as such as subject to the whims of the wealthier classes. Interest in outdoor lifestyles precede backcountry guided tours and lodges, desires for a private getaway introduces modern amenities and additions to rustic cottages. Both populations are hybrids between urban and rural, living and working on both sides of the rift, bridging it. Another less obvious similarity is the value sets, as both *sítio* owners and cottagers spoke in the interviews about good food, clean water, hard work, thriftiness, and appreciation of nature. Culturally both regions have a history of extraction, logging in Ontario and soil depletion via ranching in São Luiz. Education wise both need information about indigenous issues and organizing. Co-ops, organic food, subsistence gathering, and are on the rise in these similar communities, as are eco-tourist markets, home renovation, and recreation facilities. If two regions on separate continents can be similar enough to contribute to a map of rift-repairs and rift-damages, then it is likely that further research could add even more sections to the diagram above and diversify solidarity options.

### *Part 2: Summary of Analysis*

This research provides a map of potentials and warnings for *sítio* owner and cottagers, who occupy a bridge between the rural and urban. As such they have singular visibility of the gaping chasm the rift seats between center and periphery. RSH owners, because of this vantage point, can also see the outcomes of actions, and make judgements on their effectiveness at repairing or exacerbating the rift. This is already happening through food sovereignty and cooperative building, and alternative spaces like Eco *Sítio*. To be able to utilize the bridge however, RSH owners must be willing to commit to solidarity efforts. This can be catalyzed through existing entry points with community members as guides. In order to fight the hydra, every issue must be addressed in an interdisciplinary fashion, and on every front. RSH regions are understudied and undervalued in activist and scholarly spheres, and as shown above actually have an astounding amount of latent potential already being activated by communities. RSH regions, their potential, and the suggestions for further research are discussed below.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Further Research in Rural Secondary Homes

“I think I am the same as my father, with the preservation and lifestyle he mentioned.... To preserve all of this for the future, to attempt to leave it green for them, with pure water from the springs and they can drink straight from it like we do, fresh and cold.” – Shi



Figure 34: Shi walking towards Eco Sítio as a tropical storm approached

In previous chapters I introduced the concept of rural secondary home regions—areas for cottages, sítios, cabins, lake houses and the relaxation and recreation their natural landscapes inspire. I suggested that these zones present many opportunities for alternative and sustainable lifestyles and communities, as well as the chances of insular, capitalistic, and damaging future projections. I recounted my time staying with my friends and research partners in Brazil, and the interviews I conducted with various sítio owners in and around São Luiz. I delved into

monoculture vs. permaculture and agro-forestry projects being realized at Eco Sítio, local co-ops, and by forestry programs like Connections of the Mata Atlântico. The next chapter took a look at a similar region in Ontario, this time via phone to discuss cottage country with not only long-time cottagers but also new and innovative farmers, lodge owners, backcountry guides, and co-operative organizers in the region.

These findings framed in the broader environmental justice and food solidarity movements reveal several entry points for solidarity work. Analyzing these regions through the metabolic rift—the division of center from periphery, urban from rural, and man from nature—created the entry point map for various axis of action to begin repairing the rift. This also laid

bare the threats of neo-liberal development and the accompanying planetary debt and climate change, empty attempts at environmentalism and solidarity, and further separation of rural and urban zones. This highlighted the many deep (as well as superficial) similarities between two very distant RSH regions.

My intention as a researcher for this MRP is to shed light on RSH regions as wells of astounding potential only beginning to be catalyzed into action. Identifying solidarity tactics that can repair the rift: such as the various forms of food sovereignty and education from Brazil and Canada begins to foster meaningful and materially grounded relationships with each other and the earth. While a good beginning to work in these areas, this research suggests that more nuanced decolonial, critical, and queer and gendered analysis be carried out in these regions globally. What specific aids are needed next in which locals? What revolutionary work is forging forward without fanfare or academic acknowledgement? Where can academic research create even more helpful tools and bridges for these regions and the communities who live there? Further research is necessary, as is work such as that transpiring at the Eco Sítio das Cerejeiras. This work advances alternative building work into extremely closed off and often privileged spaces, nevertheless RSH regions as presented in the case studies also house tireless and ingenious people already working towards more just futures. As a young researcher wrapping up her MRP, I am heartened to have found such strength and space for mobilization. Hopefully, animating these dormant spaces into solidarity movements creates alternatives ways of living, relaxing, eating, and socializing, and actively seed better futures for our families, farmers, activists, planters, knowledge protectors and producers, communities, forests, lakes, mountains, and cherry blossoms.

## Works Cited:

- Alcock, D. , Elgie, J. , Richmond, C. , White, J. *Developing Ethical Research Practices Between Institutional and Community Partners: A Look at the Current Base of Literature*, 2017.
- Andrea A. Azevedo, Raoni Rajão, Marcelo A. Costa, Marcelo C. C. Stabile, Marcia N. Macedo, Tiago N. P. dos Reis, Ane Alencar, Britaldo S. Soares-Filho, Rayane Pacheco. *Brazil's Forest Code and illegal deforestation*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Jul 2017, 114 (29) 7653-7658; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1604768114
- Bernard, L. A. O. Penna, and E. Araujo. *Downgrading, Downsizing, Degazettement, and Reclassification of Protected Areas in Brazil*. Conservation Biology, January 2018, Volume 28, No. 4, 939–950
- Bond, P., Thompson, G. *BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*. International Journal, 71(4), 659–661, (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702016688393>
- Brannstrom, Jepson, Filippi, Redo, Xu, Ganesh. *Land change in the Brazilian Savanna (Cerrado), 1986 Comparative analysis and implications for land-use policy*. Land Use Policy Volume 25, issue 4, October 2008, Pages 579-595
- Cajete, Gregory. *Native Science*. Clear Light Publishers, 2000.
- Conway, J. & Singh, J. *Radical Democracy in Global Perspective: notes from the pluriverse*. Third World Quarterly, 32:4, 689-706, (2011), DOI: [10.1080/01436597.2011.570029](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2011.570029)
- Chartier, C. *Partnerships between Aboriginal Organizations and Academics*. The International Indigenous Policy Journal, 6(2), 2015.
- Colombo, AF., & Joly, CA.. (2010). *Brazilian Atlantic Forest lato sensu: the most ancient Brazilian forest, and a biodiversity hotspot, is highly threatened by climate change*. Brazilian Journal of Biology, 70(3, Suppl. ), 697-708. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1519-69842010000400002>
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race and Class*. Vintage Books, 1983.
- Donna M. Mertens. *Transformative Mixed Methods: Addressing Inequities*. American Behavioral Scientist, 2012.
- ECHO, O. *What is Legal Reserve*. Código Florestal. Aug. 20, 2013, <https://www.oeco.org.br/dicionario-ambiental/27492-o-que-e-reserva-legal/>

Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press: Durham and London, 1995.

Freire, Paulo, 1921-1997. *Pedagogy Of the Oppressed*. New York :Continuum, 2000. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Presence Africaine: France, 1963.

Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. California: Creative Commons, 2004.

FEMSA. *Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13: United States Securities and Exchange Commission*. Securities and Exchange commission, Form 20-F, file 333-08752, 2012

Foster, John Bellamy; Clark, Brett. *The Planetary Emergency*. Monthly Review; New York Vol. 64, Iss. 7,(Dec 2012): 1-25. DOI:10.14452/MR-064-07-2012-11\_1

Foster, John Bellamy. *Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology*. American Journal of Sociology , Vol. 105, No. 2 (September 1999), pp. 366-405

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda. *For a Pluriversal Declaration of Human Rights*. University Press, 2014.

Gelderloos, Peter. *How Nonviolence Protects the State*. Detritus Books, 2005.

Gerber, Jean-David. *The Difficulty or integrating land trusts in land use planning*. Landscape and Urban Planning 104, 2012.

Gramsci, Antonio. *The Prison Notebooks*. 1929-1935

Hamdi, Nabeel. *The Spacemaker's Guide to Big Change: Design and Improvisation in Development Practice*. Routledge, 2014.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press: New York, 2005.

Held, Kaldor, Quah. *The Hydra-Headed Crisis*. LSE Global Governance, 2010.

Hall, L. , Dell, C. A. , Fornssler, B. , Hopkins, C. , Mushquash, C. , Rowan, M. *Research as Cultural Renewal: Applying Two-Eyed Seeing in a Research Project about Cultural Interventions in First Nations Addictions Treatment*. The International Indigenous Policy Journal, 6(2) 2015.

Halseth, G. *Cottage Country in Transition: A Social Geography of Change and Contention in the Rural – recreational countryside*. McGill-Queens University Press, 1998.

Harrison, J. *A Timeless Place: The Ontario Cottage*. UBC Press, 2013

Latulippe, N. *Bridging Parallel Rows: Epistemic Difference and Relational Accountability in Cross-Cultural Research*. The International Indigenous Policy Journal, 6(2) (2015).

- Logan S., Wekerle G. *Neoliberalizing environmental governance? Land trusts, private conservation and nature on the Oak Ridges Moraine*. *Geoforum* 39, 2008.
- Maiter, S., Simich, L., Jacobson, N., & Wise, J. (2008). *Reciprocity: An ethic for community-based participatory action research*. *Action Research*, 6(3), 305–325.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750307083720>
- Meikle, M., Wilson, J., & Jafry, T. (2016). *Climate justice: Between mammon and mother earth*. *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*. 8(4), 488-504.  
 doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJCCSM-06-2015-0089>
- Mintz, S. (2006). *Food at moderate speeds*. In Lanham, M.D. (Ed), *Fast/Slowfood: The cultural economy of the global food system* (3-11). Alta Mira Press
- Mohanty, Chandra. *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*. On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism, 1984.
- Moore, J. W. (2000). *Environmental Crises and the Metabolic Rift in World-Historical Perspective*. *Organization & Environment*, 13(2), 123 – 157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026600132001>
- Pahnke, A., Tarlau, R. & Wolford, W. *Understanding rural resistance: contemporary mobilization in the Brazilian countryside*. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42:6, 1069-1085, (2015), DOI: [10.1080/03066150.2015.1046447](https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1046447)
- Peace, T. *Aboriginal History in Ontario's Cottage Country*. *Active History*, April 7, 2012
- Rachel Slocum, Kirsten Cadieux, Renata Blumberg. *Solidarity, space, and race: toward geographies of agrifood justice*. *Justice spatiale - Spatial justice*, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, UMR LAVUE 7218, Laboratoire Mosaïques, 2016, Food justice and agriculture, 9,  
<http://www.jssj.org/article/solidarite-espace-et-race-vers-des-geographies-de-la-justice-alimentaire/>. [halshs-01507278](https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01507278)
- Salleh, Ariel. *From Metabolic Rift to 'Metabolic Value': Reflections on Environmental Sociology and the Alternative Globalization Movement*. *Organization & environment* 23.2 (2010): 205–219. Web.
- Saturnino M. Borrás Jr. and Jennifer Franco May. *Towards a Broader View of the Politics of Global Land Grab: Rethinking Land Issues, Reframing Resistance*. ICAS Working Paper Series No. 001 2010
- Schneider, Mindi & McMichael, Philip. *Deepening, and repairing, the metabolic rift*, *The Journal of*

- Peasant Studies, 37:3, 461-484, 2010, DOI: [10.1080/03066150.2010.494371](https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.494371)
- Spivak, Gayatri. *Chapter 4: Can the Subaltern Speak?*. Compiled by Williams P., Chrisman, L. *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. Colombia University Press, 1988.
- Soren C. Larsen & Jay T. Johnson. *The Agency of Place: Toward a More-Than-Human Geographical Self*. *GeoHumanities*, 2:1, 2016
- Stoa, E. *Urban cottages—rural homes? Challenges towards a amore sustaibale residential culture and the role of architecture*. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2008
- Ten Fingers, Keely, Oglala Lakota Nation. *Rejecting, Revitalizing, and Reclaiming First Nations Work to Set the Direction of Research and Policy Development*. *Revue Canadienne De Sante Publique* Vol. 96. Iss 1.
- Thiesenhusen William C. *Implications of the Rural Land Tenure System for the Environmental Debate: Three Scenarios*. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Oct., 1991), pp. 1-24  
Published by: College of Business, Tennessee State University.
- Thiesenhusen,\*William C., Melmed-Sanjak, Jolyne. \*Brazil's agrarian structure: Changes from 1970 1980. *World Development*, Vol 18 Iss 3, 1990, pages 393-415
- Tiffin, S. *Indigenous history of the area draws large crowd*. *Haliburton Echo*, July 17, 2018.
- Tuck, Eve. *Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities*. *Harvard Educational Review*: September 2009, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp. 409-428.
- Wall, G. *Chapter 12: Impacts of Climate Change on Recreation and tourism*. Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1, Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 3609,
- Wittman, Hannah. *Reworking the metabolic rift: La Via Campesina , agrarian citizenship, and food sovereignty*. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol. 36 Iss. 4 2009. 805-826
- Yellowhead Institute. *Land Back: a Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*. Yellowhead Institute, contrib. Julie Flett, 2019.

## Appendix

### A.) Interview questions

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating or skip questions at any time.

- (1) Can you tell me about your relationship to cottage country/sitios and small scale agriculture in general?
- (2) Can you describe the type of community and family you see in Ontario's cottage country/ the São Luiz and Natividade region? What events are special? How do you share information or help each other? Are cottages/sitios more solitary or communal in your opinion?
- (3) What is your favorite part cottage country/of living at the sitio? What do you wish would change?
- (4) What conversations do people have about the cottages/sitios when they are in the city? How do you see the urban and the rural interacting?
- (5) Have you noticed or adapted to climate change in your daily life in the region? Altered planting, change in attire, increasing a/c, noticed changes in the plants or animals, etc.
- (6) What are some possible threats to cottages/sitios and their environments in the future? How do you foresee the region changing?
- (7) Can you describe any arguments or conflicts in the area? This could include development, road placement, property borders, or interpersonal disagreements.
- (8) Could you describe some of the different types of cottages/sitios and properties in the area? Some are private, some are tourist retreats, and some are for-profit farms as I understand it. Could you please give me some details?
- (9) How do you see the roles of sustainability, organic farming, and human-earth relationships evolving in this region? Do you notice any indigenous rights issues in the area?
- (10) Is education (not just of children) part of cottage culture/visiting the sitio? Why, what kind, or why not?
- (11) Please add anything else that could better help me understand cottage country/sitios in São Luiz

### B.) Consent form

Informed Consent Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Name: Lessons from the Eco Sitio: Mapping Emergent Alternatives in Rural Secondary Homes

Researcher: Mariah McCoy – mrm1118@westminstercollege.edu

Purpose of the Research: This project seeks to explore and understand life in secondary rural homes, such as cabins, cottages, and sitios (Brazilian cottages). The research is interested in questions of community,

sustainability, and education in second homes. This research like all MES Major Research will be published in YorkSpace and the University webpage.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: This interview is casual and participatory. The researcher has a prepared list of questions, and discussion is expected to last no more than 45 minutes. Stories and points outside of the list of questions are welcome.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating or skip questions at any time.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in *Lessons from the Eco Sitio: Mapping Emergent Alternatives and Potential in Rural Second Homes* conducted by Mariah McCoy. I understand the nature of this study and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

- I agree that my participation may be audio-recorded: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- I agree to be identified by name: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- I agree to be quoted by name: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to receive a copy of the final research paper: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- I agree to allow video, digital images, or photographs in which I appear to be used in academic presentations and/or publications based on this research. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher Signature Date

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort resulting from your participation in the research. You have the right to not answer any particular questions.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Voluntary participation in projects like this allow for thoughtful and hopefully enjoyable discussion about the places we live. The benefits of this research and impactful discussion and the opportunity to share meaningful and useful information.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. If you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: Unless you specifically give your permission by checking the boxes below, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Data will be collected via handwritten interview notes and tape recording by the researcher. Once collected the researcher will anonymize quotes and references, and destroy the original content by the end of the study in August 2020. Your data will be safely stored in a locked laptop and only research staff will have access to this information during this time. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr. Deborah McGregor by e-mail at [DMcGregor@osgoode.yorku.ca](mailto:DMcGregor@osgoode.yorku.ca). This research has been reviewed and approved by the FES Research Committee,

on behalf of York University, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, telephone (1) 416-736-5914 or e-mail [ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca).