

## UMA EXPERIÊNCIA ÉTICO-ESTÉTICA NO MOVIMENTO SOCIAL DOS TRABALHADORES RURAIS

### AN ETHICO-AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE WITHIN RURAL WORKERS SOCIAL MOVEMENT

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/105965198431781212016079>

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#### ABSTRACT

The present article deals with a variety of issues arising from our research project which was underwritten by a CNPq/SEC/MINc grant in 2014. We propose to re-frame theoretically the concepts of education, media, memory and social movement based on a philosophy of process, Deleuzian micro-politics, and Guattari's ethico-aesthetics through video production with the communities. The thrust of our project consists of instilling ethico-aesthetic practices within the shift of references and aspirations from dominant mass-media to the quotidian experience of the socially interstitial. The theoretical aspect of the research will make free use of a trans-disciplinary approach to produce the conceptual foundations upon which the ethico-aesthetic ecology of practices will be mounted. We create the enabling conditions for the creation of an ethico-aesthetic pedagogy based on the emergence of aesthetic experience.

**Keywords:** education, art, micro-politics, communities, quotidian experience.

#### RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda algumas questões do projeto de pesquisa que teve apoio do Edital CNPq/SEC/MinC em 2014. Propomos uma revisão teórica dos conceitos de mídia, memória e movimento social, baseado em uma filosofia processual de Deleuze (micro-política) e Guattari (paradigma ético-estético), a partir da produção de vídeos com as comunidades. A motivação do nosso projecto consiste em propor práticas ético-estéticas dentro de uma mudança de referências e aspirações das mídias de massa dominantes em relação às experiências cotidianas das pessoas socialmente colocadas à margem. O aspecto teórico da pesquisa faz uma abordagem transdisciplinar para produzir as bases conceituais sobre as quais uma ecologia ético-estética das práticas são construídas. Criamos as condições favoráveis à criação de uma pedagogia ético-estética baseada no surgimento de experiências estéticas.

**Palavras-chave:** educação, arte, micro-políticas, comunidades, experiências do cotidiano.

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## 1 - INTRODUCTION

The present article deals with a variety of issues arising from our research project with the Landless Rural Workers Movement in the state of Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil, which was underwritten by a CNPq/SEC/MINC grant, and carried out under the auspices of LabInter/UFSM by professors and researchers Prof. Andréia Machado Oliveira and Felix Rebolledo Palazuelos in 2013/2014. The project started out with a programmed syllabus designed to teach video production in rural settings to uninitiated participants of various ages and social and economic backgrounds. The intent was to give participants an introduction to documentary filmmaking as classically understood with state-of-the-art, consumer-grade mobile devices so that they could produce their own videos.

With the invaluable assistance of the technicians of Coptec and Emater, we were given access to the residents and schools of the settlements in Tupanciretã, Jóia, Julio de Castilhos and Chiapetta in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. The participants in the project workshops were the students and teachers of the public schools of the settlements, Coptec and Emater technicians and owner/operators of small family farms. The workshop syllabus consisted of 4 modules: an introduction to photography and documentary; shooting techniques with mobile devices; editing techniques; online distribution possibilities. The goal was for workshop participants to be able to produce small-scale documentary videos self-sufficiently. Some of the produced materials have been collected and edited and have been made available on YouTube, on the LabInter web site, and on the CODATA app currently under development by LabInter at UFSM.

We position our paper with the contention that the ineffectiveness of current forms and practices of resistance, oppositional consciousness, and social movement is not due to a lack of will or desire or militancy on the part of interstitial constituencies but because current methodologies of liberation are doomed to fail as a result of their being co-opted by their hegemonic ontological foundations and derivative epistemologies. Inevitably, the forces of change enfold themselves into the dominant structures of power so that all efforts for change ultimately lead back to very straight and narrow organization of subjectivities.

New social movement theories such as those proposed by Castells, Habermas, Melucci and Touraine concern themselves with a politics which seeks to understand and explain the dynamics of social movement in terms of social integration, participation, wealth



distribution,

cultural

reproduction and identity formation. These theories have come to address the contestatory dynamics and conflictual processes which have arisen from political, social and cultural Neoliberal disenfranchisement within a developed world context.

Thinkers such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010), Néstor García Canclini (2009) and Milton Santos (2000), among others, have offered original theories or adaptative re-contextualizations which deal with the specific social, political and cultural concerns of Southern social movement theory. In terms of repositing the traditional fore-mentioned issues and accommodating newer non-material socio-cultural concerns as well as more contemporary petitions such as environmental sustainability, gay rights, etc. more South-specific attempts exemplified by Sousa Santos (2010; 2007) remain well within the boundaries of established discourses of resource mobilization, political process theory, framing theory and social constructionism. New processes and modalities of resistance outside the traditional models of social movement have proven to be increasingly refractory to analysis and their formal systems of membership and values difficult to categorize within their various expressive modalities—this is readily seen in García Canclini's conceptualization of difference and hibrydity in *Diferentes, Desiguais, e Desconectados* (2009). And for interstitial social groups such as the MST which emerge from the no-man's land of the undefined boundaries of socio-political being at the fringes of civil society, the models are tenuous at best: the quasi-scientific claims implicit in structuralism and the grand narratives upon which traditional analytical models are based and which "are imploding under the weight of their contradictions" (SÁ MARTINO, 2009, p. 218).

The power of media to define and sway public opinion constitutes one of the most powerful forces in defining and modulating how the citizenry thinks, perceives and acts in the world socially, educationally, politically and culturally. Media are also leading determinants as to how the citizenry will accept the legitimacy of government and submit to governability: in the battle over the hearts and minds of people, the effects of media and mass communication are of paramount importance and require a new understanding which reflects the new social, political and cultural dimensions as well as the new limitations to governability.

The goal of this project is to devise and apply a method of documentary production which is based on a different understanding of what media are and how they can work in the educational field. Traditional mass media systematically "place the receptor outside the frame

of experience"



(MCLUHAN,

1967, p. 53) in order to better control the power of information and widen the binary divides between producer/consumer, active/passive, insider/outsider, subject/object. To counteract this disenfranchising positioning, our project seeks to use digital media to integrate and involve people in participative models of media production i.e documentary video production, in order to integrate and reconcile these dualities and heighten political subjectivity. This entails a shift from considering technologies and media as mere technological entities towards the activation and realization of difference within the invention of a society based on what Guattari terms a new ethico-aesthetic paradigm (GUATTARI, 1995).

In order to realize this shift, we wish to conceptualize what this shift entails. This will require a theoretical repositioning of concepts central to communication studies such as media, education, social movement, memory and the subject/object relation along the lines established by process philosophy. Second, to devise and apply a syllabus based on this conceptual realignment and a ethico-aesthetic pedagogy to teach hypermedia documentary methods in a series of workshops offered to the residents of the landless of the MST in the state of Rio Grande Do Sul.

Our project repositions the consideration of social movement and education. We need to see it in a new light: we must re-considered through the mobilization of operational concepts such as micro-politics of the everyday, memory as integrated memory and the ethico-aesthetic of pedagogy.

## 2 – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Traditional epistemologies are limited in their ability to re-position these conceptual themes primarily because of their dualist ontological foundations. These conceptual and analytical limitations are not only felt at a theoretical level, their repercussions are felt in the way that media are thought to function and the way that media are used. This constitutes a big problem for communications theory in that without a different foundation upon which to base its analyses, the discussion perpetually falls back onto itself. By developing an alternative foundation for the analysis of communication, our project re-aligns foundational concepts of communications theory according to an epistemology based on process philosophy and an ontology based on immanence. The premise to our research was guided by a question which

the practices of the workshops were not designed or equipped to answer: Does the production of an ontological shift to the epistemological underpinnings of the methods of mediatic practice bring about deep and lasting subjective social and educational change?

Yet to even inform the possibility of finding an answer, our research started out from the belief that communication is a process that generates change and that communication media are agents of social change. But the way that they do so depends on how they are posited theoretically and empirically. In terms of our project, we sought to shift the consideration of media as mere technological entities to a re-orientation of their understanding and use towards the determined activation and realization of a subjective *socius* under a new paradigm of micro-political desiring-production. This in itself brings out a number of problems of an ethico-aesthetic nature which we seek to resolve through the creation of social, mental and material ecologies of practices within a series of hypermedia documentary production workshops based on a participative ethico-aesthetical pedagogy. The implicit ontological shift in our approach was to change the constitution of the participant individual from a transcendental being to to an immanent becoming. Although immanence as a concept has been developed as a philosophical theory within process philosophy, the application of shifting the ontological premises to communications theory has not been extensively explored. Basing communications theory on process philosophy and on a fusion of the thought of Deleuze, Guattari and Simondon is at the forefront of the discipline and by proposing an enabling ecology of practices which interlinks aesthetic and ethical concerns is an original approach which extends the understanding of media into new directions.

We start out from the belief that communication is a process that generates change and that education and communication media are agents of change—change which simultaneously alters both sender and receiver. In terms of exchange, the information conveyed by media produce beliefs which condition the actions of both sender and receiver which in turn produce other beliefs, etc thus altering their participation in the world. This dynamic alters the identity of the participants in the communicational dynamic so that once they have been transformed by the effects of media and information, the identity of participants no longer concurs with their original way of being in the world. The environment, the participants, the message being transmitted, the medium being used are transformed by the process and together they constitute a flux, a dynamic of perpetual change which French philosopher Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) will label an associated milieu. For him, the transformative power of information



is "the very operation of taking on form" (COMBES, 2012, p. 9) and can be seen as a dynamic, transformative structuration.

To see communications this way already demands of us that we posit certain concepts in a new way. To begin with, information and media need to be seen not only as what is exchanged but as subjective entities in their own right which are no less privileged than the sender and the recipient within the dynamic of communication. The work of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Félix Guattari (1930-1992) develops the conceptual apparatus that expands Simondon's (1989) proposal where the subject is considered as an effect of the process of individuation, rather than as a cause or as a resulting individualization. They develop a means of thought that allows us to work with transitory elements, unexpected articulations and dynamics within fluxes of multiplicity and difference as well as to postulate the concretized workings of the interactive functional dynamic of the relation between fields of activity. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the relations which constitute the linkages between fields are not static or permanent: they are dynamic beings which create expanses of operational fields they call territories which can be likened to machinic assemblages. The spatial, material and psychological components seen as territories are of key importance to our project because they constitute the field as the integrative work of memory (REBOLLEDO, 2013).

These ideas together paint an ontological position which reflects a deviation from traditional epistemology by inverting the traditional metaphysical relationship between identity and difference. The epistemology of difference delves in the realm of change, difference and open-endedness rather than seek completion in immobile, definitive and rigid transcendental formulations. Instead of looking for understanding in definitions of essentialism and identity, our methodology aims at a functional or practical understanding based on experience. This is a method anchored in William James' (1842-1910) radical empiricism, one which does not vie for a total explanation: rather, it seeks its truth value in terms of relative coherence in experience as local operational functionality in everyday life.

If we look at this from a traditional communication model of signal generator-medium-receiver, for the MST the most important implication of this model is the generation of content which can be used to give heft and flexibility to their mediatic presence, social and political positioning and agenda-setting at a local, regional and global scale. From a new media standpoint, for the people of the assentamentos this enhanced mediatic existence allows

for the establishment of dialog and relational networking in virtual communities as well as flesh-and-blood in-the-world communities. The content produced at a grass-roots level and be user-generated through digital technologies includes mostly digital video but which can also produce offshoots or mediatic effects through blogging, podcasting, review-sites, social networking, social media and wikis. Free distribution and dissemination of this User Generated Content (UGC) can be maintained through low-cost social media and "content-based" sharing sites which place no censoring restrictions. However, the ability of assentamentados and the MST to generate documentary production and disseminate it on their own terms means that these digital technologies and communication techniques can be used for a variety of purposes: for historical and archival documentary, as source material for news and current-event documentary, for the maintenance of their ecology of technical practices and the presentation of everyday life, for fostering solidarity and the expansion of social networks, for educational purposes, for personal self-affirmation and for creative/artistic expression. Within the dissemination and distribution process, access to these materials can be modulated according to individual user security needs or protocols set-up by the MST itself without external influence by using conventional peer-to-peer (P2P) or anonymous friend-to-friend (F2F) file-sharing networks or other file transfer systems. Also, depending on end-user needs, the UGC can be provided in a variety of resolutions and formats and independently accessed.

But what is key here is that the UGC, as Touraine (2002) points out, is an expression of the individualism of the Subject—"it represents the individual in his attempt to be a responsible actor" where the result of subjectivation "is the self-representation of an individual or a group as an actor, trying to impose their own ends to their environment". The Subject "cannot oppose this invasion with universal principles but with the resistance of [their] singular experiences" (Touraine, 2002: 911 The important aspect here is for individual documentarians to create works according to a different pattern; not one based on objectivity with aspirations towards artistic or professional outcome but on their own decidedly subjective singular experience, on a minor emergent aesthetic and the interpretation of everyday events. And it is exactly this expression of the singular experience which is to be brought out in the work of documentary production. It is not a question of dictating what is to be produced and how but of examining structures of *habitus* and the dispositions of creative process by establishing a research/creation methodology within the documentary production workshop process.

### 3 - DEVELOPMENT

Because our project is structured along diverse yet convergent lines—pedagogical, theoretical, empirical—we require a methodological strategy to accomplish our proposal. The approach of our multidisciplinary endeavour requires that we deploy simultaneously the theoretical considerations, the empirical praxis and pedagogical methodologies in order to follow the individuation process: in our project, the theoretical aspects unfold at the same time that the pedagogical praxis is developed within the empirical workshop phase. This obviously goes against the grain of traditional research methodologies and the ontological foundations and epistemological stances upon which these methodologies are based on. Usually, research projects in the humanities are firmly structured and their unfolding is rigidly directed according to strict guidelines towards what is usually a pre-determined successful attainment of a foregone conclusion. Our project is in many ways the antithesis of this approach. While we acknowledge the fact that traditional research methodologies are guided by exacting formal definitions and inflexible categorical distinctions between the subject and object of study and the disciplinary boundaries which serve to frame thought, we are also conscious of the limitations inherent in this outlook: there is no denying that these artificial categorical distinctions break down quite readily under scrutiny and that the causal density and dynamics at play are severely controlled by the attempt to foretell outcomes and maintain these categorial distinctions intact. Although at first glance our methodological approach can give the impression that it is overtly fluid and unrestrained, the research methodology will be guided by enabling constraints and its unfolding will be monitored by a rigorous cartographic practice. In our project, the theoretical aspect of the research makes free use of a trans-disciplinary approach to produce the conceptual foundations upon which the ethico-aesthetic ecology of practices will be mounted. As such, the theoretical praxis will consist of a direct formulation of the concepts based on the reasoned survey and consideration of the existing literature according to the thematic delimitations of the project and defined in the bibliography.

The guiding principle behind the documentary video course was a simple documentary structure that alternates interview images (talking heads) with illustrative images (B-roll) which demonstrate, visually explain, or provide visual testimony of what is being said in the interviews and the covered interviews as voice-over. To attain that goal we proposed a

four-lesson



plan, 5-session

plan: Lesson 1: Intro to documentary video and the photographic image; Lesson 2: Working with video (2 sessions); Lesson 3: How to edit a video; Lesson 4: How to distribute and disseminate videos. These courses were to offered to teenagers in public elementary schools sited in the assentamentos of the MST in central and northern RS, the teachers in these schools and technicians from EMATER and COPTEC.

From the beginning, the participants were always very receptive to the classes and there was much enthusiasm from both students and teachers. Participants looked forward to the classes for a number of reasons:

- enjoyed the relaxed structure of the classes
- participated in academic process differently
- experienced artistic creativity which did not impose a “within-the-lines” discipline
- cooperated/collaborated with their classmates in new ways
- could take the piss out of authority (on account of the language & laxness)
- learned practical knowledge they could ‘walk away’ with
- worked with cameras and tablets i.e. state-of-the-art technology, they normally would not have access to
- played creatively with sophisticated technology with minimal constraints,
- got to see their classmates, their environment and context in a different way
- created imagery which directly reflected their reality.

Although the participants rapidly grasped and absorbed the more theoretical aspects of image composition, their interest for exercises which sought to illustrate the finer, more abstract aspects of image creation did not ignite their imagination. Exercises drawn from the “*Experimentar o Cinema—material de apoio para educadores*” from the “*Inventar a diferença—Cinema e direitos humanos*” project were a fabulous pedagogic inspiration, completely “legitimised” the syllabus, codified the learning of techniques and helped in the creation of interesting and rewarding learning experiences. Some of the techniques and exercises were extremely rewarding, like the “talk about the photograph” exercise. However, we came to feel that the technical exercises were more interesting and rewarding for the instructor than for the student. In these exercises, the instructor was able to recognise what is

at stake in  each of the exercises and can see and understand the importance and significance of each technique, but they lack the contextual significance that would make them relevant to the students. They were all “wonderful” exercises in that we could see the emergence of cinema, the invention of the practices which constitute cinematic expression at every step of their execution, but we could not help but feel that these exercises were experientially hollow and empty of any kind of relevance to the students wanting to learn how to make vídeos. To us they were akin to learning a new language by learning vocabulary without any way of using the words.

We found repeatedly when working with teenagers that to teach teach pictorial composition or how the image works internally either as a static photograph or as a motion picture sequence or shot is *initially* futile. In most cases, it was sufficient to teach the students how to turn on and off the devices and explain the distinction between the Stop and Pause buttons for them to start shooting. With that minimal level of instruction, the children were able to explore how to structure sequences and learn the fundamentals of in-camera editing and continuity. We assert this initial minimal instruction for a number of reasons. First, one has to give the children more credit for their having absorbed the rudiments of visual expression through their countless hours spent in front of video screens playing games, accessing images on the web, watching films and videos online and on television. Second, the connection of what-you-see-is-what-you-get with point-and-shoot is more often than not already hardwired in the children’s brains. Third, in our rush to start producing videos of their own making but of ‘acceptable’ quality, we are inculcating an orthodox, main-stream style of video-making which could be said to run counter to what we are trying to do. Fourth, the imposition from above of an aesthetic of what constitutes a presentable image or coherent narrative usually runs against the creative grain of the teenager’s imagination which has its own idea of how to invent video for its own designs. Fifth, the creative energy which expresses itself as a collective pulsion has a dynamic all its own and it is this (relatively) untrammelled, enthusiastic, primal, exploratory desire to experiment/play that we wish to engage. Sixth, the freedom of *laissez-faire* (with stand-by instructor support) to learn according to how the student’s inner creativity and expressivity guides them, generates a self-sufficiency and self-confidence from within based on acquired skills. Seventh, coaching by the instructor during key moments to illustrate the advantages of one technique over another, or one framing over another, or how to compensate exposure for backlighting for example, improves skills and hopefully strengthens the trust between student and teacher. But in these



environments limited by time and resources, we were more intent on the teaching of techniques which were useful and productive “right then and there” than with the planting of culturally recognised seeds of expressive potential which can be called up on later as needed towards a pre-established normative possibility. We were very conscious about the dimension to the pedagogical enterprise in that we wanted to impart the power to produce now rather than learn all that must be learned before being able to produce. To teach kids to turn on and off the devices is of course not the end-all and be-all of our work with the students. What was at stake was not so much the acquisition of technique or method, but the kindling of enthusiasm for exploration, the sharpening of awareness as to what was being done with the camera and the images produced, the maintenance of a cooperative relationship amongst the students, and the affirmative collective building up of skills and expressivity. The actual work with the cameras, smart phones or tablets was but a part of what was always at play.

In one of the settlements where we had been teaching photography and video production to children, a 13 or 14 year-old girl showed us some photographs she had taken as part of a classroom assignment to photograph her favourite animal and what she brought to class was a series of dingy images of horses tightly cooped up in their stalls. Technically, the photographs were both limited by a lack of technique and by the rudimentary technology: the students in these back-country schools have very little, if any, training and shoot with whatever image gathering devices they have available, usually mobile digital devices such as cel phones or small consumer grade cameras so that the noisy, inconsistently lit, haphazardly-exposed look of the images is not so much a result of aesthetic choice but a manifestation of economic constraints. The photographs mostly showed side views of horses in their stalls tightly constrained by their enclosure and firmly confined within the frame. The horse is often understood as a symbol of unfettered freedom and often portrayed running freely on wide, open plains—so for someone to shoot repeatedly images of different horses physically constrained and confined to very small spaces speaks of something other than horses. The girl was oblivious to all of this; as all she saw were beautiful horses. But what we wish to point out here is not the student’s interpretative ignorance or artistic naiveté but the fact that an aesthetic instinct was already there, working at a level other than at a conscious one, even if she could not articulate it as an idea or concern. It is not at the level we usually understand as working the interval between “action and reaction” but a pre-subconscious one, what Deleuze calls the unfathomable, what Guattari dubs the schizoanalytical unconscious and what



Simondon designates as the pre-individual. What is of importance is to allow the students to tap into this subconscious, not necessarily in a conscious manner but in such a way that whatever is there is given expression and whose imagistic composition is for all intents and purposes unknown to them and likely never given conscious opportunity to express itself or afforded deliberate means to access that imagistic archive. We found that an effective way to get at this level was to find “exercises” i.e. activities, which asks students to compose videos illustrating abstract concept words married to movement in conjunction with visual properties of the world.

In coming to teach video as a creative endeavour, it is helpful for teachers to situate themselves clearly on the spectrum of production. Is one looking to use video as a means of acquiring media literacy? As a way to learn about narrative fiction film? As pure artistic expression to produce experimental films? As a means to commercial ends? As documentary? In terms of our project, the initial ‘guiding philosophy’ behind documentary production is that it is an audio-visual presentation that presents issues, ideas, events, situations in a non-fictional (i.e. not actor-driven), discursive manner using illustrative images, interviews, title cards and motion graphics, music and voice-over narration. In our project, the primary drive of documentary production was more pedagogical: the audio-visual documentary purposed for educational purposes to give an account to others about something in a non-fictional, rational manner. We never pushed the dogma of impartiality, neutrality and objectivity, but instead encouraged people to produce regardless of the drive behind the content without questioning the fictive or fabulative nature of the “truths” they were composing or unveiling around their reality. But with the teenagers, we never closed the door on the possible exploration of dramatic narrative films—not because it wasn’t part of the program, but because these expressive modalities emerge on their own through the students volition whether the program wants to or not! In one instance, a class scheduled for documentary interview techniques was railroaded by an artisanal cap gun brought into the classroom. This device altered the ‘shooting’ dynamic and the scheduled interviews became a multi-actor, multi-camera shoot with an improvised horror film scenario with a prop gun, continuity person, and a make-shift art and wardrobe department—and all before lunch!

In the field, we soon understood that there is a difference between teaching documentary video production to adults and to teenagers. The main difference lies in the expression of their concerns. In terms of using video to work with the micro-politics of everyday life, the teenagers are more engaged with articulating identity dynamics than



memory. For adults, memory plays a more important role. Teenagers look for recognition in terms of who they are, who they are in relation to their schoolmates and friends, who they will be... they are more preoccupied with themselves and with the projection of their identity onto others. Initially, the children ‘fool around’ with the cameras to create selfies and amusing or taunting portraits of their peers. When using the camera, they seemed to enjoy using the camera not for the purpose of taking pictures, i.e. creating images for posterity, but as acts of transgression to infringe on the privacy of others and intrude upon their space. These images of others are usually never more than snapshot portraits but at least they display a nascent interest for the portrayal of someone’s life story through images. This impulse can be modulated over time so that the ‘portrayal’ can become a short biographical video or biographeme. One exercise which proved fruitful was to set up interview teams where the students would interview each other and then the documentaries were discussed in a class setting. Usually, their concerns were for the future in terms of “what do I want to be when I grow up?” and resolving the dilemma of whether to live in the city to reap the economic benefits of urban life or return to the settlement and to enjoy countryside life. The conversations and discussions that ensued were quite enlightening and opened new dimension in the relations between the students and how they saw each other. For example, in comparison to other Brazilian teenagers, for the most part, most students see themselves as equals in most respects but not in terms of opportunity and the discussions around this theme were quite thought provoking for all participants.

Adults on the other hand, are more concerned with the past and seek recognition for what they have experienced and the hardships they have endured. They are more attuned with memory because they have a past to tap into and generalise connections with other events in their lives and the world. In terms of the future, they see it through the future of their children. But where the vision of the future of both teenagers and adults concur is that both groups see access to upper education as of paramount importance: teenagers see it as the normal continuation of their public school education to gainful employment and consumerist participants in society and adults see it as a prime necessity, practically a human right, for the social and economic advancement of their children. In this project we tried to concentrate our efforts on self-expression through documentary and tried to move the pedagogical program directly into the midst of the possibilities just described. We wanted these older students to take the cameras into their hands and start producing straightaway and begin to articulate their



concerns, ideas and visions of themselves as what Deleuze calls in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989) the ‘people to come’.

Some of the non-school adult participants, such as the EMATER and COPTec technicians, were very much into doing systematisations of their experiences with the settlements as a justification to funding organisations of their work in the settlements for performance-evaluation purposes and as a less tedious, livelier way of presenting their experiences to their peers even if we felt that this was not the thrust of the project. Although we are philosophically against any systematization, our purpose is not to short-change systematisation as a sophisticated analytical methodology: our misgivings are with its categorical killing of the possibility of creative understanding in order to systematically control productive environments and populations; industrially standardise site-specific, human resource-dependent techniques of production; and steam-roll the difference and diversity in order to export wholesale what is successful from one ‘ecology’ to another according to (pseudo-) scientific imperatives. In stead, even if we were not overly successful in convincing the technicians, we sought to direct the attention of the pieces towards what was creative within the experiences in order to possibly recreate the conditions of improvisation, invention and creativity that arose within the experience rather than repeat the experience itself from one community to another. However, there was not enough time to work with them in terms of using video as a socio-political tool to foment and develop solidarity within their client groups and to use video not for documenting the systematisation of a technical procedure or method but as a way of documenting the creative development behind a technique—how to foment creativity, innovation and inventiveness while creating solidarity within client groups. To visually document a technical procedure in an objective, scientific manner, possibly to make sure that everyone does the procedure the same way. i.e; to systematise in order to remember and preserve a technique that might otherwise get lost; to document an event for posterity, i.e as a historical document; to standardise and render uniform the memory of an event: to establish how an event is to be remembered and interpreted; to capture the unfolding of an event for its news, archival or historical value for future analysis, interpretation and study or simply as entertainment; to record and document people’s ideas, impressions, attitudes, questions, prejudices about a particular issue; to sway people’s thinking about issues by means of a shift brought on through ideological change through the rational unfolding of “truthful” audio-visual materials; to document something for

the sake of  testimony and future evidence; to rescue the memory of some event through the process of recording and dissemination of audio-visual recordings of oral history.

It requires the construction of the discursive image of the subject of study which “is not located in the traditional discourses of individualism; [but] is located in an historical analysis of what self and experience can consist of at particular conjunctures; is relational; is embodied; insists on difference as a qualitative multiplicity; and can provide new, empowered speaking positions” (PILE & THRIFT 1995: 16). The expression of the various aspects of subjective-becoming is what constitutes the cartographic method as a mapping. The narrativity of cartography here invoked has a necessary function, a scientific legitimacy whose theory “is indissociable from a theory of practices, as its condition as well as its production” (DE CERTEAU 1994: 78). The narratives of recounted practices seek expression to the witnessed changes but also to the subjective changes which instigate the witnessing of these changes as the creation of novelty as invention as well as the recognition of the advance of novelty as a calling-forth from the future.

#### 4 – CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of our project with the people of the settlements was to serve a variety of purposes:

- to instil creative and/or personal expression
- to strengthen identity as citizens through mediatic expression
- to counter the biased perception and prejudiced mediatic representation of who they are and what they are about
- to give a voice and a mediatic presence to people that normally don't have one
- to present their everyday life events on their terms and from their point of view
- to disseminate these views as alternative mediatic content
- to heighten their self-perception and the perception of the world as participative and contributing members of Brazilian society.



As such, the project sought to emphasise the giving of a voice to people that do not normally have one, namely, women and teenagers. Throughout the duration of the project, participants were given the opportunity to discover that they do in fact have a voice, a subjective strength, which could be expressed and presented through video and that their opinions could be made to matter by the dissemination of their ideas.

Another part of the project's motivation was to focus on the micro-political of the quotidian and to move the centre of political discourse away from politicians and "high-level" leaders and democratize the conversation so that we got to see and hear the "common" folk whose day to day work is the reification of the aspirations of the movement. The point here is to get away from the discourse of politics from a macro-political ideological level and move it to the people's micro-political everyday reality to gain an appreciation for social/political movement where it is actually happening and how it is being carried forward concretely.

Our primary objective was to activate processes of cultural innovation through the production of documentary videos with digital mobile devices as communication tools and disseminating the content, the acquired knowledge through social media and other online channels. The purpose of the project was not only the production of videos, but of creating spaces and modes of expression for individual subjectivity, or for the diversity of subjectivities in rural communities which are generally invisible and unheard. The workshops provide an alternative to the lack of access to media in order to give individuals and groups in these communities a voice and media presence.

In the sense of activating subjective expressive potential, the participative video production workshops sought to produce the enabling conditions for creative discovery of novel modes of expression through video production. but of facilitating new modes of cooperation, of affirmation, of solidarity in the collaborative endeavour of social self-expression. Hence, for the project it is not so much a question of necessarily creating a final product in terms of documentary videos, but of garnering an appreciation of the communicative possibilities within the relations implicit in the production of videos. In this respect the project can be said to be a research-creation proposition where learning is a non-directed research practice which investigates possibilities of expression with the technology and the techniques in and for themselves—the subject of research thus shifts to the experience itself from a subject external to the objective experience.

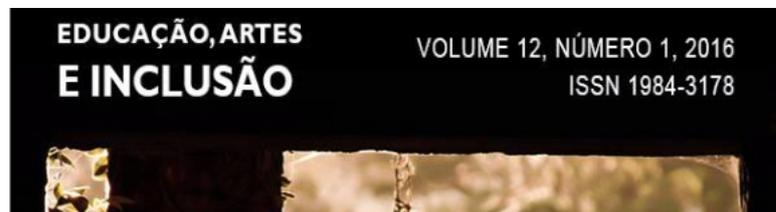
In this manner, the participants are directly involved in creation and discovery and not preoccupied with satisfying a predetermined formal final result. This does not mean that we are dismissing the importance of a final product—finished videos are of fundamental importance, but we are also looking for participants to discover and experiment with the potential of the technology, the techniques, self-knowledge and knowledge of others that participative video production makes available. We cannot be insistent enough on the point that it is more important to encourage experimentation and discovery than harping on the acquisition of formulaic technical and aesthetic techniques.

Our project problematizes how media practices developed in the participatory documentary video workshops can foment singular, personal and group subjectivity and develop a critical consciousness on the micro-politics of the everyday through the examination of practices of productive inclusion in rural settings. This would hopefully facilitate the emergence of other modes of expression, complexify identity, entertain difference and diversity as well as strengthen the sense of belonging, participation and contribution of interstitial citizens.

Thus, we seek to generate an enabling ecology of practices which repositions and redirects the functionalities of digital technologies and the potentials of web-based social media. This entails a shift from considering technologies and media as mere technological entities to the activation of techniques and devices towards the affirmation of difference. Perhaps this research and the ensuing creation will lead to social innovations, to novel expressions of collaborative solidarity, to contributions towards the invention of a society based on inclusive diversity which Guattari (1995) saw as being created within the perspective of a new aesthetic-political paradigm.

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*Recebido em 22 de dezembro de 2015*

*Aprovado em 13 de março de 2016*