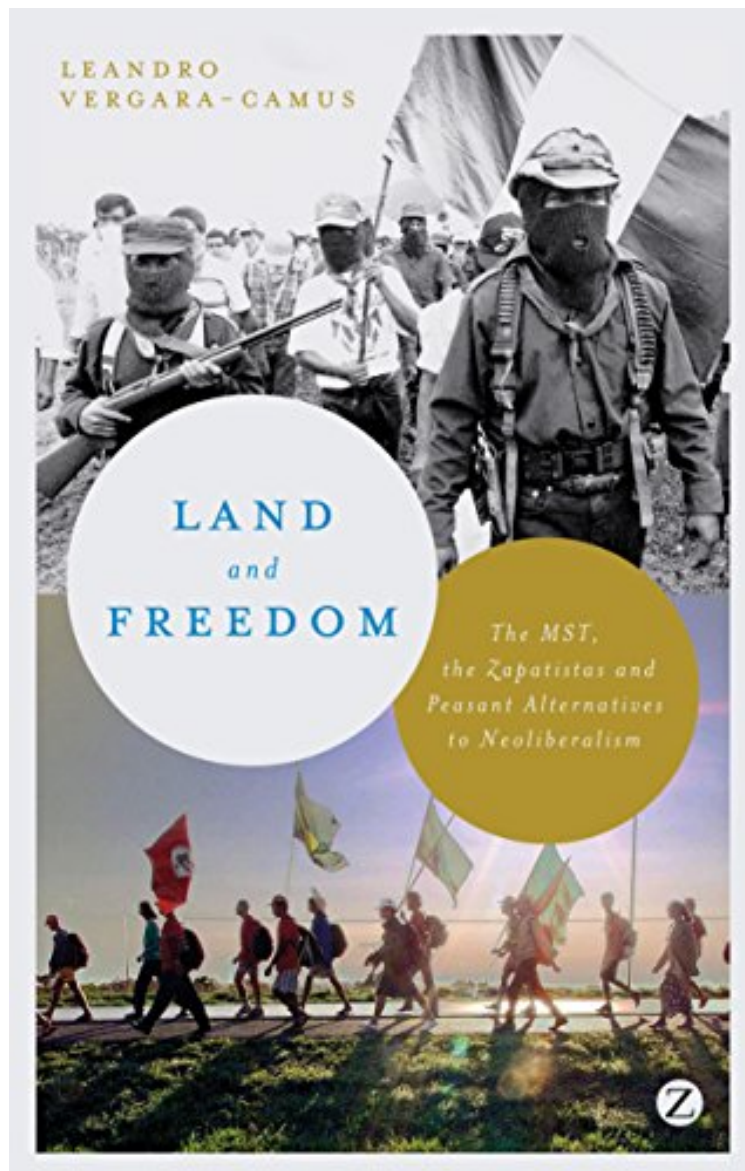


Land and Freedom: The MST, the Zapatistas and Peasant Alternatives to Neoliberalism

Leandro Vergara-Camus

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Leandro Vergara-Camus : Land and Freedom: The MST, the Zapatistas and Peasant Alternatives to Neoliberalism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Land and Freedom: The MST, the Zapatistas and Peasant Alternatives to Neoliberalism:

The Zapatistas of Chiapas and the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) of Brazil are often celebrated as shining examples in the global struggle against neoliberalism. But what have these movements achieved for their members in more than two decades of resistance and can any of these achievements realistically contribute to the rise of a viable alternative? Through a perfect balance of grassroots testimonies, participative observation and consideration of key debates in development studies, agrarian political economy, historical sociology and critical political economy, *Land and Freedom* compares, for the first time, the Zapatista and MST movements. Casting a spotlight on their resistance to globalizing market forces, Vergara-Camus gets to the heart of how these movements organize themselves and how territorial control, politicization and empowerment of their membership and the decommodification of social relations are key to understanding their radical development potential.

'This book represents an important new take on two emblematic Latin American social movements. While most scholarship has analyzed each of them separately, from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, few have compared and contrasted them, despite the similar impact they have both had on movement thinking worldwide. This book is particularly refreshing, in that it is perhaps the only major piece of scholarship to compare them through the lens of peasant studies.' Peter Rosset, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR), Chiapas, Mexico, and the Land Research Action Network (LRAN) 'Today's historic struggle by peasants, indigenous peoples and rural workers is for an alternative to neoliberal globalization. This book engagingly and vividly gives voice to the subaltern classes and their collective effort to create new communities and solidarity networks. This is indeed a ground-breaking and compelling work.' Cristobal Kay, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague 'The appeal of this book lies in its comprehensive comparison of two quite distinct agrarian social movements within the current neoliberal conjuncture. Vergara-Camus casts a critical lens on a grounded historical analysis of these two iconic struggles, their political, economic, cultural and institutional relations, and their successes and failures. This is a path-breaking contribution to the "peasant question".' Philip McMichael, Cornell University, author of *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions* 'In this provocative and unique book, Vergara-Camus compares and contrasts the important new models of socioeconomic interaction the rural poor of Brazil and Mexico have developed through collective action. Within the context of capitalist hegemony, unprecedented wealth concentration and the spread of authoritarian regimes, Vergara-Camus demonstrates how two large peasant movements have worked to construct alternative egalitarian societies, where the cash nexus does not reign supreme, making the book essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary radical social change.' Clifford Andrew Welch, Sao Paulo Federal University 'Land and Freedom offers an original and compelling theory of peasant struggles that challenge neoliberal globalization. Vergara-Camus aptly compares the contributions of MST and EZLN to contest neoliberal hegemony from the ground up. They have empowered the diverse peasant class they represent as educators in citizenship, class power and self-government for the subaltern classes. A must read for students of development.' Professor Gerardo Otero, Simon Fraser University 'This is a fundamental book for anyone who wants to understand the anti-capitalist path created by contemporary peasant rebellions. Vergara-Camus examines the impact of land struggles which, in the 1990s, challenged the "neoliberal consensus" in Mexico and Brazil. These movements have given the world a new political language, and have won a more dignified life for their impoverished members.' Debora Lerrer, Centre for Development, Agriculture and Society, Rio de Janeiro About the Author Leandro Vergara-Camus teaches development at SOAS, London, UK. His work focuses on the Latin American left, peasant agriculture, and the history of land struggles over property rights in Latin America.