

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 20 - CAPITALIST FORESTRY, RURAL LABOR, AND LAND INJUSTICES: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF FORESTS AND TREE PLANTATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LAND QUESTIONS, AGRARIAN QUESTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## **RURAL WAGE LABOR AND UNION REPRESENTATION IN THE BRAZILIAN PAMPA**

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This article examines the relationship between rural wage laborers in extensive livestock farming and their union representation in the Brazilian Pampa, considering recent transformations in the regional agricultural matrix. Historically marked by beef cattle farming in native pastures, the region has experienced significant changes with the expansion of soy, forestry, and more business-oriented forms of productive organization, which has redefined land use, the rural labor market, and labor relations. Although labor legislation formally guarantees collective rights, labor relations remain mediated by personal ties, traditional authority, and weak institutional action, now strained by processes of productive restructuring and job losses in livestock farming. Based on eighteen semi-structured interviews conducted in Sant'Ana do Livramento (Rio Grande do

Sul), the study adopts a qualitative approach inspired by ethnography, using thematic analysis to examine workers' perceptions of unions and collective action. The results indicate that the institutional invisibility of unions, fear of retaliation, distrust of their actions, and the fragmentation of collective identity operate in an articulated manner, being intensified by job insecurity resulting from productive changes. These factors weaken class solidarity and limit the collective mobilization of rural workers. The article contributes to rural sociology and organizational studies by highlighting how productive transformations, territorial isolation, symbolic traditions, and institutional fragility interact in the reproduction of asymmetrical labor relations in contemporary pastoral contexts.

Palavras-chave: rural wage labor; trade unions; collective action; pampa biome; brazil.