

Immigration, Colonization and Agricultural Development in the Campos Gerais Region of the Paraná State, Brazil

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KEYWORDS: agrarian history, agricultural projects, colonization, immigration.

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This article approaches narratives within the report entitled Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização, that was composed in the early seventies by Albert Elfes, a German agricultural engineer, and published in 1973 by the national institute of colonization and agrarian reform (INCRA), Paraná regional superintendency, south of Brazil. Elfes analyzed the settling of European and Asian immigrants in the Campos Gerais do Paraná region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, through interpretations related to the past and present (1970) of such region, the agronomist constitutes this geographic and human space as proper for the increase of agricultural production, which would originate from the work of immigrants and their descendants, in individual properties, with business characteristics that function as co-operatives. In our analysis, we don't deal with Elfes narratives just as descriptions of some specific realities, but as interpretations about the past, the present and expectations of the future that involve the ideas of progress, the passing of time and that classify and hierarchize the ways of living of the caboclos, Brazilian farmers and immigrants in Campos Gerais do Paraná.

Imigração, Colonização e Desenvolvimento Agrícola nos Campos Gerais do Paraná, Brasil

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: história agrária, projetos agrícolas, colonização, imigração.

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Esse artigo aborda narrativas presentes no relatório intitulado Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização, que foi redigido no início da década de 1970 por Albert Elfes, engenheiro agrônomo alemão, e publicado em 1973 pelo Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA), Superintendência Regional do estado do Paraná, sul do Brasil. No documento, Elfes analisa a fixação, nos séculos XIX e XX, de imigrantes europeus e asiáticos na região denominada Campos Gerais do Paraná. Além disso, por meio de interpretações sobre o passado e o presente (1970) dessa região, o agrônomo constitui esse espaço geográfico e humano como propício para o aumento da produção agrícola, que iria acontecer a partir do trabalho dos imigrantes e seus descendentes, em propriedades individuais, com características empresariais e organizados na forma de cooperativas. Em nossa análise, não encaramos as narrativas de Elfes apenas como descrições de determinadas realidades, mas como interpretações sobre o passado, o presente e expectativas de futuro que envolvem as noções de progresso, aceleração do tempo e que classificam e hierarquizam as formas de viver de caboclos, fazendeiros brasileiros e imigrantes nos Campos Gerais do Paraná.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes narratives on the settlement of European and Asian immigrants, in the 19th and 20th centuries, and proposals for increasing agricultural production in the Campos Gerais region of the Paraná state, in south of Brazil, presented in the *Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização* (Campos Gerais: Colonization Studies) report. German agricultural engineer Albert Elfes wrote the document and the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) –a body under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Brazilian government– published it in 1973.

TABLE 1

Geographical distribution and estimates of areas of fields in Paraná

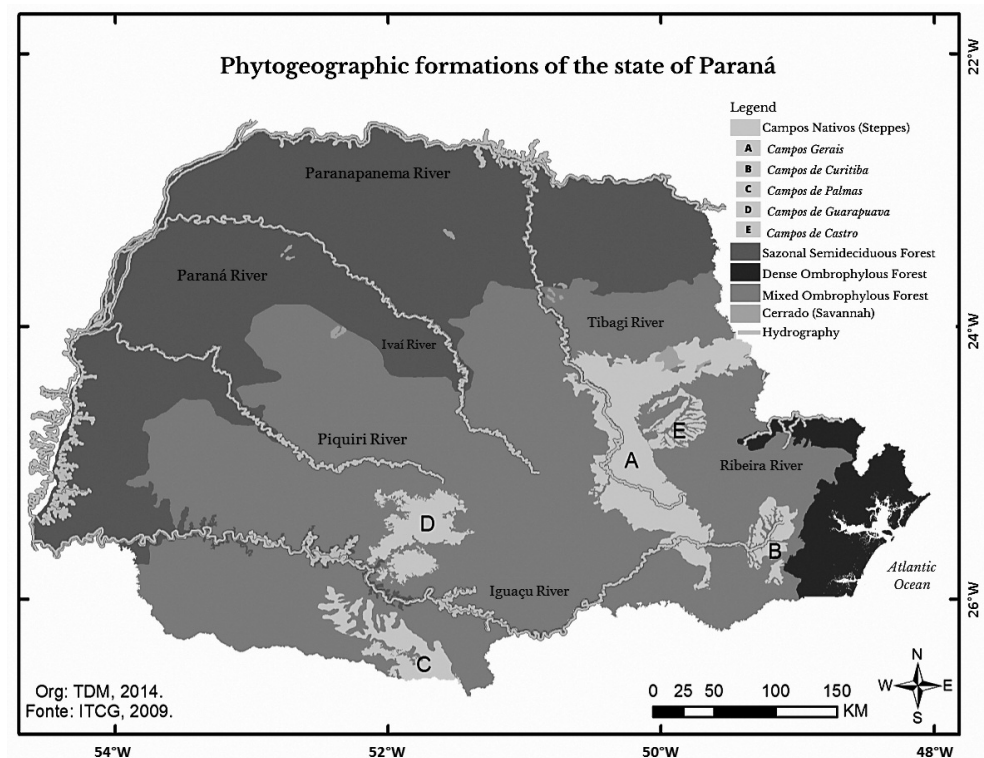
Clean Fields	Area (km²)
1. First Plateau	
Campos de Curitiba	1,740
Campos de Castro	1,290
2. Second Plateau	
Campos Gerais	19,060
3. Third Plateau	
Campos de Guarapuava	4,135
Campos de Laranjeiras do Sul	50
Campos de Palmas	2,350
Campos de Erê	25
Subtotal	28,650
Brazilian Cerrado (savannah)	
4. Second Plateau	
Jaguaraí, Arapoti and Sengés Counties	1,740
5. Third Plateau	
Campo de Mourão County and Campos do Erê	142
Total area	30,532

Source: adapted from Elfes (1973: 8).

When it comes to the geographic space addressed in the document, after noting that there is no consensus regarding the definition of the term *Campos Gerais do Paraná*, Elfes (1970: 8) adopts the definition of the German geographer Reinhard Maack, who divides the referred territory, based on the characteristics of its vegetation, in three types. The first is called “clean fields, or low grass steppes”, the second “savannah fields or shrub steppes” and the last “dirty fields”. While the first would be formations that occur without human intervention, the “dirty fields”, or “samambais,” have their origin in the action of “Eu-

ropean man”, who cut down and burned the forests for the development of livestock (*ibid.*: 8-9). Based on Maack, Elfes (1970: 8) presents and quantifies the geographic distribution of these fields in the three plateaus of Paraná (Table 1 and Map 1):

MAP 1
Map of the phytogeographic formations of the state of Paraná



“Note: notably, there is the occurrence of native grasslands (steppe) interspersed with forest formations and even, to a lesser extent, *cerrado* formations (wooded savannah). (Adapted from ITCG, 2009).”

Source: Martins and Vieira (2014: 227) (Adapted).

It should be noted that this is a phytogeographic composition interspersed with tropical and subtropical forests¹. As we can see in Map 1, areas A, B, C, D and E are the native

1. It should be taken into account that: “The region called Campos Gerais do Paraná does not have a single and permanent definition, since this has been modified, meeting the needs and conveniences of a regional identification within a state with remarkable territorial dynamics in recent years. decades” (MELO *et al.*, 2010: 18). Cruz identifies two climates in Campos Gerais do Paraná, Cfa and Cfb: “Cfa is a subtropical climate with an average temperature in the coldest month below 18°C (mesothermal) and an average temperature in the hottest month above 22°C, with hot summers, infrequent

grasslands (steppes), whose surroundings were occupied by mixed broadleaf forest. The *cerrado* (savannah) is formed by small areas located in parts of these and in the semi-deciduous seasonal forest.

The process of establishing Europeans and their descendants in Campos Gerais –also marked by the eradication and expulsion of the indigenous people who occupied the region– began in the 18th century through grants of sesmarias for cattle raising (Ritter, 1980). According to Westphalen, these areas had between 4,000 and 8,000 São Paulo bushels, with cases in which a person requested more than one sesmaria (Westphalen, 1968: 7, *apud* Fleischfresser, 1998: 46). In addition to the slaves and their masters, there were the aggregates, who lived and worked in small swiddens in areas farther away from the headquarters of the farms and who periodically traveled to harvest yerba mate (Machado, 2002: 78-9). In the following centuries, despite the granting of sesmaria being linked, in its origin, to the cultivation of the land, land ownership was consolidated as something natural and indisputable (Motta, 2008). Even with the process of sharing properties among the descendants of sesmeiros, the installation of immigrants and the emergence of faxinais², in general, there was no significant change related to land concentration in Paraná (Elfes, 1973: 1).

Regarding the establishment of immigrants in Paraná, it should be noted that in the 19th and 20th centuries, several governors of Paraná implemented policies aimed at settling European and, to a lesser extent, Asian farmers in various areas of its territory. These are policies aimed at increasing the white population and food production, especially wheat (Santos, 2007; Stein, 2014) and which were often accompanied by the production and dissemination of speeches aimed at building an identity for Paraná population. The main areas occupied by foreigners were the metropolitan region of Curitiba and Campos Gerais. It is this process of establishing 17 agricultural colonies formed in the latter region between 1877 and 1966, by immigrants from Europe and Asia, that Albert Elfes addresses in *Campos Gerais: Estudos da colonização*.

frosts and a tendency for rainfall to concentrate in the summer months, however without definite dry season; Cfb which corresponds to the temperate climate itself, with average temperature in the coldest month below 18°C (mesothermal), with cool summers, average temperature in the hottest month below 22°C and without a defined dry season” (CRUZ, 2010: 60).

2. “The Faxinal System has been found in Araucaria Forest areas of Parana State, since the 18th century. This System consists in small rural communities which combine agriculture, animal raising and extractive activities on a community land, besides a strong focus on subsistence agriculture. Fences and/or ditches separate the áreas of pasture and plantation. Initially, this System was implanted in regions of the so called “caboclo” culture, but later on European Immigrants also adopted it” (SAHR, 2005: 42).

Therefore, the main objective of this article is to investigate the narratives present in the report that build a historicity –understood as ways of relating past, present and future (Hartog, 2013: 11)– that classifies subjects, immigrants and nationals, and interprets nature in order to legitimize proposals for the use of new technologies for the growth of agricultural production in the region. In this sense, our analysis understands *Campos Gerais: Estudos da colonização* as a document that contains a set of technical and scientific discourses that establish regional and human divisions (ethnic, social, cultural and economic). Therefore, such discourses are instruments whose symbolic effect enshrines certain visions, divisions and world projects (Bourdieu, 1989: 120).

We must consider that the making of the report relates to socioeconomic development projects involving the Brazilian government, several countries, especially the United States and Germany, as well as international bodies, such as the IDB (Inter American Development Bank). We notice the same when considering the author's professional trajectory in Brazil. Albert Elfes was born on December 7, 1915, in Rheurdt, a city located in the Nordrhein-Westfalen state in Germany. In 1934, Elfes immigrated to Brazil, where he served until 1939 as a rural worker in Rolândia, a then German colony, founded by Oswald Niexdorf, in the north of Paraná state (Mainka, 2009). In 1940, after returning to Germany, the German army drafted him, who became a war prisoner in France in 1945 (Elfes, 1975).

In 1946, Elfes gained freedom, then enrolling at the Bonn University, graduating in Agronomy and Economic Sciences in 1950, when he married the agricultural engineer Irene Albrecht, with whom he immigrated to Brazil in July of the same year. At first, Elfes worked in the management of a farm in São José dos Campos, in São Paulo state. In the following years, he began working at the Agricultural and Industrial Research and Planning Institute PLANAGRO S. A., where he worked in research projects on the soils of the low São Francisco River region, in Alagoas state, where he also worked, in 1952, as a farm manager. From October 1954 on, working for the Cia. Progresso Rural (CPR), he worked, along with René Bertholet, then company's director, in the settlement of the Colônia Pindorama, located in the Cururipe municipality (Elfes, 1975: 2).

In 1958, Elfes and his family moved to Petrópolis, in Rio de Janeiro state and, working for the German Embassy in Brazil, he conducted research projects in the northeast, in Minas Gerais state and in Rio Grande do Sul state. In 1960, after settling in Curitiba, Elfes founded, along with the Bishop of Oeiras, in Piauí state, the Northeast Association of the Agricultural Development (ANDA). Such entity, through the financing of MISEREOR³

3. MISEREOR was founded in 1958 by the German Bishops' Conference (FRANZEN, 2015).

and the Bonn's Ministry of Economic Cooperation, worked on a project for agricultural development in the municipality of Itauera and established the Colony School Santa Rosa, in the Oeiras municipality. Elfes worked in the management of the association up until 1966, when he then traveled to Europe, attending an invitation by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Germany, to attend technical symposiums of agricultural development that took place in Rome and Bonn (Elfes, 1975: 2).

In the following year, working for the Bonn University and the Ministry of Economic Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Germany, Elfes traveled across the nine states of the Brazilian northeast, in order to evaluate the effects of the German financial aid towards the agricultural development of this region. A report called *Landwirtschaftliche Entwicklungshilfe in Nordostbrasilien* (Aid for the Development in the Brazilian Northeast), presented the results, one wrote in partnership with W. H. Schuch, a member of the Institut für Agrarpolitik und Marktforschung (Agricultural Policy and Market Research Institute) of said university (Elfes, 1975: 3).

In 1968 and 1969, Elfes also conducted research projects commissioned by the World Bank. One of them focused the financing for the expansion of rail networks in the Sergipe and Bahia states and the other collected data on agricultural economy and road network in 13 Chilean provinces. From August 1969 on, by invitation of the National Institute of Agrarian Development (INDA), the agricultural engineer conducted several studies in the Paraná state. The results were recorded in three reports: *Estudos agro-econômico e social* (Agricultural, Economic and Social Studies), *Morretes e suas possibilidades* (Morretes and its Possibilities), both dated 1970; *Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização*, dates in 1973 (Elfes, 1975: 3).

In 1970, Elfes wrote the book *Suábios no Paraná* (Swabians in Paraná State). It is a publication on the 20th anniversary of the Entre Rios Colony, founded in the Guarapuava municipality by refugees of the World War II, who collectively identify themselves as the Danube Swabians (Elfes, 1975: 4).

From May, 1972 to July, 1973, by invitation of the Brazilian Air Force Lieutenant General João Camarão Telles Filho, Elfes lived in the indigenous community of the Tirió's people, located in the far north of the Pará state. This experience was recorded in the report called *Die Wirtschaftliche Situation der Tirió-Indianer* (The Economic Status of the Tirió Indigenous People), published in 1972 by the Institut für Brasilienkunde (Institute for Brazilian Studies), from Mettingen, Germany.

Such activities and writings relate to a Cold War context and to an expansion of the international capitalism post-World War II, as well as to the action of North American and European organizations, who aimed at fostering the social and economic development of Latin-American countries. Yet, it is not only about economic development, being rather about producing a “dominant thinking and action”, according to historian Sônia Mendonça (2015: 170), as it involves forms of knowledge, concepts and theories, with systems of power and the forging of hierarchical subjectivities.

In addition to it, it is worth emphasizing the Elfes’s activities in Brazil happened during the modernization of agriculture in Brazil. This is a process overall characterized by the implementation of large agricultural projects, acceleration of deforestation, monoculture, the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural machinery, as well as by bank financing, subsidized by the Brazilian state and the building of an industrial complex. It is a process that involved planning experiences in the agricultural sector that were being carried out by various Brazilian government agencies in collaboration with private companies and foreign governments (Szmrecsányi, 1979). The creation in 1973 of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) stands out. Rocha *et al.* (2022: 223), when analyzing the performance of this body in the expansion of soy production in the Brazilian *cerrado*, states that

“[...] the Brazilian Green Revolution was not characterized by the direct American inception of knowledge and technologies but by continuous scientific collaboration, academic formation and intergovernmental accords. The combination of joint research programs and developmental policies transformed the Cerrado into one of the world’s most productive regions”.

According to Fleischfresser (1998: 8), in the Paraná state, the agricultural modernization happened most intensely from the 1970s on and tended to “homogenize the way of production in the regional space and fuel the process of economic and social differentiation among rural producers”. Similar to what was or would happen in other Brazilian regions, soy gradually became the main commodity in Paraná. Klanovicz and Mores (2017: 258-9) state that:

“[...] the expansion of soybeans in Paraná took place in three distinct areas: Campos Gerais, supported by the mechanization that was already being used for growing wheat; the one in the north of the state, which took longer due to the refusal or delay in changing the conception of what to plant on the part of a coffee elite, and the west which, starting from the small property, was involved in the

turmoil of the modernizing processes that led to the radical conversion of the landscape of forests into land for the soybean producer”.

By considering these aspects, we emphasize that we see the narratives in Elfes’ writings not as a mere information conveyance, nor as objective records of certain realities, but rather as a production of senses that aim to establish the realities that are narrated, as they are produced and spread by people who are in places of knowledge/power and that prescribe, under the façade of describing (Bourdieu, 1998) how the rural world of the Paraná state should be.

2. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMPOS GERAIS REGION IN THE PARANÁ STATE AND THE BUILDING OF TEMPORALITIES AND SOCIOCULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização contains 158 pages. Its cover (Image 1) presents four images that, as we can see below, do not intent to portrait the Campos Gerais region of Paraná state in its natural state, nor as a “paradise on Earth”⁴ but rather as the resulting product by the action of certain men. Then, at the first picture, to the left, there is a man in a grown wheat field, holding a sheaf in one hand and, by his side, an aerial photography of a property. On the bottom, a partial image of Charolais cattle and, by its side, machinery-cropping wheat.

These images anticipate the intent of the publication: to constitute and crystalize a certain view around how agriculture in the region must be. That is, it is a proposition for dividing areas in geometrical shapes, changing the vegetation –replacing the native pastures by crops for the growth of grains, especially wheat, employing machinery–, for the replacement or enhancement of the cattle breeds and for legitimizing the immigrants presence and of their descendants in the region as the most prepared to occupy and work the lands.

Establishing this picture of the Campos Gerais region also happens through narratives about the region’s past, the present and the future. The same happens in the report’s

4. This is a commonly mentioned quote by Auguste de Saint-Hilaire on the Campos Gerais region in the Paraná state. Saint-Hilaire traveled across it in the 19th century and recorded his experiences in the book *Viagem a Curitiba e Província de Santa Catarina*. For an analysis of his reports and of other travelers reports at the time, see PEREIRA (2002), and CARVALHO and RUNDAVALT (2017).

foreword, wrote by Silvio Galdino Carvalho Lima⁵, then regional coordinator of INCRA in Paraná. See:

The permanent concern with the improvement of methods and techniques for the development of agricultural economy in Paraná state calls for a continuous study of our reality, [...] whose results already represent a considerable source of valuable information required to formulating new perspectives of sociocultural progress. Regrettably, however, is that few works recording what has been happening in the life of the great community of Paraná are being made, whose speed of growth, unexpected, works to hide, in the “dust” of time, the true events of our making. Such reality is close to those of the visitor who, when arriving to the millenary Egyptian pyramids, does not see, not even has a glance, the events from which resulted such fabulous monuments. We walk so hastily that it seems that there is no time for reflection and for recording moments in the History “journal”, facts, its causes and effects. Thus, perhaps, in the future, our descendants will enter the Paraná state community as clumsy as tourists in the pyramids, unable to “read on the walls” the major events of the past Paraná epics, so full of human values gathered by countless streams of generous blood from all the peoples in the world (Lima, 1973: 6).

The excerpt points to the building of a progressive temporality, in which the transformations happen increasingly fast, which leads us to the Koselleck’s reflections about the rational prognostic, which he defines as “a diagnosis able to inscribe the past in the future” (Koselleck, 2006: 36). That concerns, therefore, in the case of aforementioned quote, a conception of History in which, besides the fear that the conditionals and agents of the fast process of economic, social and cultural changes that were occurring at the Paraná state were forgotten –hence the need of recording the actions of the present–, we see this movement as inexorable, in which the time and ways of life categories blend together and are hierarchized.

5. Silvio Galdino de Carvalho Lima started his professional career in the early 1960s as a rural technician for the Rural Worker Assistance Foundation. In 1964, he took charge of the coordination for the National Institute of Agrarian Development (INDA). In 1970, the INDA was replaced by the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA). In 1974, Lima took charge of the coordination for the Paraná State Cooperatives Association (ASSOCEOP). Later, he settled in Minas Gerais, where he served at the National Storage Center at the Universidade Federal de Viçosa. <http://www.paranacooperativo.coop.br/ppc/index.php/sistema-ocepar/comunicacao/2011-12-07-11-06-29/ultimas-noticias/112764-cooperativismo-silvio-galdino-e-wilson-thiesen-visitam-cooperativas-paranaenses>

In this sense, the technological modernization of agriculture and the transformation of the physical and human space of the Campos Gerais region are bonded to the actions of the present (1970s), targeting at a “desired future”, an horizon of expectations (Kosselleck, 2006: 37). These actions should be remembered, while, as we shall see, the traditional forms of labor and country life are attached to the notion of backwardness, of stagnation, condemned to disappearance and oblivion.

IMAGE 1

Campos Gerais: Estudo da colonização cover



Source: Elfes (1973)

Yet, it does not only concern a change in the production method in the Paraná state countryside. Lima’s writing also allows us to realize a conception that claims a transformation in its land structure, as it involves interpretations about the ideal size and type of land property to enable the purchase and the employment of machinery. This view is more implicit in the sequence, when he mentions that the goal of Elfes’ writing is also “to foster new projects of subdividing large properties, making up a large number of farms with the proper size to the employment of modern agricultural methods, with business characteristics” (Lima, 1973: 6).

Elfes starts his introduction by identifying the fields in the Castro region, in the second and third plateaus of the Paraná state, by their geographic position and topographic characteristics. Thus, the constitution of the Paraná fields has basis on two aspects, both connected through a view on the possibilities of agricultural production growth. The first defines them as areas located in a geographical position favorable to the market of production and by the fact of not being too far from consumers' centers such as Curitiba city and the Paranaguá Port. The second aspect refers to its relief that would be "favorable to the mechanization, without accompanying the agrarian development by the destruction of forests, as it was the case in the Paraná state North and West" (Elfes, 1973: 1). We notice, therefore, the building of the Campos Gerais region of the future, as a promise of being an "agricultural barn", which would be free from environmental and production transportation problems like those which had occurred, for example, in the west of Paraná state.

After indicating these characteristics, which would enable the agricultural development based on the mechanization of the region and its geographical location, Elfes travels back in time to explain the reasons for the agricultural production to be low in the Paraná fields.

"Although the fields are the oldest civilized region in the Paraná state plateaus, their agricultural production remains poor due to the extensive system of soil exploitation that dates back to, in general, to the 18th century. The demographic density, that even hits averages over 60 inhabitants per square kilometer, in the "Campos" accounts for an average of 15 inhabitants per km². The state development was virtually limited to the coast region and to the fields, up until the beginning of this century. When the great developmental rush of the Paraná state agriculture started, in the 1920s and 1930s, such progress skipped the fields region, taking over the North and, finally, the West of the state, as those were the most fertile lands, still inhabited" (*ibid.*: 1).

In the first part of the excerpt, the explanation indicates that the lands exploitation system established a civilization and promoted a certain development based on extensive cattle ranching, although it failed to sufficiently populate this area. In the second part, when mentioning the process of occupation of the state's north and west, the Campo Gerais region are inserted within another temporality, as a space oblivious to the transformations which had occurred in other areas of the Paraná state.

Next, the motivations involving the behaviors of the landowners from the Campos Gerais region, which resulted in their exclusion of the agricultural development, are summarized as:

“– A traditional society existed there already, in decay, yet owner of the lands, a fact that hindered the clearance of large areas for a colonization based on small properties.

– The mindset of those purchasing lands aimed, at the time, the cultivation of coffee or goods for industrialization and export only, rather than the production of food for the people themselves, which was left for the “*caboclo*”. Such mentality was also an inheritance from the “Colonial Brazil”.

– The fields, with their “weak lands”, demanded more technical expertise, which then did not exist and greater capital investments to become agriculturally useful. At the time of the great agricultural expansion in the state, the infrastructure conditions that would enable the evolution of the proper technique did not exist. Nor did it have enough markets to absorb a possible field agricultural production in larger proportions” (*ibid.*: 1)

Then, Elfes assesses the agricultural colonies composed by immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries as the great promises of change in this scenario characterized by poor agricultural production and social decay. See:

“However, through government incentive and combined with private initiatives, a few agricultural small groups in the fields were formed, which have gained growing relevance in the past decades, as they have developed techniques and showed the possibilities for a modern and highly productive agriculture in the Campos region of the Paraná state, increasing, thus, the potential and the vital space of Paraná and of Brazil” (*ibid.*: 1).

After mentioning that the report refers to 17 agricultural colonies settled in the Paraná fields between 1877 and 1966, Elfes reports that the data collection happened through visits to the colonies, contacts with directors of cooperatives, pastors, priests, agronomy technicians, city halls, INCRA and Association for Credit and Rural Assistance (ACARPA) officers, bank branches officers, officers of the Switzerland, Deutschland, Poland, Federal Republic of Germany consulate officers and to the UFPR library. Of these set of sources, which also turn into elements to validate the report’s narrative, he underlines the support given by the leader of the Carambei Dutch colony, Keimpe van der Meer, by the dean of the colony’s school, Mr. Janzen, and by the consultant to the Deutschland government, A. van der Schaff.

Then, the report presents a detailed narrative on the five definitions related to the agricultural colonies and colonization terms, which allow sensing the discourses that build hierarchies related to the types of land occupation in the Paraná state and in Brazil in different temporalities. We want to highlight that we do not see such definitions as objective data, neutral, but rather as tools for the establishment, ordination and hierarchy of what is defined. In this case, the definitions establish a chronological and hierarchical order related to the type of occupation, use of land, possibilities of increase in agricultural production, also related to the human beings who have inhabited, inhabit and will inhabit that place.

The first definition is “Primitive or Spontaneous Colonization”. This would be the “occupation of lands by the private initiative, always spontaneous –sometimes unordered– by small farmers and cattle ranchers looking for land” (*ibid.*: 3). According to Elfes, despite being that a occupation form of great importance for the population of the Brazilian territory, especially during its “historical rural formation”, and having enabled in Paraná areas, especially in the southwest, the “transition from the seminomadic extractive economy” to the “rudimentary agriculture”, this phenomena had caused and would be causing conflicts over ownership and land property, as “contracts for the buying and selling or for the full ownership of small property contracts [...] did not exist” (*ibid.*: 4).

By the end of his account on this colonization mode, Elfes provides more elements to characterize it as counterproductive. See:

“The first immigrants generation rarely takes part in this colonization mode. Besides, there is no selection of the human element when it comes to intellectual or physical capacity, nor regarding ethnicity or religion, except for the negative sense, as they are, in most cases, families lacking economic means. Nor existed in the past technical, financial or educational assistance for the small farmers of such colonization” (*ibid.*: 4).

As we can see, it is an occupation mode defined by the lack, or by the absence of order, organization and selection of people –the “human element”– most fit in terms of expertise and having the resources to succeed socially and economically through agriculture. In addition, this colonization mode would also lack State assistance.

The second colonization mode mentioned is the “Organized Colonization”. This would be what happened in Paraná state areas from the mid-1920s on “based on the technically planned allotment – in large uncultivated lands and initially unoccupied usually granted by governmental authorities to colonization enterprises or to the government itself” (*ibid.*: 4). Elfes mentions the Companhia de Terras Norte do Paraná, who, from 1925 on,

allotted and sold lands in the north of Paraná state (Tomazi, 1997), and the Industrial Madeireira Colonizadora Rio Paraná S. A., who operated in the west, as the main businesses in this mode of colonization (Gregory, 2008; Schneider, 2002).

Then, the agricultural engineer establishes one of the main aspects to differentiate this colonization mode from the “Primitive or Spontaneous Colonization”. See:

“This type of colonization, under the small property regime, was very attractive for farmers and ranchers seeking for land, as the colonization businesses offered immediate and undisputable ownership, as soon as the buy-sell agreement was signed, and the full property right after the payment of the last installment, granting the small farmer, through its economic power, full legal protection and to their property” (Elfes, 1973: 4).

As we can see, the absolute land property, legitimated by the documents that make it legal, is the main characteristic defining this colonization mode in the region and places it in an upper level in relation to the previous defined system. According to Elfes (1973: 4), the “organized colonization” had the merit of creating a “new agricultural-social structure, those of the small property accessible for all, with no discrimination, and that densely populated inexistent regions as economic factor”. That is, it is the economy field, based on producing for the market and on the purchasing of industrialized goods that establish these farmers, suggests the exclusion of indigenous people, *caboclos* and small squatters.

After naming the positive characteristics of the “organized colonization”, author presents its two negative aspects:

“– It happened in combination with an exceptional devastation of original forests, which, in addition to destroying large natural assets in wood, also results in climate disturbances and irreparable erosion damages,

– As this agrarian development happened in lands of virgin forests, the soil cultivation still predominantly depends on handwork, in a way that, in average, despite the apparent copiousness of the land, the “produced value” in the agriculture per “occupied person” does not match the value of the “minimum wage” (*ibid.*: 4).

In the first aspect, the Elfes’ views establish the forests as economic resources –the forest is seen solely as a wooden source–, which are wasted. His forecast is that, in the fu-

ture, this action would result in unbalances related to the rain regime and to the worsening of the soil quality. In the second aspect, a narrative constitutes the labor way of the people bond to this type of colonization as something stagnated, obsolete, that would have remained the same as time went by, which would result in not taking advantage of the potential that the land and the farmers could yield. In both, we see a disbelief concerning the economic future of the regions, due to the loss of natural soil fertility caused by erosion, climate change, which could cause crops to fail, and due to settlers failing to employ machinery in the agricultural work.

Elfes also argues that aforementioned colonizing businesses did not carried out a selection of the “human element” and mentions the Marechal Cândido Rondon municipality as an example, which is located in the west of the state, where “5 ethnical groups and 12 different beliefs pacifically coexist” (*ibid.*: 4)⁶. However, according to Elfes, there would be a “natural selection” concerning the “economic capabilities”, which consisted in those having the resources to buy the land, “a settler’s physical and, to an extent, intellectual capabilities, who individually could not nor did count with neither governmental nor their new society’s support, where they fitted in, but should instead overcome their hardships with their own strength” (*ibid.*: 5).

Thus, in this discourse, we have the building of this “human element” as an individualist farmer. The emphasis in the economic aspect in its identification reduces the relevance of other social bonds, such as religion, ethnicity or even the farmers’ homeland region. The last paragraph also brings it, in which Elfes argues that these two colonization modes would have the role of “alleviating the demographic pressure” on overpopulated settlers’ homeland regions, and of creating new sources of agricultural production.

The third colonization mode concerns the creation of “green belts”. A limited number of settlers, specialized in the production of goods such as vegetables, fruits, and milk and fostered by state or municipal bodies to ensure the cities’ supply, would be responsible for it. Regarding the areas applying this colonization mode, Elfes argues:

6. However, studies indicate that Maripá carried out a selection of settlers, therefore, it cannot be something “natural”. According to anthropologist Kalervo Oberg and statician Thomas Jabine studies, the company ruled out the *caboclos* from its plans due to “their primitive technique and lack of money for buying lands”. The descendants from German and Italian immigrants from Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina were chosen as, in addition to being used to the Brazilian climate, “they were small landowners, family farmers, and kept the hard work, frugality and agriculture as a way of living traditions” (OBERG & JABINE, 1960: 27-8).

“The area destined to it is limited, by reassigning public lands or private properties not used or in economic decline. As an example, we refer to the spontaneous installment of large country estates in São Paulo state, in the 1940s and 1950s, in the region between the state capital and Campinas city, when industrialization in the São Paulo city was intensifying” (*ibid.*: 5).

The next colonization mode is the “Official Colonial Groups”, created from the 1930s on, mostly in the northeast of Brazil. Their main goals would be “alleviating calamitous situations and demographic pressures” (*ibid.*: 5). Concerning their relation to the economic development and the characteristics of settlers engaged in these projects, Elfes declares:

“Most of these groups, for the far location of the consumer centers, did not economically succeed, remaining at the level of mere sustenance and self-supply. The value of this colonization consists in settling a man, who was before socially astray, in a soil and the consequent education of the new generation. The ends are mostly social and of charity and, in a lesser scale, of economic contribution. The selection of these settlers was, in a sense, negative, preferring the economically weaker and less intellectually developed families” (*ibid.*: 5).

After reporting that this type of colonial groups did not settle in Paraná state, Elfes approaches the last type of colonization, the “Heterogeneous Groups Colonization”. It concerns the process of the coming and settlement of European and Asian immigrants in Brazil around 150 years ago and around 120 years ago in Paraná. The view that homogenizes these immigrants can be felt also when he states that the main claims of these groups “have always been the same: lands, as a way of living in freedom and security” (*ibid.*: 5).

Then, he establishes the three main aspects concerning the goals of the Brazilian and Paraná state authorities concerning this type of colonization. Again, economy and technology are in the first places:

–“The hopes of systematically populating unpopulated spaces or reinvigorating regions in economic decline.

–The possibility of introducing new techniques and cultures in the Brazilian agriculture.

–The humanitarian aspect, with the willing to contribute to solve international migratory issues. This last aspect was dominant mostly in the post-World War II phase” (*ibid.*: 7).

After reporting that these groups, characterized as “closed groups”, as a rule, received financial aid from the Brazilian government, entities and foreign governments, and “high volumes of bank financing”, Elfes describes their characteristics and contributions to the agricultural development in Paraná state in a positive manner. It is a narrative that homogenizes the members of this colonization system through the emphasis in the hardships overcome in the past and in the silence about the particularities of its members. See:

“In Paraná, several streams like this arrived, carriers of different cultural backgrounds and ethnical origins. They were preferably settled in the Campos Gerais region, getting aid and giving back with their labor, their traditions and their techniques for the economic development and the change in the agrarian structure of these regions. Some of these groups, who have suffered political or ideological persecution in their homelands, and have lost and sacrificed all of their assets in their quest for freedom, took time and found hardships to mentally overcome the shocks and to root in their new environment.

The selection of the human element process, in this type of colonization, back in the homeland, and aims more at the group homogeneity than at individual capabilities. In addition, after settling in the colony, the individual gets more intellectual and material support from the community than what is seen in the open and individual colonization, in a manner that the weaker often has better chances of accompanying the general development. On the other hand, in these homogeneous colonies, the intellectual and material interdependency remains for many years and can be passed on from one generation to another” (*ibid.*: 7).

These are the colonies elected to be the report’s main subject. After presenting information about their botanical composition and their relief, Elfes approaches the *História Econômica dos Campos do Paraná* (Economic History of the Paraná Fields). The narrative occupies three pages and marks as its beginning the year of 1693, when the Nossa Senhora Luz dos Pinhais village, now Curitiba city, founded by gold miners, was elevated to a municipality. Then, Elfes approaches the establishment of the paths of troops between Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo states, the establishment of the allotments of uncultivated land and the establishment of great country plots in the Campos Gerais region destined to cattle ranching.

After mentioning that the wheat culture, carried out in some areas with “rudimentary methods”, was abandoned due to a fungal disease called *wheat rust*, Elfes argues that cattle ranching resulted in the “slow degeneration of the affected lands”. The view that es-

tablishes the past of the farms based on a decline view also appears in regards to the small farmers activities:

“While an economy of extensive ranching developed in the Campos Limpos region, in areas surrounding the fields and the vales, in forest lands, a small primitive “plantation” was established, seminomadic, based on the ax, the sickle and the fire, for the production of food grains for the big farms. As a rule, these small farmers were, in any way, aggregates to the great country estates” (*ibid.*: 12).

This narrative builds a picture of the Campos Gerais people’s lives based on their modes of production. This presents an image of socio-economic stagnation, since there is no indication of its transformation and consequent improvement in the living conditions of the local population. Such stagnation of the “society from the Paraná countryside” turns into “economic and social” decline as the narrative goes further. In an eschatological tone, the author establishes and explains the productivity decline of farms due to the “soil depletion”, to the “property sharing”, to the “degeneration of cattle quality” and the replacement of this economic activity by the “*troperismo*”. This consisted in the leasing of farms for the fattening of herds moved from Rio Grande do Sul to São Paulo states.

It is based on these circumstances marked by the “economic and social decline” that Elfes establishes a new temporality, a desired future, characterized by the settling from 1870 on, of foreign immigrants in the region and, with them, the “hope that they, with these new techniques, would reinvigorate the agricultural production for a better supply of already existing consumer markets” (*ibid.*: 13). The protagonists of this new phase for the state region are the 17 agricultural colonies founded between 1877 and 1966. Their members are characterized as “ethnic or religiously homogeneous [...] groups” (*ibid.*: 13). Table 2 details these groups.

The presentation of the “historical development” of each one of them follows the chronology of their implementation. For each immigrants group, Elfes structured his narrative through the following subjects: “Priors”, “History”, “Current Socioeconomic Status”, “Cultural Life”, “About Life and Cultural Integration” and “Summary”. For the limits of this article, we will not detail each one of these aspects. Our analysis will focus on the main arguments concerning the success or failure of certain aforementioned groups. These are arguments that either qualify them, or not, to be the protagonists of the new growth times in the agricultural production in the Campos region of Paraná.

TABLE 2
Agricultural colonies in the Campos region of Paraná state

Colony	Current Municipality	Foundation	Ethnicity
Quero-Quero	Palmeira	1877/78	German
Papagaios Novos	Palmeira	1887/78	German
Santa Clara	Castro	1884	Polish
Leopoldina	Castro	1884	Polish
Carambeí	Castro	1911	Dutch
Japó	Castro	1914	Polish
Terra Nova-Garcez	Castro	1934/35	German
Terra Nova-Maracanã	Castro	1934/35	German
Monte Alegre	Telêmaco Borba	1949	Dutch
Castrolanda	Castro	1951	Dutch
Entre Rios	Guarapuava	1951	German
Witmarsum	Palmeira	1951	German
Santo Antônio (Tronco)	Castro	1953	Dutch
Santa Cruz	Ponta Grossa	1958	White Russian
Pau Furado	Teixeira Soares	1958	White Russian
Arapoti	Arapoti	1960/61	Dutch
Santa Maria	Tibagi	1966	Korean

Source: Elfes (1973: 13-4).

“Germans from Volga” is the identification of the first group, composed by 3,809 people who settled in the two colonies of the Palmeira municipality, mentioned in Table 2, and in one more in the Lapa municipality, in areas that amounts up to 79,030 hectares. Despite the granting of equipment, provisions and land plots by the Paraná state government, the evaluation is that the project resulted in a failure, ending with its settlers leaving the areas to which they were destined. Along with the difficulties concerning communication and integration with the inhabitants of the colonies surroundings, the main causes for the low grain production, especially wheat, would be the “poor soils”, the lack of knowledge by the settlers on fertilization techniques and the inexistence “in that time, of tractors and chemical fertilizers” and of technicians that could teach the settlers (*ibid.*: 20). The last factor for the failure would be the fact that settlers “kept the collective system of soil ownership (Mir), periodically redistributing lands to the families according to their needs, a common system in the pre-Revolutionary Russia, which represented a manner of rural pre-Socialism” (*ibid.*: 21).

The second mentioned group are the Polish immigrants. In Elfes’ view, because the Brazilian and Paraná state governments have offered free travel tickets, “the selection of

immigrants was, to a certain extent, negative, regarding a reduced economic strengthen” (*ibid.*: 28). Whereas those who hold resources would have chosen to migrate to the United States or Canada. The author complements by minimizing his judgement on the quality of those who came to Brazil arguing that they would be “tens of thousands of men without resources and of modest intellectual level, yet with a strong will of working, satisfied with little and not expecting aid nor help from anyone, in addition to land and maintenance during the initial stages” (*ibid.*: 28).

In the Castro municipality, in the three colonies aforementioned in the table, 420 people total were settled. Elfes argues that, in general, due to the reduced size of lots and the impossibility of employing mechanization because of the land topography, the Polish farmers could not be known by “a high technique and bulky production” (*ibid.*: 29). Their main contribution would have been for the “ethnic composition of the region and for the small farmers’ class development” (*ibid.*: 31).

Carambeí, founded by the Dutch in 1911, in an area located between the Castro and Ponta Grossa municipalities is, by its turn, assessed as “the precursor of the modern agrarian development in the Campos region of Paraná state” (*ibid.*: 31). In the section called “History”, Elfes justifies this positive assessment by the employment of soil fertilization techniques, a “slow selection of finest cattle” (*ibid.*: 32), targeting mostly the increase in dairy products, the introduction of new grass species for pastures and fodder, purchasing of lands to enlarge properties sizes and the creation of a cooperative for milk industrialization.

By the end, the following terms summarize the success of the enterprise:

“With their tenacity, the small pioneer group finally opened the small field for later well-succeeded colonizations, developing and showing a cultivation and rational field exploitation technique. In this way, they also broke the “agricultural uselessness” taboo of the Campos Gerais region, showing its high productive capacity and arouse interest, national, and international technical and financial support” (*ibid.*: 35).

Then, the writings approach the Terra Nova Garcez and Terra Nova Maracanã colonies, founded by German people, in 1934 and 1935, in the municipality of Castro. They are an enterprise by the Foreign Colonization Society (Gesellschaft für Siedlung im Ausland, GSA), who aimed to solve the issue of the “German population excess” through the establishment of German people in other countries (*ibid.*: 36). Regarding the first colony, Elfes states that out of the nearly 200 applicants to the colonies, only one was a profes-

sional farmer. The second colony would be composed of German immigrants who had settled in the Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina states in the 1920s and wanted to migrate (*ibid.*: 37).

After presenting the agricultural production issues caused by the lack of knowledge on this craft, which resulted in the exodus of a great deal of settlers, Elfes reports that, slowly, by adopting the fertilization techniques by the Dutch from Carambeí, they succeeded in cultivating the fields. Those who stayed also had to face the issue concerning the lack of title deeds to the lots' ownership as, due to the World War II, the document was kept by the colonization company in Berlin. Without the official title deeds to the lands ownership, settlers were unable to get bank financing. The solution came only in 1966, when settlers got the document through the adverse possession mechanism (*ibid.*: 39). The results stated by Elfes in the early 1970s are that the farmers of both colonies, could get, through the use of machinery, fertilization, etc. "an economic balance with, in average, a modest standard of living" (*ibid.*: 42). Also, they "hesitantly enjoy the possibilities of bank financing, to which they can now have access to" (*ibid.*: 42).

Then, he approaches the colonies created post-World War II. Yet, it is not the war itself that highlights the difference among colonies founded before and after the war, but rather the fact that the post-War settlers, opposed to the first settlers, counted with an early capital or financing by Brazilian and/or foreigner bodies, and were also already organized in cooperatives. In addition to it, these immigrants worked, from the start, "based on soil analysis and other technical resources, in a manner to save a lot of experiment time to the farmers" (*ibid.*: 450). That is, it is a view that sets these immigrants as more prepared in financial and organizational terms to achieve economic success and that establishes technology as a mechanism to speed up time and disregard the natives' experience. By the way, as we shall see further ahead, the natives are the ones who should learn from the newcomers.

The first post-War group are the Dutch who settled in Carambeí (1911)⁷, Castrolanda (1951), Arapoti (1960/61), Santo Antônio (Tronco) (1953) and Monte Alegre (1949). First, Elfes detailed presents information on the foundation of these colonies. Next, the narrative focuses on overcoming the initial issues through the establishment of dairy processing cooperatives and receiving financing offered by the Banco do Brasil. This enabled the purchasing of machinery for the fieldwork, the purchasing of lands and the settlement of new immigrants.

7. About this colony, Elfes jointly approaches the Dutch who settled before and after the World War II.

By the end, Elfes states that the Dutch work in the Campos region of Paraná “must be considered fully successful as well as an extremely valuable contribution to the agroindustrial economy, agricultural technique, teaching and cultural exchange fields” (*ibid.*: 69). The only exception to it would be the Monte Alegre colony, soon to be terminated. This would be due to the settlers’ religion –they would be dissidents from the Dutch Reformed Church, what hindered the contact with other Dutch groups– to the reduction in the productivity and the exodus of its inhabitants.

The next colony, which was analyzed by Elfes, is Witmarsum, founded in Palmeira in 1951 by Mennonite immigrants⁸. After presenting information on the groups’ migrations in Europe, Asia and America, Elfes lists their main sociocultural characteristics. Besides the religion and the cooperative system, the Mennonite group “despite the Communist tendencies, [...] forms a capitalist society, with private property of the means of production, individual search for profit, free market and the use of paid workers” (*ibid.*: 72).

This stabilization of the Mennonite identities stands out in other writing excerpts, anchored in their religion and in them being capitalist farmers. By the end, like the narrative on the Dutch, Elfes abundantly presents data on the agricultural production, size of properties (most ranging from 40 to 50 hectares), etc. Despite the increase in the milk production and the “absence of social contrasts”, the narrative names as the main issues against “a greater colony development” the under-utilization of tractors, the lack of reserves of land to be passed on to children and the “anti-rational design of the lots in narrow and long stripes” which caused transportation to be expensive, the machinery work to be more difficult, as well as the work in level curve that would avoid erosion and “the rational subdivision of the pasture areas” (*ibid.*: 80). Such aspects would indicate a slower development concerning the economical, as well as the social and cultural integration in Brazil.

The Danube Swabians who founded the Entre Rios colony, in Guarapuava, in 1951, are mentioned next. They are nearly 2,500 people whose ancestors migrated from several parts of the Holy Roman Empire for the European southeast, settling in areas under the Austrian Empire after the forceful expulsion of the Turkish Ottoman (Stein, 2011). In the first paragraph, after informing that the members statuses were of “refugees from Socialist countries”, Elfes distinguishes them in relation to others by affirming

8. The Mennonites are part of Anabaptist groups and first appeared in the 16th century in the Netherlands. Overtime, they migrated to the Holy Roman Empire and to Russia. One of their aspects is the denial of violence, including military service. The Witmarsum inhabitants emigrated from Russia in 1930 and settled in the Santa Catarina state, from where they left to settle in Palmeira (KLASSEN, 1995).

that Entre Rios is “the only settlement of its kind composed by stateless persons, who have lost it all, saving nothing but their lives, who have spent years in ‘Displaced Persons’ camps until settling themselves in Paraná state, receiving national and international aid” (*ibid.*: 83).

Then, a paragraph positively describes the vegetation, the soil and the climate in the area where the Danube Swabians settled. He describes the flora as those of the clean fields and of araucaria forests, and the relief would be good for mechanization, while the soils, although subjected to erosion, are considered most fertile than those of the Ponta Grossa and Palmeira regions. The climate, by its turn, is classified as close to those of the European southeast, thanks to the good rain regime and “expressive winters” (*ibid.*: 83). Thus, it would be ideal for the adaptation of these immigrants.

Next, a detailed description of the settling process of the Swabian ancestors in the European southeast, in the 18th and 19th centuries, their expulsion from the region in 1944, the immigration to Brazil and the formation of Entre Rios. Regarding the first years of this place, the narrative focuses the issues related to the lack of knowledge by the settlers on the soil and the climate, which caused poor harvests and the exodus of half of its inhabitants, and to the shortage of money, to the unhappiness towards the cooperative directors and the delay in land distribution. Such issues were gradually solved through aids, in the form of machinery, equipment, fertilizers and money, granted by the Federal Republic of Germany and through subsidized loans by the Brazilian government.

The success of those who stayed in Entre Rios can be seen in Elfes’ evaluation on their socioeconomic status in the early 1970s:

“The first impression for those visiting the Entre Rios colony in spring, with the emerald green of the new wheat fields in the middle of the dark from the Campos Limpos region in its natural state, is those of an European technique, highly developed and rarely found in Brazil, in such extended areas and with such population clustering” (*ibid.*: 94).

The below excerpt reminds us of the images on the report’s cover, previously reproduced. It is an example of how the Campos Gerais region of the Paraná state should be. Such transformation would occur through technology, imported from Europe. An aspect that caught our eyes is the word play that establish, differentiate and hierarchize the two spaces/times. The areas transformed by the Swabians are characterized based on the color of the vegetation cultivated there (emerald green), which highlights the work and the success of the farmers, as well as the prediction of a good harvest. The native field, its coun-

terpoint, is a place of darkness, of absence of life, color and production. Therefore, it is what should also be modified.

After indicating the large wheat production (about 22% of the total production in Paraná), the industrialization and the storage of the agricultural production and the large use of chemical fertilizers as positive aspects of the colony, Elfes presents one of the main colony issues. That is “unbalancing in the land system”. According to him, about 60% of the farmers owned properties as large as 50 hectares, representing 15% of the total colony’s area, while seven Swabians, 2.4% of the farmers, owned 45.9% of the lands. One of these properties would be larger than 6,000 hectares. Another negative aspect is that only a 16% of the properties would have enough area for the “rational use of available machinery” (*ibid.*: 95).

Then, Elfes informs the actions took by the directors of the Entre Rios cooperative, called Agrária, in order to overcome such issues. The actions are not about dividing the larger properties, but rather of acquiring lands in the region for distribution among its associates, using a loan granted by the Far South Regional Development Bank (BRDE). Those being granted new lands would give their original lots to the cooperative, to be passed on to another farmer, what would contribute for the formation of properties of an adequate size, allowing a “more rational work and a better use of the machinery” (*ibid.*: 97). Towards this direction, in general, the colony is positively qualified due to its large volume of agricultural production, achieved by the use of chemical fertilizers and machinery, which also serve as a demonstration of “the productive potentiality of the Campos Gerais region” (*ibid.*: 101) and as an example that other farmers in the region would be gradually following.

The colony groups Santa Cruz and Pau Furado, founded in 1958 by “White Russians” immigrants in the Ponta Grossa and Teixeira Soares municipalities, respectively, are next. Elfes starts by informing that the total area of both groups mounted to 5,250 hectares and qualifies it for agriculture arguing that both are located in “plateaus almost totally arable and about 1,000 meters above sea level” (*ibid.*: 104).

Then, he states that the group members are descendant from immigrants who came from the “White Russia” province who refused to adopt the liturgical reform in the Russian Orthodox Church, established by the Tsar Peter, the Great in 1666 (the reason why they were called *old believers*). Because of it, many migrated to Siberia and settled by the Amur River. According to Elfes, although the 1905 Revolution had proportionated religious freedom, and the collectivization of agriculture, by the late 1920s, it caused a great number of group members to migrate to China, from where they left after the Commu-

nist Chinese revolution dated from 1948/49. Some of them were, with the UN and religious entities aid, transferred to the Paraná state, where they established the mentioned colony groups (*ibid.*: 105-6).

The immigrants found many hardships in the land. Many of them, within few years, emigrated to the Canada and the United States. Among the obstacles listed by Elfes for the prosperity of the White Russians in the Campos Gerais region, the main would be, similar to the Volga Germans, the maintenance of the collective ownership system (MIR), which was also adopted in Russia and China, in which the lots were periodically redistributed among families according to their needs; the difficulties in communication due to the idioms difference; the “fear of Communism”, which resulted in the refusal of adopting “Any sort of cooperative system”; and the difficulty in adopting new technologies in the agricultural work, once that in Asia, “they have spent centuries semi-isolated from the world and technical evolvement” (*ibid.*: 108). That is, once again we have a narrative that establishes the adoption of technology and private property as a sort of stage required for the socioeconomic development of the human groups.

The Korean immigrants from the Santa Maria colony, who have left South Korea due to the economic crisis and fear of the war, compose the last group. Founded in 1966, in Tibagi, with the aid of the Catholic Church, the colony had an area of 1,400 hectares, where 70 families settled. According to Elfes, it was not long before most of them migrate to São Paulo, as many would not be farmers or they thought that in small properties in the outskirts of the mentioned city they would have better economic chances. In 1970, there were only 22 families left. Although it was a recent enterprise, Elfes positively assessed it, due to the “high agro technical level”, a varied production comprehending poultry, swine, grains and fruits, use of techniques to prevent soil erosion and the use of chemical and organic fertilizers. His final assessment on Santa Maria is that, despite “the small number of farmers [...], given their high intellectual and technical level, it is fundamental as an example, which contributes to prove the multiple economic possibilities of the Campos region of Paraná” (*ibid.*: 1116).

By the end, by approaching the 17 colonial groups as a whole, their positive and negative points, Elfes presents two assessments. One concerns the Campos Gerais region capabilities in relation to the possibilities of growth in the agricultural production. The second concerns the change in its social structure.

Here is an excerpt from the first:

“All studied groups have showed, in a positive or negative manner, the potential capability of the Campos region, in order to replace the old-fashioned and of low profit economy of the extensive cattle ranching and the ‘soil rotation’ system based on the phosphorus and on the hoe by the ‘culture rotation’ system based on the plough, the tractor, the selected cattle in artificial pastures of high productive power. This demonstration is the most valuable contribution from the listed foreign ethnicity agricultural colonies for the development of the Rural Paraná.

Thus, it created the beginning of a new economic geography in the Paraná state, proving, in a relatively small scale, that not only the North and the West are the most important regions of the state, agriculturally-wise, but also that the Campos Limpos region, most of it in a geographically better location, may turn into Paraná’s barns” (*ibid.*: 139-40).

In the excerpt above, what stood out for us was the manner as the social structure meant to be replaced is built through the narrative. It is characterized as an economic system placed in the past⁹ and as little productive and anachronistic –as it is based on the cattle ranching, in the use of fire, soil rotation and manual work– to the extent that it would not be in tune with the transformations, which are established as inexorable, of the present and to become. On the other hand, the presence of foreigner settlers and the agricultural production, employing machinery and new techniques for the soil management are irrefutable evidence of this new time.

See now the assessment of the changes in the region’s structure:

“In the ancient country society, there were only two social layers: the great landowner, autocrat, who was at the same time a political and economic leader, almost autonomous in his properties on one side, and the slave later aggregated or farm laborer, illiterate, who depended on his hoe for earning his own living and on the benevolence of the landowner, and who as a part of the country’s economic life, meant almost nothing” (*ibid.*:140).

As we could read, similar to the previous excerpt, this also starts by temporally locating, through the “ancient” term, the way of living in the Campos Gerais region. In ad-

9. It is worth mentioning that this region, still to this day, is built as the *traditional Paraná*, an expression that places it in the past.

dition to locating it in the past, this discourse negatively emphasizes its social dichotomy as something stagnated that seems not to transform itself, as the worker's social and economic status would not substantially change with the termination of slavery. The worker would remain in an illiterate position, both in relation to the humanities and to the required knowledge to increase production. It is the man of the fire and the hoe, mentioned in the prior excerpt, whose condition does not change. The fruit of his work is not meant to the market, nor he would be a consumer of industrialized goods. His sole contribution to Brazil would be reproducing himself (*ibid.*: 140)¹⁰.

The immigrants, on the other hand, are the main protagonists of this transformation in the Campos Gerais region. They are those who, slowly, according to Elfes, will establish a "rural middle class" composed by individual farmers of "high technological level". This is the future imposed as ideal, it is the "path that must be followed for the creation of markets for goods from the industries in the country's inlands" (*ibid.*: 140). Thus, we have the reduction of this sociocultural world to the economic field (Bourdieu, 2011: 152)¹¹, an operation legitimated by a narrative that, restrictively employing the "rational" term (in this case, the use of nature just as a resource to increase production), establishes, through the denial in the forms of ownership and use of lands of other subjects and of the region, the agricultural technological modernization and the settlement of immigrants as the best and only alternative for the Paraná countryside.

3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We intend to show that the Elfes' reports present narratives that establish the boundaries among immigrants, and among these and the populations with whom they had contact with in Brazil; and how it comprehends certain conceptions on agricultural development in the Paraná state that hierarchize ways of living, which combine the use of new techniques and technologies considered legitimate and right to practicing agriculture combined with proposals of sociocultural changes. One of the main aspects in these narratives are the meanings about the past, the present and the future, which involve the notions of progress and time acceleration. The future is projected as a process of chan-

10. That is what we can read in the following excerpt: "The agricultural primitivism man, in addition to his biological contribution, may contribute with little or nothing for the evolvement of the national economy, forceful limited to his own live hood and to his minimal consumption" (ELFES, 1973: 140).

11. Such emphasis in the economic world even indicates a view that, in the future, the ethnical, religious, idiomatic, etc. differences will the overcome by the social status.

ges increasingly faster and completely different from the past, given that the old work methods and the experience of farmers and *caboclos* regarding agriculture in the region are no longer a model.

The building of the Campos Gerais region in the Paraná state as a place of excellence in the agricultural production was made by a view that homogenized and hierarchized people and temporalities. That was a view that divided the world between the economical and the non-economical. The first is one of an increasingly fast movement, of the increase in production, as an end in itself. The second view established this region, its people, its ways of living and its nature as located in the past. It was an old-fashioned world, archaic, of low productivity, of lack of knowledge and of the socioeconomic dichotomy based on the great country estates.

Such conceptions sought their legitimation in the authorized statements (Bourdieu, 1998) by agricultural engineers, technicians from bodies as ACARPA, INCRA, directors of cooperatives of groups considered to be successful and that present themselves as being in the field of rationality. But it is, as we have said before, a reason mostly circumscribed to the context of the technological knowledge, in which the use of machinery, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the selection of the cattle breeds and seeds variety are central elements.

This vision sought to even establish its memory for the future. Unlike the “clumsy” mentioned in the report’s introduction, who contemplated the Egyptian pyramids without knowing how they could have been built, the production of writings that emphasize and publicize the techniques and people who built the Campos Gerais region as “agricultural barns” is required.

Thus, there is a need of problematizing the agricultural modernization process, not only as proposals and actions for the use of new technologies towards the increase in production, but as ideas and mechanisms connected to conceptions that hierarchized individuals and temporalities, which saw the land ownership as something natural (Motta, 2008) and that posed as the best path for the becoming.

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