

MODERNIZATION PROCESS IN THE BRAZILIAN MID-WEST REGION. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE.

Reinhold Lücker*

Resumo

O desenvolvimento da região Centro-Oeste brasileira, iniciado através do poder colonial, continuou-se por grupos sócio-económicos dominantes inseridos no processo de desenvolvimento capitalista.

Os resultados da modernização agrícola desta região são idênticos aos das regiões do Sul do Brasil quanto ao aumento da produção, à expulsão de trabalhadores rurais e à concentração fundiária no quadro de uma estrutura agrária herdada do sistema colonial.

Os migrantes do sul introduzem uma nova percepção da aptidão agrícola da região embora permaneça uma dualidade entre pastorícia e agricultura. Porém, o aumento da produção tem levado a danos irreversíveis no ecossistema. Este facto obriga a que devam ser adoptadas pela administração brasileira medidas que estabeleçam planos de desenvolvimento regional.

Palavras-chave: Centro-Oeste Brasileiro. Migrações internas. Políticas agrárias

Résumé

Le développement de la région Centre-Ouest du Brésil, déclenché par le pouvoir colonial, est poursuivi par des groupes socio-économiques dominants, au sein d'un procès de développement capitaliste.

Les résultats de la modernisation agricole de cette région sont identiques à ceux des régions du Sud du Brésil en ce qui concerne l'augmentation de la production, l'expulsion des travailleurs ruraux et à la concentration de la propriété agricole dans le cadre d'une structure agricole héréditaire du système colonial.

Les migrants du Sud introduisent une nouvelle conception de l'aptitude agricole de la région, quoique il en reste toujours une dualité pâture et agriculture. Pourtant, l'augmentation de la production a produit des dommages irréparables dans l'écosystème. Ce fait exige que des plans de développement régional soient établis par l'administration brésilienne.

Mots-clés: Centre-Ouest Brésilien. Migrations internes. Politiques agricoles.

Abstract

The development of the Brazilian Midwestern region, which was initiated under colonial rule, proceeded under the dominant socio-economic groups that in turn were part of the whole process of capitalist development.

The consequences of the agricultural modernization of this region are identical to those of the southern regions of Brazil in terms of production growth, the ousting of rural workers, and the concentration of landed property in the context of an agrarian structure that dates back to the colonial system.

Southern migrants bring with them a new perception of the region's agricultural aptitude, even if a certain duality between herding and farming remains unresolved. However, the growth of production

* University of Tübingen

has caused an irreversible damage to the eco-system, and this fact makes it imperative for the Brazilian administration to adopt measures that may define plans for regional development.

Key words: Brazilian Mid-West. Internal migrations. Agro-politics.

1. Land Acquisition and Regional Development as an Incorporation Process

The process of land acquisition in the Developing Countries originated in the colonial period. The aim was to expand their political power in order to use the cheap local labour and to create new export zones. This process may be considered an incorporation because it is implemented by foreign dominating groups for their own profit (see dependency theory). When there is an expansion from a dominating power or economic center into an unexploited or natural area the aim is similar as above but the notion of incorporation does not make sense any longer. In this case it has to be considered an opening up or an integration into an existing socio-economic system.

The process of land acquisition in Brazil is best characterized by the notion of the "pioneer front" (WAIBEL, 1957; PFEIFER, 1981; COY, 1988) which is a process of settlement within the "empty space" based upon agriculture (see map in COY, 1989, p. 23).

Independent of whether the settlement happened spontaneously or was planned by the state and of whether the settlement consisted of small holders or big estates, during that time an eternal myth originated, that it is possible for everyone to make a living at the pioneer front, to get access to land, and to progress economically.

However once regional structures are developed they don't stay the same but change due to internal regional structures or external factors. In this way it can happen that the ties between the region and the power centre weaken making it possible for independent developments to originate in the region. In the course of economic history there can be seen repeated processes of incorporating the same region into the same or into different power centres. The reasons can be found in the sequence of different production systems (Produktionsweisen). For instance parts of the Mid-West Region of Brazil (further Centro-Oeste) were incorporated sequentially, first into a feudal and later on into an early capitalist-mercantile economic space and

then in the 1970s into the productiv-capitalist economic space which shall be shown as follows.

The agents of reincorporation are groups that have to successfully compete economically with the old regional elites. They can succeed because they fit better into the national dominating economic and political framework and harmonize with the dominating economical and political elites. In this way new regional elites and a new order in the social hierarchy appear, not simply a change on the top of the social pyramid (see fig. 4).

The changing requirements of the new dominating economic groups correspond to the changing demands on various spacial structures (e.g. infrastructure, conditions of employment). Incorporating processes during the feudal period were characterized by subjugation, expulsion and exploitation of natural resources. The actual capitalist reincorporation (FERREIRA, 1988, p. 53, MUELLER, 1983, p. 658) of the Centro-Oeste is characterized by processes such as expulsion, marginalization of man power and concentrated landownership; on the other hand it led to an enormous amelioration of all infrastructures, a diversified range of professions in the urban production and services sectors, as well as an increase in the GNP.

Besides the economic change we can see a profound social change which is often called "modernization" (BANCK, 1988, p. 42). Personal dependencies and patriarchal working systems were substituted by structural dependencies as constituted by the laws of the working market, the lack of political representation and lack of realization of individual rights.

The notion of incorporation is not explicitly linked with a theoretical approach but it can be explained using the centre-periphery theory (GALTUNG, 1975; WÖHLCKE, 1981) and its explanations of the relations between dominating and dependent regions. The change of regional elites and the conflict amongst different social groups and their respective space requirements are explained within the concept of "Social Space Development" (COY/LÜCKER, 1991). All the above mentioned processes of incorporation and reincorporation can be well exemplified in the

case of the Brazilian Centro-Oeste (borders see figure 3).

2. The Economic History of the Centro-Oeste as Incorporation History

The first phase of land acquisition in the Brazilian Centro-Oeste was characterized by the consolidation of the domination by the Portuguese colonial empire. The rivers Paraná, Paraguai and Madeira, as axes of transport constituted a geo-strategical confrontation zone and a temporary border of the colonial empires. The central area of Brazil, upto the narrow, economically used and populated strip of coastal zone, was, from the viewpoint of the Portuguese, as good as unused. The slave hunting of the Bandeirantes clearly shows the typical exploitation mentality for this phase.

The second phase consisted of the exploitation of gold, after gold was found in 1719 near Cuiabá and in 1725 at the site where the town of Goiás was later on founded. The scattered locations of the gold finds called for the rapid development of a transportation system which consisted of a combined river and road system (Rota das monções from the Southeast to Cuiabá). Numerous towns, characterized by their social differentiation from the beginning, came into being to supply the gold digger camps and serve as living location for the powerful. The valuation of the extracted gold and the price of slaves was determined by markets which lay in the central economic regions. The trade soon became concentrated in a handful of large trade houses of Portuguese capital in Belém, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Buenos Aires. This second phase was also characterized by a totally externally determined exploitation mentality.

However, as early as 1750, at the pinnacle of the gold extraction, Goiás was able to form a provincial government which, although strongly oriented towards São Paulo, already showed the appearance of regional elites. A part of the taxes and contributions stayed within the region and served to improve the urban infrastructure, to expand the road network and the build up its own administration. Local trade houses became stronger and stood up, to an extent, forcibly to the representatives of the large trade houses (BERTRAN, 1988, p. 37). Around the towns settled small farmers, who improved the always precarious supply of food, a development which could be seen earlier in Minas Gerais. In order to control the gold trade better, the provincial

government forbid the transport over the Tocantins river to Belém, a measure which also certainly lay in the interests of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Thus the second phase is characterized by the strengthening of the regional elites and the conflicts of interest with the metropolis.

Around 1800 the gold boom came rapidly to an end and with it the great interest of the leading economic and political groups in the Centro-Oeste. In contrast to the scattered use of the land resulting from the extraction of gold, an economic activity sprung up for the first time focused on extensive use of the land in the form of cattle raising. However this was by no means of a productive nature. Instead, during this late feudal era, it was much more a method to acquire real estate in great style. Above all, groups who were close to the provincial government (aristocracy, military, wholesale traders) achieved access to immense pieces of land, Fazendas from 100 to 200 square kilometres of state land (terra devoluta). The low profitability of these enterprises, which were used, if at all, only for extensive cattle farming, demonstrates the revival of the rural feudal way of life. Larger live stocks emerged only in the south of Goiás. Families, who put themselves into service as cattlemen, immigrated from the bordering states of Minas Gerais and Bahia; this labour force, which was incorporated into the economic system of the Fazendas and was not monetarily paid, was cheaper for the landowners than the slaves, which had been used up to then. Smallholders migrated searching for subsistence mainly to the forest-grassland area of Southern Goiás. The rural population density stayed decidedly low and the distance between the unattractive, small towns was large. The most important product of this time was the tanned cattleskins which were taken to Belém across the Tocantins river. The relatively low interest from the central economic region permitted, during this phase, the establishment of an extensive, independent economic and social system in the region.

With the republic of 1880 the province became independent. The peak time of the "family clans" began: in Goiás it was the Bulhões, in Mato Grosso the Murtinho (BERTRAN, 1988, p. 60). In contrast to the mainly agrarian interests of the ancestral oligarchies, the interests of the trade and finance houses developed in the state capitals. With the liberation of the slaves more and more families from the south infiltrated into the Centro-Oeste and strengthened the smallholder character along the Paranaíba valley. Also the towns, which since the end of the gold period had been in decline, were revived and new

towns were founded. In Mato Grosso Corumbá developed into the trade centre due to its position at the transshipment place of the steam boat shipping on the river Paraguai and Cuiabá. The extraction products rubber, ipecacuanha and erva mate were gained for the export. The products from the cattle farming certainly continued dominating the remaining Centro-Oeste. However, Southern Goiás and the Campo Grande region in Mato Grosso became more strongly tied to the central economic areas. The province governors, due to their good relations with Rio de Janeiro, were granted railway lines, which were supposed to enable the transport of live cattle to the state of São Paulo. The new transport system certainly represented new incorporation mechanisms. On the other hand, increasing number of migrants, using the new transport system reached the Centro-Oeste, which led to the provinces on planning their own colonization projects to guide the new pioneer fronts.

With the world economy crisis and the revolution of 1930 (Estado Novo) the incorporation of Brazil in the overseas economic circulation was reduced. On the other hand the new strong central authority in Rio de Janeiro under Getúlio Vargas propagated the "Marcha para Oeste" imitating the North American "Go West" slogan and in so doing openly expressed the incorporation interests of the central state as superior. In contrast to the previous phase the central government established several colonization projects in Goiás and Mato Grosso, which should have absorbed the smallholder population in forest zones (Colônias Nacionais). It became clear here that it wasn't a question of development measures for the receiver states but that these projects were founded to provide for those who foundered in the old pioneer fronts in São Paulo (WAIBEL, 1957, p. 292). Thus originated new pioneer fronts in the regions of Mato Grosso de Goiás and Mata de Dourados. The road construction projects, which were strongly encouraged by the state also under the slogan of integration, moved the pioneer fronts to the north. In 1936, in Goiás the removal of the function as state capital to the newly built Goiânia, could be interpreted as an expression of regional independence; it can, however, also be seen as the search for a better traffic connection with Southeast Brazil. Upto today Anápolis and Goiânia have stayed the most important traffic junction and trade emporium of the Centro-Oeste.

From the building of the new national capital Brasília in 1960, came the expected psychological effect, however by no means came an economic development.

In spite of a marked increase in food production, due to the smallholder agriculture and continually increasing amounts of live stock, the area stayed, until the end of the 1960s, a periphery region with all the appropriate socio-economic characteristics. Several new pioneer fronts sprung up and left behind them badly structured areas at the mercy of the speculation, ultimately emerging from the building of the Belém-Brasília and other highways.

3. The Agricultural Modernization as a Process of Reincorporation

After the second world war the Brazilian government decided on a "catching up development" scheme using a model associated to the industry nations. This meant a capital oriented renewal of all production sectors and with it a capitalist permeation of all areas of society. Development processes in the agriculture were triggered by agrarian policies like the subsidy of market and export oriented agricultural production (wheat, soybean, rice, corn; LÜCKER, 1987, p. 24). The mechanization increased the productivity and tied the agriculture closer to the industry; the "agro-industrial complexes" emerged consisting of basic industries (fertilizer, chemicals), agricultural production cultivated with the help of tractors and implements and processing industry (soybean oil, corn food and feeding stuff). The profit oriented farming originated from the production of agricultural goods for self-sufficiency and for the sale of excess which was tied up to precapitalist agricultural structures (GOODMAN, 1988, p. 41; COY & LÜCKER, 1991, p. 21).

The low contribution from the Centro-Oeste, which mainly existed from extensive cattle raising, to the gross national product (GNP) should have been improved, within the scope of the development programme, by sectoral and regional policies. Thereto is counted the state supported capitalization of agricultural and intensive ranching activities. Additionally the improvement of the road infrastructure, the building up of the storage capacity for grain and the support for agricultural production cooperatives, in the frame of the POLOCENTRO programme, were of particular importance (RÖNICK, 1982, p. 364).

The appearance of the intensive process of agricultural modernization, has its causes outside the region, in the South and Southeast of Brazil. There, in areas of earlier smallholder

colonization, from the end of the 1960s the capital and technology intensive agriculture expanded, as a consequence of agricultural policies. Soon the land suitable for the mechanized soybean and wheat production began to run out, so that for the expansion of this system agricultural soils were also looked for in the Centro-Oeste. This process was accelerated by the economic pressure to employ the expensive machinery, as cost effectively as possible, on a large scale (LÜCKER, 1986, p. 172). From the middle of the 1970s, the soybean farms spread out from Paraná into the climatically similar Mato Grosso do Sul and there reshaped the degraded, once smallholder pioneer front in the region of Dourados. A further expansion to the wide plateaus (chapadões) within Goiás and Mato Grosso had as pre-requisite, the breeding of new varieties (only successful for corn and soybean) and new soil cultivation methods, needed for the difficult Cerrado soils.

The necessary production area could be bought at decidedly low prices from Fazendeiros because the plateaus weren't suitable for pastures and therefore had remained mainly unused. Farms, mostly small farms sold their land in their region of origin in South and Southeast Brazil, could buy up areas which were ten times as big in the Centro-Oeste. They could also then use the state subventions for intensive agricultural production like the buying of tractors, the improvement of the soil fertility and crop fertilization. In the second half of the 1980s a new, numerically small, middle class sprung up on the basis of the agriculture. The regional elites, based on extensive cattle raising, could also see their advantage in this: for example, it was easy for them to sell or rent excess land; in the latter case they could also use the land after a few years as cultivated pastures for cattle breeding. Above all young owner-managers of Fazendas began, when to a small extent, with their own crop cultivation, which was an innovation for this group; they also soon saw the possibility to influence the further agricultural development of the region by the formation of producer cooperatives (COY & LÜCKER, 1991, p. 127). The majority of the new farms originated from São Paulo and Minas Gerais and later on from Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul and transferred, with the exception of a few larger farms, all their activities to the new region. The settlers who had arrived after 1982 couldn't as a rule buy land, instead they had to rent; this was related to both the increased land prices and the reduced willingness of the Fazendeiros to sell land but also to the low capital assets of this group and to the

reduction of state subsidies, which were totally cut in 1985. Due to the ordinarily three year long tenant contracts, these farmers are compelled to a continual migration and the level of insolvency is high.

Areas, in which concentrated market oriented agriculture is found, are the microregions Serra do Caiapó and Vertente do Paranaíba in South Goiás, Rondonópolis in Mato Grosso and Dourados in Mato Grosso do Sul (see fig. 3, intensively used areas).

In the examples of the microregion Serra do Caiapó and especially the municipality Rio Verde in South Goiás, issues and consequences of the modernization processes can be demonstrated. The location pre-conditions for the agricultural modernization already existed: the main highway Cuiabá - Goiânia - Brasília went through South Goiás and the branch Rio Verde via Itumbiara to São Paulo was already asphalted in 1967; there was agricultural suitable soil available; lime deposits were at hand; finance of infrastructure measures (esp. stores) and cultivation credit was available from the POLOCENTRO programme. In the first half of the 1970s there was a boom in cotton cultivation in the banks of the river Paranaíba, which due to the depletion of the soil came quickly to an end. Farms from Minas Gerais and São Paulo participated in the cultivation and additionally urban cadre units from the investigation region took part for speculative reasons. At the end of the boom the region found itself in a heavy economic crisis especially as the profitability of the predominating cattle farming was also severely reduced. The portion of tax income from agriculture sank by half in the municipality Rio Verde from 1970 to 1975. Therefore local elites were happy about investment from the farms, which came from the states of São Paulo and Paraná, who started to cultivate the land in the municipality using modern methods. This produced important impulses for the local trade. The first crop was, as is always the case in the opening up of new land, rice, which was planted for three to four years. Only afterwards followed the transition to the strived-for, soybean cultivation. Towards the end of the 1970s commenced the soya boom, which brought with it a simultaneous boom in local and regional trade; the amount of building in the towns also increased because among other things, the new landowners chose to live in the towns. The expansion of the soybean cultivation covered a large area of South Goiás, however only the flat plateaus.

In the microregion Serra do Caiapó, the area of soya cultivation rose from 8,600 hectares (1975) to a maximum of 230,000 hectares (1985); however that represented only a third of the total crop land and only six percent of the farm area! In particular municipalities the soya farming amount reached a maximum of 25% of the whole agricultural land (COY & LÜCKER, 1991). The volume of soybean production rose from a few thousands tonnes in the mid - 70s to 82,000 tonnes in 1980 and doubled up to 1985. The number of tractors, as an expression of the capitally intensive development, rose from 868 (1970) to 3,900 (1989). Complementary to the cultivation of soya evolved the cultivation of corn, whereas in contrast to South Brazil the further modernization didn't include the production of wheat, due to agro-climatic reasons. The change in the production structure also expressed itself in the size distribution of farms; the class of farms which were of size 50 - 200 hectares as well as those sized 200-500 hectares increased whereas the number of the large farms decreased. Astonishingly the number of people employed in the agriculture increased, although this is more likely to be due to under employment in the small farms. However the number of permanently employed workers increased and they were generally paid more than the average; to these belong tractors and lorry drivers, store workers and administrators. The number of part-time workers also increased; these consisted mainly of the large number of landless workers who were employed as day labourers and lived mostly on the periphery of the towns (boia-fria). In spite of this strong changes it shouldn't be overlooked that the region, like the whole of South Goiás, is overwhelmingly dominated by the traditional cattle raising. This is expressed in the consisting land use, the intensification of stock density and the increase of livestock; in the microregion Serra do Caiapó the population of cattle increased from 0.6 million (1970) to 1.4 million in 1980 and 1.8 million in 1985. Often land rented out for agricultural uses would be turned to cultivated pastures after a few years, so that, in connection with pasture management and breeding advances, an increase in the profitability of livestock farming could be achieved.

With the changes in the agro-politics and the withdrawing of the agricultural credits, 1981/1983 emerged as the end of the soya boom also in the region. Many farms were heavily in debt and in particular numerous tenancies must give up. The local and regional trade felt a significant reduction in demand, especially of investment goods (cars, tractors, machinery). Between 1987

and 1989 the agriculture had to adept, using business management techniques, to the new conditions, which stabilized the economic situation in the area. Nevertheless, 1989/90 the

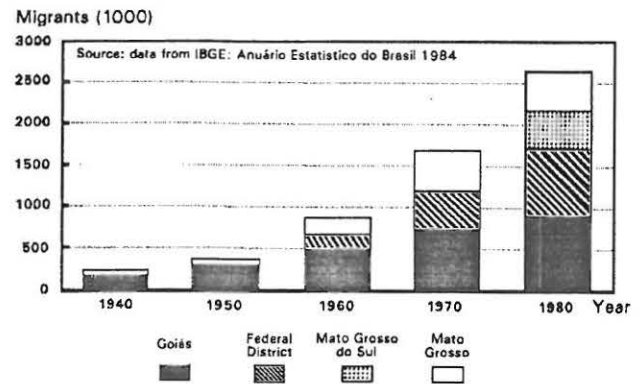


Fig. 1 — Migration to the Middle West Region 1940-1980

Migração para a região Centro-Oeste 1940-1980

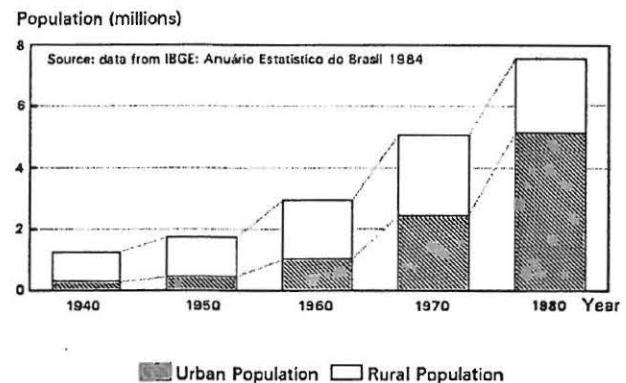


Fig. 2 — Population Increase in Rural and Urban Areas in the Middle West Region 1940-1980

Aumento da população em áreas urbanas e rurais no Centro-Oeste 1940-1980

price, which the farms were paid for their soybean production, fell; the stagnation of commodity prices on the world market was not alone responsible, but also the withdraw of support for exports, additional taxes and above all a, for the export economy ruinous exchange-rate policy. Thus a strong crisis occurred in the region again, due to external factors, clearly showing the

vulnerability of the emerged economy. The consequence was a significant return to investment in the cattle raising, which, in times of high inflation, promises a better risk safeguard.

4. Population Development and the Part of the Town in the Modern Incorporation Process

As can be seen in figure 1, the immigration into the Centro-Oeste has increased continuously since 1940; at first Goiás was the main aim, whereby the settlers came predominantly from the bordering Minas Gerais and São Paulo. After 1960 the migration intensified into the Federal District and into the divided Mato Grosso states. In the 1980s particularly the northern part of Mato Grosso was the main target for migrants from the South. The migration to Brasília and the satellite towns was already a new type of migration oriented to urban areas. In general it is possible to see a trend that even the migration to the active pioneer fronts is today predominantly a migration into towns (COY, 1988; BECKER, 1985). These circumstances can be seen in figure 2, according to which, already in 1980, two thirds of the population in the Centro-Oeste were urban based and at the same time the rural population was actually in decline. By observation from a regional view point, of the population changes in the rural areas the categories migration inflow, migration outflow and stagnation can be defined (see fig. 3). The number of inhabitants in the traditional cattle farming areas in Mato Grosso do Sul and in northeast Goiás has stagnated. Increases in population can be found in north Mato Grosso, especially along the highways on which pioneer fronts have formed. In these young areas, the formation and growth of towns is of a particular dynamic nature; the network of these towns will change significantly in the next decade. The areas of migration outflow, which exist mainly in the older settled areas of South Goiás, are of particular interest. They demonstrate that the agrarian structure isn't capable of absorbing population.

However also areas with an agricultural dynamic nature in Mato Grosso (Rondonópolis) or South Goiás, as described in the micro-region Serra do Caiap, show a rural exodus. The migration is directed especially towards the regional centres (like Rio Verde, Dourados, Rondonópolis or Araguaína) but also towards the state capitals and thus changes the system of central places (LÜCKER, 1990, p. 407). In the 1970s a well intended agro-social legislation led to an increase in rural unemployment; in the 1980s

the modernization process expelled those who didn't fit in the labour requirement profile. The new economic attractiveness of the towns drew towards them not only traders but also families from the new farms, which came from the Southeast and the South. These families preferred

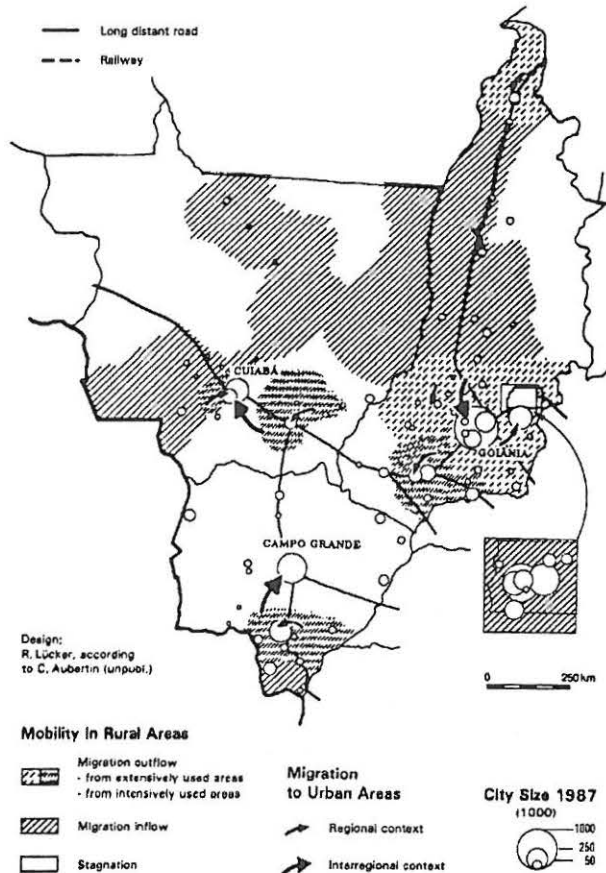


Fig. 3 - Rural Drain and Urban Increase in the Middle West Region 1980 - 1987

Êxodo rural e crescimento das cidades no Centro-Oeste 1980-1987

to live in the towns either because of schools for their children or because of better communication possibilities. In this way the spectrum of different professions widened in the towns and the social hierarchy changed both in the towns and in the whole region (see fig. 4). The rural-urban relations changed too.

The migrants from the south bring with them not only their higher demands on the urban infrastructure and their consumption habits but

also their success oriented economic model and their outwards directed perception of the world. The fact that the migrants aren't willing to become fully integrated, can be perhaps seen, for example, in the importance of a "house of culture" (Centro de Tradições Gaúchas) as a meeting point and as a cultural communication centre of south Brazilian groups. That they are

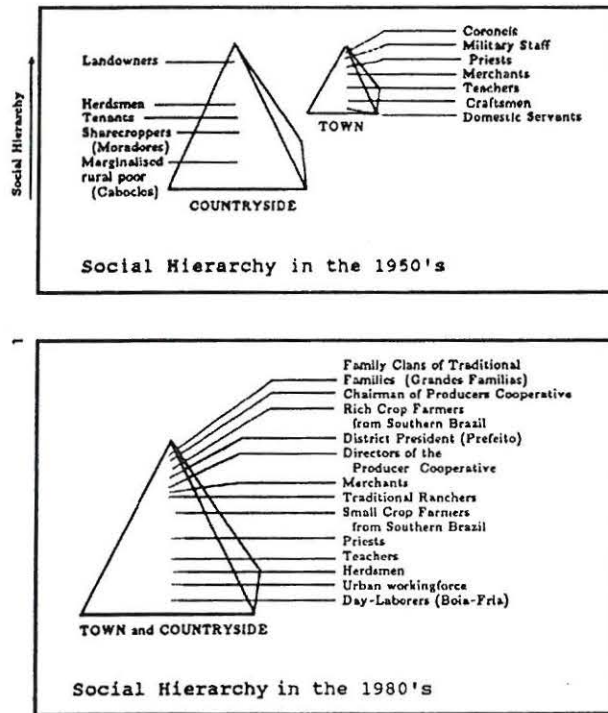


Fig. 4 - Evolution of the Social Hierarchy from the 1950's to the 1980's
 Evolução da hierarquia social dos anos 50 aos anos 80

called "sulistas" (people from the South) by the local population may show that they are at least seen as different. Alongside the regional step migration of lower classes, the interregional direct migration, especially from the Northeast, appears, but amplified. Therewith is revealed, how the modern communication possibilities intervene in the migration process and on the other hand how the dynamic nature of the regional centres of the Centro-Oeste is assessed as being promising for jobs. In a social aid program, conducted by an agricultural producer cooperative, in Rio Verde, 3,200 families were registered in 1990. From the documents, it can be seen that from the families which immigrated between the years 1985 and

1990, 30% were direct migrants especially from towns in Bahia, Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba. By 1985 the 72,000 inhabitants in the town Rio Verde consisted of over 50% marginalized poor, who to a large extent were reliant on day work in the farms and the Fazendas; the quarters of these people constitute the vast periphery of a growing and specializing city centre; the small upper class lives in a new and well separated part of town (see map in Lückner, 1990, p. 416).

Summarizing, it can be established that the growth of the towns in the Centro-Oeste is not due to their economic strength. On the contrary the growth is determined by the amount of expulsion of the rural population in the region, by agro-structural processes and also by reasons coming from outside the region (immigration). The economic growth and the growing importance of the towns are decided by the agricultural dynamic nature of the rural surroundings and by the exchange with the national economic centres. The exchange within the Centro-Oeste is of little importance. Old incorporation processes were directed towards the countryside and the towns played hardly any part at all. In the modern reincorporation process, the profit oriented development is concentrated on the reshaping of the towns, which are functionally tied up in the central hierarchy. Thus, today towns in agriculturally intensive areas are not only reloading places for goods but are also places where the capital flow is controlled, which ad valorem leads predominately into the centres. The towns are communication centres with foreign markets via brokers, the residence of executive bodies of the central state and the bridgeheads for changes in consumption and behaviour, imitating the way of life in large towns. The towns express, in general, the urban bias of the whole society. Therefore it is understandable that this constellation significantly hinders local or regional independent developments. Affected are not only those groups having traditional economic forms (caboclos, posseiros) but also those who, consistent with the pioneer front myths, are trying to subsist. They are either compelled to adapt or are pushed towards the last pioneer fronts in the Amazon.

5. Conclusions

It can be shown that the processes of regional development in parts of the Centro-Oeste were initiated by the colonial power and later by the dominant socio-economic groups of the Centro-

-Oeste in the frame work of a capitalist development. Dependent structures emerged, which even after several attempts at independent development, haven't changed significantly.

However the term "incorporation" must be used discriminately. Even though there were conflicts when the old and new elites confronted each other in the Centro-Oeste, it can be established that there is a harmony of interests between regional and national elites.

The economic modernization in the Centro-Oeste should also be seen in this context. The results were the same as in the South of Brazil: an intensification of production and an increase in the regional GNP, but also expulsion of rural workers and concentration of landownership. However, the traditional agrarian structure, as the result of the feudal land appropriation, is responsible for the macroregion having agricultural units and correspondingly few possibilities for the inhabitants to make a living. The natural environment is responsible even today for the regional differentiation in an extended area of crop and cattle farming production zones, even though the perception of the environment by migrants from the South was different. The low density of economic activities in the region and the large distances between the towns make the stimulation of an independent regional development more difficult. The towns, as bridgeheads, convey external development impulses into the region and serve as infrastructural centres for the interregional and unbalanced flow of materials and capital from the region.

The production intensification in the Centro-Oeste asks the question, to what extent can the loss of Cerrado vegetation be accepted before it leads to an irreversible damage of the ecosystem and to grave effects for the macroregion. Lastly the question must be asked, for whom is the intensification of production in the Centro-Oeste a development? Large sections of the local population are marginalized by the developments and today can find no possibilities of employment in the towns of the region, others are driven out to the new pioneer fronts. Can the survival guarantee and profit increases of the financially more stable migrants from the South and the increase in tax income to the state be valued as more important as the negative aspects mentioned above? Regional development plans for independent regions, oriented at political participation, should give the answer; but under the actual national framework and the power of the states there is no such development possible.

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