

**MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS SHAPING  
CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL**

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

The shaping of contemporary Brazil, understood as a historical process of elaboration and configuration of our society in economic, social, demographic, territorial, political-institutional and cultural terms, can be thought of as an uninterrupted, multitudinous and diverse spatial mobilization of population. It is not an overstatement to say that the Brazilian society is the historical outcome of its migration, of the meeting of migrants at multiple times and spaces, having come from the most diverse points – initially, from the world at large and, subsequently, from inside the nation itself. Banished from fatherlands by destitution or persecution, or simply urged on by dreams and hopes, millions of men and women were on the march constructing this nation.

Salvaging the history of this migration by retracing the route of millions of life courses is to question the structures that have been producing population movements stateside and abroad and the very movements that have engendered such structures. It is, in a sense, to recapture Brazil's contemporary history. Since the 50's, researchers from various fields have contributed to the attainment of this goal: scholars in population studies – first and foremost, demographers -, as well as economists, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, historians, urban and regional planners, and others.

As of the 70's these studies were subjected to a new boost, thanks mostly to important research programs that propitiated the exploration of the rich census data then available. The quantity and quality of production in the field of migratory studies evolved in the 80's and 90's, incorporating new investigative and assessment techniques as well as bringing forth awareness of new phenomena and processes that have made the Brazilian migratory picture even more complex. Thus, only to illustrate the point, whereas in the 70's much attention was given to metropolitan migration, to occupying migration were intensified, as were those concerning international emigration and frontiers and to seasonal workers and migration, in the 80's studies advanced to

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commuters and intra-metropolitan migration, and in the 90's studies into internal return immigration and new migratory trends in view of the economic and social crises that the nation had been undergoing over the past 20 years.

One could not hope to recuperate and synthesize the rich and variegated collection of accumulated knowledge within the scope of just one limited research paper. The goal is, hence, much more modest: to present in general lines a grand panel composed of the migratory processes over the last century and a half. For the purposes of this paper it has been assumed that the Abolition of Slavery (1888), followed almost immediately by the Proclamation of the Republic (1889), constitute the cornerstones of the nation's modern migratory history. A debatable choice, yet the fact that the spatial movements of the population were essentially a result of individual decisions of free men<sup>1</sup> stands in its favor. Certainly well before these dates there are safe indicators of the emergence, in Brazilian society, of a free labor market, the place for social and economic relationships that offer the context for national and international migratory movements in modern times. Thus it would not be impertinent to roll this cornerstone back to 1850, when the interruption of the slave trade portends the impending end to slavery. But it is with the advent of abolition that there is a generalization of relationships in which the labor force – and not the worker himself, that is, the slave – becomes commodity.

From this starting point on we can say that the constitution of contemporary Brazil, from the point of view of the processes of circulation and spatial location of population, is founded on the following four central elements:

- A heritage marked by a structure of great landed estates (latifundia) and by Negro slave labor;

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<sup>1</sup> One does not intend, as will become evident further on, to espouse the thesis that migratory movements respond only or especially to the decisions of isolated individuals who make locational decisions – and so decide to migrate (or not). It does entail, however, adopting the definition proposed by the U.N. some years back stating that “*migrant is a person who moves a minimum specified distance away at least once during the migration interval under consideration*” (UN/Department of Economic and Social Studies, 1980, p. 322), which means the exclusion of all those who are moved around as objects or animals – not considered socially as people – and for whom the displacement is always an imposition of direct and open, violent action from another agent.

- The development of capitalism<sup>2</sup>, with its inherent urbanization and unequal and combined development processes in the territory;
- The *American* condition, an expression by means of which one wishes to invoke the original low-density autochthonal occupation<sup>3</sup> and the permanence, throughout capitalist development, of open frontiers, i.e., vast amounts of territory ready for occupation, be it with foreign immigrants or domestic migrants;
- The permanent intervention of the State seeking, according to the period and conjunctures, to promote, direct, control or restrict migration, international or otherwise.

Once placed within a historic framework, these four central elements will interact in many different ways among themselves and with other contextual elements, domestic and international, generating migratory flows and territorial configurations that will slowly bestow on the Brazilian society, population and territory the pattern that it holds today.

In looking for landmarks that might help identify major movements and great trends characterizing our migratory history, it is possible to pinpoint three great periods:

- 1888 – 1930, period of constituting a free labor market, characterized by the predominance of international immigration;
- 1930 – 1980, period dominated by the industrialization process and by the accelerated occupation of agricultural frontiers, during which agricultural modernization and the correlate process of massive proletarianization of the rural population will engender internal migration to frontiers and to cities, establishing an explosive urbanization process (and, even, metropolitanization) and the configuration of a national labor force market;
- 1980 onwards, period whose major trends are still to be defined but which seems to be dominated by the fall of economic growth rates, by a relative saturation of the absorption capacity at the frontiers and metropolises, by a generalized circulation process of migrant populations, by selective and exclusionary absorption into labor markets and by the introduction of significant international migration.

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<sup>2</sup> At this point, for the sake of precision, it would be fitting to add **dependent** and **peripheral**, but the limitations of this paper could hardly permit the exploration of the substantive consequences of this use of adjectives.

<sup>3</sup> One could add that extermination of Indigenous peoples has been characteristic of the American condition.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the great periods herein demarcated should be understood as only rough, initial approximations enabling the identification of great trends and dominant migratory dynamics. We are dealing here with complex historical processes that cannot be concealed within intervals marked by univocal and linear trends. Quite to the contrary, far from following along paths defined by stable trends, history is made of oscillations (in its conjuncture) resulting from co-existence, at times harmonious and at other times conflicting, of multiple trends, of the survival of past periods and of the foreshadowing of barely emergent realities.

Only the first two periods will be under review and will be described in the following two sections. Certain considerations will be made in the conclusion with regard to trends that seem to be present in the period beginning in 1980, as we seek to establish lines of continuity and rupture with previous phases and make a quick balance of 150 years of migration.

## **II. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LABOR MARKET.**

### **2.1. Antecedents: the long transition to free labor (1850-1888).**

On March 31, 1824, less than a week after the declaration of the first Brazilian constitution, Dom Pedro I signed Decree No. 80 establishing the lands of the German colony São Leopoldo, “*which we cannot fail to recognize as useful to this Empire, due to its superior advantage of hiring free hardworking white people, not only in the arts but in agriculture as well*” (Demoro, 1960:32). The proclaimed virtues of “*hardworking white people*”, however, were insufficient to accelerate the end of slavery: it was only in 1850 that the effective suspension of the slave trade heralded the transition process, slowly and gradually, in the direction of free labor<sup>4</sup> and which culminates in 1888 in the so-called Golden Law (*Lei Áurea*).

The suspension of the slave trade in 1850 hit primarily the coffee plantations, which experienced their first peak of glory in the Paraíba Valley in the Rio de Janeiro province. In order to understand the impact *fully*, it suffices to say that the number of slaves arriving at Brazilian ports in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century has been estimated at around 1,713,000 (FIBGE, 1987). Therefore, it is not surprising that the phantom of

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<sup>4</sup> Right from the beginning, the simple reposition in Brazil of slave labor depended on the new consignment coming in from Africa, which led to the terse sentence spoken by the Jesuit priest Antônio Vieira: “*Without Blacks there is no Pernambuco, and without Angola there are no Blacks.*”

*lack of labor force*, systematically invoked by great landowners throughout the following decades, should have made a first appearance at this time.

For some time, until 1870 or so, the inter-province slave trade quenched the need for field hands generated by the green wave that advanced in the direction of the Paraíba Valley in São Paulo. It has been estimated that from 1854 to 1872 the North and Northeast yielded roughly 170,000 slaves to the coffee-planting Southeast (Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) (Martins, 1994). Noteworthy, too, is the massive shift of slaves from cities to farms as there was a loss of almost 50,000 slaves in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the seat of government (Martins, 1994). Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, totaling 28% of the estimated slave population in 1819, concentrated nothing less than 48% of the total number of the nation's slaves according to the 1872 census.

But the expansion of the coffee economy exacted more *hands*. In the 30 years that followed the end of the slave trade, coffee production had jumped from 3,500,000 arrobas<sup>5</sup> to 12,380,000 arrobas. On their westward march from 1876 to 1883, coffee plantations took over approximately 150,000 hectares to plant 105 million coffee plants (Cano, 1983).

Truth be told, ever since the initial experience<sup>6</sup> of the Germans in the 1820's, many initiatives were made throughout the century to bring in immigrant Europeans that might substitute or complement slave labor on plantations and that might help introduce *free hardworking Whites* into the vast territory of this strange and schizophrenic tropical empire. For in its imperial parliament and at court there raged the dream of transforming the nation into one of Whites and liberals while on its plantations the blood and sweat of its slaves was being greedily sought.

Reality imposed itself, however, on the dream: for a long time, slavery itself remained a major obstacle to Brazil's taking on surplus hands generated by agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe. The failure of the experience of importing Swiss and German workers promoted by Senator Vergueiro, ending in the *parceiros* uprising on the Ibicada farm, showed the limits to the attempt at mobilizing free White hands while slave labor perdured in Brazil<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 arroba = 15 kilograms.

<sup>6</sup> Actually the first experience of the State in organized immigration, promoted so as to consolidate Portuguese dominium at the southern frontier of the colony dates back to 1740 when the "d'El Rey couples" (casais d'El Rei) from the Azores Islands received not only passage from the Crown, but also work tools, seeds, animals and food to see them through the first few years.

<sup>7</sup> In 1845, Nicolau Vergueiro brought over the first batch of *parceiros* – 64 German families – to his Ibicaba farm, in Limeira, São Paulo. With the end of the slave trade in 1850, Vergueiro intensified his

The reasons why *free men of the slave order* - an expression consecrated in the classic work of Franco (1974) - were not mobilized to work on the expanding coffee plantations is still the object of intense debate; after all, the census population in 1872 reached 10,049,105 inhabitants, 85% of whom were free (in 1819 there were roughly 3,596,132 inhabitants, of whom 69% were free); and even in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, two great coffee provinces, there were 1,396,862 free inhabitants.

The great majority of authors<sup>8</sup>, however, converge to the thesis presented by Furtado (2000), according to whom two factors contributed to the fixation of this population group to the point of unavailability: a) the unlimited supply of easily accessible free land; b) the peculiar configuration of the latifundia powered by slave labor, whose economic as well as political reproduction linked to the commercial plantation a marginal subsistence economy that kept a great part of the free population busy (or semi-free, in some cases), bound also by personal ties of dependency. In other words, there was a lack of essential conditions to constitute a supply of movable and mobilizable manpower, i.e.: a modern proletariat, separate from the means of production and free from ties of personal dependency.

A token of the high degree of awareness of the Empire as to the strategic nature of these issues is the Law of Lands (*Lei de Terras*), promulgated, though not by chance, the same year the slave trade ended. This Law established that agrarian property would be accessible only through purchase, transforming in this way all the lands into merchandise and conditioning “*the development of new ownership to prior capital holdings*” (Martins, 1973:53). Deprived of access to lands, free men would be more inclined (or forced?) to sell their own labor. The law was intended to affect not only the foreign immigrants it wished to attract, but also freemen from the slave order and freed or emancipated Negroes whose freedom would be acquired thanks to a Fund created by this very same law. Inspired by E.G. Wakefield (Letters from Sidney, 1829), the Lei de

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activity of mediating, recruiting, transporting and “delivering” *parceiros* to various farms. In 1857, there were in the West of São Paulo over 1,000 or over 2,000 contracts of *parceria* with Germans and Swiss, respectively, according to Dean (1977:99) and Furtado (2000:131). Recruited in Europe, the immigrant would sign a contract binding himself not to abandon the farm until the landowner was paid back travel, food and other expenses incurred to set him up; the rigors of the *parceria* regime, prices charged for groceries and basic inputs, payback discounts and a thousand other loopholes, however, contributed to the inability to clear the debt and in practice transformed the presumed free labourer into an indebted slave. In 1857 the *parceiros* revolted. The uprising and the outcry of white slavery resounded in Europe, creating a highly unfavorable climate for emigration to Brazil. Swiss counties and German states simply forbade recruitment and embarkment from their lands to Brazil; in Italy and even in Portugal there was adverse feelings with regard to Brazil. As to the *parceria* system created by Senator Vergueiro and the reasons for the *parceiros* uprising, see the extraordinary account of pastor Thomas Davatz (1941).

<sup>8</sup> See too Lopes & Patarra, 1974.

Terras sought to assure that the groups entering the country would in fact constitute a ready supply of labor force.

For a long time, following the model set in São Leopoldo, foreign immigration was conceived and promoted as a means to install a peasant economy of White families in the free lands of the Empire to furnish food supplies to the great monoculture latifundia and to urban towns. With the worsening of the shortage of manual labor, especially in the last quarter of the century, there is a redefinition of strategies that could simply be described as the passage from *settlement immigration* to *labor immigration*<sup>9</sup>.

The growth of foreign immigration, however, faced a number of obstacles: first, the continuance of slavery and the terrible image of Brazil with regard to its handling of immigrant workers<sup>10</sup>. It was necessary to overcome the Vergueiro system that submitted immigrants to debt, and this was only made possible thanks to the advent of the State in the process and to immigration subsidies. From the end of the 70's,

*“in place of signed contracts from Europe preceding the coming of immigrants, the government took it upon itself to advertise in countries of emigration, covering travel costs for migration to Brazil. Once on Brazilian soil immigrants were distributed among different farm estates according to the needs and demands presented”* (Prado Júnior, 1974:192).

Compliance to the new policy on the part of the great São Paulo land owners was a decisive factor, especially for those in new lands out West where there were practically no slaves to speak of: in 1886 the Society for the Promotion of Immigration was founded, lobbying the Imperial and Provincial governments to subsidize massive immigration (Beiguelman, 1981a). Already in 1884 the Provincial Council of São Paulo approved credit for integral payment of passage and by 1904 government expenditure totaled 42 million *mil-réis*, substantiating the following observation made by Dean:

*“Any calculation as to the feasibility of the system of great plantations after the Abolition of Slavery should be made considering this awesome fact: it was not the landlords that paid the price for the substitution of labor but the entire population, including its free members”* (Dean, 1977:152).

The results of the new policy are reflected in the significant growth in immigration in the 1870's and, above all, in the 1880's (Table 1).

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<sup>9</sup> Martins (1973) and Dean (1977) show in great detail how the big farmers will readjust their rhetoric with regard to immigration at the rate that they decide to lead immigrants to the coffee plantations and no longer to small productive plots of land.

<sup>10</sup> The law of 1879 governing the hiring of services established a prison sentence for workers who did not comply with their obligations (Spindel, 1980), demonstrating the difficulty the ruling classes had to make the transition to truly free labor relationships 30 years after the end of the slave trade.

**TABLE 1. IMMIGRANTS ENTERING BRAZIL, 1850-1890.**

Years	Immigrants arriving	Years	Immigrants arriving
1851 – 1860	220 000		
1861 – 1870	95 000		
1871 – 1880	215 000	1872 – 1879	176,337
1881 – 1890	530 000	1880 – 1889	448,622
1851 – 1890	1 060 000	1872 – 1889	624,959

Source: Mortara, Giorgio. Contribuições para o estudo de demografia no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro, FIBGE, 1970; apud. Merrick, Thomas W. & Graham, Douglas H.. População e desenvolvimento econômico no Brasil de 1800 até a atualidade. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores, 1981, p. 59.

Source: Levy, Maria Stella , “O papel da imigração internacional na evolução da imigração brasileira, 1872-1929”; in Revista de Saúde Pública, no. 8, 1974.

Immigration was, therefore, the essential element in the transition to freed labor that impeded the crisis of the slave plantations from becoming a *tout court* plantation crisis. It assured its permanence, holding a dominant position in the Brazilian economy and society for yet quite some time.

This understanding should not detract, however, from the consideration that internal migration also played a role in creating an offer of ready labor for the expanding coffee production, as seen by data in Table 2. The growth in the number of foreigners in São Paulo – from 29,622 in 1872 to 75,030 in 1890, according to census data –, though considerable, is not sufficient to explain the growth in the free population (Camargo, 1981). This was due to two factors: i) growth in the number of freed persons, either due to emancipation or to the results of the Laws of Free Birth (*Lei do Ventre Livre*) and of Sexagenarians<sup>11</sup>; ii) internal migration.

**TABLE 2. EVOLUTION OF THE SLAVE POPULATION AND OF FREEMEN. SÃO PAULO, 1836 – 1886.**

Period	Total	Slaves	Freemen
1836	284,312	78,013	206,299
1854	417,149	117,731	299,418
1874	837,354	156,582	680,772
1886	1,221,380	106,665	1,114,715

Source: Spindel, Cheywa. Homens e máquinas na transição de uma economia cafeeira: formação e uso da força de trabalho em São Paulo. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Paz e Terra, 1980.

The dimension of this migration to São Paulo between 1872 and 1890 was measured indirectly by the internal migratory balance of 72,649, which means a 5.25% net rate and a participation of 16% in the absolute growth of the São Paulo population for the period (Graham & Holanda, 1984). Dean (1977) showed the diversity in origin of nationals working on plantations in the Rio Claro region, among whom there were

<sup>11</sup> The Law of Free Birth of 1871 stipulated that all children born to slave women would be born free. The Law of Sexagenarians of 1885 declared all slaves over the age of 65 to be free.

even those from the Northeast, though the largest group was made up of the offspring of small landowners or of aggregates coming from Minas Gerais<sup>12</sup>.

Be it as it may, when slavery is finally abolished in 1888, the transition to free labor is already in full progress. The large plantation owners had already been able to solve their crisis and simultaneously maintain control over the lands and over the flow of immigrants.

This was made possible thanks to the immigrant-agrarian strategy, an original solution when compared to other transitions occurring on the American continent in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century:

*“Although the United States received much immigration from Europe, they were not used in the South to substitute the former slave labor as occurred in the São Paulo coffee plantations <...> Caribbean Societies also resorted to the old slave labor to supply alternative manual labor in subsistence farming. This brought back emancipated slaves working on plantations for low wages”* (Merrick & Graham, 1981:108).

## **2.2. PRIMARY EXPORTS MODEL AND THE OLIGARCHIC REPUBLIC: ASCENSION OF THE IMMIGRANT-AGRARIAN MODEL (1888-1930).**

The creative solution found by our elite for the crisis surrounding the slave-based landed estates in the transition to free labor allowed, therefore, for a consolidation of the latifundia and for their claim to economic and political hegemony over the following 40 years. The agro-export model based on ownership of great expanses of land and the oligarchic republic, based on the pact made by regional elites – these two designs seem to synthesize to a certain degree the elements that dominate Brazilian life during the First Republic (1889-1930).

Even with the interregnum provoked by the crises of super-production and by the war (1914-1919), the continual expansion of plantations and coffee exports (Tables 3 and 4) sustained and were sustained by a continual reproduction of migratory dynamics seen in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Essentially, it had to do with giving continuity to the immigrant-agrarian strategy, assuring a flow of disciplined, skilled white hands to farms. The option for continuity was clear, right after the proclamation of the Republic, with the coming out of a legal decree to regulate *“the service to introduce and locate immigrants in the Republic of the United States of Brazil”*:

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<sup>12</sup> See, as well, Lopes e Patarra, 1974.

*“Entry by port to the Republic is entirely free for those individuals valid and apt for work who are not subject to criminal lawsuits in their own countries, excepting the Indigenous from Asia or Africa...”* (Decree No. 528, June 1890).

The evolution of emigration in the years following the Abolition is remarkable. From a monthly average of around 26,500 over the period 1851-1890, it rose to 85,625 per year in the four subsequent decades, with a high between 1890 and 1900, and a yearly average of 112,500 (Camargo, 1981). São Paulo, which had received on average 4,800 immigrants per year between 1882 and 1885, sees this number rise to 9,500 in 1886 and to 32,100 in 1887. From then on, up until 1987, there arrived in São Paulo on average nothing less than 68,500 foreigners a year (Cano, 1983:48).

Caio Prado Júnior renders an admirable description of how arrival of immigrants in São Paulo occurred, at least for those coming by means of directed and subsidized immigration:

*“Immigrants arriving in large groups were, after debarkation in Santos, immediately closed and locked into freight cars belonging to the Railway Company. The train that took them to São Paulo (and from which they had the opportunity to admire the natural beauty of the mountain range Serra do Mar, or so claimed an apologetic immigration office folder) deposited travelers directly at the patio of the Immigration Boarding House, conveniently located to one side of the <...>Santos-Jundiaí railroad tracks. During their stay in the capital, immigrants boarding at the Immigration House could not stray far and were kept as though in prison <...> Once his destination was defined - the farm where he/she was to be sent (a subject he was not consulted on) - he again embarked at the Boarding House station. Ever so closely watched he was again shipped to the station nearest to the farm where the farmer or his agent already awaited to receive and take in hand the new worker”* (Prado Junior, 1977:240).

The greater part of these immigrants will be fit into a work structure known as *colonato*, which, though a far cry from the *parceria a la Vergueiro* (see note 7), still does not fully observe a wage relationship. In effect, involving practically everyone in the family (as opposed to the individual laborer), the *colonato* system combined pecuniary remuneration per task, per time worked and per concession of lots for cultivation.

*“The “colonato” contract fixes a sum total that the immigrant working as tenant-farmer should receive to care for 1,000 coffee plants<sup>13</sup> and the wages he will be paid for extra days of work (the number of which is generally established in an official document). In addition, the contract includes authorization to plant intermixed crops or, otherwise, a certain area is*

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<sup>13</sup> Stolcke (1986:44) says that an adult male could handle from 2000 to 3000 coffee plants.

*designated outside the coffee plantation for this purpose for him.”* (Monbeig, 1952:140).

TABLE 3a. COFFEE EXPANSION IN THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO. 1880-1930.		
Year	Coffee production (10 <sup>6</sup> )	Production (10 <sup>6</sup> sacks)
1880	106	1.2
1890	220	2.9
1901	526	8.9
1911	697	8.5
1921	844	10.2
1930	1188	19.5

TABLE 3b. EXPORT COFFEE PRODUCTION. BRAZIL, 1901-1930.	
Period	Export Production (10 <sup>6</sup> sacks)
1901-1905	64.9
1906-1910	73.1
1911-1915	68.0
1916-1920	66.0
1921-1925	72.6
1926-1930	99.4

Source: Cano, Wilson. Raízes da concentração industrial no Brasil. São Paulo, T. A Queiroz Editor, 2ª edição, pp.41 e 46.

TABLE 4. ENTRY OF IMMIGRANTS. BRAZIL, 1890 –1930.			
Anos	Ingresso de imigrantes	Anos	Ingresso de imigrantes
1890-1899	1,998,327	1910-1919	815,453
1900-1909	622,407	1920-1929	846,647
		1890 - 1929	4,282,834

Fonte: Levy, Maria Stella, “O papel da imigração internacional na evolução da imigração brasileira, 1872-1929”; in Revista de Saúde Pública, nº 8, 1974

In certain cases the tenant-farmer’s farm production was under a *parceria* regime (halves or thirds), and in other cases it belonged entirely to the worker; whatever the circumstances, though, the land surface and produce were strictly controlled by the farm estate (Brandt, 1975:19). Brandt, as well as others, showed in a convincing way that the *colonato* system, aside from transferring part of the reproduction costs of labor force to the worker and his family, had the characteristic of fixing a large group of workers on farms, thus reducing labor market circulation. This meant that at times when there was shortage of workers, the *colonato* regime would reduce the possibilities of workers gaining advantage from farmers having to compete for farm help<sup>14</sup>.

Truth be told, there was a permanent battle of wits between farmers and *colonos* around the issue of mobility. The former, influenced by concepts founded on the direct and immediate control of the body and location of slaves, would seek to fix farm workers and drastically reduce their wandering about. The latter would give preference to new coffee plantations whose lands produced higher yields (in food crops as well), or they would try to derive benefits from the competition between farmers for farm hands,

<sup>14</sup> In Guaratinguetá in 1896 a farmer was absolved of the accusation of having kept a person illegally captive who, according to the accused, had committed the crime of disturbing work around the farm, “*seducing my farm hands <...> by promising high wages and other advantages*” (Franco, 1974:149).

or else they might accede to owning a small plot of land or depart for the cities where the first industries and small businesses would offer highly valued opportunities<sup>15</sup>.

But São Paulo was not the only destination for immigrants. Table 5 offers an overview of the foreign population distribution between the units of the federation, showing the importance of the South as a receptor region. There was continuity there, though also with oscillations, in colonies founded on small land holdings and on family farming, following the model set up in São Leopoldo. In Rio Grande do Sul, as well as in Santa Catarina and in Paraná, lodging on lands left behind by great landowners, immigrants started up a tradition that is maintained until today, that of the small family production unit<sup>16</sup>.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, waves of immigrants, while this lasted, joined up with the descendents of the original foreigners who had arrived in the region, giving rise to one of the (internal) migratory flows characteristic of the migratory and territorial dynamics of Brazil: the occupation and settlement of frontier lands by the small family farmer. In effect, quite a sizable part of the agricultural frontier will be cleared and occupied thanks to a particular form of expansion peculiar to the peasant-based economy that Roche (1959) has compared to the process of replication of beehives (“*essaimage*”): the offspring of peasant families, unable to find available lands in their parent’s region will displace and replicate the same structure of family agriculture in free lands elsewhere.

In Rio Grande do Sul the differentiation between the “*old settlement*” region (“*região das colônias velhas*”) - a region already referred to as the settlement of São Leopoldo and the original Italian colonies and the “*new settlement*” region (“*região das colônias novas*”), in the western part of the state, is a paradigm of this movement

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<sup>15</sup> Stolcke (1986:75) attributes the high mobility of farm hands to the wretched conditions on farms and to the competition between farmers. References are given whereby observers estimate that between 40 to 60% of workers annually abandon the big farms; such a high number seems excessive to us, an expression first of all of the campaign made by farmers against the *inconstancy and nomadism of farm laborers* and of their reinvindication for greater incentives for immigration so as to increase supply of workers.

<sup>16</sup> In Rio Grande do Sul *colonos* settled up in the highlands since the great latifundia cattle ranches took up the wide open plains. The *colonos*, who received 77 hectares per family in São Leopoldo, were given only 49 hectares as of 1851 and, from the Proclamation of the Republic onward, the lots were limited to 25 ha (Roche, 1959:249). Even today, the word *colônia*, in the rural areas in the South of Brazil, can be used to designate, depending on the context, a group of descendents of one specific nationality (Italian *colônia*, German *colônia*, etc); a set of lots organized around a villa, with a church, school house and club; a unit of land equivalent to 25 hectares, it being common for peasants to speak of their property as having one and a half *colônias*, half a *colônia*, etc. The term *colono*, on the other hand, indicates a small family producer, no matter the origin. This same use is reproduced in frontier regions settled as of the

which, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century displaced people from Rio Grande do Sul - the *gaúchos* (of Italian, German and Polish origin) - to Santa Catarina, Paraná, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Rondônia and even to Bahia and Paraguay, creating a *moving peasant frontier* of sorts.

<b>State/Province</b>	<b>1872</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1940</b>
Minas Gerais	46,900	46,787	91,593	85,705	45,546
Rio de Janeiro	184,182	140,192	246,272	289,960	267,367
São Paulo	29,622	75,030	478,417	829,851	814,120
Paraná	3,627	5,153	39,786	62,753	66,653
Santa Catarina	16,974	6,198	29,550	31,243	27,201
Rio G. do Sul	41,725	34,765	135,099	151,025	109,470
Others	66,429	43,420	53,954	115,424	75,085
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>389,459</b>	<b>351,545</b>	<b>1,074,671</b>	<b>1,565,961</b>	<b>1,405,442</b>

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud Levy, Maria Stella, "O papel da imigração internacional na evolução da imigração brasileira, 1872-1929"; in Revista de Saúde Pública, no. 8, 1974.

Table 6 brings information on the origin of immigrants entering the country. The most relevant fact is the extraordinary growth in the Japanese immigration that will partially go to compensate the reduction in the flow of Italians and Portuguese at the end of the period. As will be seen shortly, this fact will be the object of intense debates since it threatened the whitening project, which had always been nurtured by the elites.

It would not be possible to conclude this section without mentioning, even though briefly, the urbanization and industrialization process that, though incipient, followed and supported to a certain extent the expansion of the agro-export economy.

Table 7 brings information on the evolution of the population in two major capital cities. Urban growth in both capitals, and especially in São Paulo, had as basis, on the one hand, the expansion of urban activities (commerce, transport and various services) associated to exports; on the other hand, they were the result of the initial steps of a yet incipient industry that during the 1914-1919 war becomes aware of an important substitute expansion in imports. Furthermore, in Rio de Janeiro, a significant parcel of activity and of the population converges around public administration.

The measure of immigrant participation in urban as well as in rural economic activities appears in Table 8. The extraordinary contribution of immigration to typically urban activities such as industry and commerce is made clear. This means that despite permanent efforts in line with government policies to lead immigrants to the fields,

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60's and 70's in the Midwest and in the Amazon Region, where small farmers originally from the South

significant groups ended up in the cities, either straight away or after a trial run on farms. The role immigrants played in the birth of the workers' organizations and struggles was immeasurable not only in Rio de Janeiro but also and most especially in São Paulo. Considerable, too, was the brutal and untiring repression that both State and patronage unleashed, mostly after the strikes of 1917 and 1919, banishing much of the socialist and anarchist leadership from national territory<sup>17</sup>.

PERIOD	Portugal	Italy	Spain	Germany	Japan	Others	TOTAL
1872-1879	55,027	45,467	3,392	14,325	-	58,126	176,337
1880-1889	104,690	277,124	30,066	18,901	-	17,841	448,622
1890-1899	219,653	690,365	164,293	17,084	-	107,232	1,198,627
1900-1909	195,586	221,394	113,232	13,848	861	77,486	622,407
1910-1919	318,481	138,168	181,651	25,902	27,432	123,819	815,453
1920-1929	301,915	106,835	81,931	75,801	58,284	221,881	846,647
1872-1929	1,195,352	1,479,353	574,565	165,861	86,577	606,385	4,108,093

Source: Levy, Maria Stella, O papel da imigração internacional na evolução da imigração brasileira, 1872-1929, Revista de Saúde Pública, no. 8, 1974.

	1872	1890	1900	1920	1940
Rio de Janeiro	275	523	811	1,158	1,764
São Paulo	32	65	240	579	1,330

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud. Cano, Wilson. Raízes da concentração industrial no Brasil. São Paulo, T.A Queiroz Editor, 2ª edição, p. 97.

The balance of the period under study in this section could hardly exaggerate the importance of immigration and of immigrants: on the one hand, in the coffee plantation sector, they propitiated the permanence and expansion of a latifundium economy; on the other hand, in the South of the country, they propitiated the consolidation of the basis of a peasant economy. As we have shown, both the latifundium economy and the peasant economy marched from their beginnings towards virgin lands and towards agricultural frontiers, founding one of the characteristic axes of Brazilian migratory dynamics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But immigrants also composed the better part of the burgeoning working class and of the urban labor movement in what was to become the urban-industrial centers of the nation.

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of Brazil were beneficiaries (or victims?) of official colonization programs.

<sup>17</sup> From the rich and vast bibliography available on immigration and on labor movements one can consult, for example, the work of Fausto (1975), Beiguelman (1981b) and Hardman (1983).

**TABLE 8. EVOLUTION OF FOREIGN AND NATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN MALE WORKFORCE. FEDERAL DISTRICT AND THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO, 1872 – 1920**

Sector	1872	1900	1920
Total Male Workforce			
• Nationals	96	69	68
• Foreigners	4	31	32
Agriculture			
• Nationals	98	78	73
• Foreigners	2	22	27
Non-Agricultural Activities			
• Nationals	92	53	59
• Foreigners	8	47	41
Industry			
• Nationals	89	43	56
• Foreigners	11	57	44
Commerce			
• Nationals	79	50	48
• Foreigners	21	50	52

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud. Merrick, Thomas W. & Graham, Douglas H.. População e desenvolvimento econômico no Brasil de 1800 até a atualidade. Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores, 1981, p. 141.

Given all these facets, foreign immigration has been a key element in the rise of the agrarian-export model, whose crisis announces the urbanization and industrialization process that will change the face of the agro-export nation in the 50 years to come.

### **III. INTERNAL MIGRATION, EXPANSION OF FRONTEIRS AND URBANIZATION (1930-1980).**

#### **3.1. Crisis and Mobilization of the National Labor Force (1930-1945).**

The impact of the 1929 crisis was catastrophic with regard to Brazilian coffee exports, so much more so because production had practically doubled since the beginning of the decade and the export volume had grown by 37% between 1926 and 1930 (Tables 3a and 3b). The economic crisis only worsened the political and institutional crises of the oligarchic pact<sup>18</sup>, creating conditions for the outburst of the so-called 1930 Revolution that swept Getúlio Vargas into power. The Provisional Government (1930-1934), the short constitutional interregnum (1934-1937) and the *Estado Novo* dictatorship (1937-1945), will mark “*a decisive step in the process of constituting the Brazilian State*” (Draibe, 1985:60), characterized by centralization and state intervention activated at various moments in the economic and social life<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> From the beginning of the 20's expanding urban middle-strata sectors and, above all, segments of the Army (the lieutenants) openly manifest their opposition to the regime, even by means of armed uprisings.

<sup>19</sup> “*The break up of state ‘autonomous agencies’ that supported the ‘oligarchic poles’ <...> thus progressively concentrating the command of economic and social policies as well as the use of repressive and executive means in the Federal Executive branch <...> will lead to a more advanced form of National State, capitalist and bourgeois*” (Draibe, 1985:60).

A new era is also initiated from the point of view of migratory dynamics. The first sign is the very reduction in immigration flow: from 835,000 during the 1921-1930 period, immigration drops to 285,000 and 130,000, respectively, in the 30's and 40's (Merrick & Graham, 1981:59). In 1930, the entrance of nationals supersedes that of foreigners in the State of São Paulo (Table 9).

Of equal note and certainly much more traumatic was the massive unemployment that immediately followed, owing to the debacle in coffee exports: the Industrial Center of Brazil in 1930 estimated the number of out-of-job workers at 40,000 in Rio and 60,000 in São Paulo (Gomes, 1979:200), characterizing what was then called “disorganization of labor”

The central State was not long to intervene and reestablish order, doing so by way of Decree 19,482 dated December 12, 1930, suspending for one year entry of third-class foreign passengers<sup>20</sup>, as well as by obliging non-agricultural companies to employ at least 2/3 of Brazilian-born nationals. This same decree took draconian measures against the unemployed, determining, under threat of vagrancy charges, that they appear at police precincts “*so that proper measures can be taken with regard to their occupation, specially with respect to agricultural services.*” (Decree 19,482 dated December 12, 1930, Art. 4).

Period	Total	Foreign	Nationals	Period	Total	Foreign	Nationals
1820-1900	974,177	973,312	865	1931-1935	275,446	119,204	156,242
1901-1905	205,297	193,732	11,565	1936-1940	350,320	56,468	293,852
1906-1910	200,487	190,186	10,301	1941-1945	148,826	4,763	144,063
1911-1915	356,045	339,026	17,019	1946-1950	445,389	61,030	384,359
1916-1920	128,539	100,098	28,441	1951-1955	676,984	159,360	517,624
1921-1925	279,548	222,711	56,837	1956-1960	973,586	210,879	762,707
1926-1930	409,086	253,265	155,821	1820-1960	5,423,730	2,884,034	2,539,696

Source: Source: Cano, Wilson. Raízes da concentração industrial no Brasil. São Paulo, T. A Queiroz Editor, 2a edição, p. 308.

There were long, detailed and abundant laws reiterating the mechanisms that affirm the will of the State to intervene and control the immigration flow. Essentially though, and despite the initial restrictive measures, the new legislation supported the immigrant-agrarian option, clearly invoked by Vargas: “*Brazil continues to be a nation of migration because of the dire need to populate its vast territory*” and it continues to need “*numerous and skilled hands, mainly in cultivating <...> the soil*” (Getúlio

<sup>20</sup> In the legislation of the First Republic *immigrant* was defined as being a third-class foreign traveler.

Vargas, Message to the National Constituency Council on November 15, 1933, apud. Neiva, 1942:43). Nonetheless, there appear certain innovations that deserve mentioning and others requiring brief commentary.

First, following the interventionist model, migration and the location of the population within the national territory will be seen as legitimate area for indispensable intervention by the central government. The State is seen as the only one capable of expressing the general interests of the nation, permanently threatened not only by exotic ideologies but also by regional oligarchic interests.

Secondly, driven by newly empowered forces and by the supporting *intelligentsia*, the debate over the racial issue now gains extraordinary relevance and scope. Three factors contributed to placing this issue at centerfold, and which, since the days of the Empire, offered an opportunity for the manifestation of the racial prejudices of our elites.

- The so-called “*ethnic cysts*,” nuclei, villages and settlements composed exclusively of foreigners who, together with their Brazilian-born children, were kept relatively on the sidelines of Brazilian society, so much so because they could hardly speak any Portuguese, which goes to show the failure of the integration (assimilation) project for immigrants entering the Brazilian society;
- The growing number of Japanese immigrants who, aside from being yellow, were seen as especially tailored for non-assimilation;
- The rising diffusion and popularity of racist theories in Europe and in the United States, conferring legitimacy to the options of the Brazilian State.

Though government rhetoric continued to operate under the slogan “*in defense of our nation’s workers*,” the fact is that the debate was usually centered on the definition of which immigrant was better and how one might select and welcome him to the nation. Already in 1929 the Liberal Alliance Platform that launched Vargas’s nomination for President of the Republic, defended the need, in matters of immigration policy, “*to obey the ethnic criterion, submitting the solution of populating the nation to the fundamental convenience of nationality*” (Neiva, 1942:29). Aimed at the Japanese immigration, the new wielders of power accused the big farm owners in São Paulo of upholding their own immediate and selfish interests – their need for abundant and cheap labor force - in detriment to the eugenic formation and whitening of our people. In defense of the Nipponese immigration, the Paulistas (natives of São Paulo) and their allies lauded their virtues as good, disciplined workers, immune to agitation and, *last*

but not least, their extraordinary agricultural vocation (Table 10 seems to confirm the argument)<sup>21</sup>.

TABLE 10. IMMIGRANTS DISEMBARKED IN SANTOS AND WORKING IN AGRICULTURE, 1908 – 1933			
Nationality	Immigrants	Agricultural Workers	Percentage in Agriculture
Japanese	139,199	137,584	98.84
Spanish	207,326	164,306	79.25
Italian	199,201	100,553	50.48
Portuguese	265,751	129,027	48.50

Source: Fonte: Maurette, F.. Some social aspects of present and future economic development in Brazil, ILO, Studies and Reports, Serie B, n. 25, Genebra, 1937, pp. 88-90; apud Stolcke, Verena. *Caféicultura. Homens, mulheres e capital (1950-1980)*. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1986.

What needs to be highlighted, though, is that the project to amplify immigration, and white immigration especially, will fail due to the changes taking place in major European migratory countries. This, however, had no effect on the Central Government nor on a great part of the governing elites who remained indifferent to the profound transformations that the nation was going through – and, most specifically, the nation’s migration dynamics. Even faced with important internal migratory flows, originating primarily from the Northeast and from Minas Gerais, they continued to nurse the dream that great waves of European immigrants might port on our shores at the end of the war<sup>22</sup>. In the cities and in the countryside of São Paulo, as well as that of Rio de Janeiro, it is the domestic migrant that fills the gaps left by an ever-scarcer immigration.

Who is this national worker? For some, like the undersecretary for the São Paulo State Department of Labor, it is the man from the North of Brazil, who “*as everyone knows <...> does not adapt to the hard work of our culture*” (Clovis de Carvalho apud Lobo, 1935, p. 97). Even Roquette Pinto, an adversary to Arian theses, says that this worker’s lack of aptitude for “*regular methodical work*” would explain why he might not be “*graciously welcomed in regions where colonos are required to work specific hours and pay fines to change farms*” (Pinto, 1933:19).

<sup>21</sup> In 1935, 10,276 Japanese immigrants will represent 49% of total immigration to the State of São Paulo.

<sup>22</sup> In the final resolution of the Conference of Productive Classes, held in 1945, the most dynamic sectors of Brazilian business corporations openly supported the continuation of an immigration policy geared to whitening the population: “*we should maintain the traditional policy of miscegenation that has been observed along centuries in Brazil, preserving, however, the characteristics of European ascendancy in the majority of the Brazilian people*” (Conferência de Teresópolis, 1945). At the opening of the First Brazilian Conference on Immigration and Colonization, the President of the Immigration and Colonization Council (Conselho de Imigração e Colonização – CIC) proclaimed that “*Brazil wishes to tonify itself with the blood of Europeans, to such a large extent the blood of its greatest leaders*”(Latour, 1949:48).

It is this worker, however, who will be mobilized as of 1940 for the Battle of Rubber - born of the Brazilian commitment to supply the precious latex to allied troops.<sup>23</sup> It was this same Brazilian worker who it was intended be mobilized for the westward march (*Marcha para Oeste*). The national farming settlements thus introduced were almost always transformed into work camps, with the explicit goal of staving off nomadic tendencies in the *caboclos* (Brazilian inlanders) and of educating them for work (Azevedo, 1985; Esterci, 1972).

From foreign immigration to domestic migration: in effect, there was a second transition from 1930 to 1945 of such profound and broad consequences as that which opened the path from slave labor to free labor. It is the population groups that had until now been relatively immobilized by the traditional landed estates as well as by subsistence farming, and that since colonial times, vegetated at its borders, that will go on the move. Originally what some authors have called “*reservoirs of manual labor*” (Brito, 1997), they will build and populate cities, swell metropolitan areas and push the agricultural frontier back in an unceasing march to the West.

### **3.2. Rural population on the move: urbanization, occupation of agricultural frontiers and labor market integration (1945-1980).**

#### 3.2.1. Rural exodus

The period extending from the end of the war and the fall of the *Estado Novo* to the end of the 70's, though containing important conjunctural oscillations, can be characterized as one of strong and continued economic growth. This growth sustained the formation of a modern urban-industrial society<sup>24</sup>, in which, however, social and regional inequalities remained, and, from certain aspects, grew more serious. Observable, too, was the consolidation of a national integrated territory, a process that though begun in the 30's will be completed not only by commercial integration and later by economic integration (Guimarães, 1986) of the various regions but also by a national articulation of the labor market. This integration, as Castro (1969) already described in his pioneer work, will be accomplished under the shield of regional concentration of

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<sup>23</sup> The 60,000 thousand Northeasterners who were then taken to the *seringais* (rubber forests) in the Amazon Region (Dean, 1989) seem few in comparison with the 250 000 who headed there between 1890 and 1920 (Furtado, 2 000), making possible the Golden Age of Rubber. It so happens that the mobilization of the Battle of Rubber occurred over a very short period of time, and involved extraordinary logistics.

<sup>24</sup> The transformation industry grew at an annual rate of 8.13 % (Cano, 1998).

industrial activity and of *paulista* hegemony over the national market to be formed after the war.

Domestic migration was a consequence of the profound changes the society was undergoing, first of all with regard to the open countryside and the agricultural frontiers. At the same time they were decisive in determining the tempo and format of the Brazilian urban-industrialization process, by the increasing of the urban-urban migration and the metropolization process.

It would be outside the scope of this paper to delve deeply into the transformations that in the Northeast, in Minas Gerais and in rural regions throughout Brazil have sparked the rural exodus. The rural masses that have so far been relatively immobile are thrust on a migratory path. In the sugar-producing Northeast, for example, much has been written to indicate that the modernization sugar mills were submitted to right after the war caused the expulsion of a good many inhabitants up until then engaged as partial wage earners and, depending on the case, under strong personal dependency ties<sup>25</sup>. On considering as well the demand for land and water in the semi-arid cotton and cattle raising Northeast (cf. Oliveira, 1981), one will have a general view of the origins of the huge intensification of emigration and of the great social conflicts that have shaken the region. It comes as no surprise that in 1959 the Work Group that put together a regional planning proposal for the Northeast recommended the adoption of policies that might stimulate emigration to the South, West and to the Maranhão entryway to the Amazon Region, as a way of reducing demographic pressure – which was in all likelihood mostly of a social and political nature<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, Lopes and Pattarra (1974) emphasize “*how the considerable destruction of arts and crafts from the rural areas and from small villages and settlements, as well as from small local factories, plays an important part in uprooting the local population.*”

In the coffee growing regions, mainly in São Paulo, the 30's crisis hits the coffee plantations in full, favoring the emergence not only of new and more diversified farming (cotton, sugar cane, cattle breeding) but also weakening the *colonato* liaison. The progressive dissolution of the peasant economy and society (*caipira*), founded in

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<sup>25</sup> “<...> the end of the 1939-45 War brought about the valorization of sugar <...> the mills, now modernized, tried to expand their areas of influence and many of the mill owners who would be partying in the city <...> began to expel their tenants”. The resulting conflicts spurred on by peasant resistance was at the root of the intensification of rural conflicts in the Region and most especially in the Peasant League Movement - *Ligas Camponesas* (Andrade, 1973:122).

small settlements, many of them composed of squatters or tenant-farmers, is recorded in the classic work of Cândido (1971)<sup>27</sup>. In the South of Brazil, the secular expansion of the agricultural (*colonial*) family frontier will receive a new boost when, in the 50's and 60's, the modernization process in agriculture contributes to a differentiation of peasantry, on the one hand - leading to concentration of lands and, on the other hand - to the expropriation of an inordinate number of small peasant farmers who will beat a path to frontier lands or to cities. In Minas Gerais, the major source of long-distance migration<sup>28</sup> along with the Northeast, certainly had, according to varying periods and regions, a combination of practically all the elements that dominated the other parts of the country: latifundia crisis, dissolution of the traditional subsistence economy, modernization, etc.

If in the 70's many voices are raised lamenting the evils of the humongous urban headache, in the 50's and 60's rural exodus was welcomed as proof of the nation's development and as a means of associating in quite harmonious and complementary terms: modernization of the countryside, supply of abundant labor power for urban-industrial expansion and social ascension of the forsaken masses<sup>29</sup>.

Tables 11 to 15 amass information that allows one to form an idea of the extraordinary country-to-city migratory movement that changed the face of the nation within a 40-year period.

The figures are quite astounding: from 1950 to 1980, 36,701,000 people abandoned the fields and countryside; and if the 80's are considered as well, the number rises to 48,836,000. The expression *rural exodus* certainly applies. In the Northeast, the rural areas yielded no less than 16,159,900 people<sup>30</sup> to the cities. Observe, though, that the agricultural transformation process was no less intense in the Southeast and South; on the contrary, the loss in rural population is proportionally larger in the Southeast and

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<sup>26</sup> The Plan proposed “to promote organized immigration in the direction of the interior of Maranhão and Goiás <...>the ultimate goal is to transfer hundreds of thousands of people from the semi-arid regions <...>” (Grupo de Trabalho para o Desenvolvimento do Nordeste, 1959:85).

<sup>27</sup> See, as well, Queiroz (1973), Durham (1978), Costa (1966).

<sup>28</sup> For the purposes of this paper we are assuming inter-state migration as long distance.

<sup>29</sup> “The introduction of more perfected farming and ranching techniques <...>leads to better crops and tend to reduce the volume of labor power needed for a certain type of production. Thus, a surplus population is generated, which is then available for other activities. Only industrialization can absorb this surplus, offering work and new opportunities of bettering their standard of living. Rural exodus will be a sign of progress whenever its actual cause is an increase in agricultural productivity, parallel to a corresponding demand for labor in industries and urban jobs” (Kubitschek de Oliveira, 1955:125).

<sup>30</sup> Estimates that consider the direct and indirect effects of rural-urban migration from 1960 to 1980 stipulate total net losses in the countryside of approximately 32 million (Carvalho & Fernandes, 1987).

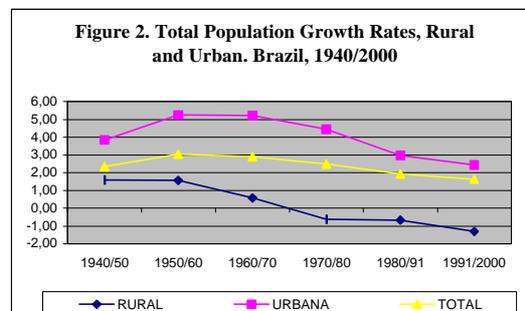
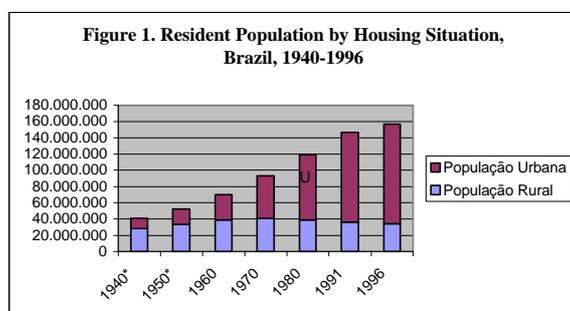
South as of the 60's, when, as aforementioned, the modernization and capitalist intensification of agriculture is accelerated.

**TABLE 11. RESIDENT POPULATION BY HOUSING SITUATION AND SEX – 1940-1996**

Years	Total		RURAL		URBAN	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1940*	20,614,088	20,622,227	6,164,473	6,715,709	14,449,615	13,906,518
1950*	25,885,001	26,059,396	8,971,163	9,811,728	16,913,838	16,247,668
1960	35,055,457	35,015,000	15,120,390	16,182,644	19,935,067	18,832,356
1970	46,331,343	46,807,694	25,227,825	26,857,159	21,103,518	19,950,535
1980	59,123,361	59,879,345	39,228,040	41,208,369	19,895,321	18,670,976
1991	72,485,122	74,340,353	53,854,256	57,136,734	18,630,866	17,203,619
1996	77,442,865	79,627,298	59,716,389	63,360,442	17,726,476	16,266,856

\* Present population

Source: FIBGE, "Historical Statistics of Brazil"/volume 3 - Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1987; "Statistics Yearbook of Brazil"/IBGE - Rio de Janeiro, volume 56, 1996; "1996 Population Count"/ Rio de Janeiro:IBGE, 1997, volume 1.



**TABLE 12. NET BALANCE ESTIMATION OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND NET MIGRATION RATES. BRAZIL, 1950-1990**

Period	Balance ( $10^3$ inhabitants)			Net Migration Rate (%)
	Men	Women	Total	
1950/1960	- 4,839	- 5,894	- 10,824	- 33.0
1960/1970	- 6,318	- 5,146	- 11,464	- 29.9
1970/1980	- 6,959	- 7,453	- 14,413	- 34.1
1980/1990	- 5,261	- 6,814	- 12,135	-29.3

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud. Camarano, Ana Amélia & Abramovai, Ricardo; Êxodo rural, envelhecimento e masculinização no Brasil: panorama dos últimos 50 anos; Rio de Janeiro, IPEA, 1999, p. 3.

Rich and intense was the debate centered on the meaningfulness and nature of the rural-urban movement: should they be explained primarily in terms of *pull factors* or *push factors* (Singer, 1980)? Other relevant controversy underlying the issue arose: had our cities and, *a fortiori*, our metropolises, as believed dualists and optimists, attracted migrants due to their capacity to offer everyone the democratic possibility of fulfilling the dream of social ascension? Studies concluded in the 70's seemed to answer in the affirmative as they perceived close correlation between the rise in standard of living and time of permanency in the city. The work of Martine & Peliano (1978), however, was decisive in demonstrating that

*“the hypotheses that the improved situation of migrants linked to time of residency <...> reflects progressive adaptation to the new environment has been shaken by evidence of great negatively-selective flights of the migrant population” (Martine & Peliano, 1978:181).*

**TABLE 13. NET BALANCE ESTIMATION OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION. BRAZIL, 1950-1990. (10<sup>3</sup> inhabitants and %)**

Region	1950-60		1960-70		1970-80		1980-1990	
N	- 297.2	2.7	- 362.7	3.2	125.1	- 0.9	-467.1	8.1
NE	- 5,009.9	46.3	- 3,083.9	27.0	- 4,912.0	34.1	- 3,154.1	54.6
SE	- 3,895.0	36.0	- 6,011.4	52.7	- 4,512.2	31.3	- 1,403.1	18.0
S	- 1,397.5	12.9	- 1,624.3	14.2	- 4,184.8	29.0	- 808.4	14.0
MW	- 224.5	2.1	- 329.9	2.9	- 929.1	6.4	- 308.6	5.3
Brazil	- 10,824.1	100.0	-11,412.2	100.0	-14,413.0	100.0	- 5,781.3	100.0

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud. Camarano, Ana Amélia & Abramovai, Ricardo; Êxodo rural, envelhecimento e masculinização no Brasil: panorama dos últimos 50 anos. Rio de Janeiro, IPEA, 1999, p. 7.

**TABLE 14. NET MIGRATION RATE ESTIMATION BY REGION. BRAZIL, 1950-1990.**

Region	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1980-1990
N	- 18.5	- 22.6	- 6.3	- 9.6
NE	- 30.8	- 14.9	- 20.1	- 22.4
SE	- 30.6	- 46.5	- 40.6	- 35.2
S	- 18.9	- 22.0	- 45.5	- 30.2
MW	- 11.6	- 17.0	- 35.2	- 38.5
Brazil	- 25.4	- 26.5	- 31.6	- 29.3

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos; apud. Camarano, Ana Amélia & Abramovai, Ricardo; Êxodo rural, envelhecimento e masculinização no Brasil: panorama dos últimos 50 anos. Rio de Janeiro, IPEA, 1999, p. 7.

**TABLE 15. TOTAL AND URBAN POPULATION ACCORDING TO SIZE OF CITY. BRAZIL, 1970-1990.**

Cities	Population		
	1970	1980	1991
< 20.000	25.81	20.92	19.07
20.000 a < 50.000	9.48	9.91	11.29
50.000 a < 100.000	5.77	7.40	8.07
100.000 a < 500.000	10.29	14.84	16.41
500.000 e mais	0.00	0.00	2.23
Total non-metropolitan cities	51.35	53.07	57.07
Total metropolitan regions	48.65	46.93	42.93
Absolute total urban population	52,084,984	80,436,409	110,990,990
Absolute total metropolitan regions	25,338,728	37,750,545	47,644,838
Absolute total population in Brazil	93,139,037	119,002,706	146,825,475

Source: FIBGE, Censos Demográficos.

The re-emigration (negative selection) of migrants claiming our metropolises (positive selection) was insufficient to stave off the rapid growth of metropolitan regions (Table 15). In 1970 these regions grew to represent almost half of all the urban population and over one-quarter of the nation's entire population (Faria, 1984).

### 3.2.2. Long-distance migration.

To complete this overview let us review long distance, that is, interstate migration.

States/Regions*	Immigration		Emigration	
	1940/50	1950/60	1940/50	1950/60
North	0,68	1,21	0,81	0,93
Septentrional NE.	2,07	5,38	2,34	3,33
Central NE.	0,99	0,59	16,22	30,52
Meridional NE.	2,29	2,52	8,44	13,93
Minas Gerais	2,57	4,65	37,86	22,03
Espírito Santo	0,79	2,81	6,23	3,14
Rio de Janeiro	24,38	15,44	0,52	1,83
São Paulo	24,60	22,81	20,09	13,6
Paraná	32,57	30,19	0,63	1,50
Mid-West	9,55	14,10	1,36	1,23
Extreme South	-0,49	0,30	5,50	7,96
Brazil	100,00	100,00	100,00	100
Brazil (Absolute n <sup>os</sup> .)	1,373,198	3,362,861	1,373,198	3,362,861

\* Septentrional Northeast: Maranhão and Piauí; Central Northeast: Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas; Meridional Northeast: Sergipe and Bahia; Extreme South: Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul; Rio de Janeiro: current State of Rio de Janeiro.

Source: FIBGE; Censos Demográficos.

Quite remarkable is the concentration of emigrants in the sub-period 1940-1960 in the direction of the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the major urban-industrial poles in the 40's and 50's: both states were responsible for 49.0 and 38.0%, respectively, of the total variation of accumulated immigration in the decade. On the other hand, the agriculturally expanding frontier regions – especially Paraná and the Mid-West, were able to surpass Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo between 1950 and 1960.

As to origin, there was the outstanding contribution of the Northeast and Minas Gerais, answering in the 40's and 50's, respectively, for 65.0% and 70% of accumulated variation in emigration. Approximately 90% of all those arriving in São Paulo between 1940 and 1960 either came from the Northeast or from Minas Gerais. In Paraná, although there were a good many *mineiros* (people from Minas Gerais) and *nordestinos* (people from the Northeast), there were that many more *paulistas* (people from São Paulo), especially in the coffee plantations in the western part of the state of Paraná. Equally important for the occupation of the frontier in Paraná was the contribution of migrant *gaúchos* (people from Rio Grande do Sul) from the *colonial* regions.

In the general movement toward the cities and the frontiers, it is not difficult to identify what might be called dominant routes: i) migration coming from the Northeast

and Minas to concentrate in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo; ii) migration originating in São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and the Northeast moving primarily towards the frontier of Parana and, secondly, to Goiás.

Aside from these, it would be worthwhile to point out secondary routes that responded to intra-regional dynamics or that, very often, constituted just the first phase in very long migratory journeys. To cite a few examples: from the coffee plantations in crisis in Espírito Santo there was displacement to the Paraná frontier or to Rio de Janeiro; from meridional Northeast to Minas Gerais; from the western part of the Northeast Region to Maranhão and to the north of Goiás.

States/Regions	IMMIGRANTS				EMIGRANTS			
	1960/70		1970/80		1960/70		1970/80	
	Absoluto	%	Absoluto	%	Absoluto	%	Absoluto	%
North	229,250	2.45	811,455	8.92	169,183	1.81	246,199	2.71
Septentrional NE	318,332	3.41	275,295	3.03	428,185	4.58	566,379	6.23
Central NE.	712,840	7.63	751,954	8.27	1,982,342	21.22	1,857,086	20.42
Meridional NE.	342,327	3.67	422,786	4.65	915,494	9.80	796,243	8.76
Minas Gerais	527,000	5.64	612,597	6.74	2,041,748	21.86	1,238,859	13.63
Espírito Santo	161,167	1.73	200,895	2.21	374,622	4.01	188,520	2.07
Rio de Janeiro	1,403,737	15.03	850,309	9.35	373,273	4.00	457,695	5.03
São Paulo	2,283,585	24.45	2,775,767	30.53	1,060,673	11.36	952,111	10.47
Paraná	1,659,750	17.77	518,986	5.71	498,402	5.34	1,338,776	14.72
Mid-West	456,914	4.89	396,002	4.36	1,103,771	11.82	581,746	6.40
Extreme South	1,244,936	13.33	1,476,470	16.24	392,145	4.20	868,902	9.56
Brazil	9,339,838	100.0	9,092,515	100.0	9,339,838	100.0	9,092,515	100.0

Source: FIBGE; Censo Demográficos.

The 60's and 70's will confirm and amplify the same movement. The frontiers continue to play a relevant role as receptors, although the closing of the frontier in Paraná and the West is easily discernable: both regions are no longer net receptors and become in fact net expellers. At an ever-growing scale, the new frontier is the Amazon Region that received almost 9% of the total number of interstate immigrants in the 70's.

The Northeast and Minas Gerais, on the other hand, continued to be instrumental in sending emigrants to other states although *Mineira* emigration dropped to half of what it was in the previous decade. Conversely, the importance of the Southern states grew - Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and, as aforementioned, Paraná.

As to the two national metropolises in the 70's, while São Paulo received the greatest number of immigrants in its entire history (31% of the total), the migratory

movement towards Rio de Janeiro was reduced – among other reasons, due to the transfer of the nation’s capital to Brasília<sup>31</sup>.

As aforementioned, from 1960 to 1980 the structuration of the national labor has been accomplished. Mass media and new and better transportation systems transport gave their contribution to the building of a nationally integrated territory. However, both metropolization and the expansion of cities of all sizes (Table 15), in all regions have been the main basis as well as the result of this process. Lopes (1973) contribution helped to the understanding of urban migrations the spatial redistribution of population as constitutive of the internal labor market<sup>32</sup>.

Accelerated agricultural modernization, intensified occupation of the Amazon Region, efforts to control metropolitan growth - the years of military regime, especially from the beginning of the 70’s to the mid-80’s, were characterized by a systematic and ambitious state project of occupation and territorial organization. On the one hand, the intention of transforming the occupation of frontiers into an *ersatz* for the ever-deferred agrarian reform<sup>33</sup>: “*The landless people of the Northeast to the un-peopled lands of the Amazon Region*” was the slogan launched by President General Medici for the National Integration Program, composed in part by the project for the construction of the Trans-Amazon Highway<sup>34</sup>. At the end of the 70’s the National Program on Internal Migration (*Programa Nacional de Apoio às Migrações Internas*) comes to light after having been long in the making. The intention was, in perfect sync with the then dominant authoritarian and technocratic arrogance, “*to elaborate and continually update a global strategy of territorial distribution of the population, explicating alternatives for territorial occupation and redistribution of population*” (MINTER, 1980, p. 13). A plan

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<sup>31</sup> Both states witnessed a drop in their relative participation in GDP, Rio de Janeiro going from 16% to 14% and São Paulo from 40% to 38%. Irrespective of great investments in infrastructure and in key industries connected to the Second National Development Plan (1975-1979), which, to a certain extent, provoked a relative distraction as to the value of industrial production, 47% of the industrial GDP continued to be engendered in São Paulo, as well as 35% of the services GDP (Cano, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> On this issue, see too Faria, 1984.

<sup>33</sup> Actually, the agrarian issue was at the core of the social and political crises at the end of the 50’s and beginning of the 60’s. The victory and establishment of the military regime had as one of its major elements the defeat of the agrarian reform project.

<sup>34</sup> Administrative history can well contribute to clarifying certain aspects of this story. The Immigration and Colonization Council (Conselho de Imigração e Colonização - CIC) was created in the 40’s within an associative concept of frontier occupation (colonization) and immigration. In 1954 the CIC is substituted by the National Institute for Immigration and Colonization (*Instituto Nacional de Imigração e Colonização - INIC*) in which the same association continues to prevail. In the 60’s and 70’s colonization will be clearly linked to the agrarian issue; thus the agency that substitutes the ININ is the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (*Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária - INCRA*). The national agricultural colonies of the *Estado Novo* foreshadowed the advent of the great Amazonian colonization programs in the 70’s.

was made to set up Selection and Referral Centers (*Centro de Triagem e Encaminhamento de Migrantes – CETREMIS*) all along major migratory routes so as to direct migrants to adequate destinations... based on territorial and demographic knowledge that the State supposedly held<sup>35</sup>. The authoritarian concept persisted even when the democratic transition was well on its way: in Exposition of Motives 21, approved by President José Sarney on September 14, 1985, the Secretary General of the National Security Council stated that “*the need to avoid a rural exodus and to revert the migratory wave from the urban zone back in the direction of the rural zone is one of the imperatives of Internal Security*”.

It is difficult to establish whether or not, and to what extent, government action was a determining factor in the change of course that began to emerge at the end of the 70's. Perhaps what was decisive was the crisis of the developmental model and the slowing down of growth that foretold the coming of the famous *lost decade*, the 80's. Perhaps, as some will have it, the decisive factor was industrial decentralization spurred on by active decentralization and by the introduction of industrial poles reliant on territorialized resources.

The main point is that at the end of the 80's Brazil could hardly recollect the days when internal migration had begun to redesign and even to construct the nation's territory. Instead of an agrarian nation, an urban one; instead of empty territory, a nation where there seems to be less and less room for its offspring...be they descendents of Negro slaves, Italian, Portuguese or Japanese immigrants, or the survivors of the Indigenous population.

#### **IV. NATION OF IMMIGRANTS, NATION OF MIGRANTS...NATION OF EMIGRANTS?**

*“THE NATION HAS NO ROOM FOR MIGRANTS. From all around the nation waves of Brazilians are leaving in search of a home and work, but they can hardly expect to be welcomed anywhere”* (Jornal do Brasil, 1<sup>st</sup> page, September 12, 1987.)

The end of the 70's ushered in a new period. From a political standpoint, democratization was irreversible, culminating in a new Constitution in 1988. The bad

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<sup>35</sup> Many of the projects from the time of the *Estado Novo* resurfaced during the military dictatorship: the march west, strict control of territory and displacement of population. The project to introduce almost 100 CETREMIS calls to mind the even more outlandish project of the *Estado Novo* to install in all municipalities Settlement and Labor Offices that would send out information on the availability and demand for lands and/or labor to a Central Office that would in turn manage the circulation of workers throughout the land.

news came from the economy: the deceleration of growth, stagnation, foreign and domestic debt, in sum, all the known ingredients of peripheral nations, with Latin American countries taking the lead. The following chapter, though familiar to us all in a slower and more roundabout fashion than to our neighbors, is known as well: Brazilian government adherence to recommendations made by global agencies (World Bank, IMF), structural readjustment, opening up to international trade, state reform, growing unemployment rates ...

As any attempt at synthesizing other moments in history have illustrated, migration has shown itself extraordinarily sensitive to the dynamical conjuncture and structure the economy. Frontiers no longer seem to work as an escape valve for social tension in the countryside<sup>36</sup>. The so-called *Brasiguaios* were, perhaps, the first sign of a greater movement to overcome frontiers: in 1975 about 40 thousand Brazilians were settled in the Paraguayan frontier side; in 1982 they were already in the 250 to 300 thousands (Salim, 1995: 151 e 152). There followed migratory movements to the United States (roughly 330 thousand), to Japan (150 thousand), an estimated of 1.25 million Brazilians emigrating between 1985 and 1987 (Sales, 1995: 89). It is too soon, and perhaps it is impossible, to give a unified view of international emigration flows, with do diverse components - dentists to USA, *dekasseguis* to Japan, landless rural workers to Paraguay. Its hard to know how much reason has Sales (1985:89) to complain: “*We are running away from our lost decade through the departure gates at international airports*”. Thus a new field opens up that migratory studies have been handling with extraordinary speed and depth<sup>37</sup>.

The new lines of migratory studies include a discussion of new migration routes, origins and destinations; the monitoring of trends of industry restructuring and spatial redistribution<sup>38</sup>; as well as the forced displacements due to big development projects<sup>39</sup> and the restrictions to free circulation that some local governments are imposing to block migrants entrance into their territory. The agenda also includes the acknowledgement of the intensification of return migration. Are we facing in this field

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<sup>36</sup> For an overview on frontiers and its perspectives, see Saywer, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Research groups are springing up dedicated to the international emigration theme; meanwhile, events and seminars are also taking place. ABEP and its members have played a decisive role in the constitution and consolidation of this new field of investigative studies. For an overview, see: Patarra, 1995 and 1996. See too the publication, still in the making, of works presented at the recent “International Seminar on International Migration – Contribution to Policymaking,” promoted by the National Council on Population and Development and by the International Migration Organization (Brasília, December 6-7, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> For an overview, see Matos & Baeninger, 2001.

new phenomena or are we just discovering old realities thanks to better statistics and more accurate measuring tools and skills?

In any case, return migration is relevant. Perhaps it won't be entirely in error to bring together descendants of the Japanese who once again embark, though inversely, on the trip their parents and grandparents made, of migrant Nordestinos and Mineiros, or their offspring, who also find their way back. Regrettably these do not seem to be the answers to dreams and expectations that these migrants have always held: to return to their homeland and enjoy there the well being earned through emigration.

This migration, more than any rhetoric, denounces the failure of such development that seems unable to have reserved a place – in the economy, in society, in its territory – for the great majority of its population. The society migration helped structure is the very society that the migration of today denounces.

The history of migration, however, makes its presence felt in various other dimensions of national life. Present in permanently updating the yet unsolved Negro question that exacts payment from a huge segment of the population for an immigrant strategy and a racist policy that, in the name of whitening the race and of eugenics, condemned the Negro for decades to the condition of sub-proletariat and sub-citizen. Present in the still more explosive permanence of the agrarian issue, a veritable phantom that seems to spook the nation's history and whose rebirth, in the form of the Landless Movement, not by chance and, in a way, almost symbolically, has as its first protagonists, groups descending from immigrants who settled in the colonies in Rio Grande do Sul. Today this movement has spread throughout the South, the Northeast, São Paulo and the Amazon Region, following along almost the same paths that migrants speaking all possible languages and dialects trod, on foot, on horseback, by train, truck, barge, and bus. On the other hand, the national labor market and the national integration of territory allowed, for the first time, the organization of national unions and political parties.

The vision of the place and role migration has played in the formation of contemporary Brazil has been but roughly sketched. In order for it to be effectively completed, it should now cede its place to a new and almost interminable chapter that, in place of economic, social, political and demographic history, might pave the way for millions of life stories, each and every one of them irreducible with regard to the social and economic structure, whilst all along, inseparable from it.

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<sup>39</sup> More than 1,000,000 people displaced by big dams in the last 20 years.

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