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THE AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION OF SOUTH AMERICA
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON BRAZIL

by

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The Agricultural Colonization of South America
with Special Emphasis on Brazil

Agricultural colonization, which has contributed to the economic growth of South America as well as growth in underpopulated regions of the continent, will continue to be a necessary component in the future development of the continent. The intent of this report is to present a study of agricultural colonization in South America with special emphasis on Brazil.

Much has been published on the agricultural colonization in South America by numerous recognized experts in the field of colonization including John P. Angelli, Robert C. Eidt, and T. Lynn Smith. For statistical data on Brazil, the writer will rely heavily upon Atlas Nacional do Brazil published in 1966 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in conjunction with the National Council of Geography.

The first part of the report will review some of the literature concerning agricultural colonization in South America, second will give a brief overview of the country of Brazil, and the third will comment on the agricultural colonization of the five regions of Brazil from its discovery in 1500 until the present. The paper will consider the immigrants themselves, the factors contributing to agricultural colonization, and it will comment on some of the agricultural colonies that were established. In the conclusion, the writer will attempt to establish trends and evaluate problems encountered in agricultural colonization in South America, and he will offer some suggestions that might be helpful in future colonization efforts.

The initial influx of Spanish and Portuguese into South America took place from the early sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century. There were people of other nationalities who came during this period, but

they were a minority. For the most part, all who came were adventurers, buccaneers, and exploiters in search of wealth. Some were exiles. Others, such as the Jesuits, came in search of souls rather than gold.

The intensive occupation and large scale land settlement of the temperate zones of North America and the colonization of tropical and sub-tropical zones of South America indicates that the development was historically quite different and progressed at different rates. There are several reasons for North America's more rapid colonization. The northern Europeans preferred the more temperate climate of North America because it was similar to that of their homelands. In South America, they had to contend with unfamiliar climates that were not suited to the production of familiar crops. The Iberian language and culture of South America were foreign to the northern Europeans.¹ Also, economic conditions were more favorable in North America than in South America; North America attracted a considerable amount of northern European capital which aided in the continent's development. Very little northern European capital found its way to South America until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

One factor that contributed to the colonization of both North and South America was the industrial revolution that began around 1760 in England and later spread to other parts of northern Europe. Much of the land that had been farmed was converted to pastureland to raise sheep to furnish wool to developing textile mills. Because of the lack of farmland, many people were forced to look elsewhere for their livelihoods. There were not enough

¹Susan Macedo (trans.), The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil, by Caio Prado, Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 14-16.

jobs in the factories for all these people so many chose to immigrate to the New World in search of land.

The European colonists were compelled to find more powerful motivating factors to induce them to settle in the tropics and sub-tropics than those that led them to the temperate zone. However, South America offered to Europeans who came and to the European countries, through export, three products that prior to the opening of the New World had been luxuries - coffee, cotton, sugar, the latter being so rare that it had figured in the dowries of queens!² The profit returns on these crops were much greater than the normal grain crops of North America. Also, colonization companies were much more active in recruiting colonists for South America than for North America.

Once the agricultural colonists arrived in South America, they found there were even more problems than climate and the cultural and language barriers. In some cases, poor soils, unhealthful environments, inadequate transportation, and at times little or no governmental support of colonists made colonization difficult. Often the people themselves added to their problems because they were unprepared for the harsh pioneer life and lacked the necessary background in farming techniques because many recruited by private colonization companies were poor city dwellers who had no farming background at all. Because the private colonization companies were paid on a per capita basis, they did little or no screening of the individuals they recruited to determine their suitability as agricultural colonists.³

²Rollie E. Poppino, Brazil: The Land and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 160.

³Robert C. Eidt, Pioneer Settlement in Northeast Argentina (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), p. 3.

Colonization in Argentina

Robert C. Eidt in his recently published book Pioneer Settlement in Northeast Argentina concentrates on Misiones National Territory which lies in the strip of land between Paraguay and southern Brazil (See Map I, page 5). Misiones derives its name from the Jesuit missions that were established in the region to work with the Guarani Indians in the seventeenth century. The Jesuit missions thrived under the supervision of the Jesuit priests until they were expelled from the region in 1767. Their unsupervised missions fell into disuse as the Indians abandoned them to return to their native way of life.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, Misiones lay idle until the Argentine government took an interest in the region after the War of Triple Alliance between 1865 and 1870. The war made it obvious that the sparsely settled region could be overrun by foreigners with very little to stop them. In order to secure the Misiones region, the government attempted to colonize it but encountered a problem common to other colonization efforts in South America - the land belonged to a few large landowners who did not care to part with the land even though they were not using it. Since the landowners were not willing to open the land for colonization the government expropriated the region and declared it to be a national territory. The land was then sold to 38 individuals who agreed to open it for colonization on a colono⁴ basis. However, once the land was titled to the 38 individuals, they showed

⁴Under the colono system, a farm laborer is paid in temporary or traditional, use of a parcel of land which remains the property of the landowner. In return, the coloni, one who works on a colono basis, must work a specified number of days in the landowner's fields. Surplus produce of the coloni is generally sold to the landowner or the commercial buyer who purchases the landowner's produce.



South America

MAP I

very little inclination to keep their agreement and much of the land remained idle.

Resurvey revealed that the land sold to the individuals by the Argentine government did not cover the total area of Misiones Territory. This untitled land, along with that which had originally been occupied by the Jesuit missions, was opened for agricultural colonization. The government had very little success in attracting colonists to the region because more choice land had been opened in the Pampas and Chacos of Argentina. When it became evident that few nationals would colonize Misiones, the government land was offered to foreign immigrants at a low price. The land available for colonization was divided into 25 hectare⁵ lots and colonists were allowed to acquire up to four lots. At first, most of the immigrants were dissatisfied German-speaking colonists who came from southern Brazil and later directly from Germany. Government regulation prevented the colonists from exploiting the forest until the land was titled to them upon full payment to the government. This regulation caused problems as Eidt explains: "Thus the settlers were caught up in the pinchers of contradictory regulations: pay up and cultivate or no title; but do not sell trees with which to pay the debts while clearing land for required cultivation."⁶ Colonization was slow and by 1900 only one half of the government land available in Misiones Territory was occupied.

The Argentine government did not discontinue efforts in agricultural colonization even though they encountered difficulty in Misiones Territory.

⁵ 1 hectare = 2.47 acres.

⁶ Eidt, Pioneer Settlement in Northeast Argentina, pp. 25-26.

Their persistent efforts have resulted in a measure of success both in settling public lands and in persuading the large landowners to open their land on a colono basis.

A Buenos Aires firm, Compania Introdutora, made the first attempt at modern private colonization in the Misiones region in 1910. The land offered for agricultural colonization belonged to a wealthy German family who had acquired the land for the extraction of timber. After the timber was removed, the land was divided into 340 farms of 25 hectares each and 96 town lots were laid out for the necessary villages. The colony named San Alberto attracted very few colonists. The unsettled land and some adjoining land acquired by the company was placed under the management of Carl Culmey who had been active in the colonization efforts in southern Brazil. Culmey renamed the colony Puerto Rico, and under him it proved to be a great success.

Eidt attributes the success of the colonization of the Misiones region to "location of the colonization area; settlement form and size; choice of settlers; methods of land titling and inheritance; formalized systems of resource utilization, and governmental attitudes toward colonization."⁷ Because of Misiones remote location, there was little governmental pressure for the colonists to abandon their cultural identities. Retaining the cultural identities aided greatly in the cooperation of the colonists since they considered themselves to be still of the original nationality working for a common goal of success. The Waldhufendorf⁸

⁷Ibid., p. 195.

⁸A Waldhufendorf settlement is a settlement in a clearing with farms radiating from the back of the farmhouses as the spokes of a wheel.

and long-lot settlement form gave all settlers access to transportation and fostered better agricultural land use. The choice of colonists who were heads of families, and who had had some agricultural experience was a definite factor in the colonies' success. Because the land was titled to the colonists, they had more incentive to remain on the land rather than shifting to different plots when the soils began to wear out. The farmers were prevented by law from subdividing their holdings in less than 25 hectare plots which avoided a minifundismo, or small farm, system from arising through inheritance. Cooperatives were formed to aid the increase of resource utilization by fostering economic stability and encouraging diversification of crops. The government encouraged both public and private colonization efforts by opening the land to both foreigners and nationals and extending financial aid in the form of credit to the colonists.⁹

Another article concerning the colonization of Argentina, "Jewish Agricultural Colonization in Argentina" by Morton D. Winsberg appeared in the Geographical Review in 1964. He comments on the increase of Jewish immigration to Argentina in the 1920's and attributes the increase to the enactment of more stringent immigration laws by the United States in 1921 and 1924. No doubt these stricter immigration laws affected more than the Jewish people and increased immigration to all the countries of South America. An increase in immigration beginning in 1924 can be seen in Brazil. (See Table 3, Appendix)

When Jewish entry into Argentina was restricted in 1927, there were

⁹All references to Misiones are based on Eidt's book Pioneer Settlement in Northeast Argentina (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), pp. 1-277.

33,084 Jewish colonists there. Since 1927, except for a seven year period, the number of Jewish agricultural colonists decreased each year as they left their farms for other businesses. The exceptions were the years 1934 to 1940 when 309 families were permitted to enter Argentina when they fled Germany for political reasons.¹⁰

Colonization in Peru

Robert C. Eidt in his "Pioneer Settlement in Eastern Peru" which appeared in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers comments on the unsuccessful attempts to colonize eastern Peru. He gives reasons for the failure of the colonies that were established in Peru as well as all South America and makes recommendations for future colonization efforts. Reasons given for failure were:

1. There was no overall coordination of legislation to support colonization attempts in many instances.
2. The attitude of the population was not favorable toward agricultural colonization, especially in instances where foreigners were brought into the country.
3. Transportation networks were inadequate in most Latin American countries.
4. Countries were lacking in the area of proper selection and training of the colonist.
5. The colonists' needs were not properly provided for when they arrived. 11

His recommendations for future colonization efforts are:

1. Experiments in land use should be conducted in areas where colonization is planned.

¹⁰Morton D. Winsberg, "Jewish Agricultural Colonization in Argentina," Geographical Review, Volume 54, Number 4 (1964), pp. 487-501.

¹¹Robert C. Eidt, "Pioneer Settlement in Eastern Peru," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Volume 52 (1962), pp. 255-278.

2. Basic urban facilities in the colonies should be established.
3. Mixed colonies of foreigners and rich nationals are recommended.
4. Police protection should be provided for the colonists in many instances when the colonies are in the more remote areas. 12

Colonization in Colombia

An in-depth study of agricultural colonization was made in 1943 by T. Lynn Smith at the request of the United States government. The purpose of the study was to aid the country of Colombia in agricultural colonization so that it might increase agricultural exports to supply United States troops stationed in the Canal Zone. The study was made between September, 1943 and September, 1944 and concentrated on methods to increase agricultural production through subdivision and settlement of the large estates. The findings of the study were presented in a 12 point memorandum to the United States Government in late 1944. The 12 points of the memorandum, in condensed form, follow:

1. Progress will be slow.
2. To strengthen and increase the middle class of agriculture is the great objective for such colonization efforts.
3. There are not enough upper class positions for upper class children in Colombia. He recommended making upper class children a genuine class of farmers.
4. A study of elements involved in the status of middle class farmer values should be made.

¹²Ibid.

5. Only group settlement should be practiced. (Groups should contain 25 to 30 families).
6. Each colony should be a point at which all governmental services converge. There should be an agronomist, veterinarians, rural housing authority, rural health service, education facilities, etc.
7. Each colony should have a resident director to act as liaison between the colony and the Colombian government.
8. The selection of sites should allow a diversification of effort. An example would be the selection of an area suitable for dairying near cities.
9. Selection of colonists should be made carefully. Selection criteria should be as follows:
 - a. select people already associated with agriculture
 - b. select upper class sons or campesinos who have done well on their own
 - c. Select young married couples so that in 15 or 20 years the children of the colonist will be ready to move into other areas to colonize there.
 - d. admit only a few foreigners who know European farming methods (exception would be in a case where special crops were desired, such as grapes or olives)
 - e. select colonists in good health and not unduly addicted to drink
10. The long lot system should be used in laying out lots for the colonists.
11. Every colony should have its community center where would be located the colony store, church, and food processing plant.

12. Every effort should be made to organize the colonists into cooperatives.¹³

The three objectives of agricultural colonization in Bolivia are promotion of nationalism, the relief of population pressure in the upland area, and the increase of agricultural exports. In their attempts at agricultural colonization, the Bolivian government brought in Mennonites, Japanese, Okinawans, and others, but the government was mainly concerned with the resettlement of nationals.¹⁴

Colonization in Bolivia

"Colonization in Bolivia: Progress and Prospects" by A. T. Edelmann appeared in the Inter-American Economic Affairs in 1966. It commented on some of the attempts at colonization that occurred in Bolivia. Past attempts were the Piper Project of 1886, the Bolivian Syndicate Project of 1902, the Bolivian Oil and Land Syndicate of 1923 and the Murry Settlement of 1925. One of Bolivia's most successful recent attempts at agricultural colonization was Alto Beni, a pilot project developed as a part of the United States Alliance for Progress. Studies were made on the agricultural potential of the site of Alto Beni before it was finally selected. Alto Beni colonists were provided government sponsored credit for 12 hectares of land, a pre-fabricated house, two hens, one rooster, one purebred gilt, farming tools, and cash credit for six months. The colonists were given 15 years to

¹³T. Lynn Smith, "Colonization and Settlement in Colombia," Rural Sociology, Volume 12, Number 2 (June, 1947), pp. 128-139.

¹⁴A. T. Edelmann, "Colonization in Bolivia: Progress and Prospects", Inter-American Economic Affairs, Volume 20, Number 4 (Spring, 1966), pp. 35-54.

repay debts. The government also furnished a purebred boar for the community, built 23 schools and 4 government health clinics. Of those colonists who accepted the governmental aid, only 6 percent failed to remain in the agricultural colony. Two of the most serious problems of Alto Beni were the reluctance of the colonists to live on their allotted land, in preference to forming villages and the inadequacy of transportation facilities.¹⁵

Colonization in Paraguay

Norman R. Stewart, for his thesis for his Ph.D. in Geography at the University of California, Los Angeles, 1963, presented a study, "Japanese Colonization in Eastern Paraguay: Study in the Cultural Geography of Pioneer Agricultural Settlement", on Japanese colonization in Paraguay. His paper dealt with Asiatic and European immigration and the development of foreign agricultural colonies in Paraguay. He did research work for the thesis in eastern Paraguay centering his attention upon 100 Japanese families who arrived in eastern Paraguay in 1936 and their direct descendants. The Japanese colony of La Colmena in eastern Paraguay is discussed in detail.

Literature on agricultural colonization in the countries of South America not discussed in this first part of the report is sparse or unavailable to the author. Undoubtedly it does exist in foreign editions of books, however.

Colonization in Brazil

The author has selected Brazil for special emphasis on agricultural

¹⁵Ibid.

colonization. A great deal more literature was available to him on the agricultural colonization of Brazil than on that of any other of the South American countries. Also, the country holds a special interest for the author in that he resided there for several months, and had opportunity for considerable contact with a cross section of the population.

The country of Brazil is the third largest political unit located in a continuous land mass in the world. Only Russia and Communist China are larger in continuous area. Brazil is the largest country in both land area and population in South America; however, in Latin America, Mexico has a larger population. Brazil is approximately 2700 miles from north to south and also from east to west at its widest part and covers 3,286,473 square miles, of which approximately one-half is in the Amazon Basin. It borders every South American country except Chile and Ecuador (See Map I, page 5). Sixty-one percent of the country is forested, 15 percent is pastoral, 2 percent is arable, and 22 percent is classified as "other" which consist of cities, transportation routes, waterways, lakes, and the like.

Coffee is Brazil's major export. Other principal exports are cotton and iron ore. Brazil is rich in mineral wealth and still more may be found when the Amazon Basin is fully geologically explored. There has been much economic inflation in the past few years that has hindered the development of the country by discouraging foreign investment.

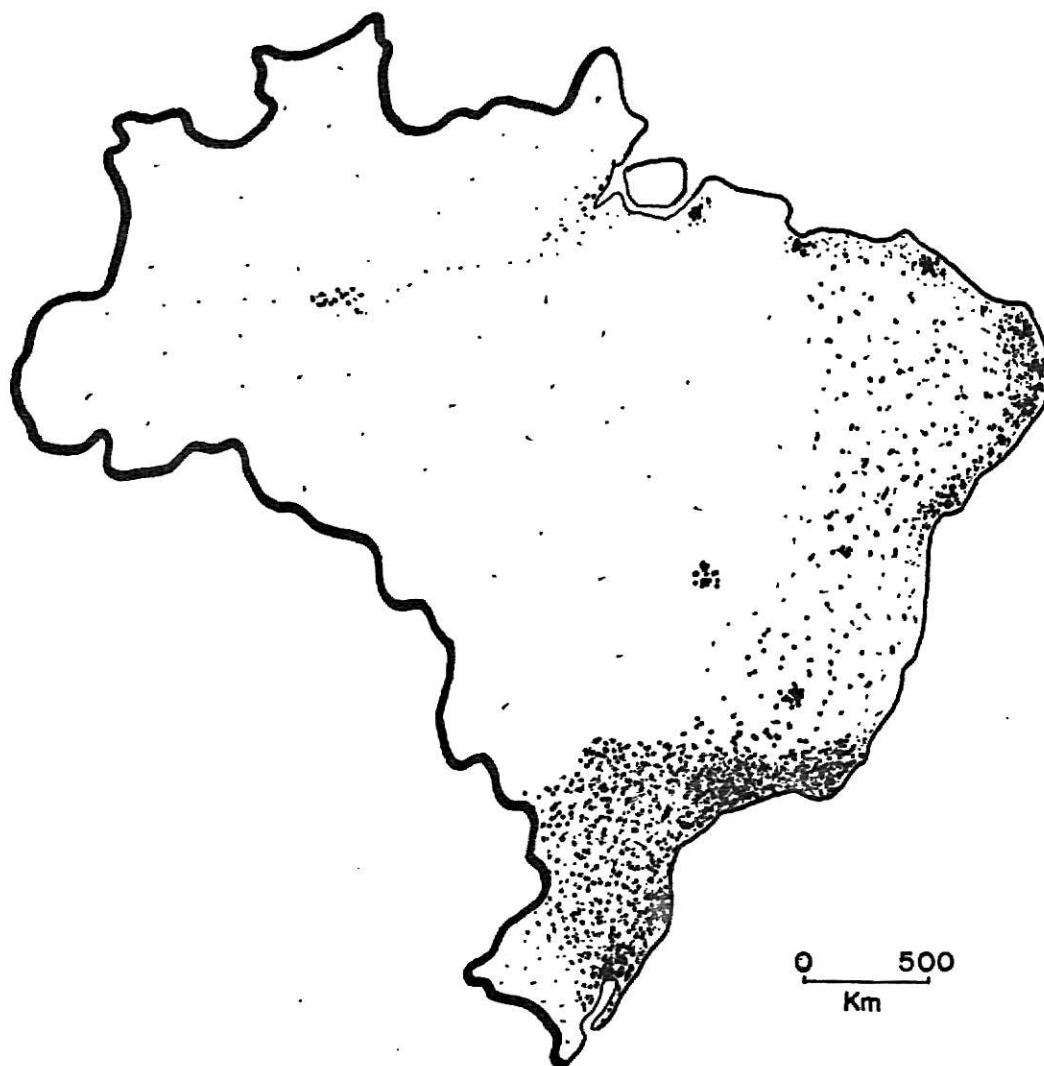
The 1970 population of Brazil was 95,262,000 based on estimates of the 1960 census. This figure is up 14,000,000 from the 1960 population of 70,967,185. In 1966, the country was 55 percent rural and 45 percent

urban.¹⁶ The largest city is Sao Paulo with approximately seven million people. There are six other cities with over one million. Map II, page 16, shows the distribution of population. Politically the country is divided into 23 states, 3 territories, and one federal district where the new capital of Brasilia is located. Map III, page 17, shows these political divisions. The country is customarily divided into five regions: North, Northeast, West Central, East, and South. These divisions are also shown on Map III. Geographically, there are two major highland regions, the Brazilian Highlands and the Guiana Highlands. Between the highlands lays the Amazon Basin. Brazil has a narrow coastal plain that disappears at some points. These major physiographic features along with the major river systems are shown on Map IV, page 18.

Brazil has an interesting history. It was discovered in 1500 by Cabral, a Portuguese navigator. By 1502, trading settlements had been established at Salvador in Bahia and at Cabo Frio in Rio de Janeiro, 105 years before the English landed at Jamestown, Virginia. Brazil developed from a colony to an independent empire in 1822 and to a republic in 1889 without breaking up into smaller independent political units.

In contrast to the United States and Canada, Brazil did not experience spontaneous agricultural colonization. Brazil's agricultural colonization was organized, planned and directed by the federal, provincial or local governments, and by large estate owners interested in colonization on a colono basis. Private colonization agencies, employed by the governments

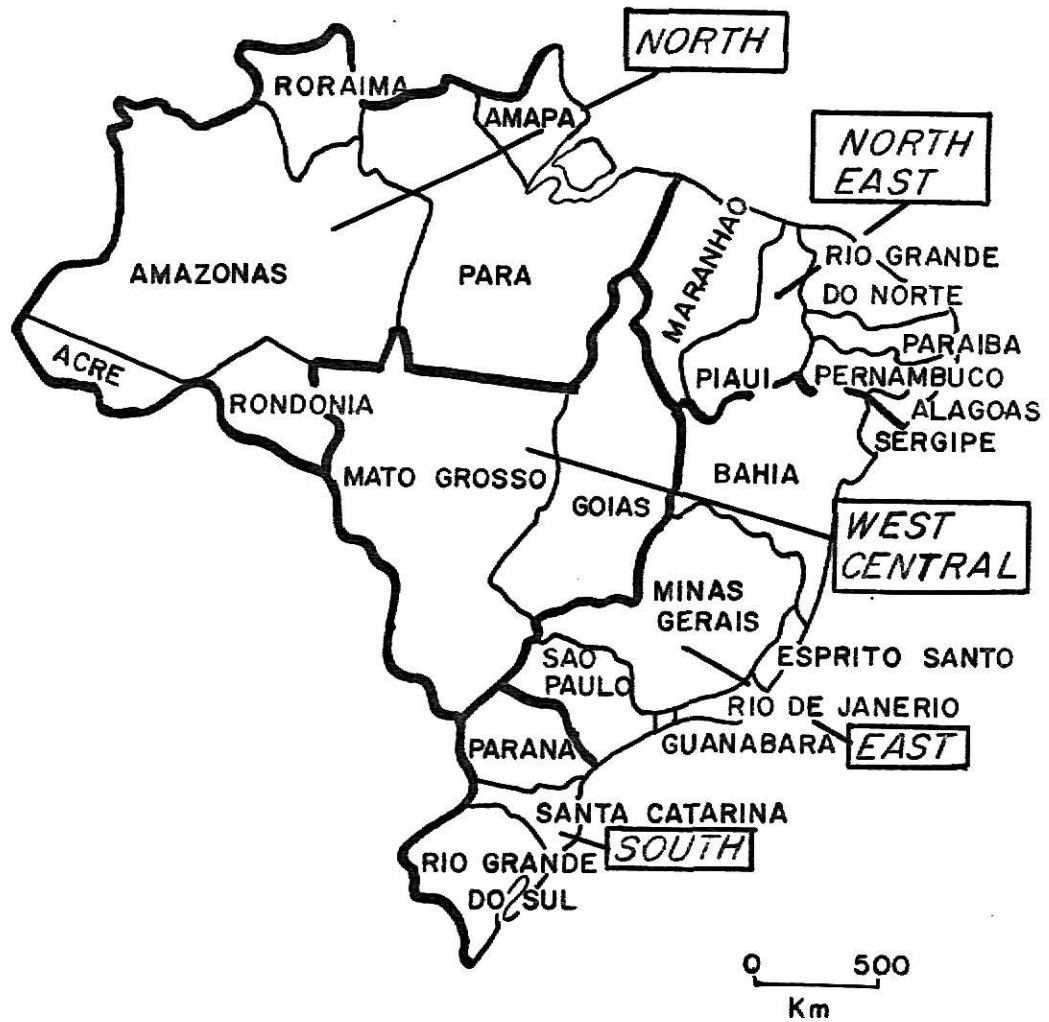
¹⁶Instituto Brasileiro De Geografia E Estatistica and Conselho Nacional De Geografia, Atlas Nacional Do Brazil (Rio do Janeiro: Oficinal do Service Grafico do Ibge, 1966), plate I-1.



Relative Population Density of Brazil

MAP II

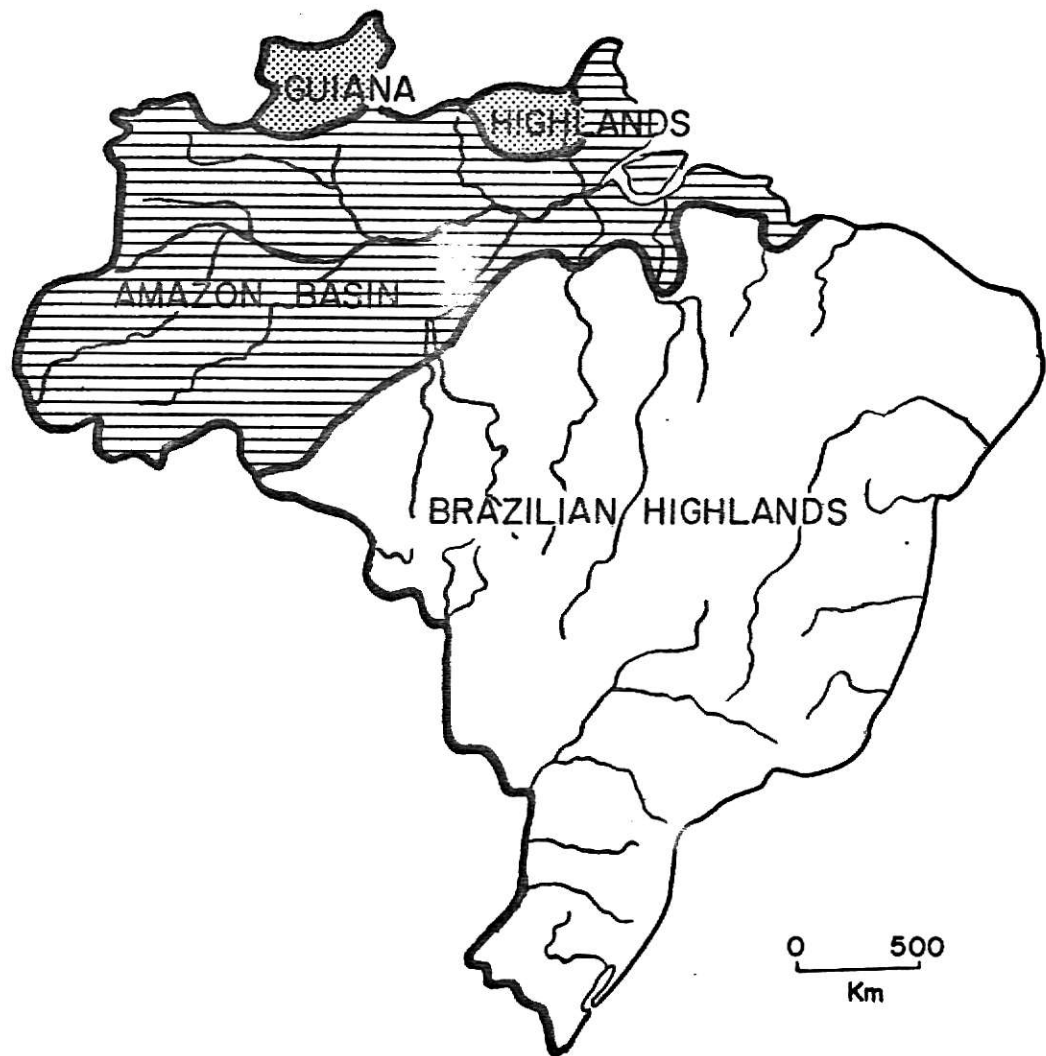
SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil



Regions, States, and Territories of Brazil

MAP III

SORCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil



Geographic Regions of Brazil

MAP IV

SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil

and private individuals, aided in the colonization by recruiting Europeans to come to Brazil as agricultural colonists.

The record of agricultural colonization in Brazil is distinguished by the activities of the Brazilian government.¹⁷ The chief motivating factors of the government's promotion of agricultural colonization were establishment of a small-farming class and population of sparsely settled regions of Brazil to secure it against foreign invasion or encroachment. The small-farming class was expected to aid in the economic development of the country by diversifying their agricultural production to offset the single crop production characteristic of the large farms. The Brazilian government preferred colonists from northern Europe who were thought to be more advanced in agricultural methods than immigrants from Latin countries. Because of a political alliance between Brazil and Germany formed through a royal marriage, Catholic German-speaking colonists were preferred.

The landowners' interest in agricultural colonists on a colono basis was the result of the abolishment of slave importation in 1850 and the abolishment of slavery itself in 1888. Prior to 1850, Negro slavery had been a major economic factor in discouraging large scale immigration to Brazil. When slave labor was no longer available, immigrants were looked upon as an available, cheap source of labor for the large coffee, cotton, and sugar latifundias.

Even under governmental sponsorship, agricultural colonization lagged. One reason was that land granted for colonization by the Brazilian government

¹⁷D. C. M. Platt, "British Agricultural Colonization in Latin America," Inter-American Economic Affairs, Volume 18, Number 3 (Winter, 1964-1965), p. 20.

was not adequately surveyed and land titles were often clouded. When information reached Europe that some colonists had lost their total investments of money and labor through disputed titles, many who would have considered immigrating to Brazil changed their minds. In 1850, a law was passed that prohibited the government from granting land and required that colonists purchased the land. The purpose of this legislation was to establish firm land titles and to protect the buyers against squatter and legal battles. Instead it raised a serious financial obstacle to rural immigrants.¹⁸

The South includes the states of Parana, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, the region of the greatest agricultural colonization. (See Map III, page 17) At first the colonists settled in the coastal regions and then penetrated westward. The first westward movement took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the bandeirantes, adventurers who at times herded cattle and sheep, enslaved Indians, or searched for precious metals, whichever their situation and financial status demanded. As a rule, when engaged in pastoral pursuits, the bandeirantes avoided the forest and settled on the campos where they established a pastoral economy raising both cattle and sheep.

The second wave of immigrants, mainly Europeans, came during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (See Map V, page 22). The first substantial agricultural colony was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1819 under the direction of Joao VI, King of Portugal, who moved his court to Brazil in 1808 when Portugal was occupied by Napoleon. The colony, Nova

¹⁸T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 120.

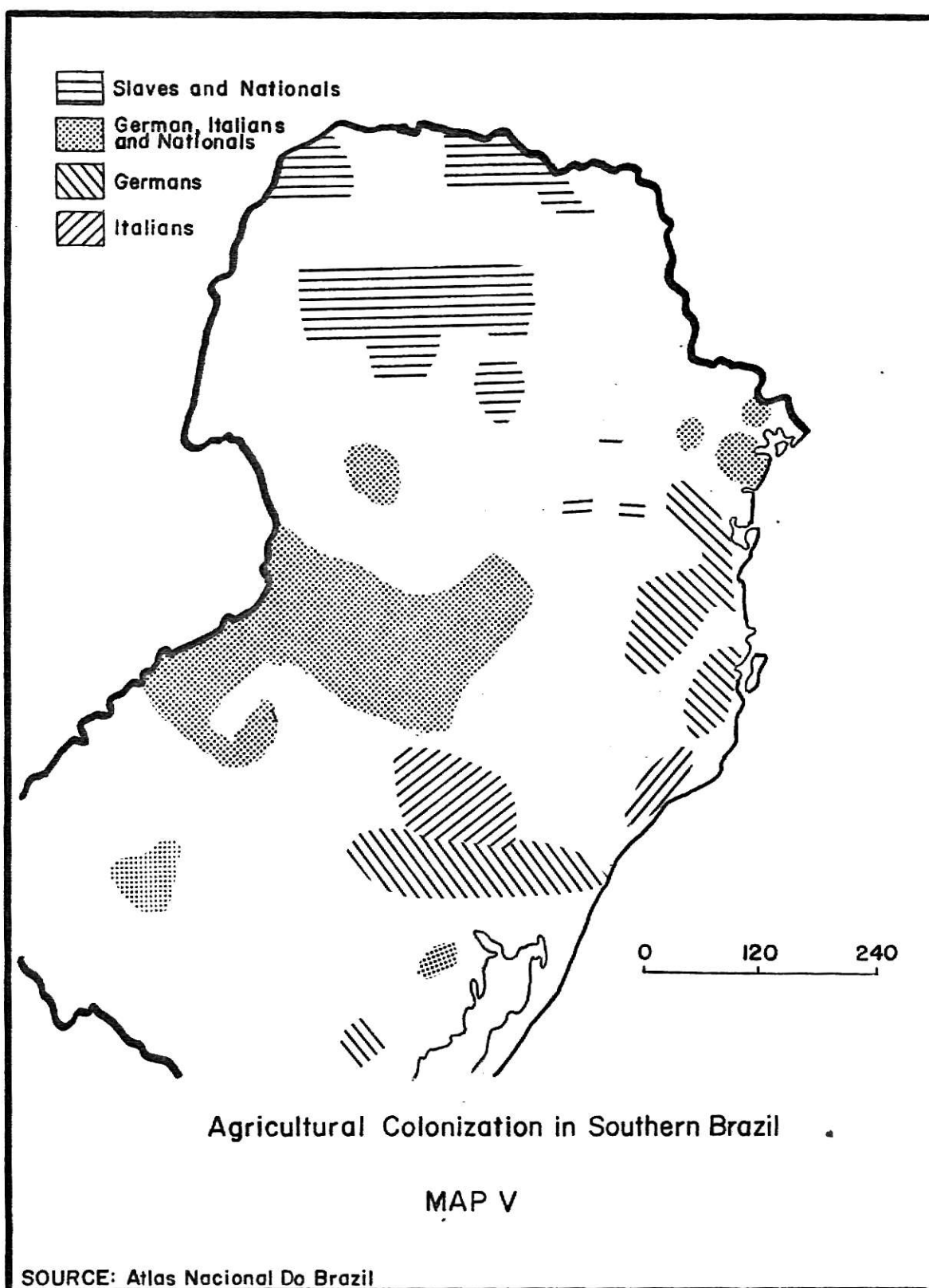
Friburgo, consisted of 1700 Swiss Catholics. However, the cost of establishing the colony was so great to the royal treasury that further attempts at outright funding of agricultural colonization were discouraged. In 1824, after Brazil had become an empire, another scheme of colonization was tried. The Emperor of Brazil, Pedro I, son of Joao VI of Spain, granted land in Rio Grande do Sul as payment to a group of German mercenaries who had been engaged to aid in the war with Uruguay. The colony, Sao Leopoldo, began with 126 settlers and became one of the most successful colonies in Brazil.¹⁹

Most of the second wave of immigrants settled in the woodlands. They shunned the campos of southern Brazil because the soil was packed and matted and was thought to be poor because of the lack of trees. (The infertility of the soil was a definite problem, but with modern farming techniques, the campos can be cultivated.) The campos offered no protection from the winters; there were no streams and, of course, no timber for the colonists to use to build homes or to supply fuel. The forested regions of Southern Brazil attracted the colonists because they had better soils and provided the needed timber, water and protection. Also, the forest were more similar to the colonists homelands in Europe than were the campos.²⁰

An early attempt was made by the Brazilian government to settle one thousand German families on the campos of Parana between 1877 and 1879. Over 50 percent found the campos to be unacceptable and moved to the edge of the campos where they were allotted 17 hectares of forestland and 17 hectares of campos. This proved to be a more satisfactory arrangement for settling

¹⁹Rollie E. Poppino, Brazil: The Land and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 184.

²⁰Leo Waibel, "European Colonization in Southern Brazil," Geographical Review, Volume 40, Number 4 (1950), pp. 529-547.



the colonists. In 1911, the British Railroad Company attempted to establish a colony on the campos at Carambe for wheat cultivation. It was unsuccessful until the Dutch arrived in 1930 with better farming techniques. In 1932, the German government supported the founding of Terra Nova, an agricultural colony where the colonists were allotted 19.3 hectares of forestland and 9.6 of the campos.²¹

In 1926, Mark Jefferson published an article in the Geographical Review, "Pictures from Southern Brazil", which was more descriptive than scientific as was much of the geographic material published in that period. It gave an excellent description of southern Brazil in the early 1920's. In his article, Jefferson mentioned that some of the first German immigrants to Brazil were mercenaries in the armies of Pedro I. He implied that they were not the best possible choice for colonists when he said of them, "They are not Germans but Brazilians, who could not possibly accomodate themselves to any life open to them in Germany."²² However, some were successful in agricultural colonization.

During the same period, the Brazilian government was more selective in its choice of agricultural colonists for Rio Grande do Sul. Their objective, as was the Argentine government's in the settlement of Misiones Territory, was to settle the region as a defense against foreign encroachment. Jefferson gave specifics of the inducements offered to German colonists to come to Rio Grande do Sul.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Mark Jefferson, "Pictures from Southern Brazil," Geographical Review, Volume 16, p. 524.

The Brazilian government had been very particular in 1825 to bring over only Germans who were good Catholics. Now the Germans say that a good half of the 400,000 Germans in Rio Grande do Sul are Lutherans. For the first ten years the government provided free passage to Brazil, free land, assistance with supplies for two years and an exemption from military service for ten years. In singular contrast to the present European effort to make emigrants retain their home citizenship while abroad, even though they may naturalize themselves in the new country, was the promise that the Germans should receive Brazilian citizenship as soon as they landed. 23

When the German immigrants moved to the cities in southern Brazil, they lost much of their German culture and became absorbed in Brazilian ways. There was some transfer of culture between the Brazilians and Germans in rural areas, but it was not as great as in large cities such as Porto Alegre. Jefferson described the German colony of Joinville, one of the first German agricultural colonies, as he saw it in 1926. He wrote that the Germans were "breaking away from the Spanish-American custom of building houses that are bare and dreary to look at. . . the windows are of European type, two folding windows with a glazed transom at the top."²⁴ He continued, ". . . almost all of the businessmen and landowners are German. . . There is a German servant class in the town as strictly kept in its place as if it were in Germany. . . Rather more than a third of the names are non-German." (See Map V, page 22)²⁵

In southern Brazil immigration was so predominately German that to many southern Brazilian, Portuguese was a secondary language until the nationalistic campaign was started by the Brazilian government in 1930. Except for a time during World War I, the German immigrants printed their

²³Ibid., p. 539.

²⁴Ibid., p. 542.

²⁵Ibid.

own textbooks and ran their own schools until the 1930's. School attendance was mandatory to the age of 14; it was through this educational process that doctrines were instilled into the young German-Brazilian minds. From textbooks, Jefferson made the following extracts:

A great number of inhabitants in our State are luso-Brazilian, descended from immigrant Portuguese. . . but these Portuguese did not keep their race pure. For the most part they mingled with Indians and negros so that with time the mixed race of Brazilians has arisen. 26

In another extract, he showed that the German immigrants still considered themselves to be Germans and not Brazilians.

The German colonists are simple, industrious, worthy, and honorable men of good reliable character. All the more it is to be lamented that here and there one of them has hurt the name of the local Germans by quarrelsomeness or drunkenness. The significance of German things for Rio Grande do Sul was a land on whose Primeval forest dwelt Indians and wild beast. Then came the Germans and with them came agriculture, commerce and industrial arts into the land. When we visit our thriving German colonies, we see the German wholesale houses and factories of our cities, our hearts are proud of the things German industry and German capacity has accomplished. 27

Eastern Brazil contains the states of Minas Gerais, Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Guanabara and Sao Paulo. These five states occupy less than 11 percent of the total area of Brazil and contain 44 percent of the total population.²⁸ In 1960, two of the states, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais accounted for 33 percent of the total Brazilian population, Sao Paulo having fourteen million people and Minas Gerais, ten million people. Also located in the East are the three largest cities of Brazil: Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte. The coastal plain of the East (only Minas Gerais has

²⁶ Mark Jefferson, "Pictures from Southern Brazil," Geographical Review, Volume 16, p. 546.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Gilbert J. Butland, Latin America, A Regional Geography (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970), pp. 325-326.

no coastline) is approximately 150 miles wide except in Sao Paulo state where it narrows. Behind the coastal plain rises the escarpments known as Serra do Mar which rises to 8,500 feet above sea level in some places. Behind this escarpment is the interior plateau at an altitude of 1,800 to 2,600 feet above sea level. In the East there is a diversity of landforms from forests to grasslands to swamps.

The bandeirantes came to the plateaus of the East in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as they had done in the South. In their search for wealth, they discovered both gold and diamonds. Their discovery started a rush that lasted a hundred years and ended in the early 1800's. With the exhaustion of the ready wealth, some of the bandeirantes and miners moved back to the coastal areas, but others stayed to produce a crop that was gaining demand in Europe - coffee. It was on the interior plateau that the coffee fazendas developed, at first dependent on slave labor and then on the labor provided by the immigrants who eventually became agricultural colonists on a colono basis.

In the East, the second most colonized region of Brazil, over 60 percent of the 49 colonies were established after 1930 when there was a flurry of colonization in western Sao Paulo state. Since 1930, there have been 14 new agricultural colonies established in the western Sao Paulo region: 6 Japanese, 3 Italian, 3 Spanish, and 2 German. The Japanese began colonizing in the region in the 1920's under the sponsorship of the Imperial Japanese Government through an exclusively Japanese owned colonization company, Sociedade Colonizador do Brazil Limitada. The company purchased seventy-eight thousand acres for Japanese agricultural colonization in western Sao Paulo state; the soil was poor and sandy and frost represented

a threat to the crops of the colonists. (See Map VII, page 28) ²⁹

A Japanese colony organized, financed, and supported by the Imperial Japanese government to function as an instrument of that government was established at Bastos, Sao Paulo. The people were to produce cotton to be shipped to Japan with no import duty to free the Japanese from the necessity of importing cotton from the United States. Every effort was made to isolate Bastos from Brazilian influence; it was planned as a Japanese island in South America. Under the supervision of the Imperial Japanese government, Bastos retained a distinctly Japanese culture until it was isolated from Japan during World War II; geographic isolation aided in their cultural retention.³⁰

At the beginning of World War II, Bastos had grown to sixteen thousand people, World War II initiated cultural and economic changes in the colony. Cotton production declined and silk and egg production became the chief economic endeavors. After World War II, the demand for silk declined as other silk producing areas of the world returned to production, and synthetic fibers became more available. The economic inflation of Brazil did much to discourage the agricultural colonists. Three hundred families left Bastos to establish another agricultural colony at Dorados, Mato Grosso. Others abandoned Bastos to move to the outskirts of the large cities to produce truck crops and to the interior of the cities to engage in non-agricultural work. By the mid 1950's, the colony had declined to 50 percent of its

²⁹ John P. Augelli, "Cultural and Economic Changes of Bastos, a Japanese Colony on Brazil's Paulista Frontier," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Volume 48, Number 1 (1958), pp. 3-6.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 3-10.

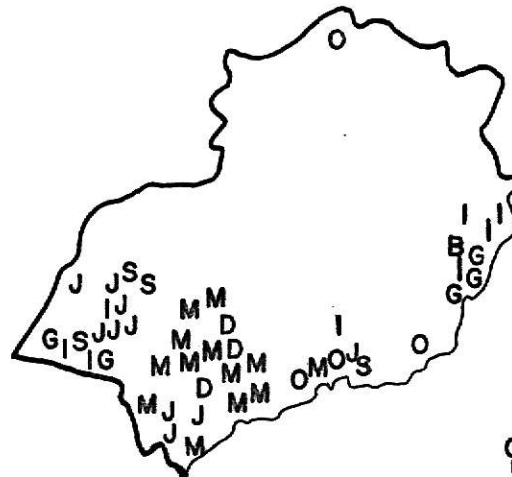
- G GERMANS
- J JAPANESE
- I ITALIANS
- B SLAVES
- M MIXED
- O IBRA
- N NATIONALS



Colonization in Southern Brazil
MAP VI

SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil

- G GERMANS
- J JAPANESE
- I ITALIANS
- S SPANISH
- B SLAVES
- M MIXED
- D DUTCH
- O IBRA



Colonization in Eastern Brazil
MAP VII

SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil

pre-World War II population or to eight thousand people resulting in a decline of the proportion of Japanese to Brazilians in the region and less intensive land use. John P. Augelli, in his article, said, "Their eventual absorption appears to be only a matter of time."³¹

It was also in western Sao Paulo state that the Latvians established their colony of Varpa. (See Map VII, page 28) Their motive for immigration to Brazil was a religious one. A splinter group of the Baptists known as the Pentecostals, supplied most of the colonists. Two thousand colonists (three hundred families) came from all parts of Latvia. Many of the colonists were war widows and their children resulting in an imbalance between the number of men and women. The wealthy immigrants helped the poor to pay their passage to Brazil and to purchase land when they arrived. The Brazilian government had promised to reimburse the colonists for their passage but failed to do so.

The site of Varpa for the agricultural colony was selected because the land could be purchased cheaply (\$1.25 for 5.98 acres). The Latvians' first attempt at production was raising silk worms; the demand for silk declined with the development of synthetic fibers and the Latvians abandoned silk production in favor of growing cotton. Very few of the original colonists sought employment away from their farms; as the colony developed, Negroes came from Bahia to work as sharecroppers.

The Latvian agricultural colonists retained much of the culture that they brought with them to Brazil; after their arrival, cultural exchange with Latvia was minimal. Two things contributed to this cultural

³¹Ibid., p. 19.

retention. One was the isolated location of the colony. The other was the religious difference (Protestants in a predominately Catholic country); there was little intermarriage with non-Latvians. Varpa steadily decreased in number of colonist due to their raising small families, a disproportionately large number of single women and widows in the original group not rearing children since there was a shortage of men of marriageable age, and second generation youth leaving the colony to move westward to new farming frontiers or eastward to Sao Paulo to seek non-agricultural work. The population of Varpa declined 50 percent between 1923 and 1958.³²

The West Central region of the country consists of the states of Mato Grosso and Goias which cover 20 percent of Brazil's total land area but contain less than 5 percent of the total population of the country. The entire region is a plateau, 2,000 feet above sea level in most areas, but reaching 3,000 feet above sea level in eastern Goias. The region is classified as a campo cerrado, a grassland with scrub trees, essentially a cattle country; however, in some areas terra roxa soils produce excellent coffee. (See Map III, page 17)

There was little agricultural colonization in the West Central region. Only 14 colonies were established and all but three were established after 1930. Two reasons for the small number of colonies were the lack of transportation facilities and the lack of demand for agricultural products in the region. The establishment of Brasilia in the new federal district located in east central Goias has brought some agricultural colonists to

³² John P. Augelli, "The Latvian of Varpa: A Foreign Colony on the Brazilian Pioneer Fringe," Geographical Review, Volume 48, Number 3 (1958), pp. 365-387.

the area of Brasilia to produce truck crops for the growing city. Most of those who came to the Brasilia area were Japanese who migrated from other parts of the country. (See Map VIII, page 32)

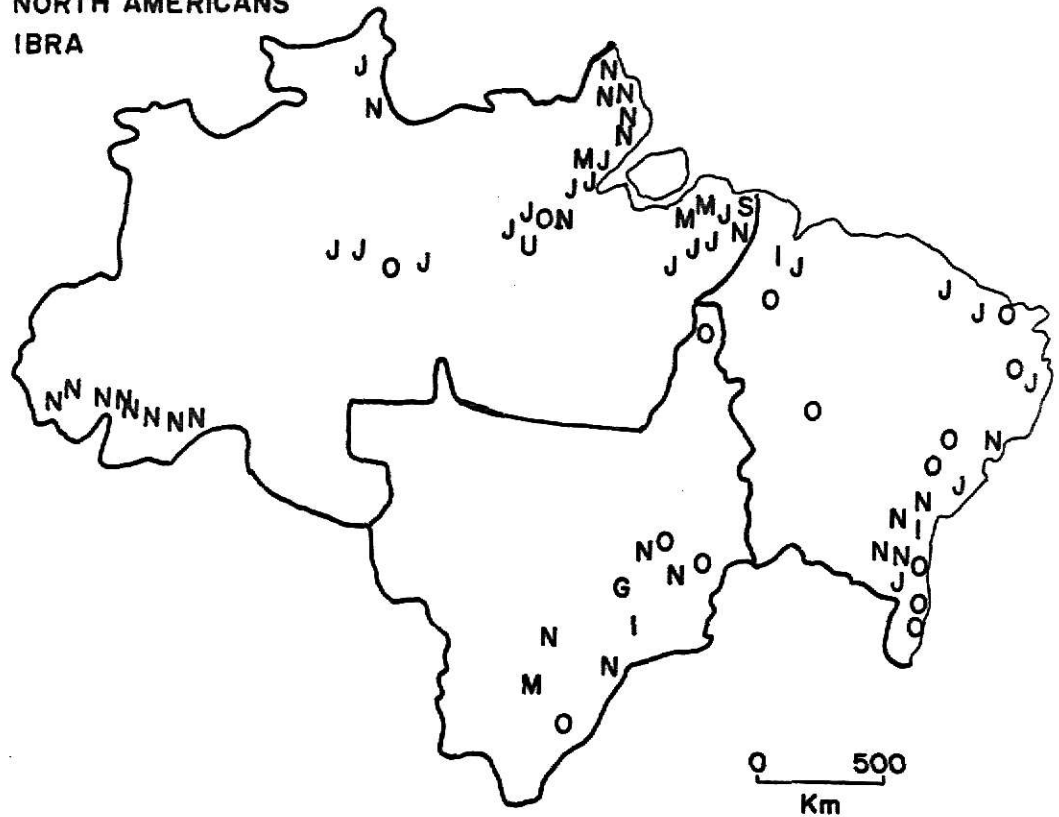
The Instituto Brasileiro de Reforma Agraria, hereafter referred to as the IBRA, has been active in the West Central region establishing agricultural colonies. The IBRA is under the direction of the Brazilian government and was established to foster agricultural colonization in sparsely populated areas and to aid in the diversification of agricultural production of Brazil. It has been concerned mainly with the settlement of Brazilian nationals but has not met with a great deal of success.³³

The North, the largest region of Brazil, contains less than 4 percent of the total population. It consists of three states, Amazonas, Para, and Acre, and the three territories of Brazil, Rondoniam, Roraima, and Amapa. The North includes the most of the Amazon Basin, and all of the Guiana Highlands in the north, and the Brazilian Highlands in the southeast. (See Map III, page 17, and Map IV, page 18)

There was an attempt to establish a North American colony in the North. Immediately prior to, during, and after the Civil War in the United States several hundred Southern families immigrated to Brazil in an attempt to preserve a way of life based on agriculture and slave labor. At that time, the importation of slaves had been outlawed in Brazil, but slavery still existed. The colonists also planned to use colono labor. Because

³³Instituto Brasileiro De Geografia E Estatistica and Conselho Nacional De Geografia, Atlas Nacional Do Brazil (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinal do Service Grafico do Ibge, 1966, plate III-6.

- G GERMANS
- J JAPANESE
- I ITALIAN
- S SPANISH
- N NATIONAL
- B SLAVE
- M MIXED
- D DUTCH
- U NORTH AMERICANS
- O IBRA



Colonization in Northern, North Eastern
and West Central Brazil

MAP VIII

SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil

the North Americans found living conditions to be harsh, many of them returned to the United States. Those who did remain in Brazil were absorbed into the Brazilian culture, and no trace of their colony can be found today.³⁴

There has been little true agricultural colonization in the North where most of the activities are extractive. The only agricultural colonies established were near the coast or near cities. Much of the agricultural colonization in the North took place after 1930 by Brazilian nationals.

(See Map VIII, page 32)

In 1970, the Brazil's Transamazonian Highway was started. It is to connect Belem and Receife to the Bolivian and Peruvian borders, and has a north-south highway connecting Santarem to Cuiaba. The Brazilian government has expropriated land along the highway in various places that totals 888,000 square miles. They plan to colonize this land with Brazilian nationals providing them with free transportation to the area, 250 acres, and a small wooden house, and loans of up to \$2,250 to improve the land. So far the plan has not worked smoothly because of lack of coordination within the government and hostile Indians.³⁵

The Northeast covers almost 20 percent of the area of the country and contains 33 percent of the Brazilian population, most situated on the coastal plain in the large cities. The region consists of nine states: Maranhao, Piaui, Cerra, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraiba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, and Bahia. There were 23 agricultural colonies established in the

³⁴Jose Arthur Rios, "Assimilation of Immigrants from the Old South in Brazil," Social Forces, Volume 26, Number 2 (December, 1947), pp. 145-152.

³⁵"Transamazonia: The Last Frontier," Time, September 13, 1971, pp. 36-37.

Northeast; however, little information is available on colonization in the area.

There were more colonies established in the South than in any of the four other regions. The count of officially recognized colonies is presented in Table 1.

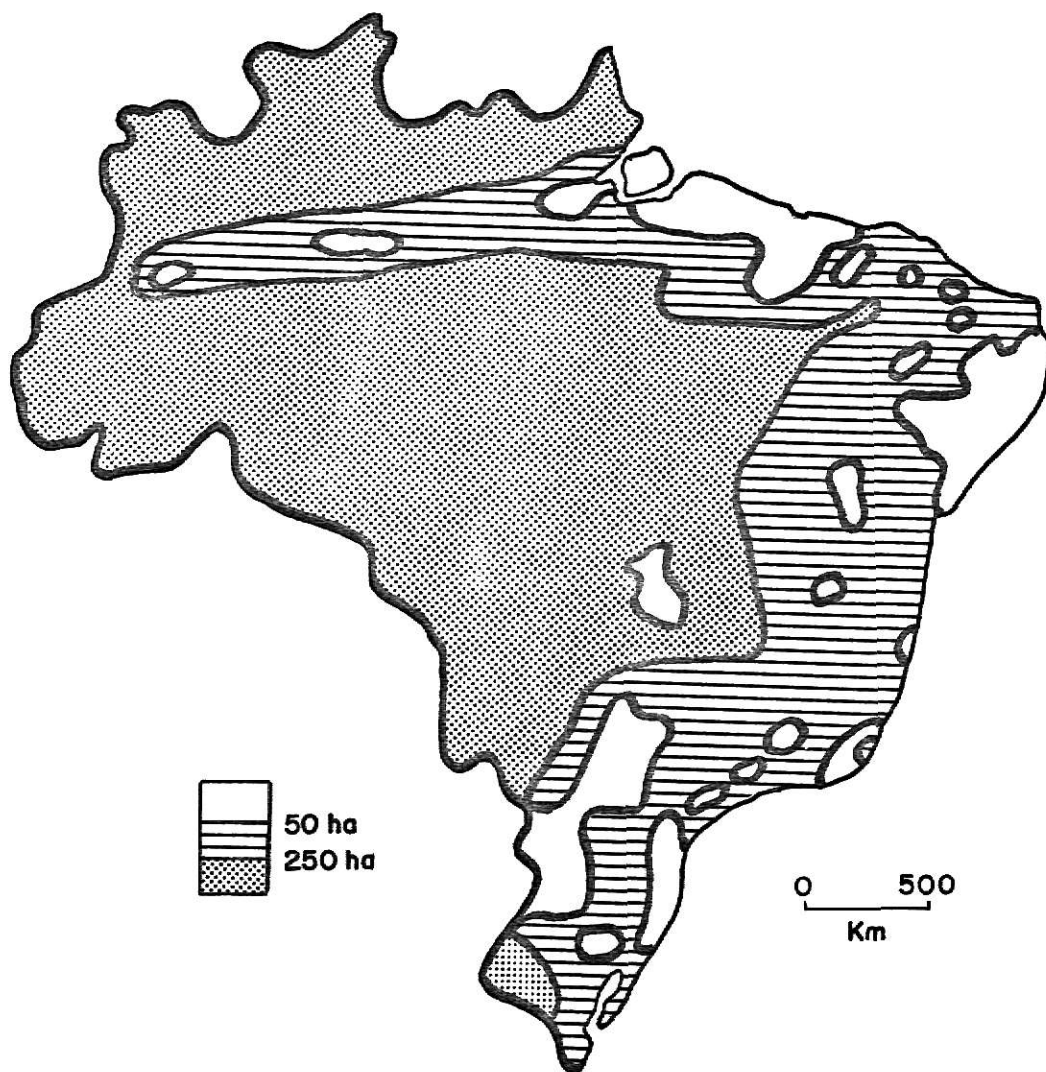
Table 1
Colonization in the Regions of Brazil

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Colonies</u>
South	87
East	49
North	46
Northeast	22
West Central	17

Source: Instituto Brasileiro De Geografia E Estatistica and Conselho Nacional De Geografia, Atlas Nacional Do Brazil (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinal do Service Grafico do Ibge, 1966, plate III-6.

Map IX, page 35, shows the size of landholdings in Brazil. The size of landholdings in the Southeast and on the coastal plain is smaller than that of those in the West-Central and West. Map X, page 36, shows the natural vegetation of Brazil. It is evident, when Map X is compared to Map IX, that the Campos, the tropical semideciduous forest, and the tropical forest have larger landholdings than the other regions of the country.

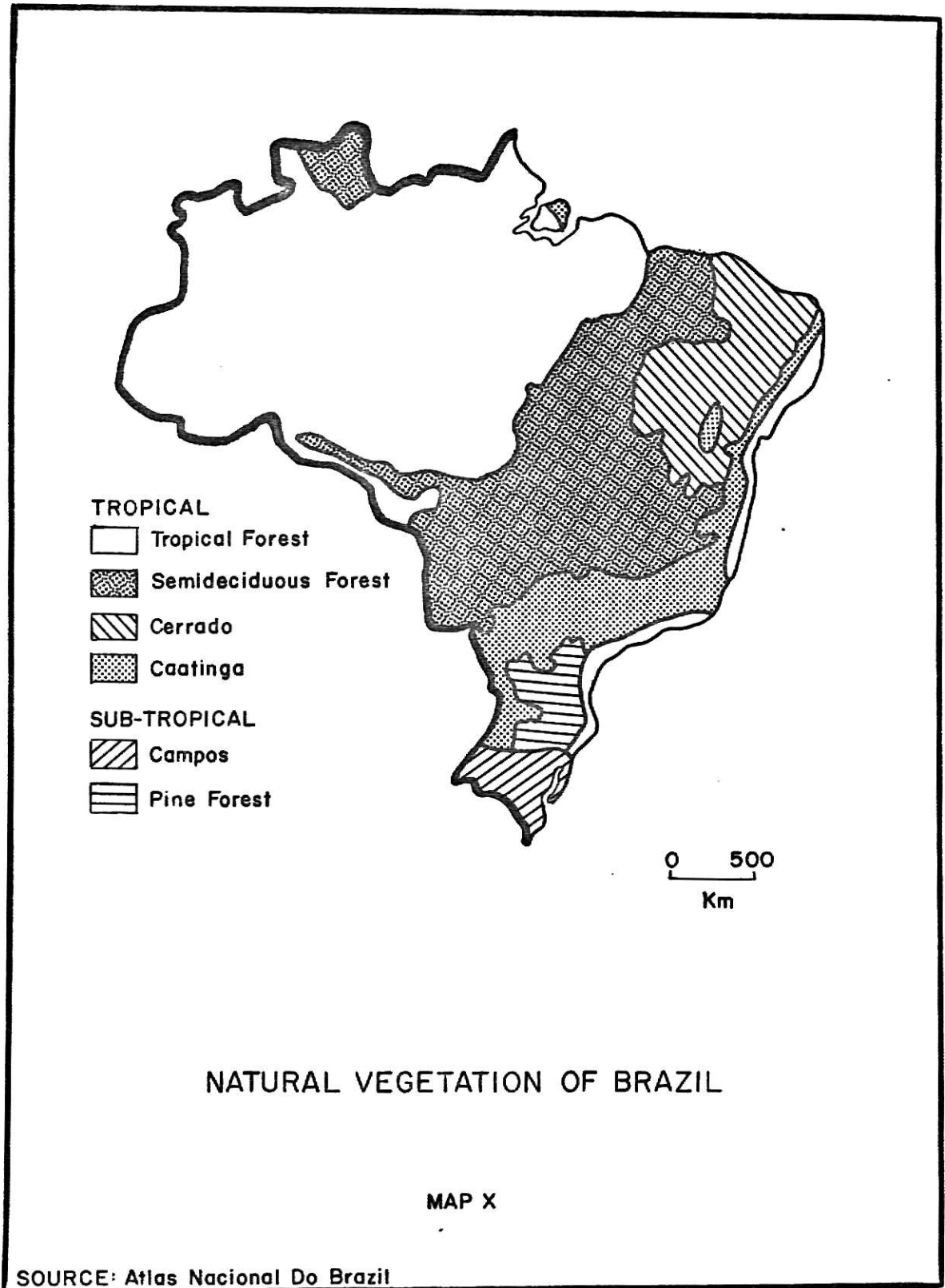
There is little information available concerning the actual number of agricultural colonists who immigrated to the different regions of Brazil because before 1874, there were no accurate records kept of immigration. Even the data of supposedly official sources concerning immigration contain



SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS IN BRAZIL

MAP IX

SOURCE: Atlas Nacional Do Brazil



serious discrepancies both between and within the sources.³⁶ However, the author feels that the available data should be presented to show the number of immigrants to Brazil. (See Table 3 and Table 4, Appendix)

The influx of immigrants of all nations had a dramatic effect on the Brazilian culture. Between 1870 and 1920, the arrival of an estimated three and one half million immigrants altered the population distribution, ethnic composition, and traditions of the country. During this period, the population tripled from approximately ten million to thirty million. Much of this population increase can be attributed to the immigrants, their children, and grandchildren. It is evident in Table 2, that there was one increase in immigration following the abolishment of slavery in 1888 and another in the three years preceeding World War I. Immigration declined during World War I, but started to climb again after the war ended, reaching 121,569 in 1926, the greatest number of immigrants in any one year after World War I. Immigration declined in the late 1930's when World War II began in Europe, and it dropped to 1,539 in 1944. After World War II, immigration began to increase but never regained its former number of immigrants. (See Table 3, Appendix)

Brazil accepted immigrants from more than 50 nations of Europe, America, North Africa, and the Orient. Most of the immigrants came from six countries; ranked in order they are: Portugal, Italy, Spain, Japan, Germany and Russia. For brief periods, the United States and the Ottoman Empire were relatively important sources of immigration. (See Table 4,

³⁶T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions (Eaton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 120.

Appendix)³⁷

Other than the Japanese, the immigrants since 1800 can be considered white (Negro slaves were not considered immigrants) and have contributed to the "whitening"³⁸ of the country as some nationalities mixed with the Negroes and Indians. The following table shows that the proportion of whites increased as immigration increased. The classification is by color, not by the presence or absence of non-white blood.

Table 2
Composition of Brazilian Population

	<u>1835</u>	<u>1872</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1940</u>
White	24.2%	38.1%	43.9%	63.4%
Brown	18.6%	42.1%	41.4%	21.2%
Black	57.0%	19.6%	14.6%	14.6%
Yellow	---	---	---	0.5%

Source: Rollie E. Poppino, Brazil: The Land and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 198.

The agricultural immigration has accomplished the first aim envisioned by the Brazilian government of creating a small-farming, middle class and has aided in the diversification of its agricultural products, although Brazil remains a one crop economy based of coffee. Immigration also provided much

³⁷Rollie E. Poppino, Brazil: The Land and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 191.

³⁸A word used by Poppino to denote the increase of Caucasian features.

of the labor needed on the fazendas after the abolishment of slavery. Immigrants introduced better methods of agriculture than were practiced in Brazil prior to the large scale immigration.

While the Brazilian government encouraged immigration for agricultural colonization, little was done to encourage immigration for other purposes. Perhaps the reasons were best explained by Andrew Marshall when he wrote:

Yet even today, the foreigner is not welcomed with any enthusiasm, particularly by the Brazilian of Portuguese descent. Brazilian suspicions of foreigners are reflected in their attitude to the immigrant to such an extent, for example, that although the country is desperately short of doctors in the rural areas, a foreign doctor may not practice in Brazil. Even foreign technicians, which she also needs so badly can experience endless difficulties and irritation. All the liberal professions are closed to foreigners, almost as if the Brazilians, in a display of that peculiar inferiority complex, are afraid that they will somehow outsmart the local talent. The sort of immigrant the Brazilian wants is the man who is prepared to go into the interior and invest capital in opening up new land, but even he can get strangled by red tape and prejudice if his plans seem too ambitious. Many Brazilians do not realize that their immigration policy has often been unimaginative. After the last war, for example, Brazil might have received a far greater number of displaced persons with skills and qualifications which she could certainly use. But confronted with the restrictions and attitude of almost instinctive hostility, many of these potential immigrants went elsewhere. ³⁹

Simple agriculturalists are more desirable to the Brazilians than any other immigrants, but even they can encounter difficulty if their aspirations are too high. Agricultural immigrants are not allowed to import their agricultural equipment into Brazil without paying high import taxes. They encounter difficulty in obtaining visas to enter the country other than in a tourist status. There is a marked dislike especially of North American agricultural colonists.⁴⁰ In the author's opinion, the country of Brazil

³⁹Andrew Marshall, Brazil (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), p. 116.

⁴⁰Statement by Robert Gibson, personal interview, May 1969.

is doing itself a great disservice by its prohibitive regulations and its attitudes toward foreigners who could contribute to the agricultural development of the country.

In Brazil, as in all of South America, there have been basic trends in agricultural colonization. Almost all of the successful agricultural colonization has been supported by the governments of South American countries who sought to populate sparsely settled regions to prevent foreign encroachment, to increase and diversify agricultural production, or to alleviate population pressures in other regions of the country. Colonization was sometimes accomplished through private colonization companies in the employment of the governments. There was also a trend between World War I and World War II for foreign governments to attempt to establish footholds in South America through agricultural colonization. The Nazi government was so confident of the German influence in southern Brazil that there was a plan to cut off the tail of Brazil and join it to Argentina who had declared neutrality at the onset of World War II.⁴¹ Agricultural colonization by foreign governments prompted Brazil in 1937 to make the stipulation that any new settlement established in the country had to be comprised of at least 30 percent Brazilian-born nationals and no single foreign nationality could comprise more than 25 percent of the total population.⁴²

Conclusion

One problem common to most South American countries in the attempts

⁴¹ Rose Brown, The Land and People of Brazil (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1946), p. 87.

⁴² Benjamin H. Hunnicutt, Brazil: World Frontier (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 18.

at agricultural colonization has been that much of the land was owned by a few people. This is a major problem. Eidt said:

Practically every nation in Latin America is faced today with two major problems, both of which must be overcome if prosperity is to be achieved. One of these is the unfavorable divergence between population growth and food production. The second is the gross inequality of land distribution among the people. 43

This problem of land distribution must be solved before land for agricultural colonization can be made available. This can be achieved through the purchase or expropriation of the land by the governments for agricultural colonization.

There is a need for governmental support of agricultural colonies. Studies of sites should be made to determine their suitability for agricultural colonization before the sites are selected. When agricultural colonies are established, the governments should provide not only land and credit but also technical advice to the colonists. Careful plans should be laid concerning the crops to be produced.

Selection of colonists has been a problem in the past. Future agricultural colonists should be carefully screened as to their suitability or the colonists should be educated in farming techniques.

Inadequate transportation has also been a common problem in the establishment of agricultural colonies in South America. A transportation network must be available to the colonists if they are to move their products to market. The type of transportation required would depend on the perishability of their produce. A rail connection would suffice for a wheat producing colony but not for one that produces truck crops or dairy

⁴³Robert C Eidt, "Modern Colonization as a Facet of Land Development in Colombia," Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, Volume 29, p. 21.

products.

To feed the increasing population of South America, further agricultural colonization will be required through the efforts of the South American government or by enterprising individuals. New agricultural colonies could help to absorb the growing South American population and also serve to populate the sparsely populated regions. Agricultural colonization could aid the economies of the countries by diversifying the agricultural products available for export.

Agricultural colonization is a geographic problem. It involves a man-land relationship, one of the basic geographic concepts. Studies of problems of agricultural colonization by geographers are needed for reference for future colonization efforts.

APPENDIX

Table 3
Annual Immigration to Brazil, 1874-1957

Year	Number
1874	19,942
1875	11,001
1876	30,567
1877	29,029
1878	22,432
1879	22,189
1880	29,729
1881	11,054
1882	27,197
1883	28,662
1884	24,890
1885	35,440
1886	33,486
1887	55,963
1888	113,253
1889	65,946
1890	107,474
1891	216,760
1892	86,203
1893	134,805
1894	60,984
1895	167,618
1896	158,132
1897	146,362
1898	78,109
1899	54,629
1900	40,300
1901	85,306
1902	52,204
1903	34,062
1904	46,164
1905	70,295
1906	73,672
1907	58,552
1908	94,695
1909	85,410

Table 3 (continued)

1910	88,564
1911	135,967
1912	180,182
1913	192,683
1914	82,572
1915	32,206
1916	34,003
1917	31,192
1918	20,501
1919	37,898
1920	71,027
1921	60,844
1922	66,967
1923	86,679
1924	98,125
1925	84,883
1926	121,569
1927	101,568
1928	82,061
1929	100,424
1930	74,420
1931	24,056
1932	34,683
1933	48,812
1934	50,368
1935	35,913
1936	?
1937	34,677
1938	19,388
1939	22,668
1940	18,449
1941	9,938
1942	2,425
1943	1,308
1944	1,539
1945	3,168
1946	13,039
1947	18,753
1948	21,568
1949	23,844

Table 3 (continued)

1950	34,691
1951	62,568
1952	84,720
1953	80,070
1954	72,248
1955	55,166
1956	44,806
1957	53,613

Source: T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), pp. 122-123.

Table 4

Immigration into Brazil by Nationality, 1884-1963

Years	Portuguese	Italians	Spanish	Japanese	German	Russians	Others	Total
1884-93	170,621	510,533	103,116	—	22,778	40,589	36,031	883,658
1894-1903	157,542	537,784	93,770	—	6,698	2,886	63,430	862,110
1904-13	384,672	196,521	224,672	11,868	33,859	48,100	106,925	1,006,617
1914-23	201,252	86,320	94,779	20,398	29,339	8,196	63,697	503,981
1924-33	223,649	70,177	52,405	110,191	61,728	7,953	201,120	737,223
1934-43	75,634	11,432	5,184	46,158	17,682	275	40,693	197,238
1944-53	146,647	61,692	46,141	2,340	15,440	1,801	74,382	348,443
1954-63	181,095	53,362	75,036	51,889	9,382	91	88,430	495,285
Total	1,551,112	1,527,821	695,103	242,844	197,086	109,891	674,708	4,998,565

Source: Rollie E. Poppino, Brazil: The Land and People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 193.

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THE AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION OF SOUTH AMERICA
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON BRAZIL

by

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B. S., University of Georgia, 1967

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Geography

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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1972

ABSTRACT

The Agricultural Colonization of South America with Special Emphasis on Brazil

This report concerns agricultural colonization in South America with special emphasis on Brazil. It examines colonization attempts, both successes and failures, from the early bandierantes and Jesuits to present attempts in colonization of the Amazon Basin. The major factors affecting the degree of success of the agricultural colonies are location of the colony, internal cohesion and cooperation, governmental support of the colony by the country in which it is established and governmental support of foreign governments. The report also reflects the recommendations of studies on what circumstances are required for successful agricultural colonization.