

STATE, KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN BRAZIL

ESTADO, SABER E PODER NO BRASIL

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ÉTAT, SAVOIR ET POUVOIR AU BRÉSIL

国家，智识和权力：巴西个案

DOI: [10.5533/1984-2503-20135204eng](https://doi.org/10.5533/1984-2503-20135204eng)

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ABSTRACT

This work analyses the relations established between the state, knowledge and power in Brazil during the first half of the twentieth century with a particular focus on higher agricultural education, based on the study of two of the period's most important agricultural Schools in Piracicaba and Rio de Janeiro. The analysis is based on intensive research into the profile of the teaching and student bodies of both institutions – their regional, social and family backgrounds, etc. – as well as on an assessment of the existing curriculum structures in the two state-run Schools and the respective modifications within the time frames stipulated. Analysing this data permits the verification of the formation of two different class habitus, according to the institutions attended and the class fractions linked to each of them: one basically destined to reproduce the agriculturists' class condition, and the other focused on the construction of a new "state nobility".

Key words: State, Power, Higher Education, Agriculture.

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RESUMO

O trabalho analisa as relações estabelecidas entre Estado, Saber e Poder no Brasil da primeira metade do século XX, enfatizando o caso do Ensino Superior Agrônomo, a partir do estudo de duas das mais importantes escolas de agronomia do período: a de Piracicaba e a do Rio de Janeiro. A análise baseia em densa pesquisa sobre o perfil dos corpos docente e discente de ambas as instituições – sua procedência regional, social, familiar, etc. - bem como na apreciação das estruturas curriculares vigentes nas duas escolas estatais e respectivas alterações dentro dos marcos cronológicos estipulados. A partir desses dados é possível verificar a existência da formação de dois habitus de classe distintos, segundo as instituições frequentadas e as frações de classe a cada uma delas vinculadas: um destinado basicamente à reprodução da condição de classe dos agrônomos, e outro voltado para a construção de uma “nobreza de estado”.

Palavras-chave: Estado, Poder, Ensino Superior, Agronomia.

RESUMEN

El trabajo analiza las relaciones establecidas entre Estado, Saber y Poder en el Brasil de la primera mitad del siglo XX, enfatizando el caso de la Enseñanza Superior Agronómica, a partir del estudio de dos de las más importantes escuelas de agronomía del periodo: la de Piracicaba y la de Río de Janeiro. El análisis es basado en densa investigación sobre el perfil de los cuerpos docente y discente de ambas instituciones – su procedencia regional, social, familiar, etc. – así como en la apreciación de las estructuras curriculares vigentes en las dos escuelas estatales y respectivas alteraciones dentro de los marcos cronológicos estipulados. A partir de estos datos es posible verificar la existencia de la formación de dos habitus de clase distintos, según las instituciones frequentadas y las fracciones de clase a cada una de ellas vinculadas: un destinado básicamente a la reproducción de condición de clase de los agrónomos y otro direccionado para la construcción de una “nobleza de estado”.

Palabras clave: Estado, Poder, Enseñanza Superior, Agronomía.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse les relations entre État, savoir et pouvoir dans le Brésil de la première moitié du XX^{ème} siècle à travers le prisme de l'enseignement supérieur agronomique. L'étude se base sur deux des écoles d'agronomie les plus importantes de cette période,

celle de Piracicaba et celle de Rio de Janeiro, pour lesquelles une analyse poussée des corps professoraux et étudiants (origines régionales, sociales et familiales) a été menée. L'on a également analysé les programmes d'enseignement en vigueur dans ces deux écoles d'État, ainsi que leurs modifications respectives durant la période en question. Il est possible, à partir de ces données, de constater l'existence de la formation de deux habitus de classe distincts en fonction de l'école fréquentée et des fractions de classe y ayant accès : l'un destiné essentiellement à la reproduction de la condition de classe des agronomes et l'autre à la construction d'une « noblesse d'État ».

Mots-clés: État, Pouvoir, Enseignement supérieur, Agronomie.

提要

论文讨论20世纪上半叶巴西的国家，智识和权力三者之间的关系，以农学高等教育为例。对那个时期巴西两个最重要的农学院校，一个位于皮拉希卡巴，另外一个位于里约热内卢。通过对两农校的师生的个人资料进行分析—

他们的来源地，社会和家庭背景等。同时对这两所国家创办的农校的课程设置和变迁进行分析。通过研究师生的阶级来源和社交习惯，可以了解到两种截然不同的社会阶层的形成过程：一个是农艺师的再生产，另外一个“国家权贵”的再生产。

关键词: 国家，权力，高等教育，农学

Premises for Reflection

Studies on the origins and consolidation of the teaching of agriculture in Brazil often fall prey to two “vices”. The first of these considers the object through a laudatory prism, over-determined by the very socio-professional extraction of its authors and their social class position. Such works often feature a “celebratory discourse” for purposes of consecration and apology, elaborated by former students or heads of educational institutions to which they are emotionally or academically linked². The second type of works feature a subject approached by means of a welfare bias fitting with this new

² This is the case with works such as that of Galli, Ferdinando (1976). *ESALQ: 75 anos a serviço da pátria*, Piracicaba: s.n, p. 125 e Reis, Tito de Souza (1921). *O Ensino Agrícola na Escola Luiz de Queiroz*, São Paulo: Typ. Olegário Ribeiro, for example.

technique seen as capable of “rescuing” rural Brazilian workers from the past. Two questions may be asked of both registers.

First, the fact of always being in the name of the “underprivileged” sets up the justificatory rhetoric of intervention proposals for the field and “rural men”, thus subordinating its own reverse. These social actors – small producers, tenants, leaseholders, etc. – therefore end up supporting the dual and simultaneous process of the expansion of the material structure of the state in Brazil and the increasing nationalisation of interests from segments of the agro-industrial dominant class and its spokespersons, without even the slightest awareness of this. The second problem concerns the fact that almost all of the studies dedicated to higher agricultural education institutions consider them in “isolation”, separate from the objective relations which unite them together, which, in my opinion, produces the only dimension able to promote the recognition of the properties relevant to those qualified by the institutions, or in other words, their various *habitus*³.

In order to attempt to overcome focuses which may jeopardise results and conclusions, I propose a reflection on the socio-historical constitution of agriculturists in Brazil based on an exhaustive study into the archives of two important higher education institutions throughout all of the period from 1901 to 1961. The premise of this analysis is the profound and permanent intercession existing between the state, knowledge, power and class reproduction. I therefore begin by highlighting that the masking of the existing relations between knowledge and power throughout history itself does not just result in an assumption of a simplistic position in the sphere of so-called “cultural history”, but also in certain confusion between methodology and theory, where the first is usually assumed through the acceptance of the second. To elucidate upon such an “imbroglio”, I wish to highlight that my vision of the state is Gramscian, which entails understanding it as an expanded state which also incorporates civil society and political society, and whose ever tense and conflictive inter-relations result in the hegemony of a certain class fraction situated in the bloc in power at each historical conjuncture⁴. Another premise of this work is to focus on the agricultural Schools as part of a complex network of relations through which it is possible to continually trace the production and reproduction of a certain structure of domination by classes, their agents and the respective agencies. The latter,

³ Cf. Capdeville, Guy (1991). *O Ensino Superior Agrícola no Brasil*, Viçosa: Imprensa Universitária.

⁴ Cf. Gramsci, Antonio (1986). *Maquiavel, a Política e o Estado Moderno*, 3. ed., Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira.

responsible for redistributing social places hierarchizing powers and prestige, help to create and recreate social order itself, producing such an effect in so far as they themselves are spaces for hierarchized differences, or in other words, spaces for the construction of similarly distinct socio-professional identity projects.

To then reflect on the social construction of agriculturists in Brazil before the approval of the Brazilian Law of Directive and Bases for Education in 1961 implies inserting the subject in the play of political disputes inherent to the process of constructing the Brazilian state, without which the study of the teaching of agriculture as an instrument of cultural production, symbolic domination and also the confrontation between various identity projects would lose its main *raison d'être*: to outline the reproduction mechanisms for Brazil's agro-industrial dominant class fraction.

The study was carried out on the period's two most important Schools: the Luiz de Queiroz School of Agriculture (ESALQ) in Piracicaba and the National School of Agriculture (ENA – formerly known as the School of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine and the current UFRRJ) in Rio de Janeiro. Both are public institutions, with one state and the other federal, respectively, and both are subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture. I believe that the approach suggested facilitates a simultaneous study of the incessant process for constructing the Brazilian state, verifying to what extent the institutions researched contributed by means of those they qualified to interfering with the definition/redefinition of public agricultural policies and determining the mechanisms for inserting agriculturists with different qualifications into political society (or the limited state), resulting in professional practices which are differentiated according to the “reputation of the School” they attended.

When I speak of differently structured agricultural Schools, I am referring to the possibility of contrasting “*blood nobility*” – inherited by the agro-industrial dominant class fractions – with “*School nobility*” – basically constituted by diplomas as instruments for the obtaining of privileges similar to those acquired through class condition, as diplomas may not be inherited or sold, depending fundamentally on technical skills. For such a reason it may be affirmed that “School nobility” is also “state nobility”, according to Bourdieu's terms⁵, in light of the “intimacy” existing between the educational title and the so-called “people-nation”⁶.

⁵ For more on these concepts, see Bourdieu, Pierre (1989). *La Noblesse d'État. Grandes Écoles et Esprit de Corps*, Paris: Minuit e também Bourdieu, Pierre & Saint-Martin, Monique (1987). “Agrégration et Ségrégation:

The notion of “state nobility” contributed to enriching the reflection, as it permits superimposing the class condition itself with properties inherent to what Bourdieu refers to as “class position”⁷. This brings back to the discussion the subject of unity *versus* division in the “dominant class”, a concept which becomes more nuanced due to the fact that, in the very agencies of the limited state, one group “dominates” by knowledge and the other is “dominated”, in spite of their shared class condition. Social backgrounds thus assume new colours, inserting themselves into the subject of the teaching of agriculture core to the reflection, given that the agents qualified from both institutions also acquire peculiar characteristics also in the field of education, proving that the “question of class” equally includes the dimension of a “question of education”. The questions raised facilitate an analysis of how – and by means of which strategies – agriculturists qualified by the two institutions managed to organise themselves in terms of “social forces” (in the Gramscian sense of the term) and with Brazilian civil society, as well as how they inserted themselves into the agencies of the limited state, offering to them proceeds, prestige and above all, the legitimate monopoly on the exercise of symbolic power, via the “professional exercise”⁸.

It is worth remembering that symbolic power activates an entire set of acts of naming and certifying which integrate the category of “effective” official discourses, given that they are produced in situations of authority and by means of agents authorised to act as holders of an *officium*, or, in other words, a role or responsibility assured by the state itself, such as verdicts, minutes, certificates or even – most interestingly of all for us – the issuance and validation of diplomas⁹. This is what ensures that the identities they create are socially guaranteed and recognised, relying on the power of including and excluding groups and categories in the sphere of certain public policies. It is in the intercession of these features that the correlation between the state’s specialised agents and its specific knowledge is highlighted, as these very subjects metamorphose in the visible “face” of the state, bearing, outside their individual trajectories, that which may be termed as a “logical apparatus”¹⁰, whether to integrate its material bones or to produce an official discourse

le champ des grandes écoles et le champ du pouvoir”. In *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, Paris, v. 69, p. 2 - 50, sep.

⁶ The expression “people-nation” is used by Poulantzas to avoid the notion of “bureaucracy”. Poulantzas, Nicos (1978). *O Estado, o poder, o socialismo*, Rio de Janeiro: Graal.

⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre (1974) “Condição de Classe e Posição de Classe”. In *A Economia das Trocas Simbólicas*, São Paulo: Perspectiva, p. 3 – 25.

⁸ LiPuma, J. P. (1993). “Culture and the Concept of Culture in a Theory of Practice”. In Calhoun, C. et al. (Orgs) (1993). *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Chicago: University Press, p. 14-34, p. 18.

⁹ On this subject, see Bourdieu, Pierre (1996). *Razões Práticas: sobre a teoria da ação*, Campinas: Papirus, especialmente capítulo 4.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

which makes the state itself exist. This is the role of intellectuals along with what Gramsci terms “the social division of the work of domination”¹¹, as the specific interests expressed by each group of agents through their position in terms of the state apparatus demonstrate that the latter is far from constituting a monolithic bloc, being equally contradictory and unstably stable.

I will therefore focus on the mechanisms by which the first steps constituting an effective labour market implied, on the part of the state agents, a symbolical redefinition of new modes of compulsion for work, perpetuating identity projects based on a taxonomy creating *rural modern producers* capable of maintaining social order on the field, in a fundamentally agricultural society to have recently abolished slavery and inherited practices repressing workers, such as was Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century. Just who was responsible for this hierarchizing operation and what were its habitus and its trajectories, as well as its degree of insertion within the limited state at that moment, are questions asked by the study.

Symbolic Violence, the Teaching of Agriculture and Social Identities

In the conjuncture produced by the abolition of slavery in Brazil, countless social agents across distinct fractions of the agro-industrial dominant class produced a generic representation of the *crisis in agriculture*¹². Emerging at the end of the nineteenth century, the crisis was marked by subtle shades depending on the origins of that which enunciated it, derived from numerous specific socio-regional extractions which did not always correspond to a dramatic situation in agriculture¹³. This universalised representation led to the emergence of various agencies of civil society linked to the Brazilian agro-industrial dominant class fractions, organised with the objective of formulating projects for overcoming it, such as the São Paulo Agriculture Society (SPA) and the National Agriculture Society (SNA). While the former represented the dynamic nucleus of the country’s big coffee bourgeoisie – transformed in 1919 to the Brazilian Rural Society – the latter was in a private apparatus of hegemony which amalgamated interests from various fractions of the agro-industrial class, especially those on the northeast/southeast/southern

¹¹ Gramsci, Antonio (1984). *Os Intelectuais e a Organização da Cultura*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira.

¹² Italics denote any expression or quotation from the sources researched.

¹³ Mendonça, Sonia Regina de (1997). *O Ruralismo Brasileiro*, São Paulo: Hucitec.

axis, whose economic performance suffered obstacles on the international market, including, above all, large landowners not linked to coffee production¹⁴.

While for bodies from the upper bourgeoisie in São Paulo the *agricultural crisis* was due to an absence of credit and workers (leading to subsidised immigration) and the need for a *modernisation in agriculture and agricultural education*¹⁵, the SNA's landowners clamored for the creation of a state agency focused on "*dealing with agricultural matters*" – along with the Ministry of Agriculture – as well as the "*diversification of national production*". The tension between the segments organised by these bodies transformed the implantation of the ministry into a fierce dispute within the dominant class, given that both sides longed to inscribe in it their various interests. They did however agree on one aspect: the ministry to be created should be *eminently technical*, and for this reason they selected one privileged agent deemed to also be capable of facing the *crisis*: the agriculturist. Considering that until this moment Brazil only had the one precarious School of Agriculture located in the state of Bahia, another flag waved by the Brazilian agro-industrial dominant class consisted in attributing the state with the role of promoting institutions teaching agriculture necessary to the production of professionals with "*specialised technical knowledge*".

The ESALQ and Social Class Reproduction

Created in 1901 by São Paulo state government, the ESALQ was wholly dedicated to the realisation of the project instigated by sectors of the landowning class under whose aegis it was implanted. It is worth highlighting that until 1933 it remained as subordinate to the state secretariat of agriculture, the São Paulo upper bourgeoisie's preferred locus for the creation of means of organisation and domination. In this sense, the School's main concern was not necessarily on producing professionals for the state, but rather to train

¹⁴ This was the case for the large São Paulo coffee growers, as their product suffered a devaluation due to overproduction, but not that of the coffee growers in the state of Rio de Janeiro or in Minas Gerais, whose productive performance was much less than hailing from the purple soils of São Paulo. For the segments which did not produce coffee, those which stood out were the cotton growers and mill owners in the states of northeastern Brazil or cattle farmers in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, surpassed in the internal market by meat imported from the La Plata River Basin and produced in the state of São Paulo itself.

¹⁵ The modernisation of agriculture as conceived by the spokespersons of São Paulo's upper bourgeoisie consisted of the adoption of new techniques for cultivation and processing, based on the intensive use of industrial machinery and inputs in agricultural activities. Rural education was considered in terms of the diffusion of several notions of practical agriculture to be administered to workers by farmers themselves, or, in the case under discussion, by agriculturists.

both *modern farmers* and the institution's teaching body which was regulated by a highly endogenous standard of recruitment and reproduction¹⁶. The existence of true "dynasties" along with the teaching staff corroborates this statement. An example of the former is found in that of Teixeira Mendes – a total of three sons and grandsons of the great farmer in the Piracicaba region, who was the oldest professor at the School; that of the Kiehls – three brothers qualified at the beginning of the 1940s and teachers at the School for over 15 years; the Arzollas – José and Sylvio, father and son, also large landowners in Piracicaba; the Bergamins – brothers qualified between 1934 and 1940, including Henrique, the son of the former, a former student and teacher at the School, among countless other examples¹⁷.

Another characteristic of the ESALQ teaching body was the fact that 72% were farmers' sons and 20% tradesmen's sons, and of a total of 164 teachers, only eight (08) were not from the state of São Paulo¹⁸. Furthermore, whether due to the fact that it was an educational institution for preparing large landowners/rural businessmen or the endogenous character of the reproduction of its teaching staff – formed of former students, who were also farmers'/businessmen's sons and from the state of São Paulo – the School could hardly be defined as a tool for social ascension by means of obtaining its diplomas. Its profile as a School for educating agriculturists in the state of São Paulo focused on agriculture in the state of São Paulo is corroborated by the data on the regional origins of those it qualified. Between 1903 and 1961, 2,118 students were matriculated from municipalities in the state of São Paulo, which accounts for 80% of the total. The other 20% were from other states such as Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso or Rio Grande do Sul. It was along with these agriculture undergraduates – and with them as intermediaries – that the School publicised its *modern farmer* project with hegemonic claims capable of unifying, within the cultural but always political sphere, regional fractions representing the Brazilian agrarian dominant class.

This project came to be oriented by a key guideline: the publicising of the belief in the regenerative power of science – or, in other words, technology and industrial inputs – applied to agriculture, with the School's students to be privileged by this transformation, as

¹⁶ While during the period from 1903 to 1930, 67% of teachers at the ESALQ were former students of the School and 20% were foreign, from 1934 to 1961 this percentage shifted to 93% of teachers who were former students, or, in other words, a majority from the state of São Paulo and large landowners. Mendonça, Sonia Regina de (1999a). *Agronomia e Poder no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Vício de Leitura, p. 65.

¹⁷ Mendonça, Sonia Regina de (1999b). *Agronomia, Poder e Estado no Brasil (1933-1961)*, Niterói, CNPq Research Report, p. 55-6.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 50-2.

they emerged from the “*single, true nucleus of higher agricultural education in Brazil*”¹⁹. This guideline was in keeping with the institution’s main hallmark: its students’ social background. Considering the paternal professions of those who matriculated, we see that, among those qualified between 1903 and 1961, 63% were the sons of large rural landowners, distantly followed by the sons of liberal professionals (7.5%) and those of civil servants (3%), revealing the profile of the School’s student body, and, by extension, that of the teaching itself administered which involved training professionals destined to reproduce their social background²⁰. Important tradesmen also sent their sons to the School (7.4%), as well as bankers and “capitalists” (0.6% of the student body).

Upon graduating, 85% of the institution’s agriculturists went to work on family farms and/or businesses, as well as joining its teaching staff²¹. A survey undertaken by students in 1942 demonstrated this trend. Of the 211 students who responded, 65% were sons or relatives of farmers²². In researching the participants’ motives for choosing the ESALQ, the survey revealed that 37% of those interviewed sought to “*become modern farmers*”²³, while 65% justified the decision based on the School’s prestige. Acquiring the knowledge for managing property seems to have been the main objective for those who wished to be qualified as agriculturists at the School, consolidating an identity of “agriculturist-landowners” and not mere “agriculture professionals”.

Another aspect key to understanding the habitus of the ESALQ’s agriculturists is found by analysing the curriculum structure and the educational regime, characterised by the progressive increase of the élite of the course in the period under analysis. This was achieved by expedients such as the gradual reduction of skills parallel to those such as agriculture and the making secondary of “humanities” subjects on the curriculum, allocated a minimum number of hours in the period’s curriculum reforms²⁴. The selection criteria for obtaining a place and progressing to the next year were also flexible enough to accommodate very low average pass rates, consistent with the profile of a “concept School”²⁵, for the dominant classes. The School’s increase of élite character and that of

¹⁹ The affirmation was made by one of the School’s former deans, Tito de Souza Reis, from the state of São Paulo (1921). Op. Cit., p. 233.

²⁰ Mendonça, Sonia Regina de (1999b). Op. Cit.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 67.

²² *O Solo* (1942), Piracicaba: ESALQ, n.3.

²³ Ibidem, p. 74.

²⁴ Throughout the period under study, the ESALQ curriculum underwent 11 reforms, all of which prioritised technical-scientific subjects, devalued the so-called “practical classes” and gradually restricted the hours allocated for what we might consider the “humanities”.

²⁵ From 1900 to 1908, the average minimum pass rate was just two point zero (2.0), which was altered in 1908 to six point zero (6.0) and later, to five point zero (5.0), where it remained until 1934. Similarly, entry to

the profile of the agriculturists it qualified was consolidated by means of a reading of its various regulations which never established a grant for students who required one, for example. The ESALQ agriculturist's habitus would also come to be marked by its deeply technical nature, despite agricultural science being, by definition, a type of applied knowledge²⁶. Much more about scientific research – training not the executors, but those with executive authority – the vision of the “practical” nature of this strain of knowledge played a key role in the predispositions acquired by the School's students: “*Know how to see it to know how to get someone to do it*” was the motto of those to inherit accumulated social capital, very similar to the positions effectively dominating in the field of power.

In spite of all of these aspects, obtaining the School's recognition as a higher education institute – upon which its power to qualify agriculturists would depend – from the federal executive branch was a lengthy process. The executive subordinated the School to strict observance of the curriculum at the national model School: the ESAM/VENA²⁷. Behind this process arose a dispute which transcended the sphere of knowledge, consisting of a political struggle for the affirmation of “legitimate agriculture”: that which prepared you to be a businessman (qualified by the São Paulo School) or trained you to be a worker privileged by the national state to fulfil roles linked to agricultural administration (qualified by the ENA). The problem would only die down in 1949, when the ESALQ obtained the power to qualify engineer-agriculturists. Countless acts of fraud were carried out by the School heads in order to avoid complying with the ENA's curriculum changes as, for them, the Rio de Janeiro School was “*lagging behind in the evolution of agricultural sciences*”²⁸.

Furthermore, the pinnacle of the teaching administered in Piracicaba consisted of “*great excursions*” or obligatory internships carried out by the agriculture undergraduates in their last year as a prerequisite for graduating. As of the 1920s, the great excursions

the School only required proof of completing secondary education, with the entry exam only established after 1910. After 1933, the standard remained unchanged, with the annual average for passing the year falling to three point zero (3.0) from 1940 to 48. ESALQ (various years). *Reformas Curriculares*. Piracicaba, *passim*. It is worth remembering that such increases in the average were due to the competition provided by the Federal District School of Agriculture, which, despite a lack of resources, had maintained an entry exam and pass rates above seven point zero (7.0) since its foundation.

²⁶ Until 1905, hours for practical classes were double those for theory classes. Between 1905 and 1912 – when the parity of status was established between both – hours for practical classes were half of those for theory classes. After the reform of 1918, hours for theory classes came to depend on the “*discretion of the teacher*” and remained as such for the rest of the period under study. ESALQ. *Reformas Curriculares*. Piracicaba, *passim*.

²⁷ The ESALQ only came to grant the title of engineer-agriculturist in 1926 and only by means of a state decree-law meaning that it continued to issue diplomas without the national recognition of the Ministry of Agriculture. ESALQ (1927). *Atas da Congregação*. Piracicaba, p. 80 (manuscrito)

²⁸ Galli, Ferdinando, *Op. Cit.*, p. 125.

came to take place outside Brazil, not just due to the School's increase in wealth, but mainly due to the social capital brought by its head teachers²⁹, guaranteeing the funding for the trips. Such resources mainly originated in class bodies (such as the powerful Brazilian Rural Society) and large private companies (such as Anderson Clayton, the English refrigeration company Armour and Manah Adubos Químicos, etc.). It is thus possible to affirm that we are faced with an institution destined to socialise and prepare what may be termed as "agriculturists with land". The School of Agriculture in Piracicaba remained loyal throughout all of the period to the motto illustrating the cover of every bulletin it published: "*The ESALQ is no longer just a institution for the teaching of agriculture. It is a research establishment*"³⁰.

The Rio de Janeiro School and "State Nobility"

The School of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (ESAMV), founded in 1912 by the Ministry of Agriculture was transformed in 1934 to the National School of Agriculture (ENA) and in 1944, to the Rural University, in order to compete in terms of qualifications and legitimacy with the ESALQ. It was soon defined, by virtue of the federal government's power, as a national model School, a means for political society to homogenise and control all of the academic structure of the existing higher agricultural education courses across Brazil. Considering that the agriculture ministry itself resulted from political pressure exerted by the agro-industrial dominant sectors unified by the SNA, the Rio de Janeiro School was not immune to such conditioning, as 35% of its head teachers were from this body.

The profile and origins of the Rio School's teachers were considerably different from those at the ESALQ. From 1913 to 1961, it had a total of 142 professors, of which 39% were former students, and of these, only 19% were the sons of large rural landowners. In contrast, the percentage of teachers who were the sons of civil servants, liberal professionals and those in the military reached 64.4% of the total. The social backgrounds of the School's teachers were therefore much more diverse and "open", despite the

²⁹ In the period prior to 1930, of a total of 28 great excursions organized by the agriculturists, 11 were abroad, particularly to Uruguay and Argentina, as well as to the United States and Canada. Those carried out in Brazil were to "*the large properties owned by illustrious members of the Brazilian Rural Society*". ESALQ (1932-1961). *Relatórios de Grande Excursão, passim*. (manuscripts)

³⁰ *Boletim da ESALQ* (1912), Piracicaba, ano I, n. 1, p. 3, my emphasis.

predominance of people from Rio de Janeiro state (45%). It is worth mentioning that people from northeast Brazil, for example, formed 32% of the teaching staff and the phenomenon of “dynasties” did not exist in the School as it did in the São Paulo School. Furthermore, a large proportion of the teachers at the ENA/UR and SNA heads fulfilled positions in the higher ranks of the Ministry of Agriculture (35%), which leads to the conclusion that the Rio de Janeiro School was categorically not focused on the reproduction of the rural landowning class, constituting what Bourdieu called an “execution School”³¹.

Despite this, the School still relied on a greater degree of political-administrative autonomy for its teachers, even though it was a federal institution. The teachers frequently rallied for everything the ministry denied them – unlike the teachers at the ESALQ – such as a 40-hour working week; university independence; alterations to the curriculum, etc. Severe cuts to the School’s budget during the 1950s produced heated protests by the assembly which complained in 1958 of the problems suffered by “*research and the multiple activities performed by the teachers, even including their means of transport for travelling to and fro*”³². In a protest against the ministerial units, the assembly came to contract interim teachers by default, with security only provided by the Rural University’s own Technical Commission³³. Therefore, even with a nationally and internationally renowned teaching body³⁴, the ENA/UR suffered serious financial and administrative restrictions, resulting in the failure to harness the potential of a set of renowned specialists.

The habitus of the agriculturist qualified at the School featured two key principles: a belief in merit as an instrument of promotion and a fierce defence of cooperativism as a means of rescuing rural populations from the “backwardness” of their life, forming a counter-hegemonic identity project particularly in the field of agricultural Schools, and that of the dominant Brazilian agro-industrial class in general. In terms of the students’ regional origins, despite the fact that the predominance of those from the state and city of Rio de Janeiro hardly compares with the 80% of students from São Paulo at the ESALQ, those from Rio formed only 40% of those qualified, demonstrating the more plural profile of the

³¹ Bourdieu, Pierre & Saint-Martin, Monique (1987). Op. Cit.

³² Universidade Rural (1958). *Atas da Congregação*, Rio de Janeiro, p. 146.

³³ Universidade Rural (1959). *Atas da Congregação*, Rio de Janeiro, p. 142.

³⁴ By means of examples, I would like to cite Prof. Ângelo da Costa Lima who received the Rockefeller Prize in 1938 for the publication of the two-volume work entitled *Insetos do Brasil [Brazilian Insects]* and was made an Honorary Fellow of the Entomological Society of America in 1945. *Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Agronomia* (1945), Rio de Janeiro, v. 18, n. 1, p. 57. I would also like to mention Arthur do Prado, Chairman of the South American Chemistry Association and Cândido de Mello Leitão, a zoologist to have been described by Roquette Pinto as “*Brazil’s greatest naturalist*”. ENA (1938), *Boletim*, Rio de Janeiro, p. 23-5.

ENA's students. As it was never a "Rio de Janeiro institution for Rio de Janeiro students", the School catalysed students from the most diverse of regions even including the state of São Paulo (7%), Santa Catarina (8.6%) or Minas Gerais (9.4%), as well as those from the northeast of Brazil, with 17% of the total.

In terms of the social background of those it qualified, although 23% at the ENA were farmers' sons, these never represented such a high percentage as at the São Paulo School. In other words, just like the ministry to which it was subordinate, the federal School constituted an alternative axis of knowledge and power in Brazil, spreading its socio-political reach to groups with the most diverse social backgrounds. This is demonstrated by the 66% of its graduates whose fathers bore no relation to landowning. If this reflects the less elite nature of access to this form of knowledge, it also reveals the suitability of the ENA for the occupational profile of the population from the federal capital, marked by the predominance of urban middle-class sectors, often linked to the government. The spectrum of socio-professional categories present among the graduates even included 2 sons of railway workers; 2 sons of artisans and 1 son of a factory worker, along with 6 sons of shop assistants, making 11 agriculturists from working-class backgrounds in the capital. This does not mean that landowners' sons did not predominate among students, however we see that of them, 18% were the sons of civil servants; 19% were sons of those with liberal professions; 10% were shopkeepers' sons and 8% soldiers' sons, making a total of 52% of students from middle-class urban sectors, suggesting that the ENA was a channel for social ascension by means of the qualification it offered.

Unlike at the São Paulo School, students could also always rely on grants. Such grants even benefited up to 80% of students, based on three criteria: poverty, merit and state government recommendations. This process should certainly not be viewed as "goodness" on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture, as it invested in the ENA to obtain specialised technicians, making it churn out agriculture specialists, demonstrated by the 85% of those it qualified who went on to work at the ministry³⁵.

Heads of the Ministry of Agriculture – the majority of whom were also directors of the SNA – pulled out all the stops to ensure that the School was accessible to students from various socio-economic backgrounds, encouraging their matriculation and practice even as teachers by means of the creation of figures known as "monitors" who served as a "trampoline" for their future entry as teachers at the institution³⁶. The ENA/UR

³⁵Ibidem, p. 135.

³⁶ After 1934, the School had 35 monitors, of which 23 became teachers at ENA/UR.

agriculturists' social nature was also due to their participation in countless initiatives involving the community near to the School, such as *Farmer's Weeks*, created in 1948 and held annually, in which students gave speeches and theoretical/practical workshops to growers living near the School³⁷.

The structure of the curriculum of the agriculture course at the ENA is another extremely important factor, as its characteristics did not feature the sophisticated technical nature of the subjects at its São Paulo counterpart. Of a total of 20 modules, 12% were related to more "humanity-based" subjects such as *rural economics*, *law*, *agrarian legislation* or even *agricultural statistics*. The tools for passing the course were also significantly different to those employed at the ESALQ, especially regarding practical classes which were double the hours per week than for theoretical classes. This reflects that the project for creating "*modern agriculturists*" internalised by the agriculturists in Rio was based on the demonstration of the advantages of productive diversification and trade-unionism, under the banner of agricultural co-operation.

Concluding Remarks

The main point for reflection emerging from this work is why both of the agricultural Schools researched produced such different graduates. In light of all of the features considered, it seems to have become clear that features such as access and progression criteria, as well as curriculum differences and those regarding the practical content of the subjects served to materialise various projects such as the role of the agriculturist and their practices, without undermining the distinct social backgrounds of the teaching and student bodies of the two institutions. The polarisation between both the Schools led to them varying in the fulfilling of different purposes: one, to ratify and reproduce the same class conditions of its graduates, producing what may be termed as "agriculturist-businessmen", and the other focused on the production of men representing "state nobility" formed by agriculturist-servants without direct links with landowning. One was for the sons of men from the hegemonic Brazilian agro-industrial landowning class and the other for a student body formed of agents from middle-class urban sectors who used the qualifications gained as a means of social ascension. If the São Paulo ESALQ should be considered as the institution par excellence for "blood or silver-spoon nobility", the ENA/UR consolidated

³⁷ *Agronomia* (1951), Rio de Janeiro, v. 10, n. 1-2, p. 45.

itself as managing “state nobility”, a condition sine qua non for the reproduction/expansion of the state apparatus itself.

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Received for publication in January, 2013.

Approved for publication in February, 2013.