STUDIES OF COLONIZATION AND SETTLEMENT*

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THE RECENT BURGEONING OF INTEREST IN AGRARIAN REFORM THROUGHOUT Latin American countries (Schaedel, 1965; Smith, 1965) has been accompanied by unprecedented attention on the part of social scientists in Latin America and elsewhere in what is called colonization. This is largely because what often is designated as official colonization (or projects to establish on the land groups of families headed by the operators of small or medium-sized farms) is one of the major measures used in attempts to achieve agrarian reform, and also because what frequently is referred to as spontaneous colonization (or the process by which settlers established new farmsteads for themselves on portions of the public domain) is another. In this article attention is concentrated upon the books, monographs, and articles dealing with colonization and settlement, and particularly those that have been put into circulation during the last decade.

TERMINOLOGY

The use here of the term colonization is limited largely to the two meanings mentioned above. However, in the present stage of the development of the nomenclature relating to the general processes of settlement and resettlement, no one person or agency is able to rectify fully the chaotic condition of the terminology. Therefore in beginning our discussion it seems essential to identify some of the principal features of the present confusion.

In English the very parsimoniousness of the nomenclature of the subject we are studying probably has contributed significantly to the difficulties. Thus even Webster's New International Dictionary offers as definitions of the word colony (in relation to modern human affairs) only the following: (1) "a company of people transplanted from their mother country, and remaining subject to the jurisdiction of the parent state"; (2) "a group of people situated so as to resemble a colony"; and (3) "the country or district colonized or occupied by an isolated group, as of artists; a settlement; also any distant territory dependent upon a ruling power." This basic compendium also gives, of course, the two

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important connotations the word colony had during the period of classical antiquity. These are the Roman usage of the word *colonia* to designate “a subject settlement of Romans in a newly acquired or hostile country,” and the meaning of the Greek word *apoikia* which signified “a settlement, nearly always independent or self-governing, of Greeks in a foreign country.”

In the United States neither the noun colony, nor any of the family of words to which it belongs has attained the meanings which became common for their counterparts (such as *colonia*, *colonización* (or *colonização*), *colono*, and *colonizar*) in Spanish and Portuguese. This is due undoubtedly to the fact that there was no basis in the history of the United States as an independent nation for the development in American English of the connotations for the words we are considering. While they were on their way over the Appalachians and on to the west the migrants from the areas along the Atlantic seaboard, along with the large contingents of immigrants from European countries, all were designated as *emigrants*; after they had located in new homes they were called *settlers*, or in the case of the actual trail blazers *pioneers*; and the new neighborhoods and communities that they established were called *settlements*. In the entire process there was, of course, little or nothing that corresponded to what frequently is called *colonización oficial* in Latin America, and those who wrote about the subject in the United States seemed fully content to employ the word settlement, either as a condition or a process, to designate all that is frequently termed colonization espontánea in the areas to the south of the Rio Grande. Only during the 1930’s, and then as a part of the “New Deal” of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was there any attempt in this country to establish groups of small farm operators on pieces of land once held in large estates; and even then, when various “colonization projects” were attempted, they were known as “Resettlement Projects,” and the official agency responsible for planning and executing them was the “Resettlement Administration.”

The use in Spanish and Portuguese of the group of words we are considering to signify about the same things as to settle, setter, and settlement in American English is not a recent introduction. For example even the ultra-conservative *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* of the Real Academia Española (Año de la Victoria [1939]) includes the following definitions: *colonizar*, “fijar en un terreno la morada de sus cultivadores”; *colonización*, “acción y efecto de colonizar”; *colonia*, “gente que se establece en un territorio inculto de su mismo país para poblarlo y cultivarlo”; and *colono*, “el que habita en una colonia.” Even so, however, the approved definitions it gives do not include the meaning presently most employed by those who write about Latin America in any language, namely, the establishment, usually by some governmental agency, of a settlement on portions of what once was a large estate of farm families whose heads themselves manage the farm businesses and cultivate the land.
Perhaps this is the reason that in Colombia, as late as 1943 to 1945, when I was detailed by the United States Department of State to serve the Colombian government as “Asesor Técnico en Parcelación y Colonización” (Smith, 1947), the work of subdividing an old hacienda was considered as something apart from that of colonization. Moreover, in Colombia there still remains a sharp distinction between colonización, or the establishment of new settlements on the public domain, and parcelación, or the subdivision of private estates (Duft, 1964; and Shearer and Others, 1966, p. 288). To add to the variety, in Colombia rarely if ever is the designation colono applied to the modern counterpart of the Roman colonus (i.e. the semi-servile farm worker attached to a large estate who is obliged to work from three to six days per week for the proprietor in return for a nominal wage and who is allowed the use of an acre or two of land on which he may build a hut and grow a few crops to help feed himself and family), although this usage is common in many parts of Spanish America (cf. Schulman, 1955).

In Brazil, where both quantitatively and qualitatively, the study of all having to do with colonization and settlement, is second to none, the meanings given to the Portuguese equivalents of colonist, colony, and colonization are quite different; they vary considerably from one part of the immense country to another, and a number of other terms must be taken into account. For example, in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná, where the majority are the descendants of immigrants from small farms in Germany, Italy, Poland, and other European countries, who were settled in various colonies on the land during the period from about 1870 to 1914, the zona colonial signifies the area given over to small farms and the colono is the owner-operator of a small farm. In the great industrial and agricultural state of São Paulo, which bounds Paraná on the north, however, the colono is an agricultural labor who is assigned the care of a specified number of coffee trees for the period of one year, and who is assigned the use of one of the dwellings in the workers’ village, or colonia, near the mansion of the proprietor, the mill for processing the coffee cherries, and the grounds on which the coffee beans are spread to dry.

Brazilians and others working on matters pertaining to settlement and resettlement in the Brazilian half of South America are not confronted with the problem of colonization versus parcelación, as are all those who study the relations of man to the land in Colombia; but they do have a number of other important terms to take into account. One of the most important of these is povoamento, or peopling. The comparable term in Spanish, poblamiento, is encountered now and then in some of the Spanish American countries, and the English peopling was, of course, used by Mark Jefferson (1930) in his excellent early study of the settlement of Argentina’s magnificent pampa region.
Both in Spanish terminology and in English, however, the concept is used sparingly, whereas in Brazil the most perceptive and careful social scientists must take care to distinguish the inclusive term povoamento from the more restricted one, or colonização. This is all the more necessary because the important national agency responsible for settlement of all types long was designated as the Serviço de Povoamento (Calmón and Gonçalves, 1909), and was the division of the Ministry of Agriculture that was responsible for the production of some of the most comprehensive compendia of materials on colonization and settlement that have ever been made (cf., for example, Silva Rocha, 1919). In dealing with this problem Diégues (1959, p. 127) insisted that to distinguish colonization as such from povoamento, at least two criteria must be employed, namely, provisions to establish small farms and systematic assistance to the colonos or farm operators. Even more incisive are the specifications given by lawyer-sociologist Rios (1961, p. 200), who first raised the question of “como entender a palavra colonização?” succinctly surveyed the meanings attached to it at various times and places, and then gave the following specifications:

Colonização ficou sendo, para nós, a ação pública ou privada que visa subdividir a terra para nela estabelecer famílias ou comunidades, sob a forma de núcleos de pequenos proprietários, prestando-lhes todo auxílio e assistência técnica.

A much more complicated version of this eventually was included in the definition used in Brazil’s Estatuto da Terra (Maia, 1967, pp. 221 and 291), her nearest approximation to agrarian reform legislation.

As indicated above, in the various Spanish American countries no considerable use is made of poblamiento as the equivalent of colonization or settlement. This does not mean, though, that the Colombian equivalents of settler, settlement as a process, settlement as a neighborhood or community, resettlement project, and resettled family, as these terms have figured in American English, are generally accepted and used throughout the other Spanish American countries. Neither does it indicate that no other designations for the substantives which necessarily must figure in this study are commonly applied to the phenomena. Thus in Argentina (Domike and Others, 1965, p. 75) asentamiento is employed to denote various governmental programs to create new agricultural establishments and two of its specific varieties are distinguished as follows:

Por “colonización” se entiende el establecimiento de colonos en tierras de la frontera del desarrollo agrícola o en terrenos fiscales vírgenes; los programas de “reasentamiento” se realizan en terrenos que fueron de propiedad privada.

Just across the international boundary in Chile, however, the word asentamiento...
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miento seems to be used only to designate a temporary place of abode, or camp, of families figuring in one of the colonization projects (Sternberg and del Canto, 1966, pp. 276 and 278); colonización seems to include parcelación as well as settlement projects in general; and either colono or parcelero seems to be used to designate the participant in one of the resettlement projects (ibid., pp. 248–251). Moreover, in Chile colonización definitely is employed to designate problems for bringing about a redistribution of the ownership and control of the land and also the spontaneous occupation of portions of the public domain (ibid., 248–251, 217–219, and 396). Finally, to mention just one more case, in Venezuela (Shaya, 1961) the term asentamiento is used to designate what is called a reasentamiento in Argentina and a parcelación in Colombia.

Such an enumeration could be continued at considerable length, but it is hoped that the illustrations given are sufficient to demonstrate conclusively that the terminology employed throughout the Americas in treating the subjects of colonization and settlement is still in a highly confused state.

Historians have not yet traced for us the development of the Spanish and Portuguese equivalents for the English family of words that centers about the infinitive “to settle”. In the case of the Spanish terms it is just possible that they go back to the colonies of German Catholic farmers that were transplanted into locations in the Sierra Morena late in the eighteenth century (Townsend, II, pp. 265–273), although Ward’s great Proyecto Económico for the development of Spain, written in 1762 and published posthumously in 1779, makes specific use of the term colonia to designate not only his proposed settlements of immigrant Catholic farmers (p. 69), but those of transplanted groups of Spaniards as well (p. 91). In any case the various terms under consideration here were well established in the Spanish American countries and the Brazilian half of South America before specialists from the United States played any significant role in observing and analyzing the lands and peoples to the south of the Rio Grande.

Eventually scholars from this country, led by geographers Isiah Bowman, George M. McBride, and Mark Jefferson, did begin writing about the lands and peoples of South and Central America. But all of them seem to have slipped rather naturally and perhaps unconsciously in the use of colonize as the equivalent of to settle, of colonization as synonymous with settlement (either as a process or as a group of families that had settled), and of colonist as a synonym for settler. In this they have been widely followed by those who subsequently studied and wrote about the establishment of families on the land throughout the various Latin American countries.

In my own case, however, the record shows that the mixed up terminology early was a matter of some concern, and I recall rather vividly the difficulties I had in explaining to my friends and associates in the United States just what
was involved in my work for the Colombian government during the years 1943–1945 when my title was that of Advisor on Colonization and "Parcelization." As a result when the first edition of my Brazil was published I felt obliged to include the following paragraph on the opening page of the chapter on "Colonization and Settlement" (Smith, 1946, p. 530).

A few words are necessary concerning the specific connotations of "colonization" and "settlement" as these expressions are used in this chapter. They do not have the meanings usually attached to them in English writings, but are intended to denote the more specific concepts prevailing in Portuguese and Spanish America. Thus "colonization" as used here refers not to the establishment of the original settlers in Brazil, but to the activity programs or projects by which governmental and private agencies are subdividing large properties; placing families on the farm plots so created; and extending aid, assistance, and supervision in an attempt to establish communities of small farmers on the land. "Settlement" has a similar connotation, except that it is broad enough to include the more independent or spontaneous developments by which land gets into the control of the small-farming classes, the density of population is increased, and large tracts of unused or slightly used lands—the latifundia of the Brazilians—come to be the seats of numerous firmly established neighborhoods and communities. Together the terms "colonization" and "settlement," used with reference to twentieth-century Brazil, may be thought of as including all the processes by which a class of small farmers in securing possession of the land.

Adequate bibliographies and specialized journals dealing with colonization and settlement in Latin America are a thing of the future, if, indeed, they ever become available. Three bibliographies have been useful in the preparation of this review. The most important of these is The Handbook of Latin American Studies, edited annually in the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress. Specialists at many institutions scattered throughout the United States collaborate in the work of finding, sifting, and annotating the selections it lists. The first issue of this annual was published in 1935 by the Harvard University Press, which continued the work for the succeeding 12 numbers. All subsequent volumes, beginning with Number 14, which appeared in 1951 (with materials for the year 1948) have borne the imprint of the University of Florida Press. The items dealing with colonization and settlement ordinarily can be identified only if this part of their content is reflected in their titles, but even so this is by far the most useful guide available to those who must search for materials on those subjects.

A second important aid is Carroll's (1965) comprehensive bibliography on Land Tenure and Land Reform in Latin America. For recent materials on colonization this is far more complete than the Handbook of Latin American
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Studies. However, even though its author is hopeful of getting out his compilation in printed form, the bibliography itself, and a large number of the items it lists, have appeared in mimeographed form only. This raises a fundamental question as to the degree to which the interests of fruitful scholarship are served by extensive listings in bibliographies, or of references, in review articles such as this one, to mimeographed materials. Librarians seem unable to cope with them; and not a few of the researchers who assiduously seek for copies of the same never succeed in being able to consult the items in which they are interested.

A short bibliography devoted specifically to Colonization and Settlement prepared by the staff of the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin (1968) is the third item deserving mention in this section. It is not restricted to Latin America, although the items dealing with Brazil and the Spanish American countries figure heavily in the list it contains. Originally issued in 1964, it was reissued with an addendum in 1965, and again in 1968. It, too, is only in mimeographed form.

As far as I have been able to discover, there are practically no periodicals devoted to colonization and settlement. Fortunately the three that I know of all are parts of my personal library, but all of them belong to the past. The first is the Boletim da Diretoria de Terras, Colonização e Imigração of the Secretaria de Agricultura, Industria e Commercio of Sao Paulo; and fairly certain that four numbers appeared, the first in October 1937 and the fourth in December 1939. The editor of this periodical, Henrique Doria de Vasconcellos, was largely responsible for its publication. After the first issue the word Serviço replaced Diretoria in the title, a change corresponding to that in the name of the agency responsible for it. Extremely important for all related to immigration and internal migration in Brazil, only the second number of the series contains much that deals specifically with colonization.

About 1940 Doria de Vasconcellos went to Rio de Janeiro to help organize and direct the national Conselho de Imigração e Colonização, a part of the Ministry of Foreign Relations; and in 1940 the first numbers of the Revista de Imigração e Colonização appeared. My own collection of this important periodical ends with Volume VII (1946), although this is not the last one in the series. Its various numbers are filled with important articles on colonization as well as many about immigration.

The third periodical is the Boletín del Instituto Nacional de Colonización once published by the corresponding division of Uruguay’s Ministério de Ganadería y Agricultura. The first number of this is the one for February 1949, and Eduardo Llovet was its moving spirit. My own collection terminates with No. 120–121 for the month of August, 1962. During the period covered, one when colonization projects were used to superimpose an agricultural economy
upon Uruguay's traditional pastoral way of life, this small publication undoubtedly did much to disseminate the fundamentals of agriculture to Uruguay's new farmers. If and when some one undertakes a fundamental study of colonization in Uruguay, such as those made of Argentina (Taylor, 1948) and Mexico (Whetten, 1948), this modest publication probably will figure as one of the most important sources of information.

A FEW NOTABLE LANDMARKS

There are few prominent landmarks to guide anyone who plunges into the study of the development of scientific work dealing with colonization and settlement. But there are some known to the present writer, largely as a result of his own studies of society in Brazil and Colombia, and it is entirely possible that others can be identified and described by those who have done intensive work on some of the other countries.

It is ironical, to say the least, that we must go back almost a century in order to find the most comprehensive and analytical treatise on colonization, or the establishment of settlements of families headed by the operators of small and medium-sized farms, in Latin America. Moreover, on this subject, as in most other work on sociocultural matters, it was the Brazilians who led the way, perhaps because many of its outstanding intellectuals chose to express their thoughts about society rather than the short story or novel which was used almost exclusively by the Spanish American counterparts (cf. Smith, 1957). In any case in 1875 a monumental work by Cardoso de Meneses e Souza entitled Theses sobre Colonização no Brazil was published in Rio de Janeiro by the government of the Empire of Brazil. This appeared 13 years before slavery was abolished in that great country, and while the movement (led by the Emperor himself) to establish settlements of small farmers from Europe in favorable locations was in its heyday. Hence it is not strange that emphasis in the great work was upon the problems of colonies of immigrant farmers. The following extracts from a previous endeavor (Smith, 1946, pp. 551-552) to assess the importance of this notable study indicates why I consider it still to be one of the most important landmarks in the development of knowledge on the subject of colonization and settlement.

The 1870's, however, should always be reckoned as the critical years in Brazil's colonization program. This was the time when an accounting had to be made for the haphazard manner in which colonization activities had proceeded, when thorough investigations of the colonies in existence were called for in order to satisfy criticisms at home, and to combat adverse publicity abroad. But the investigations were made, the reports were published, many improvements in planning and administration were made, and the nation was launched on the program that brought settlers in greatly
increased numbers. The investigations made included one having to do with the relations between fazendeiros and colonos on São Paulo coffee fazendas, where the German laborers were raising severe protests; another was made of the colonies in southern Baía, and a third investigation was made of the German settlements in the province of Santa Catarina, including Blumenau and D. Francisca. However, most important of all the studies was one that resulted in the report to the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works, entitled "Theses About Colonization in Brazil," a volume of 429 pages plus Appendices A to I. This study examined in a systematic manner the deficiencies in Brazil's program of colonization and made recommendations for its improvement. The author's analysis is very enlightening. After noting that Argentina and the United States were more successful than Brazil in attracting immigrants, he set forth the following as the defects in Brazilian colonization theory and practice and then proceeded to a detailed analysis of each of the defects listed:

I. The lack of liberty of conscience; the nonexistence of civil marriage as an institution; imperfections of education; ignorance and immorality of the clergy; the ambition of the Brazilian Episcopate for temporal power, transformed into a struggle improperly called the religious question.

II. Lack of educational institutions and principally the absence of agricultural and professional instruction.

III. The small number of institutions of credit, especially of banks designed to aid small farmers and industrious men, the existence of State land, and the absence of joint capital, which could be placed upon industrial freedom to legislate and make administration more efficient and developing individual initiative.

IV. Defects in the law concerning contracting of services and share contracts with foreigners; defects in and failure to execute the public land laws and the lack of land tax upon lands lacking buildings and cultivation.

V. Lack of transportation systems and ways of communication, that would link the center and the interior of the Empire to consumer and export markets.

VI. The creation of colonies far from markets on sterile, unprepared land, as well as the lack of facilities for receiving immigrants and colonists in the ports of the Empire and for their permanent establishment in the colonies of the State, or on the plots of land that they buy.

VIII. The failure to make Brazil known in the countries from which the emigration which we need proceeds, and to refute, by all the means of a readily understood publicity, and by ready and disinterested pens, the writings by means of which in those states we are depreciated, our errors in relation to the emigrants exaggerated, and hateful calumnies raised against us (pp. 551-552).

Perhaps it would have been just as well to have begun this mention of highly selected works by naming Mulhall's (1873, especially pp. 57, 88–93, and 105–152) interesting account of his visit to the German agricultural colonies in Rio Grande do Sul. This description by the editor of an English language newspaper in Buenos Aires seems to be the first substantial publication, in Eng-