

Devastação ambiental da Floresta Ombrófila Mista no Sudoeste do Paraná: Palmas como entrada da “locomotiva fumegante do progresso” (1935-1955)

Environmental devastation of the Mixed Ombrophile Forest in the Paraná Southwest: Palmas as the entry of the “smoke locomotive of progress” (1935-1955)

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Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century, the southwest of Paraná had a vegetation cover in which the Mixed Ombrophilous Forest – MOF – predominated. With the beginning of the colonization in the region, the predominant landscape of the MOF began to be devastated. Palmas/PR was one of the first municipalities to grant licenses for the timber sector in 1935. This article aims to analyze the role played by Palmas in a movement to relocate sawmills from União da Vitória/PR and surrounding areas, epicenter of the MOF devastation in the period, to the southwest. Therefore, from the perspective of global environmental history, we sought to demonstrate that with political and economic support coming from the capital of the state between 1935 and 1955, the first sawmills were installed and regularized in Palmas and roads were created to enable the advancement of these companies and the colonization over the southwest.

Keywords: global environmental history; Palmas/PR; Mixed Ombrophilous Forest (Araucaria Forest); environmental devastation; southwestern Paraná.

Resumo

No início do século XX, o sudoeste do Paraná possuía uma cobertura vegetal em que predominava a Floresta Ombrófila Mista – FOM. Com o início da colonização da região, a paisagem predominante da FOM passou a ser devastada. O município de Palmas/PR foi um dos primeiros a conceder licenças para o setor madeireiro no ano de 1935. Este artigo tem o objetivo de analisar o papel que Palmas desempenhou em um movimento de deslocamento de serrarias de União da Vitória/PR e adjacências, epicentro da devastação da FOM no

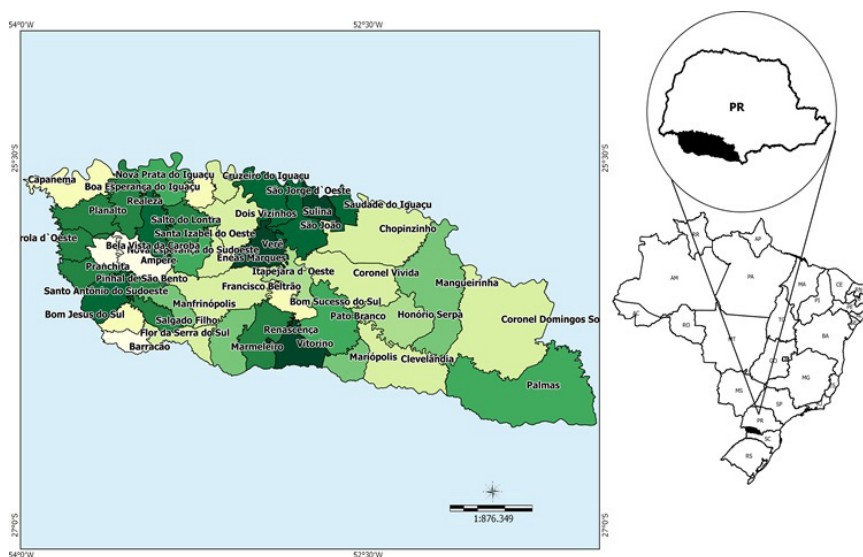
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período, para o sudoeste. Com isso, desde a perspectiva da história ambiental global, buscou-se demonstrar que, com apoio político e econômico advindos da capital do estado entre os anos de 1935 e 1955, as primeiras serrarias são instaladas e regularizadas em Palmas, e que estradas são criadas para que empreendimentos desse gênero e a colonização avançassem sobre o sudoeste. **Palavras-chave:** História Ambiental Global; Palmas/PR; Floresta Ombrófila Mista; devastação ambiental; Sudoeste do Paraná.

Introduction

This study seeks to understand the role played by the municipality of Palmas/PR in the installation of sawmills that promoted environmental devastation in the state of Paraná, mainly represented by the extraction of species from the Mixed Ombrophilous Forest – MOF (Araucaria Forest). The region covers a 1,163,842.64-hectare area and is located in the third plateau of the state of Paraná (MAACK, 2017, p. 138), in the belt that borders the Argentinian Republic in extreme west, in the south of the Iguazu River, bordering the state of Santa Catarina in the south (IPARDES, 2004) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Updated map of Southwestern Paraná



Source: Caderno Territorial, Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário (2015). Municipalities in alphabetical order: Ampère, Barracão, Bela Vista da Caroba, Boa Esperança do Iguaçu, Bom Jesus do Sul, Bom Sucesso do Sul, Capanema, Chopinzinho, Clevelândia, Coronel Domingos Soares, Coronel Vivida, Cruzeiro do Iguaçu, Dois Vizinhos, Enéas Marques, Flor da Serra do Sul, Francisco Beltrão, Honório Serpa, Itapejara d'Oeste, Manfrinópolis, Mangueirinha, Mariópolis, Marmeleiro, Nova Esperança do sudoeste, Nova Prata do Iguaçu, Palmas, Pato Branco, Pérola d'Oeste, Pinhal de São Bento, Planalto, Pranchita, Realeza, Renasçença, Salgado Filho, Salto do Lontra, Santa Izabel do Oeste, Santo Antônio do sudoeste, São João, São Jorge d'Oeste, Saudade do Iguaçu, Sulina, Verê, and Vitorino.

The historiography of the state of Paraná presents several analyses on the socio-spatial formation of the municipality of Palmas. Some examples are the works by Wachowicz¹, Machado², and Heinsfeld³, in addition to the reports put forward by local memoirists such as Bauer⁴, Bauer⁵. Great part of these

¹ WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: LíteroTécnica, 1985. p. 27-64.

² MACHADO, Paulo Pinheiro. O sertão de Palmas: fronteira agro-pastoril e conflitos sociais. In: Congresso Latino Americano de História Econômica. Montevideo: International Economic History Association, Universidad de la Republica, v. 1, p. 53-58, 2007.

³ HEINSFELD, Adelar. *Fronteira e ocupação do espaço: a questão de Palmas com a Argentina e a colonização do vale do rio do Peixe/SC*. São Paulo: Perse, 2014. p. 73-81, 128-149.

⁴ BAUER, José. *Reminiscências, histórias de Palmas*. Palmas: Kaygangue, 2002.

⁵ BAUER, Celso. *Palmas nas vivências de um campeiro*. Palmas: Kaygangue, 2017.

works focused on 19th century events when the region was named Campos de Palmas⁶. Other relevant themes were researched in the last decade such as the cases of individuals enslaved in Campos de Palmas as reported by Machado⁷ and the changes promoted to the landscape of Campos de Palmas, from the 1950s onwards, as a result of the timber and livestock activities, which were analyzed by Carlin⁸.

For being an older municipality, already existing at the time of the empire, this location already had a population that had been working in the livestock activity for generations. Those activities were developed based on slaving socio-economic relations, and after the abolition of slavery, they continued in precarious working conditions and employing descendants of those that had been previously enslaved. That was a typical model of Portuguese colonization. In the early 20th century, the region witnessed an outflow of people who did not find ways of surviving in Palmas and moved to other cities such as Guarapuava and towards the southwestern Paraná, as already reported by Correa⁹, Abramovay¹⁰, and Wachowicz¹¹, among others.

Based on sources found in Palmas, we observed that the municipality was one of the gates for those entering the Paraná southwest region, not only due to the immigration flows, but also via the MOF devastation, in which immigrants had direct participation. This means that on the one hand, Palmas lost inhabitants who sought to survive somewhere else, but on the other hand, the municipality also received a flow of immigrants to work in the timber industry, either as owners or as workers, and others who bought areas covered in MOF and sold those trees to the sawmills as a way of creating agricultural areas to establish their crops.

⁶This name was given to the municipality by a military officer that commanded the genocide of Kaingang indigenous tribes in Guarapuava between 1814 and 1819. His expedition left from Palmas. The Emancipation Act and an official version of the history of that municipality can be found at: Prefeitura Municipal de Palmas - PR (pmp.pr.gov.br).

⁷MACHADO, Jose Lúcio da Silva. *O sertão e o cativo: escravidão e pastoreio. Os Campos de Palmas – Paraná, 1859-1888*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Universidade de Passo Fundo: Passo Fundo, 2014. p. 83-142.

⁸CARLIN, Janete Chaves. *Entre campos e florestas: transformações da paisagem no município de Palmas/PR: 1950-1980*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019.

⁹CORRÊA, Roberto Lobato. *O sudoeste paranaense antes da colonização*. Revista Brasileira de Geografia. Rio de Janeiro, n.º 1, p.87-98, jan/mar. 1970a.

¹⁰ABRAMOVAY, Ricardo. *Transformações na vida camponesa: o sudoeste do Paraná*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia), Faculdade de Filosofia Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo: São Paulo, 1981.

¹¹WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: LíteroTécnica, 1985; WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *História do Paraná*. Curitiba: Imprensa Oficial do Paraná: 2001.

Thus, in the light of the global environmental history perspective, we analyzed the relevance of the Palmas' ways for the advancement of the timber activity in the southwest region, which owned preserved forests in the early 20th century. Taking that into consideration, we surveyed the first registers of sawmills found at the city hall of Palmas dating back to 1930, which was quite early when compared to other cities in the region. Next, we introduced the MOF characteristics in southwestern Paraná. After that, we analyzed the advancement of sawmills located in Palmas and their effects on the forests of the region.

Characterization of the Mixed Ombrophilous Forest

The MOF, also called Araucaria Forest, is one of the vegetable formations in the Atlantic Forest¹² and has different academic classifications with subtle variations in some cases. According to Nodari¹³ and Veloso¹⁴, MOF is a vegetable formation where *Araucaria angustifolia* predominates at the top, sheltering hundreds of other vegetable species underneath, these include mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*), tree fern (*Diksonia sellowiana*), canela lageana (*Ocotea pulchella*), imbuia (*Ocotea porosa*), woolly jelly palm (*Butia eriospatha*), and Brazilian cedar wood (*Cedrela fissilis*), among others.

MOF is divided into four groups, which refer to the altitudes of the areas occupied by those forests. Such subdivisions comprise the alluvial MOF, located close to rivers; the submontane MOF, found in areas whose altitude ranges between 50m and 400m; the Montane MOF, from regions whose altitudes range between 400m and 1,000m; and the high-montane MOF, located in altitudes higher than 1,000m¹⁵.

¹²The Atlantic Rainforest (Mata Atlântica) is a biome formed by four phytophysionomy groups, covering 17 out of the 27 Brazilian states, from the south to the northeast, found in the west, in the states of Goiás and Mato Grosso do Sul. With the CONAMA Resolution n. 249, of 29th January 1999, published in the Federal Official Gazette, and the approval of the Law n. 11.428 of 22nd December 2006, a convention was set to classify the phytophysionomic groups that make up the Atlantic Rainforest, namely, Dense Ombrophilous Forests (FOD- Florestas Ombrófila Densas); Open Ombrophilous Forests (FOA - Florestas Ombrófila Abertas); Mixed Ombrophilous Forests (FOM - Florestas Ombrófila Mistas); Semidecidual and Decidual Seasonal Forests (FES - Florestas Estacionais Semidecíduais and FED (Florestas Estacionais Deciduais); mangroves; altitude fields; interior swamps; Northwestern forestry enclaves, and sandbank vegetation.

¹³NODARI, Eunice Sueli. Florestas com araucária: uma história do antropoceno. In: NODARI, E. S.; CARVALHO, M. M. X.; ZARTH, P. A. (org.). *Fronteiras fluídas: florestas com araucárias na América Meridional*. São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018b.

¹⁴VELOSO, Henrique Pimenta. *Classificação da vegetação brasileira, adaptada a um sistema universal*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1991.

¹⁵VELOSO, Henrique Pimenta. *Classificação da vegetação brasileira, adaptada a um sistema universal*. Rio de

The MOF vegetable formation once occupied almost half of the Brazilian southern region. Nodari¹⁶ reported that in its original formation over 200,000 km² were covered in FOM, which was found in some parts of the state of Minas Gerais, appeared more intensely in the Serra da Mantiqueira in the state of São Paulo and the Misiones province in Argentina and “[...] In Paraná, it was found in around 37% of the territory; while in Santa Catarina, 31% of the land presented this vegetable cover, and in Rio Grande do Sul 25% [...]”.

Regarding, southwestern Paraná, studies demonstrated that the appearance of one of the most remarkable MOF species, *Araucaria angustifolia*, also known as araucaria, pine tree, or Paraná pine tree dates back to 13,400 BP, while the peak of its development occurred around 4,210 BP. These data were confirmed by Bertoldo, Paisani and Oliveira¹⁷ in their research developed using samples and palynology techniques at the Buriti Ecological Interest Area of the State Conservation Unit in Pato Branco /PR.

Researching southwestern Paraná, mainly adopting the environmental history perspective, implies addressing the human action that practically devastated it. Thus, it is vital to understand the araucaria species, as well as other species found in the MOF and in the SSF as central historical agents in the interpersonal relations and of physical and ideological constructions. The remarkable physical magnificence of the pine trees placed them, over time, in a privileged position in relation to the human beings, who worshiped and respected them, coexisted with them, and were fed by them (their seeds are edible).

The advancement of sawmills in southwestern Paraná moving from Porto União/SC and União da Vitória/PR to Palmas.

The occupation and emancipation of Palmas date back to the Brazilian monarchy time and because of that, the municipality owned communication and trade flows with other states already established since the 19th century. One of the first colonization settlements built in that century, Campos de Palmas and its neighboring areas were predominantly occupied by the Kaingang

Janeiro: IBGE, 1991. p. 71-73.

¹⁶NODARI, Eunice Sueli. Florestas com araucária: uma história do antropoceno. In: NODARI, E. S.; CARVALHO, M. M. X.; ZARTH, P. A. (org.). *Fronteiras fluídas: florestas com araucárias na América Meridional*. São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018b. p. 12.

¹⁷BERTOLDO, Édson; PAISANI, Julio Cesar; OLIVEIRA, Paulo Eduardo. Registro de Floresta Ombrófila Mista nas regiões sudoeste e sul do Estado do Paraná, Brasil, durante o Pleistoceno/Holoceno. São Paulo, *Instituto de Pesquisas Ambientais*, 2014, v. 41, n.º 1, pp. 1-8. p. 4.

Xokleng and Guarani Indigenous peoples, who had been living there for centuries before the arrival of the settlers¹⁸. Regional (re)occupation processes contributed to the massacres against those peoples and the formation of the empire internal and external borders, as reported by Machado¹⁹, Heinsfeld²⁰, and Petrolí²¹. In such context, Palmas created connections with the states of Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, and particularly with the municipalities of Porto União/SC and União da Vitória/PR. These two municipalities also favored its connections to the capital of the state.

The relationship with Porto União and União da Vitória was quite relevant for the entrance of timber companies in Palmas. Those two municipalities favored Palmas's connection to the São Paulo-Rio Grande do Sul Railway – EFSPRG. The areas connected by that railway since the late 19th century became the epicenter of the MOF devastation, mainly by the American company *Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization*²². Close to the EFSPRG, several smaller sawmills were built and operated²³ enabling the exploration of new colonization and migration areas.

The connection between Palmas and União da Vitória originated in the 19th century and was used by cattle drivers to reach Curitiba. According to Straube²⁴, Porto União and União da Vitória/PR were founded due to the existence of a ford in the Iguaçu River which, among other destinations, enabled the passage of cattle drivers from the Campos de Palmas to the

¹⁸ RODRIGUES, Ivan.º *Etnohistória Kaingang na região de Palmas/Paraná: um olhar para a relação com o meio ambiente*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2021. p. 23; LOURDEAU, Antoine. *et al.* Pré-história na foz do rio Chapecó. Chapecó: *Cadernos do CEOM*, 2016, v. 29, n.º 45, pp. 220-242. p. 224;227.

¹⁹ MACHADO, Paulo Pinheiro. *Um estudo sobre as origens sociais e a formação política das lideranças sertanejas do Contestado: 1912-1916*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Campinas: Unicamp, 2001. p. 37-40.

²⁰ HEINSFELD, Adelar. *Fronteira e ocupação do espaço: a questão de Palmas com a Argentina e a colonização do valo do rio do Peixe/SC*. São Paulo: Perse, 2014. p. 73-81.

²¹ PETROLI, Francimar Ilha da Silva. O “descobrimento” dos Campos de Palmas e a configuração de uma problemática complexa no sul do Brasil – 1841-1853. Joinville: *Anais do XVII Encontro Estadual de História da ANPUH-SC*, 2018. pp. 1-18.

²² CARVALHO, Miguel Mundstock Xavier. *Uma grande empresa em meio à floresta: a história da devastação da floresta com araucária e a Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization: 1870-1970*. Tese (Doutorado em história). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2010.

²³ SILVA, Claiton Marcio da.; BRANDT, Marlon.; CARVALHO, Miguel Mundstock Xavier. Uma história ambiental da fronteira sul: campos, florestas e agroecossistemas. In: RADIN, José Carlos.; VALENTINI, Delmir; ZARTH, Paulo (org.). *História da fronteira sul*. Chapecó: UFSC, 2016.

²⁴ STRAUBE, Kelly von Knoblauch. *A Estruturação sócio-espacial do sistema tropeiro: o caso do caminho das tropas entre Palmas e União da Vitória-PR*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia). Curitiba: UFPR, 2007. p. 10; 116.

Campos de Curitiba. Such strategic point in the river for the crossing of mules, horses, cows, and pigs was also used by the cattle drivers of Palmas to transport animals from the west of the Chopim River to the Curitiba market²⁵.

In the mid-20th century, the number of sawmills in the south of the country was quite high. The Instituto Nacional do Pinho – INP (National Pine Institute) – agency responsible for regulating the *araucaria* extraction at that time, recorded 2,773 sawmills cutting pine for the domestic and foreign market, as well as 4,444 other sawmills cutting hardwood (including several species), which were either mixed or served the domestic market only, as reported by the environmental historian Eunice Nodari²⁶.

Throughout the 1940s, the German geologist Reinhard Maack traveled all over the state of Paraná to investigate the state phytogeographical formation and published the results of his studies in partnership with the Geology and Petrography Service of the Biology and Technological Research Institute – (IBPT, Serviço de Geologia e Petrografia do Instituto de Biologia e Pesquisas Tecnológicas) in the Phytogeographical Map of the State of Paraná in 1950 (Figure 2). In that period, the number of sawmills in Paraná grew sharply, while a decrease was observed in Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul²⁷. Such phenomenon might be linked to the end of commercial *araucarias* in those two states along with the immigration of many timber industries to Paraná, where the sawmills advanced aggressively toward the remaining forests that had attracted great attention since the late 19th century. These were the *araucaria* forests of western Palmas and Guarapuava, which included southwestern Paraná.

²⁵ STRAUBE, Kelly von Knoblauch. *A Estruturação sócio-espacial do sistema tropeiro: o caso do caminho das tropas entre Palmas e União da Vitória-PR*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia). Curitiba: UFPR, 2007.

²⁶ NODARI, Eunice Sueli. Florestas com *araucária*: uma história do antropoceno. In: NODARI, E. S.; CARVALHO, M. M. X.; ZARTH, P. A. (org.). *Fronteiras fluídas: florestas com *araucárias* na América Meridional*. São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018b. p. 23.

²⁷ NODARI, Eunice Sueli. Florestas com *araucária*: uma história do antropoceno. In: NODARI, E. S.; CARVALHO, M. M. X.; ZARTH, P. A. (org.). *Fronteiras fluídas: florestas com *araucárias* na América Meridional*. São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018b. p. 23.

Figure 2 – Phytogeographic map of the state of Paraná published by Reinhard Maack in 1950



Source: Archives of the Technology Institute of Paraná – (TECPAR- Instituto de Tecnologia do Paraná)²⁸. Key: beige areas are natural fields; light green areas are secondary woods predominating in the araucaria zones or areas of transition to SSF; green areas are MOF; dark green areas are Dense Ombrophilous Forest – DOF; light blue areas are SSF; tropical green areas are savannahs.

Most of the southwestern Paraná was covered in forests (Figure 2), either MOF or SSF and natural fields. When the immigrants started to colonize the states starting from western Palmas, from the 1940s onwards, and mainly in the 1950s, a proper structure of roads did not exist, this factor hampered the wood transportation²⁹.

The historiography indicates, however, that many timber businessmen entered the forests and in an illegal process started to cut pine trees to sell in Rio Grande do Sul, travelling through other ways, not necessarily going through Palmas, as explained by the researcher Joe Foweraker, who reported that “[...] since the level of investment needed to start extracting wood was

²⁸ Retrieved from: Tecpar. Accessed on 20/06/2020.

²⁹ PIN, André Egidio. *Mas pai, aonde estão os pinheiros do Paraná? A devastação da Floresta Ombrófila Mista no sudoeste do Paraná - 1935-1975*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2022. p. 60.

quite low, an unknown number of sawmills, which was very high, operated without obstacles and clearly out of the INP control.”³⁰. In this case, it seems relevant to mention that the National Pine Institute (INP - Instituto Nacional do Pinho) was created in 1941, that is, the practice described by Foweraker had been occurring before that.

Evidence of the illegal cut of araucarias in the southwestern region were also presented by Wachowicz³¹, who emphasized, in an interview given by the former CITLA director, Mario Fontana, that the extraction of wood in the border region of the municipalities Barracão, Santo Antônio, and Pranchita was carried out by immigrants from Rio Grande do Sul, who entered the forests and cut illegally those MOF species, sending them to their original state using the precarious roads that linked the municipalities bordering São Miguel do Oeste/SC up to Iraí /RS. Mario Fontana stated in that interview that up to the 1950s, it was impossible to trade the MOF extracted from southwestern Paraná due to the lack of roads to transport it³².

Therefore, when Palmas was connected to the EFSPRG, it received many timber companies that had been developing such activity in Rio Grande do Sul and in Santa Catarina, mainly in the Contestado region³³. One hypothesis is that those timber businessmen took advantage of the wood market flow via the EFSPRG to move from their original locations and create a different route towards the west, via General Carneiro, when this municipality was still a district of Palmas.

Such flow started in the 1930s, considering the legal standpoint since the first permits and licenses granted by the municipality of Palmas for this type of business date back to 1935, as recorded in the city hall books of register. As indicated by the historiography, however, and considering the municipal borders which were not very clear or inspected at the time, illegal sawmills could have started to operate much earlier, at the same time, and after those that got the license³⁴.

³⁰ FOWERAKER, Joe. *A luta pela terra: a economia política da fronteira pioneira no Brasil de 1930 até os dias atuais*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores S. A., 1982. p. 65-66.

³¹ WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: LíteroTécnica, 1985.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 197-199.

³³ BAUER, José. *Reminiscências, histórias de Palmas*. Palmas: Kayganguê, 2002. p. 180.

³⁴ WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *História do Paraná*. Curitiba: Imprensa Oficial do Paraná: 2001. p. 68; FOWERAKER, Joe. *A luta pela terra: a economia política da fronteira pioneira no Brasil de 1930 até os dias atuais*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores S. A., 1982. p. 65-66.

The owners of small farms, mostly immigrants, saw the possibility of surviving with the exploration of firewood or by burning trees, even before the sawmills, to plant their crops. Carvalho³⁵ highlighted that the most devastated areas or those that were completely devastated were those divided into small properties, and that the population used a lot of firewood as the main or only source of energy. They also sold their trees to sawmills, which became a common practice throughout the period of extraction of MOF species. This practice was also recorded by Carlin³⁶, who pointed out that many sawmills “[...] were not the owners of the lands where they cut the pine trees. It was a common practice to buy only the trees. Many of these purchases were legal and registered in registry offices where private contracts were executed [...]”.

In the late 2010s, Carvalho³⁷ stated that the most preserved araucaria forests in Paraná were located in the municipalities of Palmas and General Carneiro. Some hypotheses might be considered regarding this phenomenon. The families of the 19th century and their heirs were mostly dedicated to the livestock activity; therefore, their businesses did not demand the destruction of those forests. In addition, on the one hand, they might have considered keeping the forests as inheritance or on the other hand, they might not have managed to cut the trees before the changes occurred in the environmental law.

Apparently, the first situation, in which livestock activities were prioritized prevailed since there is no evidence that the large landowners of Palmas were really concerned with the preservation of the natural environment of the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and they were used to the indiscriminate hunting of animals that they considered harmful to their cattle breeding activity, such as jaguars³⁸. In other words, those owners of large portions of land opted for breeding cattle, and even if this might seem a paradox, this decision resulted in the preservation of the local MOF. In general, the environment was managed without any planning,

³⁵ CARVALHO, Miguel Mundstock Xavier. *Uma grande empresa em meio à floresta: a história da devastação da floresta com araucária e a Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization: 1870-1970*. Tese (Doutorado em história). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2010. p. 87-88.

³⁶ CARLIN, Janete Chaves. *Entre campos e florestas: transformações da paisagem no município de Palmas/PR: 1950-1980*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019. p. 82.

³⁷ CARVALHO, Miguel Mundstock Xavier. *Uma grande empresa em meio à floresta: a história da devastação da floresta com araucária e a Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization: 1870-1970*. Tese (Doutorado em história). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2010. p. 87.

³⁸ CARLIN, Janete Chaves. *Entre campos e florestas: transformações da paisagem no município de Palmas/PR: 1950-1980*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019. p. 64-65.

or any help from the government, without scientific guidance regarding environmental issues, or basic infrastructure³⁹.

Lack of infrastructure in western Palmas

Considering the process of colonization of Palmas in the first half of the 20th century, that is, through immigration and the timber activity that devastated the local MOF, it is also possible to characterize the occupation of the whole southwestern Paraná by immigrants. However, while there were not proper roads or more modern means of transportation to link Palmas to the whole region that environment remained more preserved. This occurred because up to the 1950s the sawmills had no means to market their products outside the region⁴⁰.

Such situation is evidenced in several documents, such as the chapters written by engineers and politicians in the book called “Cinquentenário da Estrada de Ferro do Paraná” (Fifth Anniversary of the Railway in Paraná). It was published in 1935 and was part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the railway in this state. Some of the chapters reveal relevant information about the construction of the railway in the state, pointing out the mistakes made, and the efforts needed to change the scenery of the economy of the state of Paraná in the 1930s.

One of the chapters published in that book, which addresses the lack of infrastructure in western Palmas in the early 20th century was named “Expansão econômica do Paraná” (Economic Expansion of the state of Paraná). It was written by the federal deputy João Moreira Garcez. The material had been prepared for a conference that had been held in 1929 at the “Centro Paranaense” (Paraná Center) in Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital at that time. In that chapter the deputy presented an overview of the economic situation of his state of origin. The document contained several analyses of the economy of Paraná, including activities such as the exportation of farming products and the extraction activities developed in the state in the 1920s. According to João Moreira Garcez, “Coffee, mate and wood were undoubtedly the real dynamic factors of progress in the state”⁴¹.

³⁹ WAIBEL, Leo. Princípios da Colonização Européia no Sul do Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, Ano XI, 1949, nº 2, pp.159-222. p. 171-181.

⁴⁰ PIN, André Egídio. *Mas pai, aonde estão os pinheiros do Paraná? A devastação da Floresta Ombrófila Mista no sudoeste do Paraná - 1935-1975*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2022. p. 58-65.

⁴¹ GARCEZ, João Moreira. *Expansão econômica do Paraná*. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada*

Garcez also pointed out that, although the mate (*ilex paraguariensis*) extraction was highly profitable and important for the state economy in the 1920s, there were growing difficulties faced to extract and transport it, since every year, the points that processed the mate became more distant from railway or ports, which made transportation a hard issue “[...] with the penetration to the interior of the state, in the west, where there were no convenient ways to promote the circulation of such wealth”⁴².

The “west” as referred by Garcez was in fact the Southwest region. Such denomination was used by politicians and intellectuals of the state of Paraná to refer to the territories on the west side of Palmas and Guarapuava, that is, southwestern and western Paraná. This was observed in the works presented by the deputy João Moreira Garcez⁴³ and Domingos Nascimento (1903), and also in other publications by the government of the state that in 1940 included that region under the jurisdiction of the Western Paraná Administrative Department – (DAOP - Departamento Administrativo do Oeste do Paraná)⁴⁴.

In the excerpt quoted above, we observed that native mate areas were being devastated in the same way as the MOF located close to the EFSPRG. The deputy never mentioned the possibility of reforestation, or any subjects linked to environmental preservation. Nature was only seen as a processable resource.

In the sequence of his communication, the deputy João Moreira Garcez presented data about the economic values resulting from the extraction and exportation of the Brazilian mate, and more specifically, of that produced in Paraná. Mate exploitation was only considered less profitable than that of coffee, which in both Northern Paraná and other Brazilian regions, had access to the railway⁴⁵.

Regarding this matter, João Moreira Garcez defended that the construction of a minimally structured road network towards the west of the state would improve the economic potential linked to mate exploitation.

de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935.pp 211-234. p. 155.

⁴² GARCEZ, João Moreira. Expansão econômica do Paraná. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935*. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935.pp 211-234. p. 160.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ *Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas, 1936-1950*. p. 27 e verso.

⁴⁵ At the national level, cocoa and coffee also exceeded the numbers presented by the mate (GARCEZ, 1935, p. 161).

He demonstrated that a relevant zone of the state was isolated and used the southwestern Paraná as an example. According to the deputy:

If we consider the mate extracted from Clevelandia, Palmas, and Mangueirinha, which must be transported for over a 100 kilometers on mule back followed by over 150 kilometers in wagons, and then over 500 kilometers by train, and finally 1,600 or 2,000 kilometers of maritime navigation, depending on the port of destination, either Buenos Aires or Rozario, with a total journey of almost 3,000 kilometers, including 8 or 10 transshipments.

[...]

What is verified in relation to mate, *mutatis-mutandis*, applies to wood, which has shown growing acceptance in both the domestic and foreign market; however, the exports volume has not grown in the proportion expected (emphasis in the original document)⁴⁶.

If this problem was already a matter of concern in relation to the exploration of mate, which had always been transported on mule back through narrow paths⁴⁷, we can imagine the difficulties, if not impossibility, of removing wood from the southwestern Paraná in that period. Therefore, “this creates the pressing need currently felt quite intensely in relation to the exploration of other mate and pine sources, which might offer better commercial advantages”⁴⁸.

Therefore, João Moreira Garcez emphasized his arguments related to the need to create means of transportation for the export of wood and mate to be explored in western Paraná, taking advantage of the Iguaçu and Ivaí Rivers, the latter was located more to the north and was relevant in the Campo Mourão/PR region – to take their products to the Paraná River, and from there to the markets of neighboring countries. While regretting that situation, the deputy defended that the state should consider the construction of roads enabling the exploration of the western MOF resources a relevant

⁴⁶ GARCEZ, João Moreira. Expansão econômica do Paraná. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935*. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935.pp 211-234. p. 165. grifo no original.

⁴⁷ STRAUBE, Kelly von Knoblauch. *A Estruturação sócio-espacial do sistema tropeiro: o caso do caminho das tropas entre Palmas e União da Vitória-PR*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia). Curitiba: UFPR, 2007. p. 18.

⁴⁸ GARCEZ, João Moreira. Expansão econômica do Paraná. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935*. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935.pp 211-234. p. 168.

“civilizing work” with a “patriotic purpose”⁴⁹. And stated that, while that was not possible, the region presented

[...] great future that was reserved to the interior of the state of Paraná [concluding that] the use of such immeasurable wealth, this **extraordinary inheritance that nature so generously offered to us**, in the activation of all these economic energy sources, depended on the transportation factor (our emphasis)⁵⁰.

The MOF species were seen as a type of savings account provided by nature, as if there was no other perspective to that natural life, the deputy also neglected local society, already established there since the late 19th century⁵¹ and the Indigenous populations who had been living on that land for hundreds of years⁵². The absence of modern transportation enabled some extra years for the existence of those peoples and the local MOF, as opposed to the “civilization” that would devastate them in a short period of time.

In the same publication, the text “Planos viário e ferroviário do Paraná” (“Road and Railway Plans in Paraná”) was found. This chapter was elaborated by the civil engineer Adriano Goulin, who was a professor at the Engineering College of the University of Paraná and a technical consultant for the Curitiba city hall. He also presented data related to the infrastructure situation in the Southwest region of the state.

Goulin emphasized that, despite the roads already built in Paraná up to the 1920s, which were fundamental for the economic success of the state, it still lacked interconnections with the regions in the west of Palmas and Guarapuava. Referring to the already mentioned deputy João Moreira Garcez, who was also an engineer, Adriano Goulin defined the situation as follows:

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 172. grifos meus.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 171.

⁵¹ CORRÊA, Roberto Lobato. *O sudoeste paranaense antes da colonização*. Revista Brasileira de Geografia. Rio de Janeiro, n.º 1, p.87-98, jan/mar. 1970; WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: LíteroTécnica, 1985; PASSOS, Aruana Antonio. *História de sangue e dor: crimes passionais no sudoeste do Paraná: 1909-1939*. Dissertação (Mestrado em história). Curitiba: UFPR, 2009; MONDARO, Marcos Leandro. *Territórios migrantes: transterritorialização e identidades em Francisco Beltrão/PR*. Dourados: UFGD, 2012; LAZIER, Hermógenes. *Estrutura agrária no sudoeste do Paraná*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Curitiba: Universidade Federal do Paraná, 1983.

⁵² RODRIGUES, Ivan.º *Etnohistória Kaingang na região de Palmas/Paraná: um olhar para a relação com o meio ambiente*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2021; LOURDEAU, Antoine. *et al. Pré-história na foz do rio Chapecó*. Chapecó: *Cadernos do CEOM*, 2016, v. 29, n.º 45, pp. 220-242.

Since the 1st National Road Congress of 1916, in which the renowned representative of our state, civil engineer João Moreira Garcez, demonstrated brilliantly and surprised most of the attendees that we have in this small unit of the federation the widest road network of the country, and up to the 2nd Pan-American Road Congress of 1929, where a well prepared material was presented by one of the delegates of the state of Paraná, the distinct civil engineer Angelo Ferraro Lopes, we could observe that the state always outstands in relation to the other units of the Brazilian federation.

However, despite having such an important network of magnificent roads, the Paraná production still requires faster and more economic means of transportation, and quite vast and rich regions demand means of communication to improve the use of their wealth and possibilities.

There is only one railway reaching the region, the São Paulo-Paraná Railway, whose route does not favor our state.

Although we own some good trunk lines in our road network, we still lack real trunk lines in our railway⁵³.

In agreement with the discourse by politicians and businessmen addressing nature in the interior of the state of Curitiba, the engineer reaffirmed the absence of infrastructure in southwestern Paraná, and the same dissatisfaction shown by João Moreira Garcez, with the high fares charged by the EFSPRG to transport goods, when referring to the company as “not favoring the state” and later on stating that the goods transported via the Paranapanema route presented much lower costs than those transported by the EFSPRG.

For these reasons and, mainly the plans of extraction of whatever could be processed from the MOF at the time, Goulin defended the need for expanding the roads towards the west, so that the interior of the state of Paraná could know the “smoky locomotive of progress”, allowing entrepreneurs and colonizers to “[...] seek the richness that was guarded by the gigantic forests that covered its lands and mountains, which were hidden underground, or existed in the bottom of its rivers, or that were spread throughout its vast and infinite fields and natural herbs”⁵⁴.

⁵³ GOULIN, Adriano. Planos viário e ferroviário do Paraná. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935*. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935. pp 211-234. p. 212, grifos meus.

⁵⁴ GOULIN, Adriano. Planos viário e ferroviário do Paraná. LIMA, Caio Machado. In: *Cincoentenário da estrada de ferro do Paraná: 1835-1935*. Curitiba: Rêde de Viação Paraná-Santa Catarina, 1935. pp 211-234. p. 216.

Since the construction of railways in the regions in the west of Palmas and Guarapuava was not viable, the engineer requested the construction of roads, and the conservation of the existing ones. One of those roads was called Curitiba-Barracão, and was the former way used by the cattle drivers who left Palmas to reach Curitiba. And from Palmas heading to Barracão, in the west, the road should go past Clevelândia, according to that engineer⁵⁵.

However, Goulin⁵⁶ admitted that the construction of the last stretch of that road was not carried out by the government of the state of Paraná, and wrote “unfortunately, the current starting point of the latter is located in the state of Santa Catarina. That is why, it is so urgent to establish the missing connections, so that the Jangada-Barracão stretch is added to the trunk line that we have just described”. In fact, there was a plan to build up a railway whose starting point was Curitiba, going past São Matheus do Sul, União da Vitória, Palmas, Clevelândia, and up to the border with Argentina⁵⁷.

Other documents evidencing the importance of Palmas in this process – that is, the advancement of the environmental devastation towards the southwestern MOF – are the surveys carried out by the Colonization Department of the Public Building, Roadwork, and Agriculture Secretariat of the State of Paraná, in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Those studies revealed in maps that, for the state administration, the access to the southwest of Paraná should be through the municipality of Palmas, without any other ways to access the region, at least there were no other minimally structured roads that would enable their use by large wagons or trucks. The unpaved roads that existed in Paraná in 1930 are shown below (Figure 3).

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 215.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 215.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 215.

Figure 3 – Map of unpaved conserved roads showing the roadworks carried out by the Governor Manoel Ribas in the period 1932 – 1938.



Source: Instituto Água e Terra (IAT) do Paraná (Water and Land Institute of Paraná).

This material was elaborated aiming to report the roadworks carried out during the administration of governor Manoel Ribas. On the map, the dark blue line indicates that there were unpaved conserved roads up to the place where the municipality of Pato Branco was founded some years later as a result of the arrival of immigrants started in the 1940s. That was the only way linking the municipalities located in the west of the Chopim River, in the south of the Iguaçu river and the capital of the state, Curitiba, that is, the largest part of the region.

Even taking that into consideration, these data are questionable when opposed to the moist reality of the MOF and other documents of the period. Bearing in mind that in the 1940s there was still a dense belt of preserved MOF in southwestern Paraná⁵⁸, and that that forest main characteristic was moist and high rainfall rates throughout the year, it is very unlikely that an unpaved road, which would probably be muddy most of the time, could remain suitable for the traffic of heavy vehicles for long periods without maintenance.

In addition, some years later, the analysis of documents produced by the state government of Moysés Lupion revealed that there were no established routes between the capital and the municipalities in the southwest beyond Palmas. In the early 1940s, the region was also claimed by the federal

⁵⁸ COMISSÃO PRÓPRIA DE INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE AS TERRAS DO SUDOESTE DO DO SENADO FEDERAL. Brasília: *Diário Oficial do Congresso Nacional*, 11 de abril de 1959. pp. 1.350-1.381. Retrieved from: Arquivo Nacional (an.gov.br). Accessed in July 2021. p. 1.356; WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: LitteroTécnica, 1985. p. 189.

government for the creation of the Iguaçu State (1943-1946), which delayed the recognition of the state of Paraná.

In this sense, Palmas was a partner of the state government when in 1940 the public administration focused on the region and started to build bridges, since the absence of such structures to cross the Chopim River, for example, hampered the connection of the southwest to the capital, Curitiba and the ports.

The first sawmills in the municipality of Palmas

Between 1930 and 1940, Palmas established a new trade front, that is, the first sawmills with technological devices that enabled the legal exploration of the region's native wood. As a consequence, the MOF devastation increased, invading areas that were somehow still preserved in the southwest, where the colonization had only started.

According to the documents available in Palmas' archives, the executive branch in the city created some regulation for the first sawmills in the city in 1935. Palmas held at the time the jurisdiction of a large extension of land, from which several districts were separated, originating new towns in the following decades. General Carneiro is one example of this since it was a district of Palmas, emancipated in 1961⁵⁹.

In a period of over ten years, there were at least 15 sawmills operating legally. Of course, there were those that operated without permits and those that were not included in the records. Thus, in 1935, through the licenses n.º137 and 138, two sawmills were registered and authorized to operate. The owners were Candido de Oliveira Syres and Roberto Schanauffer, respectively, according to the data verified in the book of registers of the City Hall of Palmas, n.º 2 and 4 – Licenses 1935-1948, in the Archive of Palmas. In the following years, other 17 sawmills were regulated (Chart 1).

⁵⁹ Municipal Law n.º 4.339, of 25 January 1961, General Carneiro/PR. Retrieved from <https://www.general-carneiro.pr.gov.br/municipio/historia/>. Accessed on 20/03/2023.

Chart 1 – Licenses granted to sawmills in the municipality of Palmas between 1935 and 1948.

Number of sawmills in chronological order	License number/ mayor	License	Beneficiary	Municipal Secretary	Date
1	nº 137/ Rafael Ribas, Palmas mayor/	“license to open a sawmill at the rocio in this city”.	Candido de Oliveira Syres	Alipio Nascimento Ribas	23/03/1935
2	Nº 138 / Rafael Ribas, Palmas mayor	“license to open a sawmill at the rocio in this city”.	Roberto Schanauffer	Alipio Nascimento Ribas	08/05/1935
3	Nº 156/ Deocleciano de Souza Nenê, Palmas deputy mayor	“license to open a sawmill at the place called Rio Farias in the district of General Carneiro”	Intor P. Kia	Sthilio Masalotti (Secretary’s Assistant)	24/11/1936
4	nº 254/ Pompilio Mendes de Camargo, Palmas mayor	“license to open a sawmill at the place called ‘Passo Grande’, located in in the district of General Carneiro”	Francisco Lazari & Cia	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	20/02/1941
5	n.º 255/ Pompilio Mendes de Camargo ¹ , Palmas mayor	“license to open a sawmill at the place called ‘Passo da Galinha’, located in the district of General Carneiro”.	Guilherme Voehringer	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	-
6	n.º 270/ Pompilio Mendes de Camargo, Palmas mayor	“license to set up a sawmill at the place called São Bento, in the district of General Carneiro”.	Herminio Longo	Amantino de Melo Ribas (representing Saldanha da Gama Ribas)	20/05/1941
7	n.º 277/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to set up a sawmill at the place called, Rio Souza, District of General Carneiro”.	João Rotta & Sons	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	18/10/1941
8	n.º 278/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called Rio Xavier, in the district of General Carneiro”.	João Rotta & Sons	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	11/11/1941
9	Nº 280/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called Pouso Bonito, District of General Carneiro”.	Alberto Martini & Brothers	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	18/10/1941
10	n.º 284/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called Barro Faria district of General Carneiro”.	Herminio Longo	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	18/10/1941

continue

conclusion

Number of sawmills in chronological order	License number/ mayor	License	Beneficiary	Municipal Secretary	Date
11	n.º 290/ Rutilio Ribas	“license informed in the Permit n.º254, to open a sawmill at the place called Passo Grande, in the district of General Carneiro”	Lazzari e Ritzmann Ltda	Saldanha da Gama Ribas	08/01/1942
12	n.º 323/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called São Pedro, District of General Carneiro”.	Pedro N. Pizzato e Filhos	Antonio	14/10/1942
13	n.º 324/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called São João, in the district of General Carneiro”.	Pedro N. Pizzato e Filhos	Antonio	14/10/1942
14	n.º 325/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to set up a ‘Sawmill’, at the place called São Pedro, in the district of General Carneiro”.	Pedro N. Pizzato e Filhos	Antonio	14/10/1942
15	n.º 326/ Rutilio Ribas	“license to open a sawmill at the place called Arroio do Gado, District of General Carneiro”.	Guilherme Bendelím	Antonio	20/10/1942
16	n.º 641/ Antonio Oliveira Franco, deputy mayor	“license to set up a second class Commercial Store, to sell groceries in general, located on the São Bento farm, close to the Tamandoá River, attached to the Lima Vegetal Sawmill, belonging to the same commercial group, in the district of General Carneiro”.	Serrarias Reunidas Irmãos Fernandes S/A	Carlos Saldanha	28/03/1946
17	n.º 668/ Elpídio Aranja	“license to open a sawmill at the place called ‘Colônia Augusto Leureiro’, in the district of Bituruna”.	Ervino Arnhold	Antonio	05/10/1946
18	n.º 711/ Antonio Oliveira Franco	“license to open a sawmill at the place called São Lourenço, in the main ‘District in this municipality”.	Codega & Cia	Antonio	01/10/1947
19	n.º 760/ Bernardo Oliveira Vianna	“License to open a sawmill at the place called Colonia Augusto Loureiro, District of Bituruna”.	Florido Abrão & Cia	Alberto Iluztor	30/09/1948

Source: Book of records of the Palmas City Hall nº 2 and 4 – Licenses 1935-1948 – Archive of Palmas

Organization: the author.

As evidenced in the documents, the first sawmills authorized by the city hall to operate in the region were mainly located in the district of General Carneiro. This fact calls attention and confirms the arguments that Palmas was the entrance gate for the MOF devastation in southwestern Paraná in a flow that started in the region of União da Vitória.

General Carneiro is located between Palmas and União da Vitória, that is, the old division of municipalities where the sawmills started to establish, as shown by the first permits granted. The installation of sawmills at that spot seems to have been the main reason for the foundation of the district of General Carneiro and its consequent emancipation from Palmas. Another interesting situation was observed in the Permit nº 641, in which the owner of the Lima Vegetal Sawmill registered with the city hall, a grocery store, that is, a retail store selling food and other goods, whose main customers were probably the sawmill workers.

The predominance of surnames of Italian and German origin was observed in the licenses. Those immigrants also marked the colonization of other parts of the southwestern Paraná, as illustrated by many authors⁶⁰. In addition to the environmental impacts, the advancement of those entrepreneurs created socioeconomic impacts. For this reason, the municipality of Palmas created a Price Committee in 1943 to deal with the economic instability of that period. The minutes of a meeting in which the Price Committee was created informed:

[...] for being of great interest to the wellbeing of the residents of Palmas and the larger Brazilian family, given the abnormalities of the moment and the uncertainties of the future [...].

[...] so that the work to be developed, with highly patriotic purposes, were as perfect as possible [...]⁶¹.

The creation of such committee was also an order by the federal government via the telegram nº 629.800, of 12th January 1943. Later, in 1946, the state government sent letters to the city halls informing the creation of

⁶⁰ The word “predominance” is used here in relation to the sawmill operation permits/licenses granted by the city hall of Palmas, rather than social or cultural aspects. Although reports by Wachowicz (1985) somehow relativize the social and cultural relevance and the importance of the workforce of populations with ethnic origins different from the Italians or Germans in the construction of southwestern Paraná, it seems relevant to emphasize that *Caboclos*’ and Indigenous’ societies were equally important in the development of that region. The latter also faced great social, cultural, and territorial losses as shown by Langer (2010, p. 13-39), Flávio (2011) and Mondaro (2012), for example.

⁶¹ ATA DE CRIAÇÃO DA COMISSÃO DE PREÇO, 19 de janeiro de 1943, Palmas. Arquivo de Palmas.

the State Price Committee and the mandatory continuation or creation of municipal price committees, and instructions of how they should be formed⁶². The Decree n.º 9.125, of 4th April 1946⁶³ aimed to stop the inflation all over the country, and undoubtedly the committee had some results for the region or, at least, for the sawmills and the public tax collections since it was the base for other laws approved by the municipality at the time.

Thus, in the 1940s, a new tax law related to farming and extraction activities was implemented by the city. That was Law n.º 16, of 18th October 1948, which provided for tax charges imposed to several activities related to the extraction and processing of wood and other vegetable products. This fact generates evidence regarding the increase in contracts for the extraction of live trees, sawn timber, cellulose, chipped wood, and wood knots. In addition, the municipality imposed taxes on the extraction of mate, butia (*Butia eriospatha*) vegetable hair, and pine fruit.

Law n.º 16, of 18th October 1948

The Municipal Council of Palmas, State of Paraná, pursuant to its legal attributions, Decrees: Art. 1st – The creation, under the heading 0-25-2 – Tax on the Agricultural and Industrial Exploration, a tax related to the Defense of the Vegetable Extraction Production, for the taxation of the following activities:

- a) all hardwood sold as trees for industrialization;
- b) all crude wood in any form, to be processed outside this municipality;
- c) – sawn timber;
- d) – chipped wood;
- e) – laminated wood;
- f) – mechanical paste;
- g) – cardboard;
- h) – cellulose;
- i) – *chimarrão* mate, tea mate or mate plants;
- j) – vegetable hair;
- k) – bark for tannery;

⁶² Art. 15th of the Letter s/n by the city hall of Palmas informed the creation of the structure of the Price Committee of the State of Paraná in 1946, and determined that the municipal committee should include seven members, as follows: “The members of each Municipal Price Committee shall be seven and shall be appointed by the Mayor of the respective municipality, and officially nominated by the Minister of Labor, Industry, Commerce, or certified delegates, as follows: one representative of commerce, one representative of industry, one representative of farm and livestock producers, the mayor, and the prosecutor”.

⁶³ The State Committee was subjected to the Central Price Committee of the Labor, Industry, and Commerce Ministry. The Decree n.º 9.125, of 4th April 1946, Art. 9th provided for the creation of the municipal committees.

l) – pine knots;

m) – pine fruit.

sole paragraph: The tax above, shall not be charged on any type of wood destined to the construction of buildings and the facilities of the respective sawmills and industries if built inside this municipality, or even on any other vegetable extraction production destined to the exclusive use of their producers [...] ⁶⁴.

Such law exempted the wood used to build sawmills from taxes and this was a type of tax incentive for the advancement of the sawmill businesses, which employed a lot of people, as reported by Flores⁶⁵. In addition, this law evidences how widespread was the exploitation of the MOF in that municipality, which taxed not only sawn wood, but also pine fruit, butia vegetable hair, and mate. All these species are characteristic of the natural formation of the araucaria forest. Art. 6th of that law created three tax inspection points, two located in the district of General Carneiro, and another in the district of Bituruna.

Permits from the 1950s are not found in the books of registers of the Archive of the Palmas city hall, which are kept by the Palmas IFPR Library⁶⁶. However, based on the literature, we believe that other sawmills started their activities in that period. In the following decades, dozens of other sawmills started their activities in the municipality, and in 1965, the Industrial Register (1965) recorded the existence of 37 sawmills in Palmas. It seems relevant to emphasize that in 1965 many municipalities such as General Carneiro had already been separated from Palmas, and thus the number of sawmills in the 1950s was higher. For example, when adding the 19 sawmills registered in General Carneiro to the 37 existing in Palmas, we observe the existence of 56 companies in this activity. Also about those companies, Carlin⁶⁷ elaborated a mapping in his work, which calculated and demonstrated the places where sawmills were installed in Palmas in the period between 1970 and 1980.

⁶⁴ CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE PALMAS. Lei n.º 16, de 18 de outubro de 1948. p. 16.

⁶⁵ FLORES, Edson Luiz. *Industrialização e desenvolvimento do sudoeste do Paraná*. (Dissertação). Francisco Beltrão: Unioeste, 2009a. p. 15-52.

⁶⁶ The source research in said archive was carried out in 2019.

⁶⁷ CARLIN, Janete Chaves. *Entre campos e florestas: transformações da paisagem no município de Palmas/PR: 1950-1980*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Chapecó: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019. p. 89.

Going to the west of Palmas

As evidenced, the concrete way for the advancement of the “smoky locomotive of progress” to the southwest and west of Paraná was to use the roads that the municipality of Palmas had already established years before to reach the Curitiba market. One of the ways to go past Palmas towards the west was that used by the cattle drivers to get to the place named Mangueirinha after its emancipation, going past the Chopim River. At least from 1939 onwards, the executive branch of Palmas already controlled a ferry boat crossing the Chopim River. According to the information found in the Book of Contracts of the Palmas City Hall (*Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas*) (1936-1939), the ferry boat was located at a place called Passo do Pinhal.

The analysis of contracts through which the city hall of Palmas outsourced the operation of the ferry boat via concessions enables the perception that those were predominantly granted to entrepreneurs linked to the timber business, and most of them came from other states. The first contract, for example, gave the ferry boat concession to an immigrant from Rio Grande do Sul called Honório Serpa⁶⁸. That man had inherited 2 thousand hectares from his father-in-law in Passo do Pinhal, which became a district of Mangueirinha in 1964, and was emancipated in 1993. After emancipated, Passo do Pinhal was renamed Honório Serpa, paying homage to the timber businessman and the ferry boat concession holder between 1939 and 1941⁶⁹.

Later, several other contracts were executed, on average at every two years with other residents of that place^{70;71}. Also in the 1940s, Palmas mayor became representative of the DAOP and could attract new contracts of infrastructure for the region. This reinforced the importance of the municipality for the advancement of the “smoky locomotive of progress” in the southwest. In 1949, the first contract for the construction of a bridge over the Chopim River, in Passo do Pinhal, was executed.

The contract was executed by and between Palmas mayor, representing the DAOP, and José Salvador, and obliged the latter to deliver at least 60

⁶⁸ *Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas, 1936-1950*. p. 27 e verso. p. 11.

⁶⁹ The municipality of Honório Serpa is located between Mangueirinha, Coronel Domingos Soares, Pato Branco, and Clevelândia, as observed in Figure 4, on page 25 in this article. See also the IBGE portal: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/pr/honorio-serpa/historico>. Accessed on 04/10/2021.

⁷⁰ *Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas, 1936-1950*. p. 12-16.

⁷¹ It seems relevant to mention that only the front part of the document is numbered, the back has no number. Thus, some contracts might be found on the back of page. For example, back of page 12.

m³ wood within four months. The contractor, an immigrant from Bento Gonçalves/RS, was responsible for the whole workforce to saw, prepare, and transport the amount of wood required for the bridge construction.

Agreement executed by and between the Western Paraná Administrative Department (DAOP - Departamento Administrativo do Oeste do Paraná), represented by the mayor of Palmas, Mr. Bernardo Ribeiro Vianna and José Salvador, as follows:

On the twenty-fourth ... nineteen ninety-nine, at the Secretary of the City Hall of Palmas, state of Paraná, there was a meeting between Dr. Bernardo Ribeiro Vianna, mayor, representing the DAOP, and me, Alberto Kluge, City Hall Secretary, at ten o'clock, and Mr. José Salvador, Brazilian, married, born in Bento Gonçalves, state of Rio Grande do Sul, with permanent address at the place called Salais, District of this municipality, and stated to be aware his proposal was accepted as advantageous to provide workforce for the extraction, preparation, and transport of the wood destined to the construction of the bridge over the Chopim River, at the place called Passo do Pinhal, in this municipality. He came to confirm and adjust with the Department the beginning of the said wood services for the respective construction. For this purpose, I, Alberto Kluge, City Hall Secretary, wrote this agreement that is ruled by the following conditions:

1st - José Salvador as the contracted party, is willing to perform the workforce service, extraction, preparation and transport of the wood destined to the construction of the bridge over the Chopim River, at the place called Passo do Pinhal, in this municipality;

2nd - The contracted party undertakes to provide the services of workforce, extraction, preparation, and transport of the total amount of wood needed for the bridge construction, as described in the estimates organized by the State Road Department, and to be paid Crz 550.00 (five hundred and fifty cruzeiros [the Brazilian currency at that time]) for each cubic meter, delivered at the place where the bridge is to be built;

3rd - The contracted party, pursuant to the previous clauses, undertakes to deliver to the city hall at the place appointed, all the wood destined to the construction, obeying the sizes determined in said estimates, within 4 (four) months, as of the date of this agreement;

4th - The City Hall of Palmas, representing the Western Paraná Administrative Department, as the contracting party, undertakes

to pay to the contracted party Crz 30,000.00 (thirty thousand cruzeiros), as soon as he delivers part of the wood, that is, around 60 (sixty) cubic meters, at the place of the construction;
5th - The remaining value to be paid to the contracted party shall be paid by the Western Paraná Administrative Department⁷².

In the contract transcribed above, the type of tree to be cut was not specified. In general, however, this type of construction was made with imbuia wood – due to its high durability and resistance – and pine wood. Other contracts found in the city hall of Palmas and other municipalities of the southwestern region evidenced that the use of imbuia wood for this purpose was recurrent, as well as in other specific functions in civil construction⁷³. In August 1949, the city hall of Palmas executed another contract for the construction of the bridge over the Chopim River, linking two farms from the region. The bridge was 31.0m long and 4.0m wide.

The “Agreement executed by and between the city hall of Palmas, represented by its mayor, Dr. Bernardo Ribeiro Vianna and Antonio Mariano Ribas [...]”. provided for the construction to be made of imbuia:

The said construction shall use the best quality imbuia, with guardrails on both sides; it shall have strong foundation on the margins to support the bridge, and contention for the land built using boards of the same wood. The whole work shall be tied with iron sticks and brackets. Any necessary earth work, including landfills and cuts, shall be provided to guarantee free traffic after the bridge is concluded. The contracted party also undertakes to finish the bridge construction within five months as of the date of signature of this agreement⁷⁴.

These contracts, among others of that period, evidenced the demand for one of the MOF characteristic species. The need to connect villages and small settlements, where extraction industries were established, and the implementation of a concrete corridor between the capital of the state and other municipalities in the southwest of Paraná was pressing. Such connections would guarantee a profitable flow, that is, highly profitable from the economic standpoint, due to both the trees that were cut and the land market.

⁷² *Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas, 1936-1950*. p. 27 and back.

⁷³ Here, we refer to the sources surveyed at the city halls or municipal councils in the municipalities of São João, Itapejara D'Oeste, Chopinzinho, Pato Branco, and Francisco Beltrão, all located in southwestern Paraná, but nor directly cited in this report.

⁷⁴ *Livro de Contratos da Prefeitura de Palmas, 1936-1950*. p. 28 and back; 29.

Thus, the immigrants that occupied the Southwest of Paraná, started to have ways to send their products to the state market, unlike previous periods, when the first settlers would send their farm production and small amounts of wood to the cities of Rio Grande do Sul. In the late 1940s, the immigrant producers whose agent was CANGO, could send products from Francisco Beltrão to Clevelândia, Palmas, União da Vitória, Ponta Grossa, Curitiba, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro⁷⁵. It seems relevant to highlight that the commercial flow in which those immigrants were inserted followed the route to Palmas, with some roads leading to Ponta Grossa, and from Curitiba to other states.

In the document entitled “Concretization of the governor Moysés Lupion’s Work Plan for 1947-1950” (CPOGML - Concretização do Plano de Obras do Governador Moysés Lupion 1947-1950)⁷⁶, published in 1950, some data also revealed the development of some works in municipalities or districts that were accessed by teams sent by the state governor from Palmas, as for example Mangueirinha, Clevelândia, Vitorino, Mariópolis, Pato Branco, Verê, and Francisco Beltrão. Nevertheless, the CPOGML indicates the use of wood, which was probably extracted from the MOF species to build schools, with a standard size of 144m², in 23 places, and the municipality of Palmas is among them⁷⁷.

Apart from the construction of such schools, the document also reports the construction of hygiene units, mixed health, hygiene, and social work units, and roads. Regarding roads, we observed that Moysés Lupion’s government sought to build an alternative way to that of Palmas, linking the municipality of Chopinzinho, which was still a district of Palmas, and from Mangueirinha to Laranjeiras do Sul, overcoming the obstacle imposed by the Iguçu River. Another road built, according to Lupion’s report, was the stretch Mangueirinha-Clevelândia, which covered 48 kilometers⁷⁸.

As observed in the map (Figure 4), in addition to the southwestern region, there were others, which in 1950, had no easy access, and were reached through ways that did not allow the traffic of wagons, trucks, or

⁷⁵ GOMES, Iria Zanoni. 1957: a revolta dos posseiros. Curitiba: Criar Edições, 1986. p. 20.

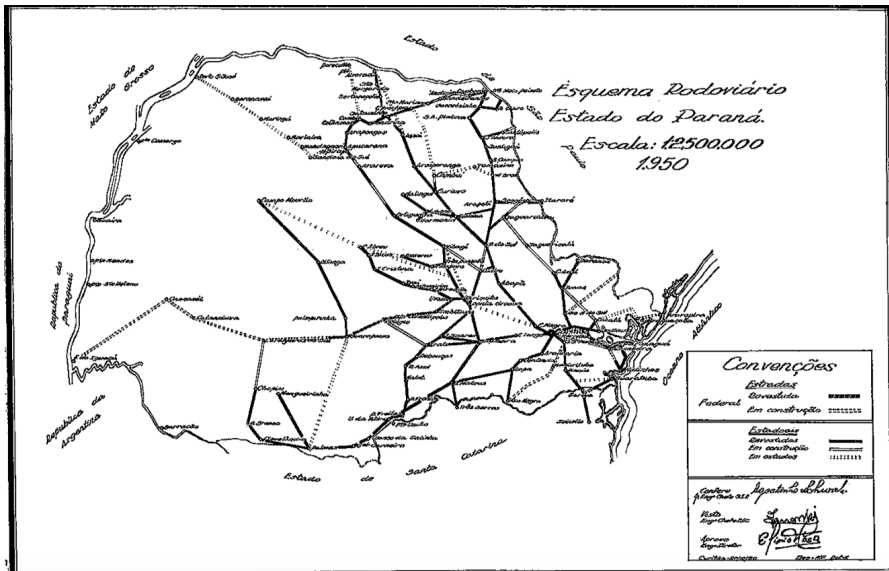
⁷⁶ CONCRETIZAÇÃO DO PLANO DE OBRAS DO GOVERNADOR MOYSÉS LUPION 1947-1950 – CPOGML. Curitiba: Estado do Paraná, 1950.

⁷⁷ CONCRETIZAÇÃO DO PLANO DE OBRAS DO GOVERNADOR MOYSÉS LUPION 1947-1950 – CPOGML. Curitiba: Estado do Paraná, 1950. p. 30, 49, 60, 64, 319, 322, 326, 327.

⁷⁸ CONCRETIZAÇÃO DO PLANO DE OBRAS DO GOVERNADOR MOYSÉS LUPION 1947-1950 – CPOGML. Curitiba: Estado do Paraná, 1950. p. 331, 332, 334.

the locomotive. Among those were Cascavel and Foz do Iguaçu, for example, municipalities that went through a similar process to that of southwestern Paraná from that period onwards, that is, they received immigrants, had their forests devastated, and experienced social conflicts⁷⁹. In the northwest of Guarapuava, the municipality of Campo Morão experienced a similar situation, and according to the CPOGML, it already had conserved roads at the time.

Figure 4 – Map of existing roads in the state of Paraná in 1950.



Source: CPOGML (1950, p. 99).

The map (Figure 4) shows once more how important was the Campos de Palmas way for the introduction of southwestern Paraná in the state market and, consequently, the advancement of the forest devastation. In the map, thicker lines represent conserved roads. The two continuous lines show roads that were being built at the time the map was drawn. This was the access from Chopinzinho (“Chopim”, in the map) to Laranjeiras do Sul, while the colon in parallel lines represent pre-construction studies, and the dark line with white dots are the roads that were already paved.

⁷⁹ Among other references, for reports of social conflicts in western Paraná, see Chagas (2015) and Andrade (2017).

In 1953, the geographer Lysia M. Cavalcanti Bernardes, in her analysis of the colonization in the interior of Paraná, stated that the way linking União da Vitória to the southwest region, through Palmas, gave a new status to the immigration and colonization of the region.

After 1930, with the reorganization of the colonization plan, and later on, the improvement of the União da Vitória-Palmas-Clevelândia road, Pato Branco colony started a new phase. And vast pieces of land, which had not been properly divided yet, were marked and populated, thus forming an active pioneer front attracting countless new dwellers. Moreover, it influenced the birth of a pioneer zone in Pato Branco, an economic factor that cannot be neglected. This resulted in great valuation of farming products and their demand increased in large consumer centers, mainly after 1940, since this was how they could bear the high cost of transportation due to their distance from the markets⁸⁰.

Therefore, it shows that opening these ways enabled the “smoky locomotive of progress” to advance towards the west of Palmas. The immigrants who settled in the region to work in the agricultural activity had some difficulty to sell their excess production in other regions, at least until 1948, with advances from 1956 onwards⁸¹. Some evidence is also provided by the population growth occurred in southwestern Paraná in the early 1950, soon after the insertion of that region in the state market, and consequently, national market. At that time, the population grew from 94,158 to 269,1613⁸², according to the statistical data made available by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – IBGE)⁸³.

⁸⁰ BERNARDES, Lysia Maria Cavalcanti. O problema das frentes pioneiras no estado do Paraná. Rio de Janeiro, *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, ano XV, n.º 3, jul./set. 1953, pp. 335-384. p. 348.

⁸¹ GOMES, Iria Zanoni. 1957: a revolta dos posseiros. Curitiba: Criar Edições, 1986. p. 20.

⁸² It seems relevant to emphasize that the number of inhabitants herein represented refer to the sum of the total population of the municipalities in southwestern Paraná. In 1950, the sum included the municipalities of Clevelândia, Mangueirinha, and Palmas, and in 1960, the municipalities of Barracão, Capanema, Chopinzinho, Clevelândia, Coronel Vivida, Francisco Beltrão, Mangueirinha, Palmas, Pato Branco, and Santo Antônio do Sudoeste. There are some reports, such as Abramovay (1981), Lazier (1983), Wachowicz (1985, 2003), Santos (2008), Briskievicz (2012), Scholz (2015), and Pin (2022), presenting the numbers 76,373 and 230,379, respectively, in 1950 and 1960 in southwestern Paraná. A hypothesis for the different numbers refers to the fact that those authors might not have taken into consideration the number of inhabitants of Palmas, probably due to the several administrative and geopolitical changes occurred in Paraná throughout the 20th century and early 21st century. One example of such reformulations can be found in Ipardes (2009).

⁸³ INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA. *Anuário estatístico do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE,

The population grew, the number of commercial businesses increased, the political organization was expanded, the number of municipalities also grew, as well as the number of sawmills. As a consequence, ambition and social and environmental violence increased in the dispute for the land and the MOF species, mainly araucaria. All these factors called the attention of politicians and powerful businessmen, such as Moysés Lupion and the colonizing companies linked to him, namely Clevelândia Industrial Territorial Ltda – CITLA, Pinho e Terras Ltda, and Colonizadora Leopoldina, and economic groups such as Forte-Khury and Irmãos Slaviero. All colonizing companies and economic groups listed, owned sawmills and timber businesses, and did business that resulted in homicide and extended conflicts with the population of *Caboclos*, immigrants, and Indigenous peoples in southwestern Paraná.

All negotiations between the state government and the economic groups Forte-Khury and Irmãos Slaviero were legally challenged⁸⁴. They evidenced the political force that was the basis for the entrance of economic groups linked to the colonization and timber businesses in the southwestern Paraná using Palmas' roads as the way to reach the capital in the 1940s and 1950s.

Final considerations

This article addressed the relevance of the Palmas way for the advancement of the local MOF environmental devastation occurred in southwestern Paraná, from the 1950s onwards. At that time, roads were structured linking the municipalities of that region and commercial centers in Curitiba as well as other states. The first roads enabled the transport of farming products produced by small farmers and the wood sawn in regional forests. Such context contributed to raise the interest of politicians and large entrepreneurs in Paraná in advancing over the southwest of the state, which promoted different forms of social and environmental violence. The sources surveyed evidenced that the first southwestern sawmills were installed and legalized in Palmas in 1935, in the district of General Carneiro, which was emancipated in 1961. This is a region close to União da Vitória/Pr, another

1953. p. 64. Retrieved from: [aeb_1953.pdf](#) (ibge.gov.br). Accessed in June 2021; INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA. *Anuário estatístico do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1961. p. 42. Retrieved from: https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/20/aeb_1961.pdf. Accessed in June 2021.

⁸⁴ PIN, André Egidio. *Mas pai, aonde estão os pinheiros do Paraná? A devastação da Floresta Ombrófila Mista no sudoeste do Paraná - 1935-1975*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Florianópolis: UFSC, 2022.

municipality in the region that was considered the center of the MOF devastation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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