

Thesis project: Social change in rural Galicia (1959-1982)

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The goal of this thesis is to study the changes experienced by the peasantry in Galicia in the sixties and seventies to complicate the view of a process still internalized as linear and inevitable and offer a reading from the base and social action.

The idea is to think about the different ways and times the process was absorbed by studying:

- 1) The application and reception of the agricultural policies of the regime, focussing on the role of the Agricultural Extension Service and Land Consolidation Service, thinking about what measures were accepted first, which ones were rejected and which were negotiated and how. For us, the peasant/farmer is an actor with a voice of his own that manages his possibilities depending on the specific context. During the dictatorship, Galician rural society had neither democratic institutional mechanisms nor collective instruments (as pre-war agricultural associations) to influence these policies. The free agricultural unions, outside the official organization, did not become legal until after 1975. This does not mean, however, that no other ways to mediate (or at least try) these processes existed. The study of policies and instruments for the "modernization" of the country, therefore, is not only interesting in itself, allowing us to observe what was the ideal rural from the state power, what means were implemented to achieve it and how they were executed in fact, but also in providing information about the way the groups at which these policies were aimed interact in this process.

From these same perspectives, we will think about the migration and rural exodus, especially at the local level, influenced by industrialization policies or market contexts, but also by cultural changes.

2) The conflicts generated by the installation of polluting industries in rural areas (a nuclear power station, an aluminum factory, etc). We will reflect on the underlying philosophy, why they were projected in a certain place, what consequences had for the whole region and what conflicts were generated. The analysis of actors and motivations mobilized, combined with the elections results at the local level and the agricultural unions in the area, will help us to understand the transition to democracy in rural areas.

We will try to address these issues through a case study (the northern area of one of the most rural provinces of Galicia), with the support of oral sources and the analysis of various documentary sources (funds of General Administration Archive, Provincial Historic Archive, Administration Municipal Archives, etc.) and press of that time.