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STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF MARKETS IN THE ANDER RODOLFO SETTLEMENT HENRIQUE: BUILDING MARKET AUTONOMY

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This study analyzes the structure and operation of markets serving the Ander Rodolfo Henrique settlement in Diamante D'Oeste, Paraná, southern Brazil. The study considers these markets to be social constructions that are permeated by power relations, institutions, and control mechanisms. A case study supported by data collected from 108 family production units and observations of marketing practices demonstrate that supply channels are asymmetrical. Ninety-seven percent of the channels accessed by families are conventional markets linked to agro-industrial complexes and middlemen. Only one percent involves local markets, and two percent involve institutional markets. This configuration ties settlers to long, standardized chains that are negotiated under unfavorable conditions. In these chains, cooperatives, dairies, and middlemen set prices, technical requirements, and logistical conditions. Examining the daily functioning of these markets from the production units reveals a channel typology showing different degrees of diversification. About one-third of families sell through a single channel, 63% sell through two or three channels, and only 4% sell through four or more channels. This differentiation is important because greater diversification provides more flexibility in the face of price fluctuations, whereas specialization in a single channel increases dependence and vulnerability. Markets constitute a field of possibilities in which families decide how, when, and with whom to sell. These possibilities depend on material and organizational conditions, such as access to information, credit, storage, logistics, and collective coordination, as well as the variety of channels and terms. Formal and informal contracts, storage infrastructure, distance to the city, and connectivity structure opportunities for market insertion. The combination of conventional, proximity, institutional, and territorial markets contributes to the construction of markets as spaces for producing value. Therefore, autonomy is not a destination, but rather a process. When co-governed, markets cease to be merely spaces for commercialization and begin operating as devices for autonomy.

Palavras-chave: market autonomy; agrarian reform settlements; family farming; diversification of commercialization channels.