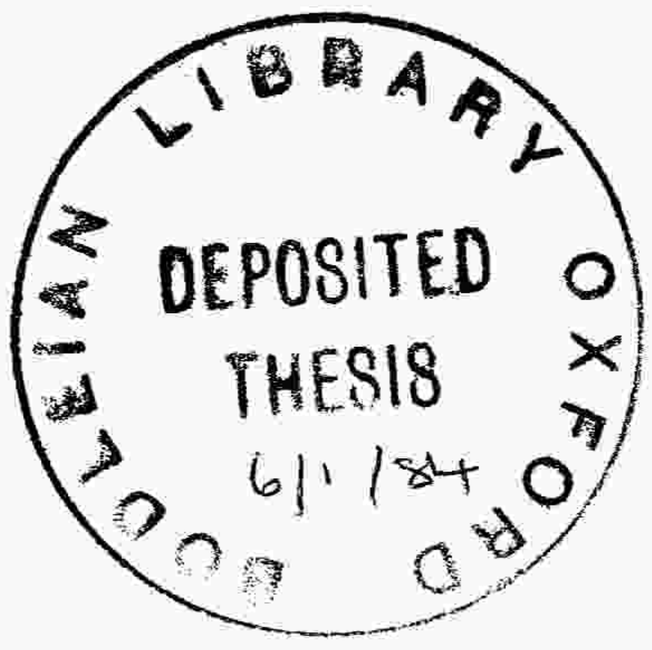
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE NORTHEASTERN SERTÃO OF BRAZIL

by

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ABSTRACT

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This work deals with cultural change in the semi-arid Sertão of Northeast Brazil. Since 1940, the Sertanejo way of life has undergone considerable modification provoked by a process of increasing economic and cultural integration into the national society.

The hardships caused by recurrent drought have been reduced and widescale famine no longer occurs. Also, improved transport facilities, together with new market opportunities, have enabled the limited introduction of irrigation and intensification of stock-raising. These activities are less susceptible to drought but dry farming has been little changed and crop failure is still frequent. This, combined with increasing population pressure and low produce prices, have depressed farming.

Monetarization of the local economy caused growth in other sectors but this was offset by greater unemployment problems created by large-scale substitution of local crafts by manufactured goods. Hence, emigration continues, although drought is no longer the principal cause.

Landless peasants have left the country, thus lessening class disparity there but only shifting it to town. The urban upper classes increasingly accept the national lifestyle and the poor have improved their lot, but the gap between the two is growing.

The kinship system has become more bounded because of the effects of monetarization and the shift away from a rural lifestyle. However, concepts of family honour and morality have changed little and feuding persists.

Political power has shifted from rural to urban groups but leaders are descendants of the traditional families of the past. The structure of the political system, with strict control of higher level politicians over county leaders and the latter over the local people, remains intact.

New religious sects have been introduced and are related to increasing urbanisation. Protestant and Afro-Brazilian sects appeal to some dissatisfied urban merchants and poor labourers but the sects have encountered many obstacles to wider acceptance and so the majority of Sertanejos are still Catholics.

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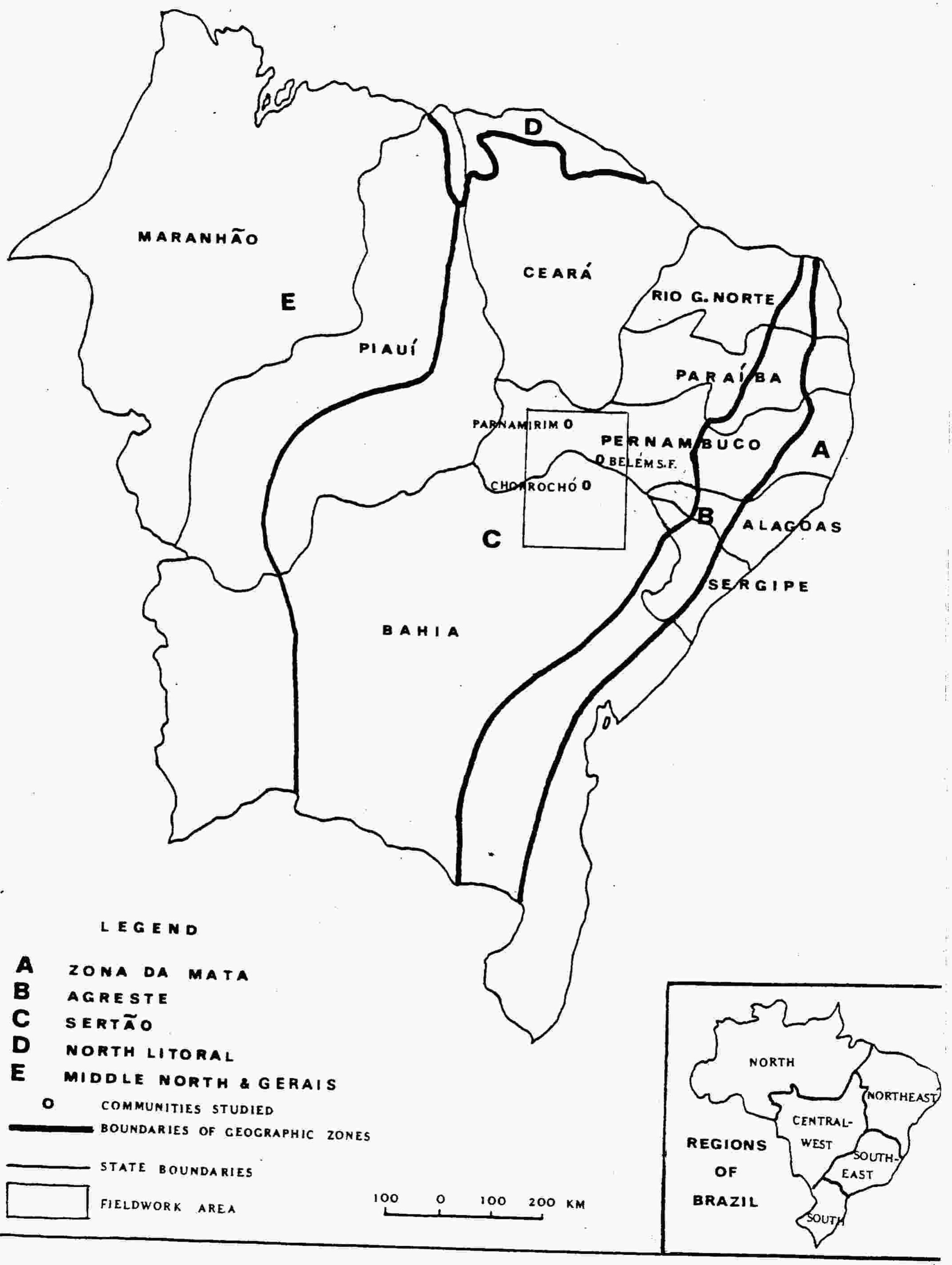
INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sertão is the popular name given to the semi-arid zone of Northeast Brazil (Map 1). The Sertão occupies about one half of the territory of the Northeast and almost all of the states of the region have a substantial part of their area lying in the semi-arid. zone. There were 9,509,115 inhabitants living in the Sertão in 1980 which was about 27% of the regional total.

What distinguishes the Sertão as a particular cultural area within the Northeast is the way of life that has arisen from stock-raising as the traditionally predominant occupation and from the problems caused by periodic drought. In the eyes of other Northeasterners and Brazilians, these two dominant facts of life in the Sertão have made for a type of individual and society considered to be curiously different, yet at the same time authentically Brazilian.

In the last forty years socio-economic change at the national and regional level have brought about a process of increasing cultural integration of the Sertão into the national economy and society. The principal objective of this work is to describe life in the semi-arid zone and how the process of integration is changing it. An evaluation of the cultural transformations in the context of the traditional life-style of the Sertão is made in order to judge their impact. Can the change be characterized as 'development'? Who has benefited most and why? Are the people satisfied with the modification of their way of life?



Map 1. Geographic and Political Divisions of Northeast Brazil

THE SERTÃO AS VIEWED FROM THE OUTSIDE

To most Brazilians the Northeastern Sertão evokes visions of a place that is dry and inhospitable, has *caatinga* thorn bush, and is, like the rest of the Northeast, poor and backward. For the people of the humid areas of Brazil a land as dry as the Sertão in their country seems quite extraordinary. They imagine it as being very hot, dusty, and racked by chronic drought, all of which make life extremely difficult there. The reality of course is not so extreme. One can suffer more from heat in Rio de Janeiro. Most of the country experiences extremely dry seasons every year, when one can choke from the dust on a dirt road and finding enough pasture can be a problem.

The chronic state of poverty and backwardness thought to be widespread in the semi-arid zone is attributed to the recurrent droughts about which most is heard from the Sertão. Even when considering the Northeast region as a whole, droughts are such a common subject that the region and the Sertão are thought to be almost one and the same. As we shall see, the region is one of contrasting physical, climatic and socio-economic types and, ironically, it is precisely the poorer environmental conditions of the Sertão that make for less misery and inequality than are encountered in other parts of the Northeast.

In the newspapers and on television, scenes of the latest drought are shown. The more common journalistic image is of farmer Zé telling a reporter how he has lost all his crops and almost all his herd. Also common is the news that the market in some small Sertanejo town has been invaded by the hungry poor and blame is put on the corrupt local politicians who have ignored the misery of these unfortunates. Occasionally, one sees propaganda boasting of the newest federal

programme to aid the plight of the drought victims or the inauguration of yet another of the largest reservoirs in the world.

Such coverage is of course an invaluable aid to having an emergency declared, just as it is the hinge that squeaks which gets the oil. However, it is reports on the bad and the bizarre, or sometimes on the very good, which are considered to be news and hence reality becomes distorted in the process.[1] At any rate, when the current drought is over, the Sertão is once again forgotten.

Another image of the Sertão and of the Northeast is the one held by most regional and national planners as well as by regional, national and international social scientists who subscribe to development theory. From this point of view the region is considered as backward when compared with other, more industrialized parts of the country, and with other nations. Depending on the author, the society has semi-feudal, pre-capitalist or underdeveloped capitalist aspects which have prevented it from being transformed into the ideal society of the industrial countries. When it can break out of the constraints of a harsh climate, of archaic economic and social structures, then it will become integrated into the national culture. The region will contribute to the overall industrialization of the country and cease to be a drain on Brazil's scanty capital resources. In this view, the national culture is usually equated with the urban industrial society of the Southeast, the 'New' Brazil.

The more cynical counter this position with the criticism that the problems of the Sertão and the Northeast are not being seriously tackled

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[1] This is ironic as it sounds very much like the complaint of the 'developing' countries that the news agencies of the industrial nations do the same, distorting their reality. A development theorist would quickly recognize this as classic: what one country does to another, one region of a country does to another region. Intellectuals of the Northeast have seized upon this idea and increasingly complain about the economic and cultural domination of their region by the Southeasterners.

because the Northeast - as a supplier of cheap labour and a reserve army - is already a functional part of the Brazilian model of development (Oliveira, 1977). Similar to this is the view that the predicament of the Northeast will only be resolved when the Amazon frontier has been fully settled. The escape valve will be stopped and the regional problems of the Northeast will have to be confronted (Becker, 1974; Forman, 1975).

We shall see here that indeed the Sertão is increasingly being tied to the national economy, not just as a source of migrant labourers, but also as a market for the factories of the Southeast and Northeast. In addition, due to increasing demographic pressure and depressed employment opportunity, a substantial part of the population leaves the semi-arid zone. However, the escape valve is not so much the frontier areas as it is the Southeast to where most Sertanejos are drawn by the greater job opportunity found there. This also reflects a greater assimilation of national values, for the emigrants want an urban life-style and work in industry which the Amazon cannot offer them.

A third way of viewing the Sertão from the national level is that found in Brazilian literature. In such works the inhabitants of the semi-arid zone have been variously characterized as tenacious, superhumanly tough and resilient, mystical, highly religious, uncivilized and barbaric (Gross, 1970). This author also cites numerous works about famous Sertanejos who are legends on a national scale, such as the bandit Lampião, the charismatic Padre Cícero and the messianic prophet Antonio Conselheiro; about all of whom work continues to appear. Indeed, the Sertanejo is so fascinatingly 'Brazilian' to literary writers that Queiroz (1976 a) holds that the nationalistic treatises of this century have used him as the archetype of what is uniquely Brazilian.

In fact, in his traditional way of life the Sertanejo fits the typical Brazilian image. He is the descendant of mainly Indians and Portuguese, and not of various European and Oriental immigrants who entered the country more recently and who live along side the earlier Portuguese, African and Indian mixed population in the Southeast and South. The Sertanejo does not put on airs, as do people of the upper and middle classes in large industrial cities. He does not look to North America or Europe for an ideal of culture. His food is Brazilian: beans, cassava meal, dried beef and home made cheese are his staple diet. He dresses simply and wears sandals. Of late, music about life in the Sertão has had a resurgence in popularity and is seen as truly national music in contrast with imported Anglo-American rock-and-roll. Indeed, the latter when performed by local bands in the Sertão is set to the local *forró* beat and the words are unintelligible.

It is no accident that the Sertanejo and the Northeasterner should be considered to be so Brazilian, since it was they who carried out much of the hard work of colonizing the country. They are found nearly everywhere. As Orlando Valverde has declared, "Where the Northeasterner has set his foot, that is Brazil". In the 'New' Brazil, the industrial complex of Greater São Paulo, to which most Sertanejos migrate, Northeasterners make up a substantial part of the local population. They are also to be found by the last great frontier, the Amazon.

THE DELINEATION OF THE SERTÃO WITHIN THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

Each of the above conceptions of the semi-arid zone on the part of outsiders contains an element of truth but the social and physical reality of the Sertão is not quite so simple. Moreover, this reality has been changing over time and also what is meant by the name has changed to some extent.

In other parts of Brazil the term *sertão* refers to the less populated hinterlands, the *interior*.[1] In the Northeast, *sertão* refers to an interior zone where droughts are common, a certain type of vegetation is present and stock-raising on extensive areas of open range has been the traditional mode of human occupation. This zone and its way of life are defined and delineated with reference to the other zones of the Northeast: the Middle North, the Gerais, the Argeste, the Zona de Mata and Litoral Norte (see Map 1).

The Other Zones of the Northeast

The Middle North bounds the Sertão to the west and is a zone of transition to the humid Amazon region. Like the Sertão it has long been characterised by scattered settlements having only a few areas of more concentrated human occupation, with a little over eleven inhabitants per km^2 in the zone as a whole. While there is also a good deal of stock-raising, the increasingly favourable environmental conditions observed as one moves further westward into the zone make for greater agricultural exploitation and denser equatorial forest vegetation. Hence in the Middle North as a whole the countryside is quite different from that of the semi-arid zone. The Gerais is a similar zone of more recent settlement. Soils are poor but rainfall is much higher than that of the Sertão and vegetation is a denser *cerrado* type which reflects its being a transition zone to the Central Plateau.

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[1] Barroso (1947) traces the meaning of the term *sertão* back to the Portuguese explorers. According to this author the term is an abbreviation of *desertão* (great deserted place) or is a corruption of an Angolan word *muceltão* (forest of the interior). *Sertão* was also used to refer to a particular area of Portugal. What all these various usages of the term have in common is the meaning of a scantily populated interior region, which corresponds to the way in which Brazilians employ the term.

The Agreste, also known as caatinga, cerradão or brejo, is another transitional zone, usually an upland area, located between the semi-arid Sertão and the humid coastal Mata zone. Traditionally, it was a refuge area for persons fleeing from the recurrent droughts of the Sertão as well as for those forced away from the coast by the concentration of lands in sugarcane plantations.

For a long time some parts of the zone had a settlement pattern similar to that of the Sertão and the same extensive stock-raising on open ranges. From the 1800s onward the Agreste became a densely populated agricultural area and the countryside has changed accordingly. Given the agricultural technology in use, the inequitable distribution of resources, and the general lack of employment opportunities, the Agreste experiences extreme population pressure with demographic densities usually ranging from 30 to 122 inhabitants per square kilometer.[1]

The Zona da Mata (forest) coastal zone is quite humid and has been organized since colonial times, principally around the sugarcane plantations. Even today with a few modifications the monoculture of sugarcane dominates the rural scene in the coastal zone with an associated high population density, averaging almost 94 inhabitants per km^2. The Litoral Norte is an area that mixes characteristics of the Zona de Mata and Agreste. Sugarcane and cashew plantations are found there, as well as small farmers exploiting a variety of crops.

Almost all the principal cities of the region are located on the coast. Recife, Salvador and Fortaleza are the largest of these industrial, administrative centres which economically and socially dominate the life of the Northeast.

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[1] The transitional zone of the Bahia state remained predominantly pastoral and the population density, from 13 to 44 inhabitants per km^2, has always been lower than in the northern part of the Agreste.

The Sertão

A countryside where stock-raising is practised on an open range of little modified bushland and where population is sparse and dispersed are important features in distinguishing the Sertão from other zones of the Northeast. Indeed, certain areas that border the zone ceased to be considered Sertão when they lost these characteristics. As agriculture becomes more important, the majority of the bush is cut, more fencing appears and fragmentation of the properties occurs. Such a countryside is considered as more occupied and 'domesticated', to which the term *agreste*, in the modern sense of the word, is applied.[1]

São Caetano in Pernambuco and Itabaiana in Paraíba, now considered cities in the Agreste, or in an Agreste-like zone, were considered at the beginning of the century to have been on the edge of the Sertão. Now the popularly recognized boundary is further westward in these states, at Arcoverde and Patos respectively. Proust (1968) reports more recent change of this kind in a zone of ecological transition in Paraíba where cropping expanded into an area of stock-raising.

On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the boundary will shift further westward or whether the whole of the zone will cease to be called the Sertão as population increases and agriculture becomes more important. Probably the name will remain, but it will lost the meaning of alightly populated and open range cattle-raising region. Other characteristics, such as the common occurrence of drought, will be emphasized as more important defining traits. The droughts are due to climatic and

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[1] *Agreste* (from the Latin *ager*) has also changed its meaning, being most commonly used now for the transition zone between the dry Sertão and the humid Zona da Mata. What it refers to presently is the opposite of the older meaning, which was synonymous with *sertão*: uncultivated countryside, rustic, rude, coarse. As the Agreste was conquered after the Zona da Mata and the Sertão, it is possible that the term was applied to just such a region before it was finally subdued and the term has remained until today (Bicalho, 1980).

physical factors which are less amenable to modification by man, and so the present boundary between Agreste and Sertão has shifted about as far as possible.

The third distinctive feature of the Sertão is less clear-cut than the others. The typical vegetation of the Sertão is fairly low, thorny bush scrub called *caatinga* (from the Tupi Amerindian language, *caa* = forest, *tinga* = white, light coloured, open). It is not just any caatinga that characterises the Sertão, for much of the Agreste also has caatinga. The type of caatinga of the greater part of the Sertão is neither as dense, nor as high as that of the Agreste and of the mountainous areas of the Sertão. For the people of the region the bushlands of the Sertão are a 'thorn' caatinga, i.e. one in which cacti and shrubs with thorns predominate.

The typical vegetation of the semi-arid zone has been variously described scientifically as dry and sparse caatinga by Egler, *seridó* by Leutzelburg and campestral caatinga by SUDENE (MINTER/SUDENE, 1973). It is basically vegetation of small bushes and cacti, not very densely spaced, with grasses covering the ground during the rainy season. In the moister low-lying areas along the seasonal rivers, medium sized trees grow.

The denser type of caatinga is scientifically classified as a bush-tree type made up of various strata of flora. It can be found together with other even denser vegetation forms, such as *cerrado* and tropical forest, in the more humid mountain areas of the semi-arid zone. However, such 'green islands' occupy a very small portion of the Sertão. Such richer kinds of flora, as dominant types, are more characteristic of the other zones of the Northeast.

THE RESEARCH

The present work is the result of bibliographic and field research which has been in progress since July 1976. From July 1976, until January 1977, literature on the Northeast was consulted in Rio de Janeiro.

From this preliminary work an area was chosen in western Pernambuco and northern Bahia states to be the site of the community-level fieldwork (Map 2). From climatic and demographic maps as well as from readings of previous research done, the area chosen seemed to be one that included the range of variation of ecological conditions and economic activities to be encountered throughout the semi-arid zone. It was important that such variety should be found in a small area, with the communities studied being close enough to one another for information from one to overlap with data from others. Such a procedure allowed for cross checking as well as for maintaining contact with a previously studied community.

From north to south, ecological conditions of the study area vary extremely from the moist Chapada do Araripe highlands to the arid sparse bush lands of north Bahia state. Farming ranges from mountain agriculture to mixed farming to irrigation along the São Francisco River and, finally, to the extensive stock-raising of northern Bahia. Population density also varies accordingly from high density in the north to low density in the south. Sociologically, it promised to be an interesting area to study as it has a past of revolts, millenarian movements, famous feuds and banditry.

During the month of August 1976, a reconnaissance trip was made to the region of study to have a first-hand look at some of the localities that seemed promising for detailed fieldwork. The trip

CHAPADA DO ARARIPE
JUAZEIRO DO NORTE
CRATO
ARARIPINA
EXU
GRANITO
OURICURI
SERRITA
SALGUEIRO
S. TALHADA
PARNAMIRIM
TERRA NOVA
CABROBO
OROCÓ
FLORESTA
STA. MARIA BOA VISTA
ABARÉ
BELEM S. FRANCISCO
RODELAS
CURAÇA
CHORROCHÓ
MACURURÉ
PETROLINA
JUAZEIRO
PAULO AFONSO
RASO DA CATARINA
QUIJUA
N
20 0 20 40KM

ALTITUDE
PERENNIAL RIVER
SEASONAL RIVER
CITY
TOWN
FIELDWORK COMMUNITIES
PAVED ROAD
UNPAVED ROAD

Map 2. Fieldwork Area.

confirmed initial ideas about the study area and a number of communities were chosen for field study. The communities not only presented ecological and economic differences but they also seemed to be at varying phases of the type of cultural change that leads to assimilation into the national society.

Exu was to have been the highland community studied. The area around Parnamirim represented a transitional zone to the drier lands to the south. Belém de São Francisco was the town researched in the irrigation zone along the São Francisco River. Finally, the small town of Chorrochó was the community studied in the north of Bahia.

The total amount of time spent in each county varied according to how much information already existed in the literature for similar communities. Less fieldwork was done in places where previous research had been carried out in nearby counties. Including the survey, a total of twenty-two months were spent in the Sertão.

During 1977 and 1981, four and a half months were spent in Belém. This was judged to be enough because prior research had already been done in the area in the 1950s, by the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil (1957) and Pierson (1972). Little published work exists on extremely dry stock-raising areas so seven months of fieldwork were undertaken in Chorrochó, in 1977, 1978 and 1979. As Chorrochó is economically dependent on Belém and only thirty-six kilometres separate the two towns, a good deal of contact was maintained with Belém during the stay in Chorrochó, so that the information from Belém was not limited to that of the resident fieldwork.

Parnamirim was the last community studied. Eight and a half months of field research were undertaken during 1979 and 1981. The area to the south of Parnamirim is mainly a stock-raising zone while cropping is equally important in the areas to the east, west and north of the town.

Adjacent parts of the counties of Terra Nova, Serrita and Granito were also researched to include a larger area where cropping is important.

Exu, located further up the same valley as Parnamirim, was to have been studied for four months but health problems at the end of the main fieldwork period prevented this. The first hand study of a mountain community has since been considered dispensable for the project. A rich literature exists on the Chapada do Araripe region (Della Cava, 1970; Figueiredo Filho, 1958; Pinheiro, 1950). In addition, Johnson (1971) and Soiffer (1981) have done anthropological research in areas of the Sertão where agriculture is more important than stock-raising. Furthermore, the researcher gained a good deal of first-hand experience in a similar setting from fieldwork undertaken in the Agreste of Paraíba in 1978.

In each of the three communities, research was conducted in both a formal and informal manner. Normal anthropological methods of data collection, such as informal interviews and picking up information from conversations, were used. In addition, both urban and rural questionnaires were utilized. These were of the open type and were mainly a way of recording a sizeable amount of information which would otherwise have been impossible to remember for later noting down. The questionnaires were devised in the field after an initial familiarity had been gained with the area of study. Also the size of the questionnaires grew over the period of research. Thus, the number of questionnaires varies from community to community and their quality improved over time (Table 1).

Different kinds of communities of the semi-arid zone were studied in detail in order to establish a firmer basis for making generalizations as well as for grasping the extent of cultural variation. In addition

Table 1. Questionnaires Applied to the Communities Studied

Community	Urban	Farm	
		Owner	Worker
Belém de São Francisco	21	51	21
Chorrochó	36	47	4
Parnamirim	22	27	6

to the three towns where long term field research was done, a general survey of 25 counties dispersed throughout the semi-arid zone was undertaken. This was done in response to criticism of community studies both within and without Anthropology. It is therefore hoped that the information from this survey, together with that from census data and from the results of other research on the semi-arid zone, combine with the detailed field observations in such a way as to substantiate the ideas advanced in this work.

A brief cultural outline of each of the three communities of intensive fieldwork is now given so that the reader may have a prior notion of their varying natures in order better to follow the details as the work develops. Then the general survey is explained and the counties are characterized and located. Finally, the structure of the thesis is explained.

The Fieldwork Communities

The first community to be studied was Belém do São Francisco, in Pernambuco state, located on the São Francisco River, the only large perennial river of the Sertão. Here irrigation has been directly

and indirectly causing numerous changes in the way of life during the last thirty years.

The country around Belém was first settled in the 1700s. The huge ranches of the colonial period stretched far inland from the São Francisco River. The population near the river rarely suffered from the usual problem of the semi-arid zone, the droughts. However, floods and disease could cause hardship at times.

Even today, most farms are still orientated to the river. Properties consist of narrow strips of land that stretch inland for 12-18 kilometres from the São Francisco River.

The farms further inland from the 'river edge' area, deeper into the dry '*caatinga*' zone, have a similar property form. They possess small fenced areas of valuable bottomland along a seasonal river. The poorly demarcated higher lands of the property stretch away to the most elevated point of the interfluvial area. In these unfenced bushlands, cattle and other livestock roam in search of pasture.

The farms of the caatinga zone do not have a plentiful year-round source of water. Ranchers are not able to shift their residence and animals to a perennial river during times of drought. In consequence, it is common there for animals to perish from lack of pasture and water, for crops to fail and for men to suffer greater hardship.

Given these conditions and the greater value that is now given to the alluvial lands on the São Francisco River for irrigation, most of the population today lives along the river edge and increasingly people are leaving the caatinga to live and farm along this principal river. The caatinga, where the traditional pursuit was cattle raising, has lost its prominence socially and economically, and is being used less and less. The zone between the irrigated lands and 20 kilometres inland from the river is to a great extent abandoned to elderly ranchers.

Also, numerous outsiders are being attracted to the irrigation zone so that it has become an area of net immigration. This contrasts sharply with the situation in more typical areas of the Sertão where dry farming and stock-raising have not been offering enough employment and income to hold the population.

Highly specialized commercial irrigation of speculative cash crops, such as onions, melons, watermelons and tomatoes, in Belém and other neighbouring river counties, is bringing about rapid change in the county seats and rural zone. The agricultural system is gradually becoming more capital-intensive, increasingly employing industrial agriculture techniques and equipment, while at the same time making ample use of the relatively cheap labour that is being attracted to the river area. The produce is sent directly to distant markets in the Southeast and North as well as to the capitals and larger cities of the Northeast, which is a radical departure from the traditional forms of marketing.

The greater income obtained from specialized cash cropping has changed the patterns of self-sufficiency and perception of basic necessities when compared with Chorrochó and Parnamirim. The latter are being integrated into the regional and national market system at a much slower rate.

The county seat of Belém, as the other river cities in the São Francisco irrigation area, is increasing in size very quickly. Belém grew from 1,384 inhabitants in 1950 to 8,284 in 1980, Cabrobó from 759 to 7,986 and Santa Maria da Boa Vista from 833 to 4,484 (Fundação IBGE, 1955a, 1981). The small cities of the irrigation area are booming and show the dynamism in terms of commerce, provision of social services and expansion in urban infra-structure usually possessed only by larger commercial hub cities of the Sertão. Also many of the same problems are present such as increased violence and social disparity.

As Belém is situated in a favourable area of the Sertão, there have always existed great class distinctions between the white upper class and the large lower class of small property holders and sharecroppers, who are usually the descendants of Amerindians and black slaves. Numerous landless peasants were attracted to such a place where more cropping was possible and where harvests were more guaranteed.

Politics in Belém are definitely factional, as are all politics in the Brazilian interior, though not nearly so much so as in other communities of the Sertão. An opposition group has always existed but its political power has been very weak and the elections have always been won by the same party, that of the 'family', composed of descendants of the first settlers.

Catholicism, with the upper class domination of the religious functions, is the principal religion in Belém. Afro-Brazilian *xangô* cults have been introduced into the community during the last fifteen years and are frequented mainly by the poor. Other important independent religious activities of the poor are the Catholic flagellant groups, long present in Belém, as well as the numerous Protestant sects that have arisen in the last 20 years. Despite the existence of these and other religious sects, such as spiritualism, the vast majority of the population remain devout Catholics. Only the Protestant sects are mutually exclusive in membership and their congregation makes up about 5 per cent of the urban population.

Chorrochó is only 36 kilometres south of Belém, in Bahia state, but the relative distance in travel time and change in socio-economic circumstances are far greater. After crossing the São Francisco River on a small ferry, the town is reached by travelling inland on very poorly maintained dirt roads, which become nearly impassable when it rains.

The county is located in one of the driest parts of the Sertão, the vast majority of its area being covered by rocky interfluvial lands, where topsoils are almost non-existent. Problems of salinity, flooding and heavy clay soil texture limit the area of bottomlands that can be used for agriculture when utilizing the traditional technology. This, together with the problem of very irregular and poorly distributed rainfall, make for a land use system that is more oriented to stock-raising. Since the area was settled in the 1800s, stock-raising, in which goats and sheep are just as important as cattle, has always been more important than cropping in order to fulfil subsistence needs and to earn a monetary income. Cropping is a very uncertain undertaking, limited to the small-scale cultivation of beans, corn and pumpkins, together with cotton as a cash crop.

Farms are found along the small seasonal rivers, as they are in the caatinga area of Belém. The population density of the northern counties of Bahia is one of the lowest to be found in the Sertão, varying from 1 to 4 inhabitants per km^2.

Small cities of 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants are not to be encountered in this area. Either one finds towns or cities. The latter are far distant from one another and their existence is explained by external factors. Juazeiro da Bahia grew because it is the final port on the navigable part of the São Francisco River. The city of Paulo Afonso was created recently with the construction there of a large hydroelectric dam. The nearest city in Bahia that can be said to have been expanded by the force of its commerce and agricultural production is Euclides da Cunha, more than 175 kilometres to the south of Chorrochó and located at the point of transition to a more favourable climatic zone.

Urban settlement in the north of Bahia is restricted to small towns, like Chorrochó, Macururé and Rodelas which had respectively 869, 1,375 and 1,718 inhabitants in 1980 (Fundação IBGE, 1981). In 1950 these communities had an urban population of 400, 1,055 and 1,030. The increase in the size of the towns is due more to the recent government financed expansion of public bureaucracy and services than to any local expansion in agriculture or other productive activities.

The income received by the civil servants of Chorrochó has stimulated the modest growth of commerce and services, although for the most part these have not changed very much. At the time of the fieldwork there were no specialized stores, reliable electricity, running water, paved streets, banking or telephone services, all of which are now considered basic for a county seat elsewhere in the Sertão. Such commerce and services can generate considerable employment opportunities, the lack of which has been a problem for some time in the Sertão. In the words of the local people, studying Chorrochó was like studying the life of the Sertão as it had been thirty years ago.

Politics is the great pursuit of live in this part of Bahia, as the most desirable jobs in the towns depend on it. Chorrochó is a community extremely divided along factional lines defined by racial and class status. One faction, made up mainly of poor 'coloured' persons, has, as its leaders, modestly prosperous rancher-merchants. The other group, the white traditional family faction, is also led by rancher-merchants, although these are far richer than those of the other faction.

Chorrochó is a strictly Catholic community, and typically, the traditional family dominates most church activities. At the time of the field research a Protestant missionary entered the community to seek

converts so it was possible to observe first reactions to the attempt at introducing Protestantism. In such a zone inland from the São Francisco River and away from the major roads, the new religious and spiritual cults are rarely encountered. There are no *xangô* centres and only occasionally will a spiritualist appear on market day to treat the ill and disturbed.

Parnamirim is located along the large seasonal river, the Riacho da Brígida, in Pernambuco state. The town lies in the depression formed by the river which makes Parnamirim drier than the surrounding highlands. To the south of the town conditions become increasingly drier and the soils rockier as one descends gradually into the depression formed by the São Francisco River. There the rural population is distributed along the principal seasonal rivers, with land use fairly much the same as in the caatinga areas of Belém, though the population density is somewhat higher.

To the north, east and west of the town the soils of the higher lands off the rivers become increasingly better for agriculture. As one approaches the mountains, where rainfall is greater and more reliable, population density increases accordingly. The neighbouring highland counties of Ouricuri, Araripina and Exú have a demographic density of 13, 28 and 27 inhabitants per km^2 respectively. The counties of Granito, Serrita and Terra Nova are transitional with densities of 8, 11 and 20 inhabitants per km^2. Numerous county seats exist in this area, in contrast to the drier area to the south where none are to be found until the São Francisco River is reached. Also, in the highland area, a number of larger commercial hub cities are encountered. Salgueiro to the east and Ouricuri and Araripina to the west had respectively urban inhabitants numbering 25,915; 12,611 and 12,531 in 1980.

Most of the area of Parnamirim county lies to the south of the county seat, where no humid mountains exist. In this zone cattle ranching has remained the predominant pursuit ever since the area was settled in the 1800s. The overall population density of the county is low, being only 6 inhabitants per km^2. The demographic density of the area researched to the north and east of Parnamirim, where more cropping was traditionally encountered, has a population density similar to the overall county figures for the transitional counties mentioned above.

Historically, Parnamirim has traded cattle and other livestock with the highland area, receiving agricultural products in return. Also, cattle were - and still are - sent to the coast in large numbers along the main highway from the Middle North to Recife, which bypasses the city. Only since the 1930s have most farmers become interested in planting crops locally and this activity has increased greatly in the last five years with the introduction of commercial onion irrigation. Ironically, cropping activity is expanding in what was a dry area of cattle-raising at the same time that cropping has been on the decline in the traditional dry farming areas to the north.

The town has been gradually increasing in size, from 1,457 inhabitants in 1950 to 3,604 in 1980. In the last ten years Parnamirim has gained many of the public services deemed important to 'city life' which Chorrochó in contrast still lacks. The shops stock a good variety of products, though they have not expanded more rapidly because of the close proximity of two major commercial cities, Salgueiro and Ouricuri, and the increasing competition from the market day merchants.

There is less class disparity in Parnamirim than in Belém. This reflects its geographical position whereby the county lies in an

intermediate ecological zone, neither extremely dry nor favourable. Also numerous persons in a middle class situation are found in the county. The people do talk of rich and poor as well as of white and coloured persons, but the distinctions do not reach the extreme that one finds in the São Francisco River and indeed almost everyone has some strong Amerindian physical trait. Moreover, political parties are not formed along racial and class lines as in Chorrochó. The greater majority of individuals are small property holders whose children emigrate to the Southeast, like many of the landless peasants.

What has slowed the rate of emigration to some extent has been the recent expansion of irrigation. This activity is making some of the small properties more economically viable as well as offering opportunities to the landless who can find work as share croppers. On the other hand, for some considerable time before this, farming had been unrewarding and somewhat depreciated. Here with most of the civil service positions already filled, the children of all classes are still forced to look for suitable work elsewhere. To attain the better positions one must have a high school or even a university education, hence great emphasis is placed on formal schooling.

Politics in Parnamirim are of the type commonly found in the Northeastern interior. One faction is made up of the traditional family, who are ranchers, and the other is made up of merchants and farmers who have arrived more recently in the county. Both sides, by dispersing favours, mobilize their poor dependants.

The Catholic church is controlled by the dominant families of each faction. Protestantism appeals to some of the urban poor and middle class merchants. There are no *xangô* groups present, but spiritualists are encountered. A local man practises spiritual curing on a part-time

basis and specialists can be consulted on market day and by going to Salgueiro or Ouricuri.

The County Survey and Other Material from Secondary Sources

The survey of Sertanejo counties was executed parallel to the community study and consisted of about three additional months of research, spread out over the fieldwork period. The time spent in each county varied from one to ten days.

The choice of some of the counties was based on the need for comparison with the three communities studied so that a number of neighbouring counties were included in the survey. Others were selected in a more systematic way using the IBGE (1970) division of Brazil into micro-regions so as to sample the variation of climatic and socio-economic conditions existing throughout the semi-arid zone. IBGE divides the Sertão into 51 micro-regions, each of which groups together adjacent counties that have similar physical and economic characteristics. The survey was conducted in one or more counties in 18 different micro-regions dispersed throughout the Sertão (Table 2, Map 3).

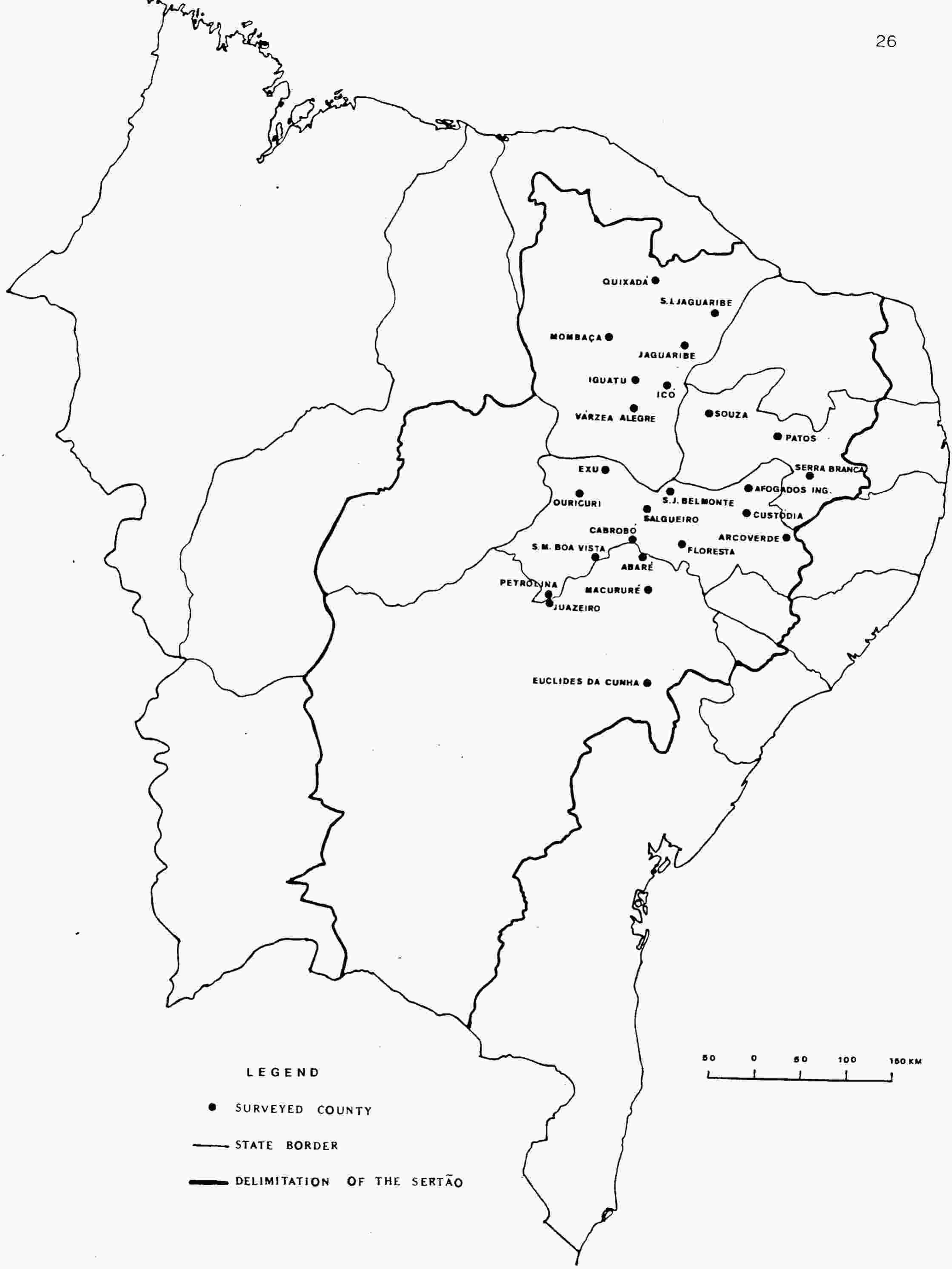
In most places a questionnaire was applied to local agricultural extentionists, old ranchers and other informants with a good knowledge of the county in question and its history. Counties surveyed later in the fieldwork were covered better, for the list of subjects to research grew through time. The original survey was to have been larger but time and practicality limited it to 25 counties.

In addition to such general information gathered in the field this research makes use of the available statistical data from the demographic and agricultural census. The quality of the information is at times poor and some blatant mistakes were noted. So the rule of thumb adopted here was to make use of the information that seemed best to reflect the

Table 2. Surveyed Counties

County (State)	Micro-Region (number)	Predominate Farm Activity	Urban Population in 1980	Economic Base
Quixadá (CE)	Sertão de Quixeramobim (68)	stock-raising	25 149	agriculture & commerce
Mombaça (CE)	Sertão de Senador Pompeu (69)	mixed farming	9 534	agriculture
Iguatú (CE)	Iguatú (73)	mixed farming	39 611	commerce & light industry
Várzea Alegre (CE)	Serrana de Caririaçu (75)	inundation irrigation	9 172	agriculture
São João do Jaguaribe (CE)	Baixo Jaguaribe (61)	irrigation	1 839	agriculture
Jaguaribe (CE)	Médio Jaguaribe (70)	dry zone stock-raising	9 392	agriculture
Icó (CE)	Sertão do Salgado (74)	mixed farming & irrigation	13 007	agriculture & commerce
Sousa (PB)	Depressão do Alto Piranhas (95)	mixed farming & irrigation	34 055	agriculture, commerce & light industry
Patos (PB)	Depressão do Alto Piranhas (95)	mixed farming	58 735	agriculture, commerce & light industry
Serra Branca (PB)	Cariris Velhos (96)	dry zone stock-raising	4 548	agriculture
Arcoverde (PE)	Arcoverde (106)	mixed farming & highland cropping	40 646	commerce & light industry
Custódia (PE)	Sertão do Moxotó (105)	mixed farming & irrigation	7 011	agriculture
Afogados da Ingazeira (PE)	Alto Pajeú (104)	mixed farming & irrigation	12 762	agriculture & commerce
São José do Belmonte (PE)	Salgueiro (102)	mixed farming & highland cropping	5 754	agriculture
Salgueiro (PE)	Salgueiro (102)	mixed farming & irrigation	25 915	commerce & light industry
Exú (PE)	Araripina (101)	highland cropping	5 562	agriculture
Ouricuri (PE)	Araripina (101)	mixed farming & highland cropping	12 611	agriculture & commerce
Floresta (PE)	Sertão Pern. do São Francisco (103)	dry zone stock-raising	7 523	agriculture
Cabrobó (PE)	Sertão Pern. do São Francisco (103)	irrigation & dry zone stock-raising	7 986	agriculture
Santa Ma. da Boa Vista (PE)	Sertão Pern. do São Francisco (103)	irrigation & dry zone stock-raising	4 484	agriculture
Petrolina (PE)	Sertão Pern. do São Francisco (103)	irrigation & dry zone stock-raising	73 436	commerce & light industry
Juazeiro (BA)	Corredeiras do São Francisco (140)	irrigation & dry zone stock-raising	64 337	commerce & light industry
Abaré (BA)	Corredeiras do São Francisco (140)	irrigation & dry zone stock-raising	809	agriculture
Macururé (BA)	Sertão de Paulo Afonso (147)	dry zone stock-raising	1 375	agriculture
Euclides da Cunha (BA)	Sertão de Canudos (141)	mixed farming & improved stock-raising	9 741	agriculture & commerce

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1981) and Field Research



Map 3. Surveyed Counties

reality observed in the field, while at the same time ignoring the faulty data. Such an approach may appear to involve subjectivity but it was the only practical way of using census material.

The Brazilian census, or any census for that matter, can only be used when a researcher is thoroughly familiar with the area studied, a situation which usually only arises through firsthand fieldwork. Similarly, the data cannot be interpreted correctly without a basic knowledge of what general categories, established for the country as a whole or for an important region, mean in the Sertão.

For the fieldwork area statistical data were analyzed at the county level. At times this method can involve some difficulty because most counties of the Sertão are large and usually county seats are located at marketing junction points that bridge two or more micro-environments, hence an overall county figure masks internal variation. When possible this is overcome by the sample of rural questionnaires.

When treating the Sertão as a whole, census material is examined at the IBGE micro-region level. In the present work the micro-regions have been modified in some cases to reflect county divisions in 1950 for the sake of comparison. Also, a few micro-regions are considered here to be part of the semi-arid zone but are placed in the Agreste by IBGE (1979 and 1981) and Melo (1978).[1]

Usually the census data for the Sertão are presented as an overall figure for the whole of the semi-arid zone. For some purposes the data is grouped into four basic agricultural zones of the Sertão: dry zone

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[1] These micro-regions are located at the boundary of the Sertão with the Agreste. Some counties fall in the Sertão and others in the Agreste or the counties themselves may be so divided. Most of the micro-regions were considered to be part of the semi-arid zone in older scientific delineations of the zones of the Northeast and, based on my experience, I chose to do so also.

stock-raising, mixed farming, highland cropping and improved stock-raising of favourable areas. As we shall see later, such basic ecological and economic variation has had a profound effect on the course of cultural change in the semi-arid zone.

The Structure of the Thesis

This work is organized in such a way as to reflect the priority of causes for social change in the Sertão. Chapters 2 and 3 are introductory and set the stage for the principal arguments of the thesis. Sertanejo culture can only be understood in the light of the difficulties imposed by recurrent drought. This is a constant factor upon which different adaptation strategies have been constructed but which did not resolve the problems posed by drought. Then, in Chapter 3, man's perception of nature and culture are presented in order to see how Sertanejos view their relationship with a harsh environment.

Chapter 4 is central to the thesis. Cultural transformation in the Sertão came about because of economic changes resulting from gradually improving transport and communication facilities. Better roads and railroads brought about greater market and cultural integration into the national economy and society at a time when the latter was industrializing. Great attention is given to the process of market integration and how the changes were translated into social terms, i.e. class relations and perceptions of disparity.

The following chapter deals with modification of kinship structure and obligationswhich traditionally formed the basis of class relations. Socio-economic change has set in progress a trend towards bounding family relationships. At the same time, new economic opportunity has allowed

has allowed for the upward social mobility of some individuals, thereby calling into question older notions of family, class and racial standing. Cultural integration has also affected patterns of family feuding and seems to have increased violence. Instead of the introduction of a formal judicial system, allowing for greater institutional control and repression of individual acts of aggression, the very opposite has occurred.

Chapter 6 treats the political forum where the struggle to control new sources of economic power and social status takes place. Finally, the following chapter deals with the religious and spiritual sphere where the disparity and injustices of This World are justified or rationalized and protest deflected. The growing class division is analyzed in the light of who takes up the new religious and spiritual sects that have been introduced as part of the process of national cultural integration.

It must be clearly stated that the use here of the concept of integration does not imply *a priori* that the changes are for the better. That the Sertanejos are eagerly adopting habits and practices which they view as 'modern' cannot be denied. Whether this is a good thing or not is the subject of the concluding chapter. In that chapter, traditional and present day Sertanejo ideas on change are presented and the views of persons of all classes concerning the changes are analyzed.

THE LAND AND CLIMATE

2. THE LAND AND CLIMATE

Rain and drought are subjects that are continuously raised in conversation by Sertanejos and quite logically so because a very fickle Nature can make or break a man's fortunes. If the rains are poor the harvest will fail, water and pasture shortages may arise, resulting in loss of livestock and lack of water for domestic purposes. These lead to human suffering and have led in the not too distant past to large-scale starvation and emigration.

How Sertanejos come to grips with their difficult environment is described in detail here. The people are immensely concerned with the weather. Regional and national scientists all give much consideration to the climatic conditions of the semi-arid zone. Hence, this topic is treated here in greater depth than would normally be the case for an anthropological work.

RAINFALL, DROUGHT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENT

The environmental factors of local climatic conditions, type of terrain and quality of soils influenced the way in which man occupied the Sertão. The greater or lesser probability of drought and risk to agriculture have given rise to considerable local variation in demographic and settlement patterns, combination of farming activities, forms of land tenure and work relations.

The likelihood of drought in the Northeast increases with the distance from the origin points of the rain masses. This in turn, can be exacerbated by the presence of physical barriers and depressions. Inland from the

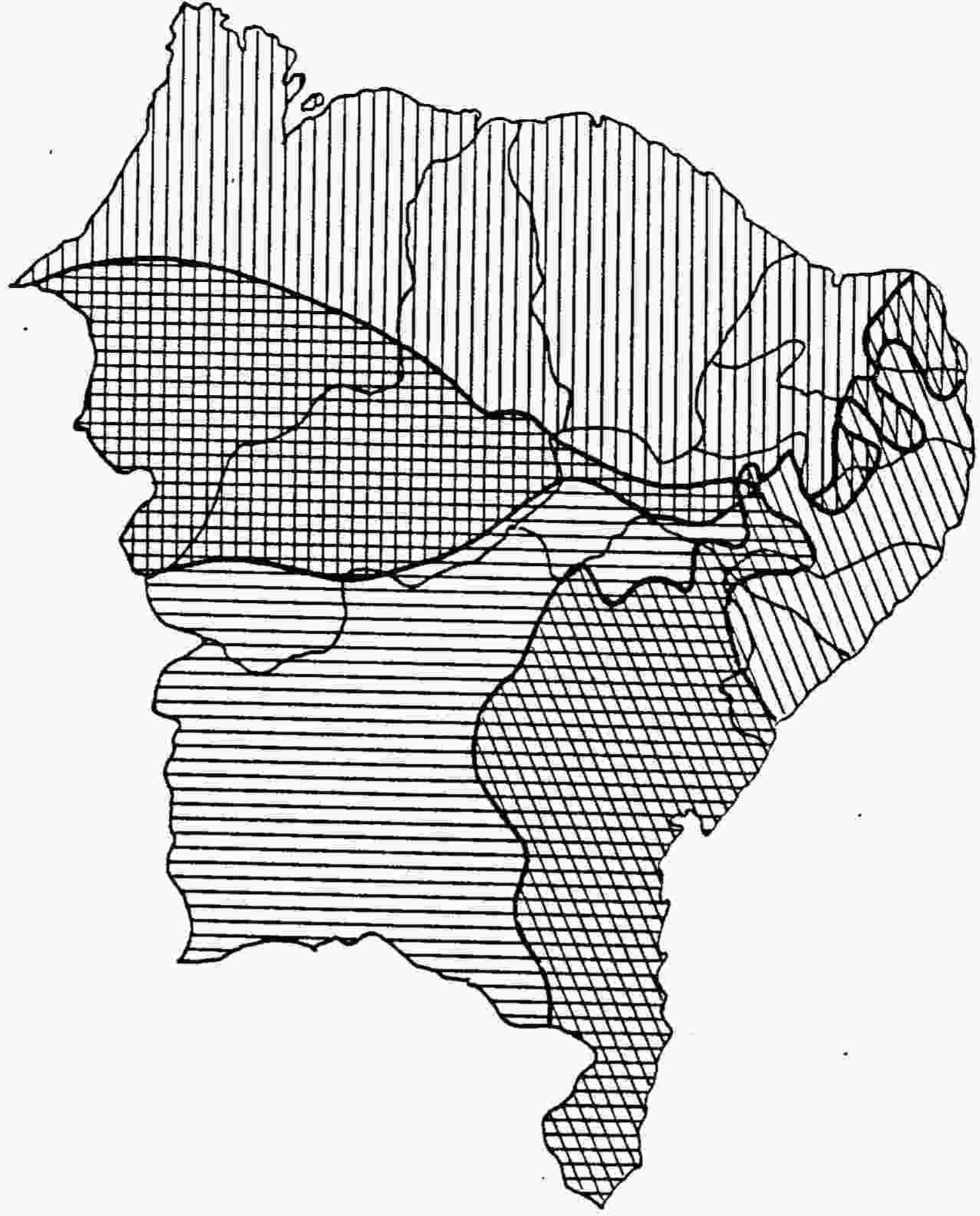
coast places at higher elevations receive more rainfall but, at the same time, obstruct its passage to the lands on the leeward side. However, if the upland area, or any area for that matter, is to retain the moisture, the soil conditions must favour the absorption and retention of the water.

The rain system of the Northeast is a complex phenomenon, the result of the interaction of three air masses that arrive at different times of the year (Map 4). The air masses travel over great distances and the Sertão is at the limits of their extension. Depending on the behaviour of one or other mass in a given year, one part of the Sertão can be suffering a punishing drought, while another is having a normal year. Also, from one year to the next, precipitation in the same place can vary dramatically. A very capricious Nature has imbued the Sertanejo with stoicism and a black humour about his predicament.

Of the three rainfall periods, that of the south of the Northeast, and particularly that of the east coast, are more dependable. The northern rains are very unpredictable making this part of the Northeast the one most subject to drought (Map 5).

On the other hand, the probability of good rains or drought is not just the work of any of the masses in isolation, but also of their interplay, which may cause certain areas to have a longer rainy season or two different ones. Most of the Middle North zone and the Litoral of Bahia are usually quite well watered for most month of the year (Andrade, 1977).

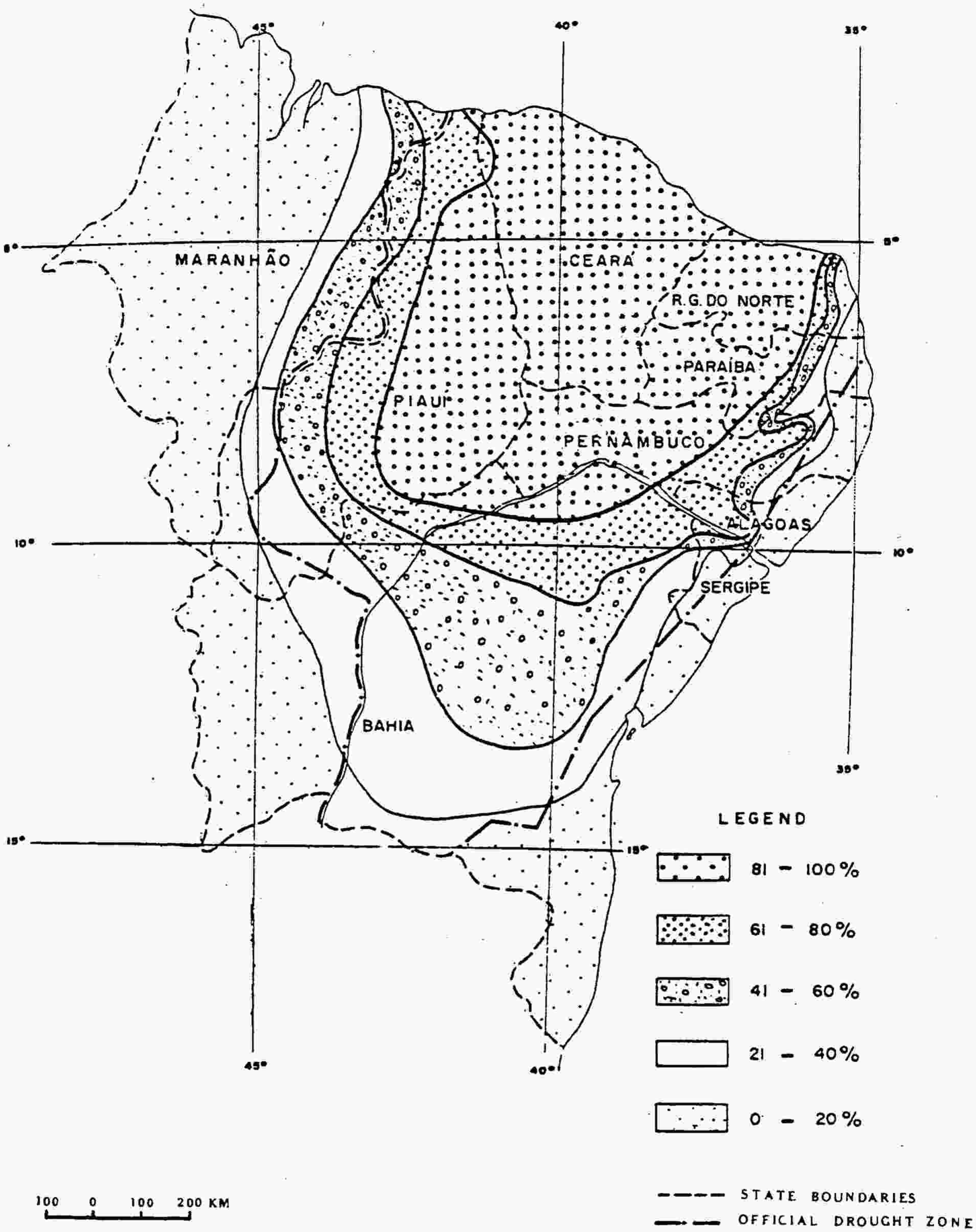
However, the overlapping of rain masses at the farthest reaches of the systems must not be overemphasized, particularly in the case of the extreme north of Bahia, western Pernambuco and southeastern Piauí, which is exactly the area of the fieldwork. In any given year, one or all of



Source: Andrade (1977)

Map 4: Periods of Rainfall in the Northeast.

In the southern portion of the Northeast, rains from the Continental Equatorial Air Mass fall during the months between November and March (C). The Intertropical Convergence Air Mass arrives in January bringing rains that last to April in the northern part of the region (A). The third source of rain is that of the South Atlantic Polar Fronts which come north, reaching the eastern portion of the Northeast between April and August (B).



Source: MINTER/SUDENE (1973)

Map 5. Frequency of Drought as Defined by Requests for Assistance.

the masses may not reach their maximum extension thus causing less rain to fall or even drought.

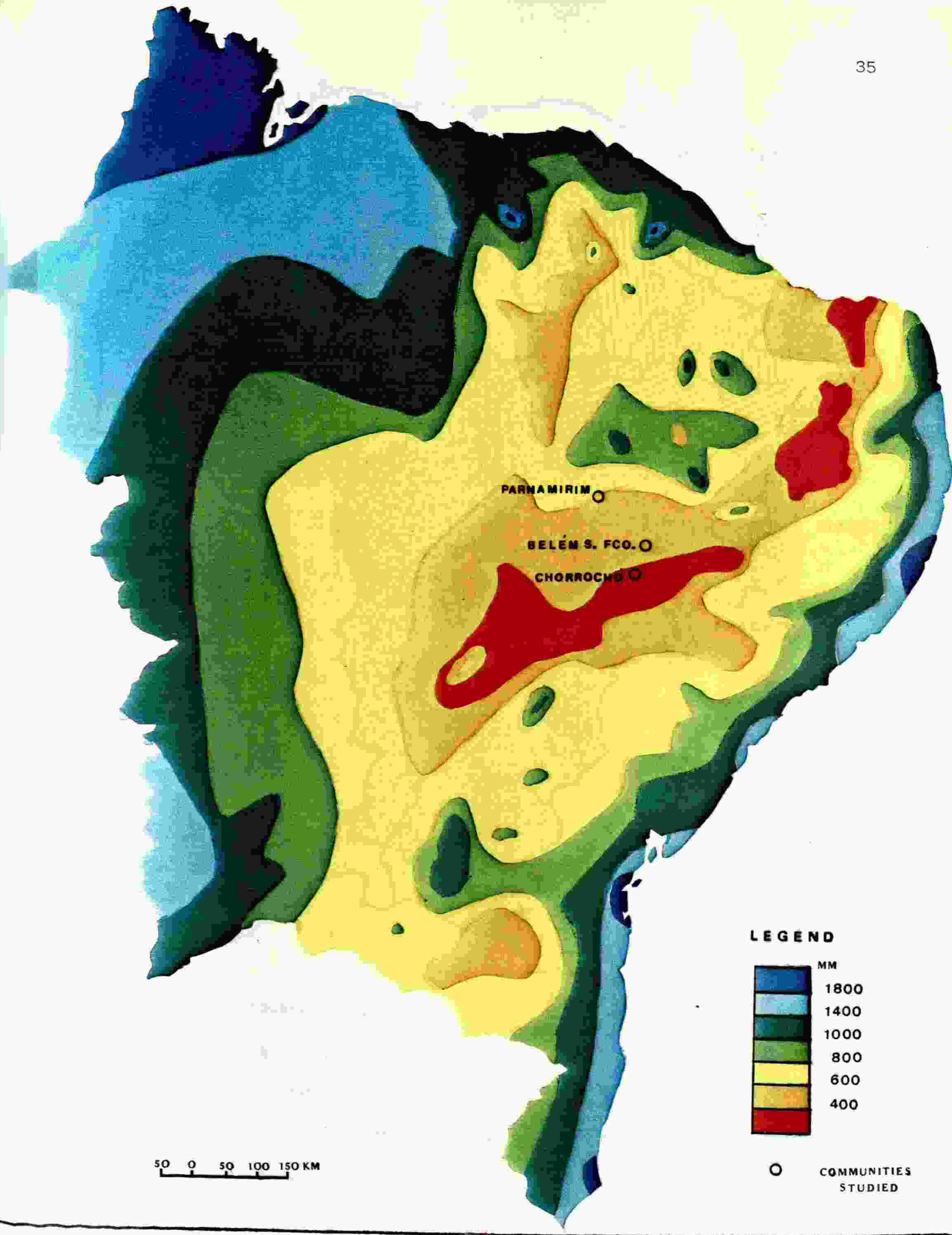
The worst places of the semi-arid zone, in terms of drought, are those situated at the furthest limits of the rain mass movements, and which also lie in rain shadows, i.e. behind elevations and in depressions. Belém and Chorrochó are in such a situation (Map 6).

Where high risk is associated with dry farming, extensive cattle ranching has remained the predominant activity (Map 7, Table 3). In dry stock-rearing zones rainfall is highly irregular, concentrated in two or three months of the year and is less than 300 mm annually. Soils are usually shallow, rocky and generally of poor fertility. In such areas, cattle-raising is the main commercial activity while goat- and sheep-rearing and cropping are practised principally for subsistence. Some areas are so dry that conditions are difficult even for cattle so that goats and sheep assume equal importance in such places.[1]

In the Sertão, the more elevated areas, even those forming only modest escarpments, capture more humidity from the passing clouds. Striking against the windward side the rain will fall, but whether such a place will be more humid or not depends on the nature of the soils. Clay soils retain water. Rocky ones let it run off, impoverishing their quality as the top soil is usually carried away as well. Most of the soils of the Sertão are of the latter type and the landscape is one of uncroppings of rock and poor interfluvial areas where water is scarce. In such places human occupation is limited to stock-raising. Settlement is dispersed, the ranches being scattered about the distant points where water is to be found.

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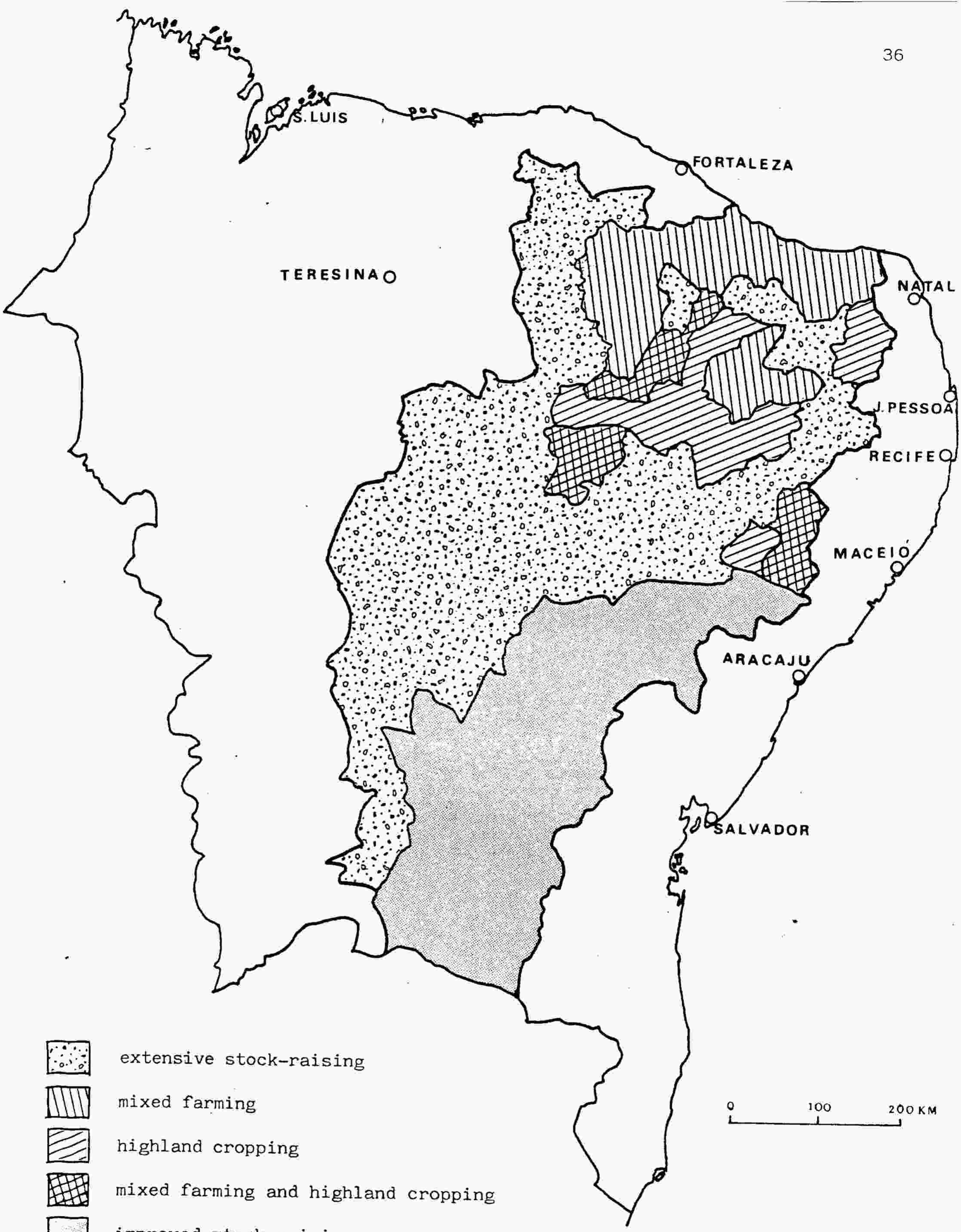
[1] Goats are one of the hardiest of domestic animals and in different parts of the world are found to thrive under conditions which other types of livestock cannot withstand (Wernick, 1982).



Source: Melo (1978)(modified here)

Obs.: This map will also appear in the Ph.D. thesis of A.M. Bicalho

Map 6. Precipitation Patterns in the Northeast



Map 7: Agricultural Zones of the Sertão

The zones are defined according to the area in cropping, planted pasture and bush as well as by climatic and geomorphological features.

Table 3. Farm Land in Cropping, Pasture and Bush according to Zone of the Sertão in 1975

Zone	Cropping		Native Pasture[1]		Planted Pasture		Bush[2]		Total Area in Farms[3]		Total Area	
	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%
extensive stock-raising	1 622 147	5.4	5 521 346	18.2	164 866	0.5	6 281 592	20.7	13 586 951	44.8	30 310 900	100.0
mixed farming	1 164 218	16.2	1 771 151	24.7	22 644	0.3	2 521 002	35.2	5 479 015	76.4	7 170 000	100.0
highland cropping	1 044 504	21.9	1 026 184	21.6	53 044	1.1	1 431 813	30.1	3 555 545	74.7	4 761 500	100.0
highland cropping and mixed farming[4]	574 679	17.6	850 593	26.0	94 581	2.9	745 065	22.8	2 264 918	69.3	3 267 000	100.0
improved stock-raising of humid areas[5]	789 102	4.4	2 110 974	11.8	1 262 633	7.1	3 592 876	20.1	7 755 585	43.4	17 883 400	100.0
SERTÃO	5 194 650	8.2	11 280 248	17.8	1 597 768	2.5	14 572 348	23.0	32 642 014	51.5	63 392 800	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1979)

[1] Native pastures are those where some effort has been made to facilitate the growth of wild grasses by clearing some of the scrubs.

[2] Bush, fallow and "unutilized" lands in the Sertão are exploited for their native pasture and so can be counted as stock-raising area.

[3] Total farm area in the census seems to be only that which is legally registered.

[4] These micro-regions include highland cropping areas as well as river valleys where mixed farming is practised.

[5] Zone of semi-intensive stock-raising where planted pasture covers a substantial part of total farm area. Also, some drier areas are included in these micro-regions where extensive stock-raising is practised.

The water and silt that wash off the higher lands bathe and enrich the bottomlands, the *várzeas* encountered along the seasonal rivers. These narrow strips of more fertile land retain moisture longer, enabling the cultivation of arboreal cotton and short cycle crops. Mixed farming is practised and cropping is as economically important as stock-raising. Cotton cropping and cattle-raising are the principal commercial pursuits while beans, corn and pumpkins are planted for subsistence. Similarly goats, sheep, pigs and chickens are raised for the farmer's meat needs. However, the scale of goat and sheep-rearing is much more restricted than it is in the drier areas.

In mixed farming zones annual rainfall is between 300 and 600 mm, is not so irregular as in extensive stock-raising zones and is concentrated in three to four months of the year. Notwithstanding this, the threat of drought always hangs over the success of farming activities. Farms are clustered along the main seasonal rivers. Population density is higher and more landless peasants are encountered than in drier ranching zones (Table 4).

Table 4. Demographic Density according to Zone of the Sertão (1980)

Zone	Population		Area		Density
	number	%	km^2	%	(inhab./km^2)
extensive stock-raising	3 065 461	32.3	303 109	47.8	10.1
mixed farming	1 723 606	18.1	71 709	11.3	24.0
highland cropping	1 657 888	17.4	47 615	7.5	34.8
highland cropping & mixed farming	924 791	9.7	32 670	5.2	28.3
improved stock-raising of humid areas	2 137 369	22.5	178 834	28.2	12.0
SERTÃO	9 509 115	100.0	633 928	100.0	15.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1981)

Population and number of farms are still denser in the highland cropping zones. Superior soils and more dispersed and regular rainfall of more than 600 mm annually enable the cultivation of long cycle crops. Here there are not only beans, corn and cotton planted but also manioc, sisal, pineapples and various kinds of fruit trees. Increasingly, food crops are becoming more commercial so that such favourable areas now play a larger role in supplying staples for the rest of the Sertão as well as for other zones of the Northeast. The year round practise of stock-raising on a large scale is usually rare in such humid zones of the Sertão. However, they do provide pasture for cattle brought in from nearby drier areas during the dry season as well as for livestock from further afield during times of drought.

In highland cropping zones, farms are located where good soils are found which in its turn depends on the type of mountain formation. Farms are situated at the humid base of sedimentary mesas (*chapadas*) and rocky elevations (*serrotes* or *serras secas*) where good soils and water can only be encountered at their foot. Rarer yet in the Sertão are crystaline mountain areas (*serras* or *brejos*), where favourable soils are encountered on the elevation itself, in which case properties are distributed over the whole mountain.

An improved type of specialized stock-raising is expanding in some humid areas of the Sertão. Semi-intensive rearing methods are utilized which are similar to those of the Agreste and the fact that these areas are located near the latter zone suggests that this type of cattle raising is diffusing from there into the Sertão. As we shall see in Chapter 4, this development is causing many of the same problems that have arisen in the Agreste, albeit not to the same extent due to lower initial population density.

There are as yet few areas where irrigation is the mainstay, but it is important along the lower-middle São Francisco River, the lower Jaguaribe River, the lower Açu River and in the Chapada da Diamantia area. Irrigation arose in places where local climatic conditions are usually more arid but also where rivers flow throughout most of the year and wind, river currents and terrain make it easy to lift or channel water to fields.

In places where irrigation is important, production is specialized in cash crops for large city markets. Dry zone ranching persists in the area off the main rivers. However, as ranching area makes up the majority of farm land in all the micro-regions that have irrigation it is not possible to separate an irrigation zone in the Sertão for statistical analysis.

THE SEASONS AND THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR

For a Sertanejo there are two seasons: the 'dry time' and the 'time of the rains', which can also be called the 'green time'. Throughout much of the year rains are usually absent. In most places, the dry season normally lasts for seven months (May-November), although it may last for only six months in the more humid areas or again for up to ten months in the driest places. The duration of the rainy season varies from only two months (January and February) in places like Chorrochó; to five months (December-April) in most places, as is the case of Parnamirim; and up to six months or more in mountainous areas or those graced by two different rain systems.

The terms 'summer' and 'winter' are also used, but with strict reference to the rains. 'Summer' is the dry season and 'winter' is

the wet season. These terms are not to be confused with the solar summer (December-March) and winter (June-September) nor with connotations of marking temperature differences. It is precisely during the dry season, called summer, that the lowest temperatures are experienced. The hottest days are experienced between September and November, when the first rains begin to threaten with the build-up of cloud formations.

A clear-cut change from the dry to the rainy season occurs at the end of December when fairly regular rainfall begins. Before this happens, though, there exists a period called the 'time of the first rains' or 'of the thundershowers' which does not fit clearly into either of the two seasons nor is it fully recognized as a season in its own right. It is said to indicate that the dry season is ending and that the rainy season is approaching. Occasionally during this period, a violent thunderstorm can take place, which, of course, does not happen during the dry season as strictly defined.

If one were to choose a point when the yearly round begins, it would be at this time. The fields are being cleared for the approaching wet season and a sudden thunderstorm can give a farmer respite from the gruelling dry season work of preparing fodder for emaciated livestock. While the rainfall from such cloudbursts is usually not enough for planting, given the parched state of the soil and the way it falls in an unpredictable manner, it does benefit the animals. Within days, grass sprouts and leaves begin to appear on the shrubs. This welcome natural pasture may last for some weeks, renewing the strength of the animals. The first rains are particularly opportune when they put an end to a poor year. Rainfall in the previous wet season had been inadequate and the natural pasture of the range had dried up earlier than normal. In such years a farmer is forced prematurely to use his reserve pasture of planted

fodder grass and crop residues of the fenced areas. Exhausting this he has to toil for weeks or even months on end, burning cacti and cutting branches of trees to feed his stock.

The first rainstorm to take place is perhaps one of the most socially (and environmentally) dramatic occurrences of the year for the people. It is the 'time of the first rains' and not a drop of water has fallen for months. Far on the horizon thunderheads can be seen building up, lightning flashes in the distance, the wind starts to rise and the storm approaches, with all hell threatening to break loose. This is beautiful weather for a Sertanejo despite his fear that the tempest may be violent when it arrives.[1]

If a storm is severe women hold their blessed leaf crosses saved from Palm Sunday, to avoid misfortune. The high winds can carry away the roof, blow trees down onto the house or lightning may strike the house or people. One must be very careful of the lightning, for if a person is struck and killed his soul will not be saved (and go to Heaven); instead he is condemned to wander about in space and to pester the living.

If a storm is not too violent, the children, who have been looking forward eagerly to the coming rain, will play in it, splashing around in the puddles and making miniature dams in the rapidly draining away streams of water. Children, and sometimes men, can be seen having a bath in the rain water pouring off the roof tiles. Also, after the dust has washed off the roof, water will be gathered in oil drums, pots or any other handy receptacle.

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[1] The normal days of cloudless, brilliant sunny weather are not so beautiful for him. This is the opposite of the weather aesthetics of the Brazilians who live along the whole rainy east coast. Sertanejos only want sunny days when the cotton is maturing.

The 'winter' finally arrives when rain falls on several days in the same week in December or January. It is then that the farmer, feeling rather more confident that rain will continue to fall regularly, plants his crops and hopes for the best. If it does not rain again within twenty days, he will lose what has been planted, as the seeds have already germinated, only to die quickly. When it rains he will plant again, doing this time after time until a crop takes hold, or until the 19th of March, St. Joseph's Day. If it has not rained well before that date he knows from experience that as a rule only despair lies ahead.

Regularity of the rains is crucial for the farmer, for if it rains too much within the space of a few days, flooding occurs, washing away the crops and pasture in the lowest of the bottomlands. Hence average rainfall of the year, or even of the month, does not indicate whether there was a harvest in any given year. Even the extreme of a 'green drought' can occur when heavy rainfall is concentrated in two months or less, as happened in 1980. In such a case the foliage of the shortest cycle crops may grow to full height but the plants bear no fruit. Reservoirs may be completely full, and water may not be lacking for humans and animals to drink during such a year, but man will feel hunger, and the livestock too, for the pastures will dry out sooner than usual. On the other hand, rainfall in a particular year may be regularly dispersed over a number of months, yet may not fall heavily enough to run off the soil and fill the rivers. Reservoirs will not be replenished sufficiently to last through the coming dry period. Men and animals have food to eat but they will experience thirst.[1]

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[1] Barroso (1956) observed the same on Ceará as did Macedo (1952) for ranches further up the São Francisco River.

In the rainy season, men are busy tilling their fields during most of the day. Their only stock-raising work is to milk the cows early in the morning. During this time of year, women may help in the fields if there are only a few men in the family. Where stock-raising is more important, women will be occupied in making cheese for a number of days during the week. Corn is harvested in March, and beans in April. During the dry season corn will be removed from the cob, beans from their pods, and the cotton slowly harvested. The focus of attention, though, will be the animals, which may require more or less work depending on the state of the pastures.

The change from the rainy to the dry season was well captured by Euclides da Cunha [1944(1902)], comparing it with the approach of winter in the temperate zones. Almost all the trees and shrubs gradually lose their leaves and the once brilliantly green bush turns a melancholy light grey.[1] In July and August, the leaves begin to fall, those of the inter-fluvials followed by those of the bottomlands. By July, the bush is already a quiet grey, interrupted by only an occasional evergreen tree encountered along a dry creek or river. The contrast with the rainy season could not be sharper, for during this period, the 'bountiful time', everything is green and colourful. Almost all the wild fruits and flowers come into season, and even the staid cacti take on colour.

The change from the wet to the dry season is also marked by the gradual disappearance of that crucial resource, water. When reservoirs are not filled properly during the rains, water may begin to become scarce as early as June in drier places, such as Belém and Chorrochó, or in July and August in more typical zones of the Sertão. The last pools

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[1] Sertanejos say it turns black, the colour grey not being well distinguished in their colour classification.

of water in the river beds dry up quickly as do the natural ponds formed by rock and mud depressions on interfluvial lands. The small reservoirs follow soon afterwards and the farmer digs his water holes deeper and deeper into the dry river bed as the water table recedes. He will usually have at least one water hole for human use and others for the animals, which provide water through normal dry seasons, and even through the less severe droughts.

The problem may not be simply the lack of water, but water located in one place and pasture in another. This can force the stock to walk great distances to drink, having to walk back to graze, and so forth, which tires already weakened animals. When this situation is combined with the necessity for a farmer to provide feed gathered from the bush, then it exhausts man as well. The animals become progressively weaker until they finally collapse, not to rise again.[1] Also fatiguing for man is when his water hole for household use dries up or the water becomes too salty. Then he has to carry water for kilometres in kerosene tins from a neighbour who still has water.

Today, many smaller farms still only have limited sources of water. In the past, only the wealthiest of ranchers had the financial means to construct a reservoir large enough to pass several consecutive drought years. Today, medium sized, and even some small farms, may have such reservoirs when the owners are able to obtain financing from government banks.

Another innovation, in recent times, has been federally subsidized tanker trucks that carry water to farms from large public reservoirs

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[1] When the animal is a prized cow, a Sertanejo goes to elaborate lengths to try to save it. The cow is forced to remain on its feet while he handfeeds it back to health. One way is to secure the cow upright with leather straps in a wooden frame. Another is to dig holes in the ground for the legs to stay outstretched.

during the worst years. As such trucks are administered by the county government this service has been adopted by the local political patronage system.

WEATHER FORECASTING

A number of birds migrate and when the last ones, the parrakeets and wild geese, go, then the Sertanejo longs for the rains to return (Barroso, 1956). If the rains take too long to arrive he will personally make a vow to a particular saint popularly known for bringing rain, usually St. Joseph or St. Gonçalo. A person may even 'steal a saint', which is to take an image from a house or church, returning it when the saint brings rain.[1] When a particularly rigorous drought threatens, group processions with the image of a saint can be undertaken.

The Sertanejo also looks for natural signs to see if rain is in the offing. He will observe certain trees, such as the angico (*Aptadenia colubrina*) and the oiticica (*Licania rigida*), for indications of budding or flowering. Wind blowing from the direction in which the rains arrive, sun and moon halos, clouds descending, certain stars disappearing, birds singing, the water level ceasing to diminish, and in particular unusually hot days can mean that it may rain soon. All of these are the more short-term 'experiments' that the farmer can perform to determine whether his condition will be alleviated.

Throughout the dry season many an older farmer will carry out the long-term 'experiments' to foresee the coming winter. The most wide-

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[1] Why the saint should bring rain for what is normally considered a despicable act, i.e. stealing, is explained by the people as being due to the 'saint's' desire to be returned to his accustomed place in the church or house from which he was taken. The same principle is at work when a girl, who wants to get married, turns an image of St. Anthony on its head. Because the saint suffers he arranges a suitor so that he will be turned upright again.

spread and commonly performed experiment in the Sertão is that of St. Lucy's Day (December 13), which is just before the advent of the wet season. Six pieces of salt are placed outside the night before, each one representing one of the coming months in which rain is more likely. A certain month will be good if the piece of salt representing it has melted or has a good deal of moisture running off it. A fair amount of moisture oozing from the salt means that the month will be fair. If very little or no moisture at all is observed then the month will be dry. In Chorrochó, where the rainy season is more restricted, some people conduct the experiment with only three pieces of salt!

Other experiments can be done before and after this principal one. On the eve of St. John's Day (June 24), a bottle of water is buried in the ground under a bonfire to be burnt when celebrating this important festival. Upon inspecting the bottle the next morning, if the amount of water in it is the same the coming winter will be good, if it has decreased a little the winter will be fair, and if it has decreased by half the rains will be poor.

A number of other experiments are concerned with signs of rain in certain months. Others are based on the observation of different natural phenomena during the year, such as the waxing and waning of the moon or reports about the height of the coastal tides. Also, the presence or absence of certain animals, birds and such like can augur a good or a bad winter.

And so Sertanejos try actively to know what an unreliable Nature has in store for them. To a certain point, the experiments can be explained by Malinowski's [1967(1922)] argument that they are undertaken to make a dangerous, uncontrollable element in their life predictable. However, Radcliffe-Brown's [1965(1952)] opposing argument that they can increase

anxiety when the outcome is thought to be unfavourable, can also be said to apply. Finally, one must be careful to qualify these arguments to the study area because, even when the experiments are performed, everyone realizes that they have a very good chance of being proven wrong, so fickle is Nature perceived to be. The experiments are only 'signs' of how things can come to pass. Also, as Evans-Pritchard 1950(1937) reported for Azande Oracles, not everybody performs the experiments, only some individuals are thought to be capable of doing so, and fewer yet can do so accurately enough to earn the title of 'prophet'.

That many people do not bother to perform the long-term experiments can only be partially explained by the formal education system labelling this behaviour as superstitious. Much more to the point is the wait-and-see attitude of Sertanejos, as they also doubt scientific meteorological predictions. Indeed, one agronomist-farmer believes more in the predictions of his old father-in-law than in what weather experts predict, and he proves his point by the greater accuracy of the former in recent years. Age definitely influences whether a farmer performs this type of experiments. However, an older person having received little formal education has less to do with explaining this than does the fact that an older person has more experience on which to base his forecast.

Whether or not a particular farmer undertakes experiments or makes vows to a saint, when concerned about the weather, most farmers in the more typical areas of the Sertão are of the cautious and stoical type. When he does not practise irrigation which would increase the chances of a good harvest, the traditional Sertanejo farmer hedges his risks,

limits his work and area planted to that which can feed his family and buys the things considered as being basic to life.[1]

If the rains are behind schedule or a drought is occurring Sertanejos may ask for God's intervention, but their misfortune in such a case is not considered as a sign of God's wrath for some sin committed. With their typical black humour, they say that it may have been God who created the world, there being humid areas and areas where droughts occur, but it is man's stupidity that is at fault for wanting to live in these places.

WHEN THE RAINS DO NOT COME

When the arrival of the rains, which would normally mark the advent of the wet season, fails to take place, the 'dry time' continues, and is considered unbroken until the occurrence of a real 'winter'. This may be in the next year or it may be in a number of years. When a second wet season passes without normal rainfall it is considered to be a great drought. The worst of these are remembered by a Sertanejo as far back as his grandparent's or great-grandparent's time when a particularly harsh drought would force the starving population to the extreme of 'eating leather'. Cattle were so thin that what little beef yielded was as tough as leather. Also, the predecessors were humiliated by having to eat food collected from the bush, something that Indians do. Implicit in this

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[1] Further demonstrating this point is the change in behaviour of farmers who move from a humid zone of the Northeast, where the harvest is nearly guaranteed, to the Sertão. In Souza, Paraíba, farmers coming from the extremely humid Brejo part of the state work hard planting as much area as possible in the first years. Then after repeated losses, they soon learn to cultivate like their neighbours, not risking too much. The climatic conditions and soils of Souza county are favourable by Sertanejo standards, hence one can imagine the hard lessons learnt by farmers moving to the drier parts of the Sertão.

is the idea that 'civilized' people cultivate produce. Widespread suffering, starvation and death were common before the opening of roads into the interior. A calamitous drought in which this happened was that of 1877-1879. Facó [1976(1963)] estimates that more than 100,000 Sertanejos perished in this drought and it is still remembered today as the worst ever.

Table 5 presents the dates of the more serious general droughts. These were felt throughout the region, though not necessarily during the whole period reported for each state, e.g. 1707-1711 in Ceará but 1710-1711 in Paraíba. These dates refer to the worst years, while Sertanejos recognize more variation: good, regular, poor and terrible years. Great spatial variation in drought occurrence, from county to county, and even from place to place within the same county, can be observed (Tables 6, 7 and 8).

Generally the Sertanejo says there are three bad years for every good year. In the drier areas he is even more pessimistic, claiming one good year in ten. One must be careful with such affirmations, for often what is meant by a good year is really a very favourable year. In such a year, the animals are well watered and fed, multiplying in great numbers. Also, the harvest is bountiful, for the rains fell in a pattern similar to that of the more humid zones of the Northeast. On the other hand, some of these good years can also be too good. Flash floods may carry away crops, fences, pasture and small dams. Excessive humidity can cause the appearance of more livestock disease and pests. This occurred in most places in 1960, 1964 and 1974. The ideal would be fine rains, yet strong enough for water to run off the land in order

to fill the reservoirs. The precipitation would be distributed over many months, creating plentiful pasture and perhaps even giving the possibility of two harvests, an unheard of occurrence outside irrigation. Many an old person looks back to 1924 as just such a perfect year.

Table 5. Official Recorded Droughts[1]

1500s	1600s	1700s	1800s	1900s
1499-1500	1603	1707-1711	1803-1805	1902-1904
1559	1614-1615	1720-1721	1808-1809	1907-1908
1564	1651-1652	1723-1724	1814	1915
1583	1692-1693	1735-1737	1816-1817	1919
1592		1744-1746	1819-1820	1931-1933
		1748-1751	1824-1825	1936
		1754	1827	1941-1944
		1760	1829-1830	1951-1953
		1766	1833-1835	1958
		1771-1772	1837	1970
		1776-1778	1845-1846	1975-1977
		1783-1784	1860	1979-
		1790-1794	1868-1869	
			1877-1879	
			1885	
			1888-1889	
			1891	
			1898-1900	

Source: Santos (1962), MINTER/SUDENE (1973) and Field Research

1. Droughts in which the harvest was lost and herds were devastated

Excluding the rare good year, what is more commonplace are regular and poor years. In a regular year, the harvest is fair and the animals have enough natural and reserve pasture to make any special treatment unnecessary. In a poor year, the harvest is more or less a failure. The animals may have to be given supplementary feed or removed to a place where the rainfall was more favourable that year, but in such a year a rancher will not lose too much stock.

Table 6. Characterization of Years in Surveyed Counties according to Local Informants

Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible	Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible
1905	7				1943				6
1906				7	1944		6		
1907				7	1945		6		
1908				3,7	1946		6		
1909				7	1947	6			
1910	7				1948	6			
1911					1949				6
1912					1950		6	5	
1913					1951		6		
1914					1952		6	2	7
1915				2,3,7	1953		6		
1916	7				1954		6		
1917					1955		6		
1918					1956		6		
1919				2,3,6	1957		6		
1920	6				1958		7		3,4,6
1921	6				1959				6,7
1922	6				1960	6,7			
1923		6			1961	6			
1924	6,7				1962		6		
1925	6				1963		6		
1926	6				1964	3,6,7			
1927	6			7	1965	6			
1928		6		7	1966	6		4	3
1929		6		7	1967	6	3		
1930				6,7	1968		3,6		
1931		6		3,7	1969		3,6		
1932		7		3,5,6	1970			2-4	6
1933	7		2		1971	6	3,7		
1934	6,7				1972	6	3	7	1,5
1935	6	7			1973	5,6	3,7		
1936		6			1974	1,3,5-7			
1937	6	7			1975	3,6	1,5,7	4	
1938		6		7	1976	1	5,7	3	6
1939		6		7	1977	6,7	1,5	3	
1940	6,7				1978	6		1	7
1941				6	1979		5-7		
1942			2	3,5,6					

Source: Field Research

County	State
1. Quixadá	Ceará
2. Mombaça	Ceará
3. Jaguaribe	Ceará
4. Icó	Paraíba
5. Souza	Paraíba
6. Serra Branca	Paraíba
7. Arcoverde	Pernambuco

Table 7. Characterization of Years in Different Points of Chorrochó County according to Local Informants

Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible	Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible
1905					1943		7		3
1906					1944	3,7			
1907					1945		3,7		
1908					1946		3,7		
1909					1947	3	5		7
1910					1948	5			3,7
1911					1949				3,5,7
1912	7				1950				
1913					1951	5	3		2,7
1914	7				1952	5			1,2,3,7
1915				1,6,7	1953	5			2,3,7
1916	7				1954	3,5			2,7
1917				6,7	1955	5		3	2,7
1918				7	1956	5		3	2,7
1919				7	1957	3,5,8		6	2,7
1920				7	1958			3,5,7	1,2,8
1921				7	1959		3,7,8	5	2,9
1922				7	1960	1-9			
1923				7	1961	7	2,4	3,5	6,8,9
1924	1,6,7				1962	7	2,4,5,8,9	3	
1925				7	1963	1,5,7	2,4,8,9	3	
1926	1,7				1964	2,3,5,7,9	4,5,8		
1927				7	1965		2-5,7,8		9
1928				7	1966	3,5,7	2,4,8		9
1929		7			1967	3,5	2,9		4,7,8
1930		7			1968	2,3,5	4,7,8		1,9
1931				7	1969	2,3	4,5,7,8		9
1932				1,3,5-7	1970	6,9	2,4,8	3	1,7
1933	7			1,3,5,6	1971		4,5,7,8	3	2,6,9
1934	5,7	3			1972	9	3,4,5,7,8		2,6
1935	3,5	7			1973		2-5,7,8		9
1936	5	3,7			1974	1-3,5-9	4		
1937		7	3	5	1975				1-9
1938		7		3,5	1976		4		1-3,5-9
1939		7		3,5	1977		4	3	1,2,5-9
1940	3,5		7		1978	3,8	2,9	1	
1941	5	3,7			1979				
1942	5	7		3					

Source: Field Research

Place	Location (in reference to Chorrochó)
1. County Seat	-
2. Faz. Coelho	17km NW
3. Icozeira	25km W
4. Faz. Poço da Pedra	10km SSW
5. São José	23km SW
6. Lagoa de Zé Alves	32km SW
7. Faz. Riacho dos Bois	40km S
8. Faz. Pé do Alto	55km SE
9. Faz. Estreito	53km SW

Table 8. Characterization of Years in Different Points of Parnamirim County according to Local Informants

Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible	Year	Good	Regular	Poor	Terrible
1905					1943		3		2
1906					1944	8	3		2
1907					1945	1	3		2,8
1908					1946		1,3		2,8
1909					1947	1,2	3		
1910					1948				1,2,3
1911					1949		1,3		2
1912					1950	1	3,8		2
1913					1951		1,3,8		2
1914					1952		1,8		2,3,6
1915				8	1953		1,3,8		2
1916					1954	1,2,8	3		
1917					1955		1,3,8		2
1918					1956		1,2,3		8
1919					1957	1,8	3		2,7
1920					1958		7		1-6,8
1921					1959	2,1	3,6,7		4,5
1922					1960	1-8			
1923					1961	8	2,3,5,7	6	1,4
1924	8				1962	8	1-3,5,7	6	4
1925					1963	1,4,8	2,3,5,7	6	
1926					1964	1-4,6,8	5,7		
1927					1965	1,6,8	2-5,7		
1928					1966	8	1-7		
1929					1967	1,4,8	2,3,5-7		
1930				2	1968	1,6,8	2-5,7		
1931				2,3	1969	8	1-5,7	6	
1932				2,3,7,8	1970		1,4,5	6	2,3,7
1933	2		3		1971	6	2,4,5,7		1,3
1934			2,3		1972				1-8
1935	3		2		1973	1	2-5,7	6	8
1936			2,3		1974	1-8			
1937			2,3		1975		2,4,5,7,8		1,3,6
1938			2	3	1976	7,8			1-6
1939				2,3	1977		1-3,7,8	6	4,5
1940	2,3,8				1978	6-8	1-3		4,5
1941			3	2	1979		1-3,5,7,8		4,6
1942	3			2					

Source: Field Research

Place	Location (in reference to Parnamirim)
1. County Seat	-
2. Mata Bói	30km N
3. Faz. Lagoa Grande	18km N
4. Faz. Palestina	13km SW
5. Faz. Boa Sorte	27km SW
6. Faz. Curralinho	25km S
7. Faz. Sao Joaquim	14km E
8. Faz. Cupiará	24km SE

As Tables 7 and 8 demonstrate, in practice poor years are not remembered well, and those of the more distant past are placed in the categories of regular or terrible years. Even regular years are not well recalled. They are also called 'varied' years which reflects their not being as outstanding as the good and bad years. Only for more recent years can a typical farmer recall a continual sequence of years in a discriminatory manner. In any given locality, though, there is always someone with an extraordinary power of recollection, who is able to characterize each year since his childhood. The weather 'prophets' are usually such individuals.

The years that everybody remembers well are the terrible years in which a farmer can lose everything. Harvests fail, herds are wiped out and even human drinking holes dry up. Two or more years like this and mass emigration used to be sparked off, causing the kind of desperation and hardship that Ramos describes so well:

> In the distance on the reddened plain two jujube trees opened up green patches. The poor people had been walking the entire day, were tired and starving. Ordinarily they could not walk far in a day, but the night before they had rested well in the sand of a dry river so that today they had already advanced almost three leagues (18km). For hours they had been searching for shade. Through the bare branches of the sparse bush the foliage of the jujube trees appeared a long way off.
>
> They dragged themselves along slowly in that direction. Sinhá Vitória had her youngest child straddling her hip and a leaf basket on her head. Fabiano, very sombre, staggered on. He had a fibre sack slung across his chest, a gourd cup hanging from the belt, and a flintlock swung over his shoulder. The oldest boy and the dog Beleia followed behind.
>
> The bush stretched out, an indeterminate red expanse, speckled white with bones. The black flight of vultures made circles high above dying creatures.
>
> The drought appeared a necessary fact ... and the ranch hand needed to arrive somewhere, where, he did not know. They had left the trails full of thorns and gravel, and had been walking along the river for hours. The dry cracked mud scorched their feet.

> The night before, there had been six of them, including the parrot ... but hunger had pressed too hard ... Fabiano had looked in vain for roots to eat, the rest of the cassava flour ran out, and not a single lost steer bellowed out in the bush ... Sinhá Vitória resolved suddenly to make use of the parrot for food with the justification that it was mute and worthless.
>
> The patch of jujube trees reappeared, Fabiano quickened his pace, forgot his hunger, fatigue and cuts. The heels of his sandals were worn down and the straps had opened cuts between his toes. His heels, tough as leather, were split open and bleeding.
>
> In a bend of the trail he caught sight of a fence which filled him with the hope of finding food. He wanted to sing but his voice came out hoarse, sounding horrible. He fell silent again not wanting to waste his energy.
>
> They left the edge of the river, following the fence, went up a rise and finally arrived at the jujube trees. It had been a long time since they had seen shade [1978(1938): 9-12; translated here].

Even when refugees arrived in an area that was less affected by drought they might not be able to find enough food for their numbers strained local supplies. Facó [1976(1963)] estimates that half the 112,000 who were displaced from the Sertão of Ceará during the killer drought of 1877-1879 died in the environs of the state capital of Fortaleza. I also encountered elderly informants on the coast of Paraíba who remember how food supplies ran acutely short during the droughts of 1915 and 1919.

From the 1930s onward, with the opening of better roads on which lorries could pass reasonably, the scale of mass exodus and starvation caused by drought gradually diminished. This was a typical case of linking isolated peasant populations with distant markets (Leach, 1961 and Wolf, 1966). On the other hand, having food close at hand does not necessarily mean that one has the money to buy it, or that fleeing to where there is some will guarantee the pity of the host population. Pierson (1972) captured the social relations of neglect in a research project carried

out on the São Francisco River during the drought of 1952. This river has been traditionally a refuge for men and animals feeling the droughts. Refugees from the dry lands away from the river, *caatingueiros*, were considered to be different from the *beirante* population on the river. *Caatingueiros* were considered to be filthy beasts who did not merit pity or help. Such an attitude may shock some people but it is really not very different from the depersonalized attitude of the big city dweller to beggars. Indeed, an ecological anthropologist may even show how the above reaction in the Sertão is adapted to the environmental conditions of the region, as the amount of food would not be enough for the two populations together.[1]

However, the situation in the area affected by drought is not so mean. At least in the drier areas of the Sertão, where the small scale of the society makes for more personal relationships, wide ties of kinship and friendship between inhabitants of dry and humid areas are observed. There also exists a certain amount of pity from the better-off for the disadvantaged whom they know, and their help can enable many victims to survive the worst. What usually happens, though, is for a person or a family who feel that they are being a burden on kin and friends to leave the region and to try their luck elsewhere until the local situation improves.

Ironically, the population most affected by the droughts is not to be found in the more arid parts of the Sertão.[2] In these areas the number of landless peasants is quite restricted. This is due to there being

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[1] Sweet [1970(1965)] postulates such an explanation for similar Bedouin behaviour under such extreme conditions.

[2] Dregne (1970) makes the same observation on a worldwide scale. Drought occurrence is a more serious calamity in semi-arid zones than in arid zones.

less land suitable for agriculture and also to inheritance having progressively diminished the size of holdings in such areas. When a drought strikes, as it does more frequently and severely in a place like Chorrochó, the owners, being orientated to the more drought resistant activity of stock-raising, are better able to see their few dependent persons through.

Comparing Map 6 (precipitation) to Map 5 (frequency of drought), one notes that while some of the driest areas of the semi-arid zone are included within those where the occurrence of drought is most frequently reported, other extremely dry areas are not included. Also, requests for drought relief are made repeatedly in areas that are not very dry at all.[1]

The more typical areas of the Sertão, and even the more favourable areas, are more adversely affected by droughts because of the presence of large numbers of landless peasants and minifundial property holders. These farmers are already living close to the subsistence level in normal years, and during droughts are thrown into starvation and misery, being forced to leave until conditions improve. Johnson (1971) demonstrates for Ceará how during a drought only some tenants are able to find 'charity' work on their patron's farm while the rest have to leave. They, like many smallholders whose relatives are in the same situation, have to flee elsewhere.

In the past, when extreme drought struck, the state and federal governments made fitful attempts at alleviating potentially volatile

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[1] Also involved with Map 6 is a political graft machine, associated to media publicity, in which he who 'cries' the most receives the scarce federal funds for relief. Ceará state is a master at what is called the 'Drought Industry'. "It is a popular belief that Ceará is one of the driest regions in the Northeast, which is one of the biggest lies" (Valverde, 1963: 48; translated here). Cunniff (1975) describes and analyzes in detail the rise of the 'Drought Industry' in the Northeast.

situations. For the most part, until the late 1800s, the refugees had to fend for themselves as best they could, fleeing to less stricken areas where they might or might not find work. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the state and federal governments encouraged emigration in drought years Facó [1976(1963)], SUDENE (1973) . Facó relates, as do my informants, how refugees were sent to the Amazon region to work during the rubber boom, where they were exploited as debt peons until they escaped or died of malaria. The cocoa plantations in south Bahia state also absorbed drought victims in the same way during the 20th century.

Until the late 1950s, the great droughts could still force expressive migratory surges by the beginning of the second wet season without rain. Increasingly, in the 20th century, the refugees started going to the economically booming Southeast. They were able to find work there in the coffee fields, and later, in the industrializing cities Facó [1976(1963)] Like other migrants from the Northeast, if they found rewarding work, which was difficult for landless fieldhands or 'unskilled' city workers, they stayed on. By adding their numbers to the already large multitude of migrants that arrived each year in the Southeast, a sudden wave of drought victims created huge problems in the industrial cities. Their numbers strained the city infra-structure, causing scenes such as when the entire floor area of the Central Rail Station of Rio de Janeiro was covered with homeless migrants in 1958. If the refugees who went south possessed properties or would inherit land in the 'North' they might return to their homeland and the strength of attachment to their particular patch of land is legendary. However, this should not be exaggerated. There are numerous cases of landowners, and even those with sizeable holdings, having found what they consider to be a better job and life-style in the Southeast and who do not want to return.

From the 1950s onwards, the federal government did succeed in reducing the sudden flux of refugees leaving the zone in drought years. Larger improvised public works projects (*frentes de trabalho*) were created during droughts to provide the money that the victims needed to buy food brought in from distant markets. In the last few years, a change of strategy appears to have proved even more effective in stemming the tide of drought-caused emigration. The federal government provided funds for the landed farmers to employ more of their workers and tenants than they normally would have been able to do during drought years. On the other hand, at the local level there has been the inevitable graft and uneven distribution of the emergency funds. Also, the increasingly frequent mob assaults on street markets and grain depositories during the last two years of the 1975-1982 drought attest to the fact that the drought problem has yet to be resolved.

It should be noted that Sertanejo emigration did not end with the amelioration of the impact of droughts. Rather than sudden surges of out-migration the pattern is now one of a continual stream. Other causes of emigration are increasing in importance, such as the attraction to big city life and less economic opportunity at home. Furthermore, the periodic disruptions, and, at times, even large-scale starvation and death, caused by the droughts did not stop the population of the semi-arid zone from increasing. In 1782 there were 137,000 inhabitants of the Sertão, by the early 1800s this had increased to 726,000, by 1877 to 1,754,000, in 1950 to 5,599,128 and by 1980 to 9,509,115 (MINTER/SUDENE 1973; Fundação IBGE 1955a, 1981). Indeed, demographic pressure on land holdings has increased despite the droughts. This, along with frustrated higher aspirations instilled by market integration, only lead more people to leave the Sertão.

Before treating these topics in greater detail, an overall view of the relationship between Sertanejos and their physical and social environment will be presented. A good understanding of how local people perceive the outside world, as well as that closer to home, is important for evaluating the nature of the changes taking place in their way of life.

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

3. MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

The relationship between man and his environment involves perceptions of the physical space about him, concepts about animate and inanimate forms within that space, views referring to the utility and social significance of each distinguished object or area, and finally, ideas concerning his position within the natural order. Although a Sertanejo looks at his surroundings with a very utilitarian eye, perceiving objects in terms of what use can be made of them, he also confers cultural meaning upon them. Social considerations intrude when defining the usefulness of things, and conversely, natural phenomena can be employed socially to express relationships between men.

While there is no question about places of human habitation being highly charged with social significance, perception of the least human part of the environment, the bush, is also influenced by cultural considerations. As Douglas (1966, 1975), Leach (1964), Lévi-Strauss [1969 (1962), 1966(1962)] and Tambiah (1969) have pointed out, the environment is not just economically exploited, it is also utilized for thinking about society. How man views and makes use of the environment in both these ways are analyzed here. An integrated approach is pursued and one that is neither utilitarian nor aesthetic, neither materialist nor mentalist.[1]

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[1] Environmental cognition and perception has been a growing subject of interest for social linguists (Hall 1966, 1968), psychological anthropoligists (Gladwin 1970, Wallace 1964), geographers (Gale & Golledge 1982) and particularly for psychologists (Evans 1980). Another line of research concerning man's perception of nature is that of coggitive anthropologists who have studied folk floral and faunal classifications [Berlin, Breedlove & Raven 1966 (1969); Black 1969; Brown 1979a, 1979b; Conklin 1964, 1969(1962); Frake 1964, 1969(1962); Hunn (1982);Taylor (1974) and Witkowski, Brown & Chase 1981]. A broader approach to man's view of nature is that found in the work of Bulmer (1967), Douglas (1966, 1975), Leach (1964), Lévi-Strauss [1969(1962), 1966(1962)], Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971, 1976) and Tambiah (1969).

The method used here to obtain information on environmental perception was that of the anthropologist, and not the psychologists. Laboratory experiments and tests were not conducted. Instead the material was acquired directly through questioning and indirectly through conversation and observation.[1] On certain complex subjects long interviews lasting over a period of weeks with a limited number of informants were undertaken, much in the way as Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971) did with the Tukano Amerindians of Amazonian Columbia. While more informants were interviewed in this research than in that of Reichel-Dolmatoff and were chosen in such a way as to reflect such sub-cultural variation as differences of age, sex, level of education, place of residence and line of work, the size of the sample was relatively small in some cases. However, there are times when one has to choose between talking to a lot of people about a few subjects or talking to a few people about a wide range of topics. The long residence in a fieldwork community is one way in which this problem can be overcome. A researcher gradually picks up more bits of information from a larger number of people in an informal setting and so complements the interviews.

How a Sertanejo perceives and conceives space is described and analyzed first. This ranges from the most abstract level of places far away, which he has never seen, to that of his local environment with which he is in daily contact. In the local milieu the organization of human

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[1] Such a procedure, which relies heavily on language as a window to the foreign mind, certainly suffers from all the problems cited by Schneider (1965) and Wallace (1965) in their criticisms of Ethnoscience as well as from the objections made by Hallpike (1980) against Whorf and Douglas but it is what a cultural stranger has to work with. Indeed, Honigmann (1967) shows how many psychological and psychiatric mental tests have been found to be extremely culture bound to Western industrial society.

space is only briefly treated, setting the stage for the main part of the ethnography of Sertanejo society, which is elaborated in the rest of the work. In this chapter greater attention is paid to the country and particularly to the wild sphere. After dealing with how Sertanejos divide rural space, the discussion turns to an analysis of man's view of and relationship to nature. Finally, man's impact on the environment is evaluated in the context of technological and economic change. The chief concern is to determine how and if Sertanejos have modified their mode of resource exploitation and their general attitude toward Nature.

THE PERCEPTION OF SPACE

Many of the places with which normal Sertanejos have little personal contact are described and distinguished by employing cosmological, political and socio-economic criteria. Areas closer to home are characterized and differentiated by socio-economic, climatic, topological and floral considerations, all of which arise from more immediate observation. Quite logically, as one approaches the local surroundings, more details are given and distinctions are finer. The former is compressed geographical space while the latter is operational space (Rayner, 1982).

The Outside World

The Sertanejo cosmos consists of This World, where we and other beings live, and the Other World, where the spirits live. This latter is not so much in a different physical place as in another dimension. The two worlds are considered to be quite separate and rarely do beings from the two meet. It is this cleavage which justifies the treatment

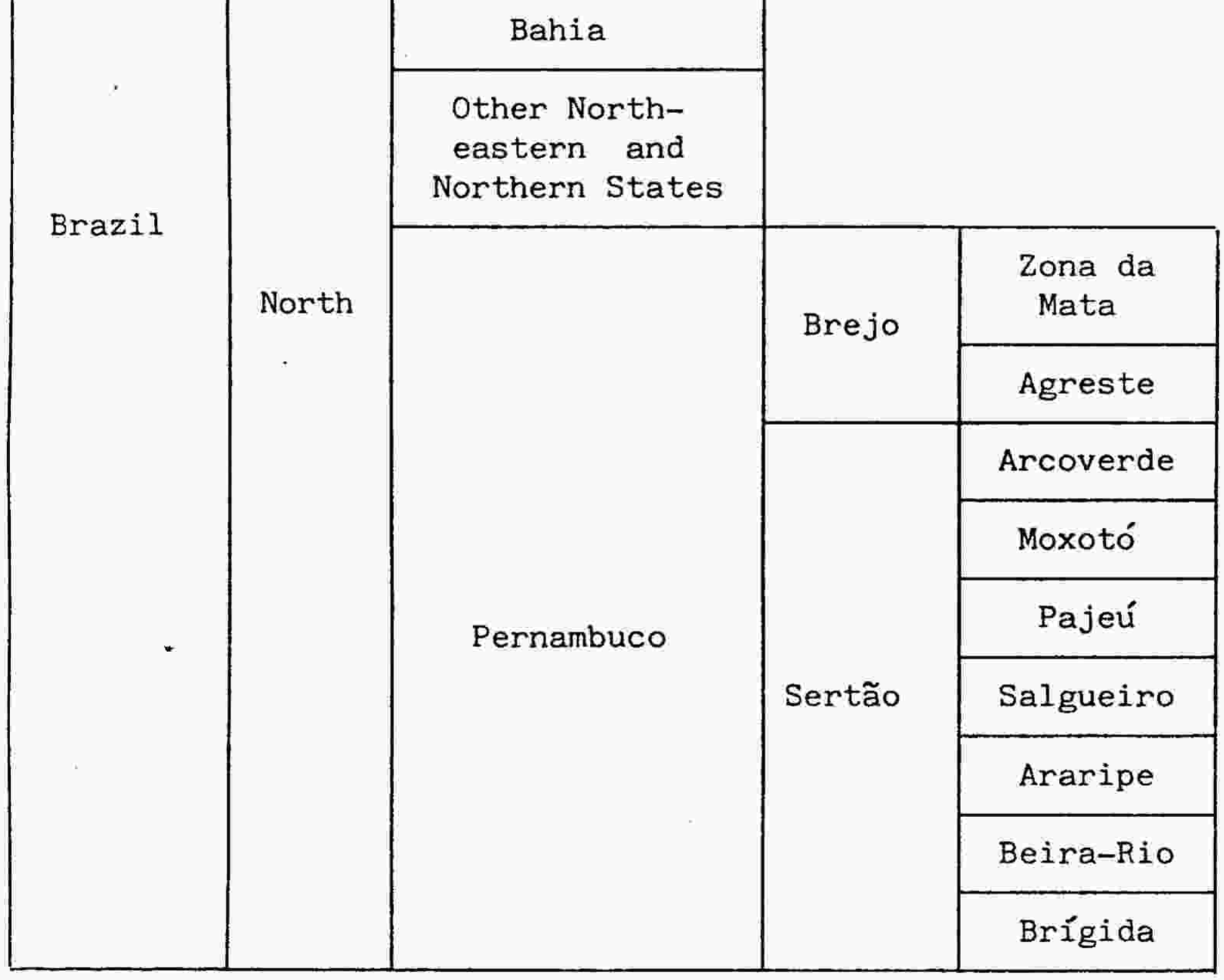
of the phenomena of This World first, and of the Other in Chapter 7.

The World, for most persons of the communities studied, consists mainly of the different states of Brazil (Figure 1). They may know of the existence of other countries but these are imagined as being like the states of Brazil, parts of the entity called the 'Foreign Land'. The type of person with such a view is usually over 40 years of age, or has an education limited to the elementary level. Individuals with a more ample view of the world are members of the better educated and wider travelled upper class, who are more numerous in the wealthier community of Belém.

For a Sertanejo, as for most of his countrymen, Brazil is seen as a collection of states divided into two regions, the North and the South. The states of his region are thought to be quite distinct from one another in socio-economic conditions, as well as in the typical behaviour displayed by the inhabitants of each, while those of the South are thought to be similar to one another. The South is 'developed' in contrast to the states of his region, which vary in their 'backwardness'.

Some states of the Northeast are thought to be more developed than others. The people of Belém consider themselves to have a more advanced way of life than that found in neighbouring Bahia. They view Bahia as a place that is really 'in the interior' and very seldom go there. Occasionally they hear of some curious happening there and comment, "Well that's Bahia", as if it were some mysterious far-off land. Similarly the people of Parnamirim, and of the other cities of western Pernambuco, ridicule Piauí for being so backward, citing as a signal example (particularly for a Sertanejo) the poor, undersized breed of cattle which still exist in the state. Inhabitants of the states in an inferior position usually accept their status and lament the backwardness of the place they live in. Persons

Figure 1. The View from Parnamirim in Pernambuco State



from states considered to be of equal standing, as for example those from Ceará and Pernambuco, will simply affirm that certain places in the other state are in an 'advanced' position, thinly disguising an uneasy sense of rivalry.

Admitting inferiority or not, uncomplimentary stereotypes are used to show one's ultimate superiority. Even persons from backward places will use these to depreciate the people of the advanced ones and so attain a degree of self-respect. The stereotypes are frequently evoked, and the ironic thing is that, for the most part, they do have some foundation in truth.

Pernambucanos of the study area, as well as most others throughout the state, will observe that Baianos are lazy and cowardly, and that Cearenses are hired assassins much like the violent Alagoanos. The Baianos studied will point out that the Pernambucanos are quick tempered and overly proud, while Paraibanos are just plain mean. A Baiano mine worker from Chorrochó, who works at the huge Caraíbas Metais complex located near Juazeiro, stated in a matter-of-fact manner that much of the work force of the mines did not consist of Baianos like himself because most of them did not like to work. One even finds this stereotyping at the highest and most educated levels in the state capitals.

Within states, large geographic divisions are recognized, defined by features of climate, vegetation, topography and human activity. The broadest of these zones are those of Zona da Mata/Agreste/Sertão, described in Chapter 1. Within each of these, finer divisions are made, with the places closer to where the person resides being quite differentiated, while those further afield are lumped together in one general category.

For Sertanejos of Parnamirim and Belém, Pernambuco consists of the Sertão and the Mata Zone. Within the latter, the Agreste and the Zona da Mata

are usually not distinguished, both being considered *brejo* (humid). The Sertão itself is divided up by river valleys, mountains and important cities which define the following sub-zones: Arcoverde (a city), the Moxotó (a river), the Pajeú (a river), Salgueiro (a city), Araripe (an upland area) and the Beira-Rio (the São Francisco River area). A person from Parnamirim would further separate the area around the Riacho da Brígida located between Salgueiro and the Araripe. Pernambucanos of the coastal region do not perceive such spatial detail in the Sertão, and, at the most, may know of a few important cities there, which together with their surrounding area, give some division to the zone.[1]

Closer to home, space is partitioned by two sets of finer divisions which are founded on a mixture of physical and social criteria. One is based on socio-economic and political distinctions, which separate town from country and human domains from wild domains. The other is geographical, relating agricultural activity and wild vegetation to types of terrain.

Town and Country

For all practical purposes the analysis of cultural space begins to take on real meaning for a Sertanejo at the county level. While at first glance it might seem that such a political and administrative demarcation might be based on arbitrary criteria, counties (*municípios*) are really quite functional areas that orient cultural life at the local level. As has been mentioned, they are marketing centres that bridge micro-environments. They are usually located on principal highways and are points of convergence of secondary roads. Most social and economic dealings focus

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[1] Bicalho (1980) observes the same tendencies in the popularly recognized divisions of the state of Paraíba.

on the county seat (*cidade, sede*). It is a place where rural folk, who spend most of their time relatively isolated on their farmsteads, can meet and socialize on market and feast days. Finally, the county seat is the axis of the most basic division of Sertanejo (and Brazilian) space: town and country.

Space in the Sertão can be envisaged as a continuum from the wildest and least human domain, virgin bush (*mato bruto*), to the most human sphere, town (*cidade*). Town is the domain of man and is constructed almost exclusively for his benefit. Very few wild animals are allowed to enter and it is being felt increasingly that not even livestock should be permitted to roam freely on the streets. The ideal of urban life is that found in the large industrial cities of the Southeast or in the state capitals of the Northeast. In such places the bush and animals have been banished from sight.[1] The urban zone of the towns, and even cities, of the Sertão is not nearly so completely separated from the country. There are cases of dangerous intruders from the wild sphere, such as snakes and jaguars, entering and threatening man. This poor separation of town and country leads many a large city dweller to say jokingly that such towns and cities of the interior are almost in the bush.

A town is also defined by having a cluster of houses aligned along streets (*ruas*) and, indeed, the term 'street' is synonymous with town. All towns have a weekly market day which is one of the highspots of

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[1] This is the ideal but one can still encounter the occasional steer or goat grazing on empty lots of the residential zones of the state capitals of the Northeast. Even Rio de Janeiro has large areas of forest on the mountains found throughout the city and domestic animals of the urban poor can be seen grazing on the grassy hillsides. Notwithstanding this, the ideal is usually accomplished, and the emphasis on constructing high rise buildings has so reduced the green areas of the large Brazilian cities that popular ecological concern has arisen in an effort to reverse this trend. Thus, in the industrial city the attitude to other life forms is being reversed and attempts are being made to reintroduce at least a domesticated form of 'Nature' into urban life.

collective activity and interaction. This sociability is called *movimento* (movement), which is the key attribute of an urban zone. There are other important characteristics of town life, which are of more recent origin. Some of these are: specialized commercial establishments that are open daily, reliable electricity, running water, tele-communications systems and paved streets.

Villages (*vilas*) and hamlets (*povoados*) may have a number of these attributes but on a much reduced scale. They now have the urban appearance of the smaller towns in the past, and, having such basic features as streets and limited commerce, are not considered to be part of the bush. On the other hand, they are well down in the ranking order of residence prestige and are not nearly on the same standing as a town. Worse still is the rural zone, and any place located outside the limits of even the above modest collections of human habitation is considered bush.

The transition from town to country is not quite as abrupt as the general ideal types would suggest. Townspeople living on the outskirts of the urban zone are not really 'in town', in the same way as those who reside near the 'centre'. As it is the poor who live in the peripheral zones, these areas are not often served, or are irregularly served, by the modern urban infrastructure. Rarely do they have the services now considered as basic, such as electricity, water and sewage facilities and rubbish collection. With the influx of persons leaving the rural zone, the poor areas of the towns and cities are growing faster than the services are being expanded from the centre outward. Also, this growth is taking place in a somewhat disordered manner so that many houses are not properly aligned along streets, when streets do exist at all.

In Belém, the poor part of town is called the 'high area', reflecting its location further away from the river, where the town was first established.

The poor sections of Chorrochó are found on the secondary streets and in the older, dilapidated part of the town. In Parnamirim, the poor live mainly on the high lands, much as in Belém. In both towns the outward spread of new middle class residences is causing the poor to be pushed even further away from the centre.

To a large extent, urban space may be organized according to the principle of wealth and class position, but there are other criteria for delineating areas of the towns where specific kinds of persons reside and socialize. Sex, age and political allegiance, together with class position, dictate which public places a person may frequent. Upper class young people of both sexes usually only enter a 'family' bar or luncheonette. Other bars are rougher. These are usually only more active, and dangerous, on market day when they are bustling full of male farm hands, sharecroppers and small property holders. When the town is of a fair size, like Parnamirim and Belém, two or more separate social clubs exist, catering for the festivities of the different classes and political parties. Chorrochó has only one club and social distinctions are made internally.

Similarly, in other parts of the public domain, such as in general stories, on the streets and plazas, one sees the above principles at work in the grouping and segregating of different kinds of individuals, each person having his own place. Such examples show how urban public space can be envisaged as being crosscut by a number of divisions, as exemplified by Figure 2 of Belém and Figure 3 of Chorrochó, which distinguish the differently perceived sections of towns. Certain places do exist, the church for example, where nearly everyone in the community gathers but even here, just as in the social club in Chorrochó, the worldly social divisions of without can be repeated within.

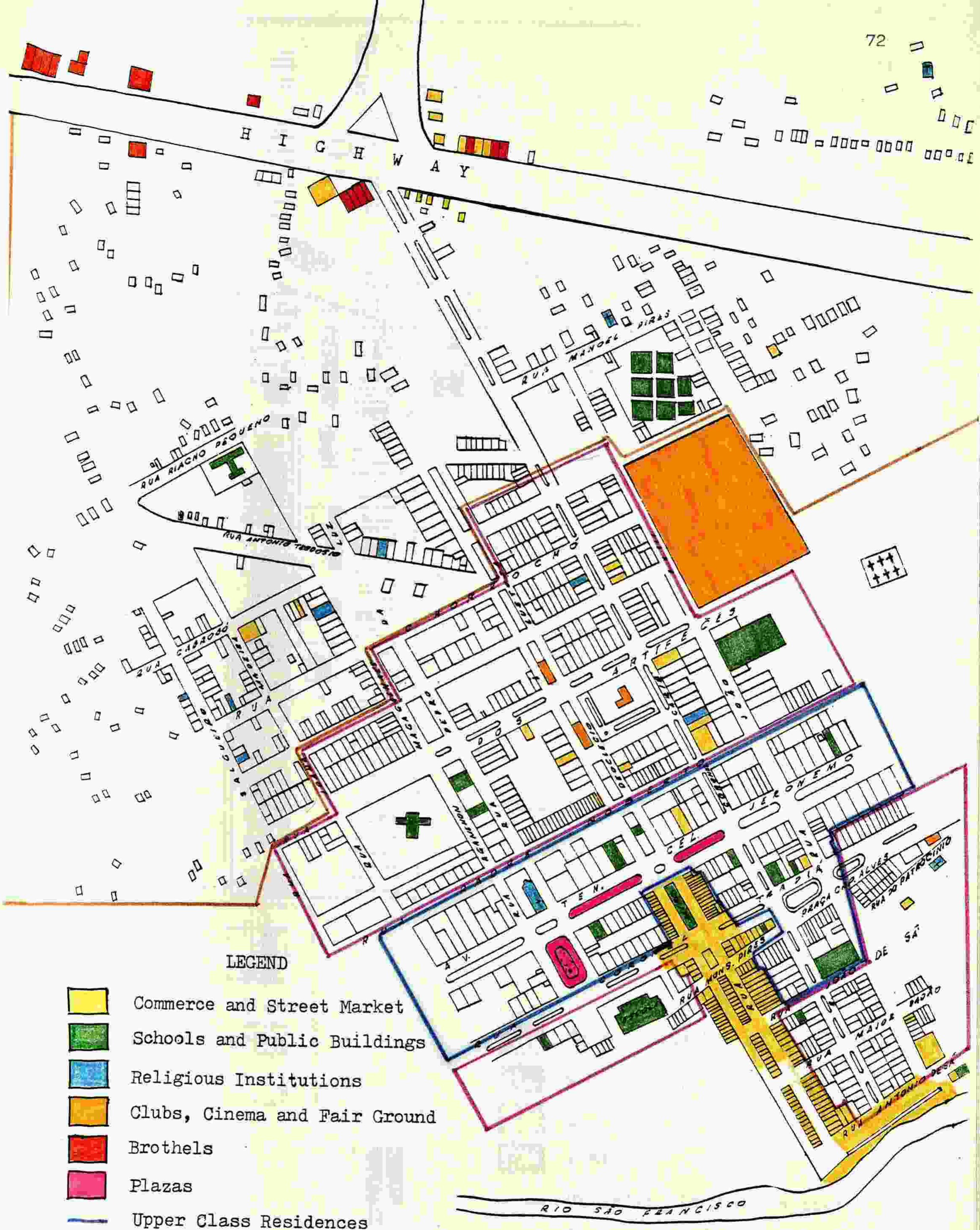


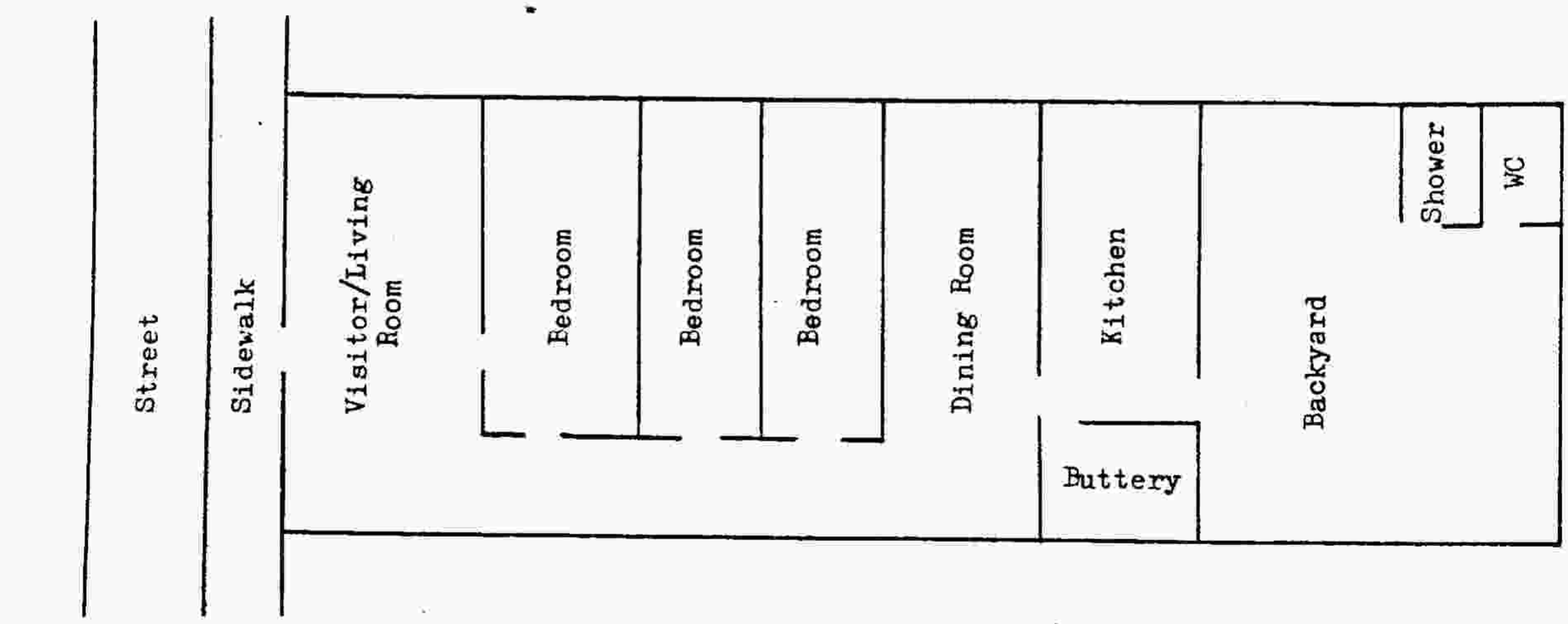
Figure 2. Socio-Economic Zones of Belém do São Francisco (1977)



Figure 3. Socio-Economic Zones of Chorrochó (1978)

Houses are the intimate domain of the family, and in particular, of women. As soon as a boy can, he will try to spend as much time as possible 'on the street', which together with both urban and rural work places, is the domain of men. Dwellings are organized along the same line for all classes, the main difference being size and furnishings. The sidewalk in front of the house and the first room entering the house, the visitor's room, are where family and public meet (Figure 4). Persons who are not close friends or kin are met on the sidewalk being invited to have a seat there or are invited into the visitor's room.[1] Only close kin and friends are allowed further into the residence, and, in the case of friends, it is usually the women who actually see more of the house.[2] Brothers and sisters, as well as their children, are given the run of most of the house, coming and going as they please, and they need not announce themselves as others must. A guest or tenant, who is not close kin, mainly keeps to his room, frequents the dining room during meals and is only at greater liberty to come and go to the living room.

Figure 4. Partitions of a Middle Class House



[1] Pi-Sunyer (1973) notes similar public and family spheres in Zamora, Mexico. However, Sertanejo women are not as retiring as Zamoran women and do not leave the visitor's room when non-kin are invited in.

[2] Rivière (1972) describes similar sexual and kinship defined house spheres in Roraima Territory, northern Brazil.

Located beside the living room, or behind it, are the bedrooms, one for the married couple, and the others for children of the same sex or for a dependent parent. When the house has only one bedroom, the children sleep in hammocks dispersed throughout the other rooms. Bedrooms are the most intimate part of the house. Non-residents will only enter a bedroom when accompanied by someone of the household, and upon finishing whatever had to be done there must promptly return to the other rooms.

Further to the back of the dwelling is the kitchen, which is mainly the domain of the womenfolk of the household. Here close female kin and friends will socialize with the *dona da casa* (the woman of the house) while she cooks.

The outhouse and shower room are usually located apart from the house, at the far end of the walled backyard. This area is walled, or at least fenced, so as to prevent pigs and other beasts from entering. A more important function of the wall is to separate clearly, at least visibly, the private family space from that of the neighbour's (who shares adjoining walls) as well as from that of the public sphere. Frequently in smaller towns the backs of house lots give directly onto the bush, fields and pastures. In such a case the wall is practically delimiting the most intimate human sphere from that of the wilds, with only a minimal public thoroughfare separating the two.[1]

From the perspective of town people, farms are in the country and rural folk are figuratively identified with it. They are called bush

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[1] Having the bush close by is convenient for the disposal of trash and sewage. Even in the large cities immigrants from the small towns of the interior and from the rural zone maintain this habit and have a hard time getting used to discarding rubbish in receptacles for collection. Instead refuse is frequently thrown onto vacant lots and one can even hear some say "throw it in the bush" when they are in the very act of placing it in a receptacle for collection.

dwellers, *matutos* , which is a pejorative term. In the context of the rural zone, human space is set apart from the wild sphere (Figure 5). The farm house is located in a clearing and is the centre of the human domain in the country. Also, located near the house is the corral, close to which the tamest of livestock are usually to be found. Then there are the fields, and, finally, different types of more or less modified bush lands.

Farm residences are organized along the same lines as those of the towns with the exception that the veranda takes the place of the sidewalk for initial encounters. Also, the house is not surrounded by a wall, and is separated from the bush only by the open clearing.

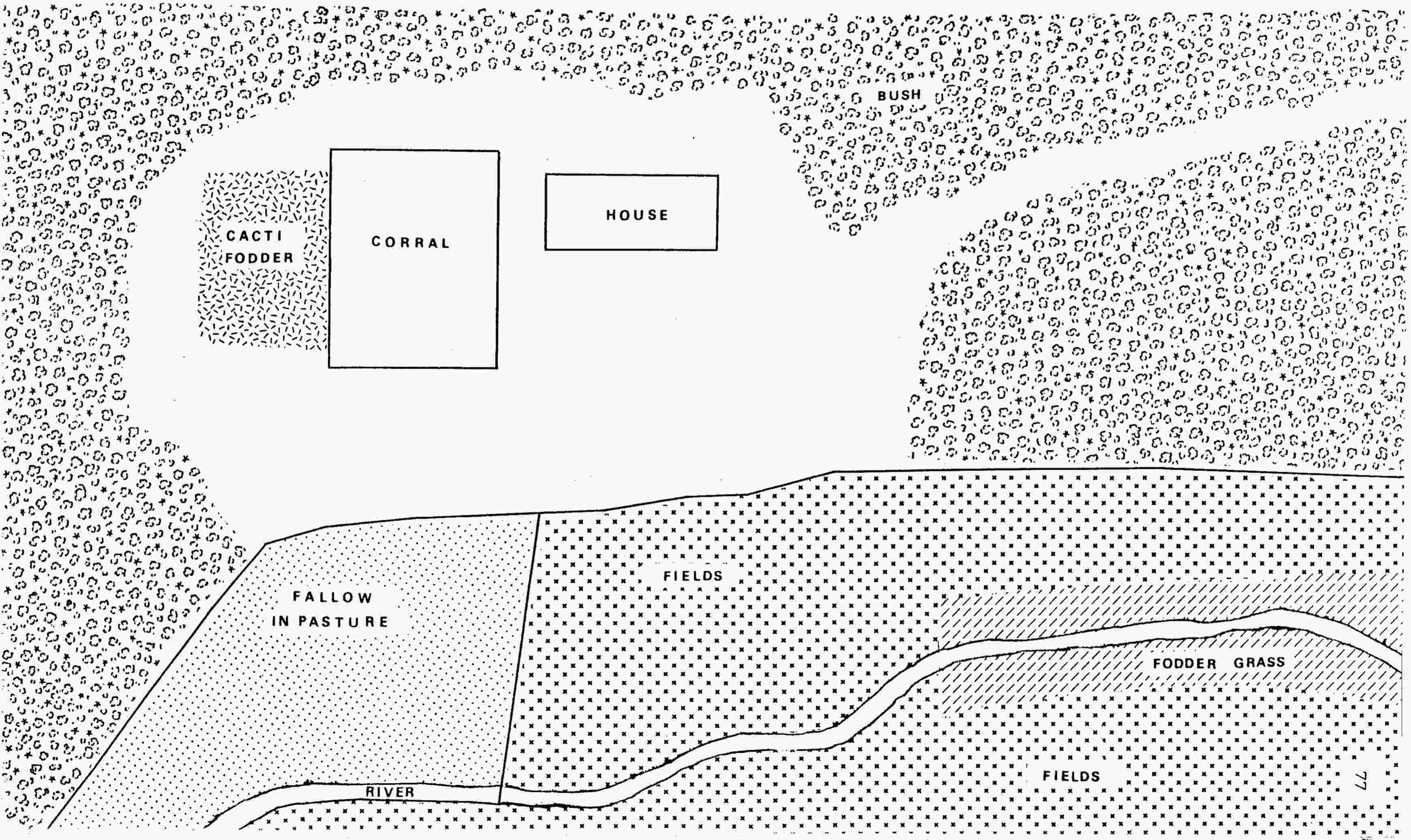
In typical Sertanejo areas, as farmhouses are invariably located on the higher lands so as not to be destroyed by violent floods, bush is encountered almost directly at the back door. It is convenient to have the bush close to the house to serve as a handy place for discarding trash as well as for relieving bodily necessities (when the farm does not have an outhouse). With the bush so close, the house is quite literally a man's castle. It is closed up tightly at night to prevent dangerous animals from entering, and even more important, to avoid the attack of vengeful human beings. A more recent fear is that of thieves entering the house. Also, it is necessary to close out the 'cold' night air, which is thought to cause illness.

The front of the house faces the river with the fields being located in the bottomlands between the two.[1] A road may pass between the house and the fields if the river is a fairly important one. The directional

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[1] In the past, ranch houses were located much further away from all water-courses, often kilometres, due to the presence of malaria (which has since been eliminated).

Figure 5. Typical Sertanejo Farmstead



orientation of the house obeys the winding and meandering of the river and is not positioned according to any particular point of the compass.

The fact that the house is bound directly by the bush and that the fields are located in front of it means that the passage from human space to that of the wilds can be rapid and abrupt without transitional zones being necessarily present. Hence, with the exception of the area directly in front of the house, fields do not actually physically separate human space from wild space, although Sertanejos conceptually view them as doing so. In the irrigation zone, man has altered the environment more. Fields are comparatively large and the farmhouse is located somewhere within their area so that, in this case, fields do mediate the human and wild domains (Plates 1 and 2).

Fields (*roças*) are cut from the bush and are separated from it by fences. From one to three years after a field is abandoned it is called a *capoeira* (fallow). Then, from four to nine years it is *mato fino* (sparse bush) and only completely bush (*mato bruto*) after ten years.[1]

However, a field will never return to virgin bush, man having left his indelible mark. It will always be considered old fallow (*capoeira velha*) in which certain larger species of trees, such as barauna (*Melanoxylon brauna*), quixabeira (*Bernelia sertorum*) and juazeiro (*Sizyphus joaseiro*), will never spring up again, while others, such as canafístula (*Cassia fistula*), jurema preta (*Mimosa nigra*) and ingazeira (*Ingá ingoides*), predominate.[2]

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[1] Johnson (1971, 1974) observed much the same in Ceará.

[2] Duque [1973(1964)] confirms such changes for *caatinga* zones, saying that the original virgin bush of 3 or 4 strata of vegetation is very hard to find today, and that of 2 strata is now more common.



Plate 1. Ranch House on the Edge of the Bush (Parnamirim, 1979)



Plate 2. Farm Houses in the Middle of Irrigation Fields (Belém do São Francisco, 1977)

The bush itself is called the *mato* or *caatinga*. As we saw earlier, *mato* is contrasted with town, in the sense of town and country. *Caatinga* is contrasted with the fields of the *baixio* (bottomlands). The *caatinga* represents the less modified open range, where livestock roam freely. The *baixio* is bush transformed into fields where man does his best to control both the plant types present as well as the coming and going of animals. When the range is fenced and cut to a greater or lesser extent in order to encourage the growth of grasses for livestock, it ceases to be *caatinga*, having been changed to pasture. In more favourable areas of the Sertão, where agriculture can be practised on the high lands, *caatinga* is not so much the counterpart of the bottomlands, as it is contrasted with cultivated fields be they where they may.

Terrain Types

The word *caatinga* can also be used in another way, referring to a particular geographical area recognized at the local level. Here the term is employed to identify a specific terrain type as defined by soil consitions, vegetation cover and presence of water. In this sense *caatinga* refers to a typical area of the semi-arid zone where the bush is by Sertanejo standards of medium height.[1] This is said to be due to the soils and rainfall being fairly good when compared to the drier areas of the semi-arid zone.

Other important terrain types are: *serra* (humid mountains), *serrote* (dry mountains, which are not usually very high), *chapada* (flat, sandy

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[1] *Caatinga* is used in the Agreste to refer to the drier parts of that zone.

Table 9. Local Terrain Types of Surveyed Counties

County (State)	Main River			Away from the Main River					
	River Bed	Annually Flooded Alluvium	Alluvium	Bottom Lands		Higher Lands			
				River Bed	Alluvium	Irregular Rocky	Flat Sandy or Clay	Dry Mountain	Humid Mountain
Quixadá (CE)	-	-	-	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	chapada	?	-
Mombaça (CE)	-	-	-	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	chapada	serra	serra
Iguatú (CE)	várzea	várzea	várzea	-	-	-	chapada	serrote	serra
Várzea Alegre (CE)	-	-	-	várzea	várzea	-	-	serra	serra
São João de Jaguaribe (CE)	vazante	vazante	margem	-	-	tabuleiro	caatinga	serra	serra
Jaguaribe (CE)	vazante	vazante	ribeira	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	-	serra	serra
Icó (CE)	vazante	vazante	vazante	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	chapada	serra	-
Souza (PB)	baixio	baixio	baixio	baixio	baixio	cascalho	chapada	serrote	-
Patos (PB)	-	-	-	vazante	baixio	tabuleiro	-	serrote	serra
Serra Brance (PB)	-	-	-	vazante	baixio	tabuleiro	-	serrote or serra	-
Arcoverde (PE)	-	-	-	baixio	baixio	-	chapada or moxotó	-	agreste
Afogados da Ingazeira (PE)	vazante	vazante	baixio	vazante	baixio	alto	-	serra	-
Salgueiro (PE)	baixio	baixio	baixio	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	chapada	serra	serra
Exu (PE)	-	-	-	baixio	baixio	-	chapada, campina	-	pé-de-serra, serra
Floresta (PE)	vazante	vazante	alto	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro	-	serrote	pé-de-serra, serra
Santa Ma. da Boa Vista (PE)	rio	vazante	alto	baixio	baixio	chapada de pedra	chapada de areia	serrote	-
Petrolina (PE)	rio	vazante	aluvião	baixio	baixio	chapada de pedra	chapada de areia	serra	serra
Abaré (BA)	rio	vazante	alto	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro, caatinga	-	serrote	-
Macururé (BA)	-	-	-	baixio	baixio	tabuleiro, caatinga	chapada, Raso	serrote	serra
Euclides da Cunha (BA)	-	-	-	várzea	várzea	tabuleiro or agreste	caatinga	serra	-

Source of data: Field Research

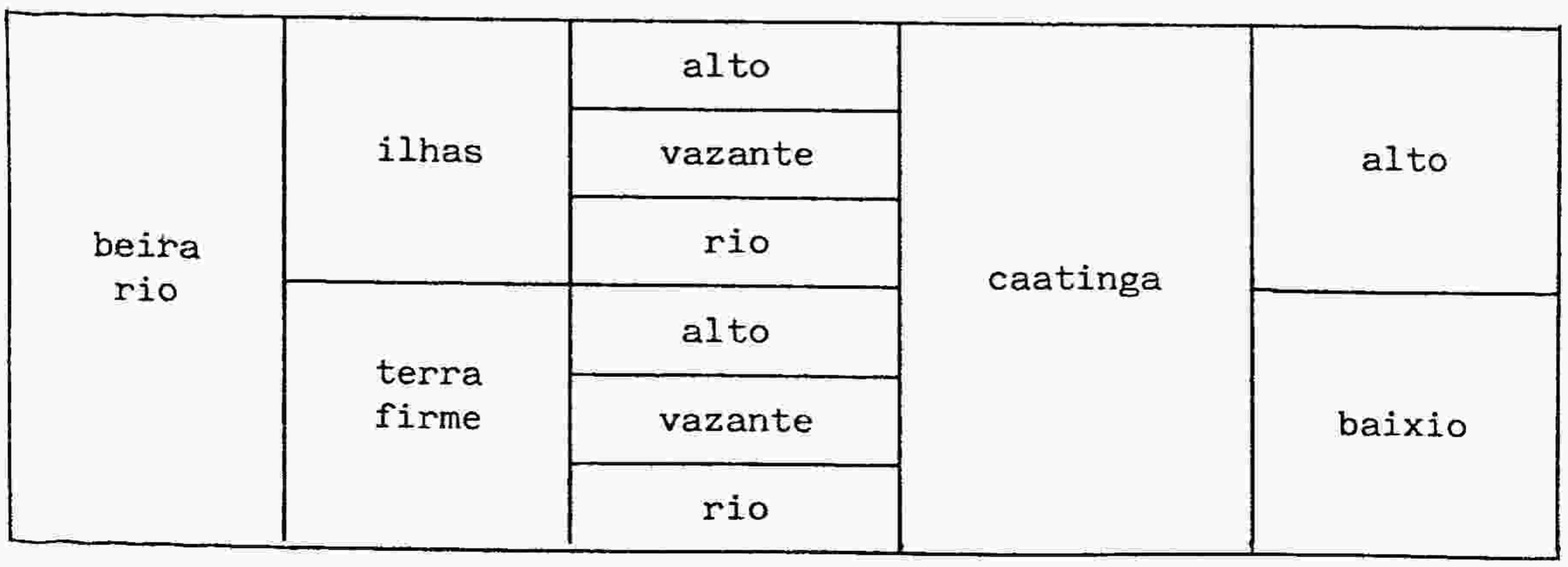
lands which are moderately fertile), *tabuleiro* (slightly rolling, rocky lands of poor fertility), and *baixio* or *várzea* (rich, alluvial bottomlands). The various terrain types are distinguished by a combination of the principles of high/low, dry/humid, hot/cold, rocky/sandy/clayish, flat/rolling/inclined, and poor/fair/rich fertility. These types are found in the study area as well as throughout the Sertão, though there is some local variation in the particular term used and its precise meaning. Also, in more humid zones, more types are recognized (Table 9).

Such variation can be seen in the counties studied. Few types are distinguished in Chorrochó, while more are recognized in Belém, and the most are made in Parnamirim. This is obviously related to actual environmental differences found in the respective counties but it also has to do with the type of human activity undertaken in each.

In Belém the basic division of land type is that between the São Francisco River edge, the *beira-rio*, and the drier lands away from the river, the *caatinga* (Figure 6). For this part of the Sertão the most important lands are the alluvial areas on the main river. Even if they account for only 5 per cent of the county lands, they yield some 90 per cent of the agricultural production.

Figure 6. Differing Views of Terrain Types in Belém do São Francisco

a. Beirante farmer



b. Caatingueiro farmer

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="8">caatinga</td><td rowspan="4">serra</td><td colspan="2">serrote</td><td rowspan="8">beira rio</td><td rowspan="4">alto</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">serra</td><td>serra</td></tr>
<tr><td>pé-de-serra</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">caatinga</td><td rowspan="2">caatinga</td><td>alto</td></tr>
<tr><td>baixio</td><td rowspan="4">vazante</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">tabuleiro</td><td>alto</td></tr>
<tr><td>baixio</td></tr>
</table>

The river edge area consists of *ilhas* (islands) and *terra firme* (firm land, i.e. river margin land). There are *vazante* lands, which the river (*rio*) covers in its annual flooding, and there are high lands (*alto*), also called alluvium (*aluvião*), which are flooded only on rare occasions. Before irrigation the *vazante* lands were very important for agricultural exploitation and human occupation.[1] With the advent of irrigation, the alluvial lands became more important. Cropping took over from stock-raising there and the expansion of cultivated area in these lands was solely responsible for the planted area's doubling from 1950 to 1975.[2] The *vazante* practically fell into disuse due to salinization, irregular flooding periods provoked by the so-called water control barrages constructed upriver and the lands being naturally more difficult to till when compared with the irrigated ones.

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[1] In the past, greater population densities arose where extensive areas of *vazante* lands are found. The islands of the São Francisco River provided large areas of this type of land, which were of great importance for the production of food crops and sugarcane. A number of the cities along the river owe their origin to large and numerous islands nearby.

[2] These census figures for Belém are suspect. In neighbouring Cabrobó the cropping area almost increased by four.

From the point of view of the *beirantes* who practice irrigation, beyond the alluvium lies the undifferentiated *caatinga*. In recent times this zone has been given scant attention, due to the rise of irrigation on the river and so the river people do not see much spatial variation there. On the other hand, for *caatingueiros* who must make a living in the *caatinga*, various terrain sub-types are recognized.

One such area is that of humid mountains (*serras*) and dry hills (*serrotes*), distinguished principally by their elevation from the rest of the *caatinga*. *Serrotes* are dry, barren rock upcroppings while *serras* are higher elevations that are graced with greater rainfall and better soils. The latter make for more agriculture as well as for denser and higher vegetation. When soils are only found at the base such an area is called *pé-de-serra* to distinguish it from a true *serra*. Such green islands are rare in Belém and they occupy only about 4 per cent of the county lands.

The part of the *caatinga* close to the river is distinguished from that found further inland (which is said to be similar to that of the counties of Cabrobó and Santa Maria da Boa Vista to the west). The area near the river is called *agreste* or *tabuleiro* which covers about 60 per cent of the county. The soils are observed to be shallow and the vegetation low and more open. The area further away from the river is called *caatinga*, used here in the most restricted sense of the term. Such land has deeper and superior clay soils, a much denser and higher vegetation cover and greater agricultural potential than *tabuleiro* lands. However, in this general area both are mainly stock-raising zones due to irregular and low rainfall.

As the *beirantes* do, the inhabitants of the general *caatinga* area also make high and low land distinctions. These too are based on where

the water reaches during flooding, which differentiates the dry, high lands (*alto*) from the humid, bottomlands (*baixio*). The water and fertilizing silt from floods annually cover the greater part of the bottomlands and their whole area at least once in a while. In the *caatinga* the *vazante*, when distinguished at all from the *baixio*, is the river bed itself, which is dry for most of the year and completely submerged during the short period when the seasonal rivers flow. In contrast to the River Edge zone, farmers of the *caatinga* rarely plant in the *vazante*.[1]

The people of Parnamirim have a good deal of contact with the surrounding mountainous areas and the town is located in the valley of a large seasonal river, hence considerable spatial variety is perceived (Figure 7). The area near the Riacho da Brígida, called *ribeirão*, is differentiated from the land away from the main river, which is called *caatinga*. Respectively the two occupy 5 per cent and 95 per cent of the county. There exist areas of *baixio* both on and off the principal river, with the difference being that in the *ribeirão* zone large tracts of bottomlands are encountered in which a good deal of agriculture is practised.

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1 In the study area, farmers along seasonal rivers only plant in the *vazante* of reservoirs, which is the inundated part that is exposed as the water level recedes in the dry season. This type of *vazante*, like its counterpart on the São Francisco River, soaks up humidity during more months of the year than does the normal *vazante* of these dry areas. The river bed of the largest seasonal rivers of the Sertão, such as the Jaguaribe and Piranhas/Açu, are utilized and for the same reason. Such rivers flow during more months of the year than other rivers in the semi-arid zone, so their river bed lands remain humid long enough for poor farmers to raise a short cycle crop during the dry season.

Figure 7. Terrain Types in Parnamirim

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="4">ribeirão</td>
<td>chapada</td>
<td rowspan="4">caatinga</td>
<td>alto</td>
<td rowspan="4">serra
or
brejo
or
agreste</td>
<td colspan="2">serra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">tabuleiro</td>
<td>chapada</td>
<td rowspan="3">chapada</td>
<td>chapada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>campadão</td>
<td rowspan="2">pé-de-serra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alto</td>
<td>campestre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baixio</td>
<td>baixio</td>
</tr>
</table>

In the *caatinga* and in the *ribeirão* there are various kinds of higher lands recognized. Irregular, light coloured, rocky lands are called *tabuleiro*, which are only suitable for stock-raising and poisonous snakes. *Alto* lands are similar, being hilly, rocky and dry. Vegetation is sparser still and consists mainly of cacti. These two make up about 65 per cent of the county area. *Chapada* lands of these zones are flat, have sandy soil that is easy to till, have a denser bush and are good for agriculture. They occupy about 30 per cent of the county.

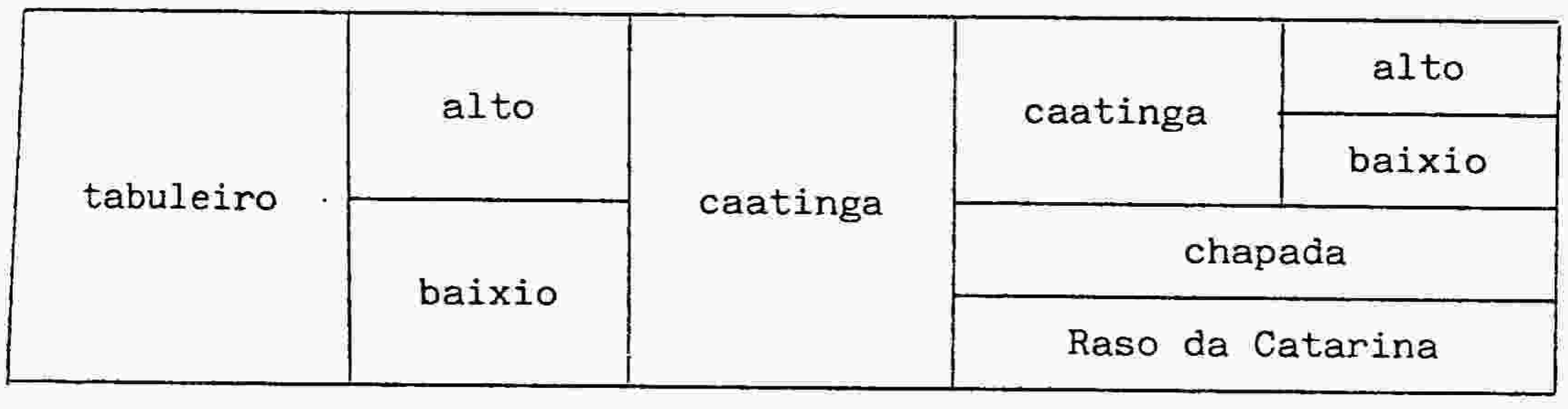
Further afield in other counties more terrain types are recognized. *Campestre* lands have coarse sandy soils of a red colour which are of poor fertility and whose vegetation does not grow very high. *Campadão* is flat, lacks bottomlands and has sandy soils suitable for growing manioc, castorbean plants and black-eyed peas.

Serra is the term used for all major elevations. The mountainous areas to the north and west are called *chapada* or *pé-de-serra*, though they can be referred to, at times, by the terms *agreste* or *brejo*. The use of the latter terms is in recognition of their similarity to the

Agreste Zone on the East Coast. Both have considerable rainfall, denser vegetation and an agricultural, domesticated countryside. The highland *serra* areas to the east of Parnamirim have similar characteristics with the difference that good soils and water are encountered on the mountains as well as at their base.

In Chorrochó one finds some of the same broader terrain distinctions as encountered in Belém, though, as very little of the county is situated on the São Francisco River, the important distinction is between *tabuleiro* and *caatinga* (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Terrain Types in Chorrochó



Tabuleiro areas cover about three-quarters of the county. This kind of terrain is characterized by sparse vegetation and dry, extremely rocky soils. Despite being a poor region for agriculture, it is said to be a good one for cattle raising because the bush is less dense, which allows more grass to grow.

Caatinga is encountered only in the south of the county and in neighbouring counties to the east and to the west. The bottomlands and interfluvial lands of this type of terrain are better than those of the *tabuleiro*. Rather more agriculture is pursued, but it is goat-raising

that is even more important. This animal can withstand the dry conditions as well as reach high into the dense bush to eat leaves and tender branches.

Located in *caatinga* areas are tracts of completely open land called *chapada*; which can be thought as a part of the general *caatinga* area or a type apart. A distinctive feature of these open lands is the fact that wild animals do not inhabit them. In Chorrochó such areas are not as frequently encountered as they are in the counties of the east.

Another sub-area of the *caatinga* is the forbidding Raso da Catarina, located in neighbouring counties to the southeast. As the Raso has dense *caatinga* bush it falls within this general terrain type but what makes it different is the presence of arenaceous soil, some different kinds of cacti found only there and the absence of bottomlands or elevations as it is completely flat. Bottomlands and elevations are necessary for human occupation in the Sertão and despite the Raso having a comparatively long rainy season there are no natural means of retaining water for the dry season. Hence the area is only exploited by open range stock-raising for six months of the year and not at all during the other six.

Within the broader terrain types finer distinctions are recognized and are similar to those used in Belém. Interfluvial lands are called *altò*, bottom lands are *baixio* and the *vazante* is part of the latter. At most 5 per cent of the county area is occupied by bottomlands with the interfluvial lands covering the rest. It is interesting to note that, in contrast with the distinctions made in Belém and Parnamirim, the lands found on the two large seasonal rivers of Chorrochó are not considered to be very different from that of the smaller tributaries. On the two large seasonal rivers there might be more *várzea* (bottomland) present but the difference is not enough to warrant considering their immediate area as a separate terrain type. In Belém and Parnamirim the main river

area are distinguished and named *beira-rio* and *ribeirão* respectively. This is probably explained by the fact that the principal activity in Chorrochó is stock-raising, with cropping being of only minor interest, whether on large or small rivers. No matter what the size of the river, the flow is just as erratic and the pursuit if agriculture just as uncertain.

Hot and Cold Plants and Terrains

For each kind of land there exist corresponding hot or cold plants adapted to the particular hot or cold conditions of the terrain type (Table 10). This involves basically the variable amount of humidity retained, ranging from the driest high lands, the hottest, to the most humid bottom-lands, the coldest. Xique-xique, for example, is a common type of cactus

Table 10. Hot and Cold Plants

Cold	Hot
black-eyed peas	mature arboreal cotton
brown beans	mesquite tree
maize	palma cactus
squash	xique-xique cactus
immature arboreal cotton	mandacaru cactus
herbaceous cotton	rest of bush
watermelon	
sweet potato	
manioc	
rice	
onions	
tomatoes	
banana trees	
orange trees	
mango trees	
other fruit trees	
craibeira	
juazeiro	

Source: Field Research

that is classified as hot and thrives in the dry and rocky *tabuleiro* and *alto* areas, respectively of Chorrochó and Parnamirim, which are the hottest of terrain types. *Chapada* areas of Parnamirim are cooler and certain warmer 'cold' crops such as black-eyed peas and maize, can grow there.

The lands are indeed quite literally hot and cold, and plants specific to each terrain are thought to take on these attributes by growing in such a habitat.[1] On the other hand, all bush vegetation (with the exception of a few bottomland specific trees) is said to be hot, yet it can grow anywhere, in hot or cold terrains. Hot plants can grow in cold land yet do not cease to be considered as hot plants, hence we might conclude that the classification is not completely based on physical temperature. In response to this, a Sertanejo would answer that such an inference is beside the point, for what counts is where they grow best and for hot plants this is in warmer places. Also, the converse, that of cold plants growing in hot localities, is not observed.

The heat effect is not merely from terrain to plant but can also be from plant to terrain and to other plants. Immature arboreal cotton is 'cold' and so maize and beans can be planted in association with it. However, as the cotton matures it gets 'hotter' so making it impossible to continue planting maize and beans nearby.

Johnson (1971) observed a similar relationship of terrain and crops in Ceará as did Pierson (1972) in the whole São Francisco River basin. For the places studied in Pernambuco and Bahia what is different is that farmers using the hot and cold classification of plants and soils are encountered mainly in the *caatinga* area, and rarely along the São Francisco River.

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[1] It should be noted that when farmers listed the different hot and cold plants the species given were mainly crops. The lack of interest in specifying the different species of the bush, dismissing them all as 'bush' in which all plants are 'hot', is a notion akin to ours of 'weeds'. Lévi-Strauss [1966(1962)] has shown this collective category to exist in various cultures around the world.

When a farmer of the river area knows of the system he is invariably from the *caatinga* zone originally. Such a farmer will usually discontinue using the system because irrigated land is always fairly cold, and, as almost anything will grow in it, the relationship is no longer considered as important.[1] The native *beirante* farmer does not even know of the hot/cold soil and plant classification. This is perhaps explained by there never having been much of a problem with lack of moisture in his lands. In the past he practised inundation *vazante* agriculture and how he utilizes irrigation.

On the other hand, when plant disease is explained, contrasts of hot and cold are the causal mechanism evoked by both *caatingueiro* and *beirante* farmers. Too much irrigation water or cool, overcast, rainy weather makes the crops too cold and hence causes fungi to attack them. Introduced cropping methods, such as the use of fertilizers and pesticides, have been assimilated into the folk model of disease causation. These chemical products cause the crops to heat up so they should not be applied during the hottest part of the day or else the plants will 'ferment'. Similarly, irrigated crops should be watered in the early morning and not at noontime. If watered at mid-day, the cold water striking the hot plants is a clash of contrasts and causes the crops to 'become ill'. This is all part of a more general system of illness and disease which includes humans and animals as well.

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[1] On the other hand, Pierson (1972) cites a similar case of an immigrant to São Paulo who retained and adapted the system to local conditions. Rice, a cold plant in his native land, could be planted in what would be hot lands in São Paulo because the climate cools the land there.

Soil Type and Crops

When considering only the area of the fields there is an alternative way of visualizing the land to that of the hot and cold classification. Here soils are differentiated, using some of the same criteria as the general terrain types: texture, fertility and humidity. Specific names are not given, rather they are identified by the crop or crops that can grow well in each and whether the soils are sandy (*arenoso*), clayish (*barro*) or a varying mixture of the two.

In the part of the bottomlands close to the watercourse, very humid clays are found in natural depressions where pools form. These are propitious for the cultivation of rice. Further up the *baixio* soils become sandier. maize and beans are planted about half way up and at the higher reaches of the bottomlands the permanent cotton crop is located.

Soil conditions are not seen as being static and cropping can change soil fertility. A farmer is intimately familiar with the different types of soil in practically every square inch of his field and is aware of the dynamics of each, knowing exactly where to plant which crops in order to obtain the best results in terms of quantity and reliability of yield. A farmer will point out that the soil in a particular part of his field has become 'tired' with use. 'Weak' (arenaceous) soils are depleted faster than 'strong' (argillaceous) soils. Also, some crops, like maize cotton and some vegetables, are perceived as being more demanding on the generative power of soils and so 'weaken' them faster than others. After a number of years of 'rest', cultivated land may return to its former strength. Manure and fertilizers are said to give tired soils a quick shot of generative force (to be explained below).

Similarly, and somewhat akin to our popular way of thinking about farm lands, soils can be thought of as being naturally 'poor' or 'rich'. With use they become 'poorer' as their fertility is 'spent'. There might be a connection between these soil fertility concepts and others used socially. Men become rich and poor in much the same way, and this is viewed in terms of personal strength and weakness.

MAN AND NATURE

In the bush, a Sertanejo does not make a sharp division between an inanimate, physical environment, on the one hand, and the animate beings that live there, on the other. All that is found in the wild sphere is part of the *mato* and this idea involves the intimate relationship between all the various components encountered within this domain. As we saw previously, the different spatial divisions of the bush are often defined principally in terms of considerations of vegetation types which are in turn related to soil types. Creatures, too, are thought to be identified with particular kinds of countryside.

A conversation with an old ranch hand shows both the environmental interdependency and the utilitarian vision of Sertanejos:

I: What do you see there when you look into the bush?

He: I look in the shade of the trees to see if there is a deer resting somewhere (as a man who hunts naturally would in the middle of the dry season).

I: Besides animals, what else do you see?

He: Trees, ground.

I: What do you note first?

He: Marmeleiro, which is very good for making fences. I see there is still a lot here. Quebra-faca and alegrim are also good for this.

I: Is the ground part of the bush?

He: Yes. The trees grow in the ground, the creatures live in the bush, eat the foliage ... the birds have to step on the ground, they eat the worms that live in the ground.

A Sertanejo perception of the phenomena around him is also guided by considerations of the observed likeness between man and other things, which is quite often related to the potential usefulness of them. The way that other beings are grouped in classes and compared with one another ultimately rests on their relationship to man in these two basic considerations. That which cannot be utilized in some way is despised and labelled *safado*, which means shameless or worthless in the sense of a whore or a vagabond. That which is worthy has a likeness to man in physical appearance and behaviour, in addition to its being useful. For most Sertanejos, these ideas come together with the larger animals that are sociable and domesticated.

The larger mammals are the form of life considered to be closest to man and the other natural phenomena are scaled at decreasing degrees of likeness to him. Inanimate things are the least human of phenomena. Rocks do not grow and have not changed or moved since the Creation. Living things (*seres vivos*), on the other hand, go through a cycle from birth to death. The latter occurs when they cease to move or grow; they lose their moisture and dry up.[1] The ground, however, is considered

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[1] In a semi-arid zone, decay is not such a problem as is that of drying out. Euclides da Cunha [1944(1902)], who was originally from a humid part of Brazil where the opposite is the case, was most impressed by how the flesh of fallen combatants in the Canudos Revolt would mummify rather than decay.

to be alive because, when humid, it 'produces', i.e. it gives plants a generative power which rocks do not. On the other hand, the ground is not truly a living being because, when it dries up, it is never described as having died and, when it rains, it is always rejuvenated. The next phenomena in the scale from the least to most humanlike, are trees. Like the ground, trees in the Sertão go through seasonal rejuvenation but, despite living for a very long time, they die in the end and so are truly living beings.

The animals considered most similar to man are dogs, cats, cattle, goats, sheep, horses, pigs and monkeys. All are observed to be sociable, to assist one another, and to teach their dependent young. Above all others, monkeys are thought to be the most like humans. They have a similar physical appearance and it is pointed out that they are agile, very domestic, make use of tools and have specialized tasks amongst themselves; all this despite the fact that they are four-legged beasts that live far from man.[1]

The least like human beings in terms of behaviour are those that 'exist only to destroy' which means to do man harm, as insects, snakes, and most birds do. Also, to lead an existence in a very different habitat from that of man makes creatures, such as for instance fish and birds, less like humans.

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[1] Primatologists have only observed this in recent years when they began doing more field studies (Jolly, 1972). In the Sertão, monkeys have been observed breaking open catolé nuts with rocks as well as by smashing them on the ground. Indeed, they do it better than humans. When a monkey breaks open the nuts the meat comes out in one piece while a man can only remove the meat in pieces. Monkeys divide their tasks with some standing watching while others work. It is noted that they have various calls each signifying something different, almost like human language. Primatologists might enrich their investigations by asking the local population what they have observed of the animals studied.

Folk Faunal and Floral Classification

The Sertanejo groups all living beings into broad classes called 'races' (*raças*) in the case of animal, and 'types' (*tipos*) for plants. These in turn may have sub-groupings called 'families' (*famílias*), which consist of 'individuals' or 'members' (*é da família*). Some important 'individuals' have further sub-categories called 'types' (*tipos*) for animals and 'varieties' (*variedades*) for plants. 'Race' and 'type' correspond to the various levels from kingdom to order in biological taxonomy. 'Family' corresponds to family and genus, 'individual' to species, and 'type' and 'variety' to sub-species and variety (Figure 9, Appendix 1).

Figure 9. Folk and Scientific Faunal and Floral Categories

Folk

fauna

Race	Family	Individual	Type
Example: Beasts-animals-dogs	Cats	Jaguars	Black Jaguar Spotted Jaguar Unidentified Jaguar Red Jaguar

flora

Type	Family	Individual	Variety
Example: Trees-grass	Canes	Sugarcanes	Caiana Preta Fita Piojota

Scientific

fauna

Kingdom → Order	Family	Genus	Species	Sub-species

flora

Kingdom → Order	Family	Genus	Species	Variety

The terms used in Sertanejo folk taxonomy reflect how the people's perception of the environment passes through the prism of culture. The terms 'individual', 'family' and 'race' are employed here in the same way as they are used to express different degrees of kinship. In human society, individuals are members of a particular restricted family, and these pertain to greater families often called 'races'. A jaguar is a 'dog' (a race of animals) as Zé Sampaio is an individual of the Sampaio 'race' (kindred). Similarly, as in the cognatic kinship system, the broader groupings are vaguely imagined and the ties of similarity between members of a class are distant. The Sertanejo is more interested in families, individuals and types with whom he has contact than in notions of race, which he rarely uses or thinks about.

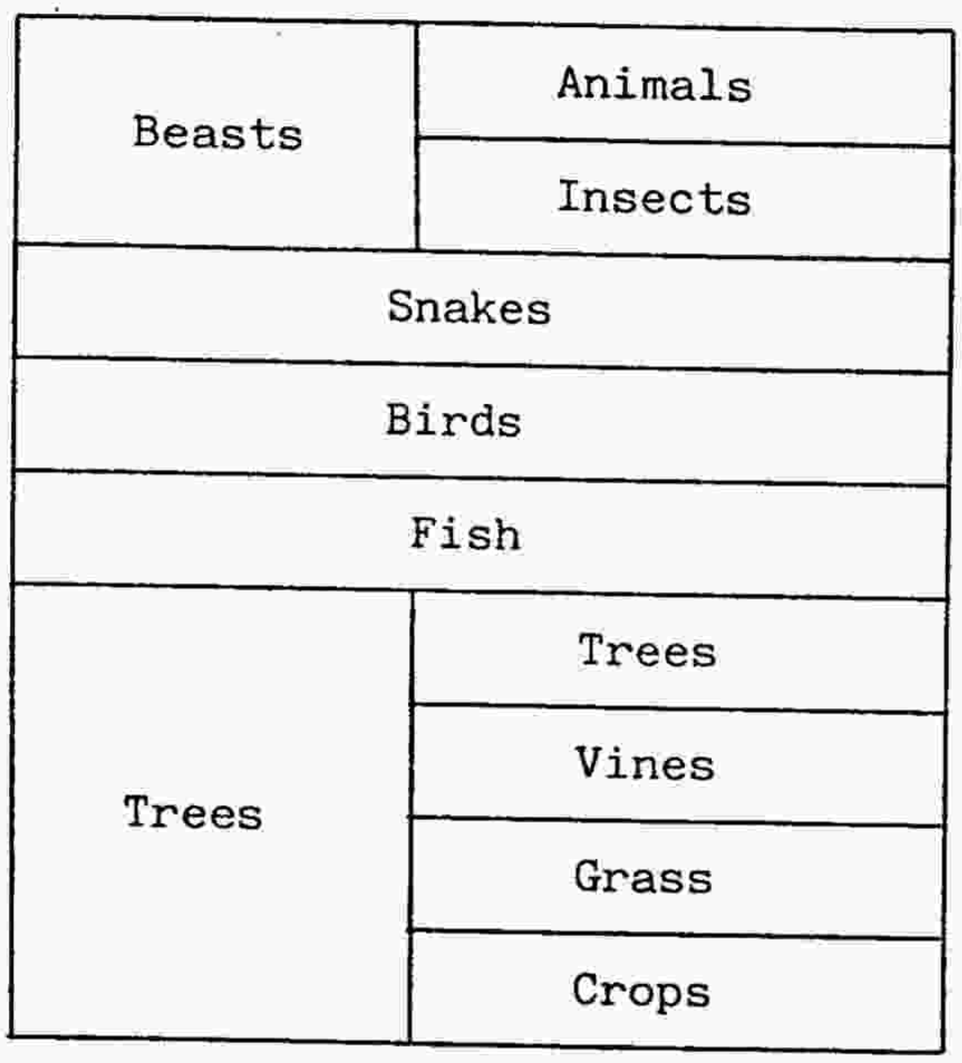
We must not force a strict hierarchical ordering on this system of folk biology. In practice, many 'families' have only one 'individual' so it is a good question whether the name of a creature in such a situation is really used at the family level as well. Secondly, many of the 'individuals' that are important to the people have numerous 'types' recognized, so that the latter are, at times, almost placed on the same level as 'individuals'. Finally, some of the general categories also suffer from the problem of determining at which level they are being used. While 'insects' are grouped in the general class of 'beasts'; snakes, birds, and fish are not.[1] The latter are at the level of 'beast' and 'animal'/'insect' simultaneously or they are not included in any such general category as beast. On the

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[1] Folk faunal classification in Thailand possesses a similar capacity to collapse certain parts of the scheme as well as to magnify or to upgrade lower categories to the status of higher ones. Tambiah (1969) holds that this is done according to the relative degrees of interest the people have in the different species.

other hand, 'trees', when used in the widest sense, is a category that does include all plant life (unlike the 'beast' category) and the term is successively employed at different levels, from the general to the more particular, with its meaning progressively restricted (Figure 10).

Figure 10. General Folk Classes



General categories of 'race' and 'types' are distinguished from one another by the criteria of physical appearance, mode of locomotion, habitat and certain particular behaviour patterns. 'Animals' have fur, internal skeletons and suckle their young. 'Insects' possess outer shells or thick skins. This class is a coverall category for all small 'beasts': small mammals, most reptiles, amphibians and insects. 'Snakes' do not have legs and crawl on the ground. They are akin to insects, though not having legs they are not 'beasts'. 'Birds' have feathers and fly. 'Fish' have scales or thick skin and live in water. 'Trees' produce

wood and grow high. 'Vines' do not produce wood and spread out over the ground. 'Grass' only produces hay, grows in clumps, extends upward and opens outward. 'Crops' are planted, produce grains and fruits, but do not produce wood.

The more specific categories of 'family', or 'individual' and 'type' or 'variety' are mainly distinguished from one another by characteristics of size, colour, body shape (especially of the head), smell, growth rate and peculiar eating habits. It is the combination of all these traits that makes a species unique because many have certain traits in common, and it is the different trait or traits that distinguish one from another.[1]

Douglas (1975) presents a figure of a railway station scene reproduced from a 19th Century English novel in which the characters seem to use the general categories of 'insect' and 'dog' in the way they are used in the Sertão. Leach (1964) also refers to insects as an English residue class of non-edible creatures. One could hypothesize that the folk system of the Sertão uses traditional European categories and principles of classification into which the species native to South America were fitted much like circus creatures are today. Also, the general classes and their criteria for differentiation are similar to those found in the natural philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. They, too, seem similar to those gleaned from the Bible by Douglas (1966). Hodgen [1971(1964)]

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[1] Species that contradict one of the broader classification principles of its class, such as whales, palms, fruit trees and others, do not receive any special consideration, in the way that Douglas (1966) noted for the Lele and Ancient Hebrews. In the Sertão, such exceptions are noted to be somewhat different, but some specific trait overrides the contradictory one, thus disposing of the enigma. Palms do not have wood but they grow high like other trees. Whales are fish because they live in the sea.

holds that the scientific system of biological taxonomy was highly influenced by the work of Linnaeus who based his system on the European folk system. Finally, the classes, if not the criteria, are very much the same for those encountered in similar research on non-European societies, as Brown (1979a) and Witkowski, Brown & Chase (1981) report. Hence, one might speculate about the existence of universal classes based on phenomena that are similarly perceived by all humans. Fur, suckling the young, the number of legs, wings, hard outer shells and living in water are traits that can easily be perceived by all men, no matter what kind of culture they may live in.

On the other hand, as Berlin, Breedlove and Raven [1969(1966)] illustrate for the Tzeltal of Mexico, the more specific classes of everyday experience vary to a considerable degree which argues for cultural specificity at the basic levels of the systems. These authors demonstrate how Tzeltal plant classification shows more discrimination than scientific biological classification for those plants that are culturally significant to their way of life, while the opposite holds for less significant plants. Hunn (1982) relates how the folk systems of a number of societies possess such a characteristic of variable discrimination. This author holds that groups and species are recognized in greater or lesser detail according to the cultural utility of each for the people in question.

In the Sertão, more sub-categories exist for the 'individuals' (species) which are judged to be more useful as well as more akin to man in behaviour and appearance. This explains why numerous 'types' of important animal 'individuals' are distinguished. The classification of fish and birds is not as elaborate nor so well organized as that of the animals. For example, many 'types' of dogs are recognized while

domestic cats are undifferentiated, which is explained by the latter having little practical value for man. Dogs work for their keep by helping in the hunt, by keeping guard at home, and by sounding the alarm against human and wild intruders. All that cats do is to catch rats, when they condescend to do even that. Like human vagabonds, they spend most of their time sleeping by day and prowling about, 'up to no good', by night. On the other hand, numerous wild cats are recognized as they are hunted for their skins, the value of which varies with the species and sub-species. Similarly, in the flora numerous varieties of important crops are recognized while few such finer distinctions are made for most bush species.

Tame and Wild Animals

For large animals an alternative way of classing also exists, which divides them into tame (*manso*) and wild (*bravo*) animals. These categories crosscut the classes based on appearance and behaviour that were presented above. This additional way of grouping animals is based on the varying degrees to which man has succeeded in dominating and transforming different phenomena of the environment to his advantage. Animals that cannot be mastered are considered as wild. They cannot be reared by man, will not reproduce in the corral and will not even get close to man. Only when dying of thirst will they risk coming near a house to drink from a water hole. Being close to man is synonymous with being useful to man.

Tame and wild may be contrasting ideal types but they do not constitute a binary opposition. There exists a gradation between the two according to the proximity to man. Although most wild animals are found in the bush, the same can apply to many domestic animals. Even today, most cattle, goats, sheep and horses still graze on the open range. Those that

stray further into the bush and stay there for long periods have little contact with man and indeed try to avoid him. They take on wilder characteristics and are known as such, e.g. 'wild cattle' as opposed to 'tame cattle' which stay closer to home. With the former one must 'struggle' in order to make them do man's bidding. However, as they are still domestic animals they can be subdued, which is not the case with true wild animals.

Milk cows, horses and dogs are closest to man and have a long-term relationship of co-operation with him. They receive individual names, though not human names, which would be insulting to the persons with such names. The semi-wild steers of the range do not receive names, nor do donkeys, which are usually a stubborn lot that must be caught in order to be put to work. They are merely called 'donkey', and the suggestion that one might give one a name provokes laughter, for the creature is synonymous with stupidity. These practices support, at least for the Sertão, the thesis of Lévi-Strauss [1966(1962)] that personal names are used where the relationship between man and beast is a subjective one, while collective group naming is used for objective relationships. The first type of relationship is a long-term intimate one where bonds of affection can arise in a human way, while the second type is short-term and strictly utilitarian. However, we must not become too sentimental about this, for horses and cows are still treated roughly. They are kicked, hit and spurred on to do man's bidding.

Of Man and Beast

For a Sertanejo, what makes man a being apart in the scheme of things is not just his appearance. He may walk on two legs, but birds do so also. Of course a man does not have wings but the unique traits which

are said to make him completely different are his power of wisdom and his capacity for speech. He can accumulate knowledge and thus better his life. It is by way of this ability that man has been gradually making discoveries and putting ever more distance between himself and the rest of creation. Indeed, older informants talk of a distant fabled time when animals had human behaviour, including the capacity of speech, and humans lived like animals. The animals, one by one, suffered misfortunes which transformed them to their present form, while man through his intelligence slowly consolidated his position of superiority.

Another way of comparing and contrasting man and beast in the Sertão is the equating of the behaviour of animals to that of particular human beings (Table 11). Some of the comparisons are favourable, such as 'agile or quick as a wild cat' or 'my little lamb' for one's girlfriend. The majority, though, are unfavourable, implying that the person's behaviour is in some way not human, nor does his appearance seem to be. To call someone a dog means that he or she is always fighting or is a shameless whore or vagabond. A monkey is very timid and runs away from anything, which is the opposite of the behaviour expected of any self-respecting Sertanejo male. To have a toad body is indeed ugly. These sayings are usually employed in jest but can be insulting when spoken in a certain tone of voice.

A final point of comparison between humans and animals concerns their eating habits, upon which depends whether or not the latter are suitable food. Man eats only that which subsists on living or dried plant material. If a creature eats other animals, insects, birds, fish

Table 11. Human-Creature Comparison Sayings

creature	saying
lion	- brave as a lion - nickname of brave or tough person
jaguar	- to only go out at night - turned into a jaguar (became mean and forceful)
wild cat	- quick as a wild cat - agile as a wild cat
dog	- always fighting - without shame - whore - unmarried man who has a number of mistresses - unethical - get involved where not asked to - work like a dog - a dog to be kicked (maltreated)
monkey	- to dance around, jump up and down like a monkey - fearful, run from anything
common marmoset	- ugly with large ears - black person
pig	- dirty, lives in mud, eats anything
paca	- fat as a little paca
billy goat	- virile - womanizer
sheep	- quiet as a sheep 'you can kill it and it will not bleat'
deer	- homosexual
cow	- give birth every year - walk like a tired cow
cow (Dutch breed)	- a woman who produces vast quantities of maternal milk
horse	- dumb
mare	- whore
mule	- worse than a mule (dumb)
donkey	- worse than a female donkey (very dumb: stronger insult and females are viewed to be quite stubborn)
taranchula	- walk backwards (only do things wrong)
spider	- walk and work very slow
cockroach	- don't ask for roach blood (don't ask the impossible)
toad	- lazy
cururu toad	- have a *cururu* body (ugly and poorly fashioned body)
bumblebee	- speak strongly (to appear like a tough man)

cont'd.

Table 11: continued

creature	saying
bee	- like a small bee (a woman that works hard)
fly	- like a fly (a person that does not stay put, has only arrived and is already off)
mosquito	- became so afraid that he shrank to the size of a mosquito
cricket	- skinny
cicada	- a person who sings a lot
teju lizard	- to be a teju (to run away scared)
cavy	- to be a cavy (to have big business deals)
rock cavy	- country bumpkin
rat	- to be a rat (thief) - to have a rat illness (any illness)
opossum	- a road worker or construction worker
snake	- eat like a snake (to eat too fast without chewing properly)
rattle snake	- to be a rattle snake (to be brave)
jararaca	- nickname of brave or tough person
hummingbird	- to be like a hummingbird (to not stop in any place)
owl	- ugly like an owl (to have an ugly large mouth)
heron	- as white as only a heron can be (very white)
pinnated bittern	- to have a pinnated bittern body (high, skinny with exposed ribs)
blackish rail	- to be like a blackish rail (to have no tail at all)
parrot	- fastened as a parrot to a stick (cheap scate)
vulture	- quiet as a vulture - a place where only a vulture can go (of difficult access)
bird	- children are birds (like fruit)
piranha	- an unhappy piranha (a boy who likes to tear his clothes)
pé de papagaio grass	- he sticks like *pé de papagaio* grass (extremely attached to another person)

or decaying plants man will not eat it.[1] A Sertanejo is very careful about what he eats and is nauseated by a species that might eat (or live in) carrion, excrement and other decaying substances. Predators and scavengers can at times eat such *porcaria* (that which pertains to pigs).[2] The idea is analogous to that of poisoning, in which a harmful substance enters the body by ingestion. Such creatures are thought to be vectors and eating them will make one ill by transmission of the disease or poison with which they have had contact or have ingested. That which a vulture eats might have died of some ailment and its rotting body may have become infested with harmful substances; hence eating a vulture will make one ill in the same way as ingesting a roadrunner or rhea (which eat snakes) would.

The archetype of disgusting creatures is the pig, which Sertanejos use as a synonym to describe other revolting animals such as vultures, hawks, dogs, wild cats, foxes, toads, most insects and birds without crops. Why the pig should be considered the exemplar repulsive creature is probably explained by its being a domestic animal and thus the most commonly observed disgusting creature. However, it is reared for meat that is eaten in the Sertão which seems to contradict its status as a disgusting creature. The real problem is with urban pigs and not with

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[1] Birds eat insects and worms, but Sertanejos say that only birds without crops do this and birds which they do not eat. However, domestic fowl eat such things, which might call this into question but the people hold that chickens normally eat maize or other cereals. Fish are another exception. Sertanejos will not eat birds that eat fish but do not object to fish that eat other fish. Also, they do not note that fish can eat insects. If this were brought to their attention they would probably say that insects are not their regular food.

[2] Also, the name of the poor pig is further abused by calling all human bodily excretions *porcaria*. This illustrates well Leach's (1964) point about animal-human relational sets whereby human filth is associated with a sordid creature.

those raised on the farms. Free roaming pigs in towns end up by wallowing in open sewage ditches for lack of other humid places, and this, together with eating garbage, is what causes them to be considered as repulsive. To prevent this, many pigs are reared in pigsties and those people who can will only eat pork if they know the life history of the animal in question. It would appear that wallowing in sewage is the principal objection as a greater number of pigs are raised and consumed in the more humid parts of the Sertão where alternative places to wallow, other than sewage ditches, are available. Hence, conditions are closer to those on the farm. Also, the inhabitants of the rest of the Northeast, which is more humid, do not demonstrate nearly the same degree of aversion to pork as is observed in the Sertão.[1]

Supernatural Creatures

There is one group of beings that has never been mentioned by informants in connection with the normal creatures of This World. These beings are in a class apart, much as is man. Some are very similar to man in appearance and behaviour, though they have other animal-like attributes which distinguish them from humans. Most are also spirit-like. The

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[1] Two alternative explanations have been postulated for the abhorrence of pigs in the Middle East, an arid and semi-arid region. Douglas (1966) has suggested that certain species considered offensive and repugnant to the Biblical Hebrews, such as pigs, camels, rock badgers and hares, were held to be so because they were contradictions to the system of natural classification. Harris (1974) holds the view that the pig in particular was detested as it was difficult to raise in arid regions and was a competitor for food, eating grain. Neither of these two explanations apply in the Sertão. Pigs can eat human food and can create conflict between farmers by invading fields, but they are held to be repulsive because of their other habits and not for these reasons. They eat leftovers and certain waste products, such as milk whey. As Rappaport (1968) holds for pigs in New Guinea, they and humans are in a symbiotic relationship in the Sertão. Douglas' (1966) general theories concerning pollution and contagion are closer to the mark when applied to eating habits and concepts of health in the Sertão.

latter explains why they were never referred to when talking of living beings, for they are immortal. Also, spirits are greatly feared and in particular may attack or play unamusing tricks on humans.[1]

One such creature is *caipora*, the invisible guardian of the wild animals and sworn enemy of humans. They will attack hunters and dogs and will only not do so when bribed with tobacco, which they adore. *Caiporas* have a human appearance yet live in the mountains far from man, eat fruit instead of meat, sleep in the bush with the animals and do not wear clothes.[2]

Another kind of these beings are the enchanted animals. They live in a habitat which is quite different from that expected of normal animals, e.g. underwater horses, or they have a different physical appearance, e.g. golden fleeced rams. They live far from man, independent of him and seduce domestic animals into abandoning the herd.

Werewolves, witches and *vira-bichos* (turn-into-animals) are mortal or immortal humans that take on animal form and habits, such as attacking neighbours or eating raw meat. They are held to be persons who marry priests, beat their parents, baptize illegitimate children, leave their wives to live with other married women or other such anti-social acts.

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[1] However, these creatures are considered part of This World. While they are ambiguous in respect to their not being living creatures nor spiritual beings of the Other World they are not credited with mediating between man and the dieties as Leach (1964) theorizes. Nor are they subject to intense taboo or considered sacred in any sense. Conventional Catholic saints fulfil the mediating role.

[2] As the name suggests this belief is of Amerindian origin. It is interesting to note that in the humid coastal region of Paraíba state, in a domesticated landscape where few wild animals are presently encountered, *caipora* also attacks livestock, which we might interpret as her assailing the competitors of her few surviving wards.

MAN, NATURE AND CULTURAL CHANGE

We have seen that the Sertanejo sets himself apart from the bush by creating and actively expanding a human domain that is organized for his benefit. To the best of his ability, man manipulates his environment to encourage the existence of only beneficial flora and fauna. He converts bush into fields and interferes with the bush itself by hunting, by collecting and by rearing his stock there. Despite such efforts, stock-raising and agriculture in the Sertão are still seriously affected by recurrent drought. Resulting food and water shortages continue to cause widespread suffering.

It might seem that the people of the semi-arid zone have not been very successful in changing the environment, when compared with the radical modification that industrial society achieves. However, when compared with the Sertão of the beginning of this century, a good deal of alteration has taken place. The principle factors for change have been the population increase and greater integration into national and international markets.

Sertanejos intentionally bring about much of the modification of their surroundings but they have also had many unintentional effects on the environment as well, which the people fully realize. Ranchers have always tried to eliminate those animals that do him and his livestock harm. Wild cats and birds of prey particularly are hunted, for they kill much livestock in addition to attacking humans on occasions. Farmers are also aware that their mere presence forces certain harmless or even beneficial creatures to leave the immediate area of man's residence and activities. Bees and monkeys are said to be especially adverse to living near human settlements and are only found in distant virgin bush and uninhabited mountains.

The people realize that overhunting has greatly reduced game near inhabited zones and that game is only found far from man nowadays. This is in stark contrast to the beginning of the century when jaguars and deer would pass close to ranch houses, which were distant from one another at that time. What greatly stimulated hunting to the point of extinction was the creation of a market for skins, which arose when roads were constructed into the semi-arid zone. The Sertão was integrated into distant markets and its economy became monetarized. The large number of road workers hunted to supplement their income. So it is said that the local people learned to hunt more actively, and not just occasionally for subsistence, as had been the practice before. Animals were increasingly hunted, principally for their skins or feathers and frequently the meat was left unutilized. This happened to wild cats, rheas and foxes as well as even to deer and bush pigs at times. Monetarization of the economy also created a local market for game meat as a delicacy. Informants have pointed out that the price of armadillo meat is so high that hunters are even catching the young and soon there will be none left.

The disappearance of game had a somewhat adverse effect on class mobility by making the accumulation of capital by the poor more difficult. In the past, most self-respecting ranchers would never stoop to hunting but game as a source of meat was important for cow hands wanting to better their position.[1] By not slaughtering their own animals, they could conserve these, and thus it was easier to increase their herd to the point where they were able to buy land and become ranchers.

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[1] This was probably related to notions of culturally acceptable food. As we saw earlier, cultivated produce was more acceptable than gathered roots. The latter were associated with Amerindians as opposed to what was considered proper food by European colonists. Similarly, it might be that 'civilized' persons should eat the meat of livestock and not that of wild animals. In anthropological literature Nuer stock-raisers hold similar ideas concerning the superiority of raised versus hunted food (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

Class behaviour has also changed. Now civil servants from town consider hunting to be great sport, whereas persons of the upper class did not before. They have the vehicles and the means to pay for the fuel used to gain access to the distant places where game can still be found in abundance.

Greater potential for remodelling the environment is found in the expansion of farm lands. Increasing population in the Sertão has caused the division of properties and the opening-up of more fields. This, of course, effects the vegetation present. As was noted before, certain large bottomland trees, such as barauna, quixabeira and juazeiro, do not return even if these lands are left in permanent fallow, so that agriculture, together with cutting trees for timber, has reduced the larger species. Even where agriculture is not practised on the interfluvial lands the bush is increasingly being cut to plant artificial pastures.[1]

A more important change that could have occurred with more farms and greater cropping activity would have been the establishment of a more domesticated countryside and a different outlook toward Nature. Has the semi-arid zone been tamed and has man lost his adversary view of nature? Will the term *Sertão* lose its meaning of a place of uncut bush and teeming wild animals as the Agreste zone to the east did?

To both of these questions we can say no. It is true that game is scarce in the more populated parts of the Sertão and that the bush

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[1] This trend, if implemented on a large scale, might prove to be ecologically dangerous. Given the semi-arid conditions of alternating drought and flash flood and the fragility of the frequently shallow, poor soils the potential for erosion is great. In the traditional system of grazing where the very resiliant bush is not cut, even the presence of goats and sheep has not threatened a process of 'desertification' like that which Cloudsley-Thompson (1970) reports as happening in other semi-arid zones of the world.

has been reduced in these places but this has not occurred in the greater part of the Sertão and probably will not happen in the near future. Drought serves as a limiting factor, slowing down this process. Human population is undoubtedly increasing but not at nearly so fast a rate as elsewhere in Brazil. More important, drought keeps down the rate of livestock increase and the expansion of cropping area. Even if the bottomlands are all fenced it will be some time before the interfluvial areas are completely fenced and planted with pasture. Jaguars may be almost extinct but poisonous snakes still abound. The most threatening aspect of a fickle nature is drought itself and this is a permanent feature of the Sertanejo environment.

A more likely source for fundamental change in outlook is irrigation. With this activity the threat of drought is almost wholly overcome. Extensive areas can be cultivated and farmsteads are no longer located on the edge of the bush. Multiple harvests of cash crops keep farmers fully occupied with their fields throughout the year. They do not have the time, or increasingly the inclination, to raise livestock in the bush, much less to go hunting and fishing.

Irrigation farmers can often make so much money that their children are sent at a younger age to study in the state capitals. A very successful irrigation farmer might even join them there. The children develop a taste for urban life and usually end up by finding city jobs. Here we are dealing with the seeds for the break with old attitudes as well as with contact with Nature. This is not to say that such persons will develop an "ecological outlook" towards nature such as popular in the cities. On the contrary, having little familiarity with the country lifestyle and needing to overcome their interior origins stigma, they view rural life with disdain. Soon they will have the same fear of the

bush as other big city dwellers. In their schooling some may come into contact with ecological ideas and criticize the 'ignorant' folk back home for killing off the game but they will never know and appreciate the wilds as the oldtime hunter did. However, whole families moving to the capitals involves only a small minority of the population. Most students only go to finish their education in the capital and so, until they are about fifteen years old, remain in the Sertão.

At the local level, greater formal schooling has caused little change in how the people see the environment. As of yet most children, in spite of passing most of their time studying, still spend considerable time with their parents on the farm and so although their contact with the bush may have been reduced it has not been completely severed. Biology is not emphasized at school, hence their way of viewing the bush is still quite similar to that of their elders. Where the young may have their doubts is concerned with the existence of the spiritual creatures and the veracity of the fables. These are the type of traditional ideas that are ridiculed in school as superstition or mere folklore.

Thus we see, despite all their efforts to cope with a rigorous environment, Sertanejos have not succeeded in radically modifying it and so are still much more dependent on natural processes than is the case with industrial society or even with most other agrarian societies. Also, they possess an acute knowledge of the wilds about them. However, it does not follow that they think of themselves as being closer to nature because of this. Quite the contrary. As Sertanejos have such a difficult struggle with the environment, they make a much greater effort to separate themselves both physically and conceptually from it. This is clearly seen in their notions of man's superior place in the order of things. Without doubt, industrial society can be much more destructive in relation

to Nature but possessing a simpler technology does not mean that men will be more harmonious in their attitudes towards the rest of creation.

ECONOMIC CHANGE AND ITS

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. ECONOMIC CHANGE AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A common theme in the literature on Latin America is that of the profound social and economic changes that accompany market integration (Forman, 1975; Gilbert, 1974; Pearse, 1975; Warmen, 1980; Wolf, 1966; Yudelman and Howard, 1970). Farms and communities that had only a modest part of their productive activity orientated to commercial ends experience a transformation of their way of life, with assimilation into the national economy and culture. Alterations occur in agricultural technology, in the system of land tenure and labour relations and in local patterns of self-sufficiency and consumption. With increasing monetarization, the rise of new professions and greater occupational specialization, ideas as to what is deemed basic and the whole outlook on social life change. Such transformations, in turn, provoke other cultural changes, particularly in notions of wealth, class and status.

In the Sertão, greater ties with distant national and international markets were provoked by developments at the regional and national levels. Prior to the 1930s very few roads and railroads existed in the semi-arid zone. The basis of transport was the mule train. Great suffering and starvation, caused by the intense droughts of the early 1930s, prodded the federal and state governments into beginning the construction of roads into the dry interior. In the 1950s and 1960s the existing dirt roads were improved, and more bridges were erected which made transit easier during the rainy season. Finally, during the late 60s and 70s many key highways were asphalted.

Three periods in the process of market integration and socio-economic change can be discerned. The first is the one prior to 1930 when roads

were nearly non-existent and the life was relatively self-sufficient. During the period from 1930 to 1960 transport improvements and substantial price increases for rural products brought about a certain monetarization of the local economy. After 1960, transport not only improved in the Sertão but also between the Northeast and the Southeast. This development opened up the region to wide-scale market penetration by the rapidly expanding Southeastern industries. Manufactured goods entered the Sertanejo market in greater numbers and have since been rapidly displacing local crafts.

The changes wrought are taking place at an ever faster rate and are beginning to affect all aspects of life. More recent improvements in communications, such as the diffusion of radio and television, as well as the practice of the middle and upper classes of sending their children to be educated in the state capitals has made the process of assimilation into the national culture more direct and hence even more rapid.

THE CHANGING AGRARIAN ECONOMY

Farming has always been - and continues to be - the principal occupation of Sertanejos. However, there is an increasing tendency for a shift from a country way of life to one centred on towns and the urban population has been increasing at a rate that is much faster than that of the rural zone. Between 1950 and 1980 the growth rate for towns was 5.2% per annum while that of rural zones was only 0.9%. Notwithstanding this, the change is a gradual one and the economy and society are still basically rural. The majority of persons continue to be employed in agriculture. Despite the low status accorded to agriculture in recent times and the meagre

income earned in traditional dry-farming, 64% of the work force were employed in the primary sector in 1970 and 69% of the population resided in the country in 1980 (Fundação IBGE, 1975a, 1981).

The process of change from a rural lifestyle of dispersed ranches and farms to that of a town society with a mixed agricultural and commerce/services economy has proceeded more rapidly in some places than in others. Also, the change in agricultural technology, mode of land use, system of labour relations and the degree of market integration have taken place at varied rates in different parts of the Sertão. Historically, the two basic factors that have played a large part in stimulating such change have been the local environmental differences and varying transport facilities. These were highly influential in determining which type of agricultural activity became predominant in different parts of the semi-arid zone.

Traditionally, there were three basic agricultural systems that arose in different ecological zones of the Sertão: dry zone stock-raising, mixed farming of cropping associated with ranching in less arid areas, and monoculture or polyculture cropping in humid highland areas. All of these zones first passed through an initial extensive cattle-raising phase and some places still have such a land use system today. In other parts of the semi-arid zone population increase and the introduction of certain commercial crops modified rural activities to the point where cropping became equally as important as stock-raising, or, indeed, became predominant.

Since the 18th century, arboreal cotton has been the traditional cash crop of the Sertão. It is thoroughly adapted to the typical environmental conditions of the semi-arid zone and flourishes in the large river valleys. In places where cropping became important, stock-raising methods

changed, and in some mountain zones ranching was displaced [Andrade 1973 (1964)]. Historically, the degree that agriculture has been orientated to the market and the type of associated labour relations present in different parts of the Sertão has depended on which of the three systems was more important locally.

Stock-Raising

In the more arid and less populated parts of the Sertão stock-raising remains the principal means of making a living, both for earning an income and for the subsistence needs of the rancher. In the past, cattle-raising was less commercially orientated than it has become since the 1930s. It is said that beef was plentiful and its price very low. Rich and poor alike ate it. Also, possession of a large herd was an end in itself, bestowing status on the rancher. Pierson (1972) detected such an attitude among ranchers as late as the 1950s. The sale of cattle was of course important and occurred when a buyer appeared or when a particular necessity for cash arose.

Nowadays, cattle for all types of rancher are raised strictly for commercial ends. In the past - and on rare occasions today - a steer could be slaughtered to celebrate an important festive event, such as a wedding, but only very rich men would slaughter cattle more frequently. For most farmers goats, sheep and chickens were the basis of meat consumption, with pigs complementing this in more favourable zones. In the last 20 years, with the growth of towns and cities in the semi-arid zone, a market for such small animals has grown so that, today, they are reared equally for subsistence and for cash income.

In Parnamirim and Chorrochó, prior to 1940, fenced crop lands were limited mainly to subsistence plots. Most of the bottomland area was

unfenced and covered with native grasses in which livestock grazed freely. In the last forty years bottomlands have been increasingly put into cropping. From 1950 to 1975, in all of the counties studied, cropping expanded its area by two or three times as well as increasing its proportionate part of the total area (Table 12). This in turn has increased the area in pasture because fallow lands can be turned into pasture of native grasses or planted fodder. The area in bush lands has decreased proportionately from 94% to 83%, 96% to 59% and has remained more or less the same for Belém, Parnamirim and Chorrochó respectively. The same trends can be detected throughout the Sertão for dry zone stock-raising areas and improved stock-raising of humid areas.

As the population grew and farms became subdivided by inheritance, extensive ranching could no longer provide enough income to buy basic necessities as well as fulfil new needs that had arisen. In Chorrochó small farms with less than 100 hectares became more common, increasing from 78% in 1950 to 95% in 1975 of the total number of farms, and now occupying more farm area, 40% of the total in 1975 as compared to 28% in 1950 (Tables 13 and 14). Similarly in Parnamirim, small farms increased in numbers from 43% to 78% of the total during the same period and 27% of farm land was in small properties in 1975 as compared to 6% in 1950 (Tables 15 and 16).[1] Also, after 1940 informants complain that inflation made all goods more expensive, particularly basic food stuffs, which stimulated every rancher to practise subsistence farming and a modest amount of cash cropping in addition to raising livestock.

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[1] Absolute change in hectarage is not possible to ascertain because it appears that the sample size for this type of information in the 1950 and 1975 census were different. The same probably holds good for the number of farms. So, the analysis is limited to proportionate changes.

Table 12. Farm Land in Cropping, Pasture and Bush in 1950 and in 1975

Counties and Zones	Cropping		Native Pasture		Planted Pasture		Bush		Total Area in Farms[1]		Total Area	
	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%	area (ha)	%
Belém do São Francisco[2]												
1950	3 485	1.6	9 034	4.2	54	0	1 255	0.6	13 828	6.4	217 600	100
1975	6 832	3.1	30 763	14.1	368	0.2	3 314	1.5	41 277	19.0	217 600	100
Chorrochó[2]												
1950	4 355	0.4	73 164	6.8	1 801	0.2	51 777	4.8	131 097	12.2	1 076 100	100
1975	14 826	1.4	39 593	3.7	1 166	0.1	36 808	3.4	92 393	8.6	1 076 100	100
Parnamirim[2]												
1950	5 672	2.1	5 642	2.1	192	0.1	30 185[3]	11.0	41 691	15.2	274 400	100
1975	11 421	4.2	105 636	38.5	398	0.1	46.560	17.0	164 015	59.8	274 400	100
extensive stock-raising												
1950	677 020	2.2	3 033 936	10.0	77 843	0.3	6 259 549	20.7	10 048 348	33.2	30 310 900	100
1975	1 622 147	5.4	5 521 346	18.2	164 866	0.5	6 281 592	20.7	13 586 951	44.8	30 310 900	100
mixed farming												
1950	541 697	7.5	1 712 843	23.9	41 104	0.6	2 566 977	35.8	4 862 621	67,8	7 170 000	100
1975	1 164 218	16.2	1 771 151	24.7	22 644	0.3	2 521 002	35,2	5 479 015	76.4	7 170 000	100
highland cropping												
1950	521 854	11.0	423 764	8.9	37 269	0.8	1 433 966	30.1	2 416 853	50.8	4 761 500	100
1975	1 044 504	21.9	1 026 184	21.6	53 044	1.1	1 431 813	30.1	3 555 545	74.7	4 761 500	100
highland cropping and mixed farming												
1950	289 687	8.9	359 438	11.0	32 712	1.0	1 008 830	30.9	1 690 667	51.8	3 267 000	100
1975	574 679	17.6	850 593	26.0	94 581	2.9	745 065	22.8	2 264 918	69.3	3 267 000	100
improved stock-raising of humid areas												
1950	345 726	1.9	742 150	4.2	687 685	3.8	2 593 794	14.5	4 369 355	24.4	17 883 400	100
1975	789 102	4.4	2 110 974	11.8	1 262 633	7.1	3 592 876	20.1	7 555 585	43.4	17 883 400	100
SERTÃO												
1950	2 375 984	3.7	6 272 131	9.9	876 613	1.4	13 863 116	21.9	23 387 844	36.9	63 392 800	100
1975	5 194 650	8.2	11 280 248	17.8	1 597 768	2.5	14 572 348	23.0	32 642 014	51.5	63 392 800	100

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

[1] Total farm area has increased over time through private purchase of government land.

[2] County areas are adjusted to older boundaries so that the 1950 figures can be compared with those for 1975. In 1950 Chorrochó was part of Curaçá county and the data for the latter is that which is presented here.

[3] The census data for fallow and unutilized arable land, which makes up part of the bush figure, are obviously wrong for the 1950 figure and are not counted here as bush lands owned by farmers but rather as those which are not owned.

Table 13: Change in Farm Size in Chorrochó County: Area of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	hectares	%	hectares	%
0-10 ha	9 014	5.3	13 146	13.5
10-50 ha	20 049	11.8	18 114	18.6
50-100 ha	18 907	11.1	8 040	8.3
100-500 ha	69 427	40.9	20 341	20.9
500-1000 ha	25 574	15.1	4 462	4.6
1000-2000 ha	9 498	5.6	3 500	3.6
2000 ha and above	17 245	10.2	29 650	30.5
Total	169 714	100.0	97 253	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

Table 14: Change in Farm Size in Chorrochó County: Number of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	number	%	number	%
0-10 ha	1 351	46.5	4 204	77.5
10-50 ha	918	31.6	961	17.7
50-100 ha	254	8.7	122	2.2
100-500 ha	336	11.6	117	2.2
500-1000 ha	36	1.2	7	0.1
1000-2000 ha	7	0.2	3	0.1
2000 ha and above	5	0.2	9	0.2
Total	2 907	100.0	5 423	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

Table 15: Change in Farm Size in Parnamirim County: Area of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	hectares	%	hectares	%
0-10 ha	186	0.1	2 864	1.7
10-50 ha	5 840	2.0	13 474	7.7
50-100 ha	11 152	3.8	17 106	9.8
100-500 ha	97 301	33.0	68 700	39.5
500-1000 ha	52 213	17.7	27 021	15.5
1000-2000 ha	45 146	15.3	15 816	9.1
2000 ha and above	83 001	28.1	29 096	16.7
Total	294 839	100.1	174 077	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

Table 16: Change in Farm Size in Parnamirim County: Number of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	number	%	number	%
0-10 ha	31	3.4	635	36.6
10-50 ha	204	22.6	471	27.2
50-100 ha	149	16.5	243	14.0
100-500 ha	396	43.9	325	18.7
500-1000 ha	75	8.3	41	2.4
1000-2000 ha	31	3.4	12	0.7
2000 ha and above	17	1.9	7	0.4
Total	903	100.0	1 734	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

Such changes have modified stock-raising methods. During the rains the animals still graze on the unfenced higher lands but they are not allowed to enter the bottomlands where the crops are maturing during this part of the year. When the last pastures on the range are exhausted, which in normal years is shortly after the cotton is harvested, the animals, or at least the weakest ones, are allowed to enter the fields to eat the crop residues. Besides enriching the land with their manure, they perform the service of cleaning away the rest of the cotton pod, thus enabling new cotton to bud in the following year.

Despite this symbiosis, and the fact that overall food production increased with crop-livestock association, the local population of Belém and Chorrochó point out, contrary to census data, that the absolute number of animals has decreased as more bottomland was put into cropping.[1] It is said that crop residue provides less animal fodder than the native grasses and bushes of the bottomlands had previously.

There were other factors affecting the absolute number of livestock which are more important for explaining a decrease. The size of herds tends to fluctuate depending on the frequency and severity of drought. The droughts of the 1930s, 1950s and 1970s were particularly devastating to livestock. Also, in the north of Bahia, ten years of police action against the bandit Lampião during the late 1920s and early 1930s is said to have diminished the herds so drastically that they have never fully recovered. Finally, the introduction of larger stock breeds has diminished the absolute number of animals while at the same time having increased,

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[1] According to the census between 1950 and 1979 the number of cattle in Belém, Chorrochó and Parnamirim increased respectively by 81%, 40% and 27%. Similarly goats and sheep for these counties increased by 67%, 38% and 17%.

or at least maintained, the quantity of beef produced. Many a rancher, who owned 100 steers prior to 1958 and may have only 50 today, points out that the weight and value of the 50 is greater than the 100 possessed before.

The first zebu cattle (*bos indianus*) were introduced into the study area in the late 1940s and were allowed to mix with the rustic *pé-duro* cattle on the open range. The latter are the cattle descended from those of the first colonists. They are the equivalent of the Texas Long Horns of the Old West. For some agronomists, the *pé-duro* had degenerated to their present small size (about 105 kilos after four years) because of the lack of breeding control, while others say that they are the product of adaptation to a rigorous climate [Andrade, 1960; Andrade, 1973 (1964); Lins, 1976]. In terms of size, one thing is sure, the lack of breeding control meant that the resultant hybrid cattle of the first zebu and *pé-duro* were an improvement, but not a considerable one and size only increased over a period of three decades.

Up until the early 1960s, in the north of Bahia there was a slow replacement with better breeds of animals that were bought from passing cattle drivers who herded steers from the superior Minas Gerais stock-raising area to market in Recife. The rancher's common breed animals were taken in substitution to the coast for slaughter. However, the more usual way of improving the composite breed of the herd in all the communities studied has been by purchasing better bulls and cows directly from coastal areas or from other Sertanejo areas close to these. Such purchases can take place spontaneously while travelling to these places for other reasons or even a special journey may be made for this express purpose. More recently, such cattle have been acquired in stock shows held in hearby commercial hub cities.

At any rate, overall herd breed has only improved since the late 1960s and early 1970s when more thoroughbred types of zebus, such as *gir*, *nelore* and *guzerá*, and newer European types, such as English, Dutch and French breeds, became available locally and most of the ranchers started to buy them. Generally, cows are bought and not bulls. Ranchers are interested in the greater amount of milk that thoroughbred cows produce and, as Rivière (1972) demonstrates for Roraima Territory, improved breeds of bulls when raised on the range cannot stand up to the *pé-duro* and mixed breed bulls.

This process of breed improvement was best observed in Chorrochó where such change is more recent. More of the ranches located further south in the county have adopted superior breed, as well as other improved rearing methods, than those further to the north, these being more distant from the coastal stock-raising zones. Also, the ranches away from the road, particularly the ones along the Riacho da Várzea, which are of especially difficult access, have quite traditional rearing techniques. The breed of cattle on these ranches is not far removed from the *pé-duro*, which is the term still used for the breed found there. On a larger scale, such a tendency is quite common in the Sertão. The further away from the specialized cattle-raising zones of the Agreste, the less intensive are the techniques of rearing. The introduction of such methods flows along principal highways, and then diffuses into the hinterlands away from the highways and from county seats. Alternatively, improved transport facilities mean that newer breeds, which might not withstand the long trail to market in the days of cattle drives, can now be raised.

Today, in the study area, as in most areas of the Sertão, open range stock-raising in the interfluvial areas is still the rule. With the increased practice of agriculture what has changed is the discontinuance

of seasonal transhumance. Andrade writing in 1964 and Macedo in 1952 relate how cattle were taken to the mountains in one season and brought back to spend the other in the general vicinity of the ranch. In Parnamirim, up until the mid-60s many ranchers spent the wet season at a *logradouro*, a humid place on interfluvial lands, either found at the opposite end of the ranch or on another property held expressly for this purpose. There cows were milked for making cheese, and then, with the onset of the dry season, the cattle were brought back to the bottomland area where the ranch house was located. Similarly, in Belém cattle were taken to the São Francisco River during the dry season, though here, ranch houses were located at the rainy season pastures in the *caatinga*.[1] The system in Chorrochó was similar to that of Parnamirim with the difference that *logradouros* did not exist, so that most of the steers were simply left on the range during the wet season and cows were milked at the ranch house near the bottomlands.[2]

Nowadays, ranchers only take their livestock from the ranch during drought years when they are herded to more favourable areas nearby and placed in pastures and fallow fields that are rented. The supply of such emergency pasture has not met the demand and in the last 10 to 15 years small areas of the bottomlands are being increasingly planted with fodder grasses for use during the dry season. Slightly older is the practice of planting an area of dry lands near the corral with a species of thornless cactus (*Opuntia ficus indica*) which is also cut during the dry season to feed the stock. In recent years some ranchers are starting

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[1] This was to avoid the problem with malaria on the São Francisco River which was chronic during the rainy season.

[2] Cows are allowed to graze freely nearby and return on their own for milking because their calves are held in the corral.

to plant high lands with a new type of introduced grass pasture, buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*). Also, during droughts stock feeds are now available for sale which, despite their being expensive, are used by the wealthier stock-raisers to save their animals during such crises. Even a poor farmer may use feeds for his best animals during serious drought. As ranchers adopt these innovations they discontinue the traditional recourse to cutting wild cacti and bush to feed their animals. The depletion of wild cacti during the almost continuous drought conditions of the 70s has also contributed to the bringing about of such a change.

As ranchers start to plant pastures and improve the breed of their stock they also begin to fence more of their property. In the study area only a few of the ranches are completely fenced with internal divisions. The farm might not even have much planted pasture and the greater majority of the land may be in bush or in natural grasses (created by field rotation in more favourable areas). What seems to be crucial for greater fencing is the presence of superior cattle breeds on the ranch and the care taken to see that they never lack pasture nor fall victim to rustling.

The type of material used for fences has also changed. Where high lands are fenced or even bottomlands for irrigation and planted pastures, barbed wire is used. Under the semi-arid conditions, this material can last up to 50 years as opposed to ten for pole or wicker fencing. Also barbed wire is much easier to erect over the larger areas now being fenced. The principal drawback is the money needed to pay for it, which only large and medium ranchers possess. Smallholders enclose more modest areas, continuing to use pole and wicker fencing. Collected materials from the bush do not cost much to obtain, though even they are becoming

expensive in more settled areas due to the cost of transporting suitable material which is now only found far afield.[1]

The treatment of animal diseases was always of a restricted nature, given the extensive rearing techniques. While livestock are free to roam on the unfenced range they usually keep to distinct territories. A cowboy makes a weekly round to different groups of steers to check on them. When he sees that an animal is ill, he tries to catch it, which is no easy task in the dense thorn bush. In the past, when he was able to throw the steer to the ground he would apply a salty solution on festering wounds. From the 1930s onward, creosote was available for this use.

Until the late 1960s the only other recourse for treating ill animals were orations and other spiritual cures. Many ranchers swear by their orations and often prove their point by citing a particular case when an incurably ill animal returned to health after the oration. The most commonly encountered of these is that for curing cattle with festering wounds, their most frequent malady in a land of thorn bush and sharp rocks.[2]

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[1] Hewes and Jung (1981) treat the use of different kinds of fencing in the American Middle West. The authors relate the adoption of different fence types to the local scarcity of suitable timber over time as settlement progressed and which finally resulted in wide acceptance of barbed wire.

[2] Barroso (1956), Cascudo (1956), Macedo (1952) and Pierson (1972) give examples of this type of oration which are very similar to those found in the study area. Most have references to Christ. While divine intervention is not directly sought, the orations do involve supernatural assistance, if only by association. Just as in weather 'experiments', the effectiveness of orations is thought to vary from individual to individual. Very important for the proper functioning of an oration is faith in it and in God, for when it does not work, the lack of one of these two vital components is cited as the secondary explanation, protecting confidence in it. Most older and middle-aged ranchers believe in the efficacy of orations as do some of the young.

On the other hand, in the past, serious contagious diseases were rare in such a relatively isolated area with a healthy semi-arid climate. Rabies has only been introduced to the region during the last five years and upon seeing the rapid decimation of their herds even small farmers get together the money necessary to vaccinate their cattle. Foot-and-mouth disease seems to have been present since the 1930s but it has never been much of a problem. It only strikes during the rainiest of years, though even then at a time when stock on the range do not have much contact with one another. The herd only comes together in the dry season when the animals congregate at the few water holes and reservoirs. Other lesser problems, such as worms or a more rare disease, are either not treated at all or, if the death of a prized steer is threatened, perhaps a local veterinarian will be called in (if the county is fortunate enough to have one).

In a system where stock wandered - and most still do - distances of up to 20 kilometres from the ranch house in search of pasture on the range, honesty was vital for its proper working, as Cunha [1944(1902)] long ago observed. Until the 1960s the brand was respected and rustling was rarely a problem. After this time, the theft of goats, sheep and donkeys became chronic. Even cattle rustling has been occurring, which has caused not a few Sertanejo-style range wars.

The formal justice system has proved inept in prosecuting known thieves and the law has often been that of the revolver. Ranchers in very tense areas greet strangers with their guns prominently displayed. Indeed, ranchers in Chorrochó have lost more stock to slow pilferage and the occasional bold theft of an entire herd than to the extreme droughts of the last decade. The situation has become so bad that one man observed, only half in jest, that a "communist" regime now exists in Chorrochó where everybody steals each other's livestock.

Throughout the Sertão, the people blame increased theft on the improved roads and transport facilities which allow rustlers easy access to the herds and the means for a quick getaway. The problem becomes particularly acute when roads are asphalted. Ranchers are forced to erect barbed wire fencing to prevent animals from wandering far and to keep them away from the road, where they become easy game or cause serious traffic accidents. To make matters worse, more animals go missing during the worst drought years and these have been frequent in the last decade.

Another change that is occurring with greater market integration is specialization of stock-raising by zones of the Northeast. Traditionally, cattle from the Sertão were sent to market on the coast only after attaining maturity. The old 'common' breed cattle, when left to fend for themselves on the range, needed five to six years to reach their full size of roughly 105 kilos. The improved breeds under a semi-extensive pastoral system still need four years to attain maturity, but they weigh 150 to 180 kilos.

Parnamirim is especially orientated to commercial cattle ranching and is one of the counties which sends the largest number of steers to the coast in the state of Pernambuco. When an almost continuous series of droughts struck from 1975 onward, ranchers in Parnamirim started to market their cattle with only 12 to 18 months of age when they weigh 60 to 75 kilos. These yearlings are then taken to the Agreste region, which has long been a zone for fattening mature Sertanejo cattle before final marketing. The Agreste has become increasingly specialized in stock-raising, and particularly in fattening immature cattle brought in from the Sertão. As a result of lusher pastures and more intensive stock-raising methods, the cattle are ready for market within an additional one to two years and reach heavier weights, usually about 225 kilos (Bicalho, 1980).

The stock raisers of Parnamirim find this new development most advantageous and do not plan to return to their old ways when the droughts cease. The cattle reach nearly half their marketable weight in a year or so and hence the rancher does not have to wait another three years for the stock slowly to gain the rest of their weight. Also, they point out that the risk that an animal may die before going to market is reduced. Over four years a drought is likely to occur or a contagious disease may appear on the scene, (the vaccines not being perfect). When this happens, a rancher will lose the immature animals he has but will have already marketed others in previous years. In addition, when he loses most of his herd to drought or disease, he can return to the point of selling animals again in less time than formerly.[1]

Chorrochó still markets animals in the traditional way, though nowadays, the county's production goes to the commercial hub cities in the general vicinity and no longer to the Pernambuco coast as it did up to the 1960s. Stock-raising in Belém is a declining activity with most ranches still selling animals only at maturity, but now, only within the county to meet the increasing demand for meat.

In some humid zones of the Sertão as well as near certain large urban centres, a semi-intensive specialized type of cattle ranching is spreading. The system is based on planted pasture, usually pangolagrass (*Digitaria decumbens*) which is restricted to Agreste-like areas.[2]

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[1] Many of the same reasons for this change were given in Serra Branca in the dry stock-raising area of the Cariris Velhos of Paraíba State.

[2] Indeed, a modern ecological delineation of semi-humid from semi-arid zones in the Northeast can be drawn where pangolagrass gives way to buffelgrass, just as traditionally herbaceous cotton and arboreal cotton served as such markers. As yet the semi-intensive system based on buffelgrass is not diffusing rapidly.

Greater care is taken of cattle which are more thoroughbred. Properties are fenced and internal divisions are made for pasture rotation. Vaccines and other veterinarian treatment are given to the animals.

This kind of stock-raising is usually geared to fattening and milk production for supplying the demand of the large coastal cities. These semi-humid areas possess lusher pastures and milder climatic conditions which are necessary for raising superior breeds. In addition, fattening and milk production are usually undertaken closer to the consumer markets of the Northeast in order to reduce transport costs.

In addition, such areas are where urban investment in the rural zone is heaviest. Bicalho (1980) demonstrated that for the same type of semi-intensive ranching in the Agreste, urban investors favour this system of cattle ranching because, from their viewpoint, it is the easiest to administer and the most lucrative farm activity to exploit. Also, covering the property with pasture gives it the appearance that it is being fully exploited, thus avoiding the criticism that they are merely engaged in speculation. In the Sertão, as in the Agreste, merchants and liberal professionals invest their savings in rural property as a hedge against inflation. Finally, city dwellers gain status by owning ranches and they may spend holidays on them.

All of these factors explain why the process of implanting this type of stock-raising system is more intense in the eastern part of the Bahian micro-regions of this zone (Fundação IBGE, 1970). The whole semi-intensive stock-raising zone borders on the Agreste, which has been undergoing the same process for many of the same reasons.

Changing Labour Relations in Stock Raising

Changing methods of rearing have profoundly modified traditional labour relations. The old system of a cowhand receiving one calf in four that survived until one year of age has almost disappeared.

The sharing of animals - like sharecropping - was a way in which the owner could diminish his risk of loss. Even up to the middle of this century the rearing techniques did not consist of methods that were particularly effective in guaranteeing that most calves would reach one year of age. The animals grazed freely on the range which varied from dense thorn bush to relatively open cacti lands. This meant that festering wounds or other ills might or might not receive treatment. Also, predators were numerous. For a large rancher, product-sharing was a means of reducing such risks and, at the same time, cowboys were motivated to take care of the stock in such a way as to maximize the number of surviving calves. (Plates 3 and 4).

Cowhands were not paid cash in advance, before the rancher had a chance to recoup such labour expenditures, but in production after the animals had passed their most vulnerable period. When calves reached six months to one year of age the cowboy and owner would draw lots to determine in an equitable manner who received which calves. Such cowboys were called *vaqueiros de sorte* because they tried their luck (*sorte*) when drawing lots.[1]

When improved rearing techniques decreased the rate of stock losses, the price of beef went steadily upwards in response to increasing market

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[1] Moreira Neto (1960), Rivière (1972) and Keller (1966) describe this traditional way of paying cowhands as it existed respectively in Pará state, Roraima territory and throughout Brazil.



Plate 3. Cowboys and Horses in Leather Armour for Protection Against the Thorns of the Bush (Festa do Vaqueiro, Abaré, 1977)



Plate 4. Dense Bush (Parnamirim, 1981)

demand and cash was no longer so scarce, and therefore the owners found it to their advantage to risk the cash paid out in salaries so as to obtain a greater monetary return. As cattle were now worth more, ranch owners also felt that they were paying their cowboys too much.[1]

At first, the owner either switched to paying cowboys a weekly or monthly salary, modified the cowboy's part to one in five surviving calves or left the rate unmodified but forced the hired hand to sell his calves at a low price immediately at the time of the yearly allotment. In addition, owners allege that when a hired hand was permitted to keep his cattle until their maturity he took better care of his own animals and neglected those of the rancher. This sounds a bit exaggerated. It is in the best interest of a sharing ranchhand to take good care of the owner's cows in order to maximize his future share of calves. On the other hand, the same cannot be said about the owner's steers and a cowboy might not give them top priority for care during a drought.

In Chorrochó the sharing system still exists in the more isolated areas but it is rarely encountered near the county seat. In Belém all cowhands are salaried. Sharing is only encountered among a few of the goat and sheep herders, which is explained by the system of rearing these animals being still less intensive and by the fact that they are not worth as much as cattle. In Parnamirim one finds only hired hands for all animals, due to the heavy commercial emphasis on stock-raising there. Also, Parnamirim is cattle country and the rearing of other animals is not so important as it is in the drier areas to the south, and hence

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[1] IBGE (1952) and Pierson (1972) report that ranchers in the 1950s gave the increased value of new improved cattle breeds as the chief cause for the change to salaried labour, while Macedo (1952) cites rancher dissatisfaction with cowboys taking better care of their own cattle and neglecting those of the owner.

does not warrant a separate herder. The same was observed in the surveyed counties where product-sharing cowboys are almost entirely absent and salaried cowhands are the rule.

Many hired hands say that they prefer a salary because they receive a steady income and do not have to assume the risk of having all their potential calves die in a year of severe drought, in which case no income is earned. Also, they want a more regular cash income throughout the year so as to be able to purchase items which nowadays they view as being superior to those produced by themselves or local craftsmen, and also for other items which are wholly new to their consumption pattern.

On the other hand, it is clearly recognized that the pay is not nearly enough ever to save enough money to buy a farm. Their salary merely covers subsistence needs. At best, salaried cowhands can save a modest amount of money every week or month, which they can never amass into any significant investment fund for it is ravaged by the galloping inflation of the country.

In the past, when cropping was not an important activity, the range was unfenced and land was relatively cheap as, compared with the price of cattle, many cowboys were able to amass enough cattle to sell in order to purchase land. After having bought land a cowboy would continue working for his former patron until he could increase his herd to the point of attaining complete economic independence. The greater majority of cowhands who were able to become ranchers in the study area lived in the zone off the main rivers and purchased less valuable lands in such places.

In Parnamirim old cowhands estimate that about one in ten cowhands were able to become ranchers in the past. In Chorrochó the change has been more recent. The zone is still one of extensive stock-raising where land is relatively cheap. Of 49 landholders interviewed 22.4% had been

cowhands at one time in their life and a further 18.8% their parents were also. However, even in such stock-rearing zones the price of land and cattle has increased proportionately to wages which has reduced chances for upward social mobility. In Parnamirim a steer of 150 kilos represented about 80 days of labour in 1947, while in 1980 an equivalent steer has increased to 414 days. Also, the price of land has increased proportionately to the price of cattle. In Chorrochó a farm with 10 hectares of bottom-land and about 1,000 hectares of dry lands cost about 20 steers in 1930 while in 1980 it is worth more than 100 steers.

No ex-cowboys were encountered along the Riacho da Brígida in Parnamirim or near the São Francisco River in Belém. Land near such good rivers has always been relatively expensive. Pierson (1972) also relates that cowhands of the São Francisco River community of Orocó working under the sharing system in the early 1950s stated that they could never become ranchers with the cattle they received.[1]

At any rate, cowhands, whether salaried or not, are not such common figures as they used to be. Division of property by inheritance and greater agricultural exploitation means that the large ranches, which had a number of resident cowboys, are far fewer today. Small and medium sized farms are more common and it is the owner and his family who take care of the modest number of cattle possessed. In Parnamirim, only 27% of the farms have cowhands nowadays and the number of cowhands fell by 37% from that of the previous generation. In Chorrochó 35% of the ranches have cowhands today and there are 58% fewer workers employed than in the past.

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[1] In Roraima territory, Rivière (1972) relates this way of paying cowboys to the frontier situation prevalent there. At the time of his field research in the late 1950s, land was plentiful and labour scarce. This supports what is observed in the Sertão. The sharing system existed longer in places like Chorrochó, where settlement was later and land has only recently become more scarce.

Where hired cowhands are on the increase, proportionately to other farm workers, is near county seats, where they watch over the ranches of high ranking civil servants and wealthy merchants. Indeed, in more favourable parts of the Sertão such ranches are becoming quite common near commercial hub cities, causing distortions of the rural economy and social problems of the kind from which the Agrests suffers.

Cropping

In the Sertão, the type of technology used in agriculture has varied according to the environmental conditions present in each particular area and to the commercial nature of the crop exploited. This is particularly true for recent innovations in cropping methods. Expensive industrial agriculture techniques are practised most where the farmer has a better chance of harvest success and for those crops whose price justifies the higher production costs. Hence, the highly commercial crops of the more favourable zones are those which have been experiencing the greatest innovation. However, unlike what occurred in stock-raising, technological change in cropping has not been as important in modifying labour relations as have other economic and social changes. The most technologically sophisticated of Sertanejo farm systems, commercial irrigation, continues to use sharecropping while the least, traditional dry farming, has shifted to salaried labour. This curious development will be explained in terms of market risk, capital scarcity and the changing composition of the rural labour force.

With few exceptions, dry farming methods in the Sertão have changed at a much slower rate than have those of stock-raising. Traditionally, not much was done to combat the attack of insects and fungi or to prevent

crop loss due to drought. Orations might be said over the fields in an effort to make pests leave, though this practice was not found to be that widespread. Many farmers place the skull of a steer on the fence to protect crops or livestock against the evil eye (Plates 5 & 6). The latter is thought to cause crops inexplicably to wilt under seemingly favourable weather conditions.[1] A white flag hung in the field protects the plants against fungi that might form after a period of misty weather.

If water is available nearby at least part of the crops drying out from the lack of rain can be saved by carrying water in a kerosene tin to water them. Usually, though, when misfortune strikes the more common thing for a farmer to do is to shrug his shoulders and plant again, if it is not too late to do so. If the rainy season has already passed then he accepts his fate and waits for the next year. Sertanejo farmers do not behave this way out of an inherent ignorance due to a purported backward state of development. Historically, there has been a lack of other alternatives. They have lacked the means to adopt new techniques or it did not make economic sense to adopt them.[2]

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[1] Zimmerman (1952) relates an extreme case where one Sertanejo, who was thought to have a very powerful evil eye, always walked along a road staring downwards for fear that a glance at the fields and pastures on either side of him would ruin his neighbours.

[2] Individual farmers can be quite innovative, as Gross (1970) and Johnson (1971) also observed in other parts of the Sertão, but they 'modernize' cautiously, according to their means and for many of the same reasons that Firth 1961(1951) , Johnson (1972), Schultz (1964) and Wolf (1966) find common to all peasant farmers throughout the world. Indeed, the intermediate technology irrigation agriculture that arose in certain areas of the semi-arid zone has now reached the point of diffusing widely, precisely as the result of a thirty year process of cautious change, where the system was adapted to prevailing environmental, market and social conditions.



Plate 5. Skull of a Steer Placed on the Fence of the Corral to Protect Livestock from the Evil Eye (Curaçá, 1977)



Plate 6. Horn of a Steer Mounted on a Post in the Middle of an Irrigation Field to Protect Crops from the Evil Eye (Parnamirim, 1981)

From the 60s onward industrial agricultural inputs, such as pesticides, fertilizers, selected seed and tractors, have become available in many parts of the Sertão. Outside irrigation, the use of insecticides has been restricted to cotton, beans and maize planted in association. Even for these crops only medium and large cotton growers use them with any frequency.

The use of pesticides in rain-fed agriculture began in cotton and extended to other crops. Where climatic conditions are more favourable to harvest outcome their use increases. It could also be argued that crop disease is more likely in humid areas which also favours the introduction of pesticides. Thus in Exu pesticides are used by nearly 100% of the farmers while in Afogados da Ingazeira this decreases to 80%. In Mombaça, Petrolina, Souza and Quixadá the figure is lower yet, ranging from 40 - 60%. In Serra Branca and in the study communities, where conditions are poor for cropping, less than 25% of farmers use pesticides in dry farming (Table 17). In Arcoverde and Euclides da Cunha, where cotton is not important, the use of pesticides falls to less than 10% and in all counties pesticides are not utilized for less remunerative crops grown on a small scale.

Even in irrigation, where chances of harvest are immensely better than in dry farming, insecticides, fungicides and herbicides are utilized only for the most remunerative of crops, such as onions, melons and tomatoes, when grown on a large-scale. However, in irrigation the chances of the occurrence of disease increase and particularly the most profitable crops require such protective measures.

Table 17: Use of Pesticides in the Communities Studied

Dry Farming				Irrigation			
crops	farmers planting crop	farmers using pesticides		crops	farmers planting crop	farmers using pesticides	
		n	%			n	%
BELÉM							
cotton	6	1	17	onions	31	31	100
beans	6	0	0	rice	7	0	0
maize	6	0	0	beans	29	13	45
pumpkins	6	0	0	manioc	7	0	0
watermelons	6	0	0	watermelons	5	1	20
fruit trees	1	0	0	melons	2	2	100
				tomatoes	7	2	29
				maize	7	1	14
				garlic	1	0	0
				cotton	1	0	0
CHORROCHÓ							
cotton	20	2	10	onions	4	4	100
beans	20	5	25	beans	2	1	50
maize	20	5	25	melons	1	1	100
pumpkins	20	0	0	watermelons	1	0	0
watermelons	20	0	0	fruit trees	2	1	50
fruit trees	6	0	0				
PARNAMIRIM							
cotton	11	5	45	onions	13	13	100
beans	14	1	7	rice	8	1	13
maize	14	1	7	beans	5	3	60
rice	14	1	7	maize	3	2	67
pumpkins	14	0	0	watermelons	2	1	50
watermelons	14	0	0	melons	1	1	100
sweet potatoes	3	0	0	tomatoes	4	0	0
fruit trees	4	0	0	cotton	1	1	100
				fruit trees	3	0	0

Source of data: Field Research

Obs.: This table will also appear in the Ph.D. thesis of A.M. Bicalho.

Since the 1970s tractors have been increasingly employed in land preparation for most irrigated crops. Tractors are also used for commercial crops in dry farming, when planted on a large scale in more favourable areas of the semi-arid zone (Table 18). Tractors are utilized mainly when large areas of cropping land must be prepared and planted quickly due to market reasons or to take advantage of the approaching rainy season at a time when labour might be of short or uncertain supply. Also, where soils of reasonable depth exist and the topsoil has become impoverished through overcropping and little fallowing, it can be argued that a tractor could turn the poor layer over, thereby exposing the richer soil beneath.

On the other hand, there is some reason to suspect that ploughing as well as the use of other industrial agriculture methods in the Sertão pose serious dangers of salinizing already highly saline and fragile soils.[1] In addition, the majority of land in the semi-arid zone is too rocky for tractor drawn ploughs or even for light animal-drawn ones. Finally, the bottomland areas that are suitable for ploughing are of too modest a size on most farms (due to the long, narrow property form) to justify their use.

The use of fertilizers and manure in dry farming is rare and is mostly restricted to a few cash crops in humid mountain areas. In the study communities, fertilizers are used exclusively in irrigation (Table 19). Similarly, in Afogados da Ingazeira and in Petrolina, where a considerable amount of irrigation is undertaken, almost all farmers use fertilizers

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[1] The soils of most arid and semi-arid zones are usually not deep and high rates of evaporation cause salts to rise from the sub-soil. Hence too much turning over of the land can be counterproductive, by bringing saline soils to the surface. Tractors can leave the topsoil too loose which also facilitates salt rising. Finally, most pesticides and chemical fertilizers contain a certain amount of sodium based elements which can accumulate in the land (Dregne, 1970; Withers and Vipond, 1974).

Table 18: Use of Animal and Mechanical Traction in the Study Communities and Survey Counties

County	Dry Farming		Irrigation	
	animal (%)	tractor (%)	animal (%)	tractor (%)
STUDY COMMUNITIES[1]				
Belém do São Francisco	0	0	7	49
Chorrochó	10	0	0	0
Parnamirim	9	9	33	53
SURVEY COUNTIES[2]				
Quixadá	20	5	0	0
Mombaça	5	35	0	0
Iguatu	40	50	40	50
Várzea Alegre	0	0	15	25
São Joao do Jaguaribe	0	0	0	0
Icó	80	10	0	0
Souza	78	2	-	-
Patos	86	9	-	-
Serra Branca	70	20	0	0
Arcoverde	0	0	0	0
Afogados da Ingazeira	75	25	70	1
Exu	5	45	0	0
Petrolina	40	0	n.a.	90
Euclides da Cunha	30	20	-	-

Source of data: Field Research

[1] From rural questionnaires

[2] Information given by rural extentionists and other knowledgeable local persons

on their crops. However, many of these crops will only produce with the aid of fertilizers. In addition, chemical fertilizers do not function properly unless the soil has a fairly high constant degree of humidity. Outside irrigation and a few humid highland areas, Sertanejo rainfall patterns do not permit this. On the contrary, precipitation is quite concentrated and sudden thunderstorms can wash away fertilizers (Sanders and Hollanda, 1977). Similarly, the extensive stock-raising system of the Sertão makes the collection of large quantities of manure quite difficult.

The more usual means of conserving soil fertility in dry farming is by shifting agriculture. Fallows range from 8 - 20 years on higher lands, depending on the type of soil in question, and from one to four years on bottomlands. With the ever smaller areas of agricultural land available, due to diminishing farm size, many smallholders have had to shorten the fallow of bottomlands to a year or less which has caused the soil to become quite poor.

Changing Labour Relations in Cropping

The mode of access to land and the type of farm labour used in cropping varies from place to place in the Sertão. The specific form which became predominant in any particular area depended traditionally on the degree to which local conditions were favourable for the practice of agriculture. As we have seen in previous chapters, the less arid the climate and the more fertile the soils, the greater is the amount of farm land devoted to cropping. This in turn allowed for a larger rural population composed of numerous smallholders and landless peasants in addition to large property holders.

Table 19: Use of Fertilizers in the Communities Studied

Dry Farming				Irrigation			
crops	farmers planting crop	farmers using fertilizers		crops	farmers planting crop	farmers using fertilizers	
		n	%			n	%
BELÉM							
cotton	6	0	0	onions	31	31	100
beans	6	0	0	rice	7	2	29
maize	6	0	0	beans[1]	29	3	10
pumpkins	6	0	0	manioc	7	0	0
watermelons	6	0	0	watermelons	5	3	60
fruit trees	1	0	0	melons	2	2	100
				tomatoes	7	7	100
				maize	7	0	0
				garlic	1	1	100
				cotton	1	0	0
CHORROCHÓ							
cotton	20	0	0	onions	4	4	100
beans	20	0	0	beans	2	1	50
maize	20	0	0	melons	1	1	100
pumpkins	20	0	0	watermelons	1	0	0
watermelons	20	0	0	fruit trees	2	1	50
fruit trees	6	0	0				
PARNAMIRIM							
cotton	11	0	0	onions	13	13	100
beans	14	0	0	rice	8	1	13
maize	14	0	0	beans	5	1	20
rice	14	0	0	maize	3	0	0
pumpkins	14	0	0	watermelons	2	1	50
watermelons	14	0	0	melons	1	1	100
sweet potatoes	3	0	0	tomatoes	4	0	0
fruit trees	4	0	0	cotton	1	1	100
				fruit trees	3	0	0

Source of data: Field Research

[1] After the onion harvest, beans are planted in the same area to take advantage of the fertilizer that remains in the soil.

Obs.: This table will also appear in the Ph.D. thesis of A.M. Bicalho.

The rent that landless peasants have had to pay in order to gain access to land has also varied accordingly. In dry zones of the Sertão, like Belém and Chorrochó, where stock-raising has been the more important activity, large and medium-sized ranchers in the past used to have a number of landless peasants, called *moradores* resident on their properties. No cash nor any part of their produce was paid for rent. During the rainly season they were permitted to plant short-cycle crops, the residue of which provided much needed fodder for the patron's cattle during the dry season. Also, the *moradores* were available for an occasional day of labour that the owner might need from time to time and for which they were usually paid.[1] At harvest time they would often give their patron some fresh produce or a sack of beans but this was more out of courtesy than as stipulated payment and occasionally the rancher would show his largesse by distributing meat to his retainers when he had slaughtered a steer.

From the 1960s onward, more and more landless peasants in the stock-raising zones moved to the local towns or emigrated directly to the Southeast. This is explained by the marginal nature of farm lands that *moradores* exploited in such dry areas so that they were easily attracted by better opportunities elsewhere. Also, diminishing farm size meant that the families of farmers' children needed the scarce bottomlands that were occupied by landless peasant families. In Chorrochó and Parnamirim, as well as in dry zone stock-raising areas in general, the proportion of occasional workers (*moradores* and day-labourers) and sharecroppers has fallen while that of family workers has increased (Table 20, Figure 11).

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[1] In the more distant past they might not have received a wage as occurred elsewhere in the Northeast [Andrade, 1973(1964); Bicalho, 1980]. If not, *moradores* in such drier zones of the Sertão probably did not have to give more than a day of labour a week during peak periods of cropping activity in the landowner's fields.

Table 20 - Percentage Distribution of the Rural Work Force in 1950 and in 1975

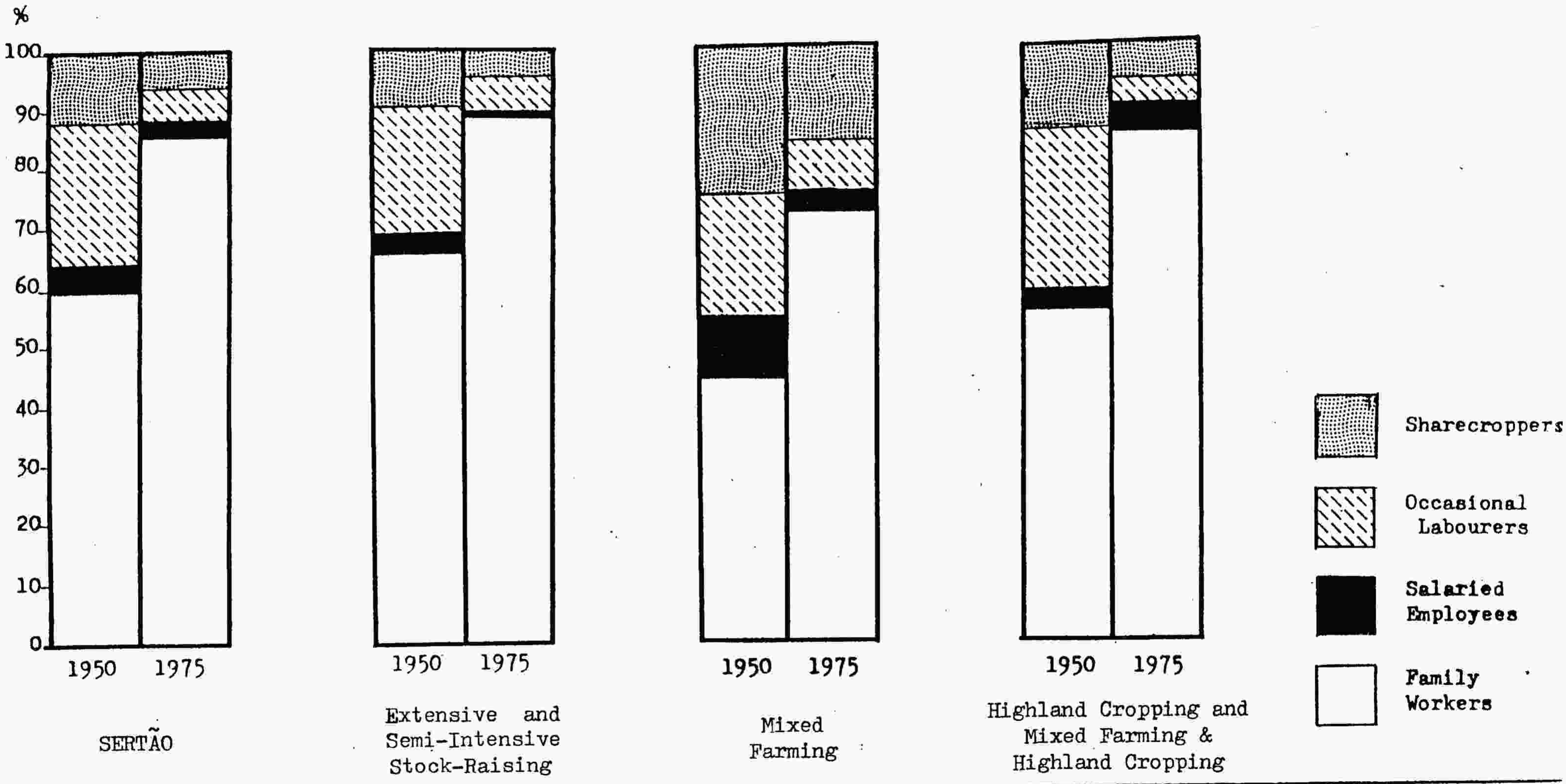
Counties and Zones	Farmers & Family[1]		Salaried Employees		Occasional Labourers[2]		Share-croppers		Total	
	1950	1975	1950	1975	1950	1975	1950	1975	1950	1975
Belém de São Francisco	75.3	80.1	1.1	1.1	5.0	6.4	18.6	12.4	100.0	100.0
Chorrochó (Curaçá)	87.6	94.8	2.5	1.0	8.1	4.1	1.8	0.1	100.0	100.0
Parnamirim	70.4	97.0	2.2	1.5	20.1	1.3	7.3	0.2	100.0	100.0
extensive stock-raising	61.0	88.7	4.0	1.7	23.1	5.8	11.9	3.8	100.0	100.0
mixed farming	44.2	72.6	5.7	3.6	26.3	8.4	24.0	15.4	100.0	100.0
highland cropping	51.5	84.6	3.9	2.8	29.3	6.0	15.3	6.6	100.0	100.0
highland cropping and mixed farming	61.5	85.5	2.4	2.4	26.2	7.8	9.9	4.3	100.0	100.0
improved stock-raising of humid areas	71.5	87.6	3.1	1.0	20.3	10.1	5.1	0.4	100.0	100.0
SERTÃO	59.1	85.2	3.9	2.3	24.4	7.5	12.6	5.0	100.0	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

1 The Agricultural Census does not allow for the combination of labour types that is common in the Sertão. Many smallholders work a few days a week as farm day-labourers, while the latter as a speciality type are rarely encountered.

2 Moradores and agregados resident on a farm who may or may not have an obligation to work one or more days a week for the land owner. Non-resident, specialist farm day-labourers are also included in this group. Urban day-labourers who work part-time or seasonally on nearby farms are probably not counted by the census in this category of worker.

Figure 11. Percentage Distribution of Rural Work Force



Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

In regions of the Sertão, where soil and climatic conditions are fairly good, large-scale cultivation of arboreal cotton arose. Here mixed farming is practised in which landowners are equally interested in cropping production as well as in utilizing the residue of the short-cycle crops and fallow lands for their cattle.

In such places sharecroppers, called *moradores*, *meeiros* or *rendeiros*, used to - and still do to some extent - make up a large part of the labour force. These workers care for the owner's long-cycle cotton crop, which is located in the superior bottomlands and better higher lands. Their payment consists of half of the cotton harvest, which was then sold to the owner at below market prices. Alternatively, a cotton planter would exploit his farm in a more direct manner using resident wage labourers, also called *moradores*, who, during the peak season were obliged to work up to four days a week in the owner's field. On the poorer high lands sharecroppers and *moradores* cultivate small areas of beans, maize, squash and manioc (in better regions) of which they might or might not have to turn over one third of the product as rent for use of the land.

Johnson (1971) describes work relations on a large farm in the cotton zone of Ceará during the 1960s when sharecropping was still the predominant form of mobilizing non-familial labour there. He studied this farm at a time when cropping in the Sertão was on the verge of moving towards more monetarized labour relations and away from dry farming on large properties. Already the sharecroppers of the farm complained of the cold, impersonal relationship with the new absentee landlord, who was becoming more interested in cattle ranching than in planting cotton. Similarly, the northern part of Parnamirim county, as well as the other counties to the north, had large areas of cotton until the early 1970s and work relations were those of sharecropping or salaried *moradores*

Since this time, the cultivation of cotton throughout the Sertão has been curtailed due to a number of years of poor prices, drought and seed problems. Many large property owners took advantage of the situation to remove landless peasants from their farms and to shift their activities to semi-extensive and even semi-intensive stock-rearing. In Parnamirim the number of *moradores* on the farms of interviewed landowners fell by 68% since the 1960s.

Counties long famous for large-scale commercial cotton farming, such as Souza in Paraíba state, have experienced such a change. The large planters allege that even the miserable salaries already paid to day-labourers (Cr$25 per day in 1978, the equivalent of two kilos of beans) were too high to make cotton cultivation profitable. And so the same pattern of rural exodus, urban unemployment, misery and finally emigration that is observed in coastal zones, is also seen in such areas of the Sertão.

In highland areas, which are not entirely favourable for sugarcane cultivation, mixed subsistence and commercial polyculture cropping on small and large properties is the predominant form of land use. The highland areas to the north and west of Parnamirim are examples of this type of rural countryside, and the mountains of Belém and neighbouring Floresta county resemble such zones also.

Here, the land tenure and labour relations were similar to those traditional to the Agreste. Until recently, numerous landless peasants were present. They, and smallholders who needed additional land to till, paid rent by handing over part of the produce to the large and medium property owners whose land they tilled. The interest of the owners for such an arrangement was in the creation of pasture for their cattle as well as in the commercial cropping of cotton, beans,maize, fruits, sisal and castorbean plant.

Today, large farms are rarely encountered in such areas, and medium and smallholders predominate. They are shifting to greater commercial production, particularly of fruits and manioc, in response to the demand of the growing towns and cities as well as of the specialized irrigation and stock-raising zones. When in need of additional labour other than that of their family, they contract the salaried labour of neighbouring farmers.

Like the Agreste, such regions suffer some of the highest rates of emigration in the Northeast. The rate of population increase is the lowest of the Sertão and well below the national level (Table 21). Such places also suffer the effects of drought, for demographic increase slowed during the climatically poor 1950s and 1970s, like the rest of the semi-arid zone. However, the main reason for emigration is that there is just not enough land available for the children of smallholders to make a livelihood and landless peasants are subject to onerous rent and social obligations. Particularly landless peasants have left such areas. In 1950 they made up nearly one half of the farm labour force which by 1975 had fallen to 15% of the total. If they did not have the means to emigrate from the region they moved to less densely populated areas where rents are lower. A number of persons now living in Parnamirim had left southern Ceará for such reasons.

Traditionally, the other great cash crop of the Northeast, sugarcane, was grown on a large scale only in exceptionally humid areas of the Sertão, where small mills arose to supply brown sugar for Sertanejo markets. Della Cava (1970), Figuereido Filho (1958) and Pinheiro (1950) document the evolution of the land use system and labour relations for the most famous of these areas, Cariri of southern Ceará state. Here the classic sugarcane complex arose with the tenure system and labour relations in

Table 21. Population Growth from 1950 to 1980

Counties Zones Country	Population				Annual Rate of Increase			
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	1950-1980
Belém do São Francisco	10 505	14 958	21 409	28 626	3.6	3.6	2.9	3.3
Chorrochó	-	12 323	17 252	19 273	-	3.3	1.1	2.3[1]
Parnamirim	10 679	12 679	17 120	20 485	1.7	3.0	1.8	2.2
extensive stock-raising	1 665 389	1 894 123	2 637 807	3 065 461	1.3	3.4	1.5	2.1
mixed farming	997 077	1 153 551	1 530 296	1 723 606	1.5	2.9	1.2	1.8
highland farming	1 061 005	1 152 965	1 436 596	1 657 888	0.9	2.2	1.4	1.5
highland and mixed farming	561 497	707 975	798 775	925 191	2.4	1.2	1.5	1.7
improved stock-raising of favourable areas	1 314 160	1 419 565	1 796 439	2 137 396	0.8	2.4	1.8	1.6
SERTÃO	5 599 128	6 328 179	8 199 913	9 509 542	1.2	2.6	1.5	1.8
NORTHEAST	17 973 413	22 428 873	28 675 110	35 419 156	2.2	2.5	2.1	2.3
BRAZIL	51 944 397	70 992 343	94 508 583	121 150 573	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.9

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955a, 1962, 1972, 1981)

[1] Rate is for the period of 1960-1980

the mould traditional to the coastal areas. After the abolition of slavery, the land was worked by resident landless peasants and neighbouring minifundial farmers who would receive a small subsistence plot to use in return for their labour, and from the 1940s onward, they would receive a modest payment for the days of work in the planter's fields.[1] More recently, the same kind of changes, such as the consolidation of land, orientation of production to large sugar mills and the increasing use of non-resident day-labourers, that Melo (1975) relates for the coastal plantations, has been occurring where sugarcane is planted on a large scale in the Sertão.

In the humid areas and near large urban centres, where specialized semi-intensive ranching by absentee landowners is being adopted, the expulsion of many landless peasants is occurring and the availability of rented lands, upon which minifundial farmers depend to complement their inadequate holdings, is being reduced. Planted pasture is replacing the native pasture that was formed in the past by a system of rotating the fields of tenant farmers and sharecroppers. Such a process worsens

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[1] Elsewhere in the Sertão, the use of slavery and even that of permanent salaried employees, was rare, owing to the strongly seasonal character of agricultural activities. Such labour relations were common in sugar-cane growing because the work force could be fully employed the whole year round which is not the case in typical Sertanejo farming [Andrade, 1973(1964)]. In drier areas the possession of slaves was more a sign of status than anything else as they did the tasks that a rich man or woman should not. Also, old informants talk of raising slaves for sale on the coast much as they reared livestock for the Recife market. However, the open frontier stymied the best methods of preventing escape. The use of chains, whippings and mutual assistance between ranchers were of little avail. Not even the black's initial lack of familiarity with the country and its resources, nor the antipathy between them and the Amerindians, was so important as to impede the flight of slaves, as Andrade (1975) holds. There are cases of escaped slaves refuges in modest numbers in the Sertão, located in areas where Amerindians also fled to. One such example is the Serra do Umã near Salgueiro. In such places there was intermarriage between the two ethnic groups, which argues against mutual antipathy. After emancipation, slaves became landless peasants and smallholders and today make up part of the rural lower class.

the already existing employment problems much in the same way as in the Agreste. Greater emigration is the result and the rate of population increase of 1.6% per annum for the period of 1950-1980 for the improved stock-raising zones is one of the lowest rates of the Sertão.

Another privileged part of the Sertão was that located along the São Francisco River, the only perennial water course of the semi-arid zone. In places like Belém, sharecroppers were also encountered where they tilled food crops. In addition, some slaves and permanent employees worked in sugarcane and small sugar mills under conditions similar to those found in the sugarcane areas of the mountains.

The development of irrigation along the São Francisco River and its tributaries has produced a wholly different situation from that which is encountered in the rest of the semi-arid zone. Area in cropping has expanded dramatically, a rapidly intensifying type of intermediate agricultural technology has been adopted and year round employment has been generated for a growing number of farmers and rural workers. The zone has attracted population and not expelled it, as occurs in most of the rural Northeast. From 1950 to 1980 the annual rate of population increase in this area was 3.5% while that of the rest of the Sertão was only 1.8% and the whole of the Northeast 2.3% during the same period (Fundação IBGE, 1955a and 1981).

Private sector irrigation in the São Francisco valley is based on the use of sharecroppers and family labour. While sharecropping in the rest of the Sertão is on the decline, a modified form of this type of labour relations has flourished in an area of rural innovation. Despite the decline in the number of rural workers that has occurred off the river in the dry zone stock-raising areas of Belém, the overall census figures for the rural work force do not show a drastic reduction in

workers as has occurred elsewhere in the Sertão. Occasional labourers and sharecroppers have maintained their position fairly well and make up respectively 6% and 12% of the total rural work force.

The equipment necessary for irrigation is expensive and the operation costs are high. Even with the help of subsidized bank loans the capital risked is substantial, given the limited resources of the local farmers. Such highly remunerative crops as onions, melons and tomatoes are exploited. However, the same crops suffer extreme price fluctuation. Local farmers have to compete for a limited national market with farmers from other regions and the principal consumer centres are located in the Southeast, more than 2000 kilometres distance. To a large degree, climatic risk has been replaced by market risk and farmers reduce their capital outlay by using family labour and sharecroppers. When not employing salaried labour, the costs of production for irrigation are reduced by 40% to 79% depending on the crop.[1]

Sharecroppers in irrigation work under conditions different from the traditional type of sharecropper of the Sertão. The land owner determines what is to be grown and supplies all the material for cultivation. Quite often the owner even provides a weekly living allowance which, together with most of the costs of production, is deducted from the amount of money received upon sale of the harvest.

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[1] Like product sharing in stock-raising, sharecropping is a way for farmers to reduce risks by dividing costs and profits with workers (Morgan and Munton, 1971). In recent years sharecropping has been reassessed and the institution is no longer considered to be an inherently exploitative economically inefficient form of labour relations, found only in pre-capitalist agriculture (Caballero, 1982; Jones, 1982; Lehmann, 1982; Loureiro, 1977; Miller, 1982; Newbery, 1975; Reid, 1975 and Stiglitz, 1974). It is true that sharecropping can have such negative characteristics in Latin America as CIDA [1975(1968)] and Feder (1971) hold, but in some cases sharecropping can be less exploitative than wage labour as well as more adapted to local socio-economic conditions. This is especially true in irrigation sharecropping.

Irrigation sharecroppers of the Sertão bear a strong resemblance to wage earners and the weekly advance is very similar to a salary. All calculations of debt and payment are made in money, not in the product. Payment itself is thought of as being half of the profits, which is the amount received upon sale of harvest less the costs of production, and not half of the produce itself. The buyer of the sharecropper's part is usually the same person who purchases the owner's part and is not the owner himself, as it once used to be. On the other hand, many of the older social relations of mutual obligations between patron and retainer are still in force. The owners realize that they have to maintain a personal relationship with workers if the latter are to work properly, all of which is in keeping with the situation of a peasant society in transition.

Income for irrigation sharecroppers of the semi-arid zone can be uncertain and a loss may be incurred, but the usual situation is for a modest profit to be made at harvest time which, counted together with the weekly allowance, adds up to better pay than would be received by specialist day-labourers if the latter could find work regularly. Their income also compares favourably with that of other rural workers of the semi-arid zone, usually being two to three times higher (Table 22).

While income for workers in dry farming is principally affected by drought, that of irrigation sharecroppers varies to a large extent according to fluctuations in crop prices. However, even in years of poor prices the income obtained from the weekly allowance and from part-time work as day-labourers gives irrigation sharecroppers a higher monetary income than would be received by a full-time salaried worker in irrigation or in dry farming.

Table 22. Average Annual Income of Interviewed Farm Workers (U.S.$).

Type of Worker	n	1976[1]		1977		1978		1979		1980		1981	
		income[2]	subsistence[3]	income	subsistence	income	subsistence	income	subsistence	income	subsistence	income	subsistence
IRRIGATION													
sharecropper	16	1,135	27	425	30	969	40	1,421	47	1,526	49	1,104	44
sharecropper/foreman	6	2,455	78	777	75	1,236	73	2,162	55	2,137	87	2,109	80
day-labourer[4]	-	500	-	528	-	871	-	846	-	790	-	673	-
DRY FARMING													
sharecropper	6	370	100	386	122	928	228	539	231	...	...	...	...
morador	7	234	109	262	149	393	251	407	254	413	317	405	308
day-labourer[4]	-	280	-	270	-	361	-	316	-	369	-	436	-
STOCK-RAISING													
salaried cowhand	7	323	177	253	205	428	255	404	265	450	344	543	351
product-sharing cowhand[5]	-	156	177	273	205	557	255	536	265	470	344	445	351
product-sharing goat herder	3	297	115	247	145	538	226	531	213	538	246	537	271

Source of data: Bicalho & Hoefle (1983)

[1] In dry farming 1976, 1977, 1980 and 1981 were drought years, 1979 was poor and 1978 was fair. In irrigation 1976 was an excellent year for produce prices, 1977 was extremely bad, 1978 and 1979 were relatively poor, 1980 was good and 1981 was fair.

[2] Salaries, allowances and cash received for day-labour.

[3] Monetary equivalent of production for subsistence. Value assigned is wholesale.

[4] Hypothetical case where a day-labourer would be able to find work for a maximum of 216 days per year in irrigation and 168 days per year in dry farming. Not all day-labourers would be able to work so many days and their income would be considerably lower.

[5] Hypothetical case where a cowhand did not receive a salary and had to sell calves upon receiving them. This situation would be the lowest possible income for if he were allowed to keep the calves his herd would multiply through time so increasing his income from independent production. Also, such a worker today probably would receive additional income from day-labour as product-sharing goat herders do.

As in the livestock product-sharing of the past, an important advantage found in irrigation sharecropping is the better chance of upward social mobility when compared with the lot of salaried labourers. When a good harvest is gathered in at a moment of large profits, a share-cropper can buy a pump. Then, he rents land, paying 10% of the value of the harvest to the landowner. From there he can accumulate enough capital to purchase land and free himself from paying rent altogether. Of the 16 tenant farmers interviewed, 44% had been sharecroppers previously and of the 38 landowners, 13% had been a sharecropper at one point of their lives.

It could be argued that the position of irrigation sharecroppers is exceptional in regional terms.[1] At the moment, there exists a certain scarcity of labour, which is reflected by the intense in-migration that is taking place. Such demand for labour makes for better terms of work for landless peasants. This is probably true because even day-labour wages are 40% higher than those current in other parts of the Sertão. Possibly with time, when the labour market becomes saturated and irrigation land more scarce, labour relations will become salaried and more exploitative. To a certain extent this is already beginning to happen in relation to land ownership.

In Belém farms are increasing in size which is the opposite trend from that of the rest of the Sertão. In 1950, farms with less than 50 hectares occupied 61% of the area in farms while in 1975 this dropped to 30% (Table 23). Properties possessing more than 500 hectares covered

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[1] Lehmann (1982) describes a similar use of sharecropping in high market risk potato farming of Ecuador. Caballero (1982) demonstrates on a worldwide basis how sharecropping is one way for farmers with limited capital resources to exploit crops that involve substantial risk or if wage labour were used would not yield a profit.

Table 23: Change in Farm Size in Belém do São Francisco County: Area of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	hectares	%	hectares	%
0-10 ha	3 617	24.2	4 755	11.2
10-50 ha	5 563	37.1	7 936	18.8
50-100 ha	1 528	10.2	3 888	9.2
100-500 ha	1 650	11.0	15 638	37.0
500-1000 ha	-	-	3 054	7.2
1000-2000 ha	-	-	7 039	16.6
2000 ha and above	2 620	17.5	-	-
Total	14 978[1]	100.0	42 310[1]	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

[1] As was the case for Chorrochó and Parnamirim, different samples were used in the 1950 and 1975 census. However, as farm land is worth more in Belém greater registration of whole properties probably occurred.

Table 24: Change in Farm Size in Belém do São Francisco County: Number of Farms per Hectare Group in 1950 and in 1975

Hectare Group	1950		1975	
	number	%	number	%
0-10 ha	1 610	83.6	1 339	70.8
10-50 ha	282	14.6	411	21.8
50-100 ha	23	1.2	57	3.0
100-500 ha	9	0.5	76	4.0
500-1000 ha	-	-	4	0.2
1000-2000 ha	-	-	4	0.2
2000 ha and above	1	0.1	-	-
Total	1 925	100.0	1 891	100.0

Source of Data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1979)

18% of the farm land in 1950 and have increased their proportion to 61% by 1975. Also, the number of farms is decreasing in this process of land consolidation. By 1975, 4% of the total of farms occupied 61% of the area (Table 24). Small farms of less than 10 hectares now make up 71% of the total of farms as compared to 84% in 1950.

The same problem of high startup and operating costs that encourages the use of sharecroppers makes it difficult for smallholders to irrigate their land. About half of those interviewed work as sharecroppers for others in order to work their land have to 'rent water' from a neighbour which costs them 10-50% of their production. Some landholders are not able to make such an arrangement or lose money with a poor harvest and end up by selling out to larger farmers. So irrigation not only leads to greater upward social mobility but also to more downward. In the sample of sharecroppers none were found to be previous landholders on the river so it is possible that upward mobility is still outweighing downward. However, if production methods continue to evolve into more capital-intensive ones, the reverse could easily begin to occur.

Sertanejo Rural Labour Relations in Transition

Thus, in the Sertão as a whole, labour relations in agriculture have changed profoundly since the 1940s. With the exception of the irrigation areas, the general tendency is one of diminishing farm size and emigration of landless peasants which have resulted in a decrease in the number of sharecroppers, *moradores* , rural salaried employees and rural day-labourers. From 1950 to 1975 family labourers increased from 59% to 85% of the total of rural workers. Salaried employees (cowhands) decreased from 4% to 2%, occasional-labourers (*moradores* and day-labourers)

from 24% to 8% and sharecroppers from 13% to 5% of the total during the same period (see Table 20).

With the division of larger properties through inheritance, the size of farms has progressively decreased to the point where today many farms can only support one family. From 1950 to 1970 the area occupied by medium-sized and large farms, with more than 500 hectares, decreased from 52% to 36% of the total area of farms (Table 25). The majority of farm land in the Sertão is poorly suited for cropping so that farms with less than 500 hectares do not usually offer steady employment for many landless peasants. Due to the long, narrow shape of farms in the semi-arid zone, of a 500 hectares total only 5 to 15 hectares are bottom-lands propitious for cropping. The rest of the property usually consists of unfenced dry interfluvial bush lands where livestock graze. In more favourable areas a greater amount of interfluvial land can be cropped, so that in highland zones a farm with 50 to 100 hectares can be considered as a medium-sized one.

During the same period, farms with less than 50 hectares increased from 76% to 85% of the total number of farms (Table 26). In many parts of the semi-arid zone even a farm of 100 hectares barely offers enough work and income for a farmer and his family much less for employing landless peasants. Such farms use only occasional workers for certain tasks that need to be done quickly, and, as old customs of labour exchange between smallholders have fallen into disuse, monetary payment for non-familial

Table 25: Change in Sertanejo Farm Size: Area of Farms per Hectare Group

Hectare Group	1950		1970	
	hectares	%	hectares	%
0-10 ha	693 302	2.5	1 724 971	5.1
10-50 ha	2 655 890	9.7	5 475 214	16.2
50-100 ha	2 366 672	8.6	3 974 262	11.8
100-500 ha	7 619 259	27.7	10 439 037	30.9
500-1000 ha	3 145 512	11.4	3 852 131	11.4
1000-2000 ha	2 975 497	10.8	2 956 012	8.7
2000 ha and above	8 044 321	29.3	5 354 550	15.9
Total	27 500 453	100.0	33 776 177	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1975)

Table 26: Change in Sertanejo Farm Size: Number of Farms per Hectare Group

Hectare Group	1950		1970	
	number	%	number	%
0-10 ha	137 771	42.4	423 212	52.7
10-50 ha	107 503	33.1	257 429	32.0
50-100 ha	33 948	10.5	59 382	7.4
100-500 ha	37 471	11.5	54 227	6.7
500-1000 ha	4 559	1.4	5 707	0.7
1000-2000 ha	2 159	0.7	2 210	0.3
2000 ha and above	1 405	0.4	1 219	0.2
Total	324 816	100.0	803 386	100.0

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955b, 1975)

labour is common today.[1] In addition, large and medium farmers no longer want *moradores* on their land, instead they too prefer the use of day-labourers (*trabalhadores soltos, diaristas*). Only salaried cowhands are desirable as resident permanent employees. Resident crop workers were let go or left of their own accord, no longer wanting to live in the dependent way they had previously.

In the rural areas that are distant from towns, day-labourers are often other smallholders who only work off their farm on a part-time basis. This explains why the number of occasional labourers decreased in a time of increasing monetarization of the local economy. The farm labour force census figures cited previously only include full-time specialists and not part-time workers. As farms became smaller, less work was available for landless peasants (who are counted as specialists in the census) and they moved to the towns and cities. This explains the drastic fall in the overall figure for occasional labourers.

On farms near the larger towns and cities, farm labour is provided by workers who live in the poor peripheral urban areas and no longer on the farms. They are employed when needed during the crop cycle, which means only in a sporadic seasonal way. However, during most of the year they find what work they can in doing 'city jobs'. They hire themselves out as carpenters, masons, water carriers, store clerks and in any

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[1] Exchanging days of labour used to be common between small and medium farmers and ranchers. Neighbours were usually close kin and could be called upon to help round up cattle, to weed or harvest a field and to pack mud into the walls of a wattle-and-daub house. The people say that salaried labour is used today because the money is now available with which to pay wages. Neighbours can still exchange days of work but nowadays they are paid for this. Payment is said to be an improvement for it avoids attrition between those involved. If, for some reason, one of the persons does not fulfil his side of the exchange, all have already been paid for their work. Galvão (1959) provides a general description of this way of mobilizing labour as it used to be practised throughout the Northeast. However, his attributing the custom to the natural gregariousness of man does not explain why it has nearly disappeared.

temporary service that appears. The low wages and loss of a plot with which to meet subsistence needs, together with greater underemployment and unemployment, have all caused mass emigration to the larger cities of the region and to other regions of the country where more opportunity lies.

In contrast to what occurred in other zones of the Northeast, where conflict over worker rights was the primary cause of large-scale expulsion of landless peasants, the exodus of landless peasants in the Sertão probably had more to do with factors of attraction to better opportunities elsewhere. In the 60s and early 70s the rapid industrial and urban growth of the Southeastern cities offered a much better chance of work, at far superior wages and a big city lifestyle. At the same time the rural sector was depressed. As we have seen, farms were rapidly diminishing in size. Prices for many traditional crops of the Sertão were low and in the 1970s were a decade of acute drought, which encouraged the reduction of cropping activity on medium and large farms (Table 27 and Figure 12).

The changes occurring in work relations are a break with the past, and not just a phase of temporary unemployment due to a period of unfavourable prices or drought.[1] Before the Peasant League movement of the early 1960s and the misinterpretation of new laws concerning the

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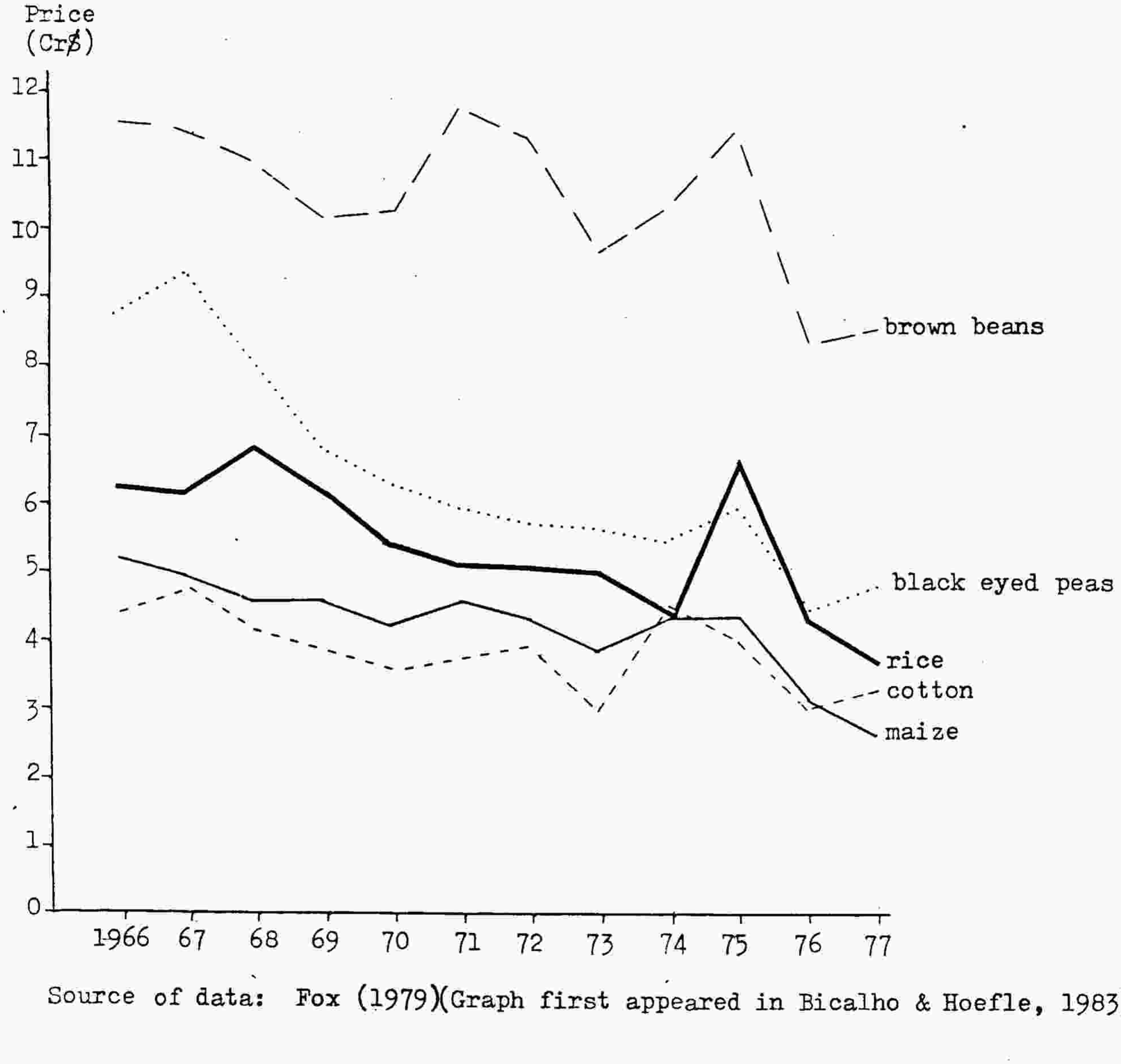
[1] As would be expected according to Sá's model of economic cycles in the commercial agriculture of the Northeast.

Table 27: Price Change for Farm Products of the Sertão

Product	Price Index (1955 = 100)			Price Change (%)	
	1948/50	1959/61	1967/69	48/50-59/61	59/61-67/69
PRODUCE					
beans	93.1	125.5	100.6	34.8	-19.8
cotton	129.2	129.3	88.1	0.1	-31.9
maize	104.0	119.7	94.9	15.1	-20.7
manioc	104.7	135.4	122.3	29.3	-9.7
onions	157.7	86.6	125.7	-45.1	45.2
rice	114.7	115.6	105.6	0.8	-8.7
sisal	275.3	149.8	77.5	-45.6	-48.3
sweet potatoes	96.1	101.5	100.1	5.6	-1.4
tomatoes	84.9	161.6	487.3	90.3	201.5
MEAT					
beef	74.4	117.5	133.7	57.9	13.8
goat meat	78.9	122.3	124.6	55.0	1.9
mutton	77.9	121.1	123.2	55.5	1.7

Source of data: Patrick (1972) (This table first appeared in Bicalho and Hoefle (1983).

Figure 12. Government Support Price for Basic Crops of the Sertão



Source of data: Fox (1979)(Graph first appeared in Bicalho & Hoefle, 1983)

Obs.: Prices are adjusted for inflation.

rights of rural workers, all land owners wanted dependent landless peasants on their farms and ranches.[1]

In the past, the ties between landowner (*dono, patrão*) and retainer (*agregado*) were multiple and of a personal nature, much like those encountered elsewhere in Brazil (Forman, 1975) and Latin America [Foster, 1979(1967), Wolf, 1966]. In addition to rent or labour, workers also provided help in disputes and votes in elections. The owner was often a worker's *compadre* and would be present at the various rites of passage involving his family. He paid many of the expenses involved in these, quite literally from cradle to grave, as many tenants spent their whole lives on the same property. A rancher would help to free a retainer held by the police. Also he would help an injured tenant or cowboy until he could return to work again. On the other hand, if the injury was of a permanent nature, impairing his job, and no family member was able to replace him, then he was discharged from the farm. His fate was to move to town to find some other line of work or to beg for a living.

Today, the ties between landowner and worker have not as yet reached the extreme of merely being that of a day-by-day wage and nothing else,

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[1] The Peasant League movement took place mainly in the Agreste and had little direct impact in the Sertão. Forman (1975) and Pearse (1975) give accounts of the social climate on the coast during the years of the movement and Bicalho (1980) describes the consequences of its defeat. However, in the Sertão, landowners heard of the conflicts and this, coupled with progressive farm labour legislation that was enacted at the same time, thoroughly alarmed them. Farmers became particularly worried about *moradores* demanding squatter ownership to land they used, as well as about a series of legal formalities and taxes that had to be made. In sum, owners felt that *moradores* suddenly had too many rights, so no new ones were accepted. On the other hand, according to local interpretation of the laws the status of sharecroppers, called *meeiros* to distinguish them from *moradores*, was different and these continued to be contracted in irrigation.

as has occurred in the coastal zones of the Northeast. In the latter, 'modern' Brazilian agriculture and labour relations have arisen whereby underemployed day-labourers live in the squalor of worker hamlets and towns (cf. Martinez-Alier, 1975; Mello, 1976 and Melo, 1975).

However, except for the few permanent employees that remain on the land, the ties are definitely fewer and less paternalistic than previously. In the Sertão, both sides seem to prefer it that way, with each being able to lead more separate and independent lives. The workers without doubt have less job security. They earn an uncertain wage or low regular salary with which they must now buy all essentials. However, they are no longer as dependent on the whims of the owner as previously and most former *moradores* do not really miss their old positions on the farm. They consider their livelihood in town as being much more secure than their old one, employed in climatically risky dry farming. Also, life in general is 'easier' in town where those things now considered as basic to life are more readily attainable. Finally, in town they see more opportunity for their children to better themselves in life through schooling.[1]

THE RISE OF TOWN PROFESSIONS

In an agrarian economy and society, like that of the Sertão, there were traditionally very few people involved in non-agricultural activities,

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[1] Johnson (1971) states that the sharecroppers on the farm he studied preferred the old system to the present one of an absentee landlord who gives them no help nor interferes in their lives. In such a case of change from one extreme, of beneficient patron to another, of absentee owner, they probably do miss the old system. As often as not, though, the old time patron was not a kind one.

and fewer yet as specialists. After agriculture, commerce was the next most important occupation in terms of the number of persons employed, but for a long time it was a distant second. Indeed, as Sá (1975) holds for the rural Northeast in general, most persons involved in this line of work were ranchers or large planters first and merchants second. Up until the 1950s, the same can be said of other non-agricultural work. Civil servants, workers in sugar and cotton mills, craftsmen, mule drivers, boatmen and cattle drivers, all worked in agriculture or owned farms and ranches. Farming provided their subsistence base and even a substantial part of their income.

On the other hand, if most non-agricultural activies have always been given more status, and as Forman (1975) maintains, have long been much more profitable, why did so many people remain in the agricultural sector for so long? The answer lies not in profits, but in the possibility of earning enough income to live on. The way of life in the Sertão was for a long time nearly self-sufficient, there were few urban nuclei and transport facilities were poor, so limiting opportunity for full-time specialization in commerce or other lines of work.

Products for long distance commerce had to be light - such as cotton and cloth - or self-propelling - as are cattle. Town life was very much like that of the villages today. Few people resided in communities, only coming to town on market day. On these days the general stores (*bodegas*) were open for the purchase of what the farmer might have to sell and for the sale of the occasional basic or luxury good that he might need. Their main function, though, was as a place to socialize and have a drink or two of *cachaça* (a type of poorly refined rum). Older informants claim that market day was not the wild drinking affair that it is today. Such was reserved for more special occasions, reflecting

the expense of spirits and bygone ways of public behaviour in which drunken brawls and murders were rare. Of equal importance for the purchase and sale of goods, especially of foodstuffs, were - and still are - the street markets.

In former times the occupations that were closest to a speciality were those of cattle dealer and ambulant merchant, who spent a considerable amount of time travelling from place to place. Both professions, even for those only employed to help, were about the only traditional means of bettering one's position in a substantial way.[1] On the other hand, large cattle dealers were often already large ranchers, who would buy steers from other areas for fattening and then pass them along to others on the long trail to the coast.

With the construction of roads, new consumer products entered the semi-arid zone in greater quantities, substituting many that were made locally or nearby. Previously, most of the products that entered the interior were imported from abroad and were expensive. Only the very wealthy could afford European cutlery, china, crystal and combs or American cigarettes. The use of such items was limited to rare festive occasions and even the rich in many places did not possess any of these things.

What truly stimulated a wholescale change in consumption habits was the rise of industries in the Southeast of the country and the means for their products to arrive cheap in the interior. Local craft production was destroyed in the classic way when industrial products penetrate

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[1] Pierson (1972) substantiates this point for the rural society of the whole São Francisco valley and Soiffer (1981) describes the same for Barro, Ceará.

untapped markets (Hodder, 1972). However, with the exception of places like Cariri, in most of the Sertão, large-scale unemployment was not provoked by this process.[1] What has increased is underemployment. Previously, part-time craft production was undertaken by landless peasants and smallholders throughout the semi-arid zone, both in the towns and in the country. With the loss of a market for their goods they found themselves with more time on their hands and in most places they were unable to expand their farm production so as to increase their income enough to fulfil new cash needs. They were able to find more work as day-labourers but we have seen that these opportunities are limited.

At the same time that crafts declined, light industry, such as small cotton and sisal processing plants, tanneries, castor oil distilleries and maize mills, arose in a number of commercial hub cities. The number of workers in this sector increased by 159.8% from 1950 to 1970 and their proportion of the work force increased from 3.5% to 6.2% of the total during the same period (Table 28). However, such industrial workers are comparatively few in number and are encountered only in the hub cities.

More common throughout the Sertão are persons employed in the different stages of marketing goods. Also, as more public services have been extended into the interior and as bureaucracy has grown in the function of its crucial role in the post-1946 political patronage system, the number of civil service posts in the Sertão has increased quickly, making services the second most important job sector.

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[1] Cariri was a centre of metallurgical and ceramic crafts before intense competition with Southeastern and Northeastern industries caused their decline [Facó, 1976(1963)]. From 1950 to 1970 the unemployed part of the work force jumped from 17.9 to 27.1% of the total (Fundação IBGE 1955a, 1975a).

Table 28: Change in the Proportion of the Sertanejo Work Force Employed in Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Services from 1950 to 1970

Sector	1950		1970		Percentage change 1950/1970
	number of workers	%	number of workers	%	
Agriculture	1 408 091	71.7	1 840 700	63.5	30.7
Light Industry	69 677	3.5	181 042	6.2	159.8
Commerce & Transport	66 022	3.4	119 779	4.1	81.4
Services	107 778	5.5	225 338	7.8	109.1
Unemployed	313 047	15.9	533 291	18.4	70.4
TOTAL	1 964 615	100.0	2 900 150	100.0	47.6

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1955a, 1975a)

Hence, members of the commercial and services occupation groups are found in all county seats and they form the base of demand for the consumption of outside goods. While new consumer tastes among farmers have created a sizeable market for goods sold by merchants, and agriculture has shifted to a semi-commercial orientation, falling real farm prices for traditional dry farming products have eroded the buying power of most Sertanejo farmers. This is true for normal years, and the occurrence of drought worsens their situation more so. Light industry in the zone is basically cotton and sisal processing, which has been depressed in recent decades, so their work force no longer offers a rapidly expanding consumer market. In the end, commerce is very dependent on itself and on the spending of civil servants. Hence, the local economy is one that is becoming increasingly reliant on what could be termed government subsidy. A form of regional dependency has arose whereby the central government in Brasília provides the funds which enable the local population to expand their consumption of manufactured goods many of which come from the Southeast.

Some of the newly introduced goods are taken up because of their observed superiority and durability, though most are adopted in order to be considered 'modern' or due to 'frivolous luxury' and 'lazyness' depending on the opinion of the informant. The powerful influence of transport improvement in stimulating market integration can be seen in the different dates for the introduction of certain goods in Parnamirim and Chorrochó, which coincided with the construction of the highway serving each community (Appendix 2).

The ever increasing inflation of new wants has brought about changes in the commercial orientation of agriculture and, indeed, the shift of many people from this activity to others, when they are unable to earn enough income from it. However, many people have remained in agriculture for want of better alternatives. So farmers, in their search to make more income, have been turning to commercial agriculture, and specialization in cash crops and types of stock-raising has arisen. They are increasingly finding a market for their products in the rapidly growing local and regional cities as well as in the big cities of the Southeast. This, together with changes in transport facilities that enable farmers to get their produce to market have modified the structure of marketing rural products. However, the majority of rural people still practise dry farming and small-scale stock-raising and despite their shifting to a more commercial orientation they cannot increase their production dramatically and have been unable to take advantage of increasing urban demand, in the same way that irrigation farmers and large stock-raisers have. We shall see that this has less to do with exploitation by local latifundial merchants, but rather is caused by farm policy dictated by the type of development model pursued by the federal government.

The Market Structure of Farm Products

In the Sertão, there has always existed a commerce of agricultural products, if only as a function of the drought phenomenon and local environmental differences. Despite farmers possessing reserves of some basic food stuffs, successive local crop failures meant that purchases in the street market would be necessary. In addition, trade between adjacent areas with differing climatic conditions is an old practice. Cereals from more humid areas were sent to drier stock-raising ones and animals, butter and cheese returned. So important has such commerce been that most towns and cities of the Sertão arose at the junction of different micro-environments. Even between areas of similar environmental type in different river valleys there existed trade in staples, as it is common for there to be crop failure in one place and surplus in another. This trade was particularly important across mountain ranges that separate areas with different rainy seasons, as between Pernambuco and Paraíba states.

Depending on the farm and ranch size, market orientation varied from quasi-subsistence to semi-commercial up until the 1960s.[1] Improvement in transport created markets for previously pure subsistence and quasi-subsistence crops, such as maize, beans, manioc, sweet potatoes and fruits, which according to the place and product, are increasingly being sold for the market. In many parts of the Sertão the attitude to farming has changed from that of just selling an occasional produce surplus to

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[1] Such terms as subsistence and commercial agriculture or economy are often used rather loosely. Here a classification devised together with A.M. Bicalho is adopted. Pure subsistence agriculture is that where less than 10% of the produce is sold, quasi-subsistence 10% to 24%, semi-subsistence 25% to 49%, semi-commercial 50% to 74%, and commercial 75% and above.

that of a commercial mentality in which a farmer specializes in a few cash crops. He may not even bother to plant certain food staples, which he now views as not remunerative enough in terms of calculated profits or effort. This is particularly true for the irrigation zones where counties have concentrated on planting onions, melons, tomatoes, bananas or oranges. Such counties have completely lost their self-sufficiency and now import staples from other areas. Also, in counties with marginal conditions for the cultivation of such humid crops as rice and sugarcane, local production of these has been substituted by that from distant markets.

Until the semi-arid zone was integrated into distant markets the best defence a farmer had against uncertain harvest was to hold a stock of basic food stuffs to last for two to three years. When a widespread drought struck, the street markets soon ran out of any surplus produce. maize was smoked on the cob by placing it in storage in a ceiling area above the wood stove. Beans were put into sand lined ditches in the dirt floor. Pumpkins conserved well in the open air and were deposited in a convenient corner. Cassava meal was bought and left in sacks leaning against a wall.

After roads into the zone were built, farmers began selling more of their surplus, usually only keeping on hand about one year's food supply.[1] Money earned from selling surplus produce enables the purchase of food brought in from elsewhere when the necessity arises. However, the price at harvest time is low in comparison with that of cereals and

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[1] Sanders & Hollanda (1977) observe that farmers of the Sertão of the Seridó in Rio Grande do Norte also store about one year's supply of food stuffs. Johnson (1971) notes that the landless peasants he studied on a farm in Quixeramobim county, Ceará state, store as much as they can, which is about one year's supply. But *moradores* have little cash saved and are permitted to rear few animals on their patron's farm so they are quite vulnerable to crop failure despite their food reserves.

fruits bought in the street market, which can be particularly high during droughts. A Sertanejo's main bank for such emergencies is his cattle which in modern times can be sold more easily and at shorter notice than in the past. Then again, the price received for stock in times of drought is not favourable, due to their emaciated state during such crises and their sale is undertaken only as a last resort.

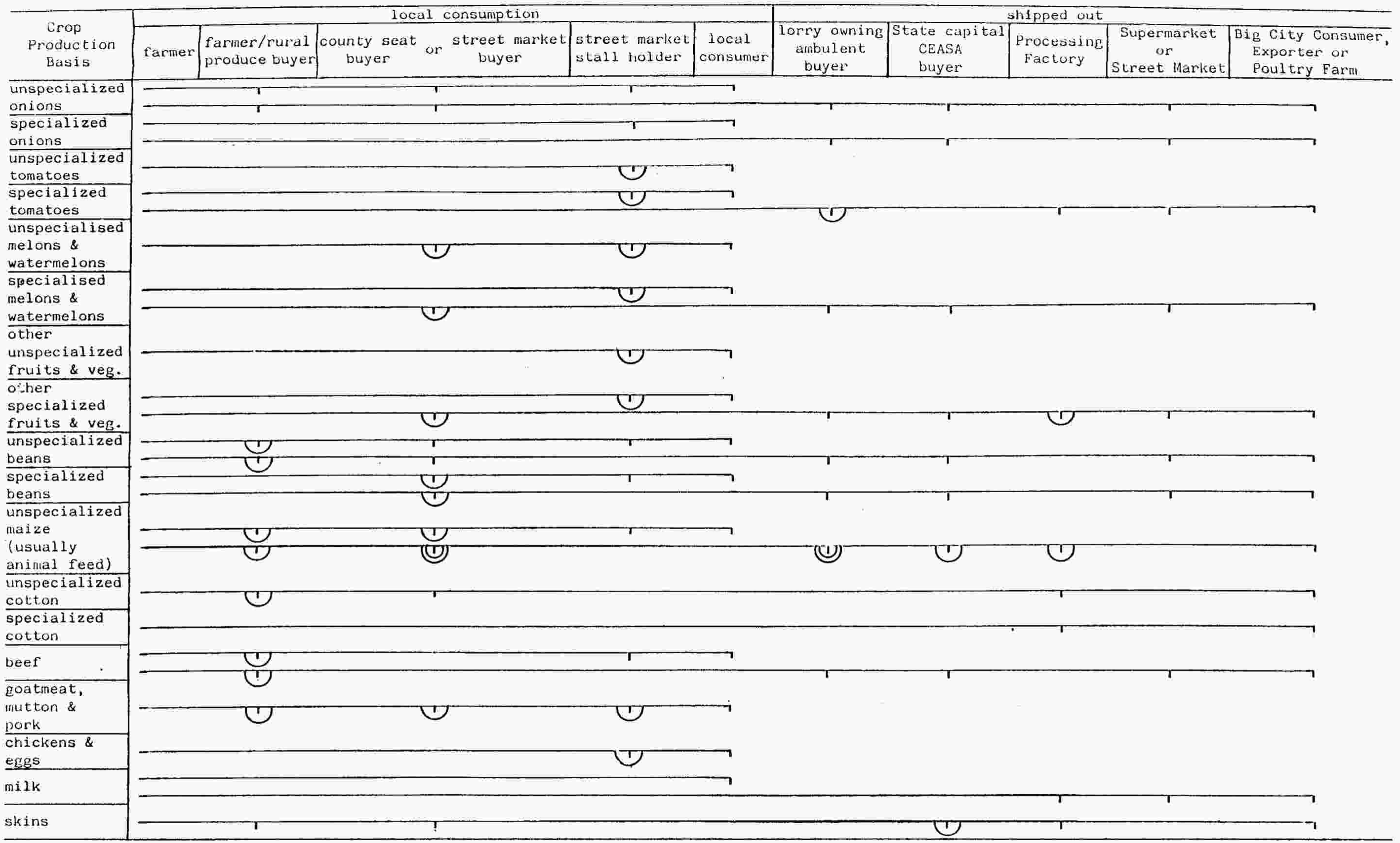
Greater specialization has also radically changed the marketing structure of certain crops of the Sertão.[1] Where less specialization exists older forms of marketing produce still prevail (Figure 13).

The surplus of perishable subsistence crops cultivated on a small scale, such as fruits and vegetables, are marketed by a farmer's wife

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[1] Forman (1975) postulates a model of change in the pattern of marketing agricultural produce where successive stages of ever greater scale in commercial dealings evolve. The stages are: (1) peasants sell their produce directly to the consumer in the local market place, (2) peasants sell to middlemen on credit in the local market place, (3) middlemen go directly to the farmers and then sell the produce in the market place or occasionally to other wholesalers who, in turn, take it to be sold elsewhere, (4) large wholesalers go directly to the peasant, with monopoly control arising and (5) large production units arise along the alternatives lines of (a) wholesalers deal on credit with large-scale producers, (b) peasants supply consumers directly through marketing co-operatives or (c) peasants sell to large wholesalers through production co-operatives. This author states that the different stages can exist concurrently in the same place which might be interpreted to mean that different products can be commercialized in different ways in the same county. With this model Goodman (1981) contrasts that put forth by a number of authors of the Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas do São Paulo (CEBRAP), where little change is thought to have occurred. The pre-capitalist structure of large property owner-merchants exploiting numerous resident landless peasants and associated minifundial landholders remains unaffected by increasing urban demand for food stuffs. Higher prices do not reach the peasants, rather they only mean greater profits for the larger landowners. In this model the tenure system has not changed, only more sharecroppers and dependent tenant farmers are allowed to work on the latifundias. The model proposed by Forman, with some qualification, best fits the Sertanejo reality today as well as that of other zones of the Northeast (see Bicalho, 1980). The CEBRAP model portrays the situation up to the 1950s and early 1960s at which time the last *coronéis* were eclipsed and rapid transformation began to occur in the Northeast.

Figure 13: Contemporary Marketing Structure of Rural Products in the Sertão



⊤ = middle man/final consumer; ⊤◡ = can bypass this middleman; ◡⊤◡ = brought by either this middleman or the next one.

Example: Unspecialized onions for local consumption pass through three middlemen before reaching the consumer. A farmer/rural produce buyer first purchases the onions, which in turn are sold to a county seat buyer who then sells them to a street market stall holder and so finally they reach the local consumer.
Unspecialized onions shipped out pass through five middlemen. A farmer/rural produce buyer first purchases the onions, which in turn are sold to a county seat buyer, who then sells them to a lorry owner/buyer. The latter takes the onions to a CEASA and sells them to a wholesaler buyer, who in turn sells them to a supermarket or street market seller and finally they reach the consumer.

from door to door in town or from stalls in the street market.[1] The same products, when irrigated and grown on a specialized scale for distant markets, attract wholesalers of all types from outside the community. This forces local middlemen to give better terms to farmers and to market produce more directly to the distant markets. Even factories can make arrangements for direct sale from the farm to the cannery, be the farmer large or small. Hence, changes in marketing structure toward greater scale do not necessarily bring about an increase in farm size as Forman (1975) holds.[2]

Where areas are not specialized, the more traditional form of marketing cereals, with a series of middlemen, is applied to irrigated crops as well. Local middlemen buy the produce on the farm, in the street market or in their deposits and then turn it over to street market stall holders (*feirantes*) for local sale to consumers. Middlemen can also sell produce to other middlemen of neighbouring counties for resale to stall holders there.[3] Some of the latter can deal directly with farmers in the country but most deal on such a small scale of operation that this is not possible. Also, farmers do not sell their produce to stall holders on market day as the small amount of cereal surplus that each has is too limited and irregular in quantity to guarantee that the stall holder will have a

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[1] This form of marketing corresponds to the first stage of Forman's model which he contends does not exist in Brazil.

[2] Consolidation of land into larger holdings has been occurring in private irrigation, but this is due to high starting-up costs and not because of the demands of the commercial structure. Elsewhere in the Sertão and in the Northeast, urban encroachment displacing smallholders and landless peasants has been more of a cause for land consolidation and tensions than that which Forman refers to. This is a nationwide trend and is a result of the economic policy which has enriched the cities at the expense of the country.

[3] This kind of marketing arrangement is similar to Forman's second stage, though cash is usually the basis for street market transactions.

continual supply. Only a middleman can do this through the purchase of cereals of local and outside origin.

In favourable areas where a substantial amount of crop produce is marketed, large wholesalers of commercial hub cities buy from local middlemen of smaller towns and of the country or, increasingly, they buy directly from the numerous smallholders found in such areas, picking up their produce on the farm. The produce might be destined for consumption in the hub city, in which case it is resold by *feirantes* or by the recently expanding supermarkets. A part of the produce may go on to the large coastal cities and to coastal zones specialized in sugarcane and stock-raising. There it is sold to large produce dealers in the newly established city wholesale markets (CEASAs) or in the case of maize it is sold directly to poultry farms.

For a long time cotton passed through the hands of numerous middlemen in the traditional way but it was one of the first rural products to have its marketing structure change. As early as the 20s and 30s, local cotton mills were established in places with large scale production of the crop. This was particularly the case in Ceará, where almost every county has at least one cotton mill and larger cities can have two or more. The mills often buy most of their supply directly from the farmer, though, the price they give is not so much of an improvement over that of the middleman's. Co-operative mills have arisen in many places to try to give a better price to the farmers.

Marketing of livestock has also changed, mainly as a result of lorry transport replacing cattle drives and trains. Since colonial times, Recife and Salvador have been the principal markets for the long distance cattle trade. The traditional way of marketing was for cattle to move from one large rancher-cattle dealer to another, being refattened at

different points along the way, as weight loss was high when cattle were driven to market. A buyer from western Pernambuco would buy cattle in Piauí, then, after a few months of grazing, dealers from Arcoverde would buy them to resell in Arcoverde to dealers from Pesqueira, Caruaru and Vitória de Santo Antão. Taken to these places, the cattle would again be fattened, and finally sold to the slaughter houses of Recife.

When the railroad was built to Arcoverde in 1912 the middlemen from the Agreste were eliminated and representatives of the coastal slaughter houses bought cattle directly from the cattle dealers in the Arcoverde Cattle Market. The city boomed and was the Sertanejo equivalent of Dodge City, where rough cowhands celebrated the end of a drive.

Cities like Arcoverde were eliminated from the trade with the advent of transporting cattle by lorry. The first middlemen and even the rancher himself sell cattle in local livestock markets to a dealer operating out of a large Agreste city, such as Caruaru or Feira de Santana. Steers are then taken directly to the slaughter houses of the state capitals. If too thin they are fattened in the more humid zones or, as was described above, may even reach maturity in the Agreste or Zona da Mata before being slaughtered locally or sent on to the capital.

Small livestock of the Sertão as of yet are rarely sold to distant markets. A local market for them arose with the growth of towns and cities in the semi-arid zone and they are usually sold in a county market place by a middleman or by the rancher himself. The local butcher buys his animals there or may even buy them in the rural zone. Also, small middlemen from the town or from neighbouring towns and cities may buy animals for slaughter in nearby communities where local supply does not meet the needs of the population.

For all agricultural products, while fewer middlemen have meant better prices for the farmer, his part as compared to that of the final price at the point of consumption is still quite modest in comparison to the part received by produce dealers. A fair estimate of the markup by the commercial/industrial sector is 300-500% on the price that the farmer receives. The old-time, small middleman who bought the produce from the farmer usually had a profit of 100% with each middleman along the line earning about the same apiece.

In the case of cotton, onions and melons it was observed that when the local middleman was removed his part would go to the farmer in the form of a higher price. However, for the majority of farm produce the part going to the other middlemen in the old serial form of marketing has been consolidated by fewer middlemen, or even for some products, by a single wholesaler or factory, with relatively little benefit to the primary producer. Indeed, there are cases of fruit and tomato canneries paying low prices, classifying the produce as spoilt and in times of bumper crops even refusing to buy the product as had been guaranteed by contract. Their monopoly power has become so great that they even do this to the producer co-operatives of government irrigation projects, which are perhaps the largest scale units of production in the Sertão. These trends are in line with the fourth stage of Forman's model and run opposite of those desired by most development planners.

The Commerce of Manufactured and Other Goods of Outside Origin

With the decline of familial and local self-sufficiency that has been occurring increasingly since the 60s and with the growth of towns and cities, the structure of marketing goods made outside the Sertão has changed.

Forman (1975) holds that it did not and remains in the old pattern, that of passing through the hands of numerous middlemen before reaching the urban and rural consumers of the interior. Changes did take place, even in small and relatively isolated communities like Chorrochó.

In all county seats, specialized stores have been established, the number of which and degree of specialization depend on the size of the community. The traditional way of marketing imported goods was through the general store, which stocked a little of everything, and through the street market, which competed with the former over a range of products. The advantage of dealing with a store was that credit was given for a month or even for a number of months until the harvest was gathered in. The prices were high, as the expectation of profit of each middleman in the commercial web is 100%.

In the past, merchandise for local resale was bought in a nearby commercial hub city. Wholesalers there had bought the goods from wholesalers in the state capital, who themselves had imported them from abroad or from the Southeast (Figure 14). The owner of the local general store in turn would sell - and still does - goods in volume to a small store owner of the villages and hamlets of the county. Street market sellers usually bought their goods from wholesalers in the hub cities in the same pattern and then made their market day circuit of neighbouring towns and villages.

Depending on the size of the town and on the product, the number of middlemen has been vastly reduced (Figure 15). Usually by the time a town has a population of 4,000 inhabitants like Parnamirim, it will have specialized establishments, such as clothing stores, chemists, bakeries, hardware stores, bars and small groceries. Cities like Belém, with more than 8,000 persons have supermarkets, electrical appliance stores and

Figure 14. Traditional Marketing Structure of Manufactured Goods

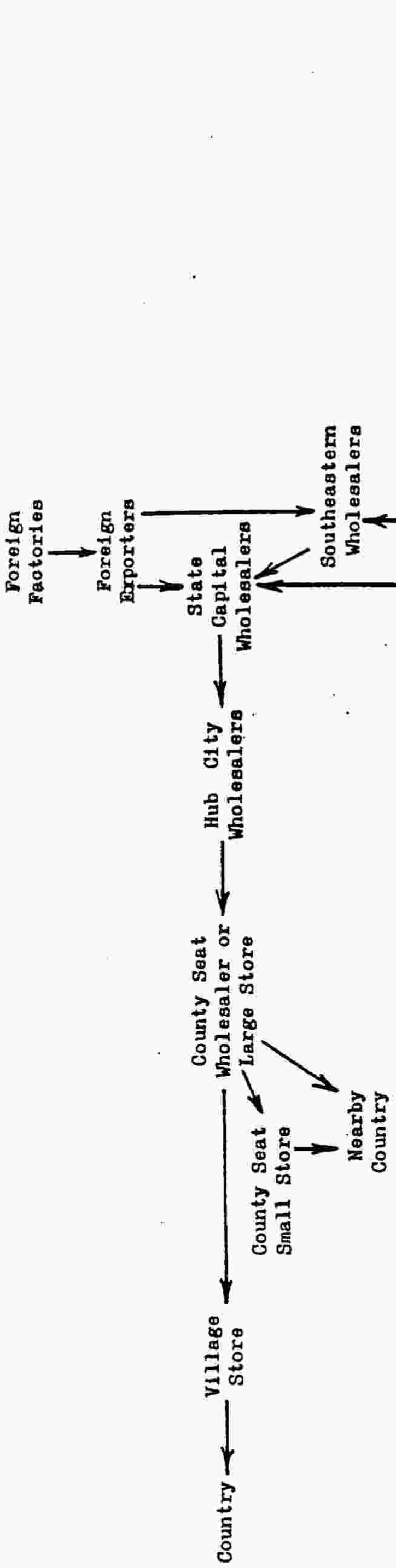
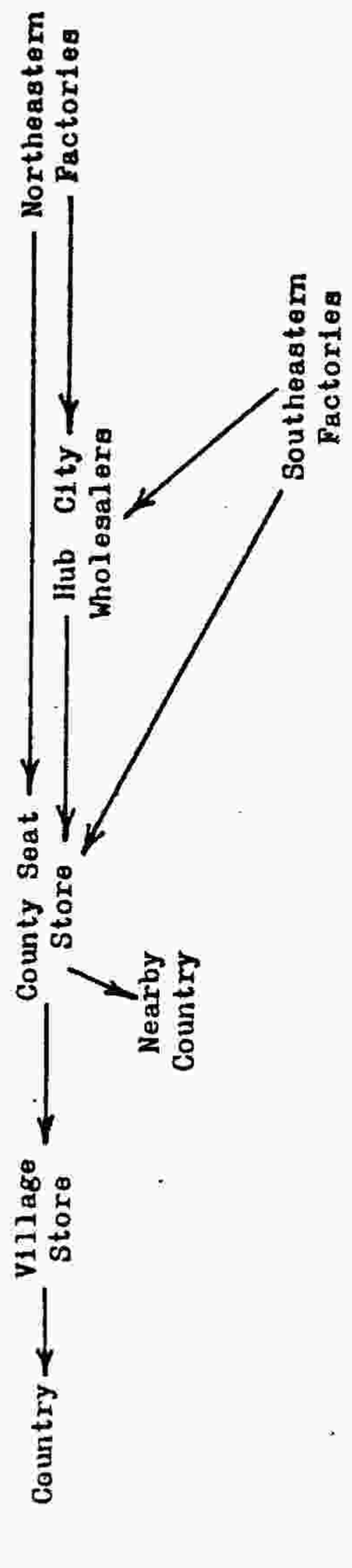


Figure 15. Contemporary Marketing Structure of Manufactured Goods



a greater number of the above establishments, all of which sell on a larger scale, with keen competition existing. This makes the prices in such cities lower than in smaller county seats. The greater the specialization and size of the stores the more direct are the links to the place of origin of the goods brought in, which also reduces the price to the consumer. Ambulant lorry driver-merchants and agents of the South-eastern and Northeastern factories have eliminated the wholesalers of the state capitals, and even those of the hub cities, from the marketing of many goods. They go directly to the specialized commercial establishments in the towns and cities dealing on a one month credit basis. Retail transactions show a trend towards a 'cash only' basis which lowers prices by eliminating the hidden interest of the higher priced goods sold on credit.

Even the retailers of the county seat street markets are now buying and selling on a greater scale. They buy their merchandise from whole-salers of large commercial cities, like Caruaru, or even from Northeastern factories. They base themselves in a hub city and make a round of the different market days of surrounding county seats. By avoiding a number of commercial taxes they undercut the prices of the stores in the small towns, causing a number of stores to go out of business.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND EMIGRATION

As we have seen, economic changes in the countryside and in town have transformed the rural economy of the Sertão. Decreasing farm size, drought and low produce prices have caused considerable rural exodus. In such a situation it is important to know whether the people moving to town have been able to find work. The substitution of local crafts

by manufactured goods needs to be evaluated to see if greater under-employment and unemployment have been caused, as have occurred elsewhere in the world (Hodder, 1972). If so, have the expanding public service and commerce sectors been taking up the slack?

All things being equal, farmers could compensate for the loss of part-time craft work by increasing their farm production to sell more in an expanded market. While the cropping area in the Sertão as a whole expanded at a rate of 4.7% per year between 1950 and 1975, well above the rate of demographic increase of 1.8%, the drought phenomenon limits such efforts. Also, in the 1960s and early 1970s the prices of traditional Sertanejo crops were low, which meant that much of the cropping area increase was undertaken merely to try to maintain income. Throughout most of the Sertão we are treating of a labour-intensive peasant economy, and not a capitalist industrial agricultural one. Smallholders can conceivably expand production in the face of falling prices. Small farmers utilizing their own land and labour in dry farming have low cash production costs and are interested in income, not profits. However, even for them there is a point when the produce price is so low that they say that planting the crop is not worth the effort (*Não compensa o trabalho*). This is particularly true in drier parts of the Sertão where cropping also involves more drought risk.

In what Brookfield (1979) calls the urban bias in the Third World, Brazilian national development policy of the 1960s and 1970s favoured the industrial sector and the cities at the expense of the farm sector and the country. To keep inflation down, the prices of certain basic staples of 'national security' were strictly controlled. Important Sertanejo crops, such as beans and maize, were so affected. Cotton and sisal prices were depressed for other reasons, primarily due to competition

with synthetics on the world market. Fruits and vegetables, which are not basic to Brazilian diet, were not severely controlled so that their prices made them worthwhile to plant, even with irrigation.

Only with irrigation can climatic, income and employment problems of the semi-arid zone be more satisfactorily overcome. Interviewed full-time dry farmers in Chorrochó on the average have 199 days (of 8 hours) of work per year while in Parnamirim they work 236 days. Foreman-cowhands normally work 246 days per year, regular cowhands 168 days and *moradores* 152 days. Small and medium irrigation farmers of Belém work longer hours and more days of the year so that they work the equivalent of 341 eight-hour days. Irrigation foreman-sharecroppers must look after the farm stead as well as their plots so that they work the equivalent of 388 eight hour days. Normal sharecroppers work 297 days a year. However, irrigation is expensive to operate and the few remunerative crops that can be exploited show signs of market saturation. In addition, full time specialization in irrigation is only practical along the São Francisco River and a few other large rivers where enough water is available for it.

Another way to cope with the limits imposed by the climate and price controls is through improved stock-raising, which is more resilient to drought and consistently more profitable than dry farming. Farmers of the semi-arid zone seem to be taking exactly this route. A modest but rising income in stock-rearing has allowed for greater technical innovation than in dry farming. Also, where water permits, as for example along the Riacho da Brígida in Parnamirim, small-scale commercial irrigation is exploited in association with stock-raising. Where irrigation is difficult to pursue, as along the smaller seasonal rivers of the counties studied, stock-raising has become the principal money maker and cropping has been reduced in recent years to supplying the farmer's needs. As

Schultz (1964) has observed, peasants are not tradition bound and do react to favourable or unfavourable farm prices in their production strategies.

However, while specialized cattle ranching may appear attractive in terms of lessening climatic risk and in earning a greater profit, it does not solve the employment problem. On the contrary, it aggravates the predicament. The semi-extensive system now in use only employs 2-3 man-days per hectare during the year while dry farming of cotton, beans and maize employs from 34 to 47 man-days per hectare throughout the year. Even the semi-intensive ranching system only employs 6-9 man-days/hectare/year. Hence, while an expansion of more intensive stock-rearing in interfluvial areas can better the employment situation, the wholescale replacement of cropping by planted pasture in bottomlands and mountainous regions must be viewed with alarm.

The majority of farmers, both in the communities studied and throughout the Sertão, cannot practise irrigation nor have the amount of land or capital to pursue specialized stock-raising. Hence, they, and particularly their children, do not view farming as a way to achieve what they consider to be the better life which they see some townspeople adopting. Rural folk are increasingly looking to the towns and cities for a livelihood with which this could be obtained.

However, the increase in local town jobs has also proved to be inadequate to employ the people who left the country or who lost jobs in crafts and the young entering the word force. As we saw previously in Table 28, there has been a definite shift towards more city work but not enough new jobs were created in commerce and services to prevent the unemployed part of the work force from increasing from 15.9% of the total in 1950 to 18.4% in 1970.

Census figures do not reflect the multiplicity of work functions present in the semi-arid zone. Many merchants and civil servants also have farms but, when given only one profession to choose from, they will give their city line of work as their profession due to its higher status. Some poor townspeople also plant a subsistence plot on lent land or work seasonally as day-labourers on farms near to town but they too give greater status to town work and avoid rural work as much as possible.

Nor does the shift of the economy and status to town professions mean that urban workers are fully employed for 250 days per year. The interviewed poor labourers of Chorrochó only manage to work 114 days a year for a wage of US$2.15 per day in 1978. Similarly, in Parnamirim on the average they only work 166 days a year. The town economy of Belém is somewhat more dynamic due to the greater income made in irrigation and poor labourers can find 204 days of work.

Even middle and upper class civil servants and merchants are not all fully employed. Most shops and government offices are only really active on market day. During the rest of the week, hours are shorter or the person responsible for the service only goes to the workplace when someone needing him arrives. Also extensive featherbedding occurs in the civil service whereby many public sector workers have an official position and salary but never do any work. They need only appear once a day, if that, to sign the job roll.

The great difference between the underemployment of the upper classes and that of the poor labourers is the far higher and more regular income that the former receive in the form of weekly profits or a monthly salary. The elevated incomes earned by high ranking civil servants and merchants has in turn allowed them to invest in the countryside. The concentration of land that has occurred in the group of largest farm holdings (with

greater than 2,000 hectares) in Chorrochó was undertaken by prosperous merchants and civil servants (see Table 13). Similarly in Belém, merchants, high-ranking and even middle-ranking civil servants have entered speculative onion irrigation farming. This, together with the problem of high startup costs involved with irrigation, have fueled the process of land concentration in Belem (see Table 23).

Greater disparity of wealth exists in Belém than in the other communities (Table 29). While there has always been greater income differences in more favourable places like Belém, this has increased with the process of market integration. The least integrated of the communities studied, Chorrochó, has less income differentiation than the others and it is amazing how many civil servants are quite happy to receive the annual minimum wage of US$717 in 1978.

The minimum wage earned in the Northeast is 23% below that of the industrial Southeast, when of course, a local worker is lucky enough to receive the minimum wage. Also, there is a much larger range of higher paying jobs in the Southeast, so that the poor and even many middle class persons migrate to there (Table 30). Even for upper class children the local job market in commerce and civil service is fairly saturated and they too end up working elsewhere in the Northeast. The great difference is that upper and middle class persons who go to work in Sertanejo hub cities or in the state capital are almost always improving their socio-economic position through work in commerce, civil service and liberal professions. Those who go south might not find a dependable, better paid job, for these are becoming quite scarce there, given the depressed state of manufacturing since the mid-1970s.

Table 29: Social Disparity in the Communities Studied as Indicated by Monthly Income and Proportion Used in Different Types of Expenditures as Estimated by Individuals Typical for their Class (1981)[1]

Class	Gross Income (US$)	Proportion of Income to Different Expenditures							
		Food (%)	Housing (%)	Clothing (%)	Education (%)	Health (%)	Transport (%)	Reinvestment & Savings (%)	Total (%)
BELÉM									
urban upper class 1	578	23	4	8	4-11[2]	4	4	46-53[2]	100
urban middle class	772	31	14	8	6	6	6	34	100
urban lower class	149	66-79	10-23	7	3	1	0	0	100
rural upper class	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
rural middle class	216	11	4	6	2-9[2]	1	3	66-73[2]	100
rural lower class	128	65	4	3	1	3	3	21	100
CHORROCHÓ									
urban upper class	312	17	8	10	3-40[2]	3	5	17-54[2]	100
urban middle class	220	45	12	10	4	3	16	26	100
urban lower class	83	64-77	2-15	9	5	2	5	0	100
rural upper class	297	15	5	5	15-40[2]	3	10	22-47[2]	100
rural middle class	130	20	4	3	3-10[2]	3	3	42-49[2]	100
rural lower class	68	50	2	5	2	3	2	36	100
PARNAMIRIM									
urban upper class 1	167	18	2	5	28	2	8	37	100
urban middle class	509	24	3	10	43	4	8	8	100
urban lower class	218	80	1	9	9	1	0	0	100
rural upper class	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
rural middle class	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
rural lower class	46	75	4	5	4	5	3	4	100

Source: Field Research

[1] As such a topic is a very sensitive one for Sertanejos this information could only be obtained from a limited number of close friends who would not misinform the researcher.

[2] When children are sent to school in the county seat, a hub city or the state capital, farm and business reinvestment funds and savings fall accordingly.

Table 30. Locality of Residence for Working Children of Interviewed Families of the Communities Studied

class of parents \ residence of child	Same County				Neighbouring County				Nearby Hub City		Other Sertanejo County				Northeast Capital		Other Zones Northeast		South and Southeast				Central-West and North				Total	
	rural		urban		rural		urban		urban		rural		urban		urban		urban		rural		urban		rural		urban			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM																												
urban upper class	1	5.6	10	55.6	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	0	0	1	5.6	4	22.2	0	0	0	0	1	5.5	0	0	0	0	18	100
urban middle class	10	26.3	15	39.5	2	5.3	0	0	4	10.5	0	0	1	2.6	5	13.2	0	0	0	0	1	2.6	0	0	0	0	38	100
urban lower class[1]	0	0	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	3	100
rural upper class[1]	0	0	1	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
rural middle class	4	44.5	2	22.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	22.2	1	11.1	0	0	9	100
rural lower class	25	75.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.0	5	15.2	0	0	1	3.0	0	0	0	0	1	3.0	0	0	0	0	33	100
CHORROCHÓ																												
urban upper class	0	0	13	65.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	0	0	0	0	1	5.0	2	10.0	0	0	1	5.0	0	0	0	0	20	100
urban middle class	3	23.0	4	30.8	0	0	0	0	1	7.7	0	0	0	0	1	7.7	0	0	0	0	4	30.8	0	0	0	0	13	100
urban lower class	3	6.8	20	45.4	1	2.3	1	2.3	6	13.6	0	0	0	0	3	6.8	1	2.3	0	0	9	20.5	0	0	0	0	44	100
rural upper class	6	46.3	0	0	1	7.7	0	0	3	23.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	23.0	0	0	0	0	13	100
rural middle class	17	41.5	1	2.4	2	4.9	1	2.4	6	14.7	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	12	29.3	0	0	0	0	41	100
rural lower class	39	66.1	2	3.4	1	1.7	1	1.7	3	5.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	18.6	2	3.4	0	0	59	100
PARNAMIRIM																												
urban upper class	3	10.4	11	37.9	0	0	0	0	5	17.2	0	0	1	3.4	3	10.4	0	0	1	3.4	2	6.9	0	0	3	10.4	29	100
urban middle class	0	0	11	68.8	0	0	0	0	2	12.4	0	0	0	0	3	18.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	100
urban lower class	5	22.7	8	36.4	0	0	0	0	3	13.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	13.6	2	9.1	1	4.6	0	0	0	0	22	100
rural upper class[1]	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	3	100
rural middle class	22	47.8	12	26.0	0	0	0	0	5	10.9	0	0	0	0	1	2.2	0	0	0	0	1	2.2	0	0	5	10.9	46	100
rural lower class	37	57.0	3	4.6	8	12.3	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	21.6	0	0	0	0	65	100

Source of data: Field Research

[1] Possibly skewed due to the small number of observations available.

WEALTH AND CLASS POSITION

Market integration and increasing cultural assimilation have profoundly affected the way that class distinctions are displayed between individuals. An inflation of wants has occurred and the status objects are more readily obtainable with money, the supply of which has become more accessible. A new attitude to wealth has arisen which is best expressed in the concept of *enricar*, to get rich quick. In the past, an individual could possibly better his position but to do so quickly was unheard of. That fortunes can change rapidly has strained old ideas of class and racial position.

In the traditional agrarian way of life fortunes changed slower. Dry farming sharecroppers and occasional labourers could not earn enough surplus income to become landholders. In stock-raising while droughts might decimate a large rancher's herd the losses were rarely so great that his herd would not recuperate. Also, he always had the land as a base for his wealth, part of which could be sold if necessary. An old time rich cattle rancher boasts of losing hundreds of steers during a drought with the implication that it did not even affect his standing. On the other hand, the number of animals a cowboy could amass was more limited and he needed a good deal of luck with the weather in order to build up his herd to the point of purchasing the land necessary for independence.

To change social position by marriage was made difficult by class and racial prejudice, and only a particularly 'white' cowboy or small-holder could ever possibly marry into a 'traditional family'. This occurred rarely and upper class persons of such families try to hide their black sheep, while their opponents deride them for having such kin in the family.

Possession of a sizeable brick farm house and hundreds of steers was the principal means of judging material wealth in the past (Plates 7 and 8). The upper class (*ricos*) was mainly composed of such large ranchers (*fazendeiros*). Large holdings on desirable sites were obtained either by inheritance, marriage or purchase from the cattle empires, all of which required a prior upper class position. A rich individual was able to amass more land by combining his inheritance with that of his wife and perhaps supplement this with purchases from childless widows or neighbours in financial difficulty.

However, the force of equal inheritance among numerous heirs reduced the immense ranches of the first settlers to such a point that most descendants are now of a much more modest situation than the few of their kin who managed to remain wealthy. Indeed, most have had their position reduced to that of the families that entered the area at a later date. The latter purchased land with the money received by selling what were considered as inadequate holdings in other parts of the Sertão or Agreste, which were already too densely populated to maintain their standard of living. These settlers were fleeing from the same inheritance problem, albeit one at a more advanced stage. If such persons merely bought land and were not integrated into a traditional family by marriage they never became part of the social elite, even if they did manage to reach the status of being considered 'rich'. The distinction between 'elite' and 'rich' is particularly marked in Belém, where class divisions are sharp.

Small property holders of the past who possessed a modest herd of cattle were still considered to be rich, even if they were only 'poor rich'. This category is the local way of recognizing a middle class. In the eyes of the poor they were rich because they could buy cassava meal by the sack and not by the kilo like themselves. In other words,



Plate 7. A Large Ranch House as Traditional Wealth, Built in the 18th Century (Fazenda Cachoeira, Belém do São Francisco, 1977)



Plate 8. Cattle as Traditional Wealth (Belém do São Francisco, 1977)

such middle class persons had the luxury of being able better to shield themselves against hunger.

With the pinch of decreasing farm sizes, the children of the middle class often went into the limited trading that took place then. They had the means of organizing mule trains, and later, when more commerce arose in the towns, they became small shop keepers. Today they form the majority of persons in the communities. Most are small farmers but many are also small store owners or what are considered middle range civil servants (who receive the minimum wage or a bit more).

The poor (*pobres*) of the past were *moradores*, sharecroppers and cowboys. Also included in this group were minifundial landholders who possessed perhaps a cow or two at the most. With the exception of the cowboys, the distinction was between *fazendeiros*, who made a living from stock-raising, and *lavradores* or *agricultores fracos*, who cultivated the land. Nowadays, the majority of the poor are minifundial landholders or low paid urban labourers who encounter work erratically. They marry among themselves, used to assist one another by exchanging days of labour and still lend one another food stuffs when in need. They are the ones most likely to move in search of better working conditions. They have few ties with the land and move from farm to farm in the Sertão, to town or to the industrial Southeast. For many, their houses are still wattle-and-daub, as they do not have the means to finish the walls off with lime or cement. The house reflects their mobility, for when they move, they knock it down and carry the roof tiles and timber with them to the next place.

The opportunity to take advantage of the new sources of wealth and employment in commerce and in the expanding civil service has not been equal for all, though more so than in the past. The civil service, however,

has been the preserve of the upper class, traditional families. The highest positions go to those most closely related to the local political leader and lesser posts go to other members of the 'Family'. Through such work the upper class is able to maintain its position, and more importantly, expand its standard of living. The salaries are relatively high and reliable when compared to that earned in traditional agriculture. Also, in the smaller cities and towns such jobs require little work which maintains the upper class's old position of aversion to hard labour. Work for them means, "exercising one's intelligence in administration, which is commanding other persons to work for you".

Commerce, as practised nowadays, is completely different. To some extent, the traditional families are involved in trade but most successful merchants are of another breed. They are ambitious sons of local small-holders or sons of merchants who moved to the community from larger commercial cities in search of a place to practice their profession. As the shop hours are long and stores are open every day of the week, merchants work hard. Poor people's opinion of them is one of admiration. This is the opposite of what they think of the lazy civil servants, whom they ridicule for being 'soft'.

With the changing economy, the criteria of class position today have also changed. Increasingly, new purchased material possessions are what give status and define wealth and class position. To be sure, having a large ranch or farm is still important but such are now seen as merely being one of the possible means of earning an income with which to buy the status symbols (Plate 9). Rural properties no longer confer prestige directly, they are now only a means to that end and one that is increasingly being derided by big city dwellers in Brazil.



Plate 9. An Expansive Car as a Modern Status Symbol, with Onions in the Background, which Produced with Irrigation is One of the Few Ways of Making Money in Farming (Old Produce Street Market, Belém do São Francisco, 1977)

While race and class upbringing are still important, one must have a car, a modern house, educate one's children in the state capital and possess a large number of electrical appliances in order to be considered rich in the most economically and culturally integrated of communities, like the commercial hub cities and those of the irrigation areas. Members of communities that may be only somewhat smaller, as Floresta and Parnamirim, but which have much less commercial agriculture, commerce and fewer government offices, do not achieve nearly the same material wealth. However, from contact with the more 'advanced' places their definition of an upper class standard of living is changing and this has forced their inhabitants to search for more lucrative activities. Small towns like Chorrochó have experienced less change of this type, though civil servants who travel widely are bringing about some innovation.

Little things can mean a lot. A rich person will use a plastic pail for making purchases in the street market and not a wicker basket. His house must have metal grilles against as yet non-existent thieves. Furniture should be made of vinyl and formica, not of wood and leather of local handicraft. In general, to use items brought in from the outside is what confers status. Such things are different, modern and require substantial expenditure of money.

Becoming rich quickly does not mean that a person of lowly origins knows how to use his newly found wealth properly. He might not make all the material acquisitions that he should, or if he does, they may not be correctly arranged or well matched. It is worse still when there is possession of all the material requisites but the social niceties are lacking. These take longer to learn, usually by way of an upbringing in an upper class social environment, but without which a person is still 'coarse' or 'brutish'. One individual started out with a modest commerce of small animals and accumulated wealth to the point of building up a political alliance of the poor and eventually being elected mayor, but for the upper class he is still a pig dealer.

However, lasting moves in the position of wealth by some individuals have forced a certain amount of change in social prejudices. A man may still be a *nego* (blackboy) but he is a rich *nego* and this has been said with admiration by a middle class person of a lighter complexion. If he behaves in a respectable manner he is allowed to go to parties at the upper class club even in notoriously racist cities like Belém. When the person is not completely black he can lose racial stigma in the classic

Brazilian manner, where brown has a way of being treated as white if other aspects of the person merit such treatment.

Despite the chance of class mobility the majority of the poor remain in their place. The lot of the urban poor has improved somewhat as compared with that of the rural poor, when using the people's criteria for defining a better or worse standard of living (Table 31, Appendix 3). The urban poor of Belém have an overall index value of 23.5 as compared to 19.3 for the rural lower class. In Chorrochó the urban and rural figures for the lower class are 24.3 and 23.3 respectively which reflects there being very few landless peasants there. The values in Parnamirim are akin to those of Belém with the urban lower class having a value of 24.9 and the rural poor 20.8.

However, members of the upper class have greatly improved their standard of living and have put more distance between themselves and the poor in the wealthier and more integrated communities. Upper class individuals of Belém have achieved an index value of 71.1 on the scale while their counterparts in Parnamirim have a value of 62.5 and in Chorrochó 59.8.

The standard of living of the urban and rural poor is basically the same despite the significant differences in income found in the communities studied. The more market integrated towns are more expensive to live in and life in the country requires less monetary income.

The type of house is either a simple, small, brick or wattle-and-daub one. Furniture is of the rustic type made by local craftsmen and household appliances usually consist only of a radio and a sewing machine. Both parental and children's educational attainments amount to merely being able to sign one's name or are a product of a few years of elementary school. They get about on foot, mounted or on bicycles and few can afford a rural or inter-urban lotation taxi.

Table 31: Social Disparity Index for the Communities Studied

Class	n	Index[1] Value	House	House Furnishings	Educa-tion	Trans-port	Diet
BELÉM							
urban upper class	15	71.1	85.7	83.9	64.5	52.9	64.6
urban middle class	16	46.2	73.0	48.2	38.7	27.5	45.7
urban lower class	10	23.5	49.0	20.8	19.5	10.0	12.8
rural upper class	1	44.7[2]	61.3	60.5	24.0	33.0	n.a.
rural middle class	8	36.5	52.1	25.0	26.4	24.8	50.2
rural lower class	32	19.3	35.8	17.0	11.8	12.0	17.5
CHORROCHÓ							
urban upper class	14	59.8	76.4	65.0	62.9	38.9	49.1
urban middle class	10	39.1	61.3	33.2	33.9	24.8	40.3
urban lower class	23	24.1	48.3	18.5	21.1	9.8	20.6
rural upper class	5	48.7	58.0	41.4	36.4	41.8	65.8
rural middle class	15	38.1	50.5	33.0	31.3	26.4	50.1
rural lower class	23	23.3	42.3	20.5	17.4	16.0	16.6
PARNAMIRIM							
urban upper class	7	62.5	74.5	78.6	57.2	48.7	58.0
urban middle class	8	47.4	71.9	53.3	39.6	32.4	33.0
urban lower class	14	24.9	50.6	24.6	25.1	11.0	14.2
rural upper class	3	49.0	62.3	52.7	46.0	33.0	64.7
rural middle class	11	34.7	51.3	31.7	26.6	25.0	39.6
rural lower class	19	20.8	34.3	16.9	15.4	17.2	17.6

Source of data: Field Research

[1] The index is based on local criteria for class distinction. Index values per observation is the average of the indicators House, House Furnishings, Education, Transport and Diet. Each indicator is scaled from 0, the minimum condition, to 100, the maximum.

[2] The small size of observations in this class skews the results. This single case of an upper class rancher is not representative because the man is elderly and so his standard of living is that of former times.

The diet of the poor is strictly that of traditional staples and they eat about 80 grammes of meat per capita (equivalents of adult male) daily. The persons who are worst off will, half-jokingly, say that they only get a taste of meat when it is mixed in the beans. They drink *cachaça*, the poor man's beverage.

As one would expect, the poor of the rural zone usually eat better than the poor in town, with Chorrochó being the exception. By being able to exploit a subsistence plot and to rear small livestock, rural lower class families have a better diet than do their urban counterparts of larger towns, who are forced to buy most everything they need. On the other hand, the urban poor of Chorrochó live in such a small community that many of them are part-time or full-time farmers. They rent or are lent land nearby to till. Hence, in terms of diet they are better off than the rural poor. The latter have experienced a number of poor years in farming which is their sole occupation. In Belém rural lower class persons are irrigation sharecroppers who by their greater income might be expected to eat better. However, they specialize in cash crops that are not normally basic to their diet and many are not permitted to raise animals; hence their subsistence base has been cut much as happens to the urban poor. Referring back to Table 29 it can be noted that for the lower class of all the communities, despite their subsistence efforts, expenses with food take up the greater part of their income, in sharp contrast with the other classes.

The urban poor must dress better than do country folk and so they spend more on clothing. Also, as their children can study more than those of the rural lower class, greater expense is incurred with schooling and their children can attain higher levels.

With the exception of smallholders and irrigation sharecroppers, the savings of the poor are almost zero. Their entire meagre income is spent on basic necessities. This is especially true of the urban lower class. Smallholders must re-invest their savings each year in order to meet the expenses of their farms. They are particularly vulnerable to drought which can decimate their modest herds and so destroy their savings.

Irrigation sharecroppers of the rural lower class of Belém achieve a much higher rate of savings (21%) than do the hired hands and occasional labourers of Parnamirim (4%). Greater savings can make upward social mobility possible. When an irrigation sharecropper receives his share of the harvest he may buy livestock and place them on the dry zone farm of his parents or a relative. Alternatively, he may purchase a lot on the edge of town or acquire consumer durables. By buying and selling these items he may go back to the dry zone with more wealth than could have been accumulated there or possibly he may purchase a pump and rent land locally, so aspiring to become an irrigation landholder.

Where the standard of living starts to differ dramatically between town and country occurs with the middle class of the more integrated communities. Middle class families living in Belém and Parnamirim earn a high income and spend a considerable part of it in 'modernizing' their homes and in educating their children.

Urban middle class houses are plastered brick with cement or ceramic tile floors. Country homes are simpler, some being plastered brick while others are unplastered brick and all floors are cement. Both in town and in the rural zone, houses have about eight rooms. In Belém and Parnamirim furniture is a mixture of the modern simple type and the modern expensive type, while in the country and in Chorrochó rustic furniture predominates.

As towns have electricity, domestic appliances there are more numerous, usually consisting of a radio or record player, a refrigerator, a sewing machine and a blender.

Transport is either by taxi or in a personally owned pickup truck which is almost the same case for the rural middle class. Moreover, a greater proportion of their income is spent on transport than occurs in other classes.

In town, while the schooling of parents has usually only been at the elementary level, most children finish junior high school, many go on to high school and some to the university. Some parents of this class have high aspirations for their children and send them to study at high school level in the state capital. They have realized, as have members of the upper class, that university entrance usually hinges on a better secondary school preparation than can be obtained in the communities.

Education beyond the elementary level involves greater expense for country folk because their children must live in town in order to study beyond the primary level. This is expensive for it either means supporting a second household or paying board in a pension. However, children can live with relatives in town but nevertheless certain additional expenses are incurred and so the children of the rural middle class do not usually get beyond the junior high and high school levels.

Diet is perhaps one of the most important ways that the middle class differentiates itself from the poor. To eat well in the Sertão is socially important and this means consuming meat *à vontade* (as much as one wants). When greeting someone is is a complement to say that the person is fat. So accordingly, besides large quantities of other foods middle class persons eat almost 200 grammes of meat per capita daily. Also, their drink is beer, which is more expensive than *cachaça* and confers more status.

The greater disparity that arises from rural development and market integration can best be seen with the progressively higher standard of living attained by the upper class in Chorrochó, Parnamirim and Belém respectively. The upper class of Belém has enriched itself with irrigation and is eagerly accepting the national lifestyle. In a number of items they are almost on a par with the upper and middle classes of the state capitals. With rates of savings of over 20%, a number of individuals have purchased apartments in fashionable areas of Recife, paying cash, something that only the rich of the capital can do.

In all communities the houses of the rich are large, with between ten and sixteen rooms. Flooring is ceramic tile or parquet. Only the lack of electricity in the rural zone limits the number of household appliances for the few upper class persons who choose to continue to live there. In town one or more radios, record players, tape recorders, televisions, refrigerators, blenders, sewing machines, typewriters and other appliances are possessed. Also, the rich own one or more motor vehicles. They eat even better than do middle class individuals and they drink whisky in addition to beer. Most upper class boys and some girls are sent to the capital for high school, from where they go on to study liberal professions in the university. Persons of the parental generation usually finished the high school level and some studied at universities, so that in both generations members of the upper class have been able to find superior jobs more easily than individuals of the other classes.

Hence, we may conclude on the side of recent critics of rural development as it occurs in Latin America (Brookfield, 1979; Harvey, Jacobs, Lamb and Schaffer, 1979; Smith, 1979 and Warren, 1979). In the Sertão, material 'progress' has not been distributed equally among all classes

and the booming towns and cities of the zone are experiencing the ever greater social disparity that has become evident elsewhere in the Northeast and in the country as a whole. An interesting facet of these changes for rural zones is that where agriculture has improved less and incomes are lower, less social disparity has developed. In Chorrochó, as ranches became smaller over the generations, houses and other aspects of lifestyle also became simpler. At the same time most landless peasants left the rural zone so that the resultant disparity between the rural classes is not nearly so marked as that in the towns and cities of the Sertão. Many landless peasants went to live in the urban zone and new consumer habits among the wealthy are strongest there.

However, despite deep resentment to the growing disparities, it has not so far taken on the class hatred and criminal violence that has been associated with similar development changes elsewhere in the Northeast and in Brazil. This is probably explained by the fact that the changes are quite recent in the Sertão and opportunities for bettering social position are still relatively good as compared with rural areas of the coastal zones of the Northeast.

FAMILY AND HONOUR

5. FAMILY AND HONOUR

In the previous chapter the economic basis of class distinctions was analyzed. It was shown that a changing economy had opened up new opportunities, creating a situation where a person could become wealthy yet not be considered a member of the upper class. Such an individual might not have obtained other key qualities for such a status, among which kinship ties to other members of the upper class and 'white' racial traits are important. Traditionally, these criteria were intertwined, particularly when cemented by preferential marriage between first cousins.

According to popular view, the semi-arid zone was colonised by white Portuguese settlers whose descendants inter-married and lived close to one another on lands originating from the vast ranches of the first founding families. Lower class 'persons of colour' are thought to be descendants of poor European, black and Amerindian ancestors who were cowboys, *moradores*, sharecroppers and slaves.

A Sertanejo is proud of his origins and these are at the base of the personal image that he projects among his fellows. However important ancestry may be, it is ultimately an individual's actions and deeds through life which will determine what Sertanejos call the 'standing of one's name'. Men and women of all classes are careful to maintain their name in high regard, which means never to have doubt cast upon the truth of one's word, the virginity of females until marriage and the eternal fidelity of a wife. Any assertions to the contrary or actions that result in the loss of one of the virtues must be cleansed with blood. Failure to do otherwise earns a man the reputation of being a coward. Quite naturally the complicating factors of class inequality mean that the *elite* have the wealth and manpower the better to maintain their reputation.

Also, other aspects of the expected behaviour of true men infringe the poor's right to a good family name.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE IN A CLASS CONTEXT

The traditional system of kinship and norms of marriage fit well into a physical and social environment of recurrent drought, of a local economy in which little money changed hands and of sharp class and racial separation. The modification of kinship relationships and of marriage practices that has taken place in the last forty years is intimately linked to the changes described in the last chapter. The changes have resulted in ties between kin becoming more bounded and also in less preferential cousin marriage taking place today.

However, the idiom of kinship is still very much in use. An important question that is commonly heard asked of a stranger is, "Who are your parents?" Obviously, this is done to see if the questioner is related to the parents in some way by ties of kinship, friendship or past economic dealings, so as to determine how the stranger is to be treated. On the other hand, the relationship can easily be a negative one, for in a region of chronic feuding it is imperative to identify strangers quickly. They may be enemies or hired assassins.

Family and Kin

Family (*família*) and kin (*parentes*) have restricted meanings as well as more extensive connotations. Family can be used to refer to a nuclear family, to a greater family of all the descendants of common grandparents and to a group of relatives who have the same surname.

The members of each of these groupings are considered to be kin of different degrees in typical cognatic fashion and have varying rights and obligations to one another.

Família in the strict sense of the word refers to the nuclear family of a husband, a wife and, most importantly, to their children. A marriage must produce children. They are considered to be the closest kin and can be counted on for care in one's old age. A marriage without offspring has not truly produced a family, the couple do not really have close kin and the husband's masculinity is cast in doubt. People will joke about his virility behind his back, saying that he is *capado* (castrated like livestock for fattening).[1]

For Sertanejos the relationships between members of the nuclear family are the building blocks of the kinship system. The intimate ties inherent in the basic categories of father, mother and brothers and sisters are used to trace distant relationships when an attempt is made to demonstrate, or allege, kinship proximity between two persons. In the words of one lower class woman informant,

> Kin [first cousins] are related to one another by way of their parents because the latter are brothers. First you have a married couple, who have children and with the proliferation of cousins their blood [ties] get [progressively] distant until they [the descendants] are no longer kin.

Similarly, the basic relationship of siblings is projected further into time to try to justify the closeness of a more distant relationship. "We are really quite closely related, for our grandparents were brothers" or even "Our great-grandparents were brothers" are expressions commonly heard.

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[1] Blok (1981), Pi-Sunyer (1973) and Pitt-Rivers [1971(1954)] report a similar image of castrated, docile animals for men who lack virility and courage in Italy, Mexico and Spain respectively.

Kinship ties are defined in terms of rights and obligations that each category of individual can expect from one another. The contemporary system is a normal cognatic type which is only to be expected in a place where Europeans were the principal settlers and the mestizo population adopted their culture (Figure 16, Table 32).

However, change in the kinship system has occurred during the last forty years. The principal difference between the older system and the contemporary one is the reduction in the number of relatives who are considered to be aunts and uncles (Figure 17). A number of individuals in these categories were considered closer relatives than the modern categories of 'cousin' or mere 'relative' by which they are now known. Children of 3rd aunts and uncles, who are in ascendant generations, are no longer considered 3rd aunts and uncles in their own right. Now they are mere 'relatives', between whom there are few mutual obligations. Similarly, children of 2nd aunts and uncles, who if they were a generation older than ego used to be considered 2nd aunts and uncles, are now 2nd cousins and their children are 3rd cousins which further removes them from ego than in the past.

What has happened is that a generational cognatic system, based on the authority of older persons over younger, has given way to a more bounded cognatic system of fewer mutual obligations. The latter now are limited to a direct line of descendants, from grandfather down to grandchildren, and no longer extend far outwards as they once did to siblings at the different generational levels.

The existence of a previously more extensive kinship system came to light due to informants declaring that an older system had been current in former times. The discovery did not result from the researcher observing variation between the geneologies of older persons and younger, in which

Table 32: Contemporary and Traditional Kinship Categories

Portuguese Term	English Translation	Contemporary Popular Rule	Traditional Popular Rule
pai do avô, pai da avó (bisavô)	grandfather's or grandmother's father	father of grandfather or grandmother	father of grandfather or grandmother
mãe do avô, mãe da avó (bisavó)	grandfather's or grandmother's mother	mother of grandfather or grandmother	mother of grandfather or grandmother
tio 3º	third uncle	brother of great-grandfather or great-grandmother	brother of great-grandfather or great-grandmother; son of 3rd uncle or aunt in ascending generations
tia 3a	third aunt	sister of great-grandfather or great-grandmother	sister of great-grandfather or great grandmother; daughter of 3rd uncle or aunt in ascending generations
avô	grandfather	father of father or mother	father of father or mother
avó	grandmother	mother of father or mother	mother of father or mother
tio 2º	second uncle	brother of grandfather or grandmother	brother of grandfather or grandmother; son of 2nd uncle or aunt in ascending generation
tia 2a	second aunt	sister of grandfather or grandmother	sister of grandfather or grandmother; daughter of 2nd uncle or aunt in ascending generation
pai	father	father	father
mãe	mother	mother	mother
tio 1º (legítimo)	first uncle (true)	brother of father or mother	brother of father or mother
tia 1a (legítima)	first aunt (true)	sister of father or mother	sister of father or mother
irmão	brother	brother	brother
irmã	sister	sister	sister
primo 1º (legítimo)	first male cousin (true)	son of first uncle or aunt	son of first uncle or aunt
prima 1a (legítima)	first female cousin (true)	daughter of first uncle or aunt	daughter of first uncle or aunt
primo 2º	second male cousin	son of second uncle or aunt; son of first cousin	same generation son of a 2nd uncle or aunt

cont'd.

Table 32 (cont'd)

Portuguese Term	English Translation	Contemporary Popular Rule	Traditional Popular Rule
prima 2[a]	second female cousin	daughter of second uncle or aunt; daughter of first cousin	same generation daughter of a 2nd uncle or aunt
primo 3[o]	third male cousin	son of third uncle or aunt; son of second cousin	same generation son of a 3rd uncle or aunt; son of a 2nd cousin
prima 3[a]	third female cousin	daughter of third uncle or aunt; daughter of second cousin	same generation daughter of a 3rd uncle or aunt; daughter of a 2nd cousin
filho	son	son	son
filha	daughter	daughter	daughter
sobrinho 1[o] (legítimo)	first nephew (true)	son of brother or sister	son of brother or sister
sobrinha 1[a] (legítima)	first niece (true)	daughter of brother or sister	daughter of brother or sister
sobrinho 2[o]	second nephew	son of 1st nephew or niece	son of 1st cousin; son of 1st nephew or niece
sobrinha 2[a]	second niece	daughter of 1st nephew or niece	daughter of 1st cousin; daughter of 1st nephew or niece
sobrinho 3[o]	third nephew	son of 2nd nephew or niece	son of 2nd nephew or niece
sobrinha 3[a]	third niece	daughter of 2nd nephew or niece	daughter of 2nd nephew or niece
neto	grandson	son of son or daughter	son of son or daughter
neta	granddaughter	daughter or son or daughter	daughter of son or daughter
bisneto	great-grandson	son of grandson or granddaughter	son of grandson or granddaughter
bisneta	great-granddaughter	daughter of grandson or granddaughter	daughter of grandson or granddaughter
parente	relative	third cousin or more removed	fourth cousin or more removed
sogro	father-in-law	husband's or wife's father	husband's or wife's father
sogra	mother-in-law	husband's or wife's mother	husband's or wife's mother

cont'd.

Table 32(cont'd)

Portuguese Term	English Translation	Contemporary Popular Rule	Traditional Popular Rule
cunhado	brother-in-law	husband's or wife's brother	husband's or wife's brother
cunhada	sister-in-law	husband's or wife's sister	husband's or wife's sister
concunhado	brothers-in-law in common	husband's brother's or sister's husband, wife's brother's or sister's husband	husband's brother's or sister's husband, wife's brother's or sister's husband
concunhada	sisters-in-law in common	husband's brother's or sister's wife, wife's brother's or sister's wife	husband's brother's or sister's wife, wife's brother's or sister's wife
genro	son-in-law	daughter's husband	daughter's husband
nora	daughter-in-law	son's wife	son's wife

Source of data: Field Research

Figure 16. Contemporary Kinship System

KEY

Relatives

pa - pai do avô/ó
ma - mãe do avô/ó
t3 - tio/a 3º
a - avô/ó
t2 - tio/a 2º
t1 - tio/a 1º
pai - pai
mãe - mãe
i - irmã(o)
c - cunhado/a
e - esposo/a
p1 - primo/a 1º
p2 - primo/a 2º
p3 - primo/a 3º
par - parente
par longe - parente longe
f - filho/a
nr - nora
g - genro
s1 - sobrinho/a 1º
s2 - sobrinho/a 2º
s3 - sobrinho/a 3º
n - neto/a
bn - bisneto/a

Closeness of Kinship

intimate
very close
close
distant
very distant

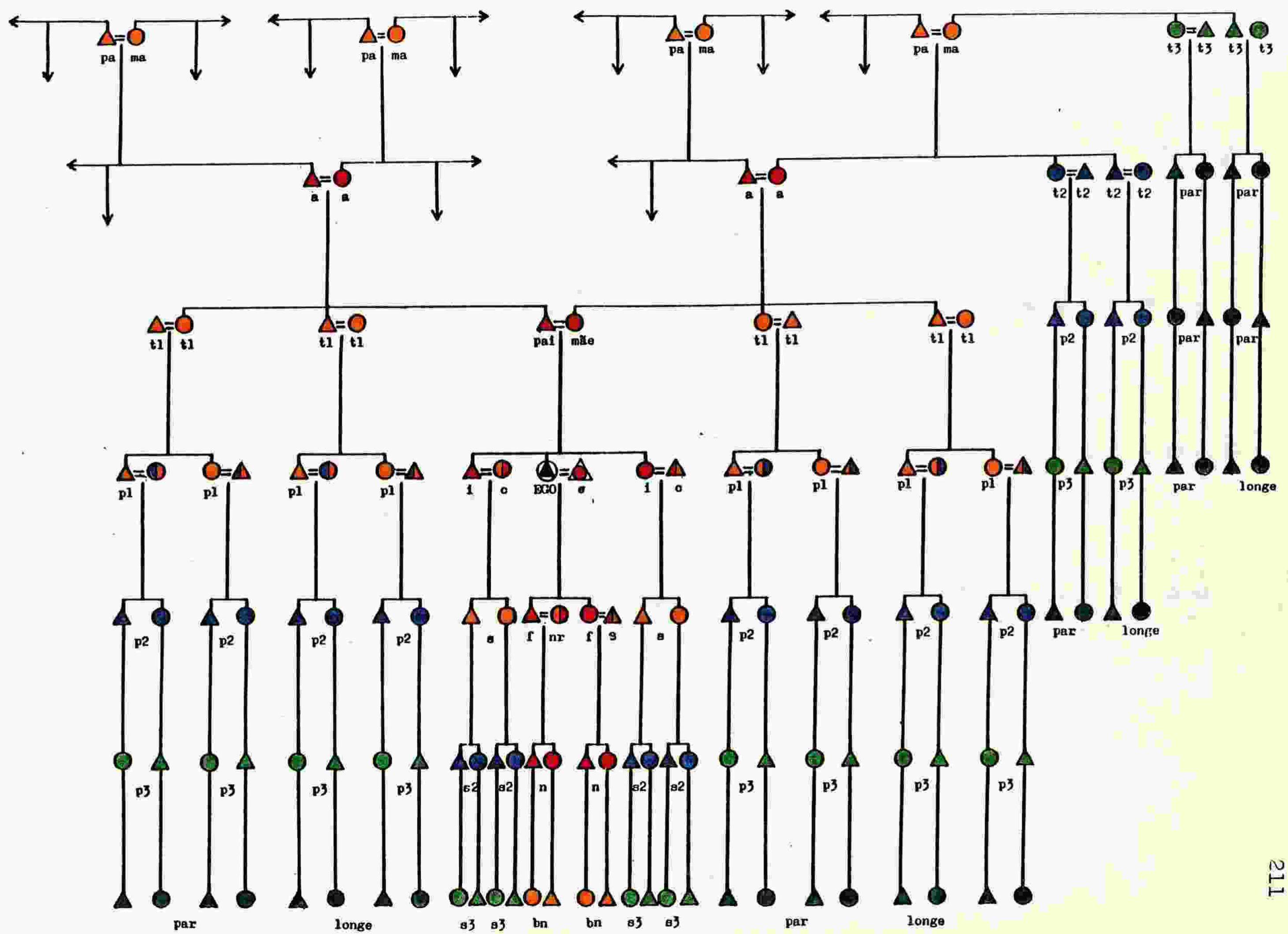


Figure 17. Traditional Kinship System

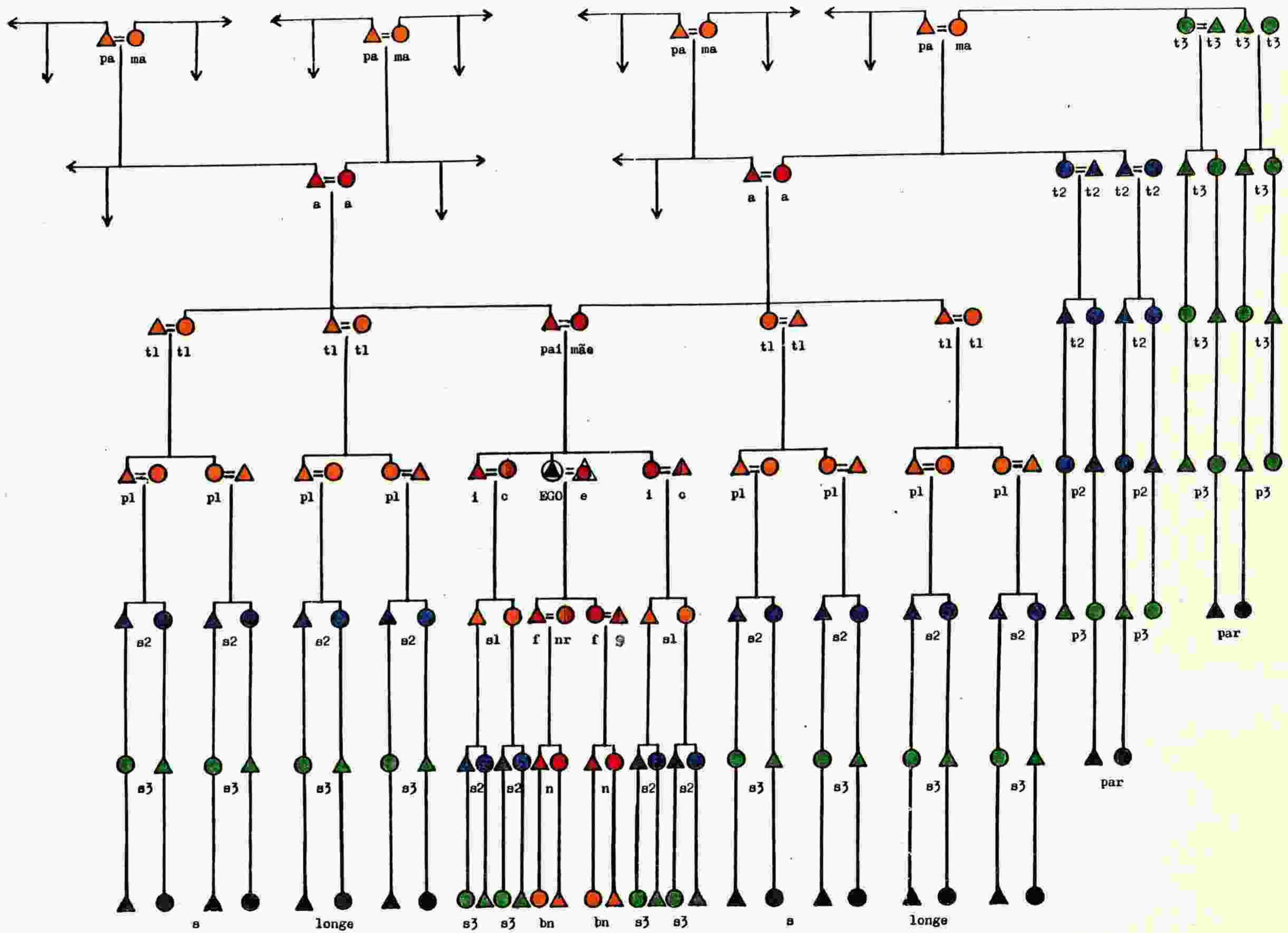
KEY

Relatives

pa - pai do avô/ó
ma - mãe do avô/ó
t3 - tio/a 3º
a - avô/ó
t2 - tio/a 2º
t1 - tio/a 1º
pai - pai
mãe - mãe
i - irmã(o
c - cunhado/a
e - esposo/a
p1 - primo/a 1º
p2 - primo/a 2º
p3 - primo/a 3º
par - parente
f - filho/a
nr - nora
g - genro
s1 - sobrinho/a 1º
s2 - sobrinho/a 2º
s3 - sobrinho/a 3º
s longe - sobrinho/a longe
n - neto/a
bn - bisneto/a

Closeness of Kinship

intimate
very close
close
distant
very distant



case elderly informants recognize more extensive kinship ties, due to their greater experience. A younger wife married to an older man said that her husband recognises kin in the *old way*, while she does it differently. Another man in his fifties said that a friend of mine is his 2nd uncle and he still considers him as such, even if today, according to the *new* system, he should be considered as a 2nd cousin.

It was after hearing such statements that the subject was investigated in detail and everything points to a change in kinship relationships which may or may not be restricted to the general area of the fieldwork communities. Freyre's (1964) unfortunate use of the term of patriarchal family should be seen in the light of a previously more extensive web of kinship, which may have been generalized to the Northeast and elsewhere in Brazil.

The 'old law' of kinship relationships is still in current use and is normally used by individuals over 45 years of age. Some younger persons, whose parents educated them to give great importance to kin, revert to the older system when pressed for details concerning particular kin. It appears that the change began around 1945.

The reason given by informants for the change is that, in modern times, people do not seek out their relatives as much as they used to, and that this is due to the greater economic and social independence possible today. In terms of not being dependent solely on inherited land this may be true, though it seems a little strange, given the fact that kin ties to local political leaders are crucial in order to receive better public employment positions.

Another common explanation for the change is that greater geographic mobility has made for less contact between kin. This is certainly the case, but families are large and at least some primary kin reside nearby.

Also the system is quite flexible and distant relatives can always be considered closer by their playing the role of absent primary kin.

A better explanation may be found in less need for the help of relatives in times of drought and famine or even for mutual assistance in farm tasks that required more workers than a nuclear or extended family possessed.[1] In classic form, monetarisation of the economy and improved transport facilities have made for a regular supply of staples. Salaried labour has replaced old customs of exchanging work days. Kinship obligations are no longer allowed to level the individual accumulation of capital, and particularly in commercial irrigation, where relatives are treated like any other sharecropper. Finally, a very important factor in explaining the change in kinship relations is the declining preference for cousins as marriage partners.

In both systems, as ties between kin become more distant so do the obligations between relatives (Appendix 4 and 5). The rights and obligations between primary kin are basically the same in both and change involved more distant kin whereby 2nd and 3rd aunts and uncles have less authority over their distant nephews and nieces.

In the Sertão, children are the closest of kin because their assistance in any difficulty, no matter what the circumstances, is unquestioned, just as their parents cared for them during their infancy and youth. Indeed, having numerous children is justified by the logic that at least one of six to ten children must be a good son or daughter and so will look after his elderly parents, even if all the rest are 'pests'.

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[1] In times of drought in the past relatives did not eat more fortunate farmers out of their stores but would migrate when they felt they were becoming a burden to others.

Perhaps as important in explaining large family size is the need to prove to the community that the husband is virile and the wife fertile. Siring numerous children is one way of making a man a true *macho* (a stud, a sexually complete male animal).

Before marriage, a child should help and obey his parents to the letter and should live in the same house. Boys help with farm work and girls help their mothers with their tasks. After marrying and setting up a separate household they will still visit their parents daily, if distance permits. Joint financial pursuits can still be undertaken but the relationship is more that of partners than of the father's being boss.[1]

Until they marry, brothers and sisters help each other in the tasks of the parental household. After marriage, they remain close in relationship and can help a brother or sister who might be passing through a period of financial difficulty. They will support one another in any conflict with others, but a married brother will ponder more deeply the implications of embarking upon a revenge killing because he has a family of his own to worry about. If he were killed, or had to flee from the police, his household would be left without a man.

The principal force in most societies that can divide sibling solidarity later in life is inheritance. For the most part, this is avoided in the Sertão by the law and local practice of equal inheritance, no matter what the sex of the heirs is. So, given the limited contention over inheritance, siblings are not torn apart upon the death of their parents.

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[1] In the past it was common before and after marriage for sons or sons-in-law to care for their parents' or wife's parents' livestock under a sharing system similar to that of *vaqueiros de sorte*. However, the tone of the relationship is more of equality and definitely not that of rancher and worker.

If they drift apart over time it may be due more to the need to look after their own growing families. Quite possibly the first cousin marriage preference of the past was a means of preventing this drift. Siblings would have common sons- and daughters-in-law as well as common grandchildren.

In terms of care and help in times of financial difficulty, there is a quantitative leap from the nuclear family to that of uncles, aunts and cousins. An uncle or godfather may care for an orphan, but the feeling will not be the same as that between parent and child and the assistance given is less if the man already has children of his own. In this case, ties between siblings are not - or at least not nowadays - as strong as they are in other ways. A widow with numerous small children and whose parents are already dead finds herself in a very difficult situation. She cannot depend on her brothers' affection for her, or for their nephews and nieces, to get all the help she needs, for they too have families to provide for. However, if she is still young, either her parents or her parents-in-law are probably still alive and they, as her parents or the grandparents of her children, will give her the assistance that she needs until she remarries.

On the other hand, if a married uncle or a married or single aunt does not have children, the desire to possess children is so great that orphans are never abandoned to their fate as happen in the large, industrial cities of the Southeast. A household needs children to be considered complete and to function properly. Adoption can also occur even though a couple already has children, particularly when all their own children are of the same sex. Men and women need help in their respective tasks. In addition, when a couple already has many children they can 'give' a son or daughter to childless brothers or sisters to bring up. Cases of children moving of their own accord to the household of a favoured

uncle or aunt also occur. The need for children can even cause upper class whites to adopt a darker skinned child of poor origins.[1]

The more common role of an uncle or aunt of either side is that of the indulgent figure who compensates for the severity of a child's parents. This probably explains why they can spoil foster nephews and nieces when they have no children of their own. The role of parent and uncle or aunt are nearly opposite ones and the change from an indulgent role to that of one wielding authority is a difficult one to master. An uncle is like a friend to a nephew. Joking is permitted and an uncle will take a boy drinking and whoring, which a father may also do on occasions, but an uncle and nephew can abandon all reserve in such riotous circumstances. An aunt will help a niece out with any problems but the contrast of her role to that of a mother is not as strong because the distance of authority between mother and daughter is not nearly as great as that between father and children.

On the other hand, the closeness of kin ties alone is not held to be enough to define relationships between individuals. If an uncle does not fulfil his duties, usually because he lives too far away to do so, then he is just not a true uncle. Also, as commonly occurs with cognatic systems, personal friendship and the importance of specific individuals can cause distant kin to be treated as closer relatives. As the first, second or third removed distinctions for uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces are used for reference and not for address; an individual can be treated like the closest of these kin if his behaviour merits it.

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[1] However, long-term sentiment is not thought to be strong enough and the ties of close blood are considered to influence a person so much that foster parents always have the fear of being abandoned if their wards discover their 'real' parents.

Similarly, persons seeking favours, or politicians requesting votes, will address a person by the closest kin term to sway a final decision. Even pure fabrications are used in commercial settings to try to soften a client's initial distrust. 'Cousin' or 'compadre' are commonly heard in such dealings. Alternatively, the cognatic relationships can be manipulated in the opposite direction. A fairly close cousin, who is an embarrassment to the family, can be referred to as merely a 'cousin', which, unqualified, gives the listener the idea that the person in question is a distant cousin.

The gradual waning of kinship ties is most clearly to be seen in mourning dress, which varies in type and duration of use according to the proximity of the deceased kinsman. The observances for women are more rigorous and of longer duration than those for men. A woman's clothes must all be black for a period of one year to mourn the death of a mother, father or husband; for three to six months for a son, daughter, brother, sister or grandparent. For a first cousin, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece only a black skirt is required and for no more than a period of three months. A man mourns the death of one of his parents or wife by dressing completely in black for a period of six months. The death of a brother, sister or child can be marked by three months of the same or only by using a black shirt or a black pair of trousers. He merely pins a black ribbon on his shirt for other relatives.

The progressive weakening of rights and obligations between distant kin is countered to some extent by the expanded sense of the term family, which almost qualifies such a grouping as a clan or kindred. Indeed, when explaining the meaning of clan and kindred in lectures to university students in the Northeast the invariable comment from them was, "Oh yes, just like families of the Sertão". What is involved is the recognition

of kin ties between individuals with the same surname, even though they cannot demonstrate the ties through their usual method of geneological reckoning. If they have a distinctive name, and not one of the overly common ones that were given to the mestizo lower class in the colonial period, such as Silva, Santos or Conceição, they are most likely kin. If they are from the same general area, they must be descendants of the legendary ancestor who established the first ranch which gave rise to the others in the area.

While mere *parentes* or *parentes longes*, distant kin, do not ask more demanding favours of one another, they can be counted on during elections and in disputes with strangers or rival family factions. In prolonged feuds, revenge killings can even reach distant kin of such loosely knit groups. When the dispute has developed to this point, vengeance seekers of one side will murder any member with the same surname as their enemies and the death counts in the same way as that of an assassin himself, his parents, brothers or cousins. Such feuds are exceptional, however, and, normally, revenge is the duty of the immediate family and close cousins.

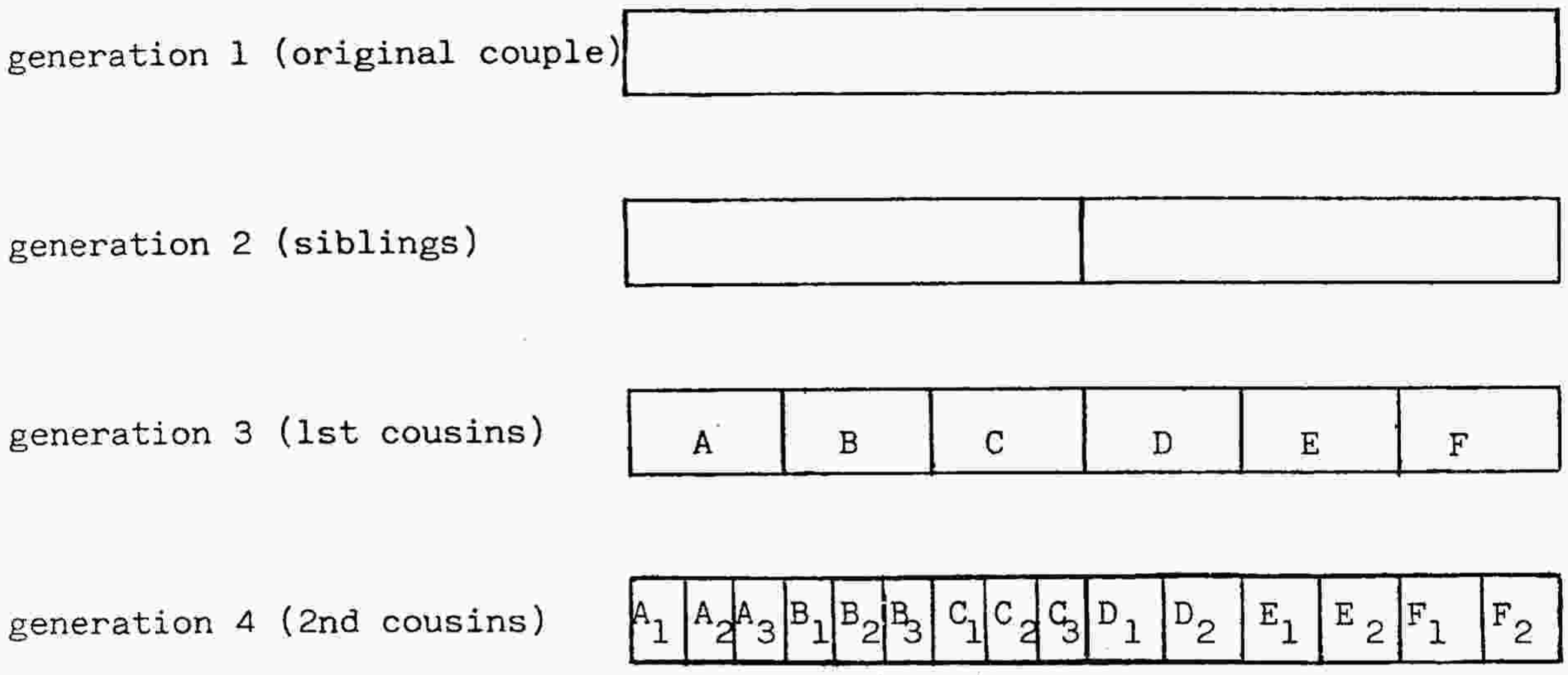
Just as mourning observation varies in intensity according to the closeness of kinship so also does vengeance. Immediate kin and even first cousins can go to elaborate lengths to lay ambush for an enemy who has killed one of their own. A second cousin will kill the wrongdoer if a good opportunity arises and, even then, only near the time of the original killing. However, if he does, he and his immediate kin become involved as primary participants of what might have been only a restricted feud. Large-scale feuds develop along such kinship lines, gradually involving more people, until a whole community can become participants. This occurred in Exu. There, only the Aires de Alencares and Sampaios

were initially involved but, with time, all Alencares became entangled and even the Saraiva family political allies of the Sampaios also became enmeshed. The feud has reached such a point that individuals from other communities with Alencar or Sampaio in their name do not pass it on to their children for fear they may be killed just because of their name. Also, kin who live thousands of miles away can be murdered.

Variation in obligations between kin exists according to class, which has been observed in other parts of Brazil (Forman, 1975; Freyre, 1964) and in the Sertão (Johnson, 1971). The upper class has kept together geographically by the laws of equal inheritance. An originally large ranch was distributed among heirs and further sub-divided in later generations. A farmer usually has siblings for neighbours, then uncles, aunts, first cousins, nephews and nieces, followed by more distant kin further up or down a river. The Agra family of Parnamirim is a perfect example of such territorial distribution of kin. The first ranch was established by Martins da Costa Agra in the middle of the last century and consisted of 45 kilometres of bottomlands along the Raicho da Brígida. When he died, his land was equally divided between ten heirs whose ranches were in turn divided and so forth until today. Large, loosely knit kin groupings are recognized based on the descendants of Martins' children which take the ranches of the latter as geographical points of reference. Through cousin marriage, heirs, whose farms are at the edge of the original parental farm, manage to maintain close relatives as neighbours, which normally would not have been the case over time (Figure 18).

By proximity of residence, members of the landed class have been better able to exchange mutual obligation and thus maintain more widely recognised ties. The poor have had to move about in search of work or land to till, which means that usually only parents and their children

Figure 18: Spatial Genealogical Separation of Kin through Inheritance



By the 4th generation children of B (of the 3rd generation) have 1st cousins closeby (children of A and C) and 2nd cousins further away (children of D, E and F). Children of C have 1st cousins on one side (children of B) and 2nd cousins immediately on the other (children of D). If D had married B in the third generation, then the children of C would have first cousins on either side.

live close enough to perform their role as kin. If a man of poor origin was lucky enough to have become rich in the old sharing system for ranch hands, perhaps he was able to purchase a farm large enough to be sub-divided by his descendants in the same manner. However, such a case would never have reached the scale of the first enormous ranches and so fewer relatives are found together.

In this century, greater job opportunities in other regions of Brazil and improved transport facilities have meant that the distance between close kin has greatly increased. A common complaint among the aging poor is that children living in the Southeast do not help as they should

and some do not even write home.[1] As we saw in the previous chapter, landholdings have become so small that the children of many middle class farmers leave for the Southeast too. Even the wealthy can be affected by this problem, for their educated children emigrate to the coastal capitals and so put distance between themselves and their parents. While complaints of neglect are heard among the *elite*, whose children have liberal professions and are economically independent of parental land, by the same token both children and parents have the resources to visit each other frequently enough throughout the year so as not to lose contact. For those who can, visits to one's home town for the celebrations of Easter, St. John's Day, the Patron Saint's Day and graduation day at the local high school, are most important for preserving bonds of kinship and old friendship. Also, upper and middle class individuals living elsewhere can make use of the recently installed inter-city telephone system. Finally, relatives holding important posts in hub cities and in the capital, or just living there, can do important favours and provide hospitality for kin from back home. This practice occurs throughout the country, which Miller (1979) also observed.

Thus, for the upper and even the middle class, distances of up to 700 kilometres, i.e. to the state capitals, do not sever ties with kin. They have cars or can travel by coaches which run regular services to important cities and are relatively inexpensive. Destinations of over 700 kilometres are usually to the Southeast, Centre-West or North. These

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[1] In this context, the extension of a social security scheme to the farm sector, called FUNRURAL, was most welcome in the Sertão. However, in some places, politics intrude, causing some people to have a pension who should not, while others who do quality, experience long delays in having their retirement approved, if they refuse to vote for the powers that be.

are long, expensive trips which can involve changing coaches several times. Primary kin of all classes who live in those places maintain little or no contact at all with kin back home. Upper and middle class people know how to write but male migrants write home less frequently than do women.

Distances of 30, 50 or 100 kilometres can impose severe barriers for members of the lower class wanting to visit kin, particularly if the people involved go to the market day in different localities. Quite often their relatives live on farms that are relatively more distant for the poor in terms of travel facilities and road conditions than are hub cities or even the state capitals for the other classes. To go to a distant farm involves renting a car, which is only worthwhile if other people can be found who also want to go to the same destination. The poor do not normally have the means to travel in a full car, much less in a car all to themselves.

The majority of parents of interviewed upper class adults, in the communities studied, live within a radius of nine kilometres and can be considered as neighbours (Table 33). In Chorrochó and Belém, substantially more upper class persons have their parents as neighbours than do members of the other classes. In Parnamirim, the upper class is not very different from the other classes as to where their parents live, because many still live in the rural zone (distances of 0-99 kilometres) or with a brother or sister in a hub city (distances of 50-349 kilometres). Many of the parents of the poor in Belém live at distances which are of more difficult access, as would be expected in a community attracting immigrants. The lower class of Parnamirim suffer less from this problem and the poor of Chorrochó still less.

The situation for the adult children of interviewed families shows many of the same trends (Table 34). With the exception of Parnamirim,

Table 33: Distance Separating Ego from Parents in the Communities Studied (kilometres)

Community and Class	0-9		10-49		50-99		100-349		350-699		700 & more		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM														
upper class	18	66.7	0	0	2	7.4	3	11.1	2	7.4	2	7.4	27	100
middle class	14	38.9	10	27.8	7	19.4	3	8.3	1	2.8	1	2.8	36	100
lower class	17	31.5	15	27.8	9	16.7	12	22.2	1	1.8	0	0	54	100
CHORROCHÓ														
upper class	22	75.9	4	13.8	0	0	2	6.9	1	3.4	0	0	29	100
middle class	22	48.8	13	28.9	3	6.7	4	8.9	3	6.7	0	0	45	100
lower class	46	56.9	23	28.4	7	8.6	4	4.9	1	1.2	0	0	81	100
PARNAMIRIM														
upper class	11	55.0	4	20.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	0	0	0	0	20	100
middle class	20	66.7	6	20.0	2	6.7	1	3.3	1	3.3	0	0	30	100
lower class	30	62.5	8	16.7	3	6.2	5	10.4	2	4.2	0	0	48	100

Source of data: Field Research

Table 34: Distance Separating Ego from Children for the Communities Studied (kilometres)

Community and Class	0-9		10-49		50-99		100-349		350-699		700 & more		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM														
upper class	12	70.6	1	5.9	0	0	1	5.9	2	11.7	1	5.9	17	100
middle class	16	31.4	10	19.6	8	15.7	5	9.8	5	9.8	7	13.7	51	100
lower class	27	69.2	1	2.6	0	0	6	15.4	0	0	5	12.8	39	100
CHORROCHÓ														
upper class	27	67.5	2	5.0	1	2.5	4	10.0	2	5.0	4	10.0	40	100
middle class	15	26.3	11	19.3	1	1.8	8	14.0	5	8.8	17	36.8	57	100
lower class	59	54.6	13	12.0	2	1.9	10	9.3	3	2.8	21	19.4	108	100
PARNAMIRIM														
upper class	18	41.9	1	2.3	1	2.3	7	16.3	9	20.9	7	16.3	43	100
middle class	26	54.1	8	16.6	3	6.3	3	6.3	3	6.3	5	10.4	48	100
lower class	38	53.5	8	11.3	2	2.8	9	12.7	0	0	14	19.7	71	100

Source of data: Field Research

upper class children are more often nearby neighbours and are less often inaccessible than are those of the other classes. Middle class families of all the communities are those most likely to have parents living in the country and whose children go to town to live or emigrate to the Southeast. This makes for a low number of children who are near neighbours but contact with children living in town is regular because parents come to spend market day with them. On the other hand, a high number of middle class children are inaccessible, which reflects their greater ability to finance long distance emigration.

Where contact is more easily lost is between siblings. They do not have the same obligation to keep in regular touch as do parents and children. For all classes, siblings are less often near neighbours with the interviewed person than either his parents or his children (Table 35). Also, they are much more scattered over the Northeast and the country than are parents and children. Particularly if the parents are already dead, brothers and sisters living elsewhere do not feel the need to come regularly to their home town.

Table 35: Distance Separating Ego from Siblings in the Communities Studied (kilometres)[1]

Community and Class	0-9		10-49		50-99		100-349		350-699		700 & more		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CHORROCHO														
upper class	50	49.6	10	9.9	8	7.9	16	15.8	9	8.9	8	8.9	101	100
middle class	32	16.2	44	22.2	12	6.1	21	10.6	30	15.2	59	29.7	198	100
lower class	64	29.2	55	25.0	21	9.5	26	11.8	8	3.6	46	20.9	220	100
PARNAMIRIM														
upper class	13	20.6	7	11.1	4	6.4	18	28.6	6	9.5	15	23.8	63	100
middle class	70	53.5	13	9.9	16	12.2	11	8.4	6	4.6	15	11.3	131	100
lower class	98	37.4	54	20.6	22	8.4	38	14.5	9	3.4	41	15.7	262	100

Source of data: Field Research

[1] This information is not available for Belém.

Marriage

Marriage practices too have been undergoing change in recent decades. In the past, the landowning class gave great importance to marrying someone from within the family. First cousins, uncles and aunts were the most preferred. Also, marriages were arranged. Today, one still encounters marriage with close kin but there is a shift toward unions involving non-kin or more distant kin.

In the communities studied, upper class individuals of over 40 years of age were those who most often married kin, while lower and middle class persons of the same age group were less prone to practise cousin marriage (Table 36). Especially since 1960 there has been a trend for persons of all classes to marry distant kin or non-kin. The greater majority of younger people of all classes in the three communities married non-kin (Table 37).

In the past, with the exception of the initial period of settlement when a family arriving in an area would not have relatives to marry, marriage with kin was particularly marked for the leading families of Belém and Chorrochó. In the 1800s, 57.4% of the marriages of the Pires de Carvalho family were with kin of first or second degree remove. Even remarriage was with kin and there are a number of cases of widowers marrying a deceased wife's sister or other close kin. When marriage was with non-kin, usually a group of siblings married another group of siblings. This would then begin a series of further marriages between their descendants in succeeding generations so that the allied groups were incorporated into one family. By the period 1940-1960 in Belém marriage with close kin had dropped to 20.7% of unions (Table 38).

Table 36: Kinship Relationship between Spouses for Individuals over 40 years of Age in the Communities Studied

Community and Class	1st Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		2nd Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		3rd Cousin, or Other relative		Non-Relative		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM										
upper class	2	16.7	4	33.3	3	25.0	3	25.0	12	100
middle class	0	0	1	5.2	1	5.2	17	89.6	19	100
lower class	1	9.1	1	9.1	0	0	9	81.8	11	100
CHORROCHÓ										
upper class	10	34.5	4	13.8	3	10.3	12	41.4	29	100
middle class	4	23.5	1	5.9	4	23.5	8	47.1	17	100
lower class	9	32.1	2	7.1	1	3.6	16	57.1	28	100
PARNAMIRIM										
upper class	2	13.3	1	6.7	4	26.7	8	53.3	15	100
middle class	2	7.4	1	3.7	8	29.6	16	59.3	27	100
lower class	4	8.2	8	16.3	1	2.0	36	73.5	49	100

Source of data: Field Research

Table 37: Kinship Relationship between Spouses for Individuals 40 Years of Age or Less in the Communities Studied

Community and Class	1st Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		2nd Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		3rd Cousin, or Other Relative		Non-Relative		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM										
upper class	0	0	0	0	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	100
middle class	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	100.0	7	100
lower class	1	7.7	2	15.4	0	0	10	76.9	13	100
CHORROCHÓ										
upper class	2	22.2	0	0	2	22.2	5	55.6	9	100
middle class	2	25.0	0	0	1	12.5	5	62.5	8	100
lower class	3	9.1	0	0	1	3.0	29	87.9	33	100
PARNAMIRIM										
upper class	2	14.3	0	0	2	14.3	10	71.4	14	100
middle class	1	5.6	4	22.2	2	11.1	11	61.1	18	100
lower class	1	2.54	4	10.3	7	17.9	27	69.2	39	100

Source of data: Field Research

Table 38: Historical Trends of the Kinship Relationship Between Spouses for Members of the Upper and Middle Class Pires de Carvalho Family of Western Pernambuco

Period	1st Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		2nd Cousin Uncle or Aunt		3rd Cousin, or Other Relative		Non-Relative		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1700s	0	0	0	0	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	100
1800s	48	31.0	41	26.4	36	23.2	30	14.4	155	100
1900-1940	49	34.0	23	16.0	34	23.6	38	26.4	144	100
1940-1960	20	11.8	15	8.9	48	28.4	86	50.9	169	100

Source of data: Carvalho (n.d.) and Field Research

Similarly, in Chorrochó, marriage with non-relatives made up 48.7% of the Pacheco marriages during the first part of this century and now account for 60% of them (Table 39). The socially upward moving Carvalho family of Chorrochó never married more kin than non-kin and even they are marrying relatives less frequently than previously (Table 40).

Table 39: Historical Trends of the Kinship Relationship Between Spouses for Members of the Upper and Middle Class Pacheco Family of Chorrochó

Period	1st Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		2nd Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		3rd Cousin, or Other Relative		Non-Relative		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1800s	0	0	0	0	1	25.0	3	75.0	4	100
1900-1940	9	24.3	3	8.1	7	18.9	18	48.7	37	100
1940-1980	5	12.5	6	15.0	5	12.5	24	60.0	40	100

Source of data: Field Research

Table 40: Historical Trends of the Kinship Relationship Between Spouses for Members of the Middle Class Carvalho Family of Chorrochó

Period	1st Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		2nd Cousin, Uncle or Aunt		3rd Cousin, or Other Relative		Non-Relative		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1800s	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100.0	2	100
1900-1940	2	22.2	2	22.2	0	0	5	55.6	9	100
1940-1980	4	18.2	3	13.6	1	4.6	14	63.3	22	100

Source of data: Field Research

For the landed class, the reasons given for marrying 'within the family are numerous but paramount in importance for them in the past was the need to find a 'suitable' marriage partner for one's children. This implied maintaining the good standing of the family name in terms of the class and racial purity of its members. A person of the same upper class position in an area was 'white' and a cousin of some degree.

As we shall see below, considerable racial mixing occurred, even among members of the upper class, so that one wonders just how purely European the initial settlers or the non-kin were that married into the upper class families. What appears to have been of overriding importance was that marriages were well matched in terms of social position and this meant that potential spouses were from the landed class and were indeed whiter than the mestizo retainers.

It is exactly in such a situation of the widescale mixing of races through dalliance on the part of colonist males with Amerindian females, that the upper class becomes obsessed with trying to make racial separations. Elderly women relating genealogies would stress the fact that different outsiders marrying into her family were either children of

important landowners, with impressive honorific titles such as colonel or major, or they were Portuguese and French immigrants.[1]

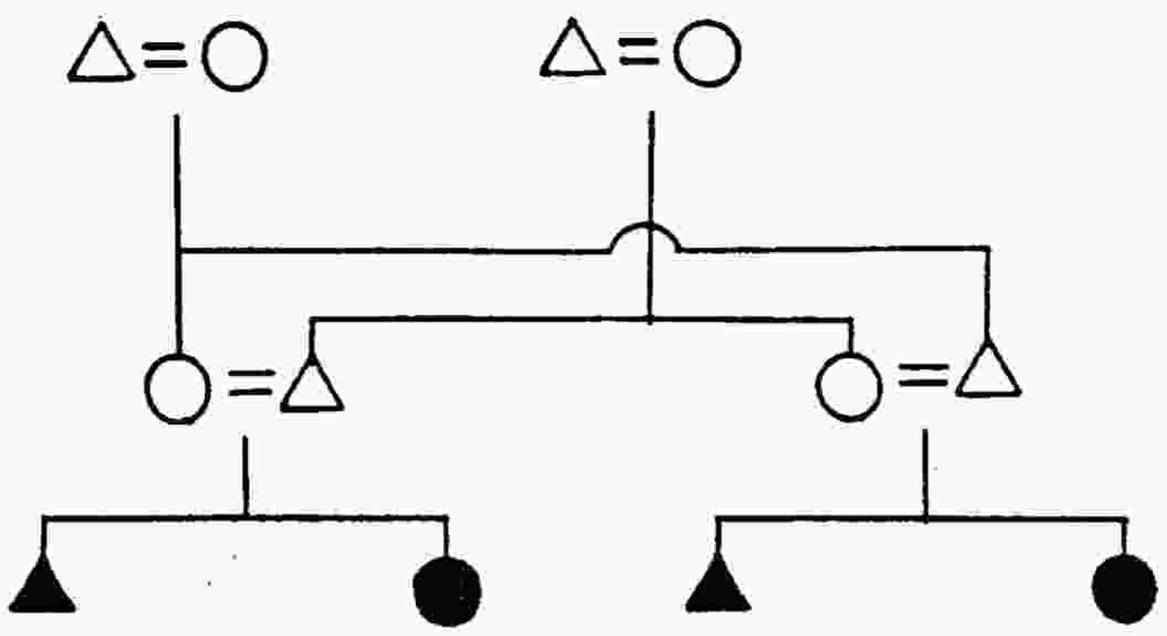
One way in which to try to maintain racial and class lines is by endogamy, which Bloch (cited in Goody, 1976) holds to be a necessary condition for class definition. The frontier conditions of the past in the Sertão meant that this was achieved by practising cousin marriage. The closest suitable marriage partners were the children of one's siblings, who lived at a distance of 10 to 20 kilometres when ranches were still large. A second cousin might live 40 or more kilometres away. In such a situation we can see how special relationships as *primo legítimo* (true cousin) and *primo carnal* (blood cousin) or *primo irmão* (brother cousin) arose.[2] *Primos legítimos* are normal first cousins while *primos carnais* and *primos irmãos* are children of a group of siblings that married with another group of siblings, and so have all four grandparents in common (Figure 19). As the terms imply these cousins are considered so closely related by blood ties that they are almost treated as true siblings.

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[1] Members of the upper and middle class traditional families of all the communities can usually recall ties much further back in time than can richer newcomers or the poor. Besides having the various ranches as convenient geographic menomic devices, social and political claims to legitimacy are also powerful reasons for greater memory capacity. The best that an old person of the newly rich Carvalho family of Chorrochó could do was a very incomplete genealogy that spanned a mere four generations to the time when her ancestors were cowhands.

[2] Wagley (1968) notes that *primo irmão* in Brazil and *primo hermano* in Spanish speaking Latin America are first cousins. They, together with their parents, are part of ego's inner circle of kin in the *parentela* (kindred).

Figure 19. The Relationship between *Primos Irmãos/Carnais*



At times parents had to search further afield for a cousin or a suitable outsider. For the Pires de Carvalho family there are some cases of marriage exchanges being practised through various generations with families in Ceará and Paraíba. Given the transport facilities of the period these places were incredibly distant. A bride often only got to know her future husband on the wedding day. Prior love between potential spouses was a good thing but not essential; it would develop over the years of married life. Parents arranged matches, and betrothal at birth was not uncommon.

When a daughter's reputation was blemished, if she were already beyond prime marrying age or slightly insane, non-kin could be considered. As Goody (1976) holds for such a society with bilateral inheritance, when women are rich they overcome such deficiencies and find marriage partners. However, such suitors had to be unquestionably 'white' and of the landed class, even if their properties were of modest size. Some may have even been outsiders who had left places where landholdings were becoming too small, but if they appeared to be of good character

and racial standing, they could marry wealthy local women when the latter were becoming desperate for husbands. Some of these outsiders and their descendants were able to move right up to the top of the social scale both through marrying into the traditional family and also by hard work. The first Cabral and Lustosa of Parnamirim, as well as the original Pacheco brothers of Chorrochó, were such outsiders.[1]

Lessening the potential for conflict between in-laws is another common reason given for marrying a cousin. A person will already have a close relationship with an uncle and an aunt, that with marriage improves the usual coolness between a son- or daughter-in-law and their parents-in-law. They continue to be called uncle or aunt and not father- or mother-in-law. A common court case is that of assault and even murder of in-laws something that rarely happens between uncles and nephews. Also, name calling that can lead to such acts of aggression is avoided because, as spouses are of the same general family, disparaging remarks concerning family origins or virtues rebound on the namer.

A third motive, which was only occasionally given by informants, for marrying close kin, is that of keeping landholdings within the 'family'.[2] First cousin marriage is one way of preventing the husband's and wife's inheritance from being too distant from one another to render impractical the exploitation of both at the same time. Also, by maintaining land within the kin group, neighbours continue to be relatives who can be

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[1] Throughout Brazil it is common for a son-in-law to be put in the same standing as a son and the former can even take charge of the kindred (Freyre, 1964).

[2] Zarur (1946) in the 1940s and Pierson (1972) in the 1950s observed the strong preference for, and the common frequency of, cousin marriage in the semi-arid portion of the São Francisco Valley. The latter author holds that the practice is a means of preserving the size of and consolidating landholdings within kindreds. Harris (1956) also observes that members of the upper class of the community he studied in southern Bahia are the ones who most often marry cousins. Freyre (1964) notes an old tradition of cousin marriage for members of the coastal sugarcane plantation owners.

counted on to help in times of difficulty and who in the past would faithfully exchange labour assistance. 'Strangers' may cause trouble and such common attritions between neighbouring farmers as a pig entering a field can more easily turn violent.

Cousin marriage was usually neither encouraged nor desired among members of the lower class. This is particularly true for landless peasants, which shows how their not residing close to one another and not possessing land affects marriage customs. In the communities studied, only one of the twenty-two poor persons who married kin is a landless peasant, the rest are all landowners who have married kin from neighbouring farms.

The poor point out that marriage with close kin causes 'bad blood' or a series of family-related physical and mental deformities, of which they cite cases from the local elite families who often marry close cousins. Persons of the upper class are aware of this danger, especially the young who use it as a pretext to justify more liberty in choosing their spouses. In the communities studied, there do indeed seem to be certain heriditary abnormalities that recur more often than should be the case. In Belém there are a number of mentally retarded persons as well as individuals suffering from dwarfism, while in Parnamirim stuttering due to cerebral irregularity is common. Also, certain physical traits considered as ugly are observed to recur often in families that inter-marry frequently.

The shift of the economy from dependence on farming to one orientated to town professions, might be a cause for the decline of cousin marriage. Not only are there more potential spouses to choose from, but also, there are more individuals of the same social position, who are non-kin. Finally, with other occupational possibilities available, land inheritance considerations are not as important as they once were.

Residence on Marriage and Inheritance

As in the rest of Brazil an individual usually lives with his parents until he or she marries. For those living on the farms, a recently married couple go to live where greater opportunity lies, which is where the land and the quality of farm resources are greatest at the moment of marriage. This depends on where there is absolutely more fertile land, fewer heirs or which of their parents is already at an age to lend or pass land on to them.

While there is a tendency in Parnamirim for a newly wed couple to live on the husband's family's land, the pattern in Chorrochó is more equally balanced between living on the husband's farm, on the wife's or on a newly purchased one (Table 41). The figure for the lower class of Parnamirim is so markedly in favour of living where the husband resides because more landless peasants make up this class there. The new couple go to live where the husband already has a job and this is where he had been living with his parents. Members of the lower class of Parnamirim who possess land, are almost evenly distributed between all the possible places for residence upon marriage in the same pattern as the rural lower class of Chorrochó which is today made up almost exclusively of smallholders.

For landholders, before marriage a man helps his father and brothers in the unified family field and a woman helps with the female tasks of the household. Ideally, upon marriage a father or father-in-law will cede part of the farm to a young man to establish his own field. Occasionally, a father may ask for help from his son but a young man is busy establishing the financial base for his own family and so will be fully occupied in tending his field and livestock. Sons-in-law,

Table 41: Location of First Residence upon Marriage for Persons of Rural Origin in Chorrochó and Parnamirim

Community and Class	Husband's Parent's Farm[1]		Wife's Parent's Farm[1]		Newly Purchased Farm		In Town or Elsewhere		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CHORROCHÓ										
upper class	3	42.9	0	0	3	42.9	1	14.2	7	100
middle class	4	23.5	6	35.3	5	29.4	2	11.8	17	100
lower class	9	30.1	7	23.3	7	23.3	7	23.3	30	100
PARNAMIRIM										
upper class	4	50.0	2	25.0	0	0	2	25.0	8	100
middle class	5	33.3	4	26.7	2	13.3	4	26.7	15	100
lower class	7	46.7	2	13.3	1	6.7	5	33.3	15	100

Source of data: Field Research

[1] In the case of landless peasants the farm referred to is that of the employer, where their parents were residing at the time of marriage.

however, feel more obliged to help, which is understood to be a condition of their residing on the father-in-law's land. Also, quite influential in deciding residence are the particular relationships involved. The nature of a father's authority can mean that his son may find the relationship with a father-in-law less restricting, particularly if the latter is his uncle.

Flexibility of marriage residence is usually an integral part of cognatic kinship and has been noted to facilitate resource distribution among families of varying size (Appell, 1976; Davenport, 1959; Firth, 1957). This practice does indeed redistribute farms among the landed class in the Sertão and may allow some landless peasants to gain farmer status, but just the opposite can also be argued. If children of wealthy

ranchers marry other persons of the upper class, as they usually do in the semi-arid zone, then land remains concentrated in the same families. Similarly, class prejudice in the Sertão means that landless peasants only rarely marry landholders. Marriage between those with land and those without land occurs most commonly in Chorrochó and even there only five (8.5%) of the 59 marriages recorded for farmers involved a landless peasant. Of these five cases, three involved men marrying into a landowning family and in the other two cases women married farmers. One of the cases involved the second marriage of an elderly farmer to which his children opposed. His first marriage had been with a woman of similar social position. In another case the couple did not go to live on the wife's family's land, and, instead, the woman joined her husband on the ranch where he was a sharing cowhand.

For those possessing land, neolocal residence on a farm given by either of their parents also prevented a matri- or patrifocus from arising in the kinship system. This is particularly true, given the fact that, through cousin marriage, newly weds did not - and still do not - live far from the other set of parents and thus maintain contact with them.

On the other hand, option of residence is made possible by the rule of equal inheritance which, as Goody (1976) shows for Western Europe, has important implications for kinship and family relationships. We saw earlier that siblings remain close throughout life and are not torn apart by inheritance conflicts.[1] Parents are very careful in dividing up family patrimony between their children so as to avoid just such attrition.

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[1] Half-brothers and half-sisters need not be close, as the case above of a second marriage demonstrates and children of a first marriage may resent the fact that they will have to divide their inheritance with more children.

Farm land in the Sertão is readily divisible. If the parents own 1,000 metres of bottomland along a seasonal river and have ten children, each will receive 100 metres, plus the dry lands behind each area that stretch out to the end of the property. Similarly, the livestock is divided in such a way that more poorer quality animals or non-mature animals correspond to a smaller number of better ones. In life parents pass some livestock on to their male children, which constitutes a slight bias in favour of sons. Upon the birth of a son, a father will set aside one or more of his calves for the boy. Through time they will multiply to a fair sized herd. As the boy gets older he will learn to care for his cattle and at marriage he should have the means to build a larger herd which will be needed for supporting his family and in turn starting his children off in life.

The parent's house or houses remain with unmarried daughters in recognition of the fact that they need more of an inheritance because they do not have a husband with whom to complete a family economic unit. Often two unmarried sisters live together and pool their inheritances. They may even divide what would be male and female tasks, with one looking after the farm and the other taking care of the house.

Equal inheritance also means that emigration of children does not fall on younger offspring more than older ones, as occurred with primogeniture in Europe (Cooper, 1976). Also, the economy and society of the Sertão are in transition, so that all sons, no matter what their birth order, may emigrate from the countryside and from the region. In fact, if the emigrant does not sell out to his siblings, his inheritance always gives him something to come back to, if he is not successful in his new life. He can even leave livestock in the care of his parents or siblings and sends instructions to sell when he needs cash.

When rural workers marry, they are forced to set up residence where they can find a job, which may be on the same farm as that of their parents, on a neighbouring or distant farm or they may even leave the rural zone altogether. Even if they find a job on the same farm where their parents work or nearby, with time, poor parents and their children will become separated as better opportunities for the children arise elsewhere.

In the past, before marriage, sons of landless peasants also helped their parents in the fields or with the animals entrusted to their father. Nowadays, they still work with their parents in these tasks, although they can also hire themselves out as occasional day-labourers, thus gaining more independence while they are still adolescents.

In town, newly wed couples of all classes normally set up their own residence. The home may be close to that of their parents or kin, but in larger towns it is usually not, owing to the shortage of desirable lots and rented housing. While in Chorrochó 33% of the 45 urban families interviewed live with, next to, or a few houses away from primary kin, only 18% of the 26 urban families in Parnamirim and 19% of the 25 urban families of Belém can do so.

COMPADRES

Compadres of baptism are the most important type of the various forms of ritual kinship. Traditionally, the system has been hierarchical, with lower status families asking individuals of a higher social position to be the godparents of their children. When involving members of different classes the institution counterbalances, to some extent, the separation between classes that arises from economic disparity and racist kinship and marriage practices.

However, upper class children usually have godparents of a similar standing. A few outward looking individuals of the upper class have higher status *compadres* who are non-kin and live in larger cities. For the most part, though, the rich close in on themselves and say that, by having brothers or good friends from the community as *compadres*, existing ties of kinship and friendship are further strengthened by their being *compadres*.

In the country, and even in towns, a lower class child's godparents (*padrinhos*) are often his parent's employers and when he reaches working age he will be able to claim special consideration for a job. Also, he may receive occasional help with the expenses involved in his education and in certain rites of passage. When a godfather is also an uncle or a close friend of his parents, more obligation is created for an orphaned godchild with no living grandparents to be taken in and be well treated. Godparents are considered to be the third set of parents, after his parents and grandparents, and are an orphan's last guaranteed resort.

Between *compadres* the institution has traditionally been a means whereby the poor may obtain a more favoured status from the landowner on whose land they might be *moradores* or cowhands. Also, non-resident poor can make requests for lent land or help in emergencies from richer *compadres*. While *compadres* of different classes will never be on an equal footing, their relationship becomes much more intimate and less one in which the owner orders his retainer about. The terms of address *compadre* and *comadre* are reciprocally used between the two, instead of the worker using the formal address *senhor* or *doutor* for the owner and the latter using the familiar form of calling the worker by his first name.

An important wealthy individual can have up to 30 godchildren and receive so many requests that, at a certain point, any further requests are refused. The greater majority of such a person's godchildren will be poor children, with only a few being nephews, nieces of the children of friends. Similarly, a middle class individual can have up to ten godchildren, many of whom will be poor. His children in turn are usually godchildren of wealthier kin and friends.

There is a recent tendency for the urban poor not to ask the rich to be the godparents of their children and, instead, to prefer kin and neighbours of similar or middle class standing. This trend goes hand in hand with the poor having left the country and the economic and social dependence of being rural retainers. When asked why they do not want the rich as *compadres*, a virulent hatred of the wealthy is displayed in such statements as, "Why? To have him ignore my child?" With the discontinuance of choosing *compadres* from different classes, social and race divisions go unameliorated. Yet another element is detected of the growing class disparity that accompanies increasing urbanisation and the shift away from an agrarian society in Brazil.

Godparents in other rites of passage and in certain festivals are of lesser importance and their purpose is to honour kin or friends. The role of *padrinho* of Confirmation is of a more serious nature but obligations are restricted to assisting with the immediate expenses of the particular rite in question, with little long-term allegiance owed by either party. This type of godchild will display respect for his godparent after the ceremony, but little else comes of it. The ties between a godchild and a godparent of a St.John's Day bonfire are merely those of friendship between an older and younger person which do not extend to the latter's parents.

RACE

As we have seen, notions of race are of particular importance to social life in the Sertão. Race is held to be inseparable from class position, and from legend its roots are set in the colonial past. In one respect, racial discrimination in the semi-arid zone was found to be nearly as virulent as that of the researcher's native South of the United States. In the past - and to a certain degree in the present - separation in social life was maintained according to racial position. Different clubs existed for 'coloureds' and for 'whites', with either of the two not wanting to frequent the other's club. One can still hear a white individual say that he does not go to parties in the country because there are too many smelly *neguinhos* at them.[1]

However, racial criteria are relative everywhere and in Brazil there is considerable flexibility as to how they are applied to particular individuals, as the various contributors to Wagley (1952) found throughout the country. Also, since the 60s, discrimination in the country as a whole, particularly among the younger generation, has lessened. Economic racism, without a doubt, still exists but certain social aspects of its practice have fallen out of use and this is true even in the Sertão.

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[1] The extremely racist situation in the highland community of southern Bahia, that Harris (1956) relates, is not typical of the Sertão, as the author freely admits. In the past a substantial number of slaves were used in mining there. More blacks are present, the community lies in a favourable zone and the town itself seems to have long been a wealthy one. Hence, both class and racial divisions are wider than is common elsewhere in the semi-arid zone. Of the communities studied, only Belém comes anywhere near having been as racist and for many of the same reasons as for Harris' community.

In the semi-arid zone, popular racial classification is based mainly on skin colour and hair texture. There are two general categories with sub-types: *brancos* (whites) and *morenos* (coloureds). *Galegos* have a very light complexion and are sandy blond. *Brancos* have a light complexion but tan darker easily and have smooth to wavy brown hair. On purely racial grounds, *morenos claros* still fall on the white side of the divide. They have a more olive complexion and wavy dark hair. *Morenos escuros* are definitely 'coloured', having a brown complexion and black, kinky or Amerindian smooth hair. *Pretos* have dark black skin and kinky black hair. The latter are not very commonly encountered throughout most of the Sertão and usually only where there has been a tradition of slavery or in places located close to former coastal slave zones.[1]

Another term, which is only infrequently used today, is *caboclo*. It is applied to persons with slick, jet black hair and who are close descendants of Amerindians. Racial mixture is such that persons with these traits are now grouped as *morenos escuros* and might be qualified by *de cabelo bom* (with good, smooth hair). Also characteristic of the mixing, is that, with the exception of *galegos*, all types can have 'good' hair or 'bad' (kinky) hair which adds more ambiguity to the classing of individuals. *Morenos*, who do not have too dark a complexion, can be considered to be 'white' if their financial and social situation merit it. Finally, most 'whites' have strong Amerindian traits which led one European priest in a moment of anger to state, "You are *all* a bunch of Indians here". Indeed, as Wilson (1978) shows, some prestigious forefathers had *indiazinhas* (derogatory equivalent of American 'squaw') for wives.

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[1] Zimmerman (1952) and Harris (1956) observed similar categories in the Sertão of Bahia. They noted a few more categories, which is probably explained by more blacks being encountered in Bahia than in other Northeastern states.

The local people no doubt perceive racial differences, which we have seen to be crucial for dividing society, but often the distinctions are more class defined than physically. *Neguinho* can be used with affection within the family by members of the upper and middle class for a child with a dark complexion. The same term can also be used disparagingly to a lower class person, who may have identical traits. This is not to deny that the rich are usually whiter and the poor darker but that the system admits ambiguity and individuals with a brown complexion are not considered *a priori* 'coloured' nor are they despised by 'whites' or 'blacks' alike, as occurs in the racism of the United States and Europe.

HONOUR

Notions of honour are basic to Sertanejo concepts of proper marriage, family and class relations. Kinship ties are defined, to a considerable degree, in terms of the rights and duties of avenging wrongs committed against one's relatives. Family honour involves traditional ideas concerning sexual mores and manly behaviour. However, notions of female chastity and fidelity, family and masculinity are often at odds, with the losers usually being the poor. The conflict of these ideals has long been at the root of violence in the semi-arid zone. The Sertão was always considered to be a violent place and the Sertanejos hot-tempered, as Spix and Martius [1981(1817)]found out the hard way in the early 1800s. The principal cause at that time is still the predominant one today: death to the person that besmerches the honour of a family.

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While members of a community can be outraged by a reproachful, dishonourable act and can bring negative public opinion to bear on a malefactor, Sertanejo ideas of individual liberty mean that a wrongdoer can only be punished by his own close kin or by those of his victim. Concepts of honour and vengeance explain why formal collective justice fails so miserably in the region. The breakdown of the modern judicial system has exacerbated these tendencies at a crucial point in time when a larger number of persons with whom Sertanejos have contact are no longer kinsmen nor intimate acquaintances and the number of aggressive crimes has increased substantially.

Proper and Dishonourable Sexual Relations

Sex is basic to proper harmony between marital partners as well as to producing children for establishing a family. For Sertanejos the subject is at once hidden from view while, at the same time, a topic of intense gossip and one which can make or break a family's reputation. Parents are especially worried about the behaviour of their daughters in order to ensure that they marry well and are not the cause of a feud.

Girls are expected to remain virgins until their wedding day. If they do not, they risk their chances of ever marrying. If a husband discovers that his bride has deceived him, he has the right to return her to her parents, thus annulling the marriage.[1] A virgin girl is

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[1] In the Sertão of Seridó in Rio Grande do Norte state, Lamartine (1965) describes an old European custom that was practised until the beginning of this century. The bloodstained bedsheets of newlyweds were shown to their parents in order to prove that the bride was a virgin. Brandes (1980) describes an indentical custom that was practised in Spain until recently. Accounts of such a custom were not encountered in the communities studied.

called a *moça*, a status she obtains upon puberty and retains until her death if she never marries or engages in sex. When she passes marrying age, which is from 18 to 25, she is called a *coroa* (literally crown, with a sense of old, old-fashioned) or *moça velha* (old girl). Partaking of sex transforms a virgin into a woman, which, if within wedlock, qualifies her as a *mulher casada* (married woman) or *senhora* (Mrs.), if out of wedlock a *mulher solteira* (single woman) or *rapariga* (whore).[1]

On the other hand, men can have relations with a woman before they marry, which they usually do by their 15th or 16th birthdays. Indeed, a father or an uncle will take a boy to a brothel when he reaches this age for what is often his first experience with a woman. Such an experience may prove his adulthood but not his manhood. Only marriage and legitimate children make him a man (*homem*), if he does not marry he remains a *moço velho* (old boy) until his dying day.

Double standards concerning virginity are accepted by both sexes and girls actually want their future husband to have had prior experience so that he will know how to act on their wedding night. Tradition is the usual explanation for why this should be so. Some men say that they have more liberty of action because it is they who control things, therefore they have more rights. Women are merely 'instruments' and should be kept quiet in their place. While the relationship between the sexes is not nearly so one-sided, particularly after marriage, the concept that he who dominates makes the rules, or is above the rules, runs right through society and is considered as a justification in itself.

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[1] The meaning of these words can vary by region in Brazil and even reverse their significance in Portugal. In the Southeast of Brazil, *moça* refers to a young woman whether she is married or not, virgin or not, and this usage thoroughly confuses a person from the Sertão. *Rapariga* in Portugal is a pure, young girl, while it is *moça* that has connotations of whore.

Ideally, legitimate sex should be practised between a man and a woman in the confines of wedlock. Besides risking vengeance from irate relatives, sex performed outside marriage is also thought to be a sin and so sex is constrained by religious sanctions as well. Ideally, any form of sex other than that involving a man and a woman in frontal coitus is considered, in varying degrees, a *tara*, a sick and sinful act. However, like all sin, there are petty and serious *taras*. Most of these are offences the seriousness of which requires a fair amount of penitence in Purgatory but are not so grave as to merit external damnation. Socially some are tolerated while others, when made public, are violently repressed by members of the families involved.

In the Sertão, sex is a very circumscribed subject only to be discussed seriously between a boy and his father or uncle, a girl and her mother or aunt and between friends of the same age. In the confines of each sex's public and private spheres, jokes and gossip about sex can be exchanged between friends and close kin. The curral is perhaps the place where more joking takes place between men, which is frequently sparked off by the unrestrained actions of the animals. A young boy's father or uncle will call attention to two animals 'courting' and one uncle was observed to go to the point of explicitly making a comparison of his nephew's genitals with those of the bull.

Sex should be hidden from public view and even from that of close relatives, which means it should take place in the sanctity of a couple's bedroom late at night when children or resident parents are sleeping. Bedrooms lack ceilings so sounds must be muffled. However, a few comments from some informants who had teased married siblings for 'resting' too long after lunch with the bedroom door closed, demonstrate that sex need not be so secretive as ideals would have it.

A boy's first relationship with the opposite sex is said not normally to be with a woman. As occurs in most of rural Brazil domestic animals are often a boy's first sex object.[1] Although considered a *tara*, male informants claim that all men have had at least one animal during their lifetime. Bestiality is said to take place more frequently near the small towns where it is easier to encounter an animal belonging to *another* person. A farmer has a certain sentiment for his own animals that prevents him from having what would be considered an almost incestuous relationship. One informant said that the size of the boy determines the size of the animal utilised: little boys go after chickens, ewes and nanny-goats while older boys have sex with mares, mules and cows. More ingenious younger boys point out that a large animal can be positioned in a depression so as to overcome the size problem.

Females probably do not have relationships with animals but boys and men suspect that they masturbate, as males do, before marriage. Such subjects between women are not discussed, so my wife could not confirm much. Such behaviour may or may not occur. However, some of the wilder claims, such as the use of phallus objects, are not true, if only because of the necessity to prove virginity on the wedding night.

Other illicit sex is more condemned both in this world and in the next. The larger the community, the greater the chance that a few homosexual males may exist. Urban growth and greater impersonality are recent changes in the Sertão, so the incidence of homosexuality can be considered to be a modern phenomenon, and, indeed, proportionately

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[1] This generalisation is based on information provided by friends and acquaintances who had grown up in various parts of rural Brazil and is also confirmed by literary works, e.g. the auto-biographical novel of Rego [1973(1965)]. Similar behaviour is portrayed for the herders of Sardinia in the film Padre Patrone.

more gays are found in towns and cities such as Belém and Salgueiro, that are integrated into the national society. Homosexuals are not attacked directly nor prosecuted by the law; they are simply shunned, gossiped about and, worst of all, not considered to be real men.

Rape is almost unheard of. On the other hand, many places have a local *tarado* who might try to lift the skirt of a woman. Such a person is considered to be insane. In one case from Chorrochó the man's relatives beat him and kept him under close surveillance to avoid a repetition of the first affront, which would surely result in his death at the hands of the victim's indignant kin. Girls using such overly revealing modern attire as bermuda shorts are warned that they are provoking a *tarado*.

Rumours about one case of sibling incest were encountered and it was considered such an abnormal act that the people did not know how to react. Individuals that grow up together in the same household should have a different kind of feeling for one another that excludes the possibility of sex. A person should also have this same kind of love for grandparents, parents, first uncles and aunts, and first nephews and nieces, whether they live together or not.[1] The relatives of the incestuous pair are said to have taken measures to prevent a recurrence, but it is God who will mete out real punishment in the end. Thus, in cases of more deviant sex, while society does not make collective action other

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[1] First aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews were traditionally favoured marriage partners when they were of about the same age. Large families meant that the youngest children of one generation could be contemporaries of the oldest children of the next generation. Feelings of incest occur between an uncle and a niece or an aunt and a nephew when one is about 15-20 years older than the other. In such cases the uncle or aunt would be playing their normal expected role which rules out marriage with nephews and nieces.

than censorship, divine punishment in the form of ultimate damnation is always hanging over the head of a potential sinner. However, divine punishment need not await St. Peter's judgement and an accident can be explained as being the result of a sick or sinful act of sex. Curiously, one hears more about the sinfulness of abandoning a wife for another woman and about homosexuality or incest than about adultery, even though the latter is one of the Ten Commandments. This might be explained by the fact that female adultery is held to result in concrete and usually swift justice at the hands of the husband.[1] Male adultery is not considered as a sin at all.

Courting

Normal relationships with the opposite sex evolve in a series of recognised stages, each with its acceptable behaviour which has changed somewhat in modern times. First a couple are steadies (*namorados*), then engaged (*noivos*) and finally married (*casados*).

Most socialising between the sexes takes place on the plaza (*praça*) which can be a main square or an important street of the community. Boys who do not as yet have girl friends stand about or sit in groups while girls without boyfriends walk together around the square or along the street passing close enough to the boys to flirt. Unmarried couples sit on the benches holding hands and talking.

Parties were traditionally the means by which a boy could try to show his attention to a specific girl by asking her to dance. Also,

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[1] This is in keeping with Douglas (1966) who argues that divine sanctions take over where economic and social sanctions are lacking or ineffectual in controlling behaviour.

couples have the opportunity to dance a close *forró* (the traditional dance of the Northeast) on such occasions. Nowadays, dimly lit *boates* and discos operate at weekends, or even during the week, allowing more opportunity for intimate socialising and dancing. This takes place away from the watchful eyes of their parents, who go to parties but not to discos.

Namorados have limits to where their relationship can lead, without the next stage of *noivos* having been officially announced. In public they can walk hand-in-hand but only near home or on the plaza. They are always accompanied by the girl's mother, sister or cousin. A girl without cousins is sorely restricted in her love life, for cousins are more understanding. When a couple can be alone, they may kiss, which is about as far as most girls are willing to go at this point. More permissive girls will allow petting, but little more.

An engaged couple is granted much more liberty, because her parents have confidence in the man's word that he will marry their daughter. They allow the two to go out more often and stay out longer. Such couples can stay at a party until the end, when most older persons have already gone home. While a mother should still keep an eye on them, they are allowed to be alone and, depending on the girls, sexual intercourse may take place, especially if the wedding day is near. As long as they are in the company of other persons, the couple can travel to other towns, where of course they will sleep separately.

Extramarital Sex and Honour

Premaritial sex and particularly adultery are acts in which notions of masculinity conflict with ideas of female virginity and fidelity.

It is exactly in such situations that class inequality, in a social sense, is most blatantly oppressive and where Sertanejo males can truly be said to have disproportionate prerogatives.

Sexual relations outside marriage which result in the loss of virginity can occur between *noivos* or even between persons who are not engaged. As long as such behaviour is not made public, no problems arise. Boys do not boast of their exploits and even men may fear a girl's indignant relatives if they were to do so.[1]

The loss of virginity usually comes to light only with pregnancy. If the lovers involved are not engaged they are forced to become so and the wedding day is set for an early date so as to avoid the embarrassment of an obviously pregnant bride. There are even a few cases of men who are already married, but only by a religious service, being forced to marry a pregnant girl in a civil ceremony and so having to choose between his two wives.

In the past, as in the present, poor women were more subject to deflowering by rich married men. While the informal work contract of a *morador* family seldom reached the extreme of one infamous case where

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[1] One trusted informant, an educated young man of Chorrochó, estimates that 70% of urban upper and middle class women marry as virgins while 20% marry already having had sex, 5% do not marry having been branded whores and 5% remain old maids. Of poor urban women 40% marry virgins, 20% marry as non-virgins, 35% remain unmarried whores and 5% remain spinsters. In the country, where women of the middle and lower class are not so depredated by lovers and philandering men of the *elite*, 50% marry as virgins, 30% marry as non-virgins, 15% remain unmarried due to loss of virginity and 5% remain old maids. Change is held to have taken place for in the older generation, all women of the upper and middle class are thought to have married as virgins, while 60% of the poor women married as virgins, 10% married having had prior relations, 25% were 'prostitutes' and 5% old maids. It would appear that the informant, who is from the upper class, overestimates the proportion of poor women who end up by remaining unmarried due to loss of virginity. It was possible to identify some of these women and, of the 23 poor families with which an urban questionnaire was done, 13% of the households consisted of single mothers.

a crusty old *coronel* insisted that sharecropping included sharing womenfolk too, landless families had to suffer stoically the occasional advances of a patron. Numerous *filhos naturais* (bastards) of certain important men attest to the temptation to abuse authority. However, Sertanejo men are usually not given to chronic philandering because even a poor man may not be able to withstand an affront, but may kill an important rancher and flee.

The fate of a poor woman who has been deflowered is to work in the fields, to wash clothes or to carry water. Such tasks in themselves are considered to be honest work and most poor women, married or not, do them. She may continue living with her parents if she has not been expelled from their household. Expelled daughters when still young can also earn money as prostitutes, though only in larger towns, like Belém, are fulltime specialists working in brothels encountered.

Unmarried non-virgins and adulteresses of the rich are a humiliation for their family. They can be exiled from the town and contact with them is severed. They go to larger cities where they find work. After a number of years they may return to their home town and can grudgingly be accepted back by their family but on condition that they lead upright lives. Alternatively, an unmarried mother of the middle and upper class may be expelled from her parental home but a relative may take her in so that she is not forced to leave the town. Also, as a punishment, her baby can be taken away from her upon birth and given to childless relatives in another community. However, if such women remain in, or return to, their home town they rarely marry, for their fidelity is considered to be questionable and second chances are seldom, if ever, given.

A *rapariga* need not be a woman who accepts money or one who beds a number of different men. To have sex with more than one man earns the status. Whores are condemned because they engage in sex for enjoyment's sake and nothing else. Relations with a *noivo* lead on to marriage and a family, while sex with different men is viewed as sick lust. Such women are likened to bitches on heat, or simply called animals, because there is only the tie of the momentary union of bodies and not the long-term bonds of economic and social cooperation. Also, priests strongly promote the idea that sex is only legitimate in marriage and for the purposes of procreation.

On the other hand, men can mess about, without strong censorship. There are fifteen bordel-bars in Belém, more than the number of churches and almost the same as the number of public buildings of the city. The bordels are far too numerous to serve only the lorry drivers who come to buy onions. Neither Chorrochó nor Parnamirim are nearly as wealthy as Belém and they do not have a single house of prostitution. Wives do not particularly like their husbands philandering after marriage but, for the most part, they only harbour their suspicions and voice them from time to time. Husbands, on the other hand, react violently to a wife's adultery. Ideally, the wife and her paramour are killed if caught in the act. If public rumour of a liaison seems to be grounded in truth it is said that a husband will kill or force his rival to leave town and will abandon his wife. If the husband does nothing, he earns the title of *corno conformado* (resigned cuckold) which is paramount to being the worst kind of coward.

Much of this seems to be stressed by the local people, more as a warning to transgressors. No resigned cuckolds were encountered in any of the communities and only two cases of a husband abandoning an

unfaithful wife came to light in Chorrochó. In both cases the husband merely abandoned her and did not take action against the paramour. One case involved a poor woman who remained in the community and her spouse left. Today, she lives from what she earns by washing clothes like other single poor women and it is rumoured that she is a part-time prostitute. The other case involved a woman of the social elite and she was forced to leave town. In a third case of female adultery in Chorrochó, the shamed husband committed suicide. He was a member of the upper class, so there was no question of his being forced to accept this affront quietly as a poor person might. Only in one case did an irate husband of Parnamirim resort to violence. When his wife became too open with an affair he killed her and fled town, leaving his children virtual orphans. In Belém, a woman's cousin sent hired killers to murder the man with whom she was living after having left her husband. The murdered man was an outsider, so his death would not be avenged.

We may conclude from this that despite all the threats of and actual cases of adultery resulting in violence against both the adultress and her lover, the burden of restraint falls on women. They must maintain strict control over their desires and rebuff the advances of men. Killing a paramour risks feud as well as dividing the family in a region where to kill either one's wife or her lover might mean murdering a close relative.

Before marriage, a man or a woman is permitted to leave a steady for another but wedding vows are taken seriously in the Sertão. Of 134 marriages only 9, 7% of the total, ended in separation. Of the nine separations, two individuals were responsible for four of the cases. With the exception of a few such troublesome individuals, Sertanejos get married for life.

Divorce was illegal until just recently and remarriage after legal separation (*desquite*) was also banned. The more usual way round the old law, that was commonly utilized in other parts of Brazil, *juntar* (to live together), is rare in the Sertão. Of the nine cases of separation, only three of the individuals took up residence *juntado* with another partner. Most of the cases are those of a man taking another mate. When women separate they usually remain single and the one woman who did take another man was soon separated again, due to her new husband's suspecting her fidelity. The one case of a couple living together without either of them having been married previously, involved a woman who had borne a number of children out of wedlock. Even living together requires fidelity and that the man did not marry her is indicative of his suspicion about her faithfulness. Not being legally married allows him the freedom to abandon her if her conduct merits it.

In the eyes of the people only a wedding legitimizes the union of two persons. As far back as informants can remember, for a couple to live together without censure, they must be married. Persons wanting to be married come from long distances for a church wedding or, nowadays, a civil wedding in the county registry office.

Ideally, a civil marriage does not have the same value that a church sanctioned union does. Until recently, most people did not even bother about having a civil marriage performed and it was usually only upper class persons, concerned about property inheritance, that were married by both forms. To avoid bigamy, the Church now requires that a civil wedding takes place before the religious wedding.[1] To most people the

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[1] It used to be common practice to marry another person in a civil wedding after having separated from the first partner of a religious wedding. However, where there is a will there is a way. For a price, the civil registry of a certain city, close to the fieldwork area, conveniently issues civil marriage certificates without asking about other prior civil unions.

former is seen as a mere bureaucratic formality. When the two ceremonies are performed the couple are not considered to be married and cannot consummate their relationship until after the religious ceremony takes place. Today most people get married by both religious and civil ceremony. Of 69 couples questioned about their wedding ceremonies, 80% were married by both, 13% were only married by a church service and only 7% were united by a civil service.

When a spouse dies and the widow(er) can remarry, simply living together is out of the question, the new couple must marry. For a number of reasons, widowers remarry more often and faster than do widows. Of the 16 widowers interviewed, 63% had remarried while only 13% of the eight widows had. Some old women say that a widow should never remarry and should wear mourning black or dark dresses for the rest of her life. No doubt some widows think like this, particularly if they are already middle aged or elderly. Women of this age normally use darker clothing and not bright colours which is for younger women. Also, a widow may be beyond prime marrying age, something a man does not suffer from, and she may have children which can be a hinderance to remarriage. Women are not nearly as dependent on men in the sexual division of labour as men are on them. A widow can administer a farm or even work in the fields but a man feels helpless in domestic tasks so that he quickly starts looking for another spouse, particularly if he does not have daughters. In addition, a widow must wear mourning clothes longer than men. She should not too actively look for another man, even after having removed her mourning clothes, for fear of being called a 'happy widow' which has connotations of a whore. Men might be criticised for not having enough respect for his deceased wife if he starts procuring women during his shorter period of mourning but he is not censored in the

least after that period. Finally, some men may harbour fears or prejudice about a widow's already having had sexual relations with another man. However, some young widows do manage to overcome these restrictions and remarry.

We can conclude from all this that, from the man's point of view, it is really fear of cuckoldry that is at the basis of the strong emphasis on female virginity, fidelity and the general strict supervision of a woman's sexuality.[1] Indeed, a man has probably greater fear of being considered a cuckold by his peers than a young woman has of losing her virginity. Men reason that if their potential spouse has never experienced sex with another man, then she shall be completely satisfied with him. Parents are also anxious for a daughter to be happy in her sex life so as to avoid having the family name stained.

It does not occur to men that, once having experienced sex, a woman might want a variety of men, but this is an academic point, for a woman is rarely left alone. She is continually surrounded by children and kin. A married woman seldom leaves her house unaccompanied and a male

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[1] Brandes (1980) holds a similar view that fear of cuckoldry is at the basis of inter-sexual behaviour in Andalusian Spain and he cites Cutileiro who reports the same for southern Portugal. The material from the Sertão supports Brandes and Pitt-Rivers [1971(1954)] in their ideas that to be a cuckold and do nothing about it makes the victim unmanly. However, the European image of a cuckold as "super-goat" (also mentioned by Alinei, 1982 and Blok, 1981) is absent in the Sertão, which at first glance seems curious considering that the zone was colonised by Portuguese. In the semi-arid zone, goat rearing is very much man's work. A billy-goat is called a *bode* and not *cabrão* (as it is in Portugal to which the cuckold stigma is attached). To the contrary of being associated with cuckolds, billy-goats have the attributes that Blok observes for rams in the Mediterranean. Sheep are not held to be as resilient, as tough or as intelligent as goats are, which is to be expected under the more rigorous climatic conditions of the Sertão. A billy-goat is a *pai-de-chiqueiro* (father of the goat corral) which reflects positively on his sexual prowess in being able to attend to his whole herd, a feat that puts men to envy. Even the term *corno* itself in the Sertão merely refers to cuckold and *chifre* is the local word for horn. Even *chifrudo*, which is used for cuckold in the southern part of Brazil is absent in the Sertão.

visitor without good cause for entering a home sparks off the malicious curiosity of neighbours. Females rarely go on journeys as men do, and when they do, it is usually in the company of their husband or close kin.

From a woman's point of view to remain a virgin until marriage is desirable because she is afraid of the implications of becoming pregnant. In a situation of more females than males, due to the intense emigration of young men, a girl wants to maximize her chances of marriage, which loss of virginity or a pregnancy can only seriously jeopardize. In addition, the man with whom she, in a momentary lapse had sex, may not be one she would like to pass the rest of her life with, if the couple were forced to get married. Thirdly, if she were to have a child out of wedlock and were expelled from her parental home, she would have great difficulty in supporting herself and her baby. Finally, priests harp on the fact that a man and a woman can only be united by holy wedlock, with the implication that to do otherwise is a serious sin. Virgins are pure and the bride's white wedding gown is a symbol of her purity. Some girls allege that the priest refuses to marry deflowered virgins and pregnant brides. Even males subscribe to the concept of purity and say that they want a virgin for a wife and not a whore that numerous men have fouled.[1]

The Mediterranean authors note a relationship between a heightened sense of honour and the need for families and individuals to resort to self-help in the absence of strong government authority. A family's reputation is part of its patrimony, just as its fields and herds are.

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[1] Brandes (1980) cites similar ideas about men wanting unpolluted virgin brides who have not been defiled by other men.

In the New World, and in the Sertão, where the frontier was - and still is in some places - a recent phenomenon, men had to protect their own. Comparing the Sertão and other parts of Latin America, such as northern Mexico (cf. Pi-Sunyer, 1973), to the situation in Europe one is struck by how much more violent conflicts of honour are in the New World. Hence, the possibility of violent sanctions for transgressors are one way to protect one's family, particularly in the absence of effective law enforcement. Pi-Sunyer (1973) shows that in such a social settling in Zamora, Mexico, the rigid control of women is in itself a mechanism designed to lower tension and friction between touchy males. However, in the Sertão there exist other important sources of contention that become questions of honour even if the dispute over women is fairly controlled.

Of Men and Revenge

The honour of a man as defined in the words of an informant,

> ... is a fundamental and traditional characteristic of Sertanejo society. Underlying it are such values as morals, respect and mutual consideration. For example, if a family has a man who is tough, is respected by his fellows, is a hard worker, is not a drunkard, is shrewd in his dealings, has economic independence, treats others with respect, then it is an honour to have such a man in the family. He keeps his word. If he says he will pay something his signing of a contract is not necessary, he can be trusted.

In the old days when beards and moustaches were common, the symbol of the sanctity of a pact was for the man, who had made a promise, to give the other a hair from his moustache. It is said that when he had fulfilled his word he would receive it back, just as in modern dealings with a promissory note. Perhaps, the man holding the hair could utilize it to avenge a broken pact through witchcraft but he was more likely to take direct violent action against the other.

Sertanejo notions of masculine, rugged individuality mean that a man should always be prepared to punish any affront to his dignity. He should be a *cabra macho*, which is to say a tough male. Such a man demands respect (*respeito*) and only a tougher enemy or a drunken fool would provoke him with an accusation of some dishonourable act.

There are innumerable stories of especially rough individuals of former times who are famous at the local level or even well known on a regional and national scale as well. Countless tales of the bandit Lampião are repeated over and over again in bars and in general stores. They have their set rules of presentation in which, at dramatic points of incredible violence, exclamations of "Nossa", "Vige" and "Meu Deus" are expected from the listening audience. These are not legends of social bandits (cf. Hobsbawn, 1972) but rather of amazement and admiration at the extremes of individual liberty that a tough man could exercise.[1]

The rich and powerful are often cowed in the stories but any person was subject to such a man's passing whims. The locally famous Enoque Pires might have put a revolver against an engineer's head and forced him to stop blowing the train whistle which caused so much commotion in the Arcoverde cattle market, but on other occasions he could get drunk and bully others in a bar. In sum, they were tricksters. As Gill (1982) and Radin [1972(1956)] note for this type of legendary figure, they set their wits and strength against all others to demonstrate their superiority. They were sometimes noble, sometimes pranksters and sometimes exceedingly cruel. Sertanejos hold a particular ambiguous attitude to these touch men as for every time they may have acted as champions, avengers and fighters for justice, they have just as often done precisely the opposite.

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[1] Pi-Sunyer (1973) reports this type of legend for bandits of northern Mexico.

Nowadays, the local people complain that violence is becoming worse than it was in the past. Traditional notions of honour, combined with a series of changes in community relations and problems with the structure of the judiciary system, have provoked greater violence than in the recent past.

To prove this quantitatively is difficult, given the fact that many violent crimes go unrecorded. Also, most civil clerks were understandably uncooperative, one to the point of taking offence at my pressing him for what should be public information. Records are incomplete which do not allow for comparison between different periods. Not even obituary records are of much help because not all deaths are recorded nor the cause of death in recent years, when a doctor does not perform a post mortem examination (which they rarely do). However, the people feel the change.

The district prosecutor of Belém observed that not a single killing was registered in the county from 1949 to 1958, while currently two to three persons are murdered each month. This demonstrates that violence in Belém has been increasing much faster than would be expected from demographic increase. Such is Belém's fame for aggressive crimes that the state radio labelled the place "crime city". Chorrochó is much less affected by the changes occurring elsewhere and only two or three homicides take place during the course of a year in the county. Similarly, in Parnamirim only three to four homicides per annum are registered for the years 1975-1979.

Quite probably the Sertão was just as violent in the colonial past while the zone was being slowly settled. For centuries it remained a frontier type cultural area and its history is one of struggles against Amerindians, fugitive slaves and outlaws. Rival large landowners advanced

on each other's empires and against squatters and smaller property holders [Andrade, 1973(1964), and Pierson, 1972]. With the exception of the period of bandits from about 1900-1936 and occasional large-scale feuds between rival families, such as the Carvalhos and the Pereiras on the Pajeú from 1850-1920, violence was probably toned down by the beginning of the last century when the semi-arid zone was finally more settled.[1] The demise of the last great bandit Lampião in 1936 marks the period when the state and federal governments started to exercise more control over the Sertão.

However, the centuries of struggle have left their mark on the Sertanejo character, which probably explains his heightened sense of honour and quick resort to vengeance as a means of righting wrongs. Pastoral societies are noted for such values (cf. Alinei, 1972; Black-Michaud, 1976 and Campbell, 1964), which have much to do with the problems of preventing animal theft and the very nature of more extensive forms of stock-rearing. Large tracts of land are utilized and population is dispersed, hence a frontier-like situation prevailed until quite recently.

Today in the Sertão, the response to being called a thief, a liar, a cuckold or scum is a bullet between the eyes or a knife in the guts. If such a murder case goes to court a jury will acquit the killer, for they would have done the same thing in his place.[2] The victim should have had the good sense to be more respectful. The reaction to provocation

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[1] Pierson (1972) holds that conflict lessened by the late 1700s. Violence did not end but it did seem to decrease. He cites accounts in the 17th and 18th centuries of frequent government punitive expeditions from Salvador into the interior in an attempt to establish some order. Also, fortified settlements existed which were not usually necessary in later times.

[2] Another very important reason for jurors to absolve a killer is to avoid angering him, for he may come after them when released from prison. Even a wealthy juror can fear the vengeance of a hardened criminal.

need not always be to kill the offender, though it usually is a violent one. In the past, an important man might cut off the ear of the transgressor, beat him or force him to leave the community. The latter two forms of punishment are still common today for any real or imagined insult. Even when a person may have been correct in his accusation, he nevertheless insulted the man and, as such, his affirmation is considered a challenge (*desafio*).

However, a sense of honour can reach extremes at times, to the point that any attempt to limit the actions of another, even when he may be endangering other people, can be viewed as a slight. Many a corrupt judge and jury under political pressure are too inclined to dismiss such cases on the grounds of affronted honour. This exaggerated notion of personal liberty is well illustrated by one act of aggression that occurred in a village of Chorrochó, which shocked even the murderer's relatives. A policeman stopped three drunken men from shooting up a market day and the men later killed him for daring to ruin their fun. The policeman was unarmed and killed in cold blood. Everyone condemned what was considered to be an unjustifiable and monstrous act but no one took any action. As the killers were distant relatives of the local traditional family the judge did nothing and, because the dead man had no relatives living in the area, the injustice went completely unavenged.

The idea involved with vengeance is that any behaviour that implies a lack of honour, a *deshonra*, or a lack of respect, *desrespeito*, must be righted with the blood of the transgressor. A disrespectful person simply does not deserve to live. Revenge can come swiftly with the aggrieved promptly killing his victim there and then. However, usually some thought is necessary to ponder the insult, for anger to mount and

the culprit is gunned down the next time he is encountered. Either the murderer is carried away by his emotions upon seeing the perpetrator of the prior insult or he has already made up his mind to kill his victim on sight. Also, calculated, premeditated homicide is common. Elaborate ambushes are used, the ingenuity of which are recounted with awe as the news of the killing spreads rapidly.

When a revenge killing is decided upon, the object is to take the victim completely by surprise so as not to allow him to defend himself and thus to avoid the risk of the bushwacker being killed instead of the intended victim. This type of murder is called killing in cold blood (*sangue frio*) and, while some stigma is attached to this mode of assassination, it is perhaps the more frequent type of homocide.[1] Indeed, a person who gives his enemy a chance to defend himself is considered to be a fool or only does so because he is so drunk he cannot reason properly.

Frequently, a more wealthy individual will contract a *pistoleiro*, a hired gunman, to kill an offender, much as the powerful used to do in the past when they would send a touch retainer, a *cabra* or *morador de confiança*, after the man. This is done so as not to be implicated directly in the crime, but murder by proxy is viewed by real men as being somewhat cowardly. In a famous feud in Exu, the Alencares are said to be true *machos* because they do their own avenging while their enemies, the Sampaios, are thought to be craven for sending hired guns.[2]

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[1] Peter Fonda's film The Hired Hand, where the two 'heroes' try to kill a man at dawn while he is still sleeping in bed, probably portrays the Old West more accurately than the typical Hollywood showdown on main street.

[2] To kill without just reason is abhorrent to Sertanejos. When a hired gun is contracted to murder an enemy, a picture of the victim is shown to him and the reasons for killing him are explained. After hearing it all he will exclaim, "I am already full of hatred". The killer thus rationalizes the act to himself and the murder will be for just motives, not merely for money.

An interesting aspect of modern disputes of honour and feud is that only men are involved. Women are never killed nor raped as acts of revenge against a family. Rape could be a particularly effective way of affronting one's enemies, for it would defile their women and ruin the chances of the latter marrying. However, such is not even contemplated, nor is the killing of women. A case where a murdered man's widow was financing a campaign of vengeance with a life insurance policy taken out for just such an end, illustrates this prohibition. The family of the other side of the feud threatened to kill her if she did not stop her activities. Her side countered by saying that if such an unthinkable act were perpetrated they would follow suit and kill a prominent woman of theirs. The threat was quickly withdrawn.

Many disputes are thought to be caused by excesses of drunkenness. '*Cachaça* fights' are said to occur due to the liberating effect of alcohol which causes an individual to make an accusation or complaint about some previous grievance, something he might not dare to do while sober. Usually in small communities, like Chorrochó and Parnamirim, the greater majority of acts of aggression are provoked by such a slip of the tongue while under the influence of alcohol. In larger towns, like Belém, or even in smaller towns that are booming commercially, like Abaré or Santa Maria da Boa Vista, about half the acts of violence are the redressing of previous wrongs while the other half are caused by misguided words between intoxicated strangers on market day. This latter type of killing is a modern phenomenon and is called 'crime of pride'. In the tense atmosphere of market day in the commercial cities, those farmers who were not so lucky in speculative commercial agriculture can be highly resentful of the ostentatious display of those who may have been more fortunate. In one extreme case, a newly-rich farmer walked down the

main street of Belém with large denomination notes pinned to his shirt and was promptly shot.

The police and the judiciary only enter into a dispute after an act of aggression takes place. Even then, the authorities only react in cases of murder or assault between individuals of the lower class or when a rich person is attacked by a poor man. When a rich man perpetrates what is viewed as justifiable assault or homicide an official inquiry is not made at all. When the deed is not so justifiable, then the judicial documents concerning the case are conveniently lost or mislaid.

The police are particularly brutal, to the point of committing what might be considered torture, but they only "smash the heads of the poor". As peace officers are from modest origins themselves and are dependent on the powerful for their jobs, they would never dare to arrest an upper class person and much less beat such a man. The poor are not so fortunate. The laws apply to them and they are regularly 'squeezed' into confessing the details of their crimes. The police are thus viewed to be so cowardly, that it is common to hear, that they only arrest the dead and passed-out. In Exu, where feud violence is worst, they do absolutely nothing about the feud because it involves the town's elite.

The poor, and particularly persons of the middle class, are not quite so helpless before the arrogant whims of the powerful as first appears, not in the present nor in prior times. In the past, many of those who joined bandit gangs, *cangaceiros*, did so as a way of revenging a wrong committed by a rich rancher.[1] Alone they could not muster the

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[1] Yet ironically they often did not actually avenge themselves when they had the chance [Mello, 1974 and Queiroz, 1977(1968)].

force nor were they as well armed as the large ranger with his hired guns, *capangas* or *cabras*. On the other hand, roving bandit bands in the first part of this century terrorized the rich of the Sertão as they were more than a match for the *coronéis* (colonels) with their hired guns and dependent police forces. Even if a poor man did not join a bandit gang, opportunities could arise whereby a person of lower status was able to kill a rich man. Queiroz [1977(1968)] cites several cases of this happening but, if the avenger and his family did not flee, the overwhelming force of a large rancher would finally get to them in the end.

It must be noted that the press and urban intellectuals have distorted the proportions of what is often portrayed as a struggle between righteous bandits representing the poor and evil rural barons. Bandits were not so numerous at all, though their threat was constant, and they were not Robin Hoods. They stole from the rich because the latter had the wealth. The colonels were more commonly upstanding local leaders who played the role of local counsellor. Some were indeed arbitrary oppressors of the weak, but the local people tend to stress the fact that most played a positive role in community relations. They would arbitrate disputes, much as political leaders can do today, where opposing individuals could only resolve their problem by attrition and conflict. Such leaders had the authority to judge a case and make their decision binding. They could even involve themselves in a minor case, such as that of rival lovers, and make a decision so as to reduce tensions between the persons involved.[1]

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[1] The colonels are so maligned in Brazilian history because they represented the losing side of the struggle for political hegemony that culminated in the 1930 Revolution and the shift of power to urban interest groups, who write the history.

At any rate, if a large rancher of the past was unjust, changing economic and political circumstances meant that from the 1940s onwards the aggrieved could ask for help from the rising commercial class, the political foes of the landed class, or might more easily kill the malefactor outright with a firearm that even the poor could increasingly afford.

Having committed a murder, if a person fears arrest for the crime or death by the murdered man's relatives, his usual recourse is to flee immediately. Brazil is a huge country and communications between the federal and state police of different regions are poor. The criminal may try his luck in the Southeast or in the Amazon region and several immigrants to these areas are fugitives from justice. In such a case or when a person is forced to leave a community, *desterrado*, the act of leaving can be a severe punishment in itself. Sertanejos are famed for their ties to the land and home. When a man leaves, he abandons his farmstead and family.[1] He is alone in a strange world where it may prove difficult to find a new means of livelihood. Many individuals choose not to leave the general vicinity, which increases their chances of one day being found by their avengers and killed. This is particularly true if a member of an influential family was murdered because the victim's relatives occupy important positions in various cities of the region. The police, on the other hand, rarely worry about a criminal once he has left town, even if he has merely moved to a neighbouring community, he is conveniently out of their jurisdiction.

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[1] Nóbrega (1960) gives this as the main reason why his father, Chico Pereira, who was involved in a famous feud, would not flee elsewhere and finally died at the hands of the police.

However, a criminal may not have to flee at all if his political faction is in power. He receives 'cover' from the local political boss in the same way that an influential person does. In the words of one man, "Now that we have city hall, nobody from our side will be prosecuted for murder". However, a killer has to take care to avoid his avengers who will be all the more infuriated by the fact that he was not arrested or convicted in court. To evade his enemies he should not frequent places where he may encounter them, such as the main streets and busy bars during market day and town festivities. As Sertanejos love the 'movement' of such occasions this in itself is at least some form of punishment.

Another way that political interference has increased the occurrence of criminal offences in modern times is by retrieving confiscated firearms from the police and returning them to their owners in order to win votes. In theory, only individuals with gun permits can bear arms and a permit is fairly difficult to obtain. In practice, nearly every man carries a revolver tucked under his belt. Ironically, greater market integration and Brazilian industrial development have meant that since 1960 firearms have become so plentiful and cheap that almost anyone can afford one. It could be said that vengeance has become more democratic.[1]

Small wonder that the police are powerless. Politicians prevent them from making arrests and even return pistols to their owners but the judicial system itself has also aggravated the wave of violence that is sweeping the Sertão. Besides the failure to convict killers,

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[1] Pi-Sunyer (1973) notes a class relation in the ownership of firearms in Mexico. Only some poor own revolvers and rifles whereas all members of the middle and upper class have them. The same can be observed in more humid areas of Northeast Brazil where landless peasants are poorer than lower class Sertanejos. The poor in such places tend to have only a knife tucked under their belt instead of a revolver.

local legal interpretation of the 'Fleury Law' means that the police cannot keep a murderer in jail if he has no previous criminal record.[1] This loophole allows killers to flee at will. Another legal peculiarity which is recognised by all, leads a potential aggressor to attempt to kill a man rather than merely wound him. A homicide case goes before a jury, which certainly will acquit him, while assault goes before a judge, who may or may not be so lenient. The situation has reached such a point that any misunderstanding that may in the slightest way cause a man to think that another will contemplate revenge, leads him to kill the other just to be on the safe side.

Instead of increased cultural integration bringing about more law and order, traditional notions of honour, combined with greater ease in the purchase of firearms, a shortage of police officers and their general lack of authority, increased consumption of hard spirits, more contact with strangers and political interference, all appear to have increased aggression in modern times. These factors, together with loosening ties of kinship, greater class disparity and rapid urban growth, are quickly thrusting the Sertão in the direction of one of the more negative aspects of the national culture. Television is a recent introduction in the semi-arid zone and the local people watch aghast at the crime which is reported from other parts of the country. They need not look too far, for already some cases of new types of urban crime, such as house and shop burglary, killing in the act of robbery and rape, are beginning to occur. When these take place locally, the people are horrified for the thought of impersonal, passionless crime is alien to Sertanejos.

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[1] This law is named after a former police chief of São Paulo in whose favour it was enacted. He was charged with being involved in a number of murders committed by right-wing death squads that killed criminals. To avoid the humiliation of having the police chief of the largest city of the country put in jail while awaiting trial, the law was established. Locally, the law is interpreted to mean that if a murderer has not killed someone before then he is released until his trial.

POLITICS

6. POLITICS

As in the interior of most of Brazil, politics in the Sertão have long been the great pursuit in life. Traditionally, almost every single act that an individual or a community undertook would - and to a large extent still does - ultimately have political overtones. Politicians take advantage of any collective gathering, such as patron saint's days, religious pilgrimages, high school graduation ceremonies and the inauguration of public works, to remind the voters just what a good job they are doing in office. In addition to this, the community itself is usually divided on such occasions, with the opinion of the audience and the participants concerning the significance of the events being split along factional lines.

Politics are taken so seriously exactly because they enter almost every aspect of community life. In a situation of poor employment opportunities and recurrent drought, steady jobs with a regular and comparatively high salary are at a premium. Basic county services can be provided or denied, according to factional allegiance. Even whether a person is prosecuted or not for a revenge killing depends on whether he voted for the present mayor.

For local notables - and for those aspiring to be notables - ultimate prestige and abundant spoils are to be won in elections. The control of political power has long been just as important for conferring status on individuals of the community as has the holding of the right material possessions. The two are mutually reinforcing. Little wonder why elections are so keenly contested in some places that outright gun battles, ambushes with intent to kill and long-lasting feuds can result. Nor are politics

an exclusively male preserve; women, too, are not immune from what some local people describe as a 'cancer' in community relations.

In the small towns and cities of the semi-arid zone, political activity is one of the principal forms of entertainment which television alone has come to rival in recent times. Also, it is a good question whether elections or revenge killings are the most common topic discussed by the groups of people who gather on sidewalks and in bars. Interest in politics as manifested in conversation may, at times, subside between elections but the way in which political power interferes with almost everything that happens is a permanent feature of life.

Political organization takes over where kinship ties wane in defining social groupings. Kindreds gain solidarity and identity through affiliation with a particular faction. Factions in turn group various kindreds together. Also, factions normally cross class and racial divisions. They are organized along consanguinal and affinal lines among the upper and middle class members and extend to their retainers and employees.

Notwithstanding this, politics can be as disruptive to community relations as they are in promoting greater social cohesion among faction members. Disputing faction leadership can even split kindreds long allied by inter-marriage. Also, the lion's share of the spoils and prestige remains in the hands of the dominant class, no matter which faction is in power, and this does not go unnoted by the poor, thus deepening social disparity and class division. The diverting of public funds to private hands can reach such extremes that, in some cases, graft can prove to be one of the greatest barriers to providing the conditions necessary for the development desired by politicians at all levels. Also, local leaders interfere regularly with the judiciary and their penchant for earning votes by obtaining the release of supporters from the police

and the courts was shown to have aggravated feuding. Finally, even such solidarity-promoting institutions as the church can be disrupted by factional rivalry so that a priest must be careful that certain acts are not construed as favouring one side more than another.

Politics, too, have been affected by the general changes that have been taking place in the Sertão. However, the system has suffered little structural modification. Some of the actors have been substituted and forms of political alliance adapted to, or better exploited by, the conservative interest groups at the state and national levels. The general process of change has resulted in a shift of the power base of local leaders, even greater control and manipulation of county level politics by higher level government and increased significance of small town politics for maintaining conservatives in power at state and federal levels.

Such change does not mean that the local people and leaders have greater leverage over state and federal affairs or that their power has increased in relation to that of the cities. Ironically, it is the people of the interior who most strongly support the conservative forces of the Northeast and the country, yet they have received so little for their loyalty. Wealth and development aid have been concentrated in exactly those areas of the region and the country that support the liberal parties. This is a general rule of Brazilian politics, from the village to the national level. Politicians give just enough of the spoils to their supporters to maintain loyalty while dispensing a good deal of patronage to potential allies and voters of the other camp. Such a state of affairs exists because Sertanejos are offered little choice. If the leaders and their kin wish to maintain their civil service posts they must vote for the government candidates and if their retainers and employees want to keep their jobs they vote as their bosses tell them to.

BRAZILIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Since independence the political history of Brazil has been one of the gradual concentration of power in the hands of the central government, a process which was occasionally disrupted by local and regional revolts. First, the Proclamation of the Republic and then the 1930 revolution and the Vargas New State dictatorship marked the transition from local autonomy to greater control on the part of the state and federal government over municipal politics. The 1964 military takeover hastened this trend (Alburquerque, 1981; Chandler, 1972).

As the system works today, most governmental decisions and funding flow from the executive branch of the federal government which, despite some recent tendencies toward liberalization, is strictly controlled by the military. Since 1964 the legislative branch, consisting of the Senate and the House of Deputies, has had its power seriously restricted to that of merely rubber stamping executive initiatives and to channelling the distribution of governmental largesse. The judiciary, too, has only recently begun to show signs of limited independence from the executive branch. However, in both the judicial and executive branches, key positions are filled by high ranking military officers. In recent months there is some talk of the armed forces participating less actively in government but whether anything comes of this remains to be seen.

The state government is made up of an executive branch headed by a governor and a legislative branch consisting of an assembly of state deputies. During the course of this century these figures have lost most of their autonomy and their role has been reduced to distributing funds and civil service positions. From 1964 until the 1982 elections, governors were appointed by the central government. The newly elected

governors took office in March of this year but the structure of the federal government is such that their power of decision is fairly limited. At the state level, too, a process of centralization has been taking place whereby even the lowest state civil service appointments must be approved by officials in the capital, which allows for immense leverage over local politicians throughout the state.

It is in this context that local politics must be interpreted. As Chandler (1972) and Forman and Riegelhaupt (1979) have shown, historical changes at the federal and state level have had profound repercussions on the dispute of local power. If local factions wished to maintain, or to seize, power in the county, their fortunes varied to a greater or a lesser degree, according to which higher level politicians they supported. Their dependence on higher level officials varied according to the institutional division of authority between federal, state and county government. The structure of government in the Colonial (1500-1822), the Old Republic (1889-1930) and the Vargas (1930-1945) periods discouraged the formation of local factions while that of the Empire (1822-1889), the New Republic (1946-1964) and the Military (1946 to date) periods allowed for factionalism at the county level. However, even when conditions were worst for the existence of two factions, an opposition group of some sort always existed[(Chandler, 1972; Queiroz, 1977(1968)]

The analysis of local politics here will focus on the post-war period of cultural change which is also the one that most informants remember best and was when elective politics resumed after the Vargas period of local appointive office. The period between 1946 and 1964 was when local factionalism became most developed in a context of state and national parties having to bargain seriously for local votes in order to stay in power (Forman and Riegelhaupt, 1979). After 1964, state and national

government virtually turned into a one party system but the old factions formed during 1946-1964 continued to function at almost all levels of government within the new framework.

LOCAL POLITICAL FACTIONS

The ideal model of traditional county level politics in Brazil is that of two competing factions [Chandler, 1972; Forman, 1975; Gross, 1973; Leal, 1975(1949) and Queiroz, 1976b]. Two competing factions are normally what are found at the county level in the Sertão but the two need not be on an equal footing in terms of electoral power. One-party towns can be encountered but they remain as such for only short periods and a second faction inevitably arises. Long-term dominance by one faction, with a second faction remaining in permanent and ineffectual opposition, is another matter and this is what one normally finds in most counties. An equal pitting of two powerful groups against one another with neither holding on to power for a long period is the next most common situation and this is when politics can have the most disruptive influence on community relations.

In the fieldwork area, variation exists between the extreme possibilities. Belém is an example of a county where a single faction has long dominated the scene. Newcomers to the town, who reached an influential position, were taken into the 'Family' by marriage. Even the weak opposition group that existed for a time was made up of the same kin group. Macururé is a one-party town where the grip of the traditional larger rancher is so tight that an opposition does not even exist. Similarly, Santa Maria da Boa Vista has long been the domain of the descendants of the Barros family.

Neighouring Cabrobó and Floresta have a more competitive two faction system. However, a 12 year dominance by one faction in Floresta brought bad feelings to the very brink of armed strife. When the faction that had been out of power finally won an election, the members of the other side paraded a donkey painted like a zebra. A zebra symbolizes an extraordinary win in the sports lottery, suggesting that the electoral victory of their rivals was a freak occurrence, which infuriated the victors.

Violence can arise in just such a situation when normal party relations in a town change. The county hall in Parnamirim is usually in the hands of the traditional Agra-Cabral family but in 1968 the opposing faction finally won an election and then in the following elections, when threatened with losing its temporary grip on power, some of its members opted for the use of force by assassinating the leaders of the Cabral group. The result was the opposite of the one desired. The sister of the slain political chief was selected to be the Cabral candidate for mayor and won overwhelmingly. Similarly rivalry between a stymied, but economically powerful, opposition faction of merchants and the traditional rancher faction is at the base of the 30 year feud in Exu, the most famous in Brazil.

Chorrochó is an example where the factions are evenly pitted against one another and each side takes turns in power. Community relations are divided along factional lines in a classic way. The members of each side shop in separate stores, drink in different bars, sit apart in town parties and even most residences are located in specific parts of the community.[1] As the Pachecos dominate the church, the leader of the other faction avoids attending mass in Chorrochó, only doing so when his position

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[1] Harris (1956) observed an identical situation in a county seat of the semi-arid zone in south Bahia.

as mayor necessitates it. The relations between the two groups are quite hostile yet, with the exception of one shooting incident, little direct confrontation occurs despite the aggravating forces of class and racial divisions, which in this unusual case, define local factional allegiance. The Carvalho faction label themselves as *morenos* ('coloured' people) so as to appeal to the poor in opposition to the 'white' Pachecos. In fact, outside the county seat the Carvalhos have *galego* (lily white) allies and the Pacheco faction crosses class and racial lines in the more usual way.

Separating residences and places for socializing might have been a way of avoiding clashes between factions in the past and in relation to residence location and shopping such a situation still occurs in the smaller county seats and villages of the Sertão. In larger towns, the housing shortage has caused families to live where they can find a suitable house to rent or a lot for building a home. Nevertheless, neighbours belonging to opposing factions get along well with each other and only during times of elections can a careless comment cause tension between them. Probably residence segregation where it still occurs is more important for defining faction membership and ensuring continued allegiance than for preventing conflict.

It would seem that violence is more common when people are under the influence of drink and factional segregation in such situation still occurs. Different bars are frequented and seating location at parties is separate so that violence for political reasons is avoided. On the other hand, patterns of shopping are changing in larger towns with the establishment of 'supermarkets'. Lower prices and fewer transactions made on credit are bringing about an end to the debtor-voter relationship as well as to shopping according to political allegiance. One important

exception to this trend is Exu where traditional separation still exists for the obvious reason that the period of violent feud there coincided with the period of urban and commercial growth in the Sertão.

Why should factions be normally two in number and not one, three or some other number, whether evenly matched or not? Why did local politics not simply become a one party system like that which can occur at times on the national level or is common in other parts of Latin America? Gross (1973) lists the following reasons which are usually given in the literature to explain this phenomenon in Brazil: (a) dual factionalism corresponds to the dual party system at the federal and state levels; (b) each faction represents opposing groups in a changing society, the traditional, land-holding 'feudal' elite versus the rising commercial bourgeoisie; (c) those persons who are excluded from the distribution of the spoils unite in opposition so as not to be crushed; and (d) bifactionalism provides a form of political leverage which growing villages use to gain their independence in order to form new counties.

Gross rightly criticizes the first explanation because the local parties are not mere extensions of federal and state parties. In the communities studied, the programmes of the latter rarely have any real impact on, or meaning for, the county-level leaders and local population. Individual politicians, standing for election for state and federal office, who are likely to win and so ensure a victory for the local faction, are given support. When a faction's candidates for higher office are elected, it is a measure of their local power and the right to receive their due in patronage from the state and federal government. As will become evident later, and as Chandler (1972) narrates for Southwestern Ceará, the structure of higher level government has been modified a number of times and, every time, local factions have vied to be the first to

adhere to the winning power group. The relationship of county politics to state and federal politics is one of opportunism and expediency. Being on the winning side guarantees survival and a steady flow of patronage.

The second explanation given for the existence of two factions, traditional large farmers challenged by modern merchants, is dismissed too hastily by Gross. Examples may exist where faction leaders exploit both commerce and agriculture but one must look closer at the kind of community involved and what the most important economic activity of the local leaders is. The larger the town, the more commerce there is, the greater the specialization and scale of commerce, thereby making merchants the most powerful individuals. The principal proponents of this view are Leal [1975(1949)] and Vilaça and Albuquerque [1978(1965)]. They portray the situation in terms of a confrontation of backwardness and development or traditional and capitalist interests. Ignoring the qualifiers, we shall see here that the basic idea of these authors is correct, but the leaders are descendants of the same traditionally dominant kindred and do not have to represent opposing interest groups.

For his third reason for dualism in local politics, Gross cites Singer's ideas on the subject. As there is always someone excluded from power because of old enmities, by there not being enough spoils to go round or, by their own choice, desiring to be today's opposition to be in power tomorrow, such individuals form another faction in order to compete better. Chandler (1972) also gives the reason of limited spoils dividing local politics, even in times when it was nearly impossible to form another faction. As Bailey (1969) points out for politics everywhere, spoils are always a limited, scarce resource, so by definition someone has to be left out.

In the Sertão, the pattern for the flow of spoils is from the leader to his closest kin and friends; more distant kin receive lesser spoils and unrelated families, that settled later in the region, are excluded. Newcomers can usually only reach a position of importance through commerce, as the best lands have already been occupied. The first settlers dominate the local political scene and newcomers challenge their power by forming a faction.

Gross' final explanation for bificationalism in county politics, that growing villages ally themselves with the opposition of the county seat so that in return for their support the district is elevated to county status is less true today. Gross did research in the late 1960s at the end of a period when there was a virtual explosion in the number of new counties that were created in the Northeast. From 1964 to date virtually no new counties were established.

In the communities studied, during the period of expansion there were indeed cases of granting autonomy to important districts as a deal between village leaders and the county seat opposition faction that wanted to gain power, e.g. Terra Nova's separation from Parnamirim and Tarrachil's wanting independence from Chorrochó. Also, a slightly dominant faction trying to consolidate its power would grant a troublesome district independence and so cut into the electoral power of its rivals, e.g. Abaré being separated from Chorrochó county. Shifting alliances among district leaders are an important aspect of county politics and they continue to be so even after new counties have ceased to be created. The relationship of villages to the county seat is in itself important to explaining the existence of dual factionalism because villagers are usually dissatisfied with the disproportionate balance of jobs and services that are concentrated in the county seat. If the faction in power does not take care to

distribute enough to the rest of the county, village leaders can ally themselves with the other faction and so gain county hall.

THE BASIS OF POWER

Since the establishment of the Republic, trading favours for votes has been the basis of the political system in rural Brazil, much as it is in most elective politics everywhere. However, in the Northeast the use of the stick for punishing adversaries is more common than the carrot of rewarding supporters with favours. As the local people describe it, voters are 'harnessed' and cast their ballots as they are told to, "or else".[1] In the 1978 elections the newly appointed governor of Ceará said that if the political leaders of the interior did not arrange the votes like they should for his party's senator candidate then they would "go hungry" when he took over as governor. Similarly, the first act that the governor of Bahia did upon taking office in 1979 was to fire 15,000 state employees, including those of his own faction, in order to rehire only those who were really his supporters and to put the fear of God into these as well.

The dominant county faction in power, through its direct control of municipal services and indirect manipulation of state and federal services makes its allies and supporters toe the line. Alternatively, the same means are used to punish its rivals as well as to coax and coerce the latter's supporters into changing sides. Bastions of opposition power in the rural zone receive little in the way of municipal services.

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[1] Albuquerque (1981) and Leal [1957(1949)] writing about pre-1930 politics in the south of Brazil and Vilaça and Albuquerque [1978(1965)] about the Northeast use the same term of 'harnessed votes' that is still heard in the Sertão today.

The roads serving such areas are the last to be resurfaced, if they are repaired at all. Farms there will be the last to receive truck-loads of water during droughts. And, most importantly, they and their children do not receive civil service positions.

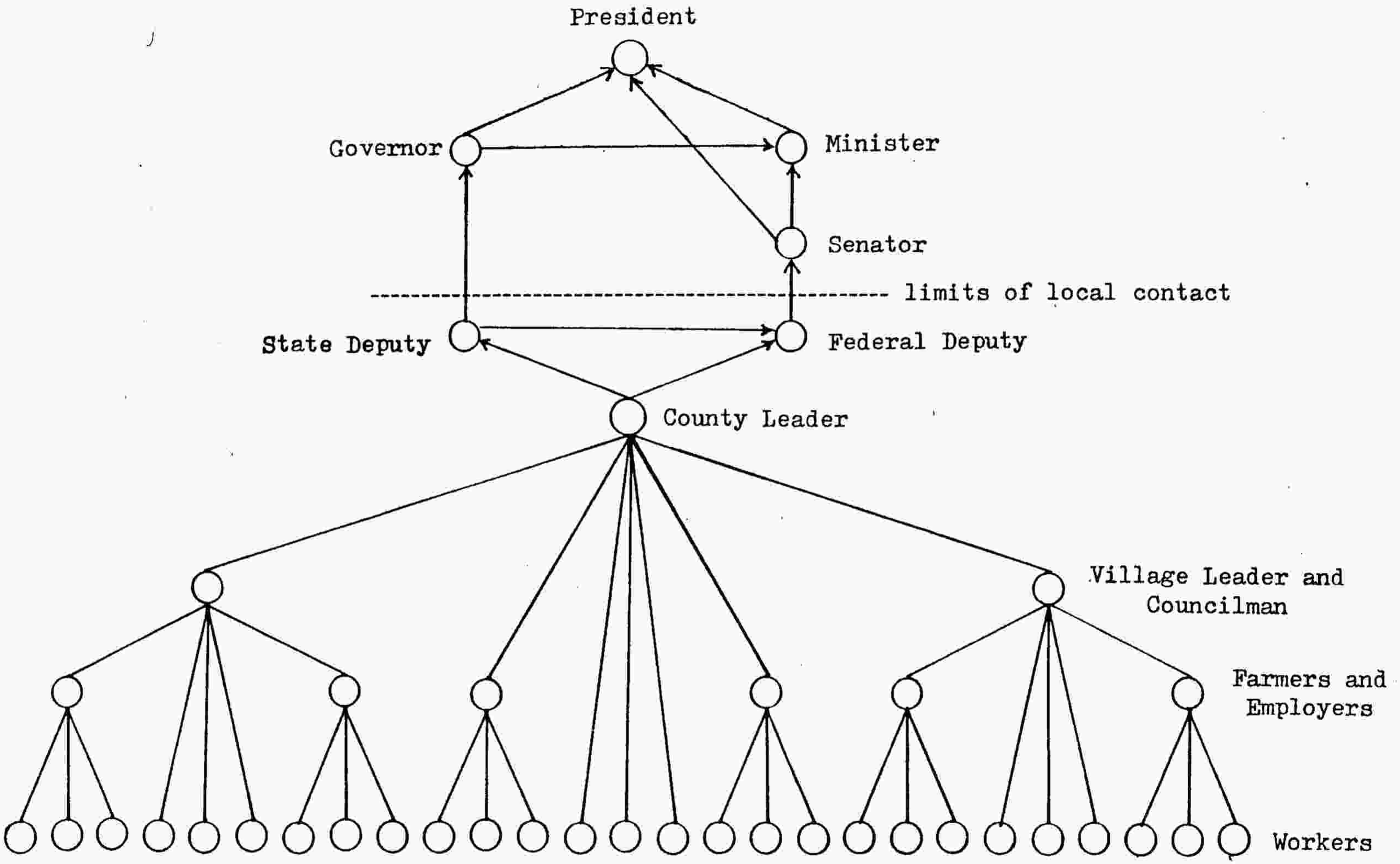
A pyramid of subordinate/superior relationships is built upon the boss/worker dyad at the base of the system, rising through the different levels to the state house and even to Brasília (Figure 20). The person higher up may at times only be giving those below what should have been theirs in the first place but the perception is that of a patron making possible the delivery of that which would have been beyond the reach of the individual acting on his own.[1]

A rural worker or a poor urban employee is grateful for the use of a piece of land or a job, for such are in short supply. Implicitly part of the contract includes the worker's vote for the boss's candidate and after an election the patron looks him in the eye and asks if he voted correctly. Honesty for most Sertanejos is a point of honour and a retainer either does not lie or has such difficulty in lying that his deceit is obvious to the patron. Mutual understanding is so strong that if his boss asks him how he is going to vote in a forthcoming election and the retainer wants to vote for another candidate he will say so and, at the same moment, state that he will be leaving the property or quitting

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[1] Soiffer and Howe (1982) in their analysis of changing patron-client relationship in Barro, Ceará, fail to see the new role of political patrons organized in a hierarchy. They oppose the role of the state and the traditional patron when it is exactly the latter in the case they cite who, through his role as a federal politician, passes government largesse on to the county. It is amazing that the informant cited even understood such a question as to whether the government is a patron. The man quite correctly interprets it to mean from where the loan comes but he also says he is going to talk to the politician to see how he can obtain one. He does not need to talk with the patron just to know the bureaucratic procedure but more importantly to see if his request will get the "proper attention" that a word from such a powerful man would assure.

Figure 20. The System of Political Hierarchy



his job. If there is some doubt whether a retainer is being 'treacherous', i.e. not being truthful about how he votes, and if he is also illiterate, he is given the voting code of an unknown candidate who would never receive a vote in that county. If the stray vote does not turn up, the retainer's deceit is proven.[1]

Farmers and town workers in turn are linked to the village or county seat leader by ties of kinship and friendship which are reinforced by past favours. A son or a daughter might have been given a job in the civil service. An ill member of the family would be taken to a local or state capital hospital for free treatment even if the ill person did not qualify for government health insurance. If this were the case, a strategically placed member of his faction sees to it that an exception is made or the doctor himself is a member or a friend of a member. In return for such favours most farmers do not question who they will vote for. The candidate is picked by the political leaders and *is* their faction's candidate.

At the head of each local faction is the *chefe político* (political chief) or *mandão* (boss). The actual name given to a faction comes from his immediate family name rather than a more global clan name. The dominant faction in Belém is called the Lustosas and not a more inclusive name such as Pires de Carvalho. Similarly in Parnamirim, descendants of the origin settlers, the Agras, are members of the Cabral faction.

In the past, political leaders of most Sertanejo communities were usually large ranchers as well as small general store owners, both being important sources of economic power and leverage necessary for building

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[1] Vilaça and Albuquerque [1978(1965)] describe similar practices throughout the interior of the Northeast during the period of the Second Republic.

up a political following. Today, the size of the community and the degree to which the local economy is monetarized determines which source of income is more important to the power of a leader. As has been pointed out already the larger the community and the greater the local consumption of purchased, manufactured items the more political power is based on commerce. Also, in communities of all sizes, leaders and their allies receive the best civil service jobs, which further enhances their power because such positions pay a high dependable salary, which dry farming and commerce cannot always guarantee.

Large ranchers are still the leaders of both factions in small county seats of up to 2,000 people. In communities of 2,000 - 4,000 inhabitants, local merchants become prominent and will lead a faction but usually do not have the power to win the mayor's office on a regular basis. Merchants become increasingly important figures in larger communities to the point where they dominate politics in hub cities.

Macururé is a town of about 1,300 inhabitants and has modest commercial establishments so it is only to be expected that the largest landowner still dominates the scene. He is also a senior civil servant and, while his salary no doubt helps him to meet the expenses of local politics, it is his rural following that provides the votes.

Chorrochó is a similar type of community and although there are two factions, the power base of their respective leaders is nearly the same, ranching and modest commerce. The two parties have been evenly pitted against one another in close, highly contested municipal elections where charges of ballot fraud have been common (Table 42).

The present leaders of the traditional family Pacheco faction of Chorrochó first made their money on the market day commercial circuit and then invested in the expansion of their small ranches. Today these are large and provide the financial power and voters. However, the

Table 42. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Chorrochó

Term	Mayor	Profession[1]	Faction	Majority[2]	Traditional Family Faction Leader	Profession[1]	Opposition Faction Leader	Profession[1]
1922-26[3]	-	-	-	-	Francisco Pacheco de Menezes	medium rancher	Enoque Pires?	large rancher
1927-45[3]	-	-	-	-	Cap. José Campos Menezes	military police		
1945-52[3]	-	-	-	-	Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Adivino Alves de Carvalho	medium rancher,
1952-55	Aureliano de Costa Andrade	medium rancher	Carvalhos	56% ?	" "		" " " "	notary public
1955-59	Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Pachecos	?	" "		Aureliano de Costa Andrade	medium rancher
1959-63	José Calazans Bezerra	medium rancher	Carvalhos	?	" "		" " " "	
1963-69	Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Pachecos	50%	" "		" " " "	
1969-73	Antonio Pires de Menezes	large rancher	Pachecos	50%	" "		" " " "	
1973-77	Pascoal de Almeida Lima	medium farmer	both	76%	" "		Sebastião Pereira da Silva	merchant,
1977-82	Sebastião Pereira da Silva	merchant, small rancher	Carvalhos	50%	" "		" " " "	small rancher
1983-88	José Juvenal de Araujo	medium rancher	Carvalhos	53%			" " " "	

Source of data: Registro Eleitorial da Comarca de Chorrochó and Field Research

[1] Underlined profession is principal one

[2] Percentage of all votes cast; ballots turned in blank or destroyed are counted as votes against the candidates

[3] The period before Chorrochó was a county

leader's ranches on their own are not nearly large enough nor do they employ enough workers to form the basis of electoral power. The leaders and their children rely on a wide network of consanguinal and affinal ties with numerous important ranchers and civil servants of the county to mobilize the voters.

The previous leader of the Pacheco faction was an officer in the military police, who was active in the pursuit of Lampião. He later moved to Salvador and slowly lost interest in Chorrochó. The leader before him was Francisco Pacheco, the father of the present day leader, and he was a medium rancher. As Chorrochó was not a county seat before 1952, we cannot talk about powerful leaders, but rather village leaders, and periods of leadership are hazy. Similarly, when the infamous Enoque Pires took up residence locally on his family's lands and with his hired guns harassed the Pachecos, he can be viewed as an important opponent of the Pachecos but it is questionable whether he could be considered an opposing political leader. One of his sons became the *delegado*, the equivalent of sheriff, and it appears that they support the faction opposing the Pachecos.

A true opposition faction to the Pachecos dates from the return to elective politics after the fall of the Vargas dictatorship. At that time both of the opposing village groups supported different county seat factions of Curaçá. The Carvalho faction is made up of medium-sized ranch holders and newly rich small merchants.[1] The most prominent merchant is the present leader. He made his money in Paulo Afonso and not locally. He has also invested money in improving his family ranch located near Chorrochó.

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[1] As Chorrochó is an area of more recent settlement, many ex-cowhands bought land there, some of whom prospered. Their descendants are the ones who formed the leadership of the faction opposing the traditional rancher group and even the original Pacheco brothers were immigrants from the Agreste who had married into the Belém family which owned most of the land of present-day Chorrochó county.

The Carvalho faction is not held together by kinship ties, except where leadership succession is concerned, but rather by opposition to the Pacheco dominance of government funding and civil service positions. Their allies in the villages are not noted for their loyalty and have a history of changing sides as the situation dictates. Tarrachil village has county ambitions and its leaders support the side they think will best further their interests. The leader of Caraíbas was not offered the mayor candidacy, as he thought he should have been, when he was allied with the Pachecos, so he changed sides. Then the Carvalhos also passed him over. Perhaps realizing their error his son was given the nomination for mayor and he won in the recent election. The ally from Várzea da Ema is a young man who broke away from the Pacheco faction of the village and went over to the Carvalhos. He is loyal until a better offer comes along and will stay where he is at the moment because the elections are running in favour of his present allies.

Parnamirim and Exu are intermediary cases between the small towns whose economies are firmly based on rural activities and the larger commercial towns and cities. They are more typical of the greater majority of the Sertanejo communities. The numerous descendants of the first settlers, whose power comes from rural supporters, are pitted against merchants who settled in town more recently. To be sure, there are rural members in the opposition faction but they too are usually more recent settlers who feel left out.

In Parnamirim, the Menezes are outsiders who only arrived in the town during the last 40 years and have established themselves as merchants. Allied to the Menezes are the Clementinos and Mirandas. Each of the last two families mostly marry among themselves and possess farms located on secondary tributaries of the Riacho da Brígida. Some Mirandas have

married into the Agra family but their kindred, as a whole, has not become close relatives to the Agras.

The dominant Agra-Cabral faction is made up of the numerous descendants of the first settlers, who also married mostly among themselves. Their farms are situated along the main stream of the Riacho da Brígida which has greater potential economically and in terms of population density. As commerce has not assumed a dominant role in the local economy, even today the Cabral political leaders can still dominate local politics through their rural power and monopoly of the civil service (Table 43).

After 1945, in larger towns, such as Belém, commerce became the key to political power. Merchants, like other persons who are not basically farmers by profession, dabble in cash-crop irrigation but this is not their principal source of income. Although the basis for political power has shifted with time, power has remained firmly in the hands of members of the traditional family group (Table 44). Before 1945 the power of this group, as well as that of the opposition group, was based on rural activities. The *coronéis* who were the leaders before this date were large ranchers and the last also had a small general store.[1] From 1945 onward, as commerce began to grow, the leaders were merchants first and farmers second. The successor after the last *coronel* died was a second cousin, who later passed the leadership to a nephew. As farming gradually

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[1] *Coronel* (colonel) refers to one of a number of honorific titles given to political leaders and other notables from the period of the Empire until about the Second World War. *Coronel* was the highest, followed by *major* (major), *capitão* (captain) and *tenente* (lieutenant) in descending order of importance [Chandler, 1972; Forman, 1975; Queiroz 1977(1968)]. The titles had their origin in the militia of the Empire and First Republic in which, like in the prebellum South of the United States, important land owners held ranks. As a way of addressing a person of the upper class the terms can still be encountered today in more isolated parts of the Sertão. From 1945 onwards the titles were replaced by *doutor* (doctor). The colonels were persecuted during the Vargas period for their opposition to the 1930 Revolution and the rising merchants preferred to be called *doutor*.

Table 43. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Parnamirim

Term	Mayor	Profession[2]	Faction	Majority[1]	Traditional Family Leader Faction	Profession[2]	Opposition Faction Leader	Profession[2]
1900-26?	n.a.	-	Agra	-	Major Alexandrino Araujo	large rancher		
1926-30	Docora Calô	large rancher and farmer	Calô- Agra	?	Cel. Jambó Aquino Batista Ermendo Calô	large rancher large rancher and farmer	Antonio Sá Neves	large rancher
1930-32[2]	Antonio Sá Neves	large rancher	Sá Neves	-	" "		" " "	
1932-33[2]	Docora Calô	large rancher and farmer	Calô- Agra	-	" "		" " "	
1933-39[3]	-	-	-	-	" "		" " "	
1939-44[2]	Glicério Parente	large rancher	Calô- Agra	-	" "		" " "	
1944-45[2]	Milton Firmino de Menezes	?	Calô- Agra	-	" "		" " "	
1945-46[2]	Ulisses Firmino de Menezes	pharmacist	Calô- Agra	-	" "		" " "	
1946-47[2]	Napoleão Lustosa Araujo	? rancher	Cabral(Agra)	-	Glicério Parente	large rancher	Ulisses Firmino de Menezes	pharmacist
1947[2]	Ulisses Firmino de Menezes	pharmacist	Menezes	-	" "		" " " "	
1947-52	Gumercindo Lustosa Cabral	large rancher	Cabral(Agra)	?	" "		" " " "	
1952-55	Gumercindo Lustosa Cabral	large rancher	Cabral(Agra)	?	" "		" " " "	
1955-59	Raimundo Batista Angelim	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral	?	Raimundo Batista Angelim	large rancher	Firmino Alves de Menezes	federal civil servant, contractor, small rancher
1959-63	Washington Gomes da Costa	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral	50%	and Antonio Lustosa Cabral	large rancher	" " " "	
1963-69	Raimundo Batista Angelim	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral	53%	" " "		" " " "	
1969-73	José Magalhães Landim	merchant	Menezes	54%	Antonio Lustosa Cabral		" " " "	
1973-77	Maria Alice Cabral	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral	61%	Jipson Lustosa Cabral	state civil servant,	" " " "	
1977-82	Ivanildo Amando Agra	state civil servant, small rancher	Cabral	44%*	" " "	large rancher	" " " "	

Source of data: Registro Eleitorial da Comarca de Parnamirim and Field Research

[1] Percentage of all votes cast; ballots turned in blank or destroyed are counted as votes against the candidates

[2] Underlined profession is principal one

[3] Vargas period when mayors were appointed

[4] A period when Parnamirim was demoted to village status

Table 44. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Belém do São Francisco

Term	Mayor	Profession[1]	Faction	Dominant Faction Leader	Profession[1]	Opposition Faction Leader	Profession[1]
1903-4	Cel. Jerônimo P. de Carvalho Trapiá	large rancher	Pires de Carvalho	Cel. Jerômino Pires de Carvalho Trapiá	large rancher		
1904-7	Cel. Jerônimo Pires de Carvalho	large rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1907	Cel. Jerônimo P. de Carvalho Trapiá	large rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1907-10	Cel. Manoel Araujo de Carv. Caribé	large rancher, small merchant	" " "	Cel. Jerômino Pires de Carvalho	large rancher		
1910-13	Cel. Jerômino Pires de Carvalho	large rancher	" " "	" " " " "			
1913-16	Antonio Augusto de Souza Sá	large rancher	" " "	Cel. Manoel Araujo de Carv. Caribé	large rancher, small merchant		
1916	Cel. Manoel Araujo de Carv. Caribé	large rancher, small merchant	" " "	" " " " " "			
1916-19	Cap. Olegário Pires Cantarelli	?	" " "	" " " " " "			
1919-22	Cap. Francisco Alves de Carvalho	large rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1922-26	Cel. Pedro da Luz	large rancher, rural product buyer	" " "	" " " " " "			
1926-36	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1936-37	Elísio Lustosa de Carvalho	rural product buyer, medium rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1937-39[2]	Gerôncio Pires Leonel	large rancher	" " "	" " " " " "			
1939-41[2]	Dr. José Alventino Lima	doctor	outside interventionist?	Elísio Lustosa de Carvalho	rural product buyer, medium rancher		
1941-42[2]	João Batista Sena	?	" "	" " " "			
1942[2]	Jader de Alemão Cireiros	?	" "	" " " "			
1942-43[2]	Davi Peixoto de Melo	?	" "	" " " "			
1943-45[2]	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	Roriz	" " " "		Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher
1945-47[2]	Ten. Otacílio de Sousa Ferraz	military police	outside interventionist?	" " " "		" " " "	
1947[2]	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	Roriz (UDN)	" " " "		" " " "	
1947[2]	Ten. Otacílio de Sousa Ferraz	military police	outside interventionist?	" " " "		" " " "	
1947-51	Dr. Alípio Lustosa de Carvalho	school director	Lustosa (Pires de Carvalho)(PSD)	" " " "		" " " "	
1951-55	Elísio Lustosa de Carvalho	rural product buyer	" "	" " " "		" " " "	
1955-59	Dr. Ariovaldo Lustosa de Carvalho	?	" "	" " " " and		" " " "	
1959-63	Eneas Cantarelli de Carvalho Caribé	merchant	" "	Deoclécio Lustosa de Carvalho Filho	merchant, small sugar mill owner, small farmer	" " " "	
1963-69	Anibal Lustosa Sobrinho	civil servant	" "	Deoclécio Lustosa de Carvalho Filho			
1969-73	Gerson Alves de Carvalho Pires	federal civil servant	" "	" " " " "			
1973-77	José de Sá Roriz	large farmer	" "	" " " " "			
1977-82	Dr. Geraldo Lustosa de Carvalho	doctor, medium farmer	" "	" " " " "		Seridan ?	large farmer

Source of data: Field Research

[1] Underlined profession is principal one

[2] During the Vargas period mayors were appointed from the state level and were often outsiders, hence their being called 'interventionists'

became more orientated to producing for the market the economic power of a rural produce buyer became greater. Similarly, the shop of the present leader grew larger as the development of irrigation generated ever greater income for local farmers. This income was increasingly spent on new consumption items that passed through the hand of merchants. The opposition faction of their cousin, who was only a large rancher, never seriously threatened the power of the two Lustosa political leaders and in the 1960s it ceased to exist. Today, members of the former faction adhere uneasily to the Lustosas.

However, Belém is a fast growing town of great economic opportunity and it is reaching the size where direct personal control of patrons over dependents is being lost. The result has been the formation of an urban poor who can achieve a certain amount of secrecy in voting and who are dissatisfied with the unequal division of urban services. They have allied themselves with some newly rich farmers who have not had time to be incorporated into the 'Family'. This group challenged the dominant faction in the 1976 election for mayor and made it the first competitive race for years.[1] After the election though, financial pressure, in the form of the local state bank refusing to renew the leader's farm loan, was brought to bear and he was forced to enter the dominant faction.

So, despite this recent challenge from newly rich farmers, it is doubtful whether the present balance of power will shift in a community

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[1] Such is Sertanejo fervour for politics that in local elections after the 1964 coup, in which only solitary candidates ran in Belém, large numbers of votes were cast blank or annulled. One mayor from this period admitted to having a third of the votes cast against him in this way. This also occurred in Chorrochó in the 1972 election which was that town's first and last experiment with trying to overcome factionalism through a single candidate representing both sides. In all the communities the Vargas period, during which mayors were appointed from the state level, is remembered with particular bitterness. Often outsiders or local persons who did not represent the dominant faction were designated mayor.

the size of Belém. Even highly renumerative irrigation farming will not prove to be as important a power base as commerce. Most important farmers are closely related to the leader since it was from their ranks that the principal merchants sprang. Also, a conflict between ranchers and farmers, like that which was common in the American West, never arose. It was exactly the ranchers and their children who became irrigation farmers when it became obvious that cash cropping was immensely more profitable.[1]

As cities like Belém grow, ever greater economic power and an increasing number of voters concentrate in the county seat. The power of the villages and rural zone in local government diminishes accordingly and politicians of larger county seats do not feel as threatened by the villages as they do in small towns such as Chorrochó. Also, the county seat has to grow faster than the villages. Chorrochó did not and an alliance between a number of the villages and the Carvalho 'upstarts' is threatening to push the traditional family faction into a permanent opposition position.

Fast growing medium-sized cities like Salgueiro, Petrolina and Juazeiro, show these trends even more. Local leaders may be buyers of farm products but they are urban in focus. They buy rural produce in order to guarantee raw material for their processing factories. Also, they are involved in consumer commerce so that they have an impressive financial base. At times, they may appear and act like old time *coronéis* but their political base is different and they are in a position better to dispense private and public favours. With this they have dealings

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[1] Fencing never proved to be a problem as it was on the American Great Plains because in the Sertão it was limited to small areas of bottomlands and river alluvium. Cropping and stock-raising were exploited on the same farm in a complementary manner so that ranchers were not pitted against "sod-busters". Indeed, perhaps even in the West too much was made of this latter conflict and not enough attention has been given to political competition between rural and town interests.

with all sections of the urban and rural population which compensates for any loss of direct political control of the traditional personal type that might have occurred with the growth of cities.

However, when cities reach this size and larger, the relationship between voter and politician is more impersonal. Votes are 'bought' rather than 'harnessed' in Vilaça and Albuquerque's [1978(1965)] distinction. Clothing is given, help in making a move, in addition to the usual aid in circumventing the bureaucracy in order to obtain social services. In cities that are larger than 100,000 inhabitants, as the state capitals and a few cities in the Agreste are, sheer size makes life more impersonal and greater economic independence of the public sector exists. Quite simply if the people from the big city do not want to vote for the government they do not have to. And they do not, the national opposition party won 72% of the vote of Recife in the 1978 election and 68% in the 1982 election. Some ties to local councilmen exist, in terms of repaying favours, but if the urban poor do not wish to enter into such a relationship they will not be barred from finding work because of it. The people of the interior are conscious of the greater freedom that big city electors have and they envy it.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

The control of the municipal budget by the county seat politicians also affects the passing on of leadership. Village leaders must depend exclusively on their own resources which can be depleted by drought or by a bad commercial deal. Also, they are dependent on the county seat leaders for any municipal services. Such a state of affairs does not make for continuity of power. The county seat leaders, on the other hand,

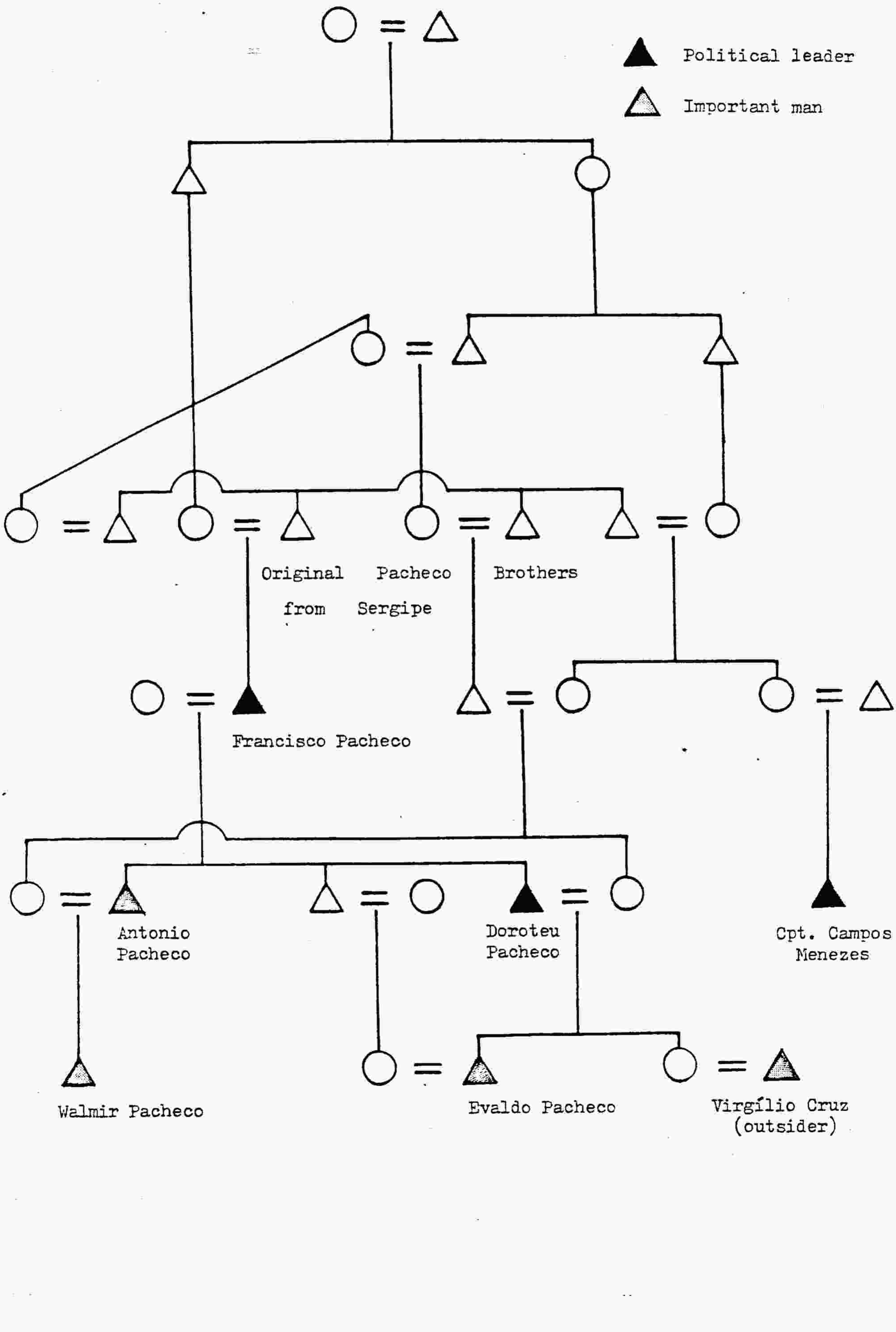
have access to regular, institutionalized sources of patronage, such as civil service positions, municipal funds and services. This dates from the First Republic, increased considerably under Vargas (Albuquerque, 1981; Forman, 1975; Forman and Riegelhaupt, 1979) and ballooned in the last two decades. Hence, once gaining power, if county leaders carefully administer the patronage at their disposal they can maintain leadership within a kin group for long periods of time. This is particularly true if they handle leadership succession smoothly and incorporate new potentially more powerful economic groups that might otherwise take power away from them.

In addition to the substantial economic resources needed to gain power and government spoils to maintain a politician in office, he must also know how to lead. The art of leading is most easily learnt by a close kin who grows up observing, or otherwise has many opportunities to note the details of a politician at work. Also, his close association with the leader, as well as his own or his wife's prestigious ancestry, give him a stamp of legitimacy in claiming leadership succession. The combination of these various perequisites for local leaders explain why some individuals become political chiefs and others do not.

In Chorrochó, the leadership of the Pacheco faction, with the exception of Captain Menezes, passed from father to son and appeared ready to pass on to the grandson of Francisco Pacheco if he had not lost two successive mayoral elections (Figure 21). The leadership still could be his or it might pass to his brother-in-law or first cousin, who might be viewed as being more capable than he. Even the leadership of the Carvalho faction passed from father-in-law to son-in-law when Sebastião Pereira da Silva took over from Aureliano de Costa Andrade.

Belém has been a county since the beginning of this century and despite the fact that power gradually shifted from ranchers to merchants,

Figure 21. Kinship Ties between Successive Political Leaders of Chorrochó



the leadership remained in the traditional family (Figure 22). Cel. Trapiá and Cel. Jerônimo were partners in power. They were second cousins and Cel. Jerônimo was married with a niece of Cel. Trapiá. Leadership then passed to Cel. Caribé, who was a nephew of Cel. Trapiá. He dominated the scene until his death in the mid-1940s.

At this point a dispute formed over who should be the next leader. By prior experience and closeness of kinship ties, Aciole Roriz felt he should have taken over. His son was married to a daughter of Cel. Caribé and his brother-in-law, Cel. Pedro da Luz, was an important man. However, the economic power of Elísio Lustosa won out even though he was only a second cousin of Cel. Caribé. But he was a nephew of Cel. Jerônimo and a second nephew of Cel. Trapiá. In turn, leadership went to his nephew Deoclecinho Lustosa, who is an even wealthier merchant. While the rift in the 1940s and 1950s was apparently healed, and the Rorizes came back into the fold, tension still exists within the 'Family'.

Parnamirim has been a county even longer than Belém but it did not grow and prosper very rapidly and at one time even ceased to be a county seat. Thus, while leadership of the dominant faction usually remained in the hands of descendants of the first settlers, some outsiders were important also (Figure 23). Cel. Jambo and Major Alexandrino were said to have shared power before the 1920s. It appears that Cel. Mariano Costa Araujo was the leader before them. Major Alexandrino was the latter's nephew and son-in-law. The exact genealogy of Cel. Jambo was not obtained but his brothers were married with second cousins of Alexandrino.

In the late 1920s a strong Agra leader did not emerge and an outsider, Emendo Calô, a rich rancher who had established himself north of Terra Nova village took over. He aligned himself with the Agras in opposition to Antonio Sá Neves of Terra Nova village. The most important man in

Figure 22. Kinship Ties between Successive Political Leaders of Parnamirim

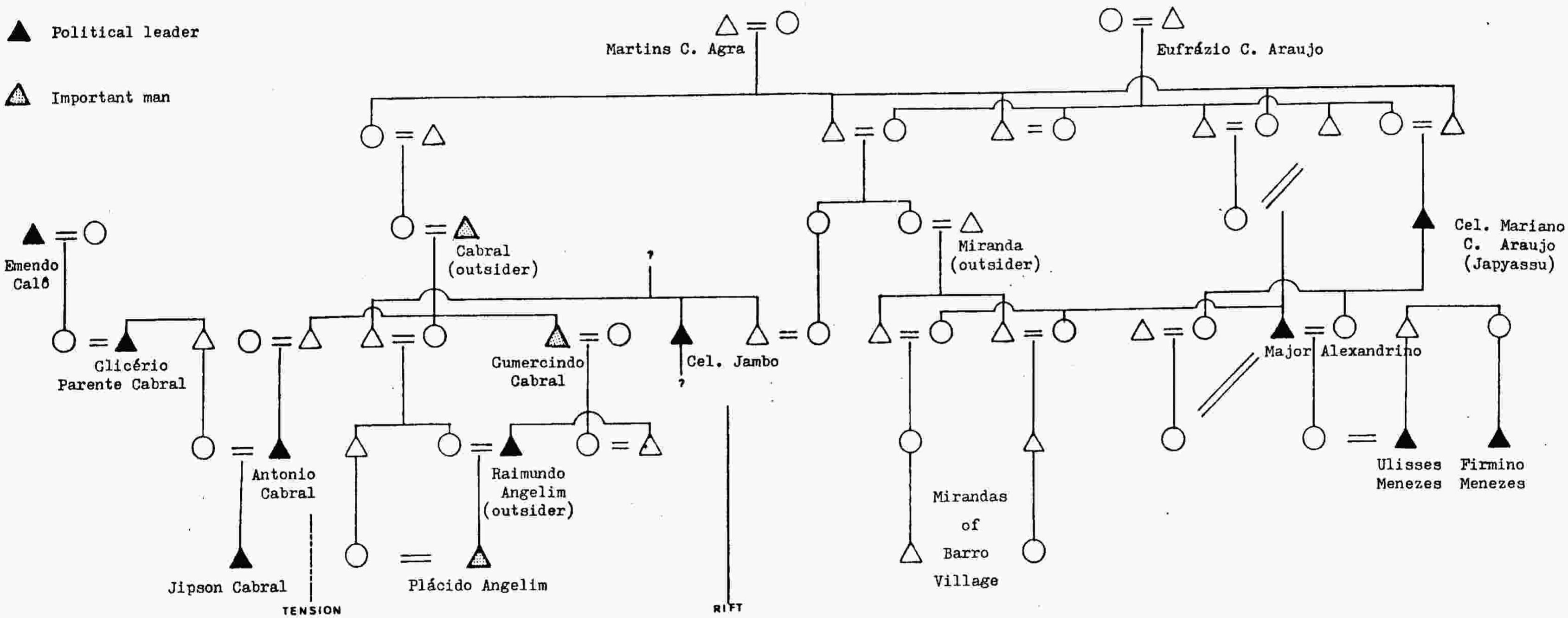
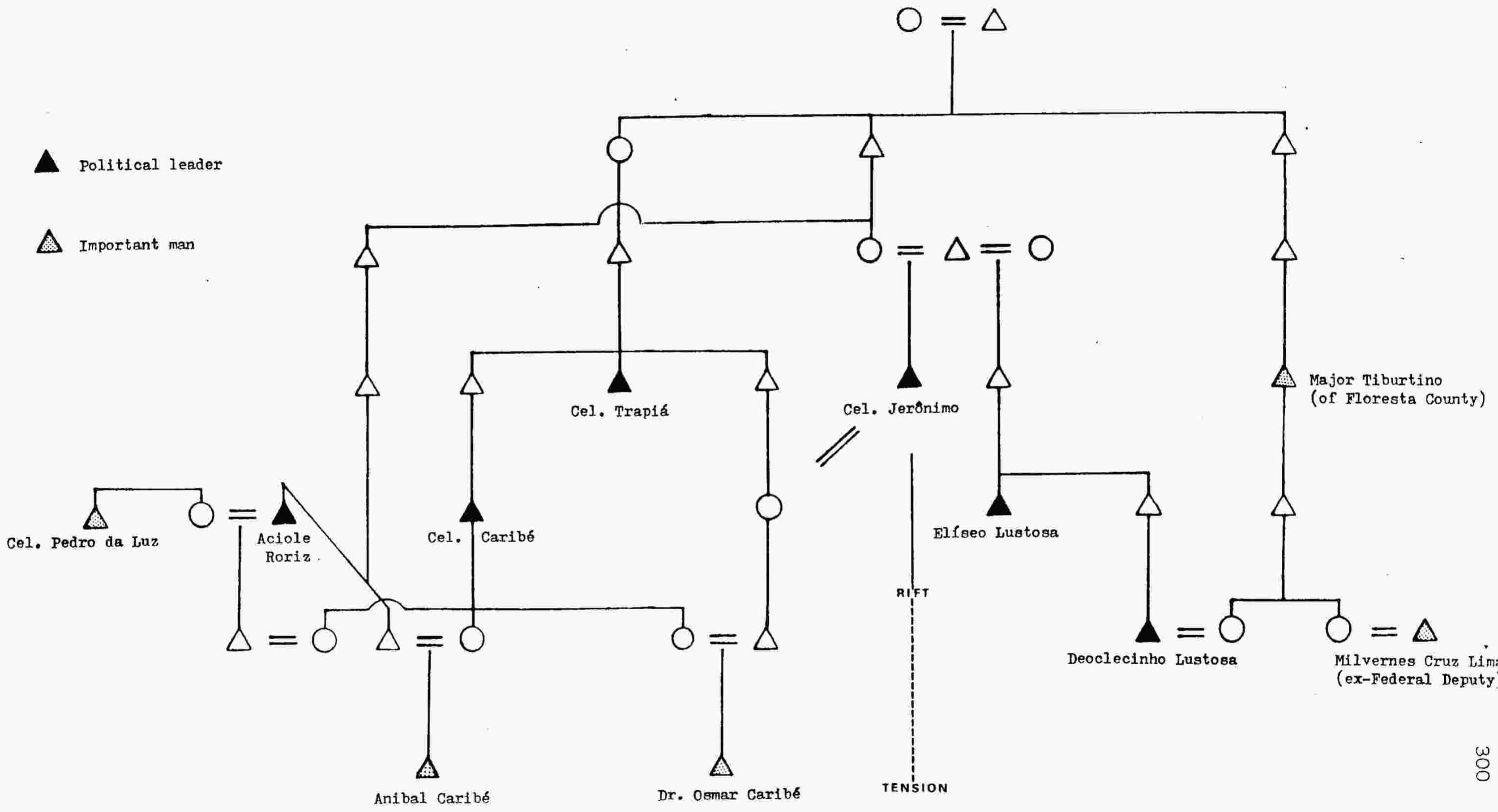


Figure 23. Kinship Ties between Successive Political Leaders of Belém do São Francisco



the town of Parnamirim at the time was the first Cabral, an officer in the military police who had married into the traditional family. This was a time of banditry and revolts so he, like Captain Menezes of Chorrochó, probably owed their importance to the conditions of the period.

At any rate, none of the leaders werevery strong and probably due to a falling out of favour with the new revolutionary government, Parnamirim was demoted to district status from 1932-1939. When the New State era of appointive mayors ended in 1946, the leadership fell to Glicério Cabral, the son-in-law of the previous leader. An important outsider, Ulisses Menezes, felt he should have been chosen leader and left the faction, joining the sons of Antonio Sá Neves along with members of the Miranda and Clementino kindreds in an opposition faction. Ulisses had been an appointive mayor but Glicério had been also. Ulisses married a daughter of Major Alexandrino, but the latter had died long before and so this was a weak claim to leadership.

Hence, the Cabrals that followed Glicério as political chiefs had more claim to the leadership due to their having closer marriage and descent ties to recent leaders. Ulisses and his first cousin Firmino after him, represent the rising urban interests but these were - and still are - not strong enough to overcome the Cabral power. On the other hand, a co-leader with Antonio Cabral, Raimundo Angelim, was a rich merchant who had married into the inner circle of Cabral power. Thus, while the Cabral faction mostly represents farmers and civil servants, there are some merchant elements in it as well.

Recently, a rift has developed between the sons of Antonio Cabral and Raimundo Angelim over who should be leader. The sons of Antonio Cabral are senior civil servants and large ranchers while the son of Raimundo Angelim is a dentist and a medium-sized rancher, which puts

him at a disadvantage in a power dispute within the faction. To counter this he shows signs of either changing factions or forming a third one.

Thus a number of factors come together to explain who leads factions and how lacking one trait can doom a man's aspirations. All leaders are usually men, who are rich, have claims to a prestigious ancestry and close contact with the previous leader. If a son or other close relatives of a leader is to succeed he must be capable, politically inclined and of age, for, if he is not, rival kin seize the initiative. At the death of Major Alexandrino of Parnamirim, his son was still an infant and the heirs of the leader Cel. Jambo did not seem to be politically inclined, so that leadership passed to other families. It is when a leader dies and where succession is not clear that a faction loses important members. A disgruntled, unsuccessful rival for leadership leaves the faction to join, or to form, another. This was the case of the Roriz opposition faction that existed for a while in Belém. Similarly, the Menezes of Parnamirim went into opposition because its leader felt that he should have been chosen as successor.

Moreover, there is a tendency for the children of the upper class to emigrate to the state capital or other larger cities for employment or cultural reasons. If they are not careful, they lose contact with the local situation and political power. Such could happen with the children of the slain Cabral leader and did occur with the children of Pedro da Luz, an old-time politician in Belém. On the other hand, they can be invaluable contacts for obtaining state services for the faction at home.

TO THE VICTOR GO THE SPOILS

There is a common understanding among the members of a community that the faction which wins elections has the right to use the county funds as its leaders see fit. In addition, all municipal jobs go to their supporters. Similarly, the winners of state and federal elections, i.e. the faction whose candidates receive the most votes locally, fill all new local state and federal jobs. They can even demand the replacement of members of the defeated group who hold certain civil service positions. It is by usually winning these higher level elections that the upper class Pachecos of Chorrochó managed to dominate the best positions of the civil service despite their only evenly dividing county level election victories with the opposing faction. No doubt their higher education attainments and class background gives them a greater advantage when dealing with state and federal politicians who all come from similar backgrounds.

Such partisan practices are so ingrained in the county level politics of the Sertão that concepts of political graft and corruption, current in some parts of Brazil, have no meaning at all for the local people. A particular mayor who steals too much, can be condemned or ridiculed as a thief with such statements as, "Milton Cão stole so much that he died". However, normal embezzlement receives, at the most, the attention of a smile. Opposition factions do not complain because they do the same when in power.

Proving the degree to which theft of county funds occurs is understandably difficult. More experienced politicians practise creative bookkeeping. By a stroke of luck the researcher was able to see an annual report in one community where embezzlement was thinly disguised. By checking the report against what was actually done, it was possible to

estimate that more than 60% of the budget went into the mayor's pocket. The report grossly exaggerates the cost of a number of projects, shows allocations to imaginary undertakings and places many county salaries at three times their actual amount. This case was an extreme one and indeed the mayor was thought to be exceeding the bounds of legitimate graft. An "honest" mayor, who really has good intentions for his county and energetically pursues public works, probably only embezzles from 20% to 30% of the budget for personal and political ends.

The amount of funding that the poor counties of the semi-arid zone receive from the higher levels of government has been increasing at a rate faster than the rate of inflation so that, by local standards, a huge amount of money is being made available to local leaders for "distribution". In 1977 the county budget of Chorrochó had receipts of US$188,547 and Parnamirim of US$221,493 meaning that even a small percentage of embezzlement involves large sums of money. Chorrochó perhaps exemplifies best how merely making funds available to poor counties does not improve local conditions. Despite the large influx of government funding, the community at the time of the first period of fieldwork did not have running water, water treatment, reliable electricity, a sewage system, trash collection, paved streets, a resident doctor, dentist, medical facilities of any kind or banking services.

Outright theft of county funds is the most obvious kind of graft. A more indirect way is to award public works projects to local 'firms' in which the mayor or his kin have a secret interest. Reservoirs, buildings and barbed-wire fences are erected on the mayor's farm as well as on those of his important supporters. Similarly, larger reservoir projects are located in places where the ruling faction has a large following. Also, urban improvements and services begin first in those parts of

town where important members of the faction reside and they may not reach streets where opposition members live.

More intelligent politicians invest embezzled funds far from the eyes of the community. Usually they buy land and apartments in the state capitals. One inexperienced politician invested in farms and businesses in neighbouring commercial hub cities which are frequented by people from his town, thus adding insult to injury. On one occasion he even had the gall to claim, in a local radio broadcast, to have used emergency flood relief funds for the purchase of 2,000 tents for refugees. Not a single tent was observed by the researcher in the affected area.

Politics are not just jobs and graft. Prestige is another goal and one of the best ways of self promotion is to have one's name painted in large letters on all public works undertaken while in office. The works have to be highly visible and of a durable kind, such as schools, county offices, cemeteries and libraries (Plate 10).[1] It is the building itself that is important, for often there is not much inside it in the way of furnishings and material; nor does it have to be functional. Many are virtual ovens. Also, the number of public structures need not be proportional to the needs of the town. Chorrochó with a population of less than 1,000 has five different schools, two cemeteries and a number of public buildings. Each building serves as a source of prestige and of graft for the mayor who built it as well as to employ, at least on paper, numerous civil servants.

When the mayor of an opposing faction comes to power he tries to find ways to nullify the works of his adversaries. County buildings

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[1] The politics of most of the Brazilian hinterland are much the same. A humourous soap opera on television portrayed a small town mayor in the Southeast of Brazil trying desperately to find a corpse in order to inaugurate his new cemetery.



Plate 10. Cemetery Entrance with Mayor's Name Prominently Displayed (Chorrochó, 1978)



Plate 11. State Deputy Candidate Making a Speech at a Political Rally (Chorrochó, 1978)

are 'renovated', i.e. repainted. In the process the name of the mayor who constructed them is of course painted out and replaced by "renovated during the administration of [the present mayor]". An extreme way of assailing an opponent's pride is by razing a building of his to the ground and erecting in its place a bigger and better one. At times, a public building may have been well made and much effort and expense are expended in pulling it down. Occasionally, the effort can backfire, as occurred in one case observed where an old market building completely resisted demolition and the humiliated mayor had to console himself with a mere renovation sign.

However, much of the spoils must go to maintaining factional loyalty. While public works are favoured sources of graft and personal prestige as well as excellent ways of rewarding lower class supporters with work, mayors have to expend a good deal of effort and county funds in repaying the support of upper and middle class allies. These people form the backbone of his political machine. They mobilize their personal following of retainers, employees, debtors and *compadres* to vote for him. Work given to the lower class actually involves accountable physical labour and the low wages paid means that large numbers of them can be rewarded. Jobs for the upper classes have to be of a longer lasting kind, should not involve much work and must be better paid.

While the members of the middle and upper classes insist that day-labourers work a full eight-hour day on their farms, in their public jobs they cannot be bothered with more than four hours a day or, in many cases, any work at all. With the exception of school teachers who are women that work long hard hours for poor pay, most public employment positions in the small towns of the semi-arid zone do not involve much work, due to the fact that population is mainly rural and dispersed.

Government officers are normally only busy on market days while, during the rest of the week, one or two people will need their services. Also, a large number of the civil servants do no work whatsoever and only go to their places of employment to receive pay cheques.

Even more effort is demanded of a political leader when he arranges state or federal jobs for his upper class supporters. He has to go to the capital numerous times for personal meetings with high level politicians in order to ensure that the proper connections are made with the bureaucrats in the different government agencies. It is through such employment that state and federal politicians exert complete domination over local leaders, as often the latter and their close kin are employed in the best of these positions and so are quite sensitive to demands from above.

STATE AND FEDERAL POLITICS AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

Up to this point in the analysis, the word party has been studiously avoided and the term faction has been used to describe the local political groupings. Revolutions and national parties come and go, having little impact on the local scene.[1] National parties are merely adapted to local and state factionalism and their policies do not mean much at the county level. The candidates who can deliver the most are supported and at the same time the most powerful candidates seek out the strongest local faction.

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[1] Pierson (1972) reports that some important *coronéis* of the São Francisco River area were arrested and even killed by the victorious group of Bahia state in the 1930 Revolution. Perhaps because the political leaders of the communities studied were not important or they were astute enough to switch quickly, harassment did not occur during any of the major changes of national political regimes.

Before 1964 the most powerful political party of the interior of the Northeast, which represented ranching and cotton interests, was the PSD (Partido Social Democrático). Its chief rival was the UDN (União Democrática Nacional), which was controlled by the coastal planters and merchants (Oliveira, 1977). In the Sertão, the PSD was usually the party of the strongest local faction and the UDN was the party of the weaker opposition group. At times the UDN faction was dominated by dissident commercial interests as in small towns like Parnamirim, but in larger towns like Belém, the situation could be just the opposite with ranchers controlling the UDN and the dominant merchants the PSD or again both parties could be dominated by ranchers as occurred in very small communities such as Chorrochó. Factions could even switch affiliations if these threatened the local way of defining factional identity, as occurred in 1958 when the Alencar and Sampaio factions of Exu switched parties due to Cid Sampaio being the candidate for governor of the UDN, which was the Alencar's party before his nomination. Hence, there was no hard and fast rule as to which type of economic group was associated with which party, other than that the PSD faction was usually the party of the strongest local faction.

Similarly, when the 1964 military takeover resulted in the abolition of the national parties that had arisen since 1945 and overwhelming power was bestowed on the government party ARENA (Aliança Renovadora Nacional), the local factions called themselves ARENA I or ARENA II, the strongest of which had the privilege of being I. The dominant national party allowed for factionalism within itself at the county and even, at times, at the state level through the use of *sub-legendas*, whereby the total of votes of the different factions were summed for the party's total. So even when competition between two strong parties at the state and federal

level was reduced, local factionalism continued as always and even if all candidates were of the ARENA party, certain ones were identified with each faction. The national opposition party, the MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro) had great difficulty in organizing at the county level in the interior because its leaders could not deliver the jobs and spoils from the higher levels of government.

An important function of state and federal elections is to channel inter-factional rivalry into less destructive ends. In Belém despite the large-scale inter-marriage that occurred between members of the middle and upper class families Pires de Carvalho, Sá, Roriz, Lustosa, Caribé and even the more recent Italian immigrants Cantarelli, so that all are considered part of the 'Family' faction, a basic division exists between the Roriz-Caribé families on one hand and the Sá, Pires de Carvalho and Lustosa ones on the other which is most manifest in higher level elections. For county elections there may be heated discussion along different family lines as to who shall be the mayoral candidate, but in the end, when he is chosen, all close their ranks and vote for their candidate. In elections for state and federal deputies the two groups vote for separate ARENA candidates as occurred in the 1978 elections. However, for senator and governor, where there are fewer candidates of the national party, they vote for the same one. In Parnamirim the factions are even more splintered for state and federal deputies but again they have always closed ranks for the elections of county and higher state and federal officials.

Chorrochó county has fewer voters so that the factions there usually only support one state deputy apiece. In 1978 the Pachecos made the mistake of dividing their vote and even though their two candidates won and their total vote was greater than that for the one candidate of the

opposing side, the Carvalhos alleged that their candidate had the most votes and so claimed the right to fill a number of state offices. In the 1982 election, the Pachecos again divided their votes but this time even the sum of their two candidates was less than that of the single Carvalho candidate, so that the traditional family faction is surely on the decline and its members will be hard pressed to secure their jobs. Indicative of the decline is the fact that in the recent reformulation of parties the Carvalhos claimed the right to be PDS I. the dominant faction of the new government party, the Partido Democrata Social. The Pachecos had to accept symbolically their new inferior position by resigning themselves to the label PDS II. They had been ARENA I until recently.

State and federal deputies and senators rarely appear in their constituencies, usually once a year or perhaps even only just before an election. Elections are one of the rare occasions when politicians need something from the local leaders and general population. Going to a person is a sign of dependence and subordination so that many higher level politicians prefer only a rare and brief courtesy visit to the local leader in order to demonstrate the latter's importance before his supporters.

Some higher level politicians may go through the motions of making political speeches to the general public but they mainly come in order to arrange votes with local leaders. When electoral speeches are made, they can be important social events. However, the emphasis is on eating and drinking for, at times, a candidate may have little substantial to offer the people in pre-election speeches and has to rely on 'speaking beautifully', whereby he only offers praise for local leaders and admiration for Sertanejo ruggedness (Plate 11).

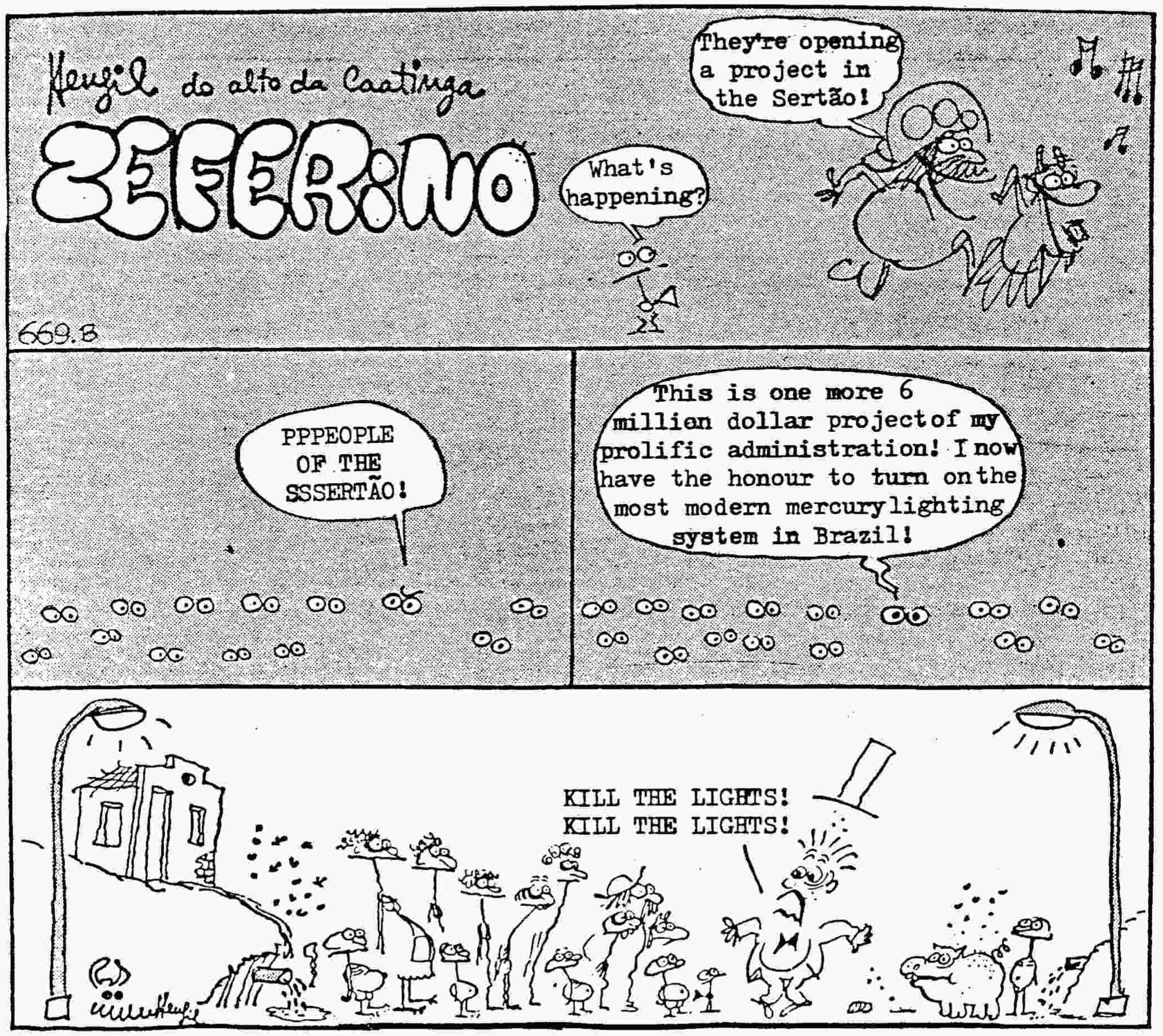
Speeches to the general populace are more commonly made when something more concrete is offered, such as the inauguration of local banks, roads or reservoirs. Such works affect everyone and intelligent politicians undertake them in their first and last years of office for maximum effect. At such official openings, a politician boasts that it was he who had made it all possible. He might even have the work named after himself and the bigger the structure the more prominent his reputation. Or he can be honoured with his name being given to a street or highway but a truly great politician has his name given to a county while still living or even while still in office.

The emphasis on bigness as prominence has resulted in many a white elephant whose size cannot be justified by local socio-economic conditions but rather by its being a monument to 'Progress' in the name of important politicians. Waste and even social harm can be the result. One politician's mother thought that a giant overpass system was needed to give the appearance of a big city to what is, in truth, merely a medium-sized commercial one. The system connects up with a wholly inadequate, narrow bridge that sorely needed to be enlarged. Huge reservoirs and hydro-electric dams are another favoured type of public works. However, they often inundate scarce agricultural land, cause large-scale emigration and worsen problems with flooding and salinization.

The above examples are only a few of the countless number that could be cited, all of which stem from the basic problem of higher level politicians, with inflated egos, who no longer live in the region they represent, having lost contact with local reality. They live in the state and federal capitals and dream of North American style development. They are advised by technicians with similar backgrounds and aspirations. Some worthy projects are undertaken, such as the building of roads, rural

electrification and the founding of local branches of government banks but, all too often, the public works are overpriced, of shoddy workmanship and not always attuned to the needs of the local population (Figure 24).

Figure 24. Cartoon of a Sertanejo Politician



Source: Jornal do Brasil (5.12.1978)

The political system works from the top down. Decisions concerning development strategy are made in Brasília or in the state capitals in such a way that local input into the process is minimal and no feedback occurs. The irrigation projects are a case in point. Local interests and experience are swept aside. Technocrats, who were trained in wholly different socio-economic settings, rule supreme. California style capital-intensive agriculture and the rural problems of the Brazilian Southeast are introduced, aggravating the traditional difficulties of the semi-arid zone.

In such a system, local leaders are usually powerless to protest, and would not do so if they could, for fear of losing their jobs. Since 1964 they have taken what they can get and are thankful.[1] Calls for the restoration of democracy at the higher levels of government and many other of the progressive programmes of the principal national opposition party, the PMDB (Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro), fall on deaf ears in most of the Sertão, where the traditional political system reigns supreme. At the county level and even for some state offices, which are those that have real meaning for the local people, different factions exist and they dispute contested elections for these offices. However, it is the lack of choice at higher levels and voters being forced to

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[1] This contradicts the hypothesis of Forman (1975) and Forman and Riegelhaupt (1979) that with the institutionalization of the authoritarian state in Brazil, patron-client relationships are disappearing. In most of the Northeast, the poor and the county authorities are respectively just as dependent, if not more so, on persons higher up in the patronage chain. An otherwise insightful historical analysis of politics is flawed by the fact that it fails to treat what happened after 1964. The rural workers' movements of the Agreste which attempted independent political activity, had little direct impact in the Sertão and at any rate they were violently put down in the early 1960s. Only recently have sugarcane workers of the coast been able to form real unions and their political clout remains to be seen.

vote for government party candidates which makes the small town politics of the country so important for maintaining the present conservative regime in power, as was clearly evident in the 1978 and 1982 elections.

However, times are changing and population shifts have increased the electoral clout of the large cities of the coast where voters are freer to vote as they choose and are increasingly opting for the PMBD.[1] The 1982 elections, despite jerrymandering, promised to be close and the opposition parties almost won the governor races in a number of Northeastern states. Before the elections such a possibility made many local leaders of the Sertão nervous for the first time for almost 20 years about being on the wrong side. Improved communications had allowed for previously little known PMDB state candidates to become popular with country folk and threatened to undermine the whole system in many Northeastern states. Some political leaders hedged their bets. In the recent reformulation of the national parties, local mayors had to opt for the new government party, the PDS (Partido Democrata Social), which replaced ARENA.[2] Many local political leaders decided not to join any party for the time being, waiting to see if they would have to join the victorious opposition party.

The support for the national government party is really not very strong in a situation where the politician who delivers the spoils receives the local support. Many local people point out that it was only after

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[1] The preliminary results of the 1982 elections have the opposition parties winning county hall in 75 of the most populous cities of the country, including almost all of those located in the Northeast (Jornal do Brasil 6.12.1982).

[2] The government party tried to capitalize on an old sentiment of loyalty to the pre-1964 PSD party. However, when the MBD tried to follow suit by renaming itself the PMDB, thus drawing on a continuity of post-1964 opposition party support, the government used everything in its power to prevent this. In the end the electoral courts allowed the MDB to use the PMDB label.

1964 that such an idea of *a* government party arose and that it does not go down too well with them. As the programmes of the national parties have never had any real meaning for the local population so they have no real deeply-felt loyalty to parties that change every ten years. As has often occurred in the past when local expediency demands, factions change higher-level party affiliation.

In the recent elections in a last desperate attempt to maintain eroding support, the government rammed an electoral change through the federal Congress before the election which takes advantage of the traditional political system prevalent throughout the less developed north of the country. As many national leaders are from the North and the Northeast they are perfectly well aware that local loyalties override any higher-level ones. The new law requires that votes be cast on a strictly party basis. The ruling national politicians gambled correctly that Northeastern voters would cast their ballots for higher level candidates of the government if they wanted to vote for their choice for mayor and councilmen.[1]

For a while before the election, the elimination of the *sub-legenda* threatened to undo the best-made plans of jerrymandering. However, the regime proved its ability to adapt to whatever the situation requires to remain in power and restored the *sub-legenda* in time for the election. If this had not occurred, county level factional antagonism would probably have caused just the opposite of what was desired. Rival factions would have had a hard time settling their differences to vote for the same local candidates and less dominant factions could have been forced to affiliate their candidates with the PMDB.

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[1] On the other hand, the 1982 returns from Chorrochó demonstrate that 18% of the voters simply left the place for higher level candidates blank when voting for the local candidates (for whom only 3.5% of the votes were blank). This could have been done out of protest or because they simply had no interest in the state level candidates offered.

At any rate, this was avoided and the mechanism for strict control over local politics of the Northeast proved to be the salvation of the PSD. The interior votes, added to the fraudulent ones, outweighed the votes of the capitals, and the Northeast with its numerous small states maintained the appearance of a government majority. The secret of the government's success, besides the usual jerrymandering of electoral laws, lies in the spoils system mounted upon traditional loyalties which, given the desperate jobs situation of the region, keeps Sertanejos 'harnessed'.

In the Southeast and South, more private sector employment opportunity exists and voters are freer to vote as they choose, even for radicals like Brizola if they wish. In the North and Central-West of the country, the opposition made serious inroads which thoroughly annoyed a government which had made a point of investing heavily there. These two regions differ radically from the Northeast. A situation where large-scale immigration occurs and good job opportunities exist proves difficult to control with the traditional political machine. In these places local politicians and voters are freer to opt for the national opposition party than is the case of the Northeast.

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEW

7. RELIGION AND WORLDVIEW

Religious belief and ceremony find their way into all aspects of life in the semi-arid zone. As we saw in previous chapters, the traditional agricultural technology relies on the ample use of amulets, orations, prayers and processions which are undertaken in an attempt to cope with the chronic problems of crop and stock loss caused by drought, disease or human envy. Similarly, before doctors and modern medicine became more accessible in recent years, folk herbal remedies made up at home or bought from a local pharmacist were accompanied by prayers, chants and vows. Even today when doctors are more common such practices still persist and have been supplemented with introduced curing cults.

In addition to belief in supernatural entities coming to the aid of people in their problems, religious rite is used to confer a stamp of legitimacy and special emphasis upon more secular political and social happenings. In a culture where deep faith in God and the Saints is a hallmark and where Catholic ceremony accompanies most important community gatherings, it is only natural that individuals should attempt to endow worldly events with a sacred quality, thereby taking advantage of the people's faith for their own private ends. It is exactly this inter-relationship of religious phenomena with the other realms of culture that so worries foreign priests. The latter were brought up in an industrial society where religion is ideally an institution apart and would prefer worldly matters to stay outside the church.

The people's faith is ever present and constantly manifests itself in daily life. Any statement as to future action and intentions is always qualified with, "If God wants such to take place". Sertanejos

mean what they say with this conditional expression and it is not merely a linguistic survival, as in more secularized parts of Brazil. Despite the effort that some men make to appear otherwise, even the most rabid anticleric or 'modern' young person believes in Catholic cosmology even if he is bored by the Catholic rite. Such a person may miss nearly an entire important mass but he rushes in at the moment of the benediction and is present for special masses that protect certain aspects of individual health.

The general socio-economic and cultural changes that have occurred in the last decades have also affected religion and its role in social organisation. Protestantism, Spiritualism and Afro-Brazilian cults have been introduced as part of the process of integration into the national society. What follows is an analysis of the impact of urbanisation, and greater social distance between the classes, on religion and particularly in the definition of religious groups. At the same time, a sustained comparison is made as to how rite and worldview differ between members of different sects, thus describing the changes in religious outlook that have taken place.

Catholicism was the European religion introduced during the Conquest and today the overwhelming majority of Sertanejos are still members of this faith. Virtually all Amerindian religious tradition was lost in the process of European cultural domination and until recently attempts to preserve, or to introduce religious practice other than Catholicism, have had limited or no success at all.

Today, collective indigenous ceremonies, such as the *toré*, are only encountered where concentrations of Amerindian descendants exist in a particular place.[1] Otherwise such rites have disappeared altogether

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[1] Pierson (1972) describes in detail surviving indigenous religious ceremonies as they were practised in some localities in the São Francisco Valley up until the 1950s. He also analyses a case of revitalization of an Amerindian ceremony in one of the communities studied by his researchers.

or have been completely changed so as no longer to possess any religious meaning. One *toré* observed in Belém do São Francisco had degenerated into a simple circle dance in which large quantities of *cachaça* were consumed. The dance was no longer dedicated to any spiritual entity but rather to the person who paid the drink of each round. Such has been the result of centuries of Catholic religious predominance. Missionaries worked with indigenous groups in the first centuries to try to bring about voluntary conversion but the major force for change was cultural assimilation in which the dominant upper class did their best directly and indirectly to bend the rest of the population to their religious views.

Jews that fled from Portugal to avoid the Inquisition also found it hard to practise their faith in Brazil and most were forced to convert to Christianity. Surnames of such 'New Christians' are encountered throughout the Sertão but today they are devout Catholics like anyone else and do not even suspect their origins. In one case a man who, by his name, was obviously of Jewish ancestry, made an extremely anti-semitic comment, not realising the irony involved.

On the increase are Protestant sects which first entered the region by way of the large State capitals. The denominations were established in the 1800s, in the capitals, where they appealed to middle class merchants (Della Cava, 1970). It was not until the 1950s that the sects started to enter the Sertão, where they are popular amongst middle class merchants and the urban poor. Today, Portestants are most numerous in larger urban areas and the spread of the sects has been part and parcel of the process of national cultural integration. The Afro-Brazilian cult *xangô* and Spiritualism are also growing in popularity and appeal to mainly the urban lower class of larger communities (Table 45).[1]

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[1] Fry (1978) and Willems (1967) note a similar appeal of Protestant and Afro-Brazilian cults for the poor of the large cities of the country.

Table 45. Religious Membership in 1970

County[1]	Urban Population	Catholics		Protestants and Others		Spiritualists		Agnostics		Total	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Chorrochó	905	10 181	99.4	61[2]	0.6	0	0	0	0	10 242	100
Parnamirim	2 994	13 043	99.8	23	0.2	0	0	0	0	13 066	100
Floresta	6 004	27 962	99.3	195	0.7	0	0	6	0	28 163	100
Belém S. Fco.	6 280	17 524	98.5	250	1.4	0	0	11	0.1	17 785	100
Cabrobó	5 843	19 024	97.4	460	2.4	5	0	33	0.2	19 522	100
Salgueiro	19 586	30 909	98.7	248	0.8	3	0	150	0.5	31 310	100
Petrolina/Juazeiro	77 985	119 305	97.1	2 998	2.5	425	0.3	172	0.1	122 900	100
Caruaru	101 862	134 865	94.6	6 482	4.5	435	0.3	842	0.6	142 624	100
Greater Recife	1 615 665	1 532 419	88.6	143 492	8.3	21 861	1.3	31 102	1.8	1 728 874	100

Source of data: Fundação IBGE (1972, 1975a)

[1] Figures for religious membership are only available for the whole county, including the rural zone. The latter can have the greater majority of the county's population in the Sertão and as rural people are overwhelmingly Catholics they weigh heavily in the total.

[2] This is probably an error for no Protestants were encountered in Chorrochó.

Floresta is the same size as Belém and Cabrobó but is comparatively isolated and is economically less integrated and has less contact with the national society, hence the proportion of Catholics is greater. Similarly, Parnamirim is both smaller and less dynamic than the irrigation communities. Where membership in other religions or even open declaration of agnosticism, is more evident is in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. In Greater Recife, non-Catholics are numerous and represent nearly 12% of the population.

Before Protestantism and Afro-Brazilian cults became favoured alternative religious activities for dissident urban groups in modern times, other types existed, some of which are still practised today. Individuals involved in flagellant groups, São Gonçalo dances and millenarian movements were - and still are - from the rural and urban poor. Thus we are not dealing with a unified Catholic population that has only recently been divided by the process of cultural integration but rather a history of religious dominance by the orthodox elite, accompanied by various types of alternative religious forms practised by some sectors of the population. Such dissident sects have been, at best tolerated by the upper class and quite often harassed, if not violently suppressed.

CATHOLICS

Typical Sertanejos are Catholics. For such people, members of the other religious sects are considered to have eccentric ways by modern standards, the strangest of which are the Protestants. Despite some interesting syncretism, what distinguished Catholicism from Protestantism and other cults are: the conventional behaviour of Catholics, the practice of traditional occupations, the position of the priest, the hierarchical

structure of the Church and the spiritual world, the manner in which rites are carried out, the cyclical nature of religious fervour on the part of Catholics, the role of the Church in the life cycle, and, finally, some basic points of disagreement concerning theological doctrine.

Conventional Behaviour and Ambiguous Priests

The rural population, no matter what their political allegiance or sex, are faithful practising Catholics, who go to mass whenever possible. The great majority of townspeople are also practising or nominal Catholics. In the communities studied normally more than 95% of the urban population are Catholic, with the proportion decreasing with the size of the community. Individuals who turn to other religions are normally small merchants who have remained outsiders and particularly the poor who practise urban occupations. This is explained by the fact that church functions are controlled by the upper class, and usually by members of the traditional family, from whose domination some members of the urban middle and lower class wish to be free, even in spiritual affairs.

Women are often the most intensely religious Catholics, particularly if they are older and widowed. Most congregations are 60-85% female, depending on the importance of the event. In cities like Belém, where mass is frequently celebrated, elderly women go to numerous masses during the week not only as a form of passing the time but also out of religious fervour. Men, on the other hand, should not demonstrate too much enthusiasm for Church functions, for this is thought to be unmanly.

This could be interpreted in terms of the division of labour between sexes and generations. Part of a woman's role is to look after the spiritual well-being of her family and elderly widows with ample free time

on their hands could thereby make themselves helpful. Some old women have been heard to say that they had just come back from mass where they had prayed for the members of their family and even for the researcher. Also, men justify their not going more frequently to mass because their hard work is already penitence enough in itself. This might make sense for farmers and lower class urban labourers but it is hard to sustain for civil servants, whose rather substantial amount of free time is spent gossiping and playing cards. Expected sexual roles are probably the main reason why women go to mass and other religious gatherings more often than men.

Men have a definite hostility towards priests, first because they are such strange men and secondly, because they take up too much of their wives' time, as well as giving them rather too much attention. In the past, some communities were notorious for 'painting' priests. Men chased sacerdotes away with gun shots and also desecrated churches. However, such open hostility to priests is rare in the Sertão where most men respect them out of faith and reverence. If not from either of these; then they do so out of fear, for the curse of a priest is held to be the most powerful that exists and brings total misfortune for the one to whom it is directed.

Numerous stories exist about how disrespectful persons were punished for their sacrilegous acts. In one case three drunken men broke into the church of Chorrochó, drank the wine for mass and stole some articles. The priest, in good Sertanejo fashion, sought revenge by giving a special mass beseeching divine punishment. One of the men went mad, another committed suicide and the third became a drunkard because of financial ruin.

Priests are peculiar figures in Sertanejo society and the butt of most jokes. .Few are Sertanejos because, as the people freely admit, "Brazilians are not fit to be priests", which of course refers to native males. What is expected locally of male behaviour is the opposite of priestly obligations of abstinence. On the other hand, if women could be priests then there would probably be no shortage of sacerdotes in the semi-arid zone.

The major barrier to priesthood for males is the vow of chastity, to which few are willing to submit themselves. Most people think that only few priests are really able to persevere in their vows and that they must have numerous illegitimate liaisons. Some women do in fact seem to be drawn to priests and a number of women recount tales of how a certain shameless priest made advances to them. There is a common belief that concubines of priests become werewolves or witches, which might limit temptation on the part of the women. Illicit sex notwithstanding, a legitimate, long-lasting relationship with a woman, through which a man achieves social and economic status, can only be accomplished by way of marriage in the Sertão and this is banned for priests.

Furthermore, a life of temperance is too much to expect of modern-day Sertanejos. Periodic excesses of drinking, dancing, whoring and gambling are expected of self-respecting males. Finally, there is the problem of the frock which for many is too similar in appearance to a woman's dress.

Thus priests are usually foreigners which adds another dimension of strangeness.[1] Some speak Portuguese well after years of residence

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[1] In addition, it must be noted that most Brazilian priests are concentrated in the more comfortable larger cities. Most are of upper class origin and so they naturally favour posts in the state capitals. Forman (1975) also made this observation.

in Brazil, others do not and even their mass is difficult for the people to understand, which is a situation similar to the one which Pierson (1972) observed 30 years ago. A more serious problem is the difficulty that foreign priests have in comprehending a way of life so different from the way in which they have spent most of their lives. The pronunciation of words and the grammar might be impeccable but the ideas end up by being too abstract and too imbued with another reality for the local population to understand the message. This contrasts sharply with the occasional Brazilian priest encountered. The latter knows how to adapt his language and concepts to that of the common rural folk of the interior. He also does this in such a way as to avoid antagonizing the local elite on which he often depends for much of his living expenses.

This does not mean that Brazilian priests never prove to be an irritant for the upper class. Their work of aiding the plight of the poor in the larger cities often proves a bane to various development and economic interest groups there. What a native priest achieves is a more diplomatic approach, so as to not bring the full wrath of the "powers-that-be" upon him.

In the smaller towns and cities of the interior, a Brazilian priest is also better able to translate the new Church policy of more clearly assisting the poor into concrete language and action. The foreign priest of Parnamirim, who was previously the priest of Abaré and Chorrochó parish, rants on about social justice in such a way that his sermons go right over the people's heads, yet, beyond such rhetoric, he does little. The old Brazilian priest from Salvador who spends three or four months a year in Chorrochó clearly states his views in mass and takes action. As he is a teacher and he knows the importance that local

people give to education, he helps as many of the poor as possible with school expenses. However, such a priest is a rarity, and with the exception of the larger commercial hub cities, the Church has done little to help the plight of the urban and rural poor of the Sertão. This stands in stark contrast with its work in the Agreste and on the coast. Perhaps this is so because the nature of the problems are quite different in the Sertão from those of the coastal zones. Church action, like development policy, needs to be better tailored to regional variation.

The Nature of Church Hierarchy and Rite

The greatest bone of contention between local Catholics and Protestants is the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church. Protestants object to the role of priests as intermediaries between worshippers and God just as they dislike the role of saints. Saints are viewed by local people as go-betweens for individuals with problems needing divine assistance. Saints, through the virtuous life they led on earth, are thought to be closer to God in Heaven and so can reach His ear easier. Lesser souls are further away and have more difficulty in getting a hearing. Many people almost take the view that the saint himself is fulfilling the request, without recourse to God, and so are nearly divinities in their own right.

This way of conceptualizing cosmological structure parallels political and social structure in this world where a hierarchy of patrons acts on behalf of the individuals below them, much in the same way that Foster [1979(1967)] and Wolf (1966) have observed elsewhere in Latin America. While local Protestants never put it in such a way, their objections to spiritual mediators mirror their attempts to overcome the dominance

of the patrons of this world. They too can ask for diving intervention in order to overcome problems with illness or unfair persecution by 'evil' persons of the community, but they take great pride in the fact that they do so directly with God, without the interference of a priest, bishop, pope or saint.

It is the priest's role in the basic religious ceremony, Mass, that particularly distinguishes Catholicism from the other religious sects. Leaders exist in the latter but they do not have the formalized position of a specialist who mediates between the spiritual world and this one. While there is a modern tendency for lay persons to take the lead at different points of a mass, their part is still quite insignificant as compared with the near total dominance of the priest. The other sects allow much more individual participation of members, and their leaders merely guide the service, never assuming the position of a spiritual mediator.

The structure of the Catholic rite is also formalized and fixed, with only a few variations occurring in the basic rite of the Mass. One highly religious Catholic male explained why he did not attend normal Mass or prayer meetings more frequently by saying, "you get tired of eating only rice and beans every day". The other sects are more spontaneous, allowing for individual creativity, and so conferring a sense of worthiness on otherwise unimportant members of the community.

What individuals of the congregation know of the formal structure of the Mass and the meaning of Mass iteslf, not to mention its parts, varies considerably. This occurs despite the distribution of printed copies of each Sunday's Mass in most places nowadays, religious class in school and the efforts of some priests patiently to explain the ceremony at each point of the service. First, few people can read and there are

even fewer with enough ability to understand the extremely formal Portuguese of the printed weekly liturgy. More important, as occurs in any society, the number of individuals who want to comprehend the workings of abstract religious rite are few. As Radin [1957(1927)] pointed out, the vast majority of persons are satisfied to go mechanically about their daily lives, including that of religious activity, without inquiring into why things are the way they are.

The best account of lay understanding of the mass was given by one inquisitive man who estimated that about 30% of the population knew as much as he did, though probably far fewer really do. In his opinion, the rest of the community simply view the rite as 'Mass'. They hold it in the highest respect, but do not understand much of what takes place.[1] Many persons go to mass because, "It's good to". This sort of explanation is the counterpart of "It's bad for you", both being evoked when a person acts in a certain way but does not know how to explain why he does so. Others go to Mass to express 'penitence' whereby they gain grace from God both in this world and in the next.

When a priest is not present to preside over mass, lay persons may participate in regular prayer meetings, such as Rosaries or Novenas, that are frequented by the most devout. Here almost all are elderly women and the leader is an old person of the elite. There are a number of other religious ceremonies and feast days at which a priest is not present which are led by important members of the community. Rites of this sort without the supervision of a priest are what the majority

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[1] Reichel-Dolmatoff (1971) noted a similar type of differentiation of religious understanding for the Desana Amerindians. His main informant estimated that half the adults merely go through the motions of ritual without understanding its meaning. When men are young they may reflect on the songs, dances and myths which they learn. Fewer persons yet are knowledgeable in that they understand myths and can interpret ritual. Finally, only a select few, made up of religious leaders can fully understand the functioning of their society's cosmology.

of Sertanejos have to make do with. Most villages may be visited by a priest only once or twice a year, usually to celebrate mass for the festival of the patron saint. Even small county seats may have mass only once a month.

The Religious Year

Another point of difference between the local practice of Catholicism and that of other religious groups is the nature of the yearly cycle of rite. Catholic Sertanejos envisage the year as being punctuated by the occurrence of a number of religious days and periods. Saints' days and festivals break the continuum of normal profane time of work in the way that Leach [1966(1961)] refers to. Holy days, together with Sundays and market days, are considered as 'days off' for rural folk and most townspeople. The majority of farmers do not work on Saints' days for to do so is thought to be disrespectful of the saint in question and can bring misfortune.

However, on feast days religion and society are not completely separated, which is a basic point of contention on the part of Protestants. In the words of the people, most festivals mix the 'social' and the 'sacred'. The atmosphere of any particular religious event varies, depending on how much the 'sacred' is emphasized in the ceremony. The more the sacred predominates, the more serious and sombre is the mood of the event. This occurs most noticeably during Holy Week when the community should come together as a whole, putting aside social and political differences. There should be silence and temperance of behaviour. The opposite occurs with the June festivals where the 'social' predominates and the 'sacred' is nearly non-existent. The majority of feast days

are a blend of serious religious ceremonies, interspersed with revelry and only the most devout emphasize the religious aspects of them.

Protestants object to the annual cycles of religious fervour and particularly to Catholics placing greater emphasis on some events than on others. There also exists a different priority as to which events throughout the year are considered most important by Sertanejos and by the Church. The principal event of the year is Holy Week, as it is in most of Christendom. Next in importance is the patron saint's day of the city, town, or village in question, as is the case for the interior of much of Brazil. In many places of the country and for the Church, Christmas is the second most important period of the year and not that of the patron saint. In the Sertão, Christmas and other significant dates for the Church pass barely noticed. Much more popular in the semi-arid zone, as in the rest of the Northeast, are the June festivals, of which St. John's Day is the most important.

The religious year for Sertanejo Catholics has the following sequence of activities: Novenas for Mary in May, followed by the June Festivals, the Rosary Novenas in October, All Soul's Day and All Saint's Day in the beginning of November, Christmas, Carnival, Lent and Holy Week. Interspersed at different points of the year are the Patron Saints' Days. Also, regional and local pilgrimages occur throughout the year but most of these coincide with All Saint's Day.

A novena is a series of prayer meetings that take place in the church or in family homes. As the word implies, the normal series is that of nine days, though those for Mary in May and for the Rosary in October take place throughout the month. In the country, a farmer or a worker may annually sponsor a modest novena in his house. The family may do this out of devotion to a particular saint, or because of a vow

made during a time of need when they promised to hold a novena every year. In Chorrochó, similar single day reunions dedicated to a particular saint, called *festas de reza*, used to be held by different farmers throughout the year.

At small community novenas, when the materials used are limited to candles for the church, modest amounts of fireworks and wood for bonfires, a different family will have the honour of sponsoring one each night. Novenas leading up to the patron saint's day are more costly and are sponsored by different social groups, such as the merchants, the artisans, the young people, the farmers, etc. Local religious lay leaders, who are often close relatives of the county politicians, may try to bridge class divisions by having novena activities held throughout the community. However, competition for prestige gained by sponsoring the most elaborate decorations or raising more money for the church, can cut the community along class and factional/occupational lines. In Parnamirim, the merchants (who are members of the Menezes faction) are pitted against the farmers on one day and civil servants on another (both groups are part of the Cabral faction). In Belém this does not happen because the dominant faction there cuts across occupational lines. Novenas in Chorrochó are simpler and different nights are usually sponsored by leading individuals of the Pacheco faction (who dominate church functions).

The tone of novenas can vary according to the community, from that of prevailing sadness in Chorrochó to a cheerful tone in Parnamirim, where novenas are often sung. Novenas for the patron saint are usually better attended by men and boys, for they are more festive in character.

The June Festivals are virtually secular events, consisting of bonfires and fireworks displays, dinners with characteristic foods,

club parties and square dancing.[1] St. Anthony's Day (June 13) is only commemorated by persons who are devoted to this saint and they usually have his name. However, St. Anthony's Day parties are rarely held in the study area. More common are St. Peter's Day (June 29) festivals, which are held more frequently on the farms by men with this name, or by widows and widowers (whom the saint protects). The most popular of all is St. John's Day (June 24) which is celebrated everywhere by the whole community, except of course Protestants.

On the eve of the saint's day each family makes a bonfire in front of their house and serves different meat and corn dishes. In the past *cachaça* and *aluá* (a fermented corn beverage) were the traditional drink of the parties, while today beer, rum and whisky are the most common drinks served. A simple rite of godfathership under the sanction of St. John is performed around the bonfire. Girls do 'experiments' to determine who their future husband will be.

The more common explanation for the bonfire and the festival is to pay tribute to St. John. One explanation, given by a devout person, was that the festival repeats the way that St. Isabelle notified her cousin Mary, with a bonfire and fireworks, of the birth of her first child, St. John the Baptist.[2]

All Saints' Day (November 1) is commemorated by a simple procession in the main street and with a Mass or prayers recited upon returning to the church. This usually involves women and conscripted students.

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[1] Cascudo [1962(1954)] describes such festivities as being general to the whole of Brazil, having been introduced by the Portuguese from Europe. In Europe the celebrations are of pre-Christian origin and commemorate the harvest and summer solstice. In the Sertão they fall two months after the harvest of cereals and prior to the cotton harvest. At this time of the year food supplies are high but it cannot be said that the June festivals celebrate the harvest as they do in Europe.

[2] Cascudo [1962(1954)] also cites these explanations, so we may assume that they can be heard in other parts of the Northeast and Brazil.

More important religious events on this day are a number of regional and local pilgrimages that take place.

Pilgrimage to a shrine can be made at any time of the year but festivals held on certain dates, like All Saints' Day or the Epiphany, draw huge crowds of believers. People come to *pagar uma promessa*, fulfil a vow made to the resident saint. The most common way to do this is by lighting a candle at the shrine or by leaving an *ex-voto* (votive offering) (Plates 12, 13, 14 and 15). Votive offerings are objects that symbolize the part of the body that had been affected by an illness and for which divine help was besought. In the Sertão they are usually carved from wood, though, ceramic and wax ones and even photographs are beginning to be used. This substitution is not taking place because there is a shortage of wood for making *ex-votos*, but rather because ceramic and photographic votive offerings are considered to be more 'modern'.

Many people who go to a shrine on the principal days are also drawn by the festival. A mass is celebrated and, outside, people socialize, eat and drink. Sometimes fights break out among rivals and even on rare occasions mortal enemies cross paths which results in a shootout. Such commotions have led a number of individuals to make pilgrimages that are mainly for religious reasons at another time of the year, when the atmosphere is quieter and less dangerous.

Regional shrines of pilgrimage draw persons from long distances and, indeed, the distance is what makes the promise a special one.[1] Individuals

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[1] There exists a saying in Portuguese, "House saints do not produce miracles". While this is true of miracles, most homes have a number of images and engravings of saints who are frequently asked for help. Some may even be images of saints from famous shrines. If a problem worsens, then a more arduous vow is made, which may be to make a pilgrimage to a shrine that is thought to be more powerful in terms of bringing about miracles.



Plate 12. A Dusty Ride to the Shrine of Patamuté Cavern (Curaçá, 1978)



Plate 13. Inside the Cavern Shrine of Patamuté (Curaçá, 1978)



Plate 14. Candles, Rosery, Wrist Band and Wooden Votive Offerings and Cash Contributions at the Base of the Cross in the Patamuté Shrine (Curaçá, 1978)

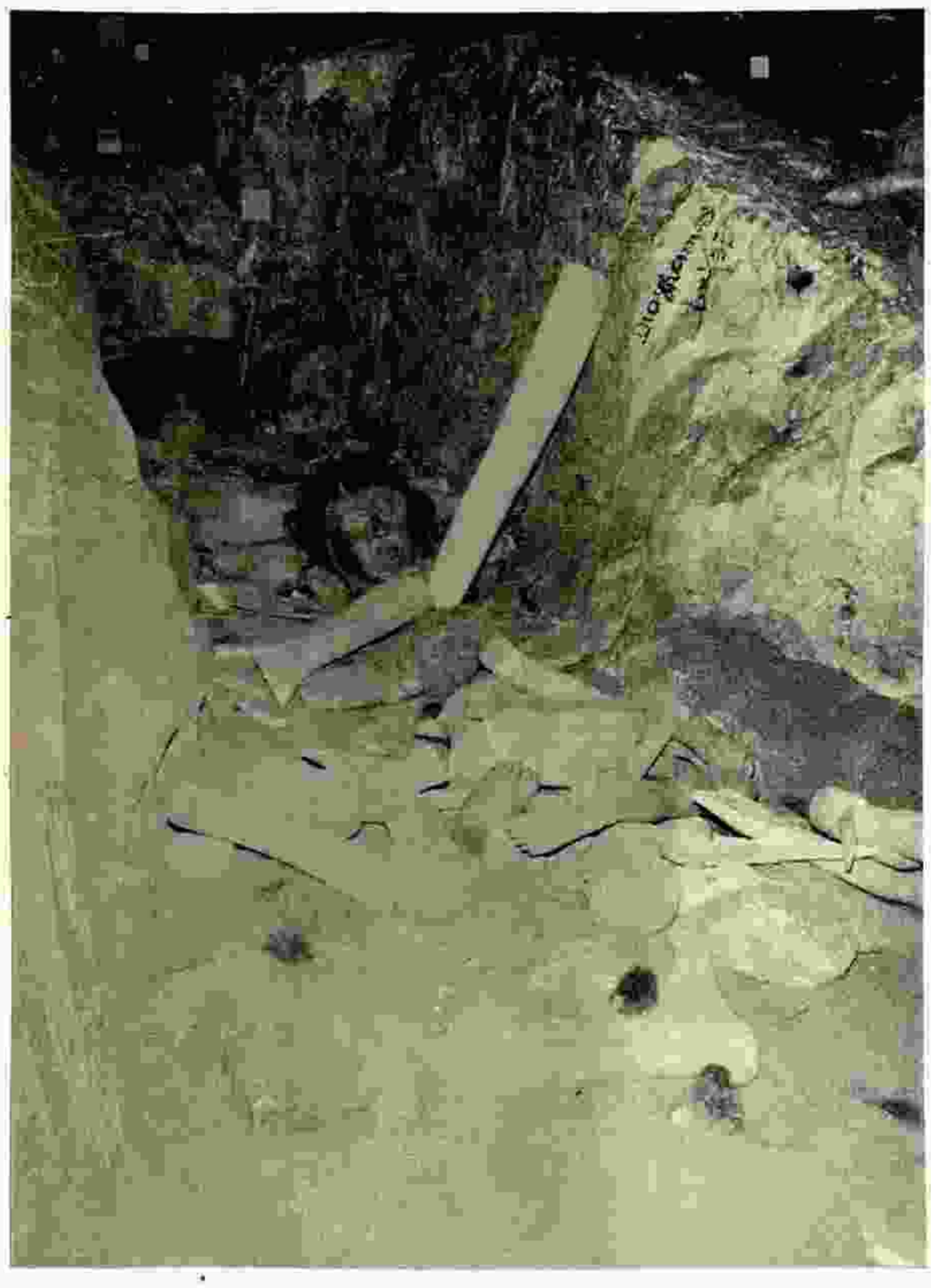


Plate 15. Collection of Wooden Votive Offerings in the Shrine of Patamuté, Each One Represents a Different Affected Part of the Body that was Cured (Curaçá, 1978)

who ask for the help of the deceased Padre Cícero of Juazeiro do Norte come from the eastern part of the Sertão and from the coastal area, while Sertanejos residing within a hundred miles of Juazeiro will often prefer to make a promise to St. Francis of Canindé, located in northern Ceará. Others may trek to Bom Jesus da Lapa, located on the São Francisco River, in Bahia, close to the stateline with Minas Gerais.

There also exist local shrines in most parts of the Sertão which draw people from the surrounding areas. In the fieldwork area there exist three such shrines: St. Anthony of Pambu, located across from Cabrobó; the Cavern of Patamuté, sited in Curaçá county of Bahia; and Montessanto in the county of the same name in Bahia. All three attract persons from distances of up to 100 kilometres.

Larger shrines usually begin as an image or a cross in a particular place. Slowly their fame grows as individuals are exceptionally successful in their requests. Gradually the places of worship are improved by the construction of chapels and proper shrines and, with time, the most miraculous develop into points of regional pilgrimage, with churches and a booming commerce in religious trinkets.[1] Contributions of money by the faithful finance larger and larger structures to accommodate

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[1] Pierson (1972) describes the history of the shrines of Bom Jesus da Lapa and Santo Antonio de Pambu. Gross (1971) did first-hand research of pilgrimage to the Lapa shrine. Della Cava (1970) furnishes a detailed account of the cult of Padre Cícero of Juazeiro do Norte. Cunha [1944(1902)] visited Montessanto and related the elaborate shrines erected there as being a product of the same devout religiousness from which the Canudos messianic movement sprang. On the other hand, such a propensity for pilgrimage is not the result of Sertanejos being religious fanatics by nature because similar places exist in other parts of Brazil and indeed pilgrimage is an integral part of Catholicism and of other religions elsewhere. Gross correctly notes that pilgrimage, unlike the rare outbursts of messianic movement, is a normal aspect of Sertanejo religion, supporting the *status quo* rather than challenging it.

the ever increasing number of pilgrims visiting the shrine. Even separate rooms and buildings are erected to house all the letters, votive offerings and other memorabilia left by the grateful.

While class differences arise in the expenditure involved in fulfilling vows, suffering is what counts and the poor devise ingenious ways of achieving this. One rich rancher took a lorry full of São Gonçalo dancers from Macururé to Bom Jesus da Lapa, a long and expensive undertaking. Some poor individuals have been known to walk hundreds of kilometres carrying a heavy cross or, on the final day of a journey, to crawl on their knees to the shrine. Individuals of all classes may go barefoot, which is no mean feat considering the size of the crowds and the rocky trails leading to more rustic shrines. Gross (1971) cites similar cases for pilgrims who go to Bom Jesus da Lapa.

Sertanejo pilgrimage lacks the elaboration and scale of social organization as reported for the Andes (Sallnow, 1981) and Mesoamerica (Nutini, 1968). Group pilgrimage is a much more informal affair and revolves around the means of transportation. Pilgrims to Patamuté can get a ride with a relative or friend who is going, whom they may or may not help with payment toward the cost of the petrol. Alternatively, they may pay their way as they would for transport to almost any destination. A third possibility would be to go along with a politician as part of an electoral deal. Each person or family pays separately his own expenses involved with other aspects of the trip so that there are no communal overtones, as Sallnow relates for Peru. As Gross (1971) also notes for pilgrimage to Lapa, people travelling together tend to be from similar socio-economic backgrounds so that little social levelling is involved. The cases of regional pilgrimage that were investigated showed similar tendencies.

The way that the people of the semi-arid zone go to local and regional shrines reflects their more individualistic type of society. Families and friends may travel together but each individual looks after himself. This, together with the occurrence of violence argues even more powerfully than does Sallnow's material against Turner's (1969, 1978) communitas explanation of pilgrimage. While Sertanejos try to maintain a respectful attitude and demeanour in the shrine itself the socio-economic divisions of without are barely masked and reassert themselves forcefully, and sometimes tragically, upon leaving the chapel. Besides individual and community factional rivalries, state chauvinism can lead to fights and killings, as occurs between Baianos and Pernambucanos who go to the notorious Santo Antonio do Pambu shrine. Gross (1971) also makes similar observations. Pilgrimate to Lapa does not serve to foster local craft markets other than that of relics, to divulge information about prices or jobs, to promote social solidarity and equality or to ceremonially rank participants as can be the case in Mesoamerican and Andean pilgrimage.[1]

On All Souls' Day (November 2) everyone should visit the grave of deceased close kin to place flowers on the tomb, to light a candle

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[1] However, Gross exaggerates his claim of pilgrimage being a sacralization of earthly patron-client relationships at least as he qualifies the latter. There does indeed exist a rough equivalence between vows to a saint and secular financial and secular debts but vows are made and debts are incurred by members of all classes and not just the poor. Some of the examples of secular debt dependency that Gross cites are not from the Sertão, others involve relationships which might be better characterized as creating gratitude than dependency and still others are merely part of the work contract which both worker and employer do not consider as debt at all. Similarly, a devotee to a saint feels more gratitude than dependency to the saint for having saved him in his hour of need. Without doubt, hierarchy is involved, and to which Protestants consciously object, but in both sacred and secular Sertanejo relationships we are dealing more with notions of intermediators than debt peonage.

and pray for their soul in order to give them help, wherever they may be. While everyone should go to the cemetery on this day usually only women and children actually do. Collective ceremony in the cemetery, as Harris (1982) reports for the Bolivian Laymi on All Saints' Day, is absent for Sertanejos on the day that they commemorate the dead, All Souls'. In the semi-arid zone, groups of only two or three members of a nuclear family go to the cemetery to pray for their dead.

Despite the official Church doctrine that the soul leaves the body and goes to the Other World, the people are extremely frightened of cemeteries and only enter them on this day and for burials. When going to the cemetery on these days they do what has to be done there and leave as quickly as possible. The people are definitely afraid of contagion from disease for they never enter without wearing shoes or sandals, always take a bath and change their clothes afterwards. However, there is more to this than disease. The people believe that the spirit is not finally released from This World until the flesh has been 'consumed by the earth'. Cabral (1980) reports a similar belief in northern Portugal. This can take a few years to occur in a semi-arid environment so that there will always be some spirits hovering around cemeteries. In the same way that Harris (1982) reports for the Bolivian Laymi, the soul can be both in Heaven and yet also still be tied to This World. Similarly, throughout most of the year, cemeteries and places of death are avoided for fear of encountering a spirit. Spirits can carry the living away to join them. This is particularly true of the souls of sinners who were condemned to wander alone in '*espaço*' (space). For a number of Sertanejos, *espaço* substitutes the conventional Catholic idea of Hell (*Inferno*).

Festivals for patron saints of the various communities of a general area are spread over the year taking place on different dates so that outsiders can attend. Any city, town, village or even hamlet that has a Catholic church or chapel, which must be dedicated to a saint, has a patron saint's day.

A novena usually leads up to the day itself. This is held in the oldest church of the community. Afterwards there is a firework display and a local marching band may perform.

On the day itself, the town fills with people coming from the rural zone and visitors from other counties. With everyone dressed in their best, a mass is celebrated which has the highest attendance of the year. The ratio of males to females is almost equal. In the late afternoon a procession takes place and the image is carried by prominent men or women through the streets of the central part of the town. In larger communities less of the outer laying areas are included in the route. Everyone takes part, walking silently in two long lines. The image is carried between the lines near the front of the procession and the priest walks before the image. Often women are at the front of the procession and men at the rear or women in the left line and men in the right. Usually leading members of the faction in power have the prerogative of occupying the most prestigious places in the procession, symbolizing their control of the community. Chorrochó is an exception to this rule because the Pachecos dominate important church functions whether in power or not.

Most of the day is spent eating and drinking heavily in bars and booths set up especially for the festival. By the time the principal dances start in the evening the men are already quite drunk and become

drunker as the party progresses on into the early hours.[1] In most county seats there is a tendency not to allow men to enter the dances armed so as to avoid gunfights. These still occur in some village festivals. The disputes do not even have to be between old enemies for a man under the influence to take offence at the drunken remark of another.

In the Sertão, Christmas is not celebrated on the same scale as in other parts of Brazil and within the semi-arid zone the extent of the festivities varies from place to place and even from year to year in the same town. When a priest is present, Midnight Mass is usually celebrated on Christmas Eve. Some places, like Parnamirim, have a novena leading up to this mass.

A late dinner before mass is given by only a few 'progressive' members of the upper class. Specially expensive holiday food, such as ham, chestnuts and wine, are served. This holiday fare comes from distant places and there is no local tradition of preparing such foods and wine is otherwise rarely consumed. As in other parts of Brazil, where this Christmas Eve dinner is more common, it takes place at the home of the grandparents and unites the whole family, members of which may have come long distances to take part. Some of the rich set up Nativity scenes in their homes which also appear to have been introduced not long ago. The giving of presents among family members, as is common in other parts of the country, is virtually unknown.

An older local custom of Christmas is the singing of carols by children dressed up as shepherds. What was truly traditional to Christmas

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[1] In the past, before electricity was supplied by generators or main lines, parties began earlier around 9 p.m. and would go on to about 1 or 2 a.m. at the latest. Today, they start about 11 p.m. and go on to near daybreak.

in the Sertão were dances that used to be held in the old dance halls. Nowadays, people go to bars or socialize in the street on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Also, inviting guests for dinner at the normal time on the Eve or for supper on the Day seems to be an old custom. However, the party fare is that which is common to other Sertanejo festivities and not typical of Christmas elsewhere in Brazil.

Carnival is not in itself a Catholic ceremony, rather it takes place in reference to Lent. It is a rampage of the senses and flesh, undertaken just before the period of temperance that ideally characterises Lent and Holy Week. The festival starts on Saturday and ends at dawn on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

Carnival in the Sertão has only recently begun to be more widely celebrated. In the past only some larger cities and towns held dances in clubs. However, be the festivities where they may in the semi-arid zone they do not assume the importance, the extravagance and loosening of morals that characterize Carnival in the large cities of the Southeast. Indeed, such an attitude is the antithesis of Sertanejo sexual mores. The people here like to drink and dance as much as anywhere, perhaps more so, but scantily dressed females and cases of promiscuity that occur elsewhere are not allowed even for a temporary reversal of normal behaviour, which festivities like Carnival may permit elsewhere.

Lent is a period of preparation for Holy Week and the activities depict Christ's path to the Cross. In the late afternoon or early evening of every Wednesday and Friday of the period mostly women and children participate in a Via Sacra. This can take place in the Church before the various images of the Via Sacra or in the streets in front of homes.

The street ceremony is repeated each time in a different part of town. The participants start at the church and make 14 stops in front

of different houses and then return to the church. At each stop the different events from the condemnation of Christ to his sepulchre are read out and the crowd responds with the phrase appropriate to the sequence of events of the crucifixion. As the people move from one station to another, they sing sad hymns of the suffering of Christ and the mood is one of melancholy. The Via Sacra observed in Chorrochó over the period of Lent passed through the whole community and was enacted in front of rich as well as poor homes. However, it was noted that more participants took part in the wealthier part of town than in the more distant poor parts.

Holy Week is the culmination of the Catholic annual cycle. It starts on Palm Sunday. On Wednesday a Via Sacra or the Procession of the Encounter takes place. On Maundy Thursday the washing of the feet of the Apostles is enacted in the mass of that day. On Friday the Procession of the Dead Christ is presented. Hallelujah Mass takes place on Saturday at midnight. Finally, Resurrection Mass is performed on Sunday. Most of these activities require a priest, so that counties that do not have one must content themselves with simpler rites of Holy Week, consisting of prayer meetings and perhaps a procession on one of the days. Some rural people come to town to attend the more important events when a priest is present. A number of other popular activities with religious and moral significance are also undertaken on different days of Holy Week. These are not supervised by a priest and, indeed, priests object to them.

The overriding tone of Holy Week is one of grief and the events emphasize the suffering and death of Christ. This mirrors their own lives, which they feel to be full of the pain and distress caused by illness and drought. The joy at the resurrection of Christ, which is

evident at the end of Holy Week elsewhere in Brazil, is muted in the Sertão. Salvation demands penitence, humility and, above all, personal suffering, which are constant themes and are symbolized throughout what is the most important religious commemoration of the year.

Another dominant theme of Holy Week is community unity. The death of Christ brings people together in much the same way that members of a family temporarily put aside individual differences at the death and burial of close kin. This is a striking difference between Catholicism and the other sects and one which is symbolized in outdoor processions. In contrast to Protestantism and Afro-Brazilian cults which close in on themselves in their places of worship, Catholicism does not separate the Church from the community. Numerous rites are performed outside the church, and ideally should be enacted throughout the whole community. In small towns, like Chorrochó, Via Sacras and processions can do exactly this and they pass through all the streets of the community. In a town the size of Parnamirim it is not practical to pass through every street so Via Sacras and novenas are performed by different groups throughout the city in an attempt to overcome the problem of size. However, unified community processions end up by excluding poor areas, which is even more evident in small cities like Belém.

There exist a number of traditional sanctions concerning the type of food, drink, dress and behaviour that must be observed during Holy Week. Out of respect for the commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ, all forms of dispute and fighting should be avoided. Salted and canned fish, eggs and cheese are eaten and not meat, particularly on Good Friday, for blood should not be shed during Holy Week. This, together with eating very little until midday on Good Friday, is considered to be an act of abstinence on the part of the worshippers. One should

also avoid sexual relations on Ash Wednesday and especially on Good Friday. Also, parties should not take place. Clothes should be dark, or even that of black mourning dress, to symbolize the sadness of the death of Christ. Shoes must be used unless an individual has made a vow to do otherwise. On Good Friday one should not bath, nor should women with the name of Mary comb their hair and change their clothes. Nowadays, some individuals who studied in the state capital try to show that they are modern by not following the observances and seem to make a point of flouting the sanctions by getting drunk on wine and shouting out profanities, all of which cause their elders to complain.

Palm Sunday is known by most people as commemorating the arrival of Christ in Jerusalem just *before his crucifixion*. In most county seats a mass is celebrated in the late afternoon with a short procession taking place in the middle of the ceremony. For the people, the high point of the mass is communion and the receiving of blessed palm fronds with which their homes can be protected from the natural elements. Most men do not bother to attend the whole mass, although many arrive late in the mass to receive the blessed fronds.

The real activities of Holy Week begin on Wednesday with a *Via Sacra* or, as occurs in some places, a *procession* that portrays the *encounter* of Mary with Jesus the child. The latter represents *a period of joy* in the life of the two *before Christ's suffering began*. In this procession, the men and boys start at one point of the town with an image of Jesus the Child and the women and girls at another with an image of Mary. The two groups proceed until they come together in the middle.

On Thursday the Last Mass takes place. Until recently the ceremony of washing the feet of the Apostles was enacted on Maundy Thursday. In a rite conveying humility, twelve men were dressed in frocks and

the priest washed their feet and gave them bread, as Christ had done for the Apostles at the Last Supper.

Also important in the Maundy Thursday Mass is the ringing of the church bells just before the Creed, after which point they are silenced and the people make as little noise as possible until the Hallelujah Mass on Saturday night. Another distinctive aspect of the Last Mass is a procession that takes place within the church just after the consecration of the host. The *host*, which is now possessed with the spirit of Christ, is *carried round the congregation* and then placed again on the altar. After the mass and during Friday and Saturday, members of the congregation come, family by family, to pray for Christ before the host.

After a morning of fasting on Friday, there is a large meal at noon in which fish and other specially prepared foods are eaten. In the afternoon rite, different persons of the community, as well as the priest, read biblical passages relating to the death of Christ. Then either a *Via Sacra* takes place or a *Procession of the Dead Lord*. In the latter, individuals dress to represent different biblical personages and walk between the lines of the people in procession. Mary (in a dark purple dress) comes first, then four girls (in black), the 12 Apostles (also in dark purple), four men (in red) carry the reclining figure of the dead Christ, and two soldiers with swords follow (Plates 16 and 17). At three different points the procession stops briefly for one of the girls representing Mary Magdalene to sing a *mourning hymn*. The procession returns to the area outside the church where the community prays and everyone sings the prayer of the *Via Sacra of Compassion*. Finally, the image is carried back into the church where individuals can come to *kiss the feet of the dead Christ* and pray.



Plate 16. Good Friday Procession of the Dead Lord (Chorrochó, 1979)



Plate 17. The Image of the Dead Lord Carried in the Good Friday Procession (Chorrochó, 1979)

Close to midnight on Saturday the Resurrection Mass takes place. The Mass begins in the dark with only the light of a large altar candle which is carried in by the priest, who also enters dispensing holy incense. Then just before the Evangel everyone lights a candle from the altar candle, uniting the congregation in worship.[1] The Evangel usually treats the events after the crucifixion of Christ which led up to his resurrection. At the moment of the Consecration all the lights of the church are lit and the ceremony becomes one of joy, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. In the past, all the images were covered with purple clothes representing funeral solemnity and at the same point of the mass they were uncovered, as if taking off mourning dress.

On Sunday, families have a festive noonday meal where meat and drink are consumed in abundance. Most places do not have any other religious rite, though a few communities have a Resurrection Procession on this day. It is a normal kind of procession in all respects, except that no image is carried, and instead the priest carries the host and chalice, which represents Christ.

The events of the last two days should, of course, be taken as celebrating the rebirth of Christ but one gets the impression that the people do not carry out the rites with as much conviction as they do during the preceding days when the painful death of Jesus is stressed. It should be noted that Holy Week in Chorrochó is markedly more solemn than in either Belém or Parnamirim which might reflect the harder life the people of Chorrochó lead. In fact, individuals who left Chorrochó to live in Belém complain of what a boring place Chorrochó is because all the people do there is to pray.

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[1] Like the frond saved from Palm Sunday, the remaining part of the candle has the power to protect homes from tempests.

On the different days of Holy Week certain popular activities take place which are frowned upon by the priests. The latter hold them to be anti-social, cruel and vengeful. The Flailing of Judas can take place on Thursday, Saturday or Sunday depending upon the place. Another event of this type is one in which whores and unmarried couples are ostracized.

The Flailing of Judas is a common event throughout the Sertão and Brazil. Basically it is a ritual execution of the Apostle who betrayed Christ. A straw dummy representing Judas is hung from a pole. It may contain fireworks so as to blow apart when the crowd sets it on fire. Rocks and even gunshots are directed at the scapegoat and so the priestly objections are understandable. Judas' Testament is a part of the event that takes place before the figure is burnt and is seen by the priests as highly anti-social. During the preceding night the organizers raid houses and farms, taking personal items and even push parked cars to the scene of the Testament. The next day the owners of the items come to retrieve their articles to the laughter of the crowd, which can be acutely embarrassing for the owners, especially in the case of stolen underclothing. One poor rancher had his prize mule taken and paraded around with its tail cut (a great offence), dressed in a brassiere and girdle and mounted by the Judas. The most entertaining and dreaded part of the Testament is the reading of Judas' Will which is an account, in humorous verse, of all the embarrassing and dishonourable occurrences that had taken place throughout the year.

Another popular event of Holy Week in Chorrochó that used to occur on Maundy Thursday was the ostracism of immoral persons who practise sex out of wedlock. Men would go to the house of such persons and verbally abuse them. After one particularly ugly case of breaking into the house

of one couple and beating the woman, the priest was able to convince the people that the practice was incompatible with the spirit of Holy Week.

Religion in the Rites of Passage

Another distinguishing feature of Catholicism is the way in which religion plays a part in all the ceremonies that mark a change in the status of an individual. A person is born into the Church. This is a birthright, much as his family affiliation is, and it is exactly this lack of conscious choice which Protestants criticize, much in the same way that they ridicule Catholic rite for being overly mechanical.

The majority of life cycle rites are religious by nature, involving the different stages of a person's development as a member of the Catholic Church. Others mark essentially secular changes, though every social event must always be accompanied by a mass, so that God's benediction is conferred upon the collective activity. This is another aspect of the lack of separation between community and religion, which so strikes a Protestant from an industrial society, i.e. the researcher, but which is only to be expected, given the type of society found in the Sertão. If the local Protestants were the majority they would probably not make a separation either.

In county seats which have a resident priest the different rites of passage can be performed on any day of the week, though even in this case their performance is usually restricted to market days for rural folk. Most counties of the Sertão do not have a local priest so that the great majority of Sertanejos can only participate in them whenever a priet visits the local church or chapel, which is usually on patron

saints' days or Easter. The rites tend to be held in mass ceremonies and on one occasion a baptism involving more than 50 families was observed.

For a priest the rite of baptism is necessarily for the soul to receive a supernatural entity which makes it beautiful before God. The child becomes a true son of the Maker and a member of Christian society. Before the rite it is merely a simple creature of God. At the moment of conception, God creates an individual's soul and the material part is contributed by the parents. If the soul is to develop by acquiring knowledge, and mot merely grow vegetatively, the person must pass through a series of Catholic rites, of which baptism is the first.

The people tend to emphasize other aspects of the rite. First and foremost, a child must be baptized for it to be 'saved', i.e. to go to Heaven. An unbaptized child is a 'pagan' and cannot be buried in the cemetery. The soul is thought to go to Limbo or to wander about in space. Such a child must be buried in the bush in the way that rural folk used to do with all deceased persons in the past before it was easier to bring them to be buried in a cemetery.

As we saw earlier, another important function of baptism for the people is to bind together persons as *compadres*, which traditionally was important for bridging class divisions and strengthening kin ties as well as to provide assistance for orphans. Also, when baptism is performed for the first child or grandchild it is an indirect way of religiously confirming a new status on some of the individuals present, as in the case of the parents and grandparents. Before this rite, only the informal gathering of close kin at the moment of birth and the month of seclusion of the mother and child mark the respective changes of status of the individual involved.

When a child is nine or ten years old and is thus to a certain degree mature, he takes his first communion whereby he officially enters the Church as a participating member. First he confesses and then receives the symbolic representation of Christ for the first time. The priest explains that this feeds the soul with the love of God and so the individual takes another large step forward in his spiritual development.

The priest tries to prevent class differences from entering into the rite but they inevitably do. Any clothes normally used for mass are acceptable in the eyes of the priest but the rich have special dresses made for the girls and cards printed as souvenirs of the occasion.

First Communion corresponds roughly to Protestant baptism for both mark an individual's official entrance into his respective church. Protestants would object to this comparison by pointing out that a Catholic child has already been indoctrinated since birth and at eight or nine is still young enough to go through first communion simply because it is expected of him. He does not make this decision based on a developed faith. Protestants think that the fact of their children being from 10 to 16 years of age helps them to exercise a choice as to which religious persuasion they wish to follow. However, they too come under considerable pressure from their parents to go the 'right' way. Also, Protestants can boast of their emphasis on conscious choice because they are very much in the business of converting adult Catholics to their faith, so free choice is definitely involved. It remains to be seen if community pressure and expectations would be any different if they were in the majority.

The rite of confirmation is not commonly performed in the Sertão as the people do not see much point in the rite and it must be performed by a bishop of whom there are fewer in number than priests. The official

purpose of the ceremony is to give strength to the child in his Christian life. A child is usually 11 or 12 years of age when the rite is performed and has a godparent of the same sex.

Graduation from high school and junior high school are basically secular changes of status. The celebration includes a ceremony of graduation in which politicians make speeches and a priest celebrates mass. A sermon is given which is written especially for the graduates. The dinners and club parties afterward have become one of the most important social events of the year and now rival those of the patron saint. The increasing importance of graduation in the life of an individual, as well as in the social life of the community, could be interpreted as an indicator of a secularizing trend in Sertanejo culture but a mass and sermon are integral parts of the ceremony. Indeed, a community ceremony without a mass is simply not complete.

Inevitably, conflicting religious doctrines have clashed in graduation ceremonies. In Belém, Protestant parents object to a Catholic mass being given and a compromise struck was to have a pastor present in order to give joint service with the priest. Also, in one year, the girls wanted to use slacks for the occasion which is a sin for local Protestants and in the end dresses had to be worn.

For priests the institution of marriage was established by God in the Beginning of the World when he created Eve to be the wife of Adam. Christ elevated matrimony to the status of a sacred act in which the holy union of husband and wife is performed in church before God. In the eyes of the people a wedding legitimizes sex and the setting up of a household.

In the past, marriages were community celebrations. The couple would arrive in town to the public acclaim of "Long live the betrothed".

They were accompanied by a procession of a hundred or more persons on horseback and the streets would be filled with the tethered horses of the people who had arrived for the festivities. After the ceremony a dance would be held for the whole town. Now the poor are married at mass ceremonies or merely have a quiet civil service performed. Even one observed case of the marriage of the heir-apparent of a local political leader did not measure up to the accounts of the celebrations of old. This of course sounds somewhat nostalgic and the communities of the past were smaller, so, indeed, the one and only street of a town just might have been full of tethered horses. However, the alleged change can also reflect the increasing size of towns and cities of the Sertão whereby personal community ties are growing weaker and class disparity is increasing. The marriage of a local notable in Chorrochó involved nearly everyone of his faction, whether they were rich or poor. The poor of Belém would not be so interested in attending such a marriage and would certainly not appear at the party afterwards.

The most elaborate church ceremony is similar to Catholic weddings elsewhere in Brazil. The bride and groom arrive in separate cars, even if the distance is only that of a few hundred metres. The groom enters the church followed by his parents and the bride's mother and the 'witnesses'. Then the bride enters accompanied by her father. The 'witnesses' are kin and close friends whose role is similar to that of godparents. Their obligations concern the good relationship of the couple throughout their married life. They take their place in the front pews, the bride's on the left and the groom's on the right, i.e. each on the side where the bride and groom stand before the altar. For the poor, this division might be interpreted as representing the union of two different families that will be tied together by the marriage, but for the rich, who usually

marry close kin, such is not necessarily the case because their families have practically all kin in common.

Church ceremonies for the dying and deceased consist of Last Rites, different types of mass or simpler ceremony marking the burial, and commemorative mass seven days after death, one month, one year and each subsequent year thereafter. In the Sertão, the official rite most commonly performed is the brief ceremony of commendation of the corpse which is held in the church just before burial and even this occurs only when a resident priest is present. The principal deterrent to the other rites is the availability of a priest at the time of death as well as the fees charged for commemorative mass. As with most religious acts in the Sertão, it is usually the local people themselves who must perform the collective rites marking death.

If possible, when a person is dying, a priest is called to perform the Last Rites. The principal purpose of the ceremony is to strengthen the soul for its passage to the Other World and to give a dying man one last chance of confessing his sins and thus the opportunity of one day going to Heaven. This does not mean that by simply confessing his sins he will not have to atone for them after death as Protestants think that Catholic Last Rites allow for. By confessing, his soul will go to Purgatory where, after a time of penitence, it can finally go to Heaven. If the person had never confessed his sins, and so shown himself to be unrepentant, he is damned forthwith and forever. The commemorative masses, held at different periods after death, gather together kin and friends to pray for the deceased and so to aid him in Purgatory.

Upon death the body is washed and dressed in the clothing appropriate to the age, sex and marital status of the deceased. Until a child reaches the age of nine or ten years old he is not yet considered to be a sinner

and is still a 'little angel'. Boys are dressed in the robes of St. Francis and girls in the dress of Mary. Virgins are clothed in the dress of Mary which is also associated with wedding apparel. Older boys and men are dressed in suits, if their kin can raise the money, otherwise they wear normal clothes to the grave. Women are attired in a long white gown.

For 24 hours the body lies in state in the house of the deceased, where friends and kin come to pay their respects. Coffee and bread are served. Kin stand in 'vigilence' over the corpse throughout the whole period. When the time is up, the coffin is carried through the streets by kin and friends who change frequently so that all who desire can express their attachment to the deceased by bearing him to his grave. A long line of people form behind the coffin as it approaches to the church. There a priest performs the commendation, or if a priest is lacking, the local lay leader says a simplified Via Sacra or another prayer. From there the coffin is taken to the cemetery where the people gather around as it is lowered into the grave. At this point kin cry out in grief, throw a handful of dirt on the grave and are led away, so permitting the gravediggers to go about their work.

Normally, after the burial the only ceremonies of remembrance are those performed by the people without a priest present. After 15 days a Visit to the Grave takes place. The church bells ring the death peal to advise friends and kin to gather before the church. Then, they go together to the cemetery where flowers and candles are placed on the grave. An old woman will lead a series of different prayers for the soul of the deceased. After this rite no others are performed and the only act of remembrance is that of the immediate kin on All Soul's Day.

In addition to the above collective ceremonies marking death, Catholics also individually express their grief through changes in daily dress and deportment. As described before, upon death, persons closely related to the deceased wear black mourning attire which must be used for a period that varies according to the closeness of their ties to the dead. Also, out of respect for the departed, close kin should not go to parties or dances or any other occasions of joy and festivity. In sum their behaviour comes to resemble local Protestants in their normal everyday lives of temperance.

TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVE RELIGION

The lack of priests and the upper class domination of most church functions led to the formation of a number of popular sects that deviated from Catholic orthodoxy long before Protestantism and Afro-Brazilian cults were available to Sertanejos as alternative forms of spiritual endeavour. In the past, there were a number of millennial movements that arose around charismatic individuals. Flagellant sects were also common and are still encountered in a number of places in the semi-arid zone. In addition, the São Gonçalo dance is still practised in some places. What they all had in common has an appeal to the poor, a corresponding hostility of the upper class to them if they appeared to threaten its power, and the lack of supervision by a priest meant that at times they were banned or discouraged by the Church.

Millennial Movements

The most famous of the millennial movements were the Sebastianists of the Enchanted Kingdom in 1836-1838, the movement of Antonio Conselheiro in the last decades of the 19th century which culminated in the Canudos Revolt, the pilgrimages to receive counsel from Padre Cícero from 1890-1932, the collectivist communities of Beato Zé Lourenço during the 1930s and 1940s, the activities of the holyman Pedro Velho at Santa Brígida from the 1940s up to his death in 1963 and the continuing attraction of the faithful to Frei Damião.[1]

The older movements of the last century are for the most part forgotten. Individuals who were directly involved or affected in some way by them pass on their recollections to their children and grandchildren. After that the movements fade from the collective memory. Thus little is recalled today about the Sebastianists. Only a few elderly individuals living in the south of Chorrochó county, near the site of Canudos, recall stories that were passed on to them. The stories about the socio-economic organization of Canudos do not quite fit the accounts of its practising primitive communism, as for example Facó [1976(1963)] portrays the movement. Land was held in common but each family tilled its own field and, before federal forces tightened their grip causing scarcities, commodities were bought and sold on a monetary basis.

Memories and legends about Padre Cícero are still vivid because the famous priest's appeal was widespread and during his lifetime he

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[1] For greater details on the different millennial movements see Cunha [1944(1902)], Della Cava (1970), Facó [1976(1963)], Forman (1975), Montenegro (1973), Pessar (1976), Queiroz (1965) and Valente (1963).

helped many people who are still living and moreover continues this help in his present role as a virtual saint in the other world. Indeed, as we saw earlier, pilgrimages to his tomb and the churches of Juazeiro do Norte are considered by Sertanejos to be of the same type as other famous regional shrines that have miraculous images of conventional saints.

Frei Damião is still living and has an appeal similar to that of Padre Cícero.[1] Whereas the latter received people in Juazeiro, Frei Damião travels through the Northeast, celebrating open air masses and counselling individuals on their problems much as Padre Cícero did. As Damião is getting old he has been exploited by his right hand man as well as by high level political candidates, who print campaign posters with pictures of themselves alongside the famous Capuchin friar. A gathering attended in Paraíba had the uncanny air of an evangelist meeting in the American South. His mission even has a special coach with his name painted on the side. It would seem that, under the influence of others, the movement is deviating from his earlier emphasis on a simple lifestyle which was one of his principal attractions for Sertanejos.

Stories about Beato Zé Lourenço are restricted to a few persons who were summoned to put down his sect. One old policeman, who had talked with the survivors of the last government attempt to stamp out the cult, was told tales of a communal lifestyle which was collective in everything, including the leader's sexual prowess. While such is probably exaggerated for a number of reasons, the local authorities destroyed the movement first in Ceará and again in Bahia because of

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[1] Della Cava (1970) reports that some people think that Frei Damião is the reincarnation of Padre Cícero but no one was encountered who held this view. On the other hand, most devotees of Padre Cícero also are devoted to Frei Damião and they wear brooches and medallions displaying pictures of the two.

its eccentricity, usually labelled fanaticism in the literature, as well as due to the fact that local notables did not like its independence of their control.

Pedro Velho passed through Belém in his wanderings and some people remember him for being similar to other lesser known *curandeiros* (herb and spiritual curors). He was able to establish a community that was not destroyed by the authorities, perhaps because his work was not such a radical departure from local norms.

All of these movements involved mainly poor persons who came to ask for counsel about important problems in their lives. Some came with the intention of improving their lives in the communities that rapidly grew up around the service to pilgrims. However, many of those who settled in the communities originally came to resolve a problem. Upon arrival they were impressed by what they saw and decided to stay.

In their place of origin the individuals, who would normally perform the role of mediating in family and personal problems, were local priests and political leaders. These may not have been able to, or were unwilling to, resolve the problems of the individuals in question and, as we saw with saints and with shrines of pilgrimage, when the local spiritual and secular authorities cannot settle a problem, the people go to others believed to be more powerful through their closer contact with God. Such was the case with all the mystical leaders of the various messianic movements and when they were previously individuals of middle class or lower class status, without formal religious training, e.g. Antonio Conselheiro, Beato Zé Lourenço and Pedro Velho, or low in the church hierarchy, like Padre Cícero and Frei Damião, antagonism with the clergy and local political leaders was inevitable. This was even more so when the social and religious behaviour was viewed as particularly deviant

and a threat to the established order. When local authorities were unable to suppress a movement the military was called in to destroy it, as occurred with Zé Lourenço, Antonio Conselheiro and was attempted with Padre Cícero. At times wholescale massacres took place because the members usually refused to surrender.

If the movements were able to survive they were, in time, co-opted by the established order and often their leaders became large property holders and political authorities as did Padre Cícero and Pedro Velho [Facó, 1976(1963) and Forman, 1975]. As Burridge (1969) and Worsley (1968) show for millennial movements throughout the world, a more practical organizer frequently guides the work of the charismatic holy man and it is usually the former who may be able finally to steer the movement into the main stream in order to safeguard its survival. João Abade at Canudos, Floro Bartolomeu at Juazeiro [Facó, 1976(1963)] and presently Frei Fernando serving Frei Damião are such figures.

Penitentes

Flagellant sects, whose members are called *penitentes*, can still be found along the São Francisco River and in a few places of the Cariri region of Ceará. St. Hilaire encountered *penitentes* in 1817, Euclides da Cunha in 1859, Lourenço Filho in the beginning of this century (cited in Pierson, 1972) and Pinheiro (1950) made reference to flagellants, so such sects are probably as old as European colonization. Many of their practices and much of their lore are surprisingly similar to such sects as were common to Europe in the past and to ones that still exist [cf. Cohn, 1970(1957) and Christian, 1981]. Of the study communities, only Belém has a group of *penitentes*, which dates from this century.

Some groups still perform flagellation while others have heeded the desire of Papal authorities that it be discontinued. The sects are almost exclusively made up of poor men because, as the members say, "the rich have not the stamina to endure the long hours of prayer and procession", nor the physical suffering involved in the past.[1] Nowadays, their functions consist of group hymn and prayer meetings which are held at places where crosses are located in the bush, at the cemetery or in the homes of poor persons who think that their presence blesses the house and the dwellers.

The basic purpose of the hardships endured is to atone for sins, although most people enter the group because they think the activities 'beautiful' and only make amends for transgressions as they occur, as is common of any person. Also, it is believed that after seven years of practise one's salvation is guaranteed. Participants think that the suffering they undergo, by flagellation in the past and with long, late hours of singing and carrying a heavy cross in procession earns them grace (Plates 18 and 19). Quite possibly they feel that their activities are beautiful because they re-enact the suffering of Ghrist, as Cohn [1970(1957)] notes for European sects of the Middle Ages. While no informant has ever stated it in this way the sects are most active during Lent and Holy Week, which would mirror Christ's sufferings.

The general public, and especially the upper class persons, are hostile, afraid or amused by the sects and their strange ways, melancholy hymns and peculiar black and white robes. Most people are curious to

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[1] In the distant past it seems that such sects also appealed mainly to the poor who were to some degree independent, which is seen in St.Helaire's observation that members were usually freed slaves and mestizos (cited in Pierson, 1972).



Plate 18. In the Chapel of the Penitentes (Belém do São Francisco, 1979)



Plate 19. Penitentes on Their Way to a House Prayer Meeting (Belém do São Francisco, 1979)

to know who are members, since most hide their identity by covering their faces and bodies with their attire.[1] This, together with the use of dark robes in their late night activities at sites of deceased persons scares many people, for such involves possible contact with spirits.

São Gonçalo Dances

The Church long ago banned ceremonies involving dancing as well as drinking, feasting and the singing of popular songs because such were held to be incompatible with the atmosphere of a church (Christian, 1981). São Gonçalo dances disappeared from the cities of Brazil where priests discouraged them but they continue to be performed in the villages and on the farms of the interior [Cascudo, 1962(1954)]. In relatively isolated parts of the Sertão, where there are few priests, the dances have continued right up to today. They are especially popular in northern Bahia and in part of western Pernambuco along the São Francisco River.

São Gonçalo dances usually take place in the late part of the calendar year and can be viewed as another form of fulfilling a vow. A vow to São Gonçalo can be made for any problem but the most common reason is to ask for a successful harvest or for regular rains to fall, hence their timing before the rains.[2] This need not be viewed as being limited to traditional dry farming for irrigation sharecroppers fearful of the risk of crop disease or poor market prices, have been known to sponsor a dance in Belém. When a dance is held every year by a certain family, other individuals can also make their own vows which are fulfilled by dancing or holding the image for a number of rounds.

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[1] Only the identity of the leader and his assistant are known to the public. As Plate 19 shows they were less secretive with an outsider such as the researcher.

[2] Christian (1981) notes that in 16th Century Spain a number of such festive processions and vows concentrated in a two week period at a moment of great danger in the agricultural cycle.

The dance is a long affair, its length depending on the number of rounds performed, which is usually eight, ten or twelve rounds. Each round takes as long as an hour to complete, so a dance can last up to twelve hours. To the accompaniment of four musicians playing guitars and tambourines, each couple of dancers weave in and out of two long lines up to the makeshift altar and return to the end. When all have had their turn a round is completed.[1]

Despite the Church's long standing objections to such dancing, the requirements of decorum for the dance reinforce traditional values of ceremonial respect. Women should use a dress with sleeves, the dress should not have a décolletage and a slip should be worn under the dress. Nobody should drink strong alcoholic beverages and traditionally *aluá* used to be served. Men should not wear hats nor be armed.

The dances are usually held on the farms by poorer folk, although some wealthy ranchers and townspeople can sponsor them at times. So popular are the dances and so frequently are they held that some players are nearly full-time specialists.

Explanations of Sertanejo Religious Zeal

Pierson (1972) tries to explain the existence of flagellant groups, the millenarian movements and the general religious zeal of Sertanejos in terms of the rigours of their harsh environment. He states that such great religious movements as Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism all arose in arid settings. No doubt there is some truth in this, for Sertanejos are intense in almost everything they do, but a better explanation of this type might be seen in the nature of pastoral society.[2]

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[1] See Pierson (1972) and Queiroz (1973) for a fuller description of the dances.

[2] However, intensity of faith varies considerably throughout Brazil. The people of Minas Gerais, including those who live in the industrial centre of Belo Horizonte, are famous for their devotion and they lead a way of life which is the opposite to that of the Sertão.

Flagellant groups in particular are mainly found along the São Francisco River and in the Cariri region of Ceará; both of which are favourable settings by Sertanejo standards and where more cropping is practised. Such places are more densely populated and sharp, long-standing class divisions exist there. This could have facilitated the poor to form collective alternative religious cults.

Also, increasing population pressure and drought, as Della Cava (1970) cites to account for the rise of Antonio Conselheiro and Padre Cícero, are insufficient explanations by themselves. Demographic pressure has since increased in the Sertão and droughts are just as severe. Drought may no longer result in starvation and death but it can still ruin a man's fortunes and cause general hardship.

Facó [1976(1963)] puts forth a developmental explanation. He is correct in his criticism of Cunha [1944(1902)] for explaining the occurrence of millenarian cults in racial terms whereby Sertanejos are held to be mentally backward and unenlightened. However, Facó was not entirely right when he explains the movements, as well as banditry, as the result of the backwardness of the local economy. In his view, religious fanatics and highwaymen were protesting against the remnants of an obsolete social structure that gradually disappeared over the years. He rightly points out elements of such a protest but, as we have seen, the social structure has not changed so much as to justify his claim. The position here is that dissident religion has been channelled into new sects. Facó is closer to the mark when he says that changes occurred which allowed for greater control over the Sertão than had existed in the past and that the protest is being shifted from the country to the cities.

Today, the membership of the *penitente* groups seems to be holding its own as it has become an urban phenomenon, while millennial movements

have for the most part disappeared since the 1950s. São Gonçalo dances seem to have declined throughout the semi-arid zone since Cascudo wrote. The dissatisfied poor now have other Protestant and Afro-Brazilian sects to channel their energies into; greater health facilities have reduced some of the need for the messianic healers of the past, improved transport makes long distance pilgrimages easier and increasing political and police control does not even allow millennial movements to get underway.

NEW ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS PHENOMENA

Protestantism, Afro-Brazilian cults and Spiritualism have all been introduced into the study communities within the last 15 years. As would be expected from the community with greater contact with the national society, these sects have been practised in Belém longer and their participants are more numerous. In the smallest and least integrated of the towns, Chorrochó, there are no *xangô* cults, spiritualists only appear from time to time and a serious attempt at Protestant missionization was only begun in 1978.

Fernandes (1937), Forman (1975), Pierson (1972), Willems (1967) and Williams (1979) all refer to community and official hostility, harassment and even banning of the sects at different times throughout the country. Besides the usual ill will towards unconventional behaviour, only a few official sects of curtailing their practise were observed by the researcher in Belém. *Xangô* sessions are not allowed to continue late into the night because the noise, which is minimal because sessions take place inside a closed centre, is alleged to disturb neighbours. No such restrictions apply to more traditional Catholic *penitente* activities. Also, little consideration is shown for *xangô* members who

are municipal workers. If a *xangô* feast day coincides with a county faction, the latter takes priority. Quite possibly little open harassment of the sects was seen because of their having been established in Belém longer ago and due to the greater size of the community, which makes for less direct control over what the people do.

Protestants in Parnamirim complain that, in the beginning, some people would make a noise to disrupt their services but they ignored the incidents and, with time, no others occurred. The Protestant missionary, who came to Chorrochó to find converts, was teased and mildly pestered by local young people. He reacted visibly to the incidents, which only made matters worse. However, the priest and town leaders took a more tolerant attitude and left the man alone. Indeed, the priest asked the people during mass to cease abusing the man. From older accounts given by the authors cited above, it would appear that the clergy did not always hold such a benign view of the new sects that were introduced into their communities.

Protestants

In the 1950s Pierson (1972) noted the uneven distribution of Protestants in the São Francisco Valley. The majority were concentrated in the larger urban areas along the main river. In my fieldwork area the cities that had more Protestants were important cities with greater contact with the rest of the country, such as Juazeiro da Bahia, Senhor da Bonfim and what is present day Paulo Afonso. The sects were established in these places during the 1930s and 1940s. From such hub cities they then diffused to other smaller communities, or missionaries came directly from the large cities of the coast.[1]

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[1] Forman (1975) and Willems (1967) note this tendency in other parts of Brazil.

Protestants are called, and prefer to be known as, *crentes* (believers) and not by the former term for they say that they are not protesting against anything. What strikes the common people as being so strange about Protestants is their religious zeal, be they male or female. While a Catholic may always depend on his beliefs ultimately to explain why certain thing happen in the way they do, the Protestant's faith is constantly and purposefully made conspicuous to those around him. He regulates his life according to his particular reading of the Book and indeed prides himself on not needing a priest to do this for him. Most Catholics never even look at the Bible, while even poor Protestants study it, searching for the right citations with which to justify their behaviour or to condemn that of others.

As they are in a minority, much of what Protestants believe and do arises in reaction to doctrine and the public behaviour of Catholics. The most common types of Protestant sect encountered in the Sertão are those of fundamentalist demoninations, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists and Evangelists. These have strong ties with the United States, from whence the denominations were disseminated by American missionaries.

Despite some interesting Catholic carryovers, such as one group kneeling during prayer, Protestants make it a point to be different from Catholics in order to distinguish and define their group. The true 'believer' should not have such vices as drinking in excess, smoking, dancing and dressing immodestly, nor should he frequent places where he might associate with persons having such vices.[1] Many a local convert was a man who previously had a drinking problem to the point of being considered anti-social which, given Sertanejo standards of drinking,

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[1] Forman (1975) and Willems (1967) show this to be common elsewhere in Brazil. Kearney (1972) observed identical behaviour on the part of a Protestant minority in a Mexican town.

was one of extreme alcoholism. The family of such a man usually welcomes the change, even if he goes to the opposite extreme of abstinence.

Many of the members are outsiders who often took up Protestantism in a larger city. Of the nine families who make up the congregation of Baptists in Belém, five have arrived in the town during the last ten to fifteen years and they are the ones who established the sect in Belém. The main group in Parnamirim, the Congregação do Brasil, is made up mostly of local people, but the two principal leaders are merchants who do not fit into the local social elite; one was born elsewhere and the other is a native of the town but not a member of the traditional family. Before these two men turned to Protestantism, they were both Freemasons, which demonstrates that they had already been searching for an alternative socio-ceremonial group to identify with.

There is a certain flux of the same individuals from one Protestant sect to another. Almost like popular saints, if a miraculous event occurs to a person from one sect, people from other groups change membership. This is particularly the case in Belém where there are a number of Protestant churches competing for a limited number of individuals who are willing to make the social sacrifices to become *crentes*. As Forman (1975) and Willems (1967) note, more people do not become Protestants because their conduct is in direct conflict with local standards, which we also saw to be the problem with priestly abstinence. Less fundamentalist sects, such as Presbyterians or Methodists, might have a wider appeal among the local poor if they were introduced.

The service (*culto*) is loosely structured, with hymn singing interspersed with readings from the Book. During the service, different

people offer suggestions of hymns to be sung. Others will come forward to read passages from the Bible and offer interpretations as to the relevance of each for their lives. The interpretations show how the Protestants approach religion differently. Very individual readings of the Bible are encouraged as opposed to Catholicism's emphasis on the orthodoxy of doctrinal interpretation. However, the negative opinion that Protestants have about the nature of the Catholic faith is not quite just, due to the fact that the former are all fairly recent converts. This makes most, what Radin [1971(1953)] called, 'thinkers'. On the other hand, the habit of local Protestants justifying everything in terms of a memorized Biblical passage might in itself be considered somewhat mechanical, much in the same way as they criticise Catholics.

Few churches have a resident pastor and only occasionally does one visit the local congregation of those sects that have such specialists. Most congregations pride themselves on not having "such a parasite that steals your money". On the other hand, some denominations require their members to contribute 10% of their income to cover the expenses of the service and the costs of building and maintaining the church. Leaders do emerge, even if they are not specialists. The leader of the Parnamirim sect is called a 'co-ordinator' and he does tend to guide the service. While more democracy of worship exists among Protestants, certain aspects of local social structure intrude. The leaders in Parnamirim are wealthier, and work on the church tends to fall more on the poor. The explanation given for this is occupational speciality. Masons and painters do their jobs while the leader does his, which is to care for the wiring of the church (he owns an electrical repair shop). The other influential merchant does no more than organize the seating in the church.

An equal number of adult males and females attend services which is quite different from Catholic patterns of mass attendance. However, this does not mean that the sexes have equal roles in the service. Indeed, Protestants are unabashedly sexist. Men insist that they should have a more active role in services by citing, as usual, the appropriate passage from the Bible which justifies this. Also severity of dress codes falls heavier on women than men, all of which mirrors the standing of women in traditional local society.

Just as Protestants have a distaste for priests as spiritual middlemen so also they do not believe in saints for the same reason. They particularly disdain the popular practice of asking a saint's intervention before God for such selfish ends as amassing worldly riches. If an individual is very ill, or being unjustly attacked, a direct plea for divine intervention can be made. However, promising to contribute money to the Church or to perform an act of penitence which involves the mechanical act of repeating so many Hail Marys or rounds of a São Gonçalo dance in order to obtain a good harvest or a favourable financial deal is abhorrent to them. Rising during the service and giving thanks to God is considered better, particularly as it does not give the impression of making a business transaction.

Another doctrinal difference concerns the yearly cycle of ritual and rites of passage for sect members. As mentioned before in reference to the cyclical nature of Catholic rites, local Protestants hold that all services should be considered of equal importance. Thus in reaction to Catholic festivals, they usually hold none throughout the year, or, if they do, they hold them on different dates from Catholics.[1] As there

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[1] This is similar to early Christians setting Easter never to coincide with Jewish Passover.

are no saints, novenas, pilgrimages, All Saints' Day and local patron saint days are not commemorated by them. Even All Souls' Day, Christmas and Easter pass virtually unnoticed, so as to be different.

The life cycle rites are also few and different from Catholics. There are only three: baptism into the church, marriage before one's brothers of the faith and funeral, marking the passage from this world to the next.

Protestants only believe in performing baptism when a person is old enough to understand the significance and implications of the rite. All members of the congregation are present and the initiates are dipped under water in a tank, in the style of John the Baptist. The latter is invoked to explain why Protestants do not have *compadres*. The Bible makes no mention of *compadres*, so they do not have them either. Also, all those present at a baptism are the initiate's brothers in worship and one can count on them in times of need so that mutual assistance involves the whole congregation and not just sets of *compadres*. Finally, Protestants contend that God is the supreme 'witness' to baptism and marriage, so mere mortal *padrinhos* and *testemunhas* are dispensible.

With baptism all previous sin is annulled. However, no further ones can be committed or else eternal damnation is the result. This is thought to be contrary to what Catholicism holds concerning confession before death and the funeral mass as saving an evil man. As sin is irrevocable, Protestants either go to Heaven or Hell. If, upon death, a Protestant was too young to have been baptized, he will be judged innocent and go to Heaven much as baptised Catholic 'little angels' do. Hence, Limbo does not exist for *crentes*. If a person did not convert to Protestantism or sinned after having converted, damnation is certain and no amount of penitence after death in a Catholic type Purgatory will change this.

Funerals for Protestants are simple services held on the day of death and are intended to remind the deceased's family of what awaits him after death. This is the only service which can fall on a day other than the regular scheduled ones which are usually held on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Generally, what Protestants do most, knowing that it irritates Catholics, is question the basic dogma of the latter, as for example casting doubt on whether Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Christ. Some Protestants have been known to tell a Catholic to his face that by his behaviour he will be damned and that the only way to salvation is to become a member of the 'true religion'.

All of this is rather curious for, on the one hand, Protestants try to break with religious tradition and ridicule family heritage as an unimaginative way of Catholics entering their faith, while on the other, *crentes* affirm older social values of honesty and temperance. Protestants would contest the first point for many say it was the change in Catholic rite made over the last twenty years that caused them to think about changing to Protestantism. Also, they hold that, from their reading of the Bible, they have concluded that they are being truer to Christianity as it existed in the time of Jesus. As they find little or no reference to Jesus or the Apostles practising the rites of local Catholics they assume that these were merely invented by the Church over the centuries.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Protestant sects, and that which most appeals to the urban poor and the frustrated of the middle class is the millennial emphasis on the End of the World and the righting of the wrongs of this world in the next. They suffer their position of outcasts, and poverty in the case of the poor, with the

conviction that they will be saved when they die and all the others will not. They never lift a hand against their oppressors nor steal a loaf of bread when hungry for they know that God will take care of his own. To act otherwise is sinful and prevents individual salvation.

Xangoists, Spiritualists and Syncretism

Xangô and Spiritualism, as practised locally, cannot be qualified as fully fledged religions in the sense that Catholicism and Protestanism are. Persons who engage in the former do not consider either to be their religion. They think of themselves as being Catholics, just as *penitentes* do. However, the flagellant sects incorporate mainly old-time Catholic rite while local *xangô* and spiritualist curors utilize a cosmology that is a synthesis of rites and beliefs derived from the Afro-Brazilian cults of the coast, surviving Amerindian ideas, Catholicism, traditional notions of folk medicine and witchcraft and even some elements of past millennarian movements. Sessions include a vague element of worship of the visiting spirits but never in the way that Catholicism and Protestantism glorify God in ritual. Where the cults come closest to conventional religion is in the means and aims of their practice. They utilize supernatural entities to overcome individual problems of illness and misfortune. In addition, *xangô* cults bring together a group of people in collective ceremony, which many participants consider to be gratifying, independently of whether it cures ill and disturbed individuals.

According to Pierson (1972) it would seem that Afro-Brazilian cults first entered the general fieldwork area in the 1930s. He describes *candomblé* sects as they appeared in the 1950s in Juazeiro da Bahia.

These cults were absent in the small community or Orocó, which his project studied in detail. Only itinerant spiritualists from the coastal zones would occasionally call there at that time.

The leader of the *xangô* group in Belém learned what she knows from membership in a centre of neighbouring Cabrobó. By the name used to refer to the cults of this area, *xangô*, it is probable that they diffused either directly from the Pernambuco coast or via a hub city like Salgueiro. If Juazeiro da Bahia had been their point of origin the cults would be called *candomblé*. However, this does not mean that practices of the cults of Bahia do not enter into the local sects. Both xangoists and spiritualists refer to the famous centres of Cachoeira and Salvador and they consult books published in these places.

Notwithstanding this, the local sects are not nearly as elaborate as those of the Northeast coast. Also, they are more permeated with rite and symbols taken from Catholicism and indigenous beliefs than are *xangô* and *condomblé* sects of the coastal cities. The complex hierarchy and characteristic dress of Afro-Brazilian cults found elsewhere in the country is less developed locally.[1]

The basic 'session' as performed in Belém is similar to those described in the literature but the spirits are as often indigenous entities as African, and generally the names of Catholic saints are used for the latter, the African names rarely being heard. Catholic prayers are often a part of the ceremony and, in typical Sertanejo manner, Padre Cícero is a patron saint of the centre along side the more common

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[1] A vast literature exists concerning Afro-Brazilian cults. Ribeiro [1978(1952)] describes *xangô* on the Pernambuco coast. Williams (1979) and Bastide [1978(1958)] give detailed accounts of *candomblé* in Bahia and the latter in another work [1971(1960)] treats such phenomena throughout Brazil. Valente [1976(1953)] also produced an excellent work on the subject in Brazil.

St. George image. Also, one hears Padre Cícero, Frei Damião, St. Sebastian and King Sebastian invoked in chants. The first two famous Catholic priests of the Sertão would probably object to being invoked in this way. St. Sebastian is a very popular saint in the semi-arid zone and the last entity commonly called upon is a mythical messianic Portuguese King. Given the traditional makeup of the Sertanejo population it is only to be expected that local *xangô* would have more Catholic and indigenous influence.[1]

The leader of the centre, the *pai-de-santo* or *mãe-de-santo*, can almost achieve the status of a full-time specialist, living off the presents of food and money received for services rendered. Below the leaders in the loose hierarchy of the experienced are *mediums* who have been frequenting the centre and undergoing possession for a number of years. Others are only beginning and as yet have not been formally initiated. Such persons usually entered into the centre because of a problem that was diagnosed as the need actively to practise possession of a spirit that had insisted on visiting them.

The basic function of *xangô* is the calling down of spiritual entities from space to help humans protect themselves from the attacks of other spirits. the latter cause illness, derangement or other serious misfortune. The spirit or spirits causing the problem may have been sent by enemies seeking revenge or the spirits may of their own accord have decided to manifest themselves *on* the individual. The affected person becomes ill because he cannot dominate the spirit, so someone who has been practising the cult for longer has to induce the spirit to pass from the victim to

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[1] Zimmerman (1952) also noted that the *candomblé* cults of the community he studied in the Sertão of Bahia were restricted to being curing cults and lacked the complexity of coastal *candomblé*.

himself in order to dominate and finally expel it back to space. Also, other classic European and African witchcraft 'works', such as frogs having their mouths sewn up or the use of pin dolls, can be annulled.

However, *xangô* is not merely the combat of witchcraft. Most of the session is not devoted to treating affected individuals and the majority of those who attend go to observe or participate in dancing and spiritual possession more as a form of entertainment. They 'feel good' when they come out of the centre. To be sure, the objective of frequently experiencing possession is to become ever more accustomed to receiving spirits so as better to ward off future attacks, but the more immediate aim is to socialize and have a good time.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, sessions are held for spirits of the right and of light. As these spirits are usually beneficial, most people enjoy themselves. Participants dress in white and dance in a circle, the *giro*, to the accompaniment of singing. Individuals experiencing the usually pleasant possessions of these days will move into the centre of the circle, whirl around until the spirit goes back to space. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the atmosphere is darker and heavier, and the people dress in black and red to receive the evil spirits of the left. Manifestations tend to be violent and the possessed have to be secured by a number of people so that they do not hurt themselves by bashing their heads against a wall, a door or on the floor. As such spirits like to stay and do not go back to space so readily, the possessed usually need the help of the most experienced members of the centres who assume the spirit for final expulsion from the centre.

Individuals who go to *xangô* sessions do not behave in a way differently to the normal Catholics of the community, which of course they also consider themselves to be. Most of them go to mass with the same frequency as other people do and *xangô* sessions are not held on Sunday.

As in Protestantism, the leader of the *xangô* sect in Belém is not an intermediator between the spirits and participants who receive spirits (about half those present). She does have this role, as spiritualist curers do, when her guiding spirit talks and counsels individuals who come to her with their problems.

Sessions are loosely structured with simple opening and closing rites. When the leader's spirit arrives, it is a signal that the session is drawing to a close. A few saint's days are celebrated throughout the year and sessions on these days can be somewhat more elaborate. The most important one for the Belém centre is Cosme and Damião Day (September 27).[1] The session is held during the day, and, as the spirits who appear are children, sweets and a greased pole are attractions for the larger number of young people who participate. Sessions on St. George's Day (April 23), St. Sebastian's Day (January 20) and on the day commemorating the death of Padre Cícero (July 20) are dedicated to these important saints but otherwise are not very different from normal sessions. Hence, an annual cycle is not well developed and the few saint's days which are commemorated are not important in the local Catholic annual cycle, so there is no conflict of dates between the two. Similarly, other than a simple initiation ceremony into mediumship, rites of the life cycle of individuals do not play a role in *xangô*.

It is basically in the role of utilizing spirits from the Other World that *xangô* and spiritualism are distinguished from other religions. Catholic and Protestant cosmology holds that, upon death, the soul goes to the next world and that all contact with it is lost or should be terminated. While a Catholic can make a request from a saint, which is a spirit of an individual who once lived, the saint does not respond

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[1] These are the Italian twin saints Cosme and Damiano who were midgets, which explains their association with the spirits of children.

to the person nor comes down to possess him. The Church has tried to forget its past of combatting witchcraft and of exorcism. Now it maintains that spirits of the Other World should not be disturbed and should be left in peace. Also, today, priests phrase their explanations of common people claiming to have seen spirits, Satan or other metaphysical entities in terms of parapsychology or so much wishful thinking. Protestants are less polite in their condemnation of Afro-Brazilian cults, which are held to be witchcraft and 'a thing of the Devil'.

Most of the people of the community tend to take a dim view of *xangô* as they too suspect that black witchcraft is practised in it. This is the opposite of the truth, as the cults are devoted to combatting spirit attacks sent by malefactors. I never once saw anything resembling an attack on others, nor did I even observe participants sending an attack back upon its sender, as can be done on the coast. While most people believe that witches exist, references to specific ones are rare. No one would admit to being a witch if he were. Even owning a copy of the *São Cipriano* book of white and black witchcraft is enough for others to suspect the possessor of being a witch. There are cases of the police arresting persons with this book and the bandit Lampião is said to have killed an individual of a village in Chorrochó county who had a copy.

There are a number of individuals who practise less elaborate forms of spiritual possession or communication with such entities. They go under different names, such as *espíritas* (spiritualists), *curandeiros* (curors) or *cartomantes* (card readers). What they practise is somewhat akin to the European Spiritualism of Alan Kardec but most of what they do has its origin in older European traditions of witchcraft and in the Afro-Brazilian cults themselves. Such spiritualists often make

reference to or admit having stayed for a time on the Bahian coast, thus demonstrating direct contact with *candomblé* cults there. The principal difference between this type of spiritualism and *xangô* or *candomblé* is that the former is strictly performed for curing and does not have the collective ceremonies of the latter.

Practitioners can be consulted on market day or by travelling to a larger city where such specialists reside. They can charge highly for their services, as much as Cr$3,000 (a month's wages for many people) at the time of the fieldwork, and their clientele may include the rich, who usually do not frequent *xangô* sessions. Near insanity, extremely anti-social behaviour, incurable disease, or particularly bad luck are the types of cases normally treated. Often individuals seek out a spiritualist or *xangô* treatment when a doctor has not been able to resolve their problem, which is common in cases of mental disturbances.

Spiritualists can be more expensive than a doctor because the latter's consultations are being increasingly paid by the government. At times, market day spiritualists can take on the appearance of a doctor as the example of one dressed in medical white with Prof. Pajé (Prof. Shaman) monogrammed on his shirt pocket. These practitioners make the market day circuit just as other merchants do. However, they, like other sellers of traditional herbal medicines and mystical salves, use a blaring loud speaker and snakes to attract clients (Plate 20). Spiritualists sell the same wares but upon request will go into a house to consult a client.

Old and New Religion

Despite the existence of old and new alternative religious groups, Catholicism still remains the predominant sect in the Sertão and will

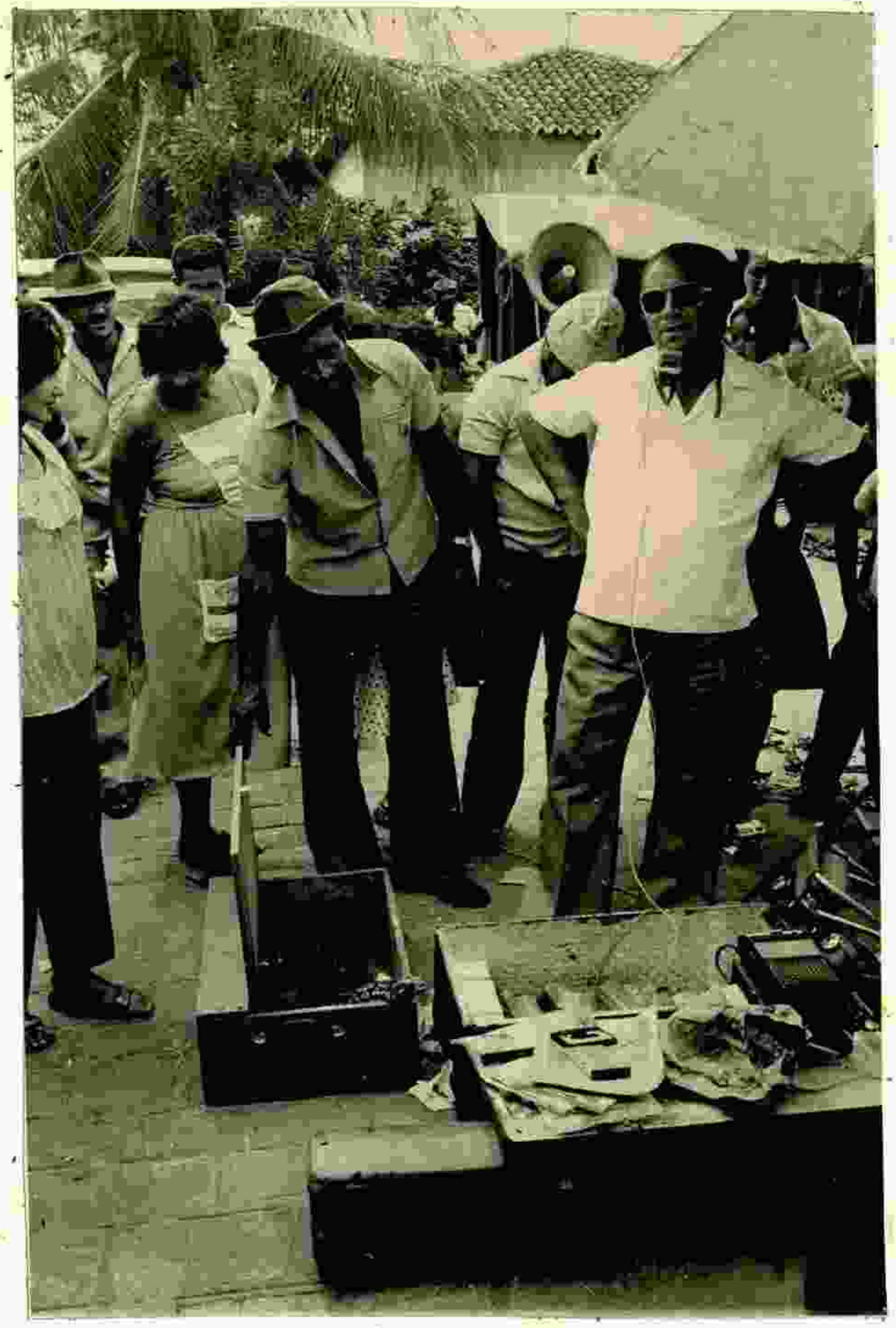


Plate 20. Zé da Cobra, a "Manatee-Oil Salesman", and Sofia, his boa constrictor (Parnamirim, 1979)

continue to be so for some time. Other sects gain membership as cities grow but do not achieve a majority even in the state capitals. With the exception of Protestantism, all new and old alternative religion has not been exclusive of folk Catholicism. Even Sertanejo *xangô* syncretizes so much of Catholic belief and rite that its members see no contradiction between practising it and being good Catholics.

While the new sects can be identified with certain types of individuals, who occupy a less privileged position in Sertanejo society, the sects have not been able to appeal to a majority of these people. Afro-Brazilian cults and Spiritualism have come to occupy a niche in explaining misfortune and providing cures for health and mental problems that popular and scientific medicine, as well as conventional religion, have been unable to solve satisfactorily. However, *xangô* is associated with witchcraft in the eyes of most of the local people, hence the cult will only grow more when it can overcome this stigma. Local Protestantism offers the alienated a true spiritual opium for the ills of this world but it demands too much in the way of abstinence to be truly acceptable to more than a small minority. Thus, we may conclude that, while the new sects are offering competing explanations of a range of phenomena which Catholicism long had as its own, Catholicism will prevail, particularly if priests start to work more with the poor, as they have done in the coastal zones of the Northeast.

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

8. CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

In the period since 1940 the way of life of the Northeastern Sertão has undergone considerable modification, which has been provoked by a process of increasing economic and cultural integration into the national society. The changes range across the whole spectrum of the local life-style but while some cultural domains have been profoundly altered, others have been little affected.

Greater ties with the national economy have brought about a more commercial outlook towards the exploitation of natural resources, but the people's basic perception of Nature has been hardly modified at all. Also, improved transport facilities have diminished the repercussions of drought. While drought can still cause severe problems, it no longer causes catastrophe as it once did when widescale famine, death and emigration could result from prolonged crop failure and loss of livestock.

Together with population pressure and, to a lesser degree, problems between farm owners and landless peasants, new market opportunities have brought about intensification of the land use system and rural technology, as well as the transformation of labour relations. Landless peasants are being pushed off the land and are being attracted to better opportunities elsewhere. Most Sertanejo farms are now exploited by the family work force, assisted by the occasional use of wage day-labourers who are often neighbouring smallholders.

Despite a shift toward greater commercial production and a long-term improvement in farm income, the rural economy does not offer enough opportunity for the growing population. Due to national pricing policy and diminishing farm size, Sertanejos are not satisfied with the comparatively

low income earned in farming and are leaving the rural zone for the towns and cities of the semi-arid zone as well as for other regions of the country. This has resulted in farming and the rural lifestyle gradually losing their predominance in favour of urban professions and town life.

However, despite the impressive growth of employment in light industry, services and commerce this increase has not been enough to offset the problems of the agricultural sector. In addition, large-scale substitution of local products by manufactured goods from the Southeast and the Northeastern capitals has contributed to a higher rate of unemployment and underemployment. The severe droughts of the 1970s and early 1980s have worsened the situation so that out-migration has intensified. While it was noted that the economy of the Sertão is becoming increasingly dependent on government funding this should not be seen as a wholly negative trend. The present drought situation has now reached the point where the harvest in dry farming has been lost four years in a row and most of the livestock has perished. Civil servant salaries, rural pensions and emergency funds are a safety net which has prevented total collapse of the local economy.

A number of the changes of the last 40 years have resulted in the kinship system becoming more bounded and the less frequent practice of cousin marriage. Today there is less need for mutual help in farm tasks and in times of drought. The shift from a rural lifestyle to that centred on the growing towns and urban professions means that close relatives do not live near one another and are not so concerned with maintaining property within the kindred. Moreover, there is greater contact with a larger number of individuals with whom there are little or no ties of kinship.

While racial discrimination has diminished somewhat and kindreds are no longer obsessed with marrying within themselves, class division has not lessened. Equal land inheritance and the emigration of landless peasants from dry farming zones have reduced inequality in the rural zone but it has only been shifted to town. The members of the upper and middle classes in town are increasingly accepting the urban life-style found in the more developed parts of the region and country. Most of the poor have also substantially improved their lot and, as yet, do not curse the changes, but the gap between the two groups grows as one moves from the rural zone to town and from smaller to larger communities.

Concepts of honour, morality and sexuality have been little altered. The nature of feuding persists and involves one sphere of kinship obligations that have been less affected by the modern trend of weaker ties between relatives. Individuals and families must take justice into their own hands, because the police and judicial system are just as ineffectual and subject to political interference as in the past. Also, local interpretation of certain laws that were introduced in recent times actually stimulates violent crime. This, together with greater class disparity, a certain degree of upward social mobility, more contact with strangers, greater ease in the purchase of firearms and increased consumption of spirits, all create situations of tension between individuals where questions of honour readily arise and so too does the increased violence in modern times. On the other hand, the common types of urban crime found elsewhere in Brazil, such as armed robbery, burglary and rape, are not as yet common in the semi-arid zone and run counter to fundamental Sertanejo values.

The basis of political power has shifted from rural to urban interest groups and the degree to which this has occurred was shown to depend

on the size of the community. However, in most communities, the main economic pursuit of political leaders may have changed, but, many present-day leaders are descendants of previous leaders and important men. They had the means more readily to take advantage of the new economic opportunities that arose and so the actors are basically the same. Some influential newcomers were absorbed into local traditional families by marriage while others were not. These formed opposing political factions, but they usually only have had limited success in their pursuit of power.

The pyramid structure of the political system, whereby village leaders are subordinated to the county seat leaders and so on up to the higher levels of government, has changed little in the interior of the Northeast. More funds and jobs have been infused into the system and are keenly contested in a situation of poor employment opportunities. The actors at the lower levels of the machine remain as dependent as ever on those at the higher levels and so voters and counties are locked in to supporting conservative candidates at the state and federal levels. This has proved crucial for these politicians retaining control of the Northeastern states and the country.

New religious and ceremonial sects have been introduced into the semi-arid zone and are part of the process of increasing urbanisation. The Protestant and Afro-Brazilian sects have found a place among some dissatisfied middle class merchants and poor labourers of larger towns and cities but the sects have encountered a number of obstacles to wider acceptance, even among these types of individuals. The vast majority of Sertanejos are still devout Catholics and only a small minority of upper class educated men display outward signs of secularization. Even these individuals believe in Catholic cosmology, notwithstanding their attitude towards traditional rite and doctrine.

There are the important trends of cultural change and continuity in the Sertão of Northeast Brazil. We might now ask what are the various attitudes toward the process of change held by the different sectors of the population? What good do the people see in the way that their lifestyle has changed? What do they find objectionable? How do they explain the changes and why have certain negative aspects come about? These questions, in turn, lead us to ask whether their basic concepts concerning change itself have been modified?

The greater majority of members of all classes, in the country and in town, of the communities studied, thought that their life today was better, or as they put it, easier, than that of the past or of that of their parents (Table 46). This question was put to informants at the very end of a farm or urban questionnaire in which they were asked almost everything about their work and lifestyle. In this way they could make their judgement based on a review of their situation up to that point in their life.

The opinion of urban upper and middle class members of the communities ranged from most favourable to fairly favourable, according to the degree to which a community had acquired more wealth and urban services. Opinion was most favourable in Belém and least in Chorrochó. Lower class opinion shows a slightly opposite tendency. The urban and rural poor of Chorrochó and Parnamirim are somewhat more optimistic about their life than are those of Belém. In the latter community, social disparity is greater and the poor are more frustrated by their standard of living not having improved as rapidly as that of the other classes.

It must be noted that we are dealing with people who decided not to emigrate or who are returnees. This could skew opinion towards favourable because those who left probably had a negative judgement about their

Table 46. Attitudes to Change in the Communities Studied

Community and Class	for the better		for the worse		no change		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BELÉM								
urban upper class	6	85.7	1	14.3	0	0	7	100
urban middle class	3	75.0	1	25.0	0	0	4	100
urban lower class	5	55.6	3	33.3	1	11.1	9	100
rural upper class	n.a.		n.a.		n.a.		n.a.	
rural middle class	n.a.		n.a.		n.a.		n.a.	
rural lower class	8	57.2	3	21.4	3	21.4	14	100
CHORROCHÓ								
urban upper class	5	55.6	4	44.4	0	0	9	100
urban middle class	6	60.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	10	100
urban lower class	12	75.0	4	25.0	0	0	16	100
rural upper class	6	60.0	3	30.0	1	10.0	10	100
rural middle class	5	83.3	1	16.7	0	0	6	100
rural lower class	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0	3	100
PARNAMIRIM								
urban upper class	5	71.4	2	28.6	0	0	7	100
urban middle class	6	75.0	2	25.0	0	0	8	100
urban lower class	7	87.5	1	12.5	0	0	8	100
rural upper class	3	100.0	0	0	0	0	3	100
rural middle class	5	71.4	0	0	2	28.6	7	100
rural lower class	8	61.5	4	30.8	1	7.7	13	100

Source of data: Field Research

life in the Sertão. On the other hand, potential migrants compare their present situation with that expected in their destination,and they can still think that their present lifestyle is better than it would have been in the past, but it could be better elsewhere.

Negative judgements are often based on more immediate problems, such as inflation eroding buying power or losses incurred in the recent droughts. Some of the criticism did focus on long-term perceptions of changing community relations, with statements like "It's getting more dangerous" and "The people of the town are no longer united".

Positive opinion of the modifications in lifestyle deal with what the people consider as a vast improvement over a past where life was difficult and involved more hardship. Transport improvements are most commonly cited and in connection with the occurrence of hunger and starvation during droughts in the past.

Next in importance is the ease with which money can be earned nowadays and this was heard in all the communities, not just in Belém where commercial agriculture has so monetarized the economy. Farm products now 'have a price', which is to say that both the price of farm produce has increased when compared to the situation 40 years ago and buyers now have the cash to purchase the produce. Also, better transport facilities allow farmers to send more of their animals and produce to distant markets, where more demand exists than locally. While such a person who is favourably disposed to monetarization, can qualify his judgement by pointing out that recently things are becoming more expensive, he then says that at least he has the money to buy something and moreover there is something to buy.

More schools and greater facility for even poor children to study is seen as another important positive change. However, some people note that the quality of teaching has fallen when compared to the same grade level that was offered locally in the past. Also, the upper and middle classes are increasingly sending their children to finish their schooling in the state capitals, which maintains class disparity in education.

In sum, even a member of the urban lower class can say, "I lead a poor life but, in the past, the life of a poor man was poorer still". This does not mean that the poor are contented and hold no resentment concerning the social disparities that exist. As we have seen throughout this work, they blame the wealthy for the distinctions that the latter

insist on making in order to separate themselves from their fellow man. On the other hand, the poor do not consciously blame their plight on, what is by local standards, the extravagant lifestyle of some members of the upper class. Nor do they see their poverty as the result of a mechanism of historical inequality in the distribution of land and other resources. They are, however, perfectly aware that they have to work hard for little compensation, while the better off work less for more.

A poor carpenter of Chorrochó offered the following mythical, and fairly fatalist, explanation,

> After Our Lord Christ died he sent St. Peter to see that those who work harder have a better life. But when St. Peter arrived, he went straight to a party which lasted three days. St. Peter loves parties and does not miss a single one. In this he almost forgot what he had come for and inverted what Jesus had said for him to do. Those who work more, lead a worse life and those who work less, have an easier life. But that's the way God wants it.

This is classically Sertanejo. A farmer can have lost all his lifestock to drought and still joke about it, or he can shrug his shoulders and say that is the way things are. The worldview of Protestants is not far removed from that of the carpenter. They work hard for low wages but suffer their fate, awaiting a better life in the next world.

Such views are of the urban poor who are the ones that most encounter difficulty in finding regular work and those whose income is low. Most towns of the Sertão are still small and, traditionally, population has been dispersed. So the rural and urban poor were rarely in a situation that would encourage collective union and, when they did attempt this in the form of millennarian cults, they were usually ruthlessly dispersed. Hence, this together with the rigors of a fickle Nature do not make for an attitude in which change is envisaged as rapid or revolutionary. Most Sertanejos of all classes work hard during their whole life and gradually and painfully better their lives. For every step forward, nearly a full step is taken backward.

Thus the way that Sertanejos view time and change does not seem to have been much altered. Like all agrarian societies farmers of the Sertão have their yearly cycle of agricultural activities and the predominant religion also observes an annual cycle of rites and festivals. However, this does not mean that Sertanejos are tradition bound and do not mark time in a linear fashion and do not perceive change. The past is organized according to successive political regimes at the state and national level, or with reference to important figures such as Lampião and Padre Cícero. Also, as the fables of Chapter 3 show, they see their life as a continual evolution from a backward (*atrasado*) to an advanced (*adiantado*) lifestyle.

At first it appeared that government propaganda on the radio might have habituated Sertanejos with a developmentalist mentality but further research showed that the people have possessed an evolutionist view of social change for some time. This does not extend to the natural realm which is thought to have either not changed at all since Creation or certain parts of it were suddenly mutated by natural catastrophes. The ideas of *atrasado* and *adiantado* have always been used in reference to comparative differences in size and services found in the various towns and cities of the region.

One thing is certain, the local people do not think of their life as changing in the way that rapid development theory would like it to, and indeed the word development (*desenvolvimento*), so much on the lips of higher level politicians and technocrats of the Northeast, is seldom heard in the Sertão. This despite all the propaganda on the radio and in school texts. However, it is probably for the best, for too many quick fix projects have been attempted that have fallen flat. Change in the Sertão should be allowed to take place over a period of decades,

permitting the local people, who usually know best, to experiment with innovation and so try to adapt the changes to their social and physical environment.

The success of private sector irrigation in the São Francisco Valley presents a good case for this kind of change. The state and federal governments adopted a strategy of indirect stimulus whereby bank loans were provided to farmers and the basic infrastructure of the area was improved. This approach caused less disruption and achieved its aims more effectively than the projects of direct intervention. However, the indirect approach, when not targetted to helping those who need aid the most, has the drawback of large and medium farmers monopolizing the benefits.

Despite some reservations, my overall impression of the changes that have occurred to date is that they have been for the most part beneficial. The same might not be said of development change in other zones of the Northeast but the traditional problems of the Sertão were so grave that their partial resolution far outweigh most negative aspects of modern change. Also, although a number of habits and customs of the national society have been adopted, Sertanejos have retained their identity and at this point in time have not been assimilated into a generalized Brazilian culture. In fact, regional differences are still quite strong in the country as a whole. The industrial lifestyle of the Southeastern cities may be superior in prestige but, as yet, it has not seriously diffused to the northern half of the country.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SERTANEJO FOLK CLASSIFICATION OF THE FAUNA AND FLORA

Race			Family	Individual	Number of Types
BEASTS (BICHOS)	ANIMALS (ANIMAIS)	DOGS	cats	lion*	0
				jaguars	4
				bush cats	6
				domestic cat	0
			dogs	dogs	7
				fox	0
				guará	0
			monkeys		2
			pigs	pigs	2
				bush pig	0
				capivara	0
				paca	0
			unnamed	goats	2
				sheep	2
				deer	0
			cattle		5
			unnamed	horse	0
				mule	0
				donkey	0
				zebra*	0
				giraffe*	0
	INSECTS (INSETOS)		unnamed	*lacrau*	0
				piolho de cobra	0
				bird spider	0
				spiders	2
			cockroaches		3
			toads	*cururu*	0
				horned toad	0
				umbaca de areia	0
				caçato	0
				gia	0
			rove beetles		2
			caterpillars		>7

* seen in circuses

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Race		Family	Individual	Number of Types
BEASTS	INSECTS	butterflies		>3
		beetles	bumblebee	0
			wasp	0
			black beetle	0
			dung beetle	0
		bees	stingerless bees	11
			stinger bees	4
		flies		2
		mosquitoes		2
		crickets	grasshoppers	>2
			cricket	0
			cascudo	0
			cicada	0
		barbeiro		0
		unnamed	*teú*	0
			chameleon	0
			sand lizard	0
			calango	0
			bico doce	0
			briba	0
			preguiça	0
		unnamed	cavy	0
			rock cavy	0
			punaré	0
			rats	5
			opossum	0
			agouti	0
SNAKES (COBRAS)		dangerous snakes	boa constrictor	0
			deer snake	0
			rat snake	0
			salamanta	0
			rattlesnake	0
			jararaca	0
			coral snake	0
			Brazilian viper	0
			verde papo amarelho	0
			goipeba	0
		harmless snakes	*corredeira*	0
			black snake	0
			cardaço	0
			green snake	0

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Race	Family	Individual	Number of Types
SNAKES	water snakes	water snakes	2
		surucucu	0
B I R D S (P A S S A R O S)	unnamed	picazuro pigeon	0
		pigeon	0
		grey-fronted pigeon	0
		eared dove	0
		burgueza	0
		ground doves	5
	vultures	crested caracara	0
		black vulture	0
		king vulture	0
		hawks	5
		laughing falcon	0
	white naped jay		0
	songthrushes		3
	red grouse		0
	unnamed	great kiskadee	0
		rabo de peixe	0
	chorró		0
	cuité		0
	caga sibinho		0
	hummingbirds	*rabo tesoura*	0
		hummingbird	0
		beijunca	0
	unnamed	rufous collared sparrow	0
		spotted nothura	0
	unnamed	burrowing owl	0
		barn owl	0
	owls	common potoo	0
		black-banded owl	0
		rufous nightjar	0
	woodpeckers	woodpeckers	3
		rachanã	0

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Race	Family	Individual	Number of Types
BIRDS	water birds	least grebe	0
		paturi	0
		whistling duck	3
		muscovy duck	0
		jaburu	0
		domestic duck	0
		butrião	0
		common gallinule	0
		heron	0
		limpkin	0
		pinnated bitterns	2
		raçanã de lagoa	0
		galo d'agua	0
		gaivota	0
		blackish rail	0
		david	0
		três cocos	0
	ovenbird		0
	tinamous		3
	zabelé		0
	guine chicken		0
	chicken		0
	parrots	parrot	0
		blue-winged macaw	0
		uniden.macaw	0
		uniden.macaw	0
		gangarra	0
		pacu	0
		jandaia	0
	unnamed	American rhea	0
		seriema	0
FISH (PEIXES)	with skin	*surubim*	0
		piranha	0
		pirambeba	0
		mandim	0
		mandimaçu	0
		pacamão	0
		sarapó	0
		cuati	0
		pirá	0
		cangati	0
		tuiú	0

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Race	Family	Individual	Number of Types
FISH	with scales	*dourado*	0
		acumatá	0
		traíra	0
		cari	0
		branquinha	0
	fresh water prawn		0
	corró		0
TREES (PAUS)	unnamed (cacti)	*xique-xique*	0
		faixeiro	0
		mandacaru	0
		faixeirinho	0
		coroa de frade	0
		rabo de raposa	0
TREES (PAUS)	unnamed	*tamboril*	0
		muguem	0
		ingá	0
		oiti	0
		oiticica	0
	unnamed	*baraúna*	0
		aroeira	0
		angicos	2
	unnamed	*umbuzeiros*	3
		umburanas	2
	unnamed	*algaroba*	0
		juremas	2
		unha de gato	0
	unnamed	*marmeleiro*	0
		quebra-faca	0
		mororó	0
	unnamed	*juazeiro*	0
		juazeirinho	0
		quixabeira	0
	amarizeiro		0
	unnamed	*pereira*	0
		cascudim	0
	icozeiras		2
	moleque duro		0

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Race		Family		Individual	Number of Types
TREES	TREES	unnamed		*caroá*	0
				macambiras	2
				croatá	0
				sisal	0
		aveloz			0
		unnamed		*pau ferro*	0
				arapiaraca	0
		jatobazeiro			0
		palm trees		*catolezeiros*	2
				coconut palms	3
				palm trees	2
				pequi	0
				macaúba	0
		unnamed		*carrasco de serra*	0
				budim	0
				caiqueijo	0
		unnamed		*paldóia*	0
				gameleiro	0
		unnamed		*salgueiro*	0
				craibeira	0
				pau d'arco	0
		unnamed		*quipá*	0
				palmatória	0
				palma verdadeira	0
		unnamed		*acaré*	0
				espinheiro	0
		ameixa			0
		unnamed		*favelas*	2
				cansação	0
		caatingueiros			2
		feijão bravo			0
		unnamed		*mulungu*	0
				birantanha	0
				barriguda	0
		cotton			3

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Type			Family	Individual	Number of Types
TREES	FRUIT TREES		banana		2
			guava		0
			mango		0
			caskew		2
			unnamed	orange	3
				lime	0
			papaya		0
			unnamed	biriba	0
				sweetsop	0
				custard apple	0
			bread fruit		0
			jack		0
			sapodilla		0
			avocado		0
			maracock		0
	VINES (RAMAS)		unnamed	*malva*	0
				meloza	0
				malva rasteira	0
			ber de égua		2
			pega pinto		0
			amor de velho		0
			argulho		0
			unnamed	*mucunã*	0
				fava do mato	0
			tingi		0
			sand spur		0
			capim de planta		0
			mimoça		0

continued

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Type				Number of Types
TREES	GRASSES (CAPIM)		*capim de burro*	0
			capim angola	0
			capim grama	0
			capim cabeludo	0
		canes	*sempre verde*	0
			capim aprichote	0
			sugarcane	4
			pé de papagaio	0
			capim marreco	0
	CROPS (LEGUMES)		maize	0
		beans beans	brown beans	>4
			black eyed peas	7
			lima beans	>3
		squash	squash	5
			pumpkins	4
			sesame	0
			pigeon pea	0
			rice	4
		potatoes	sweet potatoes	3
			potato	0
		gourds	bottle gourd	2
			cabacinha	0
		unnamed	watermelon	0
			melon	0
		unnamed	onion	3
			garlic	0
			coriander	0
		unnamed	yam	0
			bitter manioc	0
			sweet manioc	0

APPENDIX 2

PRODUCT SUBSTITUTION

This appendix treats the substitution of products of local and Sertanejo fabrication by industrial products manufactured in the South-east, and later, in the large cities of the Northeast. We are basically dealing with market change in this century. By this time, the local economy had already evolved into a craft one whereby a substantial part of the consumer goods were made by part-time and full-time specialist workers who lived on farms, in towns or in modest size cities. Only an occasional glimpse appears of older patterns of greater self-sufficiency which Abreu (1930) termed 'a leather civilization' whereby numerous items were derived from by-products of stock-raising.

The introduced item is listed and the approximate date in which its use became fairly common in the communities studied. In a number of cases, it must be noted that older products were only partially replaced by the new items. The city of manufacture is given only for Northeastern products while the state is listed for those made outside the Northeast. The regional abbreviation is placed between parenthesis: North (N), Northeast (NE), Southeast (SE) and South (S). When the locality of manufacture reads, "abroad; São Paulo; Recife", a sequence of substitution is indicated. Various sources are denoted by "Recife, Fortaleza & Caruaru". "Local" signifies production by local craftsmen and "home" or "farm" denotes self-sufficiency.

Item	PARNAMIRIM		CHORROCHÓ		SUBSTITUTION	
	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Item	Locality of Manufacture
HOUSE						
craft brick	1890s	county seat	-	county seat	wattle-and-daub	local
brick	1950	Recife (NE)	-	not used	craft brick	local
concrete block	1977	county seat	-	not used	brick	Recife
cement for mortar	1940	Minas Gerais (SE); Recife (NE)	1960	Minas Gerais (SE); Recife (NE)	lime	local
cement for sealing walls	1940	" " "	1960	" " "	lime	local
paint	?	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1960	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	whitewash	local
roof tile	1950	Cariri (Sertão) & Arcoverde (Sertão)	1975	Arcoverde (Sertão) & Petrolândia (Sertão)	craft tile	local
plaster ceiling	1950?	Recife (NE)	-	unchanged	open rafters	-
timber	1977	Pará (N)	1975	Pará (N)	local timber	local
hinges	1915	abroad, local; São Paulo (SE)	-	local; São Paulo (SE)	leather hinges	local
nails	1920	Recife (NE)	1920	Aracaju (NE)	craft nails, leather strips, caroá cord	local
kerosine	1940	abroad; Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1960	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	wax candles, castor oil	local
wick lantern	1959	Rio de Janeiro (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	1970	Rio de Janeiro (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	candle lantern, oil lantern	local
electricity	1942	local generator; Paulo Afonso Dam (Sertão)	1970	local generator	lanterns	local; São Paulo
water tank and running water apparatus	1960	local & Recife (NE)	1976	local & Recife (NE)	ceramic pots	Cariri (Sertão)
water filter	1950	Ceará (NE)	1975	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	stone filter	Petrolândia (Sertão)
shower	1960	São Paulo (SE)	1976	São Paulo (SE)	cup bath, reservoir or river bath	-
tin basin	1930	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	-	São Paulo (SE) & Recife Recife (NE)	ceramic basin	Cariri (Sertão)
sink	1940?	São Paulo (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE)	basin	São Paulo (SE)
septic tank	1950	local	1950	local	nothing	-
toilet	1960	São Paulo (SE)	1970	São Paulo (SE)	septic tank	local
iron wood stove	1940	São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	brick & clay stove	local
iron plate for brick stove	1950	São Paulo (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE)	brick & clay stove	local
gas stove	1974	São Paulo (SE)	1974	São Paulo (SE)	wood stove in general	local & São Paulo (SE)
matches	1915	São Paulo (SE)	1915	São Paulo (SE)	flint lock	local
lighter	1970	São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	matches	São Paulo (SE)
iron pans	1940	São Paulo (SE)	1940	São Paulo (SE)	ceramic pans	local; Cariri (Sertão)
lacquered kitchen utensils	1960	São Paulo (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE)	ceramic pans & iron pans	local & São Paulo (SE)
aluminium kitchen utensils	1965	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	1974	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	ceramic, tin, iron, laquered utensils	local & São Paulo (SE)
iron silver ware	1930	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	1935	Juazeiro da Norte (Sertão)	wooden spoons	local
stainless steel silverware	1960	São Paulo (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE)	iron silver ware	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)

cont'd.

APPENDIX 2 (cont'd)

Item	PARNAMIRIM		CHORROCHÓ		SUBSTITUTION	
	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Item	Locality of Manufacture
iron sieve	1940	São Paulo (SE)	–	São Paulo (SE)	wicker sieve	local
blender	1970	São Paulo (SE)	–	not used	iron sieve	São Paulo (SE)
refrigerator	1970	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	1970	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	curing	home
formica sheets	1960	São Paulo (SE)	–	not used	wooden furniture surfaces	local
formica kitchen cabinet & table	1960	local, Minas Gerais (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	1976	Belém do São Francisco (Sertão), Minas Gerais (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	wooden furniture	local
plastic cushioned furniture	1970	Minas Gerais (SE)	1975	Minas Gerais (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	wooden furniture	local
luxury cushioned furniture	1977	Minas Gerais (SE)	–	not used	plastic cushioned furniture	Minas Gerais (SE)
plastic tablecloth	1955	São Paulo (SE)	1974	São Paulo (SE)	cotton tablecloth	local
manual sewing machine	1920	abroad; São Paulo (SE)	1920	abroad; São Paulo (SE)	hand sewing	home
electric sewing machine	1970	São Paulo (SE)	–	not used	manual sewing machine	São Paulo (SE)
mattress bed	1950	São Paulo (SE), Minas Gerais (SE) & Recife (NE)	1950	São Paulo (SE), Minas Gerais (SE) & Recife (NE)	leather strip bed & hammock	local
clothes closet	1940	local & Minas Gerais (SE)	–	Belém do São Francisco (Sertão) & Minas Gerais (SE)	wood & leather trunk	local
cardboard trunk & suitcase	1950	n.a.	–	n.a.	wood & leather trunk	local
charcoal clothes iron	1920	abroad; São Paulo (SE)	–	São Paulo (SE)	fire clothes iron	São Paulo (SE)
electric clothes iron	1965	São Paulo (SE)	–	not used	charcoal iron	São Paulo (SE)
mirror	1950	Recife (NE)	–	Aracaju	mirror	abroad
radio	1940	São Paulo (SE)	1950	São Paulo (SE)	–	–
television	1978	São Paulo (SE)	1978	São Paulo (SE)	–	–
FARM UTENSILS						
leather	1950	Salgueiro (Sertão)	1950	Salgueiro (Sertão) & Caruaru (NE)	craft tanning	local
saddle	–	unchanged	–	unchanged	craft saddle	local
cowhand's leather clothing	–	unchanged	–	unchanged	craft clothing	local
stirrup	1940	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	1940	Feira de Santana (NE), Aracaju (NE) & Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	craft stirrup	local
other metal horse accessories	1920	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	1920	Feira Santana (NE), Aracagu (NE) & Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	craft accessories	local
sisal rope	1940	Caruaru (NE)	1960	Euclides da Cunha (Sertão) & Feira de Santana (NE)	caroá rope	local
nylon rope	1960	São Paulo (SE)	–	not used	not accepted	local

cont'd.

APPENDIX 2 (cont'd)

Item	PARNAMIRIM		CHORROCHÓ		SUBSTITUTION	
	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Item	Locality of Manufacture
leather cord	-	unchanged	-	unchanged	craft cord	farm
shotgun	1955	Rio Grande Sul (S)	1955	Rio Grande do Sul (S)	craft made	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)
revolver	-	S or SE	-	S or SE	shotgun, knife	Rio Grande do Sul (S), Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)
barbed wire fencing	1960/70	abroad; São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	wood & wicker fencing	farm
creosote	1920	Minas Gerais (SE); Recife (NE)	1940	Minas Gerais (SE); Recife (NE)	herbal medicines	farm
foot & mouth disease vaccine	1960	Minas Gerais (SE)	1970	Minas Gerais (SE)	folk medicines	farm
rabies vaccine	1976	abroad	1977	abroad	nothing	-
veterinarian medicines	1969	Minas Gerais , Rio de Janeiro (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	folk medicines	farm
hoe	1930	abroad São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	1930	Aracaju (NE); Recife (NE) & Salvador (NE)	craft	local
shovel	1930	abroad; São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	1930	Aracaju (NE); Recife (NE) & Salvador (NE)	craft	local
axe	1930	abroad; São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	1930	Aracaju (NE); Recife (NE) & Salvador (NE)	craft	local
machete & knives	1930	abroad; São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	1930	Aracaju (NE); Recife (NE) & Salvador (NE)	craft	local
insecticides	1950	São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE) & Minas Gerais (SE)	orations	farm
herbicides	1977	São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	hand weeding	farm
chemical fertilizers	1965	São Paulo (SE)	-	not used	manure	farm
selected seeds	1940?	abroad, S, SE & local	-	not used	farm selected seeds	farm
CLOTHING						
cloth/fabric		Recife (NE)		Recife (NE) & Delmiro Gouvéia (Sertao)	loom woven cloth	local
ready made suits	1960	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão), São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & Fortaleza (NE)	1960	Delmiro Gouvéia (Sertão)	tailored suit	local
ready wear clothing	1969	São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & Fortaleza (NE)	1970	Fortaleza (NE) & Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão)	tailored clothing	local
women's undergarments	1945	Caruaru (NE), Recife (NE) & São Paulo (SE)	1960	Caruaru (NE), Recife (NE) & São Paulo (SE)	home made	home/farm
brassiere and panties	1965	Caruaru (NE), Recife (NE) & São Paulo (SE)	1970	Juazeiro do Norte (Sertão) São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & Fortaleza (NE)	home made	home/farm
men's underwear	1969	São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & Fortaleza (NE)	1970	São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & Fortaleza (NE)	home made	home/farm
men's shoes	1969	Pesqueira (NE), Caruaru (NE) Recife (NE), Fortaleza (NE) & Crato (Sertão)	1970	Caruaru (NE)	craft boots, shoes & sandals	local
women's shoes	1969	Fortaleza (NE), Recife (NE) & Caruaru (NE)	1970	Fortaleza (NE), Recife (NE) & Caruaru (NE)	craft shoes	local
women's high heel shoes	1939	Fortaleza (NE), Recife (NE) & Caruaru (NE)	1930	Aracaju (NE) & Caruaru (NE)	craft shoes	local
rubber sandals	1974	Campina Grande (NE)	1976	Campina Grande (NE)	craft sandals	local

cont'd.

APPENDIX 2 (cont'd)

Item	PARNAMIRIM		CHORROCHÓ		SUBSTITUTION	
	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Item	Locality of Manufacture
spectacles	1950	Recife (NE) & Salgueiro (Sertão)	1975	Juazeiro (Sertão) & Salgueiro (Sertão)	craft spectacles	n.a.
sun glasses	1950	n.a.	1965	Aracaju (NE) & Arcoverde (Sertão)	-	-
wrist watch	1950	São Paulo (SE)	1960	São Paulo (SE)	-	-
PRODUCTS OF PERSONAL HYGIENE						
comb	1964	Fortaleza (NE)	1950 1974	Aracaju (NE) & Recife (NE)	craft comb	local
hair brush	1964	Fortaleza (NE)	1970	Recife (NE)	craft comb	local
toothbrush	1950	São Paulo (SE)	1950	São Paulo (SE)	juazeiro leaves	-
toothpaste	1950	São Paulo (SE)	1950	São Paulo (SE)	jua paste	-
razor	1950	Arcoverde (Sertão)	1950	Arcoverde (Sertão)	n.a.	n.a.
disposable razor blades	1965	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1965	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	razor	Arcoverde (Sertão)
soap	1969	Recife (NE)	1965	Arcoverde (Sertão)	craft soap	home/farm
hand soap	1946	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	1940/65	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	craft soap	home/farm
perfume/cologne	1969	São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE) & João Pessoa (NE)	1965	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	creme extract	São Paulo (SE)
deodorant	1969	São Paulo (SE)	1977	São Paulo (SE)	talcum	n.a.
shampoo	1969	Rio de Janeiro (SE), São Paulo (SE)	1975	Rio de Janeiro (SE), São Paulo (SE)	jua paste	home/farm
toilet paper	1974	São Paulo (SE), Minas Gerais (SE) & Campira Grande (NE)	1975	Recife (NE)	leaves, newspaper	
makeup	1965	Rio de Janeiro (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	1970	Rio de Janeiro (SE) & São Paulo (SE)	craft creams	Senhor do Bonfim (Sertão)
powdered laundry soap	1975	Recife (NE)	1977	Recife (NE)	craft soap	home/farm
FOOD, BEVERAGES, ETC.						
corn meal	1940	Recife (NE)	1960	Aracaju (NE)	home made	home/farm
flour	1920/60	abroad; Recife (NE)	1965	Recife (NE)	-	
yeast	1960	São Paulo (NE)	1970	São Paulo (SE)	bicarbonate, homemade yeast	Recife (NE) & home/farm
bread	1960	Salgueiro (Sertão)	1965	Belém do São Francisco (Sertão)	homemade cornmeal couscous	home/farm
macaroni	1965	Petrolina (Sertão)	1975	Recife (NE)	-	
ground coffee	1950	Recife (NE), Serra Talhada (Sertão), Salgueiro (Sertão) & Petrolina (Sertão)	1973	Belém do São Francisco (Sertão)	home ground	home/farm
biscuits	1924	Recife (NE), Caruaru (NE) & Arcoverde (Sertão)	→	Fortaleza (NE)	-	-
refined salt	1965	Mossoró (Sertão)	1965	Mossoró (Sertão)	craft salt	local
refined sugar	1950	Recife (NE)	1960	Recife (NE) & Itabaiana (NE)	brown sugar	Cariri (Sertão)
cooking oil	1972	Recife (NE), Teresina (NE), Fortaleza (NE) & São Paulo (SE)	1970	Recife (NE), Teresina (NE), Fortaleza (NE) & São Paulo (SE)	farm butter	local

cont'd.

APPENDIX 2 (cont'd)

Item	PARNAMIRIM		CHORROCHÓ		SUBSTITUTION	
	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Date Introduced	Locality of Manufacture	Item	Locality of Manufacture
canned sweets	1940	Pesqueira (NE)	1965	Pesqueira (NE)	home made	home/farm
canned meat	1950	São Paulo (SE), Rio Grande do Sul (S)	1975 1975	São Paulo (SE) & Rio Grande do Sul (S)	meat	local
sardines	1920	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1945	Rio de Janeiro (SE)	meat	local
canned vegetables	1974	Recife (NE)	1975	Recife (NE)	vegetables	local
tomato paste	1978	Pesqueira (NE)	1978	Pesqueira (NE)	tomato	local
tinned butter	1974	Minas Gerais (SE) & Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1975	Minas Gerais (SE) & Rio de Janeiro (SE)	farm butter	local
condensed milk	1969	São Paulo (SE)	1978	São Paulo (SE)	farm milk	local
powdered milk	1974	São Paulo (SE)	1970	São Paulo (SE)	farm milk	local
cheese	1975	Minas Gerais (SE)	-	-	farm cheese	local
margarine	1975	Recife (NE)	1975	Recife (NE)	farm butter	local
vinegar	1960	Recife (NE)	1965	Recife (NE)	-	-
frozen chicken	1978	Salgueiro (Sertão)	-	not used	farm chicken	local
'usina cachaça'	1940	Vitória de Santo Antão (NE) & Cariri (Sertão)	1960	Vitória de Santo Antão (NE)	'engenho cachaça'	local
beer	1955	Recife (NE)	1975	Recife (NE)	cachaça	Vitória de Santo Antão (NE) & Cariri (Sertão)
wine	1978	Rio Grande do Sul (S)	-	-	beer	Recife (NE)
whisky, rum etc.	1950	São Paulo (SE), Recife (NE)	1970	São Paulo (SE) & Recife (NE)	cachaça	Vitória de Santo Antão (NE) & Cariri (Sertão)
guaraná	1940	Recife (NE)	1930	Recife (NE) & Itabaiana (NE)	-	-
coca cola	1950	Recife (NE)	1970	Recife (NE)	guaraná	Recife (NE)
cigarettes	1930/60	abroad; Rio de Janeiro (SE)	1940/70	abroad; Rio de Janeiro (SE)	hand made & pipe	home

APPENDIX 3

INDEX OF SOCIAL DISPARITY

The index of social disparity used here was devised together with A.M. Bicalho and first appeared in a preliminary form in Bicalho (1980). The idea for the index was based on a Quality of Life Index used by the Overseas Development Council (1979). The Council's index is a much simpler one, which utilizes only three indicators. In addition, their index is used primarily for comparing the level of development of different countries and regions. The index used in this work is employed to measure class disparity in a specific region and is based on *local* criteria that the people themselves regard as important for distinguishing social position.

Calculation of the index is made by averaging the scores of the five indicators: housing, household furnishings, level of formal education, mode of transport and diet. Each indicator can have sub-indicators, whose average yields the overall score for the criterion. Indicators and sub-indicators use a scale of 0 - 100, where 0 is the minimal observed condition for the criterion in question and 100 is the maximum condition. The index first used in the Agreste had the additional indicator of health as reflected in infant mortality. However, infant mortality in the Sertão is low by Northeastern standards and access to medical facilities is not determined by class situation.

1. Housing

(a) Number of residences (of similar quality of construction)

no fixed residence	0
one residence	33
two residences	67
three residences	100

(b) location of residence(s)

no fixed residence	0
on the farm	20
village or hamlet	40
county seat	60
hub city	80
metropolitan area	100

(c) access to house (urban areas only)

trail	0
unpaved street	50
paved street	100

(d) house ownership

squatter	0
loaned	33
rented	67
owned	100

(e) lot ownership

squatter	0
loaned	33
rented	67
owned	100

(f) house size

no house	0
1 room	7
2 rooms	14
3 rooms	21
4 rooms	28
5 rooms	36
6 rooms	43
7 rooms	50
8 rooms	57
9 rooms	64
10 rooms	71
11 rooms	78
12 rooms	85
13 rooms	92
14 rooms and more	100

(g) type of construction: flooring

beaten earth	0
bare brick	25
cement	50
ceramic tile	75
parqué	100

(h) type of construction: walls

lacking walls	0
thatched palm fronds, plastic sacks and other non-durable material	20
wattle-and-daub	40
wattle-and-daub sealed with cement plaster	60
bare brick	80
plastered brick	100

(i) type of construction: roof

lacking roof	0
palm frond thatched roof	33
tiled roof	67
tiled roof with ceiling	100

(j) water supply

seasonal untreated water	0
perennial untreated water	33
untreated water stored in water tank	67
piped treated water	100

(k) sewage system

none	0
septic tank	33
septic tank with toilet	67
sewage system	100

(l) electricity

none	0
generator electricity	50
main line electricity	100

2. Household furnishings

(a) furniture

none	0
rustic style of local craftsmen	25
modern style of local craftsmen or manufactured	50
old style refined of local craftsmen	75
modern style refined manufactured	100

(b) number of household appliances

none	0
1 appliance	7
2 appliances	14
3 appliances	21
4 appliances	28
5 appliances	36
6 appliances	43
7 appliances	50
8 appliances	57
9 appliances	64
10 appliances	71
11 appliances	78
12 appliances	85
13 appliances	92
14 appliances and more	100

3. Formal Education

(a) level attained by persons having finished school

(i) over 40 years of age

illiterate	0
able to sign name	14
incomplete elementary school or able to read and write	29
complete elementary school	43
incomplete junior high school	57
complete junior high school	72
incomplete high school	86
complete high school or higher[1]	100

[1] persons over 58 years of age who have finished what was later called junior high are counted as having finished high school because high school did not exist prior to the 1940s and junior high school lasted longer.

(ii) under 40 years of age

illiterate	0
able to sign name	11
incomplete elementary school or able to read and write	22
complete elementary school	33
incomplete junior high school	44
complete junior high school	56
incomplete high school	67
complete high school	78
incomplete university	89
complete university or higher	100

(b) variance of age from that which is normal for each grade for children who are still studying (beyond elementary school)

not studying (children of elementary school age)	0
4 or more years of variance	25
up to 3 years of variance	50
up to 2 years of variance	75
0 - 1 year of variance	100

(c) place of study

did not study	0
all courses done locally	20
courses done in the county seat (when from rural zone)	40
1 course level done elsewhere	60
2 course levels done elsewhere	80
3 or more course levels done elsewhere	100

4. Transport

on foot or mounted	0
bicycle	11
taxi or ferry	22
pickup truck	33
passenger car	44
lorry	56
2 pickup trucks, lorries or passenger cars	67
3 pickup trucks, lorries or passenger cars	78
4 pickup trucks, lorries or passenger cars	89
5 or more pickup trucks, lorries or passenger cars	100

5. Diet

Diet was judged by the amount of meat consumed as this was found to be closely related to social position. The lowest daily per capita amount of meat consumed that was observed, none at all, receives the score of zero and the highest amount, 440 grammes, was scored as 100. All other amounts receive scores proportionately on the scale between these extremes. The per capita amount of meat consumed was calculated according to fractions of the daily necessities of an adult male working in agriculture as recommended by the Instituto Nacional de Alimentacao e Nutricao (INAN):

children up to 4 years of age	.47
children from 5 to 9 years of age	.63
girls from 10 to 14 years of age	.78
girls from 15 to 19 years of age	.75
women over 20 years of age	.78
boys from 10 to 14 years of age	.85
boys from 15 to 19 years of age	.92
men over 20 years of age	1.00

APPENDIX 4

CONTEMPORARY KINSHIP OBLIGATIONS AND TONE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH A MALE EGO

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
father	care & education, punish when adolescent, financial aid and equal share of inheritance, unquestionable hospitality	do his biddings, protect from enemies, care in old age, un-questionable hospitality	respectful affection to authority figure
mother	care & education, punish when child, equal share of inheritance	do her biddings, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	tender affection to authority figure
older brother	companionship, support & advice in all problems & conflicts, un-questionable hospitality	support in all problems & conflicts, un-questionable hospitality	respect almost like father
younger brother	companionship, support in all problems & conflicts, un-questionable hospitality	companionship, support & advice in all problems & conflicts, un-questionable hospitality	comradrie
older sister	until marriage help mother care for ego, unquestionable hospitality	help with problems, watch over to protect honour, infractions reported to father, unquestionable hospitality	respectful intimacy
younger sister	until marriage help mother care for ego, unquestionable hospitality	help with problems, protect her honour directly, un-questionable hospitality	intimacy
paternal grandfather	help teach man's activities,provide guidance & reprimand, un-questionable hospitality	do his biddings, protect, un-questionable hospitality	extreme respect (due to his superior position over father)

continued

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
maternal grandfather	help teach man's activities but lesser role than FF, provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	do his biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	respectful affection
paternal grandmother	provide guidance and reprimand	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	respectful affection
maternal grandmother	provide guidance and reprimand	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	extreme respect (due to her superior position over mother)
grandson	do his biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	help teach man's activities, provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	affection
granddaughter	do his biddings, unquestionable hospitality	provide guidance and reprimand	affection
uncle	provide guidance, support in problems and conflicts, go drinking and whoring, unquestionable hospitality	attend requests, support in problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy almost bordering on comradrie
aunt	provide guidance, unquestionable hospitality	attend requests, unquestionable hospitality	affection
nephew	attend requests, support in problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	provide guidance, support in problems and conflicts, go drinking and whoring, unquestionable hospitality	affection
niece	attend requests, unquestionable hospitality	reprimand, protect, unquestionable hospitality	affection

continued

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
1st cousin (male)	companionship, take side with and help revenge wrongs, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, take side with and help revenge wrongs, unquestionable hospitality	extreme comradrie
1st cousin (female)	companionship, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, help revenge wrongs, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy with sexual overtones
2nd cousin (male)	help in disputes when present or if encounter culprit, hospitality	help in disputes when present or if encounter culprit, hospitality	distant comradrie
2nd cousin (female)	hospitality	may help revenge her honour, hospitality	restrained affection and possible sexual overtones
2nd or 3rd uncle	may help in disputes, hospitality	may help in disputes, hospitality	distant respect
2nd or 3rd aunt	hospitality	hospitality	distant respect
3rd cousin (male)	may help in disputes but depends on convenience, probable hospitality	may help in disputes but depends on convenience, probable hospitality	distant
3rd cousin (female)	probable hospitality	probable hospitality	distant
4th cousin	none	none	normal respect similar to that given to a somewhat familiar stranger
godfather	help with education, raise if orphaned without living grandparents, bless, provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	follow advice, ask for blessing upon meeting, unquestionable hospitality	respect similar as for father

continued

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
godmother	help with education, raise if orphaned, without living grandparents, bless, reprimand, un-questionable hospitality	ask for blessing upon meeting, unquestionable hospitality	very respectful
father-in-law (non-relative)	financial help, assistance with grandchildren's education, help in problems and conflicts, un-questionable hospitality	occasional help in work, aid in conflicts, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	respectful as for father (though no talk of sex)
mother-in-law	can substitute wife in some female tasks, assistance with grandchildren's education, un-questionable hospitality	occasional help in certain tasks, care in old age, un-questionable hospitality	strained respect, limited conversation
brother-in-law	help in problems and disputes, possible companion-ship, un-questionable hospitality	help in problems and disputes, possible companion-ship, un-questionable hospitality	respect that can evolve into brotherly intimacy
sister-in-law	help care for nephews and nieces, unquestionable hospitality	aid in problems, help protect honour, long-term hospitality	respect that can evolve into sisterly intimacy
wife's brother-in-law	may help in problems and disputes, hospitality	may help in problems and disputes, hospitality	respect
wife's sister-in-law	may help care for nephew and nieces, hospitality	may help in problems on request, hospitality	respect
wife's uncles and aunts	unquestionable hospitality through wife	unquestionable hospitality through wife	respect
wife's cousins (same generation)	may take sides and help on request, hospitality	may take sides and help on request, hospitality	reserved
wife's cousins (descendent)	may take sides and help on request, hospitality	may take sides and help on request, hospitality	reserved

Source: Field Research

APPENDIX 5

CONTEMPORARY KINSHIP OBLIGATIONS AND TONE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH A FEMALE EGO

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
father	care & education, punish when adolescent, financial aid & equal share of inheritance, unquestionable hospitality	do his biddings, help mother care for father, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	respectful affection to authority figure
mother	care & education, punish until adult, equal share of inheritance	do her biddings, help in household activities, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	tender affection to authority figure
older brother	help with problems, protect her honour directly, unquestionable hospitality	support in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	respect
younger brother	help with problems, watch over to protect honour, infractions reported to father, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, support and advice in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy
older sister	companionship, support and advice in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, support and advice in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	respectful intimacy
younger sister	companionship, support in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, support in all problems and conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy

cont'd.

APPENDIX 5 (cont'd)

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
paternal grandfather	provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	do his biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	extreme respect (due to his superior position over father)
maternal grandmother	provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	respectful affection
paternal grandmother	help teach women's activities, but has lesser role than MM, provide guidance & reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	respectful affection
maternal grandmother	help teach women's activities, provide guidance & reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	extreme respect (due to her superior position over mother)
grandson	do her biddings, protect, unquestionable hospitality	provide guidance & reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	affection
grand-daughter	do her biddings, unquestionable hospitality	help teach women's activities, provide guidance and reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	affection
uncle	provide guidance, unquestionable hospitality	attend requests, unquestionable hospitality	affection
aunt	provide guidance, support in problems & conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	attend requests, support in problems & conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy bordering on comradrie
nephew	attend requests, unquestionable hospitality	reprimand, protect, unquestionable hospitality	affection

cont'd.

APPENDIX 5 (cont'd)

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
niece	attend requests, support in problems & conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	provide guidance, support in problems & conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	affection
1st cousin (male)	companionship, help revenge wrongs, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, unquestionable hospitality	intimacy with sexual overtones
1st cousin (female)	companionship, take sides with in disputes, unquestionable hospitality	companionship, take side with in disputes, unquestionable hospitality	extreme comradrie
2nd cousin (male)	may help revenge her honour, hospitality	hospitality	restrained affection & possible sexual overtones
2nd cousin (female)	take side with in disputes, hospitality	take side with in dispute, hospitality	distant comradrie
2nd or 3rd uncle	hospitality	hospitality	distant respect
2nd or 3rd aunt	may take side with in disputes, hospitality	may take side with in disputes, hospitality	distant respect
3rd cousin (male)	probable hospitality	probable hospitality	distant
3rd cousin (female)	may take side in dispute, hospitality	may take side in dispute, hospitality	distant
4th cousin	none	none	normal respect similar to that given to a somewhat familiar stranger
godfather	help with education, raise if orphaned without living grandparents, bless, provide guidance & reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	ask for blessing upon meeting, unquestionable hospitality	respect similar as for father

cont'd.

APPENDIX 5 (cont'd)

Kin	Kin's Duties	Ego's Duties	Tone of Relationship
godmother	help with education, raise if orphaned without living grandparents, bless, reprimand, unquestionable hospitality	follow advice, ask for blessing upon meeting, unquestionable hospitality	very respectful as for mother
father-in-law (non-relative)	financial help, assistance with grandchildren's education, help in problems & conflicts, unquestionable hospitality	occasional help in particular tasks, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	respectful as for father
mother-in-law	take care of son in wife's absence, assistance with grandchildren's education, unquestionable hospitality	occasional help in household tasks, aid in problems and conflicts, care in old age, unquestionable hospitality	respectful intimacy
brother-in-law	aid in problems, unquestionable hospitality	aid in problems, unquestionable hospitality	respect that can evolve into brotherly intimacy
sister-in-law	help in problems & disputes, possible companionship, unquestionable hospitality	help in problems & disputes, possible companionship, unquestionable hospitality	respect that can evolve into sisterly intimacy
husband's brother-in-law	may help in problems, hospitality	may help in problems, hospitality	respect
husband's sister-in-law	may help care for nephew & nieces, hospitality	may help care for nephew & nieces, hospitality	respect
husband's uncles & aunts	unquestionable hospitality through husband	unquestionable hospitality through husband	respect
husband's cousins (same generation)	may take sides & help on request, hospitality	may take sides & help on request, hospitality	reserved
husband's cousins (descendent)	may take sides and help on request, hospitality	may take sides & help on request, hospitality	reserved

Source of data: Field Research

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