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Development and
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**HARNESSING THE INTERIOR VOTE:
THE IMPACT OF
ECONOMIC CHANGE, UNBALANCED DEVELOPMENT
AND AUTHORITARIANISM
ON THE LOCAL POLITICS OF NORTHEAST BRAZIL¹**

Since 1940 three great socio-economic transformations have progressively modified the way in which local politics in Northeast Brazil are conducted. Increasing market penetration and competition with manufactured and agricultural products from the industrial heartland have provoked an employment crisis in the Northeastern interior. In addition, since the 1960s a number of national economic policies, which are heavily biased in favour of the urban-industrial and export farming sectors of the developed southern half of Brazil, have depressed farming in peripheral regions such as the Northeast. Finally, the conservative-military alliance which came into power with the 1964 coup established a highly authoritarian regime and consolidated a trend towards centralized government. These developments have all increased the dependency of interior politicians on federal and state government.²

The interplay of these forces of change gave rise to a modern version of the harnessed voter system, which assumes distinctive features in the Northeast. For nearly twenty years this system, in turn, proved to be fundamental for buttressing the appearance of electoral legitimacy for a succession of military governments. Until the last general election in 1982, Northeastern politicians faithfully turned out the vote for the national conservative coalition and in return they were able to share power at the federal level and to gain access to government largesse.

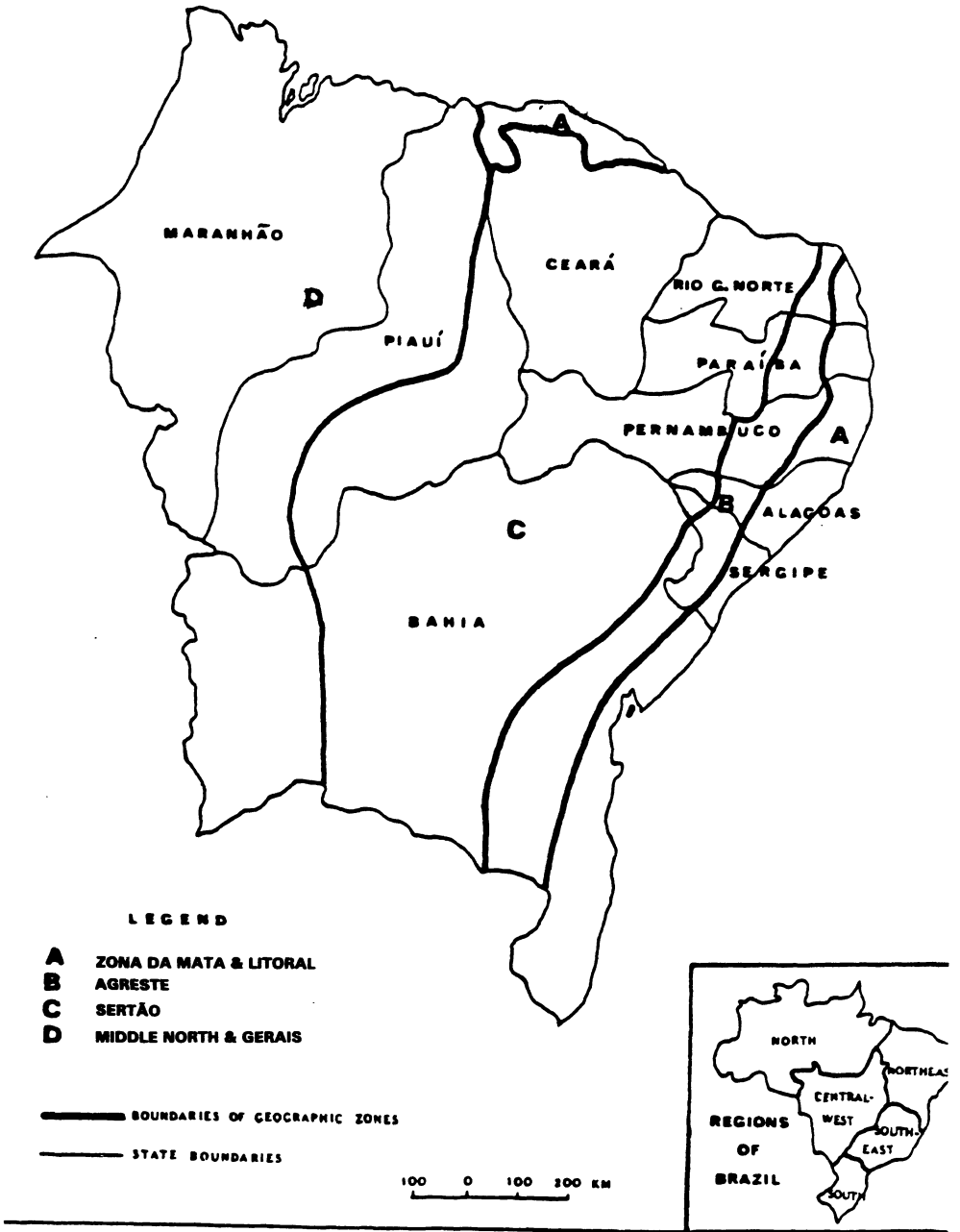
The nature of this national conservative alliance is the key to answering two basic enigmas concerning the relationship of the Northeast to the Southeast and of the urban areas to rural areas within the Northeast. As

part of this alliance a number of Northeastern politicians have been able to occupy relatively high positions in national government even though the region's importance, both in economic and in demographic terms, has been on the decline for a century or more.³ Moreover, the existence of a formidable conservative patronage machine also explains why interior-based politicians, who represent the traditional agrarian elite, have continued to dominate state politics in the Northeast despite increasing urbanization and the growth of light industry and services in the region.

It might seem, therefore, that the Northeast is controlled by rural interest groups whose leaders, in turn, have a strong voice in national affairs. It will be argued here that the exact opposite is the case. Local politics of the Northeast have, indeed, assumed national significance and one needs to know how they operate in order to understand the post-1964 political scene in Brazil, but this does not mean that rural interest groups exercise much leverage over state and federal politicians. In the increasingly hierarchical and centralized national political system which has emerged during this century, voters and leaders of the interior have been brought under the firm control of regional political bosses who have, in turn, been manipulated by the Southeastern political leaders in control of the national government.

Today the flow of political power is strictly from the top downwards. Political decision-making follows a chain of command from the federal to state to local levels of government. Strict control of voters and local leaders in the Northeast has been made possible because civil service jobs and transfer payments have assumed a major role in the economy of the interior. High rates of unemployment and poor job opportunities outside the government sector are exactly what make Northeastern politics so distinctively authoritarian. The modern harnessed voter system is, thus, based on the distribution of highly desirable public jobs and these are awarded on the basis of political allegiance.

Within this context, politics in the Northeastern interior have not remained static over time but have, in fact, undergone a good deal of modification in response to political and economic transformations. A gradual shift in the power base of local leaders has occurred and the struggle over the political spoils has intensified in the context of a depressed agrarian economy. An important consequence of the changes has been the rise of merchants to political predominance in the larger cities of the interior. However, this development does not in any significant way represent the formation of a local bourgeoisie in opposition to the traditional agrarian elite. This did not happen because most important merchants either are descendants of the original elite or have been incorporated into it by various forms of social alliance. Hence, some of the actors may have been substituted and political struggle over scarce resources may have intensified but much of the basic structure of local politics has remained intact.



Geographical and Political Divisions of Northeast Brazil

What the changes *have* permitted is greater control and manipulation of local government by higher level politicians. This, in turn, buttresses a powerful electoral machine that for twenty years gave conservative forces at the state and national levels a virtual monopoly of political power which only now shows signs of crumbling. Ironically, while the transformation of the local economy has allowed for somewhat less patron-client dependency of the traditional rural type in local politics, the relationship between *município* leaders and state and federal politicians has become one of greater dependency. Finally, the increasingly hierarchical and centralized nature of Brazilian politics makes the whole system in itself a serious barrier to the development so desired by Northeastern politicians. The very nature of the system limits input from the lower levels of government so that development policy suffers from all the shortcomings of a top-down planning model which is highly biased in favour of the urban-industrial sector.⁴

First, the economic changes are treated to demonstrate how the desperate job situation is at the base of the modern political system in the Northeast. Then, the nature of local politics is described to show how social relations in the small towns and cities of the interior permit the 'harnessing' of voters. The third section deals with the shift in the base of local power which has taken place in response to economic change. Local leadership succession is then treated, in order to show how political power remains in the hands of the descendants of the original elite despite the shift in power. Finally, the last two sections deal with the workings of the patronage system and how it relates to the articulation of local politics to state and national politics.

The Northeast

The Northeast is a region of great ecological, economic and social diversity ranging from the populous cities and domesticated countryside of the rainy eastern seaboard to the open spaces of the semi-arid zone and, finally, to the frontier areas of the western part of the region. There are basically four large geographic zones of the Northeast: the Zona da Mata and Litoral, the Agreste, the Sertão and the Meio-Norte and Gerais (see map page 3).

The Zona da Mata and Litoral are humid coastal lowland areas of plantations where monocultures of sugarcane, cocoa, cashew nuts and other cash crops are grown. The zone is densely populated and the largest cities and most state capitals are found there (Table 1). Recife, Salvador and Fortaleza are the largest of these industrial, administrative centres which dominate the life of the Northeast economically and socially.

The Agreste is basically a highland semi-humid transitional zone between the coast and the semi-arid interior. It is also densely populated

and a number of fairly large cities in the range of a few hundred thousand inhabitants are located there. The rural zone of the Agreste has seen a large-scale rural exodus in the wake of decreasing farm size, labour conflicts, the penetration of urban interests and the expansion of specialized commercial farming.

The Sertão is a sparsely populated inland zone where recurrent drought has long caused serious problems for human occupation. Only a few medium-sized cities exist there and the economy is predominantly agrarian. Over time rural activities have shifted from extensive cattle ranching to mixed farming, in which stock-raising still plays a major role.

The Meio-Norte and the Gerais of Bahia are transitional zones from the Northeast to, respectively, the Amazon region and the Central Plateau. Both are mainly frontier areas where population density has been traditionally low. However, in recent decades the two zones have been experiencing the strain of rapid colonization and violent conflict over land ownership.

The Context of Economic Change

Since the 1930s, with the construction and gradual improvement of roads and railroads into the interior of the Northeast, an intensifying process of market penetration has been at work, whereby manufactured goods have increasingly taken the place of those made by local craftsmen. Roads within the region and between the Northeast and the rest of the country were improved during the 1940s and 1950s and a number of key highways were asphalted in the 1960s and 1970s. This, together with the rapid expansion of industries in the Southeast of the country after 1945 as well as the more recent growth of manufacturing in the Northeastern capitals, has brought about wholesale changes in the consumer patterns of the inhabitants in the agrarian interior.

At the same time the farm sector has been experiencing gradually worsening difficulties of both an internal and an external nature. Government price control of basic staples and an unfavourable world market for natural fibres during the 1960s and 1970s provoked a long period of poor farm prices for many important Northeastern crops. This occurred in the case of such key staples as beans, maize, manioc and rice as well as the main cash crops cotton and sisal, and particularly depressed the farm sector of the Sertão and the Agreste. In recent years, faced with national shortfalls in the production of staples, farm prices have been allowed to rise more than was normal. However, this policy has collided with official efforts to combat Brazil's astronomical rates of inflation and IMF demands for the end of government subsidies. So the pattern is again swinging back to low produce prices; farmers are refusing to plant

unprofitable crops on a commercial scale and there is a consequent importation of foodstuffs.

Moreover, because of the laws of equal inheritance, farm size has been diminishing rapidly. In the Sertão, from 1950 to 1975 minifundia farms with less than 50 hectares increased from 76% to 87% of the total of farms. A farm of this size possesses only about one or two hectares of good bottomlands, the rest being dry bush lands utilized for livestock grazing, and as such barely supports a family. Medium and large farms with more than 500 hectares now occupy 35% of the total area in farms as compared with 52% in 1950.⁶ These farms have traditionally employed most landless peasants and their decreasing size means that there is less land available for them.

This process has been at work just as intensely in the Agreste where environmental conditions are better for farming. However, other factors have intervened which prevent the breakup of large farms and so only small and medium farmers have been affected by the process. In 1975 minifundia farms of less than 10 hectares made up 76% of the number of farms and occupied 21% of the land in farms as compared with 64% and 11% respectively in 1950. During the same period, the number of large properties of more than 100 hectares and the area occupied by them have only fallen from 5% to 3.5% and from 63% to 59% of the total.⁷ The purchase of rural land by urban interest groups, the expansion of commercial farming and the emigration of upper-class individuals to highly paid jobs in the state capitals have allowed large farms to remain intact. Hence disparity in land ownership has actually become worse in the Agreste, much as has happened in the Zona da Mata, and for many of the same reasons.

In addition to the problem of diminishing farm size, many medium and large farmers of the Sertão and the Agreste were alarmed by the Peasant Leagues of the early 1960s as well as by their own misinterpretation of new rural labour legislation. As a result they encouraged resident occasional labourers and tenants to leave their farms or expelled them outright, thus worsening the rural exodus.⁸

Confronted by such problems, people of the rural zone have been looking increasingly to the towns and cities of the interior for work. Better job opportunity is found in towns but it is not sufficient to employ the flood of people arriving there. While new jobs were created in light industry, commerce and services in the interior towns and cities between 1950 and 1980, these were not enough to counterbalance increased unemployment and underemployment that were caused by the whole process of economic transformation.

In the Sertão, between 1950 and 1980 the number of workers in industry increased by 379%, in commerce and transport by 204% and in

services by 271% but the number of unemployed also increased by 184% and, more important, their proportion of the total work force increased from 16% to 24% during this period. The annual population growth rate of 1.8% in the Sertão versus 2.9% for the country as a whole reflects heavy out-migration due to the poor employment situation.⁹ This problem is felt by rich and poor alike. Of the children of poor families interviewed, 22% live outside the zone as do 24% of middle- and upper-class children. Some of the wealthier go to upwardly mobile jobs in the state capital but most individuals of all groups go to the industrial Southeast to work as unskilled labourers. No doubt the nearly continuous drought since 1975 contributes to the job crisis but drought only worsens the underlying economic problems.

Indeed, the figures for most of the semi-humid Agreste are even worse and near-zero population growth for the last 20 years is found in a number of places. In the northern half of the zone, where more landless peasants were expelled from farms, the number of rural workers actually fell by 5% between 1950 and 1980. By 1980 the unemployed portion of the work force rose to almost 26% of the total as compared with 15.5% of the total in 1950. The employment figures for the whole zone are also not encouraging, with over 24% of the work force unemployed in 1980 while 16.5% had been unemployed in 1950.¹⁰

Given this rather depressed economic situation, one can understand why civil service jobs have become so contested. They represent one of the fastest growing sectors and, by 1980, services had expanded to the point where they employed 11% of the Sertanejo work force as compared with only 5% in 1950.¹¹ Similarly, in the Agreste 13% of the work force are now service workers as compared with 5% in 1950.¹² Of more importance is the fact that public positions afford a regular and relatively high salary which farming, commerce and small industry cannot always guarantee. Even low-paying, non-continuous manual labour jobs in public works are desirable for lower-class individuals who have few other work options. We can see how the awarding of public jobs and funds has become a powerful instrument which political leaders at all levels use for assuring factional and party loyalties.

Local Politics and Divided Communities

The nature of local politics in agrarian societies is different from that found in large-scale urban industrial societies. Not only are local politics more personal and important for organizing society but they also serve to entertain and to define prestige in small communities. The people of the Northeast may be deadly serious about the spoils of politics but more is involved than just jobs and graft.

As in the interior of most of Brazil, politics in the small towns and

cities of the Northeast 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 saints' days, religious pilgrimages, high school graduation ceremonies and the inauguration of public works, to remind the voters just who is in charge and what a good job he is 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 precisely because they enter almost every aspect of community life. Steady jobs with regular and comparatively high salaries are at a premium. Basic municipal services can be provided or denied, according to factional allegiance. Prominent roles in religious ceremonies go to local leaders and Mass always accompanies important socio-political events. 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. Small wonder that 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 informants describe as a 'cancer' in community relations.

In the small towns and cities of the interior, 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 great social cohesion among faction members. Disputing faction leadership can even split kindreds long allied

by intermarriage. 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. This does not go unnoted by the poor, and so politics deepen 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 development. In addition, rather than being upholders of law and order, leaders interfere regularly with the judiciary and their penchant for earning votes by obtaining the release of supporters from the police and the courts actually aggravates 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.

The ideal model of traditional *município* politics in Brazil is that of two competing factions.¹³ Two competing factions are normally what are found at the local level of government in the Northeast but the two need not be on an equal footing in terms of electoral power. One-party towns exist but they remain as such for only short periods and a second faction inevitably arises. Long-term dominance by one faction, with a second one remaining in permanent and ineffectual opposition, is another matter and this is what is normally found in most *municípios*. An equal pitting of two powerful groups against each other 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.

Political Hierarchy

From at least the establishment of the Empire, trading favours for votes has been the basis of political interaction 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 to reward supporters with favours. As the local people describe it, voters are 'harnessed' (*botado no cabresto*) and cast their ballots as they are told to, or else. This appropriate expression for an agrarian society is an old one and has long been used to describe the traditional Brazilian system of political control.¹⁴

In the 1978 elections the newly appointed governor of Ceará said that if the political leaders of the interior did not arrange the votes as they should for his party's candidate for senator, then they would 'go hungry' when he took over as governor. Similarly, the governor of Bahia's first act upon taking office in 1979 was to dismiss 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 faction in power at the local level, in turn, 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. The roads serving such areas are the last to be resurfaced, if they are repaired at all. Their farms will be the last to receive truck-loads of water during droughts. And, even more important, they and their children will not receive civil service positions.

Under this system a pyramid of subordinate/superior relationship is built upon the boss/worker dyad at the base of the system. This personal relationship between unequals is linked to others which rise through the different levels to the state capital and even to Brasília, thus bridging local, state and federal levels of government (Figure 1). The person higher up in the chain may at times only be giving those below a job or a social service which 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.

A farm worker or a poor urban employee is grateful for the use of a piece of land or a job, for these 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 has voted correctly. Honesty for most rural and small-town Northeasterners 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 time, state that he will be leaving the property or quitting 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 only semi-literate, he is given the voting code of an unknown candidate who would never receive a vote in that *município*. If the stray vote does not turn up, the retainer's deceit is proven. Such practices are widespread in the Northeast, and Vilaça and Albuquerque describe similar examples throughout the interior of the Northeast during the period of the New Republic.¹⁵

Farmers and town employers, in turn, are linked to the village or *município* 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 have been taken to a local or state capital hospital for free treatment, even if he 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 faction member or a friend of a member. In return for such favours most farmers and townspeople do not question for whom they

will vote. The candidate is picked by the political leaders and is simply their faction's candidate.

At the head of each local faction is the *chefe político* (political chief) or *mandão* (boss). The *município* faction leader plays a crucial pivotal role in Brazilian electoral politics. He has personal contact with local voters and with mid-range state and federal politicians. On election day the leader mobilizes the vote for those candidates who, in his opinion, can best provide the spoils from higher levels of government. Local jobs, services and public funds are ultimately distributed by him. Given this power of decision, individuals seeking favours are continually streaming in and out of his house and place of business. This is especially true on market day when country people come to town and nearly eat him out of house and home.

The actual name given to a faction comes from the leader's immediate family name rather than a more global clan name. The dominant faction in the study community Belém do São Francisco (Pernambuco) is called the Lustosas and not a more inclusive name such as the Pires de Carvalho. Similarly, in Parnamirim (Pernambuco), descendants of the original settlers, the Agras, are members of the Cabral faction. The name of the traditional family faction of Chorrochó (Bahia), the Pachecos, does, in fact, refer to a more inclusive kin group but a large number of other elite families, whose ancestors were also original settlers, are included in the faction though they are not direct descendants of the Pacheco core. Demonstrating this further is the name of their rivals, the Carvalhos or the *morenos* ('coloureds'). Carvalho was the name of one of the original leaders of the faction but the leaders who came after him were not direct relatives of his and even the faction members who live in town do not form a kindred of closely related individuals. The alternative name of their group, the *morenos*, refers to the ethnic group of the prominent members of the faction who live in or near the *sede de município* but many important village allies are, in fact, *galegos* ('lily whites').

The above is the traditional ideal model of political organization in the rural Northeast. However, at this level of politics the degree of dependency of individuals at the base of the hierarchy and the nature of their participation have varied over time as well as from place to place. This, in turn, depends on the nature of the socio-economic transformation that has occurred locally and, as Chandler and Forman and Riegelhaupt maintain, on the shifting circumstances at the higher levels of government.¹⁶

When the county seat is not a medium-sized city or larger, the new town jobs that have been created in recent decades have been incorporated into the traditional structure of political control. On the other hand, the economy, class relations, and the impersonal lifestyle of larger cities make for less direct dependency on the part of the poor there.

Similarly, in areas where the process of landless peasants leaving the countryside is more advanced, as in the coastal zones and the more arid parts of the Sertão, the tight bonds of agrarian dependency are on the wane. In these places the remaining smallholders and urban-oriented medium and large landowners still need political connections in order to fulfil a number of their needs but they are substantially less dependent than were rural retainers of former times. However, this does not mean that the voters of the country and of the small towns and cities of the interior are perfectly free to vote as they choose; rather they are somewhat less dependent than they were previously. Constraining ecological and socio-economic circumstances still work to keep them 'harnessed'.

On the other hand, economic dependency is not the sole motivating force in local politics. There is the entertainment side to consider. Persons of all classes enthusiastically participate in local elections because for them politics are a great spectator sport. To use an appropriate Brazilian analogy, a football fan may not select the players or the coach but that does not stop him from being a fanatical supporter of *his* team.

The Shifting Power Base of Local Leaders

In the past, political leaders of most Northeastern communities were usually large ranchers or planters as well as small general store owners or rural produce buyers. Both farming and commerce were important sources of economic power and leverage necessary for building up a political following. Today, the size of the community and the degree to which the local economy is monetarized determine which source of income is of greater importance to the power of a leader. The larger the community and the greater the local consumption of purchased manufactured items, the more political power is based on urban commerce. Also, in communities of all sizes, leaders and their allies receive the best civil service jobs, which further enhances their power.

Gross has challenged a similar model of interior politics, which was first proposed by Leal for the South of Brazil, by Vilaça and Albuquerque for the Northeast and more recently by Forman and Riegelhaupt for the country as a whole.¹⁷ Gross holds that *município* politics are not merely a question of traditional large farmers being confronted by modern merchants. Gross is correct in pointing out that examples exist of faction leaders exploiting both commerce and agriculture but one must look closer at the kind of community involved and at what is the most important economic activity of the local leader. The larger the town, the greater is the specialization and scale of commerce, and this makes merchants the most powerful individuals in larger urban areas. Leal, and Vilaça and Albuquerque portray the situation in terms of a confrontation

between 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 so is Gross, because the leaders are usually descendants of the same traditionally dominant kindred and do not have to represent opposing interest groups.

Large ranchers and farmers are still the most prominent individuals in small *sedes* of up to 2,000 people. Many Northeastern *ciudades* are of this size, about a third of the total number, and nearly 10% of the regional population live in these *municípios* (Table 2).¹⁸ Chorrochó and neighbouring towns of the north of Bahia State are examples of this type of *sede de município*. The power base of the respective leaders of each opposing faction is nearly the same: ranching and modest commerce (Table 3).

The economies of communities of 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants are intermediary cases between the smallest *ciudades*, which are firmly based on rural activities, and the larger commercial towns and cities. In this type of *sede*, local merchants become prominent and will lead a faction but usually they do not have the power to win the mayor's office regularly. Most *ciudades* of the Northeast fall into this size group and approximately a fifth of the regional population resides in these *municípios*.

In such places, the numerous descendants of the first settlers, whose power comes from rural supporters, are pitted against some of the town's merchants who settled there more recently. To be sure, there are rural members in the opposition faction but they too are usually more recent settlers who feel excluded. On the other hand, a number of important merchants belong to the traditional elite faction so that about all one can say is that one group may have more merchants than the other but not in a clear-cut way.

In the study community of Parnamirim, for example, the weaker faction is led by the Menezes, outsiders who arrived in the town only in the last 40 years and have established themselves as merchants (Table 4). Allied to the Menezes are the Clementinos and Mirandas. These two families mostly marry among themselves and own farms located on secondary tributaries of the Riacho da Brígida. Some Mirandas have married into the Agra family but their kindred, as a whole, have not become close relatives of 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.

After 1945, in larger towns, such as Belém do São Francisco, commerce became increasingly important as the key to political power. Merchants there, 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 the descendants of the original settlers (Table 5). Before 1945 the power of this kin 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.

From 1945 onwards, commerce began to expand and the leaders of the dominant faction were merchants first and farmers second. As farming gradually became more orientated towards producing for the market, the economic power of a rural produce buyer became greater. Similarly, the consumer goods shop of the present leader grew larger as the development of irrigation generated even greater income for local farmers. This income was increasingly spent on new items of consumption that passed through the hands of merchants. The opposition faction of their cousin, who was only a large rancher, never seriously threatened the power of the last two political leaders of the dominant faction. In the 1960s the opposition faction ceased to exist and, today, its members adhere un- easily to the dominant side.

Fast-growing cities with 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants like Salgueiro (Pernambuco), Petrolina (Pernambuco) and Juazeiro (Bahia), show these trends even more. These may only represent about 6% of the total number of *idades* in the region but a fifth of the urban population and 17% of all Northeasterners reside in the *municípios*. More importantly, these cities are at the hub of commerce, and administrative and social services; the middle range of state and federal politicians have their electoral base in these local centres.

Leaders of such cities build a power base which combines various types of commerce with light industry. These 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 urban consumer commerce and so 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 better position to dispense private and public favours. With this wide range of transactions they have dealings 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.

Nevertheless, 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 distinction.¹⁹

Clothing is given, help in making a move, in addition to the usual aid in circumventing the bureaucracy in order to obtain social services.

Moreover, the multi-role relationship of patron to client begins to break down in the cities. Many of the modes of control cited by Lindqvist as being common throughout agrarian South America were traditionally utilized by employers of the rural Northeast.²⁰ Farmers can closely regulate the lives — and votes — of their retainers because landowners often combine the role of employer, landlord, produce buyer, shopkeeper, creditor, provider of social services and law enforcer. Some of these practices have fallen into disuse in the Northeast, even in small farming communities, but enough remain in use for effective political control to be exercised throughout the interior.

Lindqvist shows how in the cities these different roles come to rest with a number of individuals instead of one powerful patron so that control of would-be clients becomes diluted. It is important to point out that this occurs only in fairly large cities of the Northeast and not in towns or even in small cities there. In the latter, an urban employer retains many of the traditional controls because the size of businesses in such places is relatively small and the relationship between owner and worker remains a personal one.

An interesting change that accompanies the development of larger commercial establishments in the cities is the discontinuance of short-term consumer credit of the traditional type. This is substituted by purchases made on a 'cash-only' basis. Most of the rapidly expanding 'supermarkets' deal on such a cash-and-carry basis, though they have not entirely eliminated small stores selling on credit. Nevertheless, the traditional exchange of credit for votes and close personal ties between buyer and seller are on the wane for the greater majority of the residents of cities.

In urban areas of more than 100,000 inhabitants, like the state capitals and a few cities in the Agreste, sheer size makes life even more impersonal, and, as Norris notes for Salvador, patron-client relationships take the form of an array of diffuse single-strand dealings which are dispersed among numerous individuals.²¹ In fact, many of the ties become so weak that the concept of patronage is probably not appropriate for qualifying the relationship. The word *patrão* merely refers to the boss in charge of the work place.

Furthermore, the economic independence of the public sector is greater in big cities. Quite simply, if the people there do not want to vote for the government party they do not have to. The people of the interior are conscious of the greater freedom that big-city electors have and they envy it.

Some personal ties of voters to local councilmen do, in fact, exist in

large urban areas, 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. While some members of the lower classes can improve their chances of locating work or moving up to better jobs if they enter into this type of relationship, as Norris observed in Salvador, this involves a minority of big-city dwellers. Not enough public jobs are available to provide for the mass of unemployed and underemployed urban poor.

Usually, when the politics of the Northeast are analysed, too much attention is given to the growth of the large cities of the region. The size of the urban area is, indeed, important for determining the type of dependency involved in local politics, which is the thesis argued here, but one must consider the whole population of a *municipio* when examining the electoral clout of the interior versus the large cities. Looking at it in this way, one sees why the votes of the interior are crucial for determining state leadership. *Ciudades* of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants are those most strictly controlled by the traditional system and almost one half of the Northeastern population resides in such *municipios*. Even cities of up to 50,000 inhabitants are usually firmly in the hands of conservative forces so that almost three-quarters of the regional population can be swayed to their political line.

Admittedly, more large-city dwellers qualify to vote because of higher rates of literacy found there, but it is common on election day for interior voters experiencing difficulty with their ballots to receive help in signing their names and in choosing their candidates. Nor do all interior electors need to be among the living for they can miraculously experience resurrection in order to go to the polls.

Local Leadership Succession

Besides the possession of personal wealth, the control of the municipal budget by politicians of the *sede* also enters into the power equation which determines local leadership. Village leaders must depend exclusively on their own resources, which can be depleted by drought, poor farm prices or a bad commercial deal. Moreover, they are dependent on the *chefe político* for any municipal services. Such a state of affairs does not make for continuity of power at the village level. The *municipio* 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 and ballooned in the last two decades. Therefore, if local leaders, once gaining power, 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 and 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 leadership is most easily learned by a close member of kin who grows up observing, or, as in the case of a son-in-law, 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 subsequently claiming leadership.

Very often a close relative of the leader is chosen to be his faction's mayoral candidate because he can, as a rule, be counted on not to use the position to undermine the leader's authority. In addition, the experience serves to groom kin for eventual succession. Many leaders prefer not to run for mayor themselves but instead stay in the background treating important matters while letting the mayor handle the bureaucratic details of local government. In addition, there is a trend for mayors to need a higher education in a liberal profession, which is not necessary for qualifying as a political leader, but which the younger kin of a leader quite often possess.²² Thus, the combination of these various prerequisites for local leaders explains why some individuals become *chefes políticos* and others do not.

In Chorrochó, the leadership of the Pacheco faction, with the exception of Capitão 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 2). The leadership could still 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 rival Carvalho faction passed from father-in-law to son-in-law when Sebastião Pereira da Silva took over from Aureliano da Costa Andrade.

Parnamirim has been a *município* since the late nineteenth century but it did not grow and prosper very rapidly and at one time even ceased to be a *sede*. Thus, while leadership of the dominant faction usually remained in the hands of descendants of the first settlers, some outsiders were important also (Figure 3). Col. Jambo and Major Alexandrino were said to have shared power before the 1920s. It appears that Col. Mariano Costa Araujo was the leader before them. Major Alexandrino was the latter's nephew and son-in-law. The exact genealogy of Col. Jambo was not obtained but his brothers were married to 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 the important village of Terra Nova, took over. He aligned himself

with the Agrads in opposition to Antonio Sá Neves of Terra Nova. The most important man in 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 Capitão Menezes of Chorrochó, probably owed his importance to the conditions of the period.

At any rate, none of the leaders was very strong and, probably because of a falling from favour with the new revolutionary government, Parnamirim was demoted to district status from 1932-1939. When the Estado Nova era of appointed *prefeitos* ended in 1947, the leadership fell to Glicério Cabral, 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 appointed mayor but so had Glicério. Ulisses married a daughter of Major Alexandrino, but as the latter had died long before, this was a weak claim to leadership.

Hence, the Cabrais that followed Glicério as political chiefs had more claim to the leadership since they had 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 developed between the sons of Antonio Cabral and the son of 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 any power dispute within the faction. When Plácido Angelim was passed over in the choice for mayoral candidate for the 1978 election, the Angelims left the faction. By the 1982 elections they had joined the other side and Plácido was their unsuccessful candidate for mayor.

Belém do São Francisco has been a *município* since the beginning of this century and, despite the fact that power gradually shifted from ranchers to merchants, the leadership remained in the traditional family (Figure 4). Col. Trapiá and Col. Jerônimo were partners in power. They were second cousins and Col. Jerônimo was married to a niece of Col. Trapiá. Leadership then passed to Col. Caribé, who was a nephew of Col. Trapiá. He dominated the scene until his death in the mid-1940s.

At this point a dispute arose over who should be the next leader. By

previous experience and closeness of kinship ties, Aciole Roriz felt he should have taken over. His son was married to a daughter of Col. Caribé and his brother-in-law, Col. 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 Col. Caribé. On the other hand, he was a nephew of Col. Jerônimo and a second nephew of Col. 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 rejoined the faction, tension still exists within the 'Family'. In 1976 one of their relatives, a wealthy irrigation farmer, tried to mount an opposition faction and ran for mayor. While he was able to make the race a contest for the first time in years, after the election he was forced back into the fold with the threat of not having his farm loans approved. By 1982 he was the vice-mayoral candidate of the Lustosa-led faction.

Thus a number of factors come together to explain who leads factions and how the lack of 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. However, if a son or other close relative 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 adolescent and the heirs of the leader Col. Jambo did not seem to be politically inclined, so that leadership passed to other families.

An important facet of leadership transition is the risk that a faction can lose important members when a leader dies and where succession is not clear. A disgruntled, failed rival for leadership leaves the faction to join, or to form, another. The rival may represent an old economic group being pushed aside or, conversely, a new force that has not yet come into its own. The former was the case of the Roriz opposition faction that existed for a while in Belém. Alternatively, the Menezes and, more recently, the Angelims of Parnamirim went into opposition because their leaders, who exercise important urban professions, felt that they should have been chosen as successors. Ambitious village leaders, who are not close relatives of county-seat leaders, are even more inclined to switch to the side which makes the best offer. This is particularly a problem for small *idades* like Chorrochó, where shifting coalitions of large villages throw elections one way or another.

A final point to be made concerning leadership succession and socio-economic change is the effect of the emigration of upper-class children to the state capital or other large cities for employment or cultural reasons. This has long been a problem in areas of rural-urban emigration, as Queiroz demonstrates for the south of Brazil.²³ If the ruling elite is not careful, it can lose contact with the local situation and political power. This

could happen with the children of Antonio Cabral in Parnamirim and did occur with Capitão Menezes in Chorrochó and with the children of Pedro da Luz in Belém. On the other hand, when they are administrators or practitioners of liberal professions in the large cities such individuals can be invaluable contacts for obtaining state services for the faction at home. At times they are higher-level politicians in the hierarchy and are, therefore, indeed quite useful.

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 *município* 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 the new local state and federal jobs. They can even demand the replacement of members of the defeated group who hold certain civil service positions.

Such partisan practices are so ingrained in the local politics of the Northeast 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 most, the attention of a smile. Opposition factions do not complain because they do the same when they are in power.

The amount of funding that the poor *municípios* of the interior receive from the higher levels of government far exceeds the taxes they pay to the state and federal government, and transfer payments received from the latter have been increasing at a pace faster than the rate of inflation so that, by local standards, a huge amount of money is being made available to *prefeitos* for 'distribution'. For example, in 1977 the municipal budget of Chorrochó had receipts of US \$188,547 and Parnamirim of US \$221,493, meaning that even a normal 20-30% rate of embezzlement involves large sums of money. More intelligent politicians invest embezzled funds far away from the eyes of the community. Usually they buy land and apartments in the state capitals.

Outright theft of county funds is the most obvious kind of graft. A less direct 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, large reservoir projects are located in places where the ruling faction has a big following. Also, urban improvements and services begin first in those parts of town where important

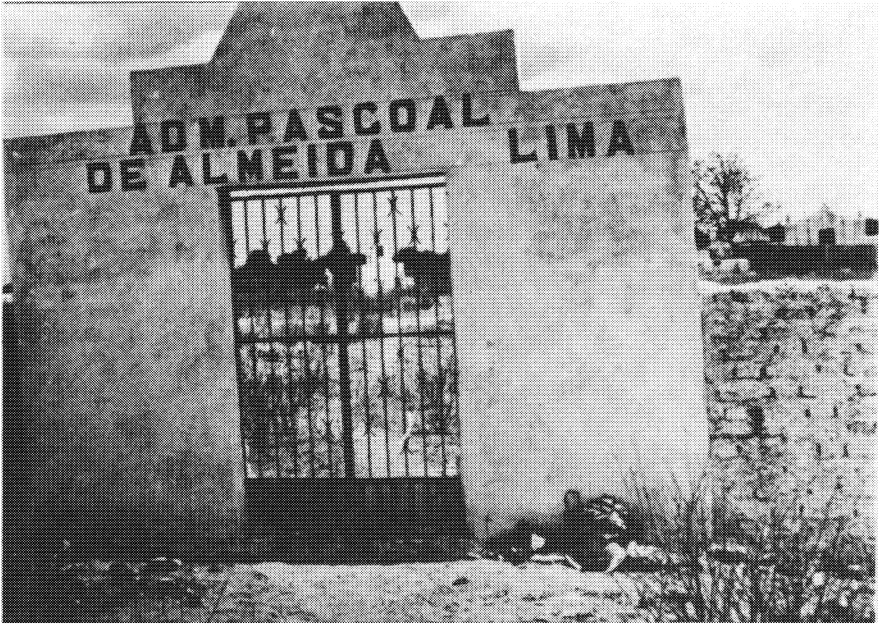


Plate 1. Cemetery entrance with mayor's name prominently displayed (Chorrochó, 1978)



Plate 2. State deputy candidate 'speaking beautifully' at a political rally (Chorrochó, 1978)

members of the faction reside and they may not even reach the streets where opposition members live, let alone the poor parts of town.

Chorrochó best exemplifies how merely making funds available to poor *municípios* with little supervision 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, refuse collection, paved streets, a resident doctor or dentist, medical facilities of any kind or banking services.

Politics, however, are not just jobs and graft. Prestige is another important 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 clearly visible and of a durable kind, such as schools, municipal offices, cemeteries and libraries (Plate 1).²⁴ 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 about 800, has five different schools, two cemeteries and a number of public buildings. Each building serves as a source of prestige and 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 in which to nullify the works of his adversaries. Municipal buildings are 'renovated', that is, 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 one of his buildings to the ground and erecting a bigger and better one in its place. Sometimes, a public building may have been well constructed and much effort and expense are expended in pulling it down. Occasionally, the effort can backfire, as happened 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, leaders 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 payment of low wages 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 working long, hard hours for poor pay, most public employment positions in the small towns of the interior do not involve much work, owing to the fact that many *municípios* have a small population which is mainly rural and dispersed. Government offices are normally busy only on market days while, during the rest of the week, one or two people will require their services. Also, a large number of the civil servants do not work whatsoever and go to their places of employment only to receive pay cheques.

However, the concession of desirable state and federal jobs is not within the local leader's domain. He can nominate the candidate but to obtain an appointment 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 right senior bureaucrats in the different government agencies. And it is exactly through such contacts that state and federal politicians, in turn, exert complete control over local leaders. Often the latter and their close kin are employed in the best civil service positions and so are quite sensitive to demands from above. If they are not themselves civil servants, many important followers are and, as Dias shows for a Zona da Mata community, even large merchants and mill owners do not wish to fall foul of tax agents and financial institutions which are vital to the survival of their enterprises.²⁵ So even those individuals who are more economically independent of the public sector and who may not be politically inclined by nature are forced to participate in politics and to toe the line.

State and Federal Politics and Policy at the Local Level (1945–1984)

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 real impact on the local scene. National parties are merely adapted to *município* and state factionalism and their policies do not mean much at the local 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.

During the Second Republic (1945–1964) 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 sugarcane planters and mill owners.²⁶ At the national level these parties represented more or less the same class interests. The UDN was a conservative party of the urban middle and upper classes while the PSD represented rural upper-class interests.²⁷

Throughout most of the Northeastern interior, the PSD was usually the party of the strongest local faction and the UDN was that 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 and cities like Belém do São Francisco, 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 in very small communities such as Chorrochó. Factions could even switch party affiliations if these threatened the local way of defining factional identity, as occurred in 1958 when the Alencar and Sampaio rival factions of Exu switched parties because Cid Sampaio was the candidate for governor of the UDN which before his nomination had been the party of the Alencars. So 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.

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 of most interior communities aligned themselves with ARENA because the dominant national party allowed for factionalism within itself, almost in the manner of the pre-1930 *política de adesão*. This was accomplished by the system of *sub-legendas* whereby the total of votes for the candidates of different factions for local, state and federal office are added to give the party's total and the party candidate with the highest number of votes wins the election.

The two local factions simply called themselves ARENA I and ARENA II, the strongest of which had the privilege of being I. The declining fortunes of a faction can be confirmed symbolically by its being demoted from I to II. Similarly, in 1979 when ARENA was replaced by the new government party, the PDS (Partido Democrata Social), the name of *município* factions was merely changed to the PDS I and the PDS II. So even when competition between strong parties at the state and federal level was reduced, local and state factionalism continued as always. Despite the fact that most candidates are members of the government party, certain candidates for local, state and federal office are identified with one faction or another.

After the 1964 coup, the national opposition party, the MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro) had great difficulty in organizing at the local level in most of the interior of the Northeast because its leaders could not deliver the jobs and spoils from the higher levels of govern-

ment. The party was only successful in organizing a serious challenge to the government party in some of the larger cities of the Agreste and Zona da Mata, principally in Paraíba and Pernambuco States, that is, in places where civil service jobs and political spoils are not vital to the local economy. Until quite recently, to be associated with the opposition party in most interior communities was tantamount to being considered crazy. Not only did such a person have the whole government machinery against him but he could even place himself in physical danger, as the murders of some interior opposition members in Alagoas and Rio Grande do Norte States in 1983 and 1984 demonstrate.

Under the modern version of the harnessed voter system, state and federal deputies and senators rarely need to appear in their constituencies and usually only do so once a year or perhaps even just before an election. An election is one of the rare occasions when a politician needs something from the local leaders and general population. Going to a person for help is a sign of dependence and subordination in the Northeast, 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 come mainly 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 sometimes a candidate may have little of any substance to offer the people in pre-election speeches and has to rely on 'speaking beautifully', whereby he only offers praise for local leaders, admiration for the people's ruggedness and other pleasantries (Plate 2).

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 official openings, a politician boasts that it was he who 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 by his name being given to a street or highway but a truly great politician has his name given to a *município* 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.

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. 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 Northeastern interior.²⁸

In such a system, local leaders are usually powerless to protest, and would not do so if they could, for fear of losing their livelihood. This runs counter to the hypothesis of Forman and Riegelhaupt that greater local autonomy has developed. The poor may have gained a little more independence but this is only really significant in the large cities and dependency has actually increased between lower and higher levels of government.²⁹

The problem of balance of political power is no longer that of rural interest groups dominating the higher levels of government, as in former times, but rather the opposite, that of the urban-industrial sector dictating rural policy. The dilemma for the implementation of development planning decisions arises not from local political interference causing such efforts to go astray but rather from the inappropriateness of the actions taken.

National and regional planners know little about the local circumstances of targeted areas and this is further aggravated by the lack of feedback from the local level to the top of the decision-making hierarchy. All too often high-level officials and agency reports complain of the backwardness and ignorance of the local population hindering change when, in fact, the authoritarian nature of the political system and the bureaucratic structure of the planning agencies pose more serious barriers to

development. Indeed, many younger agency personnel voice frustration with the way that decisions are made and with the poor results of development efforts to date. However, they are powerless to protest and if they do they may be ignored, never promoted again or even sacked outright. This occurs because the political relations of the society at large are reproduced within the agencies.

Given such a system of strict control over local politics, it is small wonder that during the military period calls for the restoration of democracy at the higher levels of government and many other of the progressive programmes of the national opposition parties did not have much of an audience throughout most of the Northeastern interior. Much of state and federal government is remote from the concerns of local people and they have no influence on decisions made there. In addition, at the *município* level and even for some mid-level state and federal offices, which are those that have real meaning for the people of the interior, different factions exist and they dispute contested elections for these offices, so that at these levels elective politics continued to exist. Indeed, when, for reasons of national politics, local elections are rescheduled for a later date, the people of the interior start to complain because elections are great social events in their lives.

From this it may be concluded that the lack of choice between competing parties at higher levels of government and electors being forced to vote for government party candidates for high office are not matters of great importance to the people of the interior. On the other hand, the small-town politics of the country were of great significance for maintaining the conservative regime in power, as was clearly evident in the 1978 and 1982 elections. In these elections, the interior votes outweighed the votes of the capitals, and the Northeast with its numerous small states helped maintain the appearance of a government majority at the state and federal level.

Nevertheless, times are changing and population shifts have increased the electoral clout of the large cities of the coast where electors are freer to vote as they choose and are increasingly opting for the PMBD. The 1982 elections 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 interior nervous for the first time for almost 20 years about being on the wrong side. Improved communications had allowed for previously little-known opposition candidates to become popular with country people and threatened to undermine the whole system in many Northeastern states. Some local political leaders hedged their bets. In the 1979 reformulation of the national parties, local mayors had to opt for the new government party, the PDS, but many local leaders decided not to join any party for the time being, waiting to see if they would have to join the victorious opposition party after the elections.

Thus, support for the national government party was really not as strong as it seemed in a situation where the politician who delivers the spoils receives allegiance. Many local people point out that it was only after the 1964 coup 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 names every ten years. As has often occurred in the past when local expediency demands, factions change higher-level party affiliation.

In the 1982 elections, in a last desperate attempt to maintain eroding national support, the government rammed through the federal Congress before the election an electoral change which takes advantage of the traditional political system prevalent throughout the less developed northern half 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.

The opposition tried to counter this move by promoting the *voto camararão*, whereby voters cast their ballot for local candidates and simply left it blank for high-level candidates. Significantly, in such a small and out-of-the-way place in Bahia State as Chorrochó, 17% of the voters left the ballot blank for the Governor and federal Senator candidates while only 4% did so for mayor candidates. Similarly, in Parnamirim, where opposition candidates had become popular, 31% of the votes for Governor and federal Senator were left blank while only 8% were cast blank for mayor. This could have been done out of protest or because the people simply had no interest in the highest level candidates.

At any rate, the blank votes were not enough to overcome the mechanism for strict control over local politics and the Northeast proved to be the salvation of the PDS in the election. The secret of the government's success, besides the usual gerrymandering of electoral laws, was the expanded spoils system mounted upon traditional loyalties which, given the desperate jobs situation of the region, 'harnessed' country people.

In the Southeast and South, more private sector employment opportunity exists and electors are freer to vote as they choose, even for so-called radicals like Brizola if they wish. In the North and Central-West of Brazil, the opposition made serious inroads which infuriated government leaders who 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 poli-

ticians and voters were freer to opt for the national opposition parties than was the case of the Northeast.

Northeastern Politics in the New Republic

After the 1982 election, popular support for the military government rapidly eroded to the point that the opposition came to power. In January 1985, Tancredo Neves, a moderate PMDB leader, was selected president by the Electoral College despite various attempts to gerrymander the presidential succession.

During the campaign it became increasingly apparent that the opposition would win the presidency and many prominent Northeastern politicians gradually cut their ties to the PDS. These 'dissidents' established a new party, the Partido Frente Liberal (PFL), and they formed a tactical alliance with the opposition parties which gave them a majority in the Electoral College. This development, together with the choice of Paulo Maluf of São Paulo State as the official PDS candidate, provoked yet more desertions from what was described as the 'imploding' government party. As the conservative leadership of the Northeast played an important role in the opposition victory for president we may ask whether the collapse of the military government will make all that much difference to the conduct of Northeastern politics?

The Northeast will probably maintain its relative importance in national affairs. Even before the death of Tancredo Neves, a number of Northeastern politicians were awarded ministries and other important government posts in return for support rendered during the presidential campaign. The vice-president, José Sarney, who assumed the presidency, is an important Northeastern politician and he was a member of the original PDS dissident group. The PFL has overtaken the PDS in the opinion polls and is now the second largest party in Brazil. All of this will maintain the political importance of the Northeast, but the region has some way to go before it can rise above its status of a junior partner to power. A Northeasterner assumed the presidency by chance and the powerful ministries are still in the hands of Southeasterners.

An opposition president will have even less of an impact on the interior politics of the Northeast, particularly in the short run. During the presidential contest, in their haste to assure victory in the Electoral College, the national opposition leaders allied themselves with the whole conservative leadership of the Northeast. Even some notorious masters of the harnessed vote system, like the twice governor of Bahia Antonio Carlos Magalhães, were allowed to join the bandwagon. At a stroke, the regional PMDB politicians had their potential power cut from under them. Further strengthening the position of the PFL is the fact that the

PMDB has been slow to organize in the interior of the Northeast and it remains essentially a party of the big cities.

The broad alliance of the presidential succession was only a temporary marriage of convenience and there will be no merger of the PFL and PMDB in the Northeast. The two groups will most likely continue to compete for Northeastern local, state and federal offices in the same way as in the past but with the important difference that the conservative group will no longer have the official stamp of representing *the* government party. Even before the inauguration, the PFL and PMDB were already fighting amongst themselves over the important posts in the new administration. Furthermore, some Northeastern politicians have predicted that the upcoming mayoral elections in the state capitals will consummate the divorce.

Hence, in essence, politics have returned to those of the Second Republic when elections were competitive at all levels of office. This might permit greater local autonomy if municipal politicians are able to play rivals at the state and federal levels off against one another, although this will probably not happen as it will be hard to reverse decades of a trend towards ever greater centralization.

Politics of the interior will change only when a real alternative party is available for members of the rural lower class, as in the early 1960s. The present system is of the vertical type which crosses class lines rather than allows for horizontal mobilization. It is doubtful whether the PMDB is such a party. Its leaders do not even represent an urban worker political movement, much less one that includes the rural poor. The PMDB is merely an alternative urban elite, in the same way that *município* opposition leaders of the interior represent an alternative rural-commercial elite at the local level. It remains to be seen whether the re-legalized Communist parties (PC do B and PCB) will return to this type of role in the Northeast or whether something along the lines of the Partido do Trabalhador (PT) is called for. At any rate, these parties have a long way to go before they can compete with the PFL or PMDB in the Northeast.

Such a state of affairs poses a dilemma for regional development. Radical political change and decentralization are necessary preconditions for resolving the agrarian problems of the Northeast and this task will never be tackled seriously until the political structure is modified in such a way that the general public gains an active role in government. If Northeasterners are not given the chance to choose politicians who can change the failed policies that have so far been pursued, they will continue to vote overwhelmingly with their feet.

NOTES

1. This paper is based on two years of field research carried out in the Sertão and Agreste Zones between 1977 and 1981. In addition, further experience was gained concerning the Zona da Mata and the large coastal cities while working for another period of a year and a half in the state capital of Paraíba. The research was made possible by grants from the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil and the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Latin American Studies held at Cambridge in April, 1984.
2. This is not the view of Forman and Riegelhaupt, who hold that with the institutionalization of the authoritarian state in Brazil, patron-client relationships are disappearing and that greater local autonomy has developed. S. Forman, *The Brazilian Peasantry* (Columbia University Press 1975), pp.196-202; and S. Forman and J.F. Riegelhaupt, 'The Political Economy of Patron-Clientship: Brazil and Portugal Compared', in M.L. Margolis and W.E. Carter, *Brazil: Anthropological Perspectives* (Columbia University Press 1979), pp.379-383.
3. For general works on the economic decline of the Northeast, see C. Furtado, *Formação Econômica do Brasil* (Companhia Editora Nacional 1974), pp.62-114, 238-41; and F. Oliveira, *Elegia para uma Re(li)gião: SUDENE, Nordeste, Planejamento e Conflitos de Classe* (Paz e Terra 1977), pp.63-84. The proportion of the Brazilian population resident in the region has fallen from 47% of the national total in 1872 to 29% in 1980. Fundação IBGE, *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil — 1980. Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Demográfico* (Rio de Janeiro 1981).
4. On the limitations of the top-down planning model, see N.M. Hansen, 'Development from Above: The Centre-Down Development Paradigm', in W.B. Stöhr and D.R.F. Taylor, *Development from Above or Below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries* (John Wiley and Sons 1981), pp.15-38; and W.B. Stöhr, 'Development from Below: The Bottom-Up and Periphery-Inward Development Paradigm' in Stöhr and Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp.39-72. The main proponents of the urban-industrial bias theory are H. Brookfield, *Interdependent Development* (Methuen 1975), pp.70-76, 'Urban Bias, Rural Bias, and the Regional Dimension', in K.Q. Hill, *Toward a New Strategy for Development* (Pergamon Press 1979), pp.97-122; and M. Lipton, *Why Poor People Stay Poor: A Study of Urban Bias in World Development* (Temple Smith 1977).
5. For more on the impact of pricing policies on farming the Northeast, see A.M.S.M. Bicalho, *A Pecuária e as Transformações do Agreste: O Exemplo de Guarabira* (M.Sc.: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro 1980), pp.51-67, 163-169; and S.W. Hoefle, *Continuity and Change in the Northeastern*

- Sertão of Brazil* (D.Phil.: University of Oxford 1983), pp.115-165. A general review of these policies for the Brazilian farming sector as a whole is found in D. Goodman and M. Redclift, *From Peasant to Proletarian: Capitalist Development and Agrarian Transitions* (Basil Blackwell 1981), pp.128-50.
6. Fundação IBGE, *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil — 1950: Censo Econômico* (Rio de Janeiro 1955); *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil — 1975: Censo Agropecuário* (Rio de Janeiro 1979).
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. On the impact of the owner-worker conflicts on rural labour relations in the Northeast, see A.M.S.M. Bicalho, *op. cit.*, pp.186-212; Hoefle, *op. cit.*, pp.160-168; and A.M.S.M. Bicalho and S.W. Hoefle, 'Changing Labour Relations in the Brazilian Semi-Arid Zone', *Occasional Papers in Geography* 16 (Bedford College 1983). An otherwise perceptive historical analysis of politics by Forman and Riegelhaupt (*op. cit.*) is flawed by the fact that it fails to give more attention to what happened after 1964. The peasant and rural workers' movements that arose in the 1950s and early 1960s in some parts of the Zona da Mata and Agreste attempted independent political activity, but they had little direct impact further inland. At any rate they were violently put down in the early 1960s so that the attempt at horizontal mobilization of the rural poor was short-lived. The federal government keeps a sharp eye on any similar manifestations and acts quickly to diffuse focal points of unrest, as the case of Alagamar (Paraíba) shows. Moreover, any new attempts to organize workers often lead to violence on the part of the local elites, as the murder in Paraíba of a female union official in 1983 demonstrates.
 9. Fundação IBGE, *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil — 1950: Censo Demográfico* (Rio de Janeiro 1955); *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil — 1980: Censo Demográfico — Mão de Obra* (Rio de Janeiro 1983).
 10. *Ibid.*
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. *Ibid.* Many of the construction workers who are classed by the Census as industrial workers should be counted as service workers. In this case the proportion of the 1980 work force made up by service workers would surpass 15% for the Sertão and 17% for the Agreste.
 13. B.J. Chandler, *The Feitosas and the Sertão dos Inhamuns: The History of a Family and a Community in Northeast Brazil, 1700-1930* (University of Florida Press 1972), pp.46-78, 103-116; Forman, *op. cit.*, pp.160-181; S.M. Greenfield, 'Patronage, Politics and the Articulation of Local Community and National Society in pre-1968 Brazil', *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol.19 No.2 (May 1977), 139-172; D.R. Gross, 'Factionalism and Local Level Politics in Rural Brazil', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol.29 No.2 (June 1973), 123-144; V.N. Leal, *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto* (Alfa-Omega 1975), pp.254-255 (translation available in English, Cambridge University Press 1977); M.I.P. Queiroz, *O Mandonismo Local na Vida Política Brasileira* (Alfa-Omega 1976), pp.69-71, 108-110, 121-128.
 14. Albuquerque and Leal writing about pre-1930 politics in the south of Brazil, and Vilaça and Albuquerque about the Northeast during the 1945-64 period, use the same term, 'harnessed votes', that is still heard in the interior today. M.M. Albuquerque, *Pequena História da Formação Social Brasileira* (Edi-

- ções Graal 1981), pp.553-56; Leal, *op. cit.*, pp.24-25; and M.V. Vilaça and R.C. Albuquerque, *Coronel, Coronéis* (Editora Universidade de Brasília 1978), pp.37-42.
15. Vilaça and Albuquerque, *op. cit.*, p.38.
 16. Chandler, *op. cit.*, p.46; and Forman and Riegelhaupt, *op. cit.*, pp.379-383.
 17. Gross, *op. cit.*, pp.123-129; Forman, *op. cit.*, p.174; Forman and Riegelhaupt, *op. cit.*, pp.389-390; Leal, *op. cit.*, pp.19-21, 251-258; and Vilaça and Albuquerque, *op. cit.*, p.41.
 18. Every *sede de município*, no matter what its size, is considered to be a 'city' (*cidade*) in Brazil. However, with reference to interpersonal relations and to less dependency on work in agriculture, only those Northeastern urban areas of more than 20,000 inhabitants can be said to be cities in a sociological sense of the concept.
 19. Vilaça and Albuquerque, *op. cit.*, pp.39-42.
 20. S. Lindqvist, *Land and Power in South America* (Penguin 1979), pp.229-241.
 21. W.P. Norris, 'Patron-Client Relationships in the Urban Social Structure: A Brazilian Case Study', *Human Organization*, Vol.43 No.1 (February 1984), 16-26.
 22. Greenfield, *op. cit.*, shows how practitioners of liberal professions, such as doctors and lawyers, in the more developed state of Minas Gerais occupy a privileged position for assuming leadership in their own right. Through their services they can build up a considerable local following as well as establish contacts with higher-level politicians.
 23. Queiroz, *op. cit.*, pp.71-74.
 24. The politics of most of the Brazilian hinterland are much the same. *O Bem Amado*, a humorous 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.
 25. G.M. Dias, *Depois do Latifúndio: Continuidade e Mudança na Sociedade Rural Nordestina* (Edições Tempo Brasileiro 1978), pp.179-180.
 26. Oliveira, *op. cit.*, pp.77-82.
 27. Albuquerque, *op. cit.*, pp.603-606, 622-624; and P. Flynn, *Brazil: A Political Analysis* (Ernest Benn 1978), pp.134-136, 144-146.
 28. For detailed accounts of the problems that have arisen with the construction of large water projects in the Northeast, see A.M.S.M. Bicalho and S.W. Hoefle, 'Transformações na Vida Sertaneja: A Irrigação no Rio São Francisco', *Revista Pernambucana de Desenvolvimento*, Vol.6 No.1 (1979), 75-110; A.M.S.M. Bicalho, *Irrigation and Rural Change in the Sertão of Northeast Brazil* (Ph.D.: University of London 1985); and A.L. Hall, *Drought and Irrigation in North-East Brazil* (Cambridge University Press 1978).
 29. Forman, *op. cit.*, pp.196-202; and Forman and Riegelhaupt, *op. cit.*, pp.379-383.

Table 1. Population, Area and Demographic Density of the Zones of the Northeast in 1980

Zone	Population inhabitants	%	Area km ²	%	Density (inhab./km ²)
Zona da Mata & Litoral	13,211,848	37.9	149,318	9.7	88.5
Agreste	6,033,982	17.3	133,267	8.6	45.3
Sertão	9,577,504	27.5	633,928	41.2	15.1
Meio-Norte & Gerais	6,037,307	17.3	623,119	40.5	9.7
NORTHEAST	34,860,641	100.0	1,539,632	100.0	22.6

Source of Data: Fundação IBGE (1981)

Table 3. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Chorrochó (Bahia)

Term	Mayor	Profession ^a	Faction
1922-26 ^b	—	—	—
1927-45 ^b	—	—	—
1945-52 ^b	—	—	—
1952-55	Aureliano da Costa Andrade	medium rancher	Carvalhos
1955-59	Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Pachecos
1959-63	José Calazans Bezerra	medium rancher	Carvalhos
1963-69	Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Pachecos
1969-73	Antonio Pires de Menezes	large rancher	Pachecos
1973-77	Pascoal de Almeida Lima	medium farmer	both
1977-83	Sebastião Pereira da Silva	<i>merchant,</i> small rancher	Carvalhos
1983-	José Juvenal de Araujo	medium rancher	Carvalhos

Source: Field Research

^a Italicized profession is principal one.

^b The period before Chorrochó was a *município*.

Table 2. Size, Number and Population of Northeastern Municípios

Size of Sede	<i>Municípios</i>		<i>Município</i>		<i>Sede de Município</i>	
	number	%	inhabitants ^a	%	inhabitants	%
2,000 and less	430	31.3	3,453,471	9.9	522,956	3.4
2,001—5,000	478	34.8	7,180,126	20.6	1,545,293	10.1
5,001—10,000	244	17.7	5,682,226	16.3	1,715,402	11.2
10,001—20,000	118	8.6	4,394,686	12.6	1,644,954	10.8
20,001—50,000	67	4.9	3,969,122	11.4	2,034,677	13.3
50,001—100,000	18	1.3	2,074,180	5.9	1,211,868	7.9
100,001—500,000	15	1.1	4,086,571	11.7	3,315,279	21.6
500,001-1,000,000	1	0.1	1,308,919	3.8	648,815	4.2
greater than 1,000,000	2	0.2	2,711,340	7.8	2,680,491	17.5
TOTAL	1,373	100.0	34,860,641	100.0	15,319,735	100.0

Source of Data: Fundação IBGE (1981)

^aAs occasionally occurs with the Census, the sum of the data for the *municípios* does not agree with the totals nor do the different totals agree with one another.

Traditional Family Faction Leader	Profession ^a	Opposition Faction Leader	Profession ^a
Francisco Pacheco de Menezes	medium rancher	Enoque Pires	large rancher
Cap. José Campos Menezes	military police		
Doroteu Pacheco	large rancher	Adivino Alves de Carvalho	medium rancher notary public
		Adivino Alves de Carvalho	
		Aureliano da Costa Andrade	medium rancher
		Aureliano da Costa Andrade	
		Sebastião Pereira da Silva	merchant, small rancher
Doroteu Pacheco		Sebastião Pereira da Silva	

Table 4. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Parnamirim (Pernambuco)

Term	Mayor	Profession ^a	Faction
1900-26	n.a.	—	Agra
1926-30	Docora Calô	large rancher and farmer	Calo-Agra
1930-32 ^b	Antonio Sá Neves	large rancher	Sá Neves
1932-33 ^b	Docora Calô	large rancher and farmer	Calô-Agra
1933-39 ^c	—	—	
1939-44 ^b	Glicério Parente	large rancher	Calô-Agra
1944-45 ^b	Milton Firmino de Menezes	n.a.	Calô-Agra
1945-46 ^b	Ulisses Firmino de Menezes	pharmacist	Calô-Agra
1946-47 ^b	Napoleão Lustosa Araujo	rancher	Cabral (Agra)
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
1959-63	Washington Gomes da Costa	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral
1963-69	Raimundo Batista Angelim	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral
1969-73	José Magalhães Landim	merchant	Menezes
1973-77	Maria Alice Cabral	large rancher	Angelim-Cabral
1977-83	Ivanildo Amando Agra	<i>state civil servant</i> , small rancher	Cabral
1983-	Geová Lustosa B. Cabral	state civil servant	

Source: Field Research

^a Italicized profession is principal one

^b Vargas period when mayors were appointed

^c A period when Parnamirim was demoted to village status

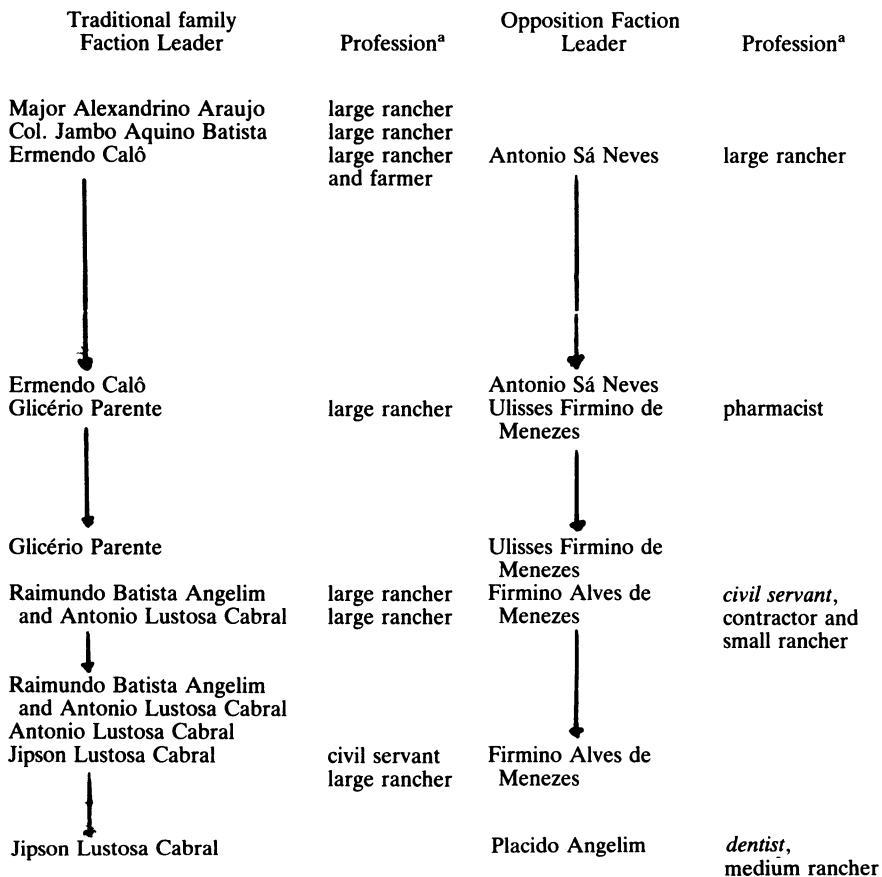
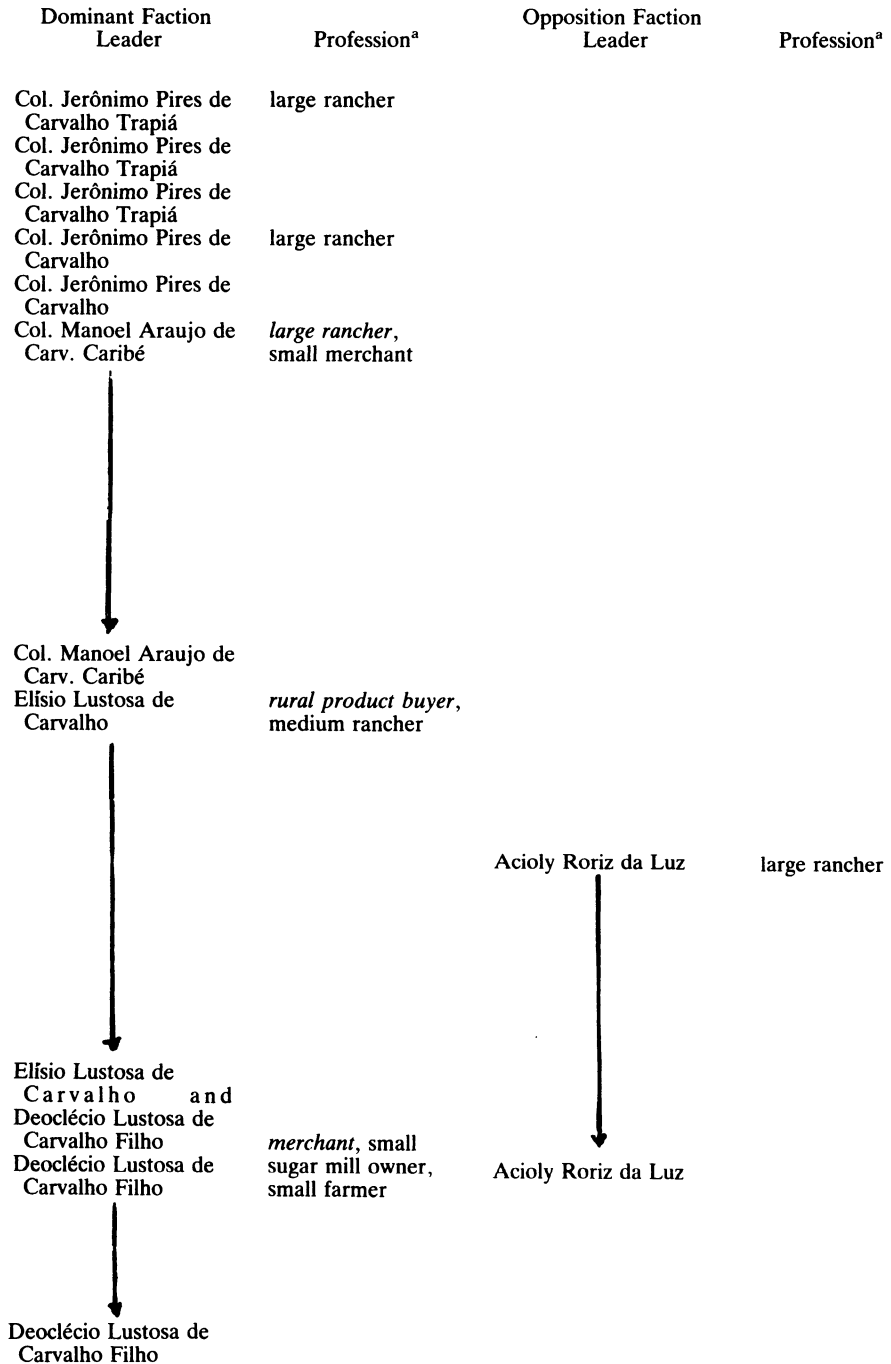


Table 5. Mayors, Factions and Political Leaders of Belém do São Francisco (Pernambuco)

Term	Mayor	Profession ^a	Faction
1903-4	Col. Jerônimo P. de Carvalho Trapiá	large rancher	Pires de Carvalho
1904-7	Col. Jerônimo Pires de Carvalho	large rancher	
1907	Col. Jerônimo P. de Carvalho Trapiá	large rancher	
1907-10	Col. Manoel Araujo de Carvalho Caribé	<i>large rancher</i> , small merchant	
1910-13	Col. Jerônimo Pires de Carvalho	large rancher	
1913-16	Antonio Augusto de Souza Sa	large rancher	
1916	Col. Manoel Araujo de Carvalho Caribé	<i>large rancher</i> , small merchant	
1916-19	Cap. Olegário Pires Cantarelli	n.a.	
1919-22	Cap. Francisco Alves de Carvalho	large rancher	
1922-26	Col. Pedro da Luz	large rancher, rural product buyer	
1926-36	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	
1936-37	Elísio Lustosa de Carvalho	<i>rural product buyer</i> , medium rancher	
1937-39 ^b	Gerônimo Pires Leonel	large rancher	
1939-41 ^b	Dr. José Alventino Lima	doctor	interventor
1941-42 ^b	João Batista Sena	n.a.	
1942 ^b	Jader de Alema Cireiros	n.a.	
1942-43 ^b	Davi Peixoto de Melo	n.a.	interventor
1943-45 ^b	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	Roriz
1945-47 ^b	Ten. Otacílio de Sousa Ferraz	military police	interventor
1947 ^b	Acioly Roriz da Luz	large rancher	Roriz (UDN)
1947 ^b	Ten. Otacílio de Sousa Ferraz	military police	interventor
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. Arioaldo Lustosa de Carvalho		
1959-63	Eneas Cantarelli de Carvalho Caribé	merchant	
1963-69	Anibal Lustosa Sobrinho	civil servant	
1969-73	Gerson Alves de Carvalho Pires	federal civil servant	
1973-77	José de Sá Roriz	large farmer	
1977-83	Dr. Geraldo Lustosa de Carvalho	<i>doctor</i> , medium farmer	



^a During the Vargas period, and for a few years after the fall of Vargas, mayors were appointed from the state level and were often outsiders, so they were called *interventores*.

FIGURE 1. THE SYSTEM OF POLITICAL HIERARCHY

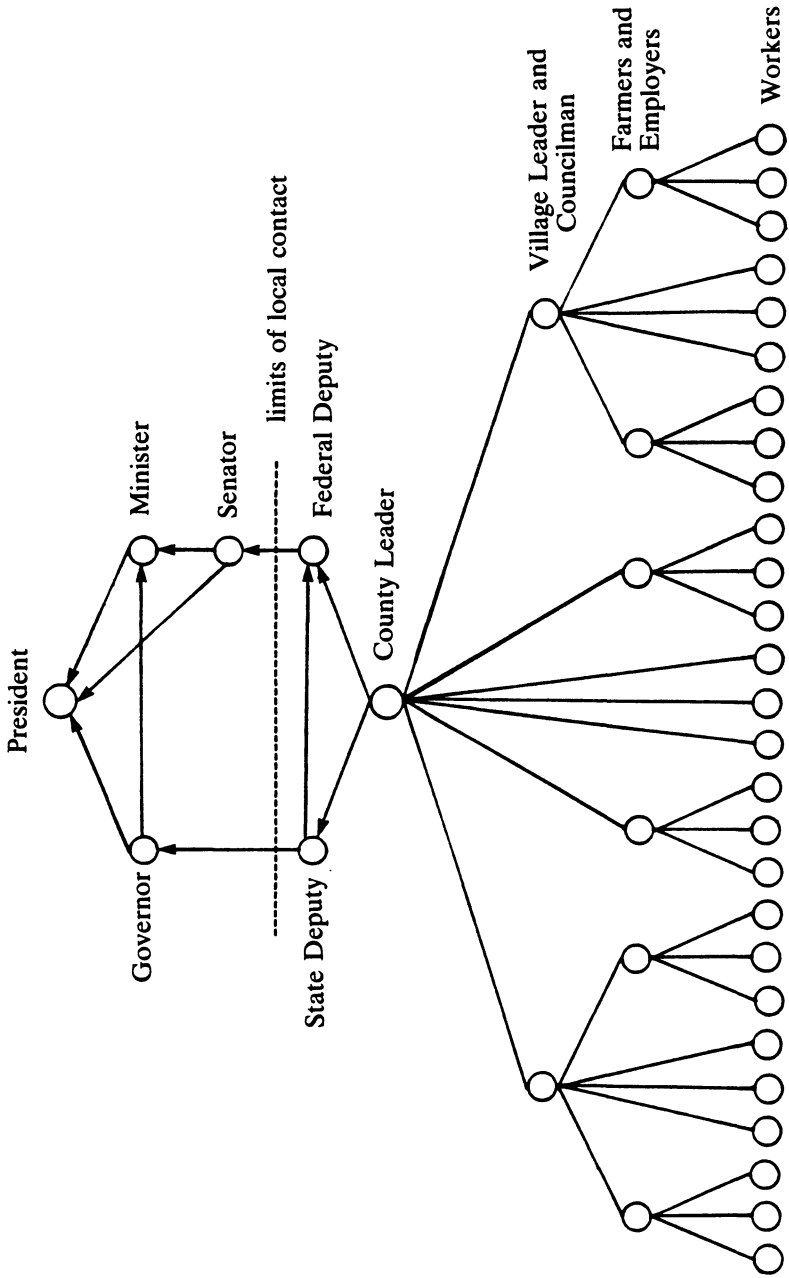


FIGURE 2. KINSHIP TIES BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE POLITICAL LEADERS OF CHORROCHÓ

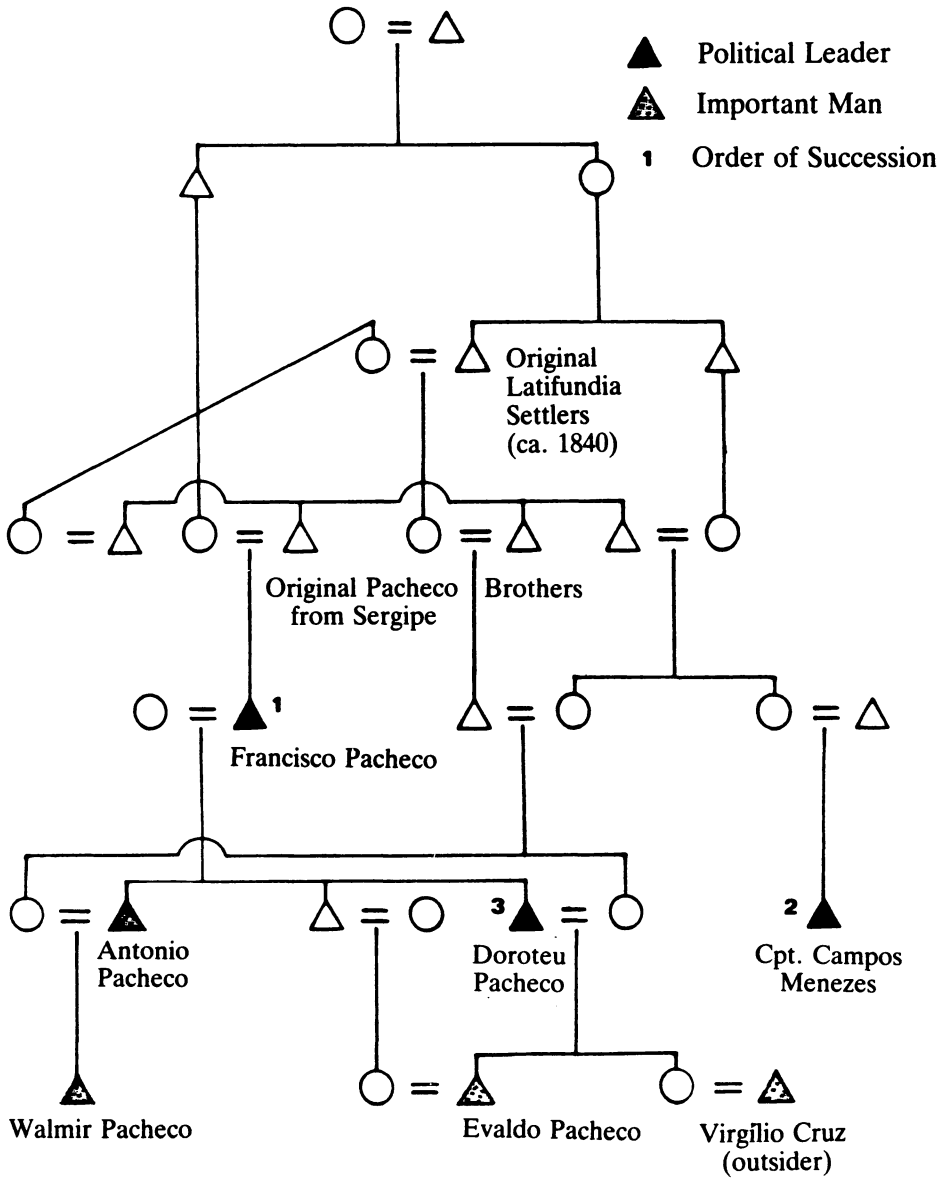


FIGURE 3. KINSHIP TIES BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE POLITICAL LEADERS OF PARNAMIRIM

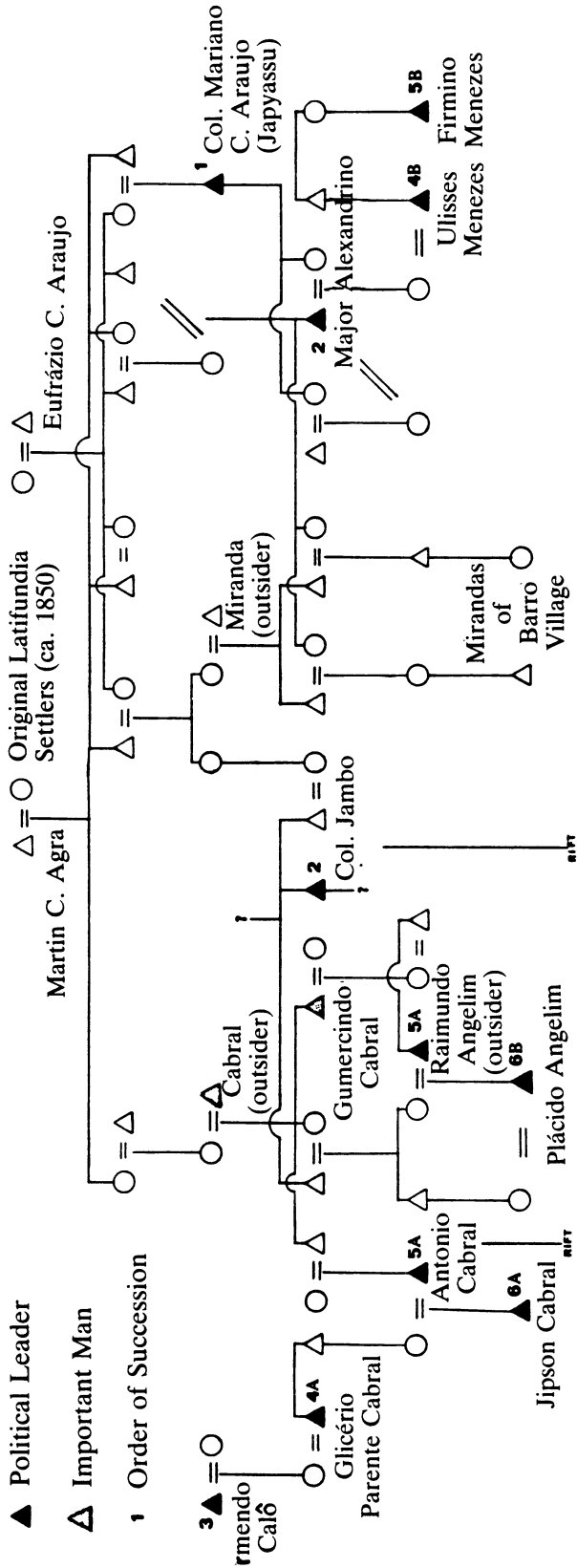
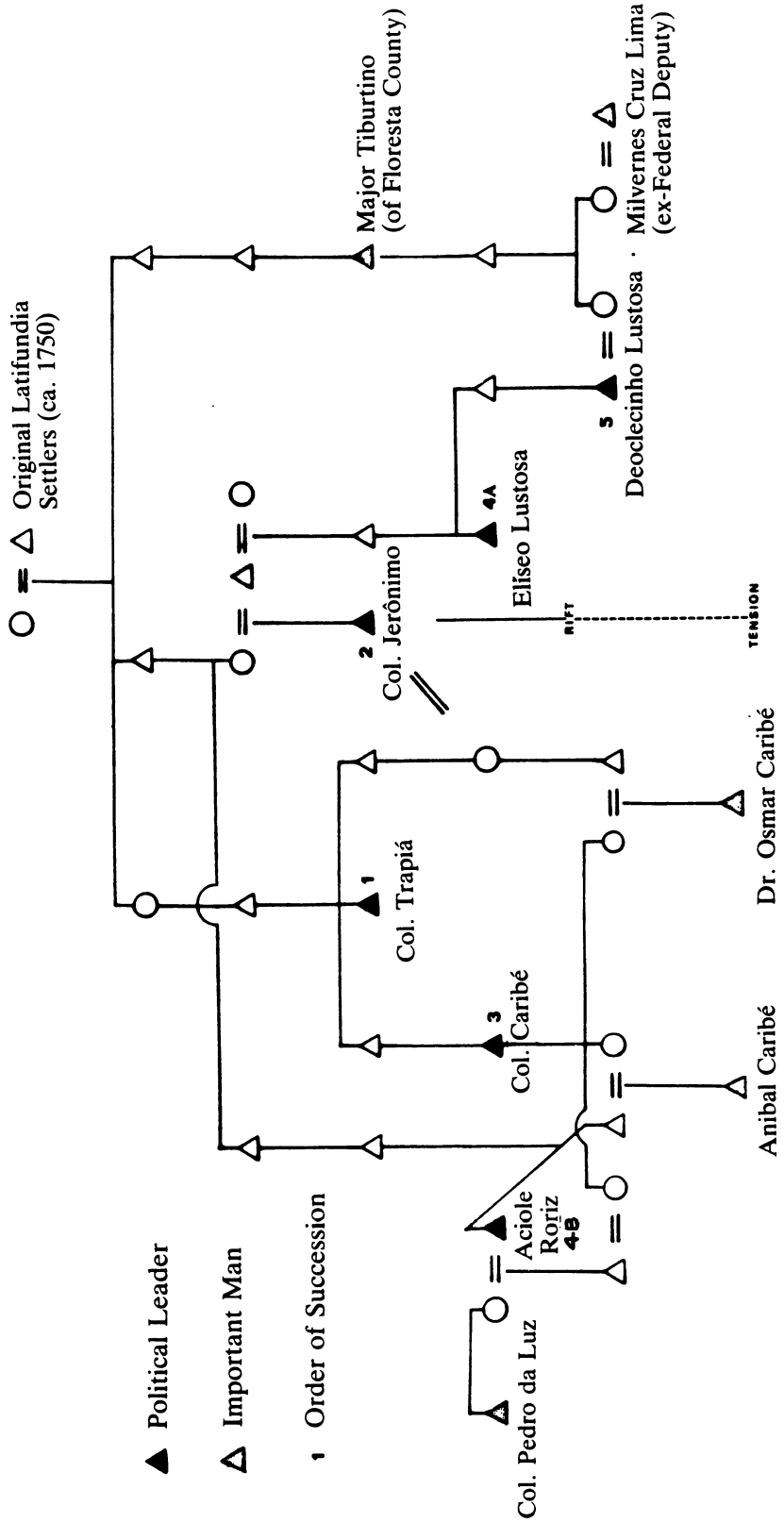


FIGURE 4. KINSHIP TIES BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE POLITICAL LEADERS OF BELEM DO SÃO FRANCISCO



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