

## Small-scale Mirror: UDN and PSD making a *Tempestade em copo d'agua*<sup>1</sup> in the village of Varzedo, Bahia, Brazil (1946)

Espelho em pequena escala: UDN e PSD fazendo *Tempestade em copo d'agua* na vila de Varzedo, Bahia (1946)

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### Resumo

As duas grandes e influentes agremiações partidárias do Brasil entre as décadas de 1940 e 1960, UDN e PSD, estigmatizaram divergências desde nível federal até rincões espalhados pelo cônico-triangular território brasileiro. Em um desses locais interioranos da Bahia, na segunda metade do decênio dos 40 do século XX, representantes daqueles partidos se envolveram num conflito iniciado por situações locais, às quais este artigo irá lançar seus olhos.

**Palavras-chave:** Política. Local. Partidos. História.

### Abstract

The two major and influential political parties in Brazil between the 1940s and 1960s, UDN and PSD, carried their disagreements from the federal level to the remote corners of the conical-triangular territory of Brazil. In one of these places in the interior of Bahia, during the second half of the 1940s, representatives of these parties became involved in a conflict that originated from local circumstances. This article aims to investigate this event.

**Keywords:** Politics; Local; Political Parties; History

### About the place: the village

In recent times, monographs, articles, and master's thesis in various fields, particularly history and geography, have developed studies on Varzedo<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The title is written according to the orthography found in the book published in 1947 by Jorge de Faria Góis and Antônio José de Araújo entitled *Tempestade em copo d'agua...A diligência do Sargento-delegado A. A. de Anastácio em Varzedo*. Tipografia CECI. Santo Antônio de Jesus e da Bahia. 1947. 59 p.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to SOUSA, Paulo Gislan Santos. *Políticas públicas de lazer em Varzedo-Ba*. Monografia de licenciatura em Educação Física. Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana-UEFS. 2008. 47 p.; ANDRADE, Anailde Assis. *Dependência da população urbana de Varzedo-BA em relação ao comércio de Santo Antônio de Jesus-BA: uma análise*

Established in 1989, this municipality belonged to the municipalities of Santo Antônio de Jesus and Castro Alves, situated in the southern region of Recôncavo in Bahia, Brazil, as indicated by research conducted on the process of its emancipation that took place between 1985 and 1989<sup>3</sup>.

Prior to becoming a municipality, Varzedo was brought into existence as ‘Vargem Grande’ in 1868 by Father Antônio Ângelo Gomes de Mendonça<sup>4</sup>. A chapel, created by the clergy, served as the embryonic nucleus, possibly where the parish church stands today. Over time, it expanded by incorporating commercial and residential cells, forming the local organism.

In its vicinity, older local organisms played a pivotal role on the formation of Vargem Grande, such as Castro Alves, Santo Antônio de Jesus and São Miguel das Matas, municipalities whose foundation date back to the 18th century<sup>5</sup>. Portions of Castro Alves and Santo Antônio de Jesus territories were officially transferred in 1989 to create the municipality of Varzedo<sup>6</sup>.

Despite sharing borders with two other municipalities, Elísio Medrado and Conceição do Almeida, the municipal fimbria with those other three

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*geográfica*. Monografia de licenciatura plena em Geografia. Universidade do Estado da Bahia-UNEB. Santo Antônio de Jesus-BA. 2007. 77 p.; JESUS, José Carlos Santos de. *Análise das transformações ocorridas na oferta de bens e serviços na cidade de Varzedo-BA após a emancipação do município*. Monografia da licenciatura plena em Geografia. Universidade do Estado da Bahia-UNEB. Santo Antônio de Jesus-BA. 2007. 60 p.; AMORIM, Jorge. “Imaginação que deu certo”: processo de emancipação de Varzedo: local, região, política e criação de um município na Bahia, Brasil (1985-1989). Dissertação de mestrado em História Contemporânea. Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, 2009. 233 p.; JESUS, Elmo Manuel de. *Emancipação municipal: uma estratégia para o desenvolvimento local? O caso de Varzedo*. Dissertação de mestrado em cultura, memória e desenvolvimento regional. Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB). Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. 2008; Amorim, Jorge (2021). “Imaginação que deu certo”: mobilização emancipatória para a criação do município de Varzedo, Bahia – Brasil (1985-1989). *Politeia - História E Sociedade*, 20(1), 257-276. <https://doi.org/10.22481/politeia.v20i1.8515>

<sup>3</sup>In 2007, the government of Bahia renamed the state’s regions as Identity Territories (Bahia State Planning Secretariat, 2007). Therefore, Recôncavo became an Identity Territory, with Varzedo as one of its municipalities. For further information about Varzedo’s emancipation, refer to: SAMPAIO, Monsenhor Gilberto Vaz. *Emancipação de Varzedo-quatro anos de luta*. Exemplar gráfica e editora. Santo Antonio de Jesus-Ba. 2007. 332 p.; AMORIM, Jorge. *Entre a Serra e a Vargem: estudos sobre a história e as culturas de Varzedo nos séculos XIX e XX*. Exemplar gráfica e editora. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. 2007. 328 p.; JESUS. Op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>LOBO, Viriato da Silva. *Geographia do Município de Santo Antonio de Jesus*. 1 Edição. Typographia d’ “O Commercio”. Santo Antonio de Jesus-BA. 1898. 20 p.; ALVES, Isaías. *Matas do Sertão de Baixo*. Reper editora. 1967; QUEIROZ, Fernando Pinto de. *A Capela do Padre Matheus*. Sagra. Feira de Santana.1995. 409 p.; AMORIM. Op. cit.

<sup>5</sup>For further information on academic studies and memorialists focusing on those localities and the region, refer to: LOBO. Op. cit.; ALVES. Op. cit.; QUEIROZ. Op. cit.; OLIVEIRA, Ana Maria Carvalho de. *Recôncavo sul: terra, homens, poder e economia*. EDUNEB. Salvador-Ba. 2003. 148 p.; VILAS BOAS, Ismar. *O Livro do Tombo: a história de São Miguel das Matas e do seu povo*. Trabalho mimeografado. Salvador-Ba. 1994. 291 p; AMORIM. op. cit.

<sup>6</sup>These territorial segments now represent the two main districts of the municipality: São Roque nos Macacos and Tabuleiro do Castro. In these districts, there are communities sustained by agricultural activities involving citrus fruits, cassava farming, cocoa cultivation, and beef cattle.

places constitute close ties between them and Varzedo in contemporary times. This form of regionalism stems from the close proximity of populations in these areas, where boundaries define both human and physical geography.

The map of Varzedo resembles a rhombus shape, with its geographic coordinates at a southern latitude of 12°58' and a western longitude of 39°23' with reference to the Greenwich meridian. It is situated on rugged topography, fertilized by the remaining rivers, streams and vargens that nourish the vestiges of the Atlantic Forest, one of Brazil's six biomes.

According to the 2022 Census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the area of the municipality of Varzedo is 221,399 km<sup>2</sup>, and its elevation is 230.07<sup>7</sup> meters above sea level. Most of the population resides in rural regions (63.1%), and a smaller percentage in urban areas (36.9%)<sup>8</sup>. Varzedo's population is 9,913 inhabitants, with a population density of 44.77 inhabitants per square kilometer<sup>9</sup>.

These geographical, demographic, and historical outlines undeniably preserve the historicity and historiography that the locality deserves and needs, and maintains the scientific objectivity of local history. This is an ocean that transcends its scale, extent, and demography, regardless of the region to which it belongs. It serves as the guardian of unusual and forgotten situations that should be brought to light.

The examination of local history involves a rigorous analysis of the village, municipality, district or sub-region with scientific objectivity, devoid of parochial hyperboles, and avoids discussions that foster mystifying stereotypes. Scientific-historiographical impartiality is a fundamental characteristic that opposes regional biases that often embrace one-sided propagandistic approaches.

Therefore, this historical-geographical portrait of the municipality of Varzedo and its regional ties serve as an introduction to the quarrel that unfolded in 1946 in the then village of Varzedo. This dispute involved local members of the National Democratic Union (União Democrática Nacional, UDN) and the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrático, PSD), addressing local and regional issues, and the political organization in Bahia

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<sup>7</sup> Source: *Monografias Municipais*. Nordeste/ Bahia VARZEDO. IBGE. 2016/2017. 31 p.

<sup>8</sup> Idem. P. 10.

<sup>9</sup> <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ba/varzedo/panorama><https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ba/varzedo/panorama>

amid the return of democracy with direct elections after the Vargas regime (1930-1945).

## Regional and local history: discussion

The Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), author of *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, classics of universal literature, summed it up splendidly: “paint your village and you will paint the whole world”. Indeed, it all begins with the place we inhabit, as it is the placenta that involves our gestation, preserving the umbilical connection between the human being and the territory through behaviors acquired from both.

The decades of the 1990s and 2000s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989) and the dissolution of the former Soviet Union (1990), posed a significant challenge for scholars in the field of humanities, especially concerning the debates on regional and local history, their definitions, and contradictions. In the current era, marked by individual identity crises, local history, *stricto sensu*, gains prominence, albeit emancipated from the regional *locus*, while maintaining the connection.

In general, it is possible to delve into local history from its own perspective without completely detaching it from the region that influenced its development. Since the early 1990s, this debate has been actively promoted not just within Brazil but also on a global scale, resonating within academic centers overseas<sup>10</sup>. There is substantial literature that leads us to select a group of academics who significantly contribute to enrich this debate.

Based on historians and geographers (Silva, 1990; Albuquerque Júnior, 2001; Neves, 2002; Santos, 1998), the definition of local endorses the concept of the region as a territory of continuous reproduction<sup>11</sup>, a combination of statement and images<sup>12</sup>, and the emergence of internal distinctions<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Studies on regional and local history conducted in Portugal took place in June 1992 at the Faculty of Arts (University of Lisbon) and were published in the compilation *Primeiras Jornadas de História Local e Regional* (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 2ª edição. Edições Colibri. Lisboa. 2004), coordinated by Álvaro Matos and Raul Rasga.

<sup>11</sup> SILVA, Marcos Antônio da. *República em migalhas: história regional e local*. Marco Zero. São Paulo. Anpuh. 1990.

<sup>12</sup> ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR, Durval Muniz. *A invenção do Nordeste e outras artes*. Editora Massangana, Recife. 2001. 340 p.

<sup>13</sup> NEVES, Erivaldo Fagundes. *História regional e local: fragmentação e recomposição da história na crise da modernidade*. Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, Feira de Santana-Ba; Arcádia, Salvador-Ba. 124 p.

The local, stemming from the regional scale, has its history shaped by human phenomena characterized by behaviors, gestures, memories, ways of thinking, socio-economic and cultural power struggles, all of which are documented in family and public archives, as well as in the imaginary of the place. Local and regional integration plays a pivotal role in fostering local research, an aspect previously identified in studies of human geography.

In *The Nature of Space*<sup>14</sup>, geographer Milton Santos (1926-2001) contributes by delving from the regional to the local using philosophical references. The author emphasizes that it is essential to have “an ontological approach – i.e., an interpretive effort from within the object”<sup>15</sup>, regarding everything that local beings have produced and are producing in order to give meaning, that is, nature, to the whole of the place in the face of the strong discourse of globalization in recent decades.

The fragment cannot exist without the whole, and vice versa. Therefore, the 21st century dawned under the globalizing discourse, with the local as a counterpoint amidst the individual’s identity crisis, the loss of work due to technological advances, relentless and sometimes unrealizable consumerism, human disposability, and physical-psychological illnesses.

All this under the magnificent and incognito internet, which was popularized in the 1990s and 2000s by symbols such as @, www, https and, later, social networks. It is the era of relationships and sharing with thousands and millions; of the isolation of the individuals who bow their heads, as if in prayer, to the device that transports them to the virtual universe by typing and touching the screen. It is the era of “collective anti-gregariousness”.

Faced with these innovations and actions by the contemporary *homo faber*, the national, the regional, and, above all, the local have been attacked by the interests of many multinationals and large national enterprises with no ties to the territory. This leads to clashes with local businesses that display old photographs of the place<sup>16</sup>, which can indicate a certain parochial streak.

### *Local history*

The nation and the state acquire concreteness through the representation of legal institutions, symbols, and the delineation of borders

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<sup>14</sup> SANTOS, Milton. *A natureza do espaço: técnica e tempo, razão e emoção*. 3ª ed. HUCITEC. São Paulo. 1999. 308 p.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. SANTOS. Op. cit. p. 16

<sup>16</sup> This may be common in supermarkets founded in cities.

and limits with countries and states. However, it is at the municipal level where the political-administrative, social, economic, and cultural reality becomes visible on a daily basis through the actions of its inhabitants, both in the urban and in the rural areas. At the municipal level, the historical journey was not, and is not, made in isolation, detached from the regional scale. Local history must remain integrated with regional history, without losing the exceptionality of the place's idiosyncrasies.

For this argumentation to move beyond a superficial analysis in the depths of the local, often in unimaginable places, a variety of documents can be found, which for the historian nourish research of the *topos*. These documents range from land and real estate deeds, photographs, correspondences (letters, telegrams, notes), oral testimonies, pamphlets, poems, anthems, flags, official documents, and even handcrafted works by anonymous or not-so-anonymous artists.

These records can be obtained from different sources: public sectors such as the city council, town hall, municipal archives, schools, and municipal departments; as well as private spheres, such as suitcases, under mattresses, inside wardrobes, chests, cupboards, and shelves of unusual people and their homes.

The significance of these and many other treasures justifies an interdisciplinary approach aligned with critical geography, focusing on the study of the local, with particular reference to Milton Santos and his *The Nature of Space*. This takes into account the extensive literature in that scientific field, which corresponds to an interpretative deepening from *within*<sup>17</sup>, in other words, from the place which, according to the geographer from Bahia, is the world<sup>18</sup>.

In line with the chorographic perspective, we do not disregard the necessity of the demonyms and toponymy, components of local history as they bring forth the essence of people and urban and rural geographies. For places that have only recently merged and been created, the concept of autochthony is relatively new. The autochthonous is understood here as someone who is native to the place, who is born there, living in the locality, coexisting within it.

Regarding toponyms, names of places, public buildings, landforms, flora, and fauna, they are given at specific moments – in the case of places

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. SANTOS. Idem. Idem.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. SANTOS. Idem. P. 252.

and buildings – or in time immemorial – in this case, constituting the local chorography. Denominations were not brought by flying saucers, which motivates researchers to search for their genesis.

Therefore, local history can be analyzed from an objective historiographical point of view, free from parochialism. It is important to add the value of memorialist records that use written documentation to record linear facts that they have come across. The historian must be careful to keep records free of biased narratives in order to produce local historiography.

### PSD vs. UDN at scale: convergences and rivalries

Two seminal studies in Brazilian political science on the creation of the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrático, PSD) and the National Democratic Union (União Democrática Nacional, UDN) are those by Maria Victória de Mesquita Benevides, *A UDN e o udenismo* (The UDN and udenism); and by Lucia Hippolito, *De raposas e reformistas: o PSD e a experiência democrática brasileira (1945-1964)* (Foxes and reformers: the PSD and the Brazilian democratic experience (1945-1964)). Both parties played leading roles in specific antagonisms in Brazilian politics during the 1940s and 1960s.

On a state level, the political-party scenario involving PSD and UDN in Bahia in the second half of the 1940s highlighted the pivotal roles of their major players, while also observing the actions of regional leaders from both parties in Santo Antônio de Jesus, who were sometimes allies and sometimes adversaries.

The political-electoral scene in Bahia between 1945 and 1947 was characterized by a pacifying dichotomy between PSD and UDN. This was endorsed by the 430,623 voters who elected, on December 2, 1945, for the federal senate, Professor Aloísio de Carvalho Filho (UDN) and General Renato Onofre Pinto Aleixo (PSD). The former, represented the intelligentsia in Bahia, while the latter, a military figure, had as his political references his period as intervenor in the state of Bahia (1942-1945)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. TAVARES, Luís Henrique Dias. *História da Bahia*. 10ª ed. EDUFBA, Salvador-Ba; Editora da UNESP, São Paulo-SP. 2001. P. 443; DANTAS NETO, Paulo Fábio. “Emergência do juracisismo e restauração autonomista”. In: *Tradição, autocracia e carisma: a política de Antônio Carlos Magalhães na modernização da Bahia. (1954-1974)*. Editora UFMG, Belo Horizonte-MG; IUPERJ- Rio de Janeiro-RJ. 2006. Pp. 73-79; SILVA, Paulo Santos. “Os ‘Autonomistas’ e a organização político-partidária”. In: *Âncoras de tradição: luta política, intelectuais e construção do discurso histórico na Bahia (1930-1949)*. EDUFBA. Salvador-Ba. 2011. Pp. 51-66.

On January 19, 1947, Otávio Mangabeira won the elections for the government of Bahia (1947-1951). Similarly to what happened to other states, this election took place in accordance with Article 11 of the Transitional Constitutional Provisions Act that initiated a period of redemocratization. Mangabeira, a former exile under the Vargas dictatorship, was a traditional leader in Bahia and the national president of the UDN. He was supported by PSD, the opposing party, after a political maneuver, carried out by leaders of PSD, Republican Party (Partido Republicano, PR), Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista Brasileiro, PCB), and Popular Representation Party (Partido de Representação Popular, PRP) also integrated the coalition in support of Mangabeira<sup>20</sup>.

At the municipal level, the “pacifying dichotomy” between state-level players of UDN and PSD was not replicated in Santo Antônio de Jesus, where local-regional forces were vying for municipal power. Two of these forces came from traditional political families in Santo Antônio de Jesus and a third we would call a political outsider, following recent terminology. In what follows a brief overview of their prosopography is presented.

The first one was Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo. With established family roots in the region since the first half of the 19th century and associated to slaveholding, to rural and commercial properties, and with an academic background, Gorgônio, who graduated in medicine at the University of Bahia, had grandfathers, uncles, and a father involved in municipal government from the last quarter of the 19th century until his own term as mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus (1938-1945), affiliated with PSD and aligned with Getúlio Vargas. In 1947, he was elected state deputy by the same party for the constitutional legislative period (1947-1951). During the administration of Antônio Balbino (1955-1959) he was the State Secretary of Health<sup>21</sup>.

The second individual was Humberto Guedes de Araújo; he belonged to a family of long-standing politicians, slave owners, landowners, and holders

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<sup>20</sup> The political move by the PSD to support Otávio Mangabeira was marked by public speeches delivered by Senator Pinto Aleixo and Federal Deputy Tarcilo Vieira de Melo. These two “veterans” from the PSD were willing to support either of the UDN candidates, Otávio Mangabeira or Juracy Magalhães, the former being the former Bahia intervenor (1931-1935) and constitutional governor (1935-1937) until the Estado Novo coup (November 10, 1937). Both were longstanding adversaries: Otávio represented “Bahian autonomism”, while Juracy, appointed by Vargas, was considered “an outsider in Bahia”. Mangabeira won with 211,121 votes against PTB candidate Antônio Garcia de Medeiros Neto, who received 92,629 votes. For further details regarding these matters involving the 1947 gubernatorial election, refer to TAVARES [pp. 453-456], DANTAS NETO [pp. 73-79] e Silva [pp. 51-66].

<sup>21</sup> Cf. OLIVEIRA. Op. cit.; QUEIROZ. Op. cit.; VALADÃO, Hélio. *Santo Antônio de Jesus, sua gente e suas origens*. Exemplar gráfica e editora. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. 2005.



of bachelor's degrees. His family's properties were spread across the current and adjacent municipalities of Santo Antônio de Jesus, Conceição do Almeida and Maragogipe, in the Recôncavo region. Humberto, a law graduate from the University of Bahia and a member of UDN since its foundation in the state, had a grandfather, uncle, and brother who held positions in the imperial legislature, republican legislature, and municipal executive, respectively<sup>22</sup>. Aligned with the political group of Juracy Magalhães and with federal representative Manoel Novais (PR), Humberto Guedes was elected state representative four times, two of them for the PR (1955-1959/ 1963-1967) and two of them for the National Renewal Alliance (Aliança Renovadora Nacional, ARENA) (1967-1970/ 1974-1975)<sup>23</sup>.

The differences between these two players stemmed from earlier times, preserved by internal issues and the dynamics of local power. The rivalry went beyond the political arena to delve into deeper personal and, one might even say, even picturesque matters. It got to the point where Humberto Guedes de Araújo went to the notary's office to remove his surname "Araújo". He aimed to eliminate any doubts regarding a possible consanguinity with his archenemy, Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo<sup>24</sup>.

Between the two, both from the regional elite, emerged Antônio Fraga, referred to here as an outsider due to his early ties to the business world and lack of involvement in politics. He succeeded his father, Francisco Fraga, in managing their tobacco warehouse. He was invited to enter politics by the then mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus, Gorgônio, who supported his candidacy for mayor of his hometown in 1946, which he won. Elected by Gorgônio's PSD, Antônio Fraga gained a certain popularity by executing visible public projects, distancing himself from his political mentor, and founding the PR in Santo Antônio de Jesus<sup>25</sup>. Who approached Fraga amid that disagreement? Humberto Guedes, obviously.

Antônio Fraga extended his influence beyond his first mentor, Gorgônio, and his then ally, Humberto. He connected with the poorest social classes both in the municipal seat of Santo Antônio de Jesus and in its largest district, Varzedo. It can be stated that he recognized the moment to push himself forward in municipal politics to the extent of promoting his children and

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<sup>22</sup> Ildefonso José de Araújo (provincial deputy and state senator), Flávio Guedes de Araújo (general deputy), and Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo (intendant and mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. VALADÃO. Op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. VALADÃO. Idem. Pp. 79-80.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. VALADÃO. Ibidem. Pp. 81-85.

relatives to positions in the municipal legislature and executive. *Fraguism* became a strong political movement between 1947 and 1962<sup>26</sup>.

These were the state and municipal scenarios. However, in Varzedo, who were the players connected to the political-party poles during that period? What conflict between them escalated to the involvement of the police and the judiciary, leading to the popular saying that inspired the metaphorical title of the book *Tempestade em copo d'agua...* (Storm in a Teacup...)?

### PSD vs. UDN in Varzedo: the book of the lawyer and the judge

It is important to mention the moments dedicated to the educational endeavor, such as the Cultural Week held on September 27, 28 and 29, 2001 in the municipality of Varzedo. This initiative, which included exhibitions and projects created by educators and students from preschool, elementary, and high school in the local public school system, organized in the previous months, revealed a diverse array of documents preserved by local families. One example is the brochure used as the basis for this study.

Through research conducted in 2001 for the organization of the Cultural Week, we had access to a small book that recounts a dispute involving local political leaders in 1946. This conflict was detailed in 1947 by Jorge Faria de Góis and Antônio José de Araújo, respectively a judge and a lawyer. The brochure entitled *Tempestade em copo d'agua...: a diligência do sargento delegado A. A. de Anastácio em Varzêdo* (Storm in a teacup...: the diligence of Sergeant Commissioner A. A. de Anastácio in Varzêdo) was published by Ceci printing house in Santo Antônio de Jesus and examines the entire episode.

The political and sociological viewpoint of both legal professionals caught our attention as they incorporated references from the penal code of the time. However, they were clinical in their analysis of politics and local human actions. Making use of their legal knowledge, Judge Jorge Faria and defense attorney Antônio José, through their writings, expanded the range of perspectives for those interested, as we were, in the case.

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<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Antônio Magalhães Fraga served as the mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus twice (1947-1951/1955-1959), as state deputy (1951-1955), and federal deputy (1959-1962), all positions held within the PR party and aligned with federal deputy Manoel Novais, a prominent figure within this political party. During those years, Fraga wielded his political influence to secure the mayoral positions for Justiniano Rocha Galvão (1951-1955) and Antônio Olavo Galvão (1959-1962). Simultaneously, his two sons, José Fraga and Haroldo Fraga, held seats as aldermen, and Humberto Guedes (1955-1959) served as a state deputy. All individuals were affiliated with the PR party, led at the state level by federal deputy Manoel Novais.

### What case was that?

*Grosso modo*, the situation entailed the prosecution of UDN leaders in the village of Varzedo by a commissioner holding the rank of a sergeant. This happened after PSD members filed a complaint against one of the leaders who complained that the Mayor Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo (1938-1945), did not maintain properly the Praça do Comércio (where the church was located, now known as Praça 08 de Dezembro). During this period, Varzedo was a district of Santo Antônio de Jesus. Despite not being the mayor anymore, Gorgônio maintained his influence over leaders in that area, as he had been replaced by Antônio Veiga Argôlo, who was serving as an interim mayor (1945-1946).

Who were the disputing individuals who played a leading role in that event?

The UDN and the PSD had competing members who were related by blood in Varzedo, a town with unpaved streets, massive streetlamps, and residences that were next to one another. Albertino de Almeida Cabral and Manoel de Almeida Cabral, affiliated with the UDN, were brothers. Another member of the UDN, Claudemiro Pereira de Almeida, was related both by blood and affinity to the two members of the PSD involved in this situation: Enéas Cardoso de Almeida and Deraldo Demóstenes da Silva, whose distant cousin was Claudemiro's wife. Albertino de Almeida Costa, a UDN member, owned a grocery store and a tobacco warehouse, while the merchant José Franco do Amaral was associated with UDN members.

All of them had properties in the village, including small and large farms in the neighboring areas. There were family ties between some of them and ancestors of others who had previously been involved in local politics. Among the UDN members, none of those mentioned had a direct political ancestor; but José Franco do Amaral had connections to the family of José Augusto de Oliveira, who served as a municipal councilor between 1928-1931 when Varzedo was called village of Vargem Grande<sup>27</sup>.

For the PSD, however, Enéas and Deraldo had a long-standing political lineage, and they shared common relatives. The uncle of the former, Marciano Pereira de Almeida, was married to an aunt of the latter, Maria Eufrosina da Silva. Enéas Cardoso's father, Joviniano Pereira de Almeida, not only owned properties in the area but also served as the district administrator (1928-1931).

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<sup>27</sup> On the history of Varzedo since it was the village of Vargem Grande, see AMORIM. *Entre a Serra e a Vargem*.

Deraldo Demósthene had his father, Francisco Felix da Silva, appointed justice of the peace in 1907<sup>28</sup>.

For a long time, this polarization defined the political forces in that region, as political groups relied on their ties with the influential leaders who held control over Santo Antônio de Jesus politics during electoral periods. The geographic isolation of Varzedo contributed to the concentration of local power in the hands of representatives from the landowning families. These families concentrated economic resources that gave them an advantage over the impoverished majority. It was a time when these people asked for their blessing<sup>29</sup>.

Furthermore, due to the means of transportation to the seat of Santo Antônio de Jesus and other places at the time, which involved the use of horses or the railway<sup>30</sup>, medical assistance for the villagers' health occurred sporadically, often in response to urgent cases.

Since Varzedo was a village of Santo Antônio de Jesus, known as Vargem Grande, as mentioned by the memoirist Eduardo de Souza Almeida (2006) in his *Memórias de um Pária* (Memoirs of a Pariah), alternative therapeutic practices were often used in the face of this shortage. The author recalls having to take his daughter Maria Joselita, born in 1915 and suffering from “dangerous malnutrition”<sup>31</sup>, from the municipal seat where he and his family lived, to the village to seek out the homeopath Antonio Pereira de Almeida, who was “his acquaintance and friend” (Alme, 2006), after taking her to doctors.

The rare medical presence in the region fostered a type of power in which medical activities translated into political results<sup>32</sup>. Some doctors who

<sup>28</sup> Source: deeds of land purchase and sale, along with correspondences lent by Deraldo Da Silva Almeida in 2002.

<sup>29</sup> In the past, it was a common practice for individuals of lower social status to ask for blessings from older individuals, particularly those who held significant economic influence in the community. This tradition persisted until recent times.

<sup>30</sup> The railway that passed through Varzedo was known as Estrada de Ferro de Nazaré (Nazaré Railway), Tram-Road, which construction began in 1871, connecting Nazaré to Jequié. The Vargem Grande station (Varzedo) was opened on February 2, 1892. To explore further details about the Nazaré Railway and its railway lines in the Recôncavo region, see OLIVEIRA, Alberto de Sá. *Pequena história da Estrada de Ferro de Nazaré*. Gráfica Central Ltda. Salvador-Ba. 1962; SANTOS, Sidney dos. *Linhas férreas, avanços e desenvolvimento: os impactos na cidade de Varzedo (1892-1960)*. Monografia (TCC) para conclusão do curso de licenciatura em História. Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB), Campus V. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. ALMEIDA, Eduardo de Souza. *Memórias de um pária*. Adipro. Salvador, maio de 2006. P. 88.

<sup>32</sup> This becomes evident when listing the intendants and mayors who served in Santo Antônio de Jesus since its elevation to the status of a municipality during the republic period in 1892. Between 1892 and 2012, with few gaps, the municipal executive was led by 10 physicians. Some were offspring of privileged families with familial connections, while others born elsewhere, having obtained diplomas from the former

attended to both the seat of the municipality and at Vargem Grande held public positions. The memoirist Hélio Valadão, in *Santo Antônio de Jesus, sua gente e suas origens* (Santo Antônio de Jesus, its people and its origins) (2005), mentions an occasion when the doctor Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo “went on horseback to attend to a patient in Vargem Grande”<sup>33</sup>. It is important to highlight that he held the position of intendant (1930-1935) and elected mayor (1935-1937).

Shortly before that, Rosalvo Fonseca held the position of intendant in Santo Antônio de Jesus (1925-1928/1929-1930). However, his rise to the position of mayor came through his work as a doctor for the municipality, attending “in his office or at home”, as Valadão (2005) recalls<sup>34</sup>. Endorsing this by recalling memories (Becker, 2006) scarcely found in written documents (Joutard, 2000), in 2002, Iraildes Santos Silva orally disclosed to us, in general terms, “that doctor Rosalvo Fonseca became involved in Santo Antônio de Jesus’ politics”<sup>35</sup>.

It is worth noting, conversely, that none of the members of the UDN and PSD held a college degree. This reveals that less importance was given to formal education and more to the continuity in managing family properties, which included real estate, commerce, and farms. These properties were inherited by descendants and usually expanded through parental heirs or through marriages with members of other families. However, when it came to politics, familial and friendship ties could be strained because “never sail

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University of Bahia (currently the Federal University of Bahia) and the Bahian School of Medicine and Public Health, the former two are public institutions, and the latter is a private one. Chronologically, these are the intendants/mayors: Eduardo Augusto da Silva (1892-1893), Francisco Félix de Barros e Almeida (1897-1903/1912-1916), Gorgônio José de Araújo (1916-1920), Rosalvo de Almeida Fonseca (1925-1928/1929-1930), Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo (1930-1935/1935-1938); Gorgônio Almeida Araújo (1938-1945), Ursicino Pinto de Queiroz (1977-1982), Renato Maximiliano Gordilho Machado (1983-1988/1993-1996), Álvaro Veloso Bessa (1997-2000/2001-2004), Euvaldo de Almeida Rosa (2005-2008/2009-2012).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. VALADÃO. Op. cit. P. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. VALADÃO. Idem. p. 64. On studies by local memorialists from Santo Antônio de Jesus, refer to ALMEIDA. Op. cit.; VALADÃO. Op. cit. Memorialists such as Eduardo Almeida and Hélio Valadão in the regional and local history of Santo Antônio de Jesus reinforce the contribution of these documents which, despite their preferential views, help to decipher moments that often remain latent.

<sup>35</sup> The importance of oral tradition and memory as historical records is affirmed by the interview conducted with Iraildes Santos Silva (1909-2005), in March 30, 2002, in Varzedo. To delve deeper into oral history, see: BECKER, Jean-Jacques. “O *handicap do a posteriori*”. In: AMADO, Janaína e FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes. *Usos & abusos da história oral*. 8ª edição. Editora FGV. Rio de Janeiro. 2006. Pp. 27-31. P. 28; JOUTARD, Philippe. “Desafios à história oral do século XXI”. In: FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes (org.). *História oral: desafios para o século XXI*. Editora Fiocruz/ Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/ CPDOC-Fundação Getúlio Vargas. Rio de Janeiro. 2000. Pp. 31-45. Pp. 33-34.

in two boats” was not a common strategy, and in the book *Tempestade em copo d'agua...* this became evident: everyone should stay in their own boat.

The book that tells in detail the event was written by criminal judge Jorge de Faria Góis<sup>36</sup> in the following months and was completed by the end of 1946. In 2001, we obtained a copy of this material from a family member who had an original copy, a gift given to her husband's father<sup>37</sup> on May 8, 1947, by the Sergeant Commissioner Antonio Alves de Anastácio. The gift was given to Deraldo Demosthenes da Silva, a prominent figure in the PSD in the village of Varzedo and an ally of the former mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus, Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo, by whom the sergeant commissioner had been appointed.

The book inscription indicates a certain level of proximity between the sergeant commissioner and the PSD member, who owned lands and properties in Varzedo. Let us examine what could be seen as proximity between them: “To my friend Deraldo D. da Silva, best regards from your friend AntonioAlvesAnastacio [sic]. On VIII-V-1947”.

The book is organized into two parts. The first is entitled EM DEFESA (IN DEFENSE), written by the lawyer of Antonio Alves, who shares the same first name, Antonio José de Araújo. The second, titled A SENTENÇA (THE SENTENCE), is signed by Judge Jorge de Faria, whose decision was in favor of the military. Based on the civil, penal, and criminal procedural codes of that time, both the judge and the defense lawyer substantiate their arguments in favor of the sergeant commissioner. They enrich the indictment with political issues of the village at that time. But they also bring the politics of Santo Antônio de Jesus, marked by the pure and passionate disagreement between Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo and Humberto Guedes, who was the defense attorney for the accused UDN members, a passionate polarity that led to a political rift<sup>38</sup>.

The narratives presented across the 59 pages show one of the several regions in Brazil where disputes for power between the UDN and PSD unfolded in a peculiar and localized manner. Not to mention the anti-Getúlio Vargas

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<sup>36</sup>Jorge de Faria Góis was involved in the trial and co-authored *Tempestade em copo d'água...* In 1958, he served as judge in the criminal court in Feira de Santana. (Source: [www.feiradesantana.ba.gov.br](http://www.feiradesantana.ba.gov.br)).

<sup>37</sup>The member is Ana Lúcia dos Santos Almeida, wife of Deraldo da Silva Almeida, son of Deraldo Demosthenes da Silva. My sincere thanks to both of them.

<sup>38</sup>Until 1945, Antônio Magalhães Fraga, as we pointed out, was an ally of Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo. Afterward, a rift emerged between them, leading Fraga to align with Humberto Guedes to establish the Republican Party (PR) in Santo Antônio de Jesus. This party's prominent figure in Bahia was federal deputy Manoel Novais. The rift between these political forces had long-lasting political consequences, giving rise to two factions nicknamed *Jacu* and *Beija-flor*. Cf. VALADÃO. Op. cit. 153 p.

and pro-Getúlio Vargas perspective that these respective parties advocated at a higher level. Just as the studies of Maria Victoria Benevides and Lucia Hippolito, the book *Tempestade em copo d'agua...* allows an investigation into how political practices emerge and their driving forces.

### UDN members vs. PSD members in the village of Varzedo: families and personalism

In the last five years of 1940, the government of President General Eurico Gaspar Dutra began. In Bahia, of João Vicente Bulcão Viana (from October 29, 1945 to February 1, 1946), Guilherme Marback (from February 1, 1946 to June 6, 1946) and Cândido Caldas (from June 6, 1946 to April 10, 1947), all from the PSD, took office. In Santo Antônio de Jesus, the municipal administration of Antônio Veiga Argolo ended, succeeded by Antônio Fraga, who had affiliations with Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo and the PSD until then. Fraga later dissociated himself from Gorgônio, he left the PSD and initiated a local chapter of the Republican Party (Partido Republicano, PR). Meanwhile, at the local level, Humberto Guedes joined and sustained, his party's alliance with Juracy Magalhães' UDN<sup>39</sup>.

In Varzedo, a small place with around 422 inhabitants<sup>40</sup>, a series of events unfolded amidst the political gossip between two groups that were more than adversaries, but personal enemies, in which the family core (UDN) aimed to assert dominance over personalist cells (PSD). From the village, both were connected to two political forces located approximately three leagues<sup>41</sup> away during the 1940s: one represented by the Guedes de Araújo (UDN/PR) and the other by Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo (PSD).

They descend from political lineages that originated in the monarchical era. The Guedes de Araújo lineage traces back to Ildefonso José de Araújo, a founding member of the National Party (Partido Nacional, PN) in Bahia<sup>42</sup>, who served as a provincial deputy and state senator (1878-1885 and 1893-1894, respectively)<sup>43</sup>, representing the municipalities of Tapera, Maragogipe, and

<sup>39</sup> Cf. DANTAS NETO. Op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> Data from 1950. Source: Revista A BAHIA DE HOJE, v. 1, 3ª ed. 146 p.

<sup>41</sup> Using this measurement, which was quite common at that time. The distance between Varzedo and Santo Antônio de Jesus is approximately 18 kilometers.

<sup>42</sup> SAMPAIO, Consuelo Novais. *Os partidos políticos da Bahia na Primeira República: uma política de acomodação*. Editora da Universidade do Estado da Bahia. Salvador-Ba. 1998. 258 p. Pp. 61-62.

<sup>43</sup> Source: cpdoc.fgv.br



Afonso Pena<sup>44</sup>. Gorgônio's political ancestry can be traced back to the leaders of the Liberal Party (Partido Liberal) and the Conservative Party (Partido Conservador) of Santo Antônio de Jesus: Manoel José da Paixão Araújo and Félix Gaspar de Araújo e Almeida.

These rivalries, although of a personal and family nature, had repercussions that reached into family circles in Varzedo at the beginning of the 20th century, back when it was still known as Vargem Grande. While the Oliveira and Jesus families were connected through commercial partnerships, marriages, and socio-political representations (such as justices of the peace), the Silva and Almeida families shared familial ties<sup>45</sup>.

As a municipal councillor (alderman) for Vargem Grande in the Santo Antônio de Jesus city council from 1928 to 1931, the businessman known as "Colonel" José Augusto de Oliveira, who signed his surname with an apostrophe as d'Oliveira, was the brother-in-law of Manoel Francisco de Jesus, who served as alderman for Varzedo in Santo Antônio de Jesus between the 1940s and 1950s. Francisco Félix da Silva served as a justice of the peace in Vargem Grande in 1907, while Joviniano Pereira de Almeida held the position of district administrator of the village from 1928 to 1931. Francisco Félix's sister and Joviniano's brother were married<sup>46</sup>.

Political affiliations of members of the UDN and PSD in 1946 resulted from these family connections. Although UDN members were less closely related than PSD members, it is worth noting that a UDN member married the cousin of a PSD member<sup>47</sup>. In other words, the conflict was caused mainly by

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<sup>44</sup> Tapera, now known as Santa Terezinha, and Afonso Pena, currently known as Conceição do Almeida.

<sup>45</sup> The research containing this information was conducted at the former Civil Registry and Notary Office of Varzedo, from family records, and narrated by contemporaries from that time. On the Oliveira and Jesus side, José Augusto de Oliveira and Manoel Francisco de Jesus, closely associated with the UDN members, were related by marriage. Meanwhile, on the Silva and Almeida side, Deraldo Demóstenes da Silva and Enéas Cardoso de Almeida shared common cousins and uncles.

<sup>46</sup> From the private archive of Deraldo da Silva Almeida's: land and property deeds. Regarding the term "colonel" attributed to José Augusto de Oliveira, he held this title not as a military rank or through noble concession, but due to the political leadership and economic power he wielded in the locality. It was common, as in other parts of Brazil, to use the term "colonel" to refer to a man with local authority and economic capital (such as the possession of land and businesses). Even post-1989, in Varzedo, some individuals nicknamed a now-deceased farmer, who lived in the city and belonged to a traditional family, "colonel". Although this was somewhat satirical and light-hearted, the socio-psychological view preserved that traditional title originating from imperial Brazil period.

<sup>47</sup> This refers to the couple Claudemiro Pereira de Almeida and Miraltina da Silva Almeida. He was a UDN member and one of those summoned; she was a cousin of a local PSD leader, Deraldo Demosthenes da Silva, mentioned in the episode.



politicking, individual passion, and local power interests. Even beyond blood ties, political passion exceeded limits.

In this scenario, the disagreement between supporters of UDN and PSD from the then village of Varzedo reached its peak. On May 29, 1946, coincidentally the date of Santo Antônio de Jesus' emancipation<sup>48</sup>, Sergeant Commissioner Anastácio went to the location with two other officers and there, "taking advantage of his position", served the summons to "citizens Albertino Costa, Claudemiro de Almeida, Albertino Cabral, Manoel Cabral, and José Franco do Amaral"<sup>49</sup>.

Sergeant commissioner's action was reported as "abuse of power" by the defense of the aforementioned citizens, who were represented by lawyer Humberto Guedes. However, Mr. Anastácio's lawyer, Antonio José de Araújo, stated that his client's visit to the village was intended to avoid "reprisals that would inevitably occur"<sup>50</sup> by "the Mayor's friends"<sup>51</sup> against UDN's opponents. These adversaries engaged in "passionate political demonstrations"<sup>52</sup> towards Mayor Gorgônio, upsetting his allies and revealing individual and political passion in its purest form on both sides.

What did Gorgônio's allies do? They brought those reports to the attention of the former head of the local executive about the information, followed by the story that "one of them, Albertino Costa", criticized the former administrator for "not taking care of the locality (...) nor cleaning up the land in the square where the (...) chapel is located"<sup>53</sup>.

The defense described the PSD supporters in the village as "cordial, peaceful, and compliant"<sup>54</sup>, yet willing to fight "whenever the nation requires their blood and sacrifice"<sup>55</sup>. The explicit idea is that of pronounced bipolarity accentuated by manichaeism, because while the members of PSD were celebrated as heroes, the UDN members were portrayed as "pettifoggers and

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<sup>48</sup> Santo Antônio de Jesus was granted municipal autonomy on May 29, 1880, by Provincial Law No. 3952.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. ARAÚJO, Antônio José de. *Tempestade em copo d'agua...* Tipografia CECI. Santo Antônio de Jesus. 1947. P. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. ARAÚJO. Op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Idem. Idem. Idem.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Ibidem. Ibidem. Ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Ib. Ib. Ib.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ib. Ib. Ib.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Ib. Ib. Ib.

insipid”<sup>56</sup>, in other words, they were vilified. Personal and group conflicts involved the search for village leadership.

As a result of criticisms against Mayor Gorgônio, Commissioner Antônio Anastácio removed the then sub-commissioner Silvino José dos Santos and replaced him with “Mr. Deraldo Demosthenes da Silva, 1st substitute sub-commissioner”<sup>57</sup>. He also summoned “Mr. Albertino de Almeida Costa, Mr. Claudemiro Pereira de Almeida, Mr. Albertino de Almeida Cabral, Mr. Manoel de Almeida Cabral, and Mr. José Franco Amaral, citizens who support the National Democratic Union party politically in the locality”<sup>58</sup>.

The local political rivalry between those gentlemen and the first substitute sub-commissioner is expressed initially, when they read that the commissioner, Anastácio, said that “Deraldo had taken the position, and they needed to respect the authority”, or the consequence of their recalcitrance would be that “the new sub-commissioner could even arrest them”<sup>59</sup>, and the prosecution witnesses reported “c) that there was no reason for the diligence”, other than that it was “carried out with premeditated political purposes”<sup>60</sup>.

Secondly, regarding the heightened local bipolarity, the account given by the former Mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus confirmed the political motivation of the sergeant commissioner’s actions. The commissioner responded, “among other residents of Varzêdo”, to complaints “about the performance of the former local sub-commissioner” made by “Mr. Enéas Cardoso and Mr. Deraldo Silva, who were his colleagues”<sup>61</sup>. What was the result? Those who felt humiliated by the commissioner’s conduct “granted power of attorney to LL.B. Guedes, so that he could file a lawsuit against the commissioner, [sic] for abuse of power”<sup>62</sup>.

There was, for an unknown reason, hostility between Albertino de Almeida Cabral and Deraldo Demósthene da Silva. This led Albertino to report that one of the reasons for the summons “in the presence of Mr. Deraldo Silva”<sup>63</sup> was to humiliate him in front of the newly appointed sub-

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. *ib. ib. ib.*

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *ib. p. 40.*

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *ib. Idem*

<sup>59</sup> *Apud* a depoimentos de fls. 27 e de fls. 31 das testemunhas presenciais. In: *ib. Ibidem.*

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *ib. P. 42.*

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *ib. P. 47.*

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *ib. P. 50.*

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *ib. P. 53.*

commissioner, even though the accusing witnesses had said that “Sergeant Anastácio was unaware of this enmity”<sup>64</sup> between Albertino and Deraldo. To sum up, these members and their leaders aimed for the domination of the village both through politics and the police force.

### “Verdict” on local politics

Beyond the stereotypical *discourse* regarding Northeastern politics<sup>65</sup>, the verdict of the trial concerning the diligence of Sergeant Commissioner Antônio Alves de Anastácio, which occurred on May 29, 1946, a Wednesday in autumn, was, according to the sentence by then Judge Jorge de Faria Góis, “for the dismissal of the accusation and the acquittal of the accused”<sup>66</sup>, favoring the military officer. We can examine some of our “verdicts” here in light of history, anthropology, and political science.

Regardless of legal issues and elaborate indictments, the situation observed in the village of Varzedo was the paroxysm of the political-personal rivalry entrenched among local families and personalisms at municipal level. This situation was far removed from the concern for public affairs. In other words, the conflicts between the Cabral and Silva families, involving their relatives, and the leaders of Santo Antônio de Jesus, Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo (PSD) and Humberto Guedes (UDN/PR)<sup>67</sup>, were characterized by the familial “encompassment” of public affairs<sup>68</sup> and the control of local order.

In addition to the family aspect, another driving force behind the actions of those involved was the legitimization of state authority<sup>69</sup>, even during the post-Vargas era (1930-1945) and during the initial steps of redemocratization (1945-1964). This was a result of the dominant tutelary principle ingrained

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Ib.* P. 54.

<sup>65</sup> ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR. *Op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> Cf. ARAÚJO and FRÓIS. *Op. cit.* P. 58.

<sup>67</sup> Gorgônio served as the mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus – abbreviated in social media and advertisements as SAJ – (1938-1946, starting in 1945 in the PSD), as state deputy (1947-1950, PSD), and as the head of the state Health Department during Balbino’s term (1955-1958) in the government of Bahia, affiliated with the PSD. Humberto Guedes was a state deputy (1955-1958, PR / 1963-1967, PR/ARENA / 1967-1970, ARENA / 1974-1975, ARENA). Source: [www.alba.ba.gov.br](http://www.alba.ba.gov.br).

<sup>68</sup> DAMATTA, Roberto. *A casa & a rua: espaço, cidadania, mulher a morte no Brasil*. 5ª ed. Editora Rocco. Rio de Janeiro. 1997. 164 p.

<sup>69</sup> LAMOUNIER, Bolívar. “Formação de um pensamento político autoritário na Primeira República. Uma interpretação”. In: CARDOSO, Fernando Henrique et ali. *O Brasil republicano: estrutura de poder e economia (1889-1930)*. Vol. 1, tomo III. Bertrand Brasil. Rio de Janeiro. 1997. Pp. 343-373.

in the everyday mentality, which preserved the authority of village and municipal leaders<sup>70</sup>.

Therefore, the shaping of people by the institutions<sup>71</sup> is the “real verdict” of that whole turmoil in the village, which revolved around “criticisms” in relation to government’s negligence regarding the cleanliness of the main square, affecting the opposing *mandonista* forces. Such shaping was conducted by the tutelage of the educated elite, notably present in Santo Antônio de Jesus since the first intendants and mayors held medical degrees<sup>72</sup>.

The dichotomous politics in Varzedo persisted in the late 1940s with the electoral dispute in 1946 between Enéas Cardoso de Almeida (PSD) and Albertino de Almeida Cabral (UDN), adversaries in the village who played a leading role in the conflict initiated on May 29 of that year. The embryo of that bipolarity at the micro level emerged at the macro scale, but in Varzedo the actions were peculiar.

Between the opposing groups led by Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo and the Guedes de Araújo in Santo Antônio de Jesus, a third force emerged in 1946, led by Antônio Magalhães Fraga. Fraga was elected mayor on the PR/PSD ticket, supported by former mayor Gorgônio. Nevertheless, the alliance soon fell apart as Fraga and Humberto Guedes became closer. Humberto even notarized the removal of his surname “Araújo” to prevent any assumption of kinship with Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo.

At the state level, the *Balbinist* and *Juracist* flags were the ones upheld by those local-municipal groups. Humberto Guedes, influential in Varzedo and neighboring areas such as Santana do Rio da Dona (a locality in the municipality of Conceição do Almeida), was connected to Manoel Novais, a federal deputy of the PR, and to Juracy Magalhães of the UDN. Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo had ties with Antônio Balbino of the PSD. He was elected as state deputy in coalition with Balbino in 1946. He later served as the head of the State Health Department during Balbino’s term (1955-1958) in the government of Bahia<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> As in the cases of Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo (mayor, state deputy, and Health Secretary of Bahia, respectively) and Humberto Guedes (state deputy between the 1950s and 1970s).

<sup>71</sup> SOUZA, Jessé. *A elite do atraso: da escravidão a Bolsonaro*. Edição revista e ampliada. Estação Brasil. Rio de Janeiro. 2019. 272 p.

<sup>72</sup> From 1892 to 2012, Santo Antônio de Jesus counted 10 intendants and mayors who held degrees in medicine, as previously mentioned.

<sup>73</sup> Hence the terminologies *balbinismo* (balbinism), derived from Antônio Balbino, and *juracismo* (juracism), from Juracy Magalhães. For further insight into these terms, refer to DANTAS NETO. Op. cit. pp. 82-92 e pp. 153-162.

The analysis of this political-party dynamic demonstrates the connection between political history and its temporal context<sup>74</sup>. It can be investigated based on the actions of those who adjust political actions to meet their reality. The perspectives presented by the authors of the book *Tempestade em copo d'agua...*, each with their own style, emphasize the actions of the key figures involved in the conflict of 1946, actions that cyclically recur at the local level, illustrating rivalries during electoral periods, physical altercations, partisan interests, and divisions among voters<sup>75</sup>.

Another important aspect involves the municipalism promoted by the PSD and UDN. During that time, in the 1946 election, players from these parties joined forces to endorse Otávio Mangabeira's candidacy for the government of Bahia (1947-1951)<sup>76</sup>. This collaboration brought together rival oligarchies and local leaders from different regions. The internal rivalries within the PSD, led by former intervenors Guilherme Marback and General Renato Onofre Pinto Aleixo, resulted in informal agreements aimed at "meeting and accommodating" the circumstances of the period.

The emerging municipalism in the 1930s in Bahia was a convenient adaptation to the forces arising from oligarchies and coronelism. It began with Juracy Magalhães, appointed by Vargas as an intervenor (1931-1938), who remarkably brought together against himself typically opposing political leaders such as the Mangabeira, Calmon, and Simões Filho, as stated by Juracy himself<sup>77</sup>. In January 1933, he organized the PSD in Bahia with the assistance of the "engineer of Bahia's municipalism", Manoel Novais, who as stated by Juracy in his memoirs "manipulated with great wisdom"<sup>78</sup>.

Manoel Novais, whose name might appear as "Novaes" in some publications, exerted political power in certain areas in the interior of Bahia. He managed to get himself and his wife, Neco Novais, elected to the chamber

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<sup>74</sup> RÉMOND, René (org.). *Por uma história política*. 2ª ed. Tradução Dora Rocha. FGV editora. Rio de Janeiro. 2003. 472 p.

<sup>75</sup> Indeed, regarding the political aspect; conflicts, alliances, actions by voters, family disputes, and proselytism continued to occur in Varzedo post-emancipation and even into the early 21st century. Some examples include: family members getting "in bad terms" for vehemently advocating for their preferred candidates for municipal leadership, candidates for council positions acting as "go-between" for the opposing group and aligning with them after their victory, voters attempting to demonstrate political influence by erecting tall flagpoles displaying the colors of their mayoral candidates in front of their houses, competing to have the tallest pole. The resemblance to other places in Brazil is not coincidental.

<sup>76</sup> TAVARES. Op. cit. pp. 453-457.

<sup>77</sup> MAGALHÃES, Juracy. *Minhas memórias provisórias*. Depoimento prestado ao CPDOC/Coordenação de Alzira Alves de Abreu et alii. Civilização Brasileira. Rio de Janeiro. 1982. 335 p.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. MAGALHÃES. Op. cit. Pp. 78-79.

of deputies in 1962<sup>79</sup>. He built this broad support base from the 1930s until his passing in 1992, covering more than half of the 20th century. He significantly expanded his dominance in the Além São Francisco region, however Humberto Guedes held a traditional political presence in the Recôncavo region.

### **Guedism: from the *Tempestade em copo d'agua...* to political familism (a necessary addendum)**

We promptly clarify that this title refers to the political, social, and economic influence of the Guedes family in the Southern Recôncavo region since the 19th century until the emergence of the two political leaders in the 20th century, who held positions in the municipal executive and the legislative assembly. These two political leaders are, respectively, Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo and Humberto Guedes de Araújo: the former served as intervenor in Santo Antônio de Jesus from 1931 to 1938, and the latter held the position of state deputy from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Both had paternal grandfathers and uncles who served in provincial, imperial, and later republican legislatures. They represented places such as Santo Antônio de Jesus, Santa Terezinha, Conceição do Almeida, and Amargosa. The rural estates, large landholdings, covered a vast area that included the Guariruru<sup>80</sup> mountain range, valleys, tablelands and fertile hills of that region, and it is worth noting that they were slave plantations in the pre-abolition period<sup>81</sup>. It also should be noted that there is a vast regional memorialist<sup>82</sup> and historiographical<sup>83</sup> literature on the Guedes de Araújo family.

Following the family's academic tradition, Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo graduated in Medicine and Humberto Guedes in Law, both from the University of Bahia. They later pursued political careers, another path in their lineage. In addition to defending members of the UDN in the village, Humberto Guedes' law firm, *Humberto Guedes Advogados*, located in Santo Antônio de Jesus, focused on land disputes and criminal cases.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. LIMA, Thiago Machado de. *O fim do jogo democrático: o golpe de 1964 e o Poder Legislativo da Bahia*. 7Letras. Rio de Janeiro. 2021. 273 p. P. 31.

<sup>80</sup> Group of mountains and hills that runs through part of the municipalities of Varzedo, Elísio Medrado, São Miguel das Matas, and Santa Terezinha in Bahia.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. ASSIS, Viviane Andrade de. "Aqui é tudo uma rama de maxixe": *experiências de trabalhadores reideiros da Fazenda engenho Sururu, Varzedo, Ba (1970-2000)*. Dissertação de Mestrado em História. UEFS, Feira de Santana-Ba. 2013. 159 p. (<http://www.pgh.uefs.br/arquivos/File/DissertacaoVivianeAssis.pdf>).

<sup>82</sup> Ver ALMEIDA. Op. cit.; ALVES. Op. cit.; VALADÃO. Op. cit.

<sup>83</sup> AMORIM. *Entre a Serra e a Vargem*; ASSIS, Viviane. Op. Cit.; LIMA. Op. cit.

Humberto Guedes was hired by the complainants to represent them in the case against Sergeant Commissioner Anastácio for two reasons: first, his political affiliation with the UDN, influenced by the significant political clout of the Guedes group in the region at that time; second, there were disagreements between the lawyer and the politician, and between the doctor and the Mayor Gorgônio de Almeida. The intricate legal documents prepared by both defense and prosecution created the scenario that concealed that antagonistic rift, which went beyond the partisan sphere; it was a personal issue.

The origins of Guedes group's dominance in Varzedo, however, can be traced back to Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo's intervention in Santo Antônio de Jesus (1931-1935). He was appointed by Juracy Magalhães<sup>84</sup>, the then intervenor of Bahia, and subsequently elected mayor (1935-1938). At that time, Varzedo was known as Vargem Grande where the physician Ildefonso treated patients before commencing his political career as intervenor in Santo Antônio de Jesus in 1931. In addition to his medical practices, there is an important visual record.

The photograph, obtained from a family from Varzedo<sup>85</sup>, captured a group of residents of Vargem Grande gathered around a Jeep vehicle in what was then the Praça do Mercado (Market Square)<sup>86</sup>. In this photograph, slightly above the crowd, there are three men dressed in suits looking at the camera. It needs to be confirmed, but it seems that on the left is Mayor Ildefonso Guedes de Araújo, on the right is an unidentified person, and in the middle is José Américo de Almeida<sup>87</sup>.

There is a banner above them, stretching from the facade of one house to another across the street. The text on the photocopy of the original image is almost illegible, but it is possible to make out the word: "DR. ILDEFONSO GUEDES... VARGEM GRANDE... DR. JOSE AMÉRICO [DE] ALMEIDA". These conclusions are based on repeated observations of the image, which, despite the durability of the material, is inevitably erased by time. To observe the photo is to be sensitive to what it might mean (Sorlin, 1994), considering it as a trace of the past that can assist us (Cardoso, 1997)<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Who was skilled at forging alliances with the dominant political forces in the interior of Bahia and later in Salvador, the capital city of the state.

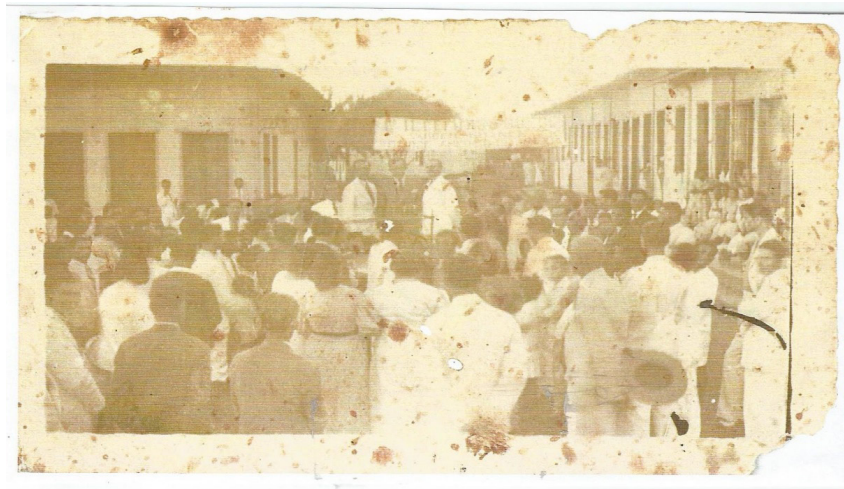
<sup>85</sup> Thanks to Ana Lúcia dos Santos Almeida and Deraldo da Silva Almeida for lending the document in 2003.

<sup>86</sup> Presently known as Praça 08 de Dezembro (December 8th Square).

<sup>87</sup> Minister of Transport in the Getúlio Vargas administration (1931-1937) and author of the novel *A bagaceira*.

<sup>88</sup> Photographs and other image-based documents are tools utilized in our research. Regarding the use of





(Photographic record of a political gathering, potentially attended by José Américo de Almeida. Source: Ana Lúcia dos Santos Almeida and Deraldo da Silva Almeida)

Some questions arise:

As there is no date specified on the back of the photo, could José Américo de Almeida have been in the village before 1938, when he served as minister under Vargas administration? Was he there as a minister under Vargas or as a potential candidate for the Brazilian presidency?

Tangible documents serve as raw material for historians to support their theses, much like photographs that crystallize unique moments that will never come again, as the one presented above. Although the quality of the photograph is not satisfactory, upon careful examination of its details, it is evident that the Guedes' influence during that period extends beyond the names of potential presidential ministers, without diminishing it.

Moreover, referring to Ildefonso Guedes evokes his role in the local administration, initially serving as an intervenor from 1931 to 1935 and later securing an elected position as mayor from 1935 to 1938. It is essential to highlight the dominance of the Guedes family in the region and its surroundings, both politically and socially. This was reflected in the

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images, refer to SORLIN, Pierre. "Indispensáveis e enganosas, as imagens, testemunhas da história". In: *NOVOS ESTUDOS/CEBRAP*. Tradução Anne-Marie Nilon Oliveira. Vol. 7. Nº 13. Editora Brasileira de Ciências. São Paulo. 1994. Pp. 81-95. P. 91; CARDOSO, Ciro Flamarion e MAUAD, Ana Maria. "História e imagem: os exemplos da fotografia e do cinema". In: CARDOSO, Ciro Flamarion e VAINFAS, Ronaldo (orgs.). *Domínios da História: ensaios de teoria e metodologia*. Campus. Rio de Janeiro. 1997. Pp. 401-417. P. 401



representation of lawyer Humberto Guedes against Sergeant Anastácio, although it did not result in a Pyrrhic victory after the turmoil.

### From a *teacup...* to the multiverse *storm*: conclusions

In this article, we explored the reasons behind the PSD and UDN parties' collaboration in politics in the state of Bahia after the fall of the Estado Novo (1937-1945), as well as the interpersonal disputes among members of these parties in Santo Antônio de Jesus, and the tensions between UDN and PSD in the village of Varzedo. Additionally, we highlighted that these factors contributed to understanding the human conflicts that occurred on May 29, 1946, and their consequences. In conclusion, this analysis emphasizes the significance of regional and local history in examining historical events, regardless of their brevity.

The book authored by Judge Jorge Faria de Góis and lawyer Antônio José de Araújo in 1946, entitled *Tempestade em copo d'água... a diligência do sargento delegado A. A. de Anastácio em Varzêdo*, discusses an accusation of abuse of power against a military officer, reported by a part of the local socioeconomic elite. Documents such as this one serve as a valuable resource for historians and are suitable for analysis and publication in communities of different sizes.

We emphasized that the issue addressed, preserved for decades by the descendants of one of those involved in the legal-political dispute, was not clarified by contemporaries of the event.

In 2002, following a meticulous review of the book, interviews were conducted to gather diverse document support to complement future scientific research<sup>89</sup>. When the book *Tempestade em copo dagua* was mentioned to a witness of the events of that period, they avoided the topic and reacted with aversion, as if they wanted to spit and push away, saying, "No, please! I don't want to talk about it!"<sup>90</sup>.

Far from disrespecting the memory of those involved in the 1946 conflict, insight into the idiosyncrasy of a location emerges when specific topics are consciously omitted by some people. This occurs due to both out of respect for the deceased and because many of those involved were part of

<sup>89</sup> Cf. AMORIM. *Entre a Serra e a Vargem*; AMORIM. "Imaginação que deu certo". ([https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212\\_ulfl064954\\_tm.pdf](https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212_ulfl064954_tm.pdf)).

<sup>90</sup> Indeed, when inquiring about the event to Iraildes Santos Silva, who was 93 years old in 2002, she refused to discuss it. It appears that either something significant happened, or the memory of the event was intentionally blocked.

the elite class of merchants, landowners, influential figures, politicians, and traditional families. Some of them had ties of “compadrio”, mutual respect, served as marriage witnesses, engaged in reciprocal favors, and exchanged labor.

The outcome of the short circuit between the exposed wires of the PSD and UDN factions in Varzedo was an expected consequence of the political dynamics that originated in the district and extended all the way to the seat of Santo Antônio de Jesus. The political-personal clashes between Albertino Costa’s group (UDN) and Deraldo Demósthene da Silva’s (PSD) reflected, on a local level, the disagreements between Humberto Guedes (UDN) and Gorgônio de Almeida Araújo (PSD). It was the “teacup” of local politics causing a “storm”, where law and authority shaped the daily lives of a local elite, contributing to their accommodation.

Although the UDN and PR gained control of the mayor’s office by electing their candidate, Antônio Fraga, who held power from 1947 to 1962, a segment of the population, twelve years after the 1946 conflict, chose a new figure as their representative for one of the seats in the Santo Antônio de Jesus legislature. This new player lacked political tradition but received support from PSD leaders Enéas Cardoso and Deraldo Demósthene, thereby maintaining the political foundation of both through an unlikely continuity.

What was this “unlikely continuity”, referred to as “chameleonic singularities”? He has a name, surname, and nickname: Manoel José de Souza, known as Nonô, who emerged from the local PSD in the late 1950s<sup>91</sup>.

Nonô was considered an “unlikely continuity” due to his non-political family tradition. From what has been investigated, he was the child of humble and tenant farmers parents, a black individual, semi-literate. He started his journey to financial independence as a peddler<sup>92</sup>. Over time, he acquired a commercial space and became the owner of urban and rural properties.

He entered the political arena during the twilight period of the leadership of the PSD under Enéas Cardoso and Deraldo Demósthene. The former was practically out of politics to devote himself to his commercial businesses in the municipality, while the latter was trying to maintain his

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<sup>91</sup> Manoel José de Souza (1920-1992) served as alderman for 30 years (1959-1989) in Santo Antônio de Jesus and was the first mayor of Varzedo (1990-1992). His political trajectory is the subject of study in our Ph.D. in Social History (UFBA).

<sup>92</sup> According to those who lived at the same time as Nonô, he was known to walk in the rural areas carrying his briefcase and tailor’s ruler.

leadership behind the scenes. Supported by these two individuals, Nonô was elected alderman in 1958, securing 263 votes<sup>93</sup>.

This represented the rise of someone with the phenotype resembling the majority of the local inhabitants, black and pardo, a person who grew up through his commercial activities and was close to the poorest through language, gestures, and relationships. He benefited from clientelism based on a variety of patronage practices. He acted as an uncertified physician, a family counselor, joker, authoritarian, and popular. All of these characteristics merged into a player who remained a leader for over three decades (1958-1992). He remained as a central figure, while his rivals on the other side came from the former members of the UDN, the white gentlemen<sup>94</sup>.

The task of studying him raised questions about his political actions, connections with key figures in politics in the state of Bahia, and his capillarity among a part of the local population, especially the poorest, who shared physical similarities with him. He had a popular *mandonista* style, which can contribute to rethinking local power. This perspective focuses on the idiosyncrasies of local *mandonismo*, highlighting the necessity of avoiding homogenizing analysis and paying attention to local-regional power dynamics, an essential aspect in a diverse nation like Brazil.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Academic Writing Center (Centro de Escrita Acadêmica/CEA - <https://www2.uepg.br/escrita-academica/>) of the State University of Ponta Grossa (Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa/UEPG) for assistance with English language translation and developmental editing.

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<sup>93</sup> Source: [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br). Previous election results.

<sup>94</sup> This notion of “white gentlemen” is something to be further discussed in future research due to the racism in Varzedo, as well as in Brazil. Nonô, a black man, from a humble origin, and with no political tradition - three aspects often concealed in the locality - rose to political power through his economic foundation and social ties. Nevertheless, certain families considered traditional - referred to as “white gentlemen” - observed him with suspicion. For this reason, our academic production exploring his journey will delve into these discussions.

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Article received for publication on 07/03/2023  
Article approved for publication on 22/09/2023