

## Localism in turmoil: An in-depth analysis of the city council of Varzedo, Bahia, amidst the tumultuous June of 1992

### Bairrismo em vertigem: verso e reverso no legislativo municipal de Varzedo, Bahia, no efervescente junho de 1992

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#### Abstract

Although Brazilian political culture places greater emphasis on the executive branch, the legislative branch is a representative institution that requires attention from political historiography just as much as the former, especially concerning events occurring in city councils. Taking this into account, the purpose of this article is to examine the roles of the councilors of the municipality of Varzedo, in the state of Bahia, in the process of annulling its directing board following the death of the mayor and the evasion of the vice mayor.

**Keywords:** politics; legislative; local; history.

#### Resumo

Embora a proeminência da cultura política no Brasil seja de mais holofotes para o poder executivo, o poder legislativo é um poder representativo que solicita, tanto quanto aquele, atenção da historiografia política, especialmente de fatos ocorridos em câmaras municipais. Partindo disso, a proposta deste artigo é esmerar versos e reversos papéis dos vereadores da câmara do município de Varzedo no processo de anulação da mesa diretora, após morte do prefeito e evasão do vice-prefeito.

**Palavras-chaves:** política; legislativo; local; história.

#### THE ISSUE AT HAND

Places reveal themes for historiographical research—and for other scientific fields—in such a way that the astute and interested gaze of a

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<sup>1</sup>To translate this article, the terminology used in the English version of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil was consulted. The Constitution is available in English at [https://www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/legislacaoConstituicao/anexo/brazil\\_federal\\_constitution.pdf](https://www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/legislacaoConstituicao/anexo/brazil_federal_constitution.pdf).

historian is enough to critically address them, particularly those tied to political matters, which often fade into oblivion, in order to foster diverse political history<sup>2</sup>. The motivation behind exploring the events in the city council of Varzedo in June 1992 and subsequent months lies in the desire to analyze them in light of written and oral records.

The document-based corpus of this article, which comprises eight sources including minutes of regular sessions, notices, notice announcements, and testimonies, was collected two decades ago and also recently. It required, however, an analysis in light of the political context and the actions that resulted in the abdication of the president of the municipal council, which led to the complex question: was it a forced resignation or removal from office? Prior to narrowing the focus of this study, the next step is to explore the history of the municipal council in Brazil, Bahia, and Varzedo.

Embedded in the Recôncavo<sup>3</sup>, Varzedo blossomed around older places that influenced the formation of Vargem Grande, such as Castro Alves, Santo Antônio de Jesus, and São Miguel das Matas, cities that date their foundations back to the 18th century<sup>4</sup>. Castro Alves and Santo Antônio de Jesus also had portions of their territories legally transplanted in 1989 to create the municipality of Varzedo<sup>5</sup>.

According to data from the 2022 Census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the area of Varzedo is 221,399

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<sup>2</sup> See RÉMOND, René (org.). *Por uma história política*. 2ª edição. Tradução Dora Rocha. Rio de Janeiro. Editora FGV. 2003.

<sup>3</sup> In 2007, the government of Bahia renamed the state's regions as *Territórios de Identidade* (Identity Territories) (*Secretaria do Planejamento do Estado da Bahia*, Secretariat of Planning of the State of Bahia, 2007.) Thus, Recôncavo was reclassified as Território de Identidade, with Varzedo included as one of its municipalities. Source: [www.ba.gov.br](http://www.ba.gov.br).

<sup>4</sup> For some academic and memorialist studies addressing these localities and region, see LOBO, Viriato da Silva. *Geographia do Município de Santo Antônio de Jesus*. I Edição. Typographia d' "O Commercio". Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. 1898; ALVES, Isaías. *Matas do Sertão de Baixo*. Salvador-Ba: Eduneb. 2010; 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.; QUEIROZ, Fernando Pinto de. *A Capela do Padre Matheus*. Feira de Santana-Ba. Sagra. 1995; OLIVEIRA, Ana Maria Carvalho de. *Recôncavo sul: terra, homens, poder e economia*. EDUNEB. Salvador-Ba. 2003. 148 p.

<sup>5</sup> These areas currently form the two main districts of Varzedo: São Roque dos Macacos and Tabuleiro do Castro. These districts encompass communities that rely on an economy centered on agriculture and livestock, including the production and farming of citrus, manioc, cacao, and cattle. Regarding the emancipation of Varzedo, see 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.

km<sup>2</sup> and is located 230,07<sup>6</sup> above sea level, specifically the Atlantic Ocean. The 2022 Census reports that Varzedo has 9,913 inhabitants, most of whom live in rural areas (63,1%) compared to urban areas (36,9%)<sup>7</sup>, and a population density of 44,77 inhabitants per square kilometer.<sup>8</sup> Its coordinates are latitude 12°58' South and longitude 39°23' West.

## FROM THE “GOOD MEN” TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

The vastness of the current Brazilian region still traces back to its historical formation based on the local, originating from the founding of villages in the 16th century. They resembled the Portuguese structure that was transplanted to the southern American colony at a micro level, even if the villages were not “(...) villages in the political-administrative sense of the term.”<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese, unlike the spaniards,<sup>10</sup> followed their natural inclination to build cities along the coast,<sup>11</sup> as evidenced by São Vicente, a village on the coastal edge of what is now the State of São Paulo, founded in 1532 by Martim Afonso de Sousa, a *capitão-mor*<sup>12</sup> empowered by royal charters.<sup>13</sup>

On the coast and in the *sertão*,<sup>14</sup> the representatives of the towns—plantation owners, farmers, and *sesmeiros*—were symbols of the “rigid and hieratic word”<sup>15</sup> of His Majesty, integrated into the government’s administrative network with the common interest in gaining access to the municipal council for being—and to be—“good men.” This became evident on a regional scale, specifically within the scope of the government-general<sup>16</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Sources: [www.ibge.br](http://www.ibge.br); *Monografias Municipais. Nordeste/Bahia VARZEDO*. IBGE. 2016/2017. 31 p.

<sup>7</sup>Idem. P. 10.

<sup>8</sup><https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ba/varzedo/panorama><https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ba/varzedo/panorama>.

<sup>9</sup>RISÉRIO, Antonio. *A cidade no Brasil*. 2ª edição. São Paulo. Editora 34. 2013.P. 55.

<sup>10</sup>See HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de. *Raízes do Brasil*. 7ª reimpressão. São Paulo. Companhia das Letras. 1999. P. 99.

<sup>11</sup>See HOLANDA, Sérgio. idem, idem, idem.

<sup>12</sup>*Capitão-mor* was the title given to the commanders of maritime squadrons in Portugal during the Age of Exploration. The holder of this title had powers granted by the Portuguese crown during expeditions.

<sup>13</sup>See FAORO, Raymundo. *Os donos do poder: formação do patronato político brasileiro*. Vol. 1. 13ª edição. Globo. São Paulo. 1998. P. 147.

<sup>14</sup>*Sertão* in Brazil refers to the areas away from the coastline. It is derived from the 1500s Portuguese term *desertão*.

<sup>15</sup>See FAORO, Raymundo. Idem. P. 149.

<sup>16</sup>*Governo-geral* (government-general) referred to a kind of viceroyalty in colonial Brazil. Its representative

in the *capitania*<sup>17</sup> of Bahia, which was established by the *capitão-mor* and first governor-general Tomé de Sousa in 1549,<sup>18</sup> as exemplified by the *Conselho de Vereança* or *Vereação*.<sup>19</sup> The *Conselho de Vereança* was composed of two *juizes Ordinários* (ordinary judges),<sup>20</sup> three municipal councilors chosen annually and four permanent officials.<sup>21</sup>

Although the other officials had tasks we would label as bureaucratic today, judges and councilors were the eyes, ears, and mouth of the colonial power in places. They were “good men”, who owned land, businesses, properties, and slaves, who attached themselves to local power and spanned across eras, solidifying themselves in the government of Pedro I and Pedro II, among unique regional and local realities, in divisions characterized by oligarchies and *coronelismo*, which obtained royal legal provisions that strengthened local dominance in the empire (1822-1889).

The first provision was ratified by Dom Pedro I, the first emperor of Brazil, on October 1, 1828, stating: “It gives a new form to the Municipal Councils, defines their duties and the process for their election, as well as the election of the Justices of the Peace.”<sup>22</sup> The second provision, decreed at the time of the regencies (1831-1840), was the Additional Act No. 16, dated August 12, 1834,<sup>23</sup> which made “some changes and additions to the Political Constitution of the Empire” with the aim of granting authority to the district councils and provincial State Legislatures, which were the replacements for the abolished General Councils.

Both the imperial and regency ordinances channeled powers through constitutional provisions to the municipal and provincial legislative Houses, which were led by municipal councilors and provincial deputies, many of

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was called the *governador-geral* (governor-general).

<sup>17</sup> *Capitania* referred to a territorial division established by the Portuguese crown through a royal decree in 1534.

<sup>18</sup> See TAVARES, Luís Henrique Dias. *História da Bahia*. 10ª edição. Salvador, Edufba/ Editora da Unesp, São Paulo. 2001. P. 107.

<sup>19</sup> *Conselho de Vereança* or *Conselho de Vereação* refers to the council that gathered the so-called “good men” (landowners, merchants, and graduates) of a city between the 16th and 17th centuries in Brazil. From the 17th century onward, it became known as the Senado da Câmara. See TAVARES, Luís Henrique Dias. *História da Bahia*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP; Salvador-Ba: Edufba. 2001. P. 106.

<sup>20</sup> The *juiz ordinário* was responsible for criminal matters in a city, as well as maintaining order in the use of public assets.

<sup>21</sup> See TAVARES, Idem. Idem. Pp. 105-106.

<sup>22</sup> Source: [www.brasilimperial.org.br](http://www.brasilimperial.org.br), accessed in 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Source: [www.brasilimperial.org.br](http://www.brasilimperial.org.br), accessed in 2008.

whom were the children of the “good men”, who were oligarchs and *coronéis*. The central power, without loosening its grip, decentralized the powers in localities and provinces, granting authority to political-economic elites, who were preserved during the Second Reign (1840-1889) and accommodated in the republic with noble and graduate titles.

From the national to the local level, the legislative branch was the sounding board for the interests of the elite. It was the foundation for maintaining the municipal, state, and national executive branches, which were legalized by the vote that bestowed upon them representation, authority, and power over public affairs,<sup>24</sup> independent of the democratic galvanization that occurred in certain periods.

## **VARZEDO: BEFORE THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

Local history, integrated with past and present regional matters, can progress steadily under the scientific and objective gaze of the historian, a process which is further facilitated by the objective stylistics that the local researcher—who both lives in and interacts with the context—can convey in detail. When viewed in relation to the whole, particularities contribute to revisionist perspectives.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, when focusing on particularities, one can uncover fragmented moments that go unnoticed and yet were registered in documentary sources, depicting a day influenced by a specific atmosphere of emotions that, in turn, drove particular interests.

This is what happened on June 10, 1992 in the municipal council of Varzedo, a municipality in the Recôncavo region of Bahia, when the then president of the directing board stepped down from her position before a tumultuous audience.

As it is a well-known fact that real places do not even remotely resemble the fictional village of Macondo imagined by Gabriel García Márquez’s fantastic realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (2009), the real events that took place in that legislative House may border on shock for the readers of this scientific paper. It is therefore important to examine the macro time,

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<sup>24</sup>See LEAL, Victor Nunes. *Coronelismo, enxada e voto: o município e o regime representativo no Brasil*. 6ª edição. Alfa-Ômega. São Paulo. 1997; FAORO, Raymundo. *Os donos do poder*. Vol. 2. 13ª edição. Globo. São Paulo. 1998.

<sup>25</sup>See NEVES, Erivaldo Fagundes. *História regional e local: fragmentação e recomposição da história na crise da modernidade*. Arcádia, Salvador-Ba/ Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, Feira de Santana-Ba. 2002. P. 8.

social environment, and particular context through the discourses, cryptolanguages, and meta-actions of those involved in the events.

This means that the traditional writing of local history considered immovable deserves the historical-analytical mobility that the very shifting nature of traditional writing possesses, though it tries to avoid it. And since the wording on official documents portrays a one-sided narrative, the historical-analytical approach is tasked with exploring an opposing perspective. However, before delving into the subject of this article, we will discuss the municipal council in Varzedo from the time it was a district between 1891 and 1989.

## THE “GOOD MEN” OF THE DISTRICT

Born in the shadow of the chapel erected by Father Antônio Ângelo Gomes de Mendonça in 1868,<sup>26</sup> the hamlet of Vargem Grande was officially established on “January 5, 1891” as a “District of Peace,<sup>27</sup> (...) where there was a settlement around the chapel.”<sup>28</sup> It was connected to the municipality of Santo Antônio de Jesus, then governed by *intendente*<sup>29</sup> Antonio Luiz de Barros (1889-1891), though the resolution to create the hamlet came from the “(...) municipal councilors (...) Dr. Félix Gaspar, Aprígio Alves de Almeida, Alexandre José de Almeida Sampaio, Ursicino Pinto de Queiroz, and José Tomaz dos Santos Silva (...).”<sup>30</sup>

Reflections of this political and socioeconomic context had an impact on the legislative representations of the Vargem Grande district. Which representations were those and who were their political figures?

Research conducted in 2003 at the now-defunct civil registry and notary office of Varzedo<sup>31</sup> uncovered the minutes of the municipal election that

<sup>26</sup> See LOBO, Viriato da Silva. *Geographia do Município de Santo Antônio de Jesus*. 1 edição. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. Typographia d'O Commercio. 1898. Pp. 20-21.

<sup>27</sup> The *Distrito de Paz* (District of Peace) was a territory located in a district or village that belonged to a municipality where the responsible official was the justice of the peace, who maintained order and was responsible for police and family matters.

<sup>28</sup> Text *No final do século XIX A Emancipação* (At the end of the 19th century The Emancipation). Source: *Biblioteca Municipal Pública de Santo Antônio de Jesus* (Public Municipal Library of Santo Antônio de Jesus.)

<sup>29</sup> *Intendente* was the head of the municipal executive government, appointed by the state government.

<sup>30</sup> See ALVES, Isaías. *Matas do Sertão de Baixo*. Salvador-Ba. Eduneb. 2010. Pp. 271-272.

<sup>31</sup> The reason for its extinction is its dismantlement as a public body in order to be acquired by the private sector (State Law 12.352, enacted in 2011 by the Governor of Bahia Jacques Wagner, 2007-2010/2011-2014), including a change of address. During that period, the department operated on Rua Padre Antônio Ângelo Gomes de Mendonça, colloquially known as Rua do Cemitério (Cemetery street), where the registrar was

happened on November 13, 1927 in the “Hamlet of Vargem Grande second District of Peace of the municipality of Santo Antônio de Jesus of the judicial district of Nazareth (...)”, “(...) in the building of the coeducational municipal school run by teacher Celestina de Sousa Bitencourt (...)”,<sup>32</sup> where the 4th polling station operated. On that day, 86 male “registered voters” complied with the call to cast their votes for municipal *intendente*, city councilors, president and members of the district board, and justices of the peace.

Since the interest, especially due to the theme, primarily relates to the municipal council, after the voting, which lasted from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the president of the directing board José Augusto de Oliveira proclaimed “(...) out loud the following result (...)”, among others, “for municipal councilors for the 1928-1931 four-year term,” in the following order:

**Table 01** - Names of the municipal councilors<sup>33</sup> in the 1928-1931 period

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Dr. Rosalvo de Almeida Fonseca    | 54 votes |
| Antonio Vicente de Souza Bulhões  | 47 votes |
| Antonio Mendes de Araújo          | 44 votes |
| Salustiano de Almeida Sampaio     | 43 votes |
| Fermino Antonio da Silveira Filho | 42 votes |
| Lidio da Costa Rosa               | 07 votes |
| Octaviano Gomes Filho             | 06 votes |
| Jozué Esdra Diniz                 | 05 votes |
| Raul Fraga Barretto               | 03 votes |

**Source:** the author, based on minutes of the poll worker meeting and installation of the electoral board of the 4th polling station of the municipality of Santo Antônio de Jesus available at the civil registry and notary office in 2003.

There was, however, a vote by the same 86 voters—all men, due to constitutional laws—from the Vargem Grande district to the vacancy left by the former municipal councilor major Henrique José de Andrade. In the vote, 71 voters cast ballots with the name of José Augusto de Oliveira—or d’Oliveira, as he used to sign his surname—, president of the 4th polling station, against

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Maria José Sampaio da França.

<sup>32</sup>Minutes of the poll worker meeting and installation of the electoral board. Source: civil registry and notary office of Varzedo, researched in 2003.

<sup>33</sup>Former terminology for councilors.

15 votes for Onezimo José de Andrade. As a result, businessman José Augusto, who owned properties and commercial premises and was a partner in the commercial organization in the district, gathered enough votes to be elected to the Santo Antônio municipal council.

Nicknamed “*coronel*” José Augusto by the local population due to his numerous possessions, which led to the naming of a street after him,<sup>34</sup> this municipal councilor played an active role in the council to assert his position and power and represent Vargem Grande. After him, in 1946, almost twenty years later, the now district of Varzedo elected as municipal councilors the merchants Albertino de Almeida Cabral (UDN) and Enéas Cardoso de Almeida (PSD), both personally and politically dichotomous due to legal reasons.<sup>35</sup>

Local dichotomous disagreements between the candidates were more related to personal matters and the obtention of power than ideological and party issues. Some of the municipal councilors representing the Varzedo district—because they were voted there—were close to the municipal executive branch, sometimes even affiliated with the same party as them, as represented in the table below:

**Table 02** - Mayors and municipal councilors elected in Santo Antônio de Jesus in the period of 1951 to 1992

| COUNCILOR(S)/PARTY(IES)   | PERIOD    | MAYOR/PARTY                             |
|---|-----------|---|
| Manoel Francisco de Jesus (elected by the UDN, later switching to the PR) | 1951-1954 | Justiniano Rocha Galvão (PR)            |
| Manoel Francisco de Jesus (PR) and Enéas Cardoso de Almeida (PST)         | 1955-1958 | Antônio Magalhães Fraga (PR)            |
| Manoel José de Souza (elected by the PSD, later switching to the UDN)     | 1959-1962 | Antônio Olavo Galvão (PR)               |
| Manoel José de Souza (UDN) and Deraldo Félix de Jesus (PR)                | 1963-1966 | José Trindade Lobo (UDN)                |
| Manoel José de Souza (Arena 1)  | 1967-1970 | Florentino Firmino de Almeida (Arena 2) |

*continue*

<sup>34</sup>Source: Recommendation by Councilor Edvaldo Oliveira in 1959. Minutes from 1953 to 1965, Santo Antônio de Jesus Municipal Council, 2023.

<sup>35</sup>See AMORIM, Jorge. “Espelho em pequena escala: UDN e PSD fazendo Tempestade em copo dagua na vila de Varzedo, Bahia (1946)”. *Revista de História Regional*. Ponta Grossa-PR. 2023, vol. 28, pp. 1-30. <https://revistas.uepg.br/index.php/rhr/article/view/21652/209209218164>.



## conclusion

| COUNCILOR(S)/PARTY(IES)  | PERIOD    | MAYOR/PARTY                               |
|--|-----------|---|
| Manoel José de Souza (Arena) and Vivaldo Bitencourt (Arena)  | 1970-1972 | José Trindade Lobo (Arena)                |
| Gerson Francisco de Jesus (Arena), Vivaldo Bitencourt (Arena), and Dermeval Felix de Jesus (Arena)                                     | 1973-1976 | Florentino Firmino de Almeida (Arena)     |
| Manoel José de Souza (Arena 2)   | 1977-1982 | Ursicino Pinto de Queiroz (Arena 1)       |
| Manoel José de Souza (PDS)   | 1983-1988 | Renato Maximiliano Gordilho Machado (PDS) |
| Manoel José de Souza (elected by the PFL, later resigning from the position of councilor in 1989 after being elected mayor of Varzedo) | 1989-1992 | Humberto Soares Leite (PSC)               |

**Source:** the author, based on electoral data from the Regional Electoral Court of Bahia (TRE BA - [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br))

As can be seen in Table 02, Manoel José de Souza was the district's key legislative figure for three decades, drawing close to power through his party and pragmatic political performance. The leading trajectory<sup>36</sup> undertaken and put into practice by Manoel José de Souza, known by the hypocoristic Nonô (1920-1992),<sup>37</sup> resulted in his election as mayor of Varzedo on November 15, 1989. This election happened in an exceptional electoral calendar due to the emancipation of the district from the municipalities of Santo Antônio de Jesus and Castro Alves.<sup>38</sup> This happened to other districts in Bahia and their

<sup>36</sup>See LEVILLAIN, Philippe. "Os protagonistas: da biografia". In: *Por uma história política*. Editora da FGV. Rio de Janeiro. 2003. Pp. 141-184.

<sup>37</sup>Born in Vargem Grande, a district of Santo Antônio de Jesus, Bahia, on June 5, 1920, Nonô came from less fortunate parents, both Black rural workers. He began working in the farm as a child to help his parents, then as a street vendor. As an adult, he opened a business selling fabrics. He got married in 1954 to Erotildes Silva Souza and, four years later, ran for councilor for the first time through the PSD and won. He won again in the elections of 1962 (UDN), 1966 (Arena), 1970 (Arena), 1976 (Arena), 1982 (PDS), and 1988 (PFL). Nonô was elected the first mayor of Varzedo (PMDB) at 69 years old in 1989, but his time in office was abruptly cut short by his murder on May 17, 1992.

<sup>38</sup>The emancipation process involved the districts of Varzedo and Tabuleiro do Castro, which belonged to the municipalities of Santo Antônio de Jesus and Castro Alves, respectively, over the course of 1985 and 1989. To illustrate this point, see "*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. [https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212\\_ulfl064954\\_tm.pdf](https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212_ulfl064954_tm.pdf).

respective parent municipalities<sup>39</sup> that underwent similar processes. Along with Nonô and the candidate for vice-mayor Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita,<sup>40</sup> both affiliated with the PMDB, nine councilors were elected for the first legislature for the three-year period of 1990-1992.<sup>41</sup>

## CONSTITUTIONS, EMANCIPATION, ELECTION, AND ORGANIC LAW

The position of councilor stands out compared to others due to the presence and closeness of councilors to the residents of the municipalities. These municipalities, which are federated entities, gained more prominence with the Federal Constitution of 1988 in comparison with previous Magna Cartas, as they became part of the political-administrative organization of the Federative Republic of Brazil alongside the Union, States and the Federal District (Article 18). This meant that they could be created (Article 18, paragraph 4), elaborate an Organic Law, define their branches of government, budgets, and taxes (Articles 29, 30, and 31), and be guided by state constitutions such as that of Bahia, which was enacted on October 5, 1989.

In this Constitution, chapters II<sup>42</sup> and III<sup>43</sup> are dedicated to municipalities, defined in the Magna Carta of Bahia as “autonomous political-administrative

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<sup>39</sup>Regarding these other districts and municipalities, see SAMPAIO, Monsenhor Gilberto Vaz. *Emancipação de Varzedo – Quatro anos de luta*. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. Exemplar gráfica e editora. 2007.

<sup>40</sup>Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita was born in Jacobina, Bahia, in 1958, and studied Pharmacology in the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA). In the 1980s, he arrived in the then district of Varzedo through the invitation of Monsignor Gilberto Vaz Sampaio (1927-2008) and Professor Pedro Barroso Sobrinho, who had been elected councilor (PMDB) in 1982 in the Santo Antônio de Jesus municipal council. After being an advocate for the creation of the municipality of Varzedo alongside Nonô and other proponents of emancipation, he ran for a seat in the Santo Antônio legislative branch in 1988 but was not elected. The following year, however, he was elected vice-mayor on the ticket with Nonô, the first mayor of the newly emancipated municipality. Following disagreements and allegations against the administration of his former ally, Mesquita was charged by the court as the mastermind behind Mayor Nonô's murder. He fled but was intercepted by the police in 2005 in the municipality of Paty do Alferes, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, where he was working in the healthcare field. He was arrested and sent to Bahia, but since the crime was time-barred, he was released shortly after, in 2006. Regarding this arrest, see the news story *Mandante de crime chega à Bahia* (Crime mastermind arrives in Bahia,) *A Tarde online*, August 6, 2005, written by Cristina Santos and posted by Roberto Rabat Chame.

<sup>41</sup>The elections held in Varzedo and 32 other districts that became municipalities were regulated by Article 1 of Law No. 7,773, dated June 8, 1989 and by Resolution No. 15,500 of the Superior Electoral Court, issued on August 24, 1989.

<sup>42</sup>See Article 54, items I, II, III, and IV, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the Constitution of the State of Bahia, dated October 5, 1989.

<sup>43</sup>See Articles 55, 56, 57 (paragraphs 1 and 2), 58, 59 (items I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX), 60 (items I, II, III, IV, V, and VI), 61, 62, 63 (paragraphs 1 and 2), and 64, *idem*.

unit” (Article 6), which could, in that context,<sup>44</sup> be created, dismembered, incorporated, and merged in compliance with legal requirements (Article 54). Based on this article, its four items, and three paragraphs, as well as the endorsement of the federal Magna Carta of 1988 (Article 18, paragraph 4), and political initiatives, Varzedo achieved the status of “autonomous unit.”

This was the result of a plebiscite held on Sunday, January 8, 1989 after pro- and anti-emancipation mobilizations led, respectively, by the opposition groups *Comissão Pró-Emancipação* and *União Santo-Antoniense*.<sup>45</sup> With more of a political-personalistic connotation than a consistent project for the post-emancipation period,<sup>46</sup> the process that began in May 1985 and ended in 1989 with the creation of the municipality of Varzedo—signed by the then governor Nilo Coelho in June 12<sup>47</sup>—relied on localist matters, idealistic hyperboles regarding projects for the city to come, and the heroification of those in favor of emancipation by the *Comissão Pró-Emancipação*. Meanwhile, the *União Santo-Antoniense* employed imagery-laden hagiographic rhetoric, skirmishes, and negativism.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>This is because during Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s first term as president (1995–1998), the National Congress approved Constitutional Amendment No. 15 of 1996 to regulate what was then referred to as the “municipality spree” (*farra dos municípios*), a term describing the creation of numerous “autonomous administrative units,” many of which lacked the necessary conditions to function effectively. See <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2013/10/16/plenario-do-senado-aprova-novas-regras-para-criacao-de-municipios>.

<sup>45</sup>Regarding the steps of the emancipation process of Varzedo between 1985 and 1989, see SAMPAIO, Monsenhor Gilberto Vaz. *Emancipação de Varzedo – Quatro anos de luta*. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. Exemplar gráfica e editora. 2007; AMORIM, Jorge. “*Imaginação que deu certo*”: *mobilização emancipatória para a criação do município de Varzedo, Bahia, Brasil (1985–1989)*. *Revista Politeia*. Vitória da Conquista-Ba. Edições UESB, 2021, vol. 20, nº 1, pp. 257–276. <https://periodicos2.uesb.br/index.php/politeia/article/view/8515/6110>; “*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. [https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212\\_ulfl064954\\_tm.pdf](https://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/474/1/20212_ulfl064954_tm.pdf); 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. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB). 2008.

<sup>46</sup>This issue is initially discussed by 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. 2008. Here, the geographer’s perspective focuses on analyzing the lack of projects aimed at economic structuring and greater independence for the municipality of Varzedo during its first five administrations (Manoel José de Souza 1990–1992; Valter Bonfim Lago 1993–1996; Erotildes Silva Souza 1997–2000; Manoel Souza Andrade 2001–2004; Deusdete de Souza Araújo 2005–2008).

<sup>47</sup>Bill No. 7844/89. Source: AMORIM, Jorge. “*Imaginação que deu certo*”: *mobilização emancipatória para a criação do município de Varzedo, Bahia, Brasil (1985–1989)*. *Revista Politeia*. Vitória da Conquista-Ba. Edições UESB, 2021, vol. 20, nº 1, pp. 257–276. <https://periodicos2.uesb.br/index.php/politeia/article/view/8515/6110>.

<sup>48</sup>See AMORIM, Jorge. “*Imaginação que deu certo*”: *mobilização emancipatória para a criação do município de Varzedo, Bahia, Brasil (1985–1989)*. *Revista Politeia*. Vitória da Conquista-Ba. Edições UESB, 2021, vol. 20, nº 1, pp. 257–276. <https://periodicos2.uesb.br/index.php/politeia/article/view/8515/6110>.

Elevated to municipality status by State Law No. 5,002<sup>49</sup> on June 13, 1989, elections were held that same year on November 15. The electoral outcomes for those who would occupy the new seats in the executive and legislative branches of the newborn municipality of Varzedo were as follows:

**Table 03** - Number of votes per candidate for the position of mayor or Varzedo in 1989

| PREFEITO/VICE-PREFEITO  | PARTIDO | NÚMERO DE VOTOS |
|---|---------|-----------------|
| Manoel José de Souza (Nonô)/Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita           | PMDB    | 2.042 (eleitos) |
| Flomário Santos/Francisco Barbosa de Oliveira (Chico da farmácia) | PSC/PDC | 1.164           |

Source: the author, based on [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br)

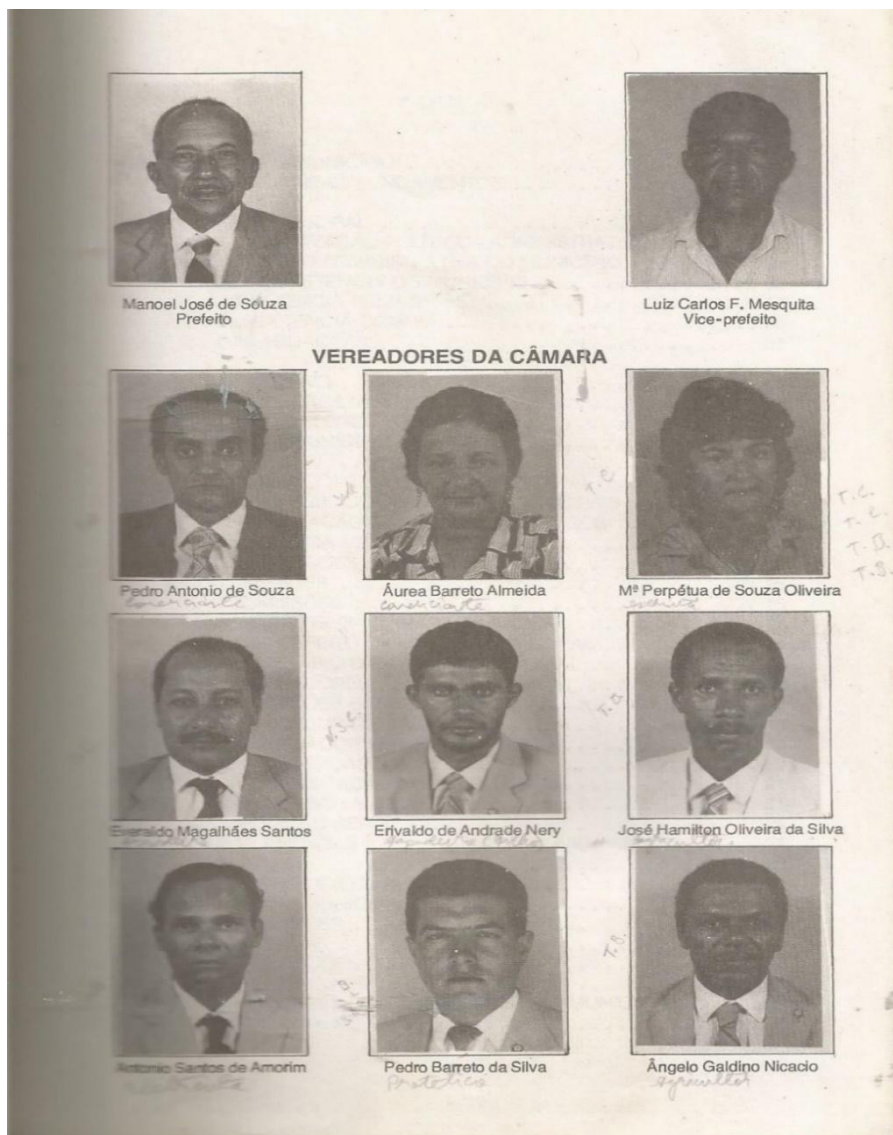
**Table 04** - Number of votes per elected councilor in 1989

| VEREADORES ELEITOS (pela ordem) | PARTIDO | NÚMERO DE VOTOS |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Everaldo Magalhães Santos       | PMDB    | 192             |
| Erivaldo de Andrade Nery        | PMDB    | 182             |
| Pedro Antonio de Souza          | PMDB    | 164             |
| José Hamilton Oliveira da Silva | PMDB    | 148             |
| Pedro Barreto da Silva          | PMDB    | 118             |
| Ângelo Galdino Nicácio          | PDC     | 107             |
| Maria Perpétua Souza Oliveira   | PSC     | 99              |
| Áurea Barreto Almeida           | PSC     | 89              |
| Antônio Santos de Amorim        | PSC     | 78              |

Source Created by the author, based on [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br)

<sup>49</sup>Source: idem.

**Photograph 01** - Reproduction of the back cover of the Organic Law of the Municipality of Varzedo, 1990



Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim's archive

Following the logic established in Brazilian political culture, the “state-level party organizations that organize and conduct electoral disputes”<sup>50</sup> can also act in local disputes. It is worth recalling that, in the context of the victory of Nonô, Mesquita, and the five councilors, the PMDB<sup>51</sup> party was still riding the wave of the “electoral success of 1986”,<sup>52</sup> in which they had won the election for governor with the Waldir Pires-Nilo Coelho<sup>53</sup> ticket.

On the other hand, the PSC<sup>54</sup> in Varzedo followed the municipal committee of Santo Antônio de Jesus, since the district belonged to it until December 31, 1989. Therefore, Mayor Humberto Leite and the committee of former Mayor Renato Machado—mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus (1983–1988) and advertised as a pre-candidate for state deputy in the 1990 elections—gave political support to the opposition in the district. In addition to that, the national branch of the PSC was being attracted, as it eventually was, to form a coalition with Fernando Collor de Mello—candidate for the presidency of Brazil in 1989—, who would use the PSC’s electoral number 20, even though he was affiliated with the PRN,<sup>55</sup> whose number was 36.

On January 1, 1990,<sup>56</sup> the new municipality of Varzedo took its first steps having its own executive and legislative administration. Starting from scratch in terms of budget, the executive branch organized itself in harmony with the legislative branch to approve laws and projects. Among them, the constitutional requirement (Article 29 of the federal Magna Carta of 1988 and

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<sup>50</sup> See FERREIRA, Denise. *PFLXPMDB: marchas e contramarchas (1982-2000)*. Goiânia. Editora Alternativa. 2002. P. 26.

<sup>51</sup> *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party), currently MDB. Regarding the five PMDB councilors in Varzedo: Everaldo Magalhães Santos was a landowner, Erivaldo de Andrade Nery was a rural leader, Pedro Antonio de Souza was a merchant, José Hamilton Oliveira da Silva was a farmer, and Pedro Barreto da Silva was a dental prosthetist. Prosopography, even when brief, reveals the socioeconomic status of individuals, outlining their profiles (ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR, 2012, pp. 15–38).

<sup>52</sup> See FERREIRA, Denise. Op. cit. P. 168.

<sup>53</sup> See JOSÉ, Emiliano. *Waldir Pires, biografia (Vol. 2)*. Rio de Janeiro. Versal Editores. 2019.

<sup>54</sup> *Partido Social Cristão* (Social Christian Party). Ângelo Galdino Nicácio was a farmer, Maria Perpétua Souza Oliveira a registrar, Áurea Barreto a merchant, and Antônio Santos de Amorim a municipal public servant (electrician).

<sup>55</sup> *Partido da Reconstrução Nacional* (National Reconstruction Party). See [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elei%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_presidencial\\_no\\_Brasil\\_em\\_1989#:~:text=Nota%3A%20a%20tabela%20a%20seguir,por%20ordem%20alfab%C3%A9tica%20de%20candidatos.&text=O%20n%C3%BAmero%20eleitoral%20do%20PRN,n%C3%BAmero%20eleitoral%20do%20PDN%2C%2051](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elei%C3%A7%C3%A3o_presidencial_no_Brasil_em_1989#:~:text=Nota%3A%20a%20tabela%20a%20seguir,por%20ordem%20alfab%C3%A9tica%20de%20candidatos.&text=O%20n%C3%BAmero%20eleitoral%20do%20PRN,n%C3%BAmero%20eleitoral%20do%20PDN%2C%2051).

<sup>56</sup> The first directing board of the municipal council was elected on January 1, 1990: Pedro Antonio de Souza (president), Erivaldo Andrade Nery (vice president), Everaldo Magalhães (1st secretary), and José Hamilton Oliveira (2nd secretary), all members of the PMDB and aligned with Mayor Nonô, who played a significant role in the political maneuvering.

Article 55 of the state Magna Carta of 1989) to draft, discuss, and approve the municipal Organic Law resulted in its promulgation after the first six months of the first legislature, on June 13, 1990, the day of the first anniversary of Varzedo's emancipation.

Moreover, in the minutes drafted between 1990 and 1991,<sup>57</sup> nominations, requests, bills, authorizations, reports, honorary titles of citizenship, and readings were discussed and approved, coordinated by president Pedro Antonio de Souza.<sup>58</sup> He was a politician from the ruling group, who was replaced by councilor Áurea Barreto Almeida,<sup>59</sup> an opponent of Mayor Nonô and elected president of the municipal council in accordance with the internal regulations. Her election was marked by the maneuverings of the mayor's opposition,<sup>60</sup> gaining support of a councilor who was then part of the ruling group, Pedro Barreto da Silva,<sup>61</sup> who had been elected on the president's ticket as vice-president of the council.<sup>62</sup>

When the sessions resumed in the second half of 1991, the municipal councilors received the prior report No. 108 from the Municipal Audit Court, dated July 31, regarding the financial accounts of the Varzedo municipal government for the 1990 fiscal year.<sup>63</sup> The *approval* of these accounts by the state public body was subject to reservations due to allegations of irregularities presented in May of the same year by Vice-Mayor Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita. During a regular session on May 23, Mesquita announced his split with Mayor

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<sup>57</sup>A total of 55 minutes, more specifically 25 in 1990 and 30 in 1991. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council archive.

<sup>58</sup>Merchant, resident of Varzedo, councilor (1990–1992), and vice mayor (1993–1996).

<sup>59</sup>Merchant, resident of Varzedo, and councilor (1990–1992).

<sup>60</sup>With the elections for governor, senator, and federal and state deputies in 1990, political maneuvering took place at the local level, influenced by regional leaders. Renato Machado, former mayor of Santo Antônio de Jesus (1983–1988), who helped elect his successor, Humberto Leite (1989–1992), and was elected state deputy in 1990 by the PMDB, maintained political ties with leaders in Varzedo. After taking office in the Bahia State Legislature, Renato Machado joined the PDS, the party aligned with the elected governor Antônio Carlos Magalhães (1991–1994), and became the leader in the State Legislative House. He then worked to orchestrate the election of the directing board with the opposition of the Varzedo Municipal Council, presenting a slate with two candidates from his group—Áurea Barreto (president) and Maria Perpétua (2nd secretary)—plus two members of the ruling group “pulled” into its composition: Pedro Barreto da Silva (vice-president) and José Hamilton (1st secretary), securing the necessary votes, which were supplemented by opposition councilors Antônio Santos de Amorim and Ângelo Galdino Nicácio.

<sup>61</sup>Dental prosthetist, resident of Varzedo at the time, and councilor (1990–1992).

<sup>62</sup>In compliance with Article 31, paragraph 1 of the Organic Law, the length of the municipal council presidential term is two years.

<sup>63</sup>Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim's archive.



Nonô due to “(...) not agreeing with the disloyalty displayed in the current administration.”<sup>64</sup>

The friction between the two escalated in the remaining months of 1991 and were emphasized by Nonô’s disaffiliation from the PMDB and subsequent affiliation with the PFL. This was highlighted by councilor Everaldo Magalhães in the session of August 1 in the Long Address:<sup>65</sup> “(...) the mayor, accompanied by some councilors, met (...) with Governor Antônio Carlos Magalhães, who approved the party affiliation form of the mayor and councilors (...).”<sup>66</sup> *Carlismo*<sup>67</sup> had returned to the government of Bahia with the election of Antônio Carlos Magalhães (ACM) in 1990,<sup>68</sup> after the interregnum of the PMDB government represented by Waldir Pires (1987-1989).<sup>69</sup>

Allegations of supposed administrative improbity also led the vice-mayor and former ally of Mayor Nonô to file a complaint with the State Prosecution Service against him. As a result, under the presidency of the council, who opposed him, the podium was available as a sounding board for Mesquita to rant, even seeking to encourage the councilors not to fall into “(...) ocular discreditability, since the people elected the nine councilors to oversee the actions of the Mayor (...).”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Minutes of the regular session held on May 23, 1991. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council.

<sup>65</sup>*Grande Expediente* (Long Address) refers to the time during the regular session when councilors take the floor to deliver speeches and engage in debates.

<sup>66</sup>Minutes of the 19th regular session of the first legislature, held on August 1, 1991. Source: Varzedo municipal council.

<sup>67</sup>*Carlismo* refers to Antônio Carlos Magalhães, a Bahian politician who, between 1954 and 2007, served as a state deputy, federal deputy, mayor of the city of Salvador, governor of Bahia three times, president of a federal agency (Eletrobrás), minister of Communications under President José Sarney’s administration (1985-1989), and twice as a senator. The term reflects his political actions and influence in Bahia. Regarding *Carlismo*, see DANTAS NETO, Paulo Fábio. **Tradição, autocracia e carisma: a política de Antônio Carlos Magalhães na modernização da Bahia (1954-1974)**. Editora UFMG, Belo Horizonte; Iuperj, Rio de Janeiro. 2006.

<sup>68</sup>For information on *Carlismo* and its origins, see DANTAS NETO, Paulo Fábio. *Tradição, autocracia e carisma: a política de Antônio Carlos Magalhães na modernização da Bahia*. Belo Horizonte-MG, Editora UFMG; Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Iuperj. 2006.

<sup>69</sup>Waldir Pires won the 1986 race for governor of Bahia against Josaphat Marinho, but left to form a ticket as vice-president with Ulysses Guimarães in the 1989 national presidential race, handing over the administration to the vice-governor, Nilo Coelho. See JOSÉ, Emiliano. *Waldir Pires biografia* (vol. 2). 1ª ed. Rio de Janeiro. Versal Editores. 2019.

<sup>70</sup>Minutes of the regular session held on August 8, 1991. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council.



## BETWEEN COMMOTION AND MANEUVERINGS: THE REVERSE

The quiet autumn Sunday was abruptly awakened by shouting voices spreading the news of the murder of then-mayor Nonô, 72, committed by two men on a motorcycle. The stagnation in Varzedo was disrupted, with streets and squares crowded with people gathered in response to the shock and commotion amplified by the confirmation of the death of the municipality's first administrator, for decades a councilor representing the district of Varzedo, and successful in the elections in which he ran.<sup>71</sup>

Judicial and police investigations intercepted the man who fired the three shots, the man who rode the motorcycle, interlocutors,<sup>72</sup> and, according to the investigations, reached Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita, vice-mayor and mastermind of the crime.<sup>73</sup> He took office as mayor on May 19 and governed for a few days, but fled on the night of May 25, between 10pm and 11pm, after being "informed" of the arrests of "(...) the gunmen in Salvador (...)": Edilson Lima Rocha, the shooter, and Marcos Souza Macedo, the rider of the motorcycle, nicknamed respectively Ceará and Marcão. The two revealed "that Mesquita and Pedro were the masterminds",<sup>74</sup> the latter being Councilor Pedro Barreto da Silva, vice-president of the council.

Publicized in newspapers for weeks starting on May 18,<sup>75</sup> Nonô's death triggered a series of actions following Mesquita's flight, including legal and legislative proceedings against him and Pedro Barreto in the early days of June 1992. While elegies for Nonô were read and prayed at Sunday masses and *crentes*<sup>76</sup> worships and the pre-election campaign of his adopted son, Valter

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<sup>71</sup> As previously alluded to, Nonô was elected councilor seven times, representing the PSD (1958), UDN (1962), Arena (1966/1970 and 1976), PDS (1982), and PFL (1988). In fact, he ranked first with 743 votes in his last election for councilor in 1988 ([www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br)).

<sup>72</sup> Those who made the contact between the mastermind behind the crime and the shooter, as well as the man who rode the motorcycle.

<sup>73</sup> Investigations compiled in the CM proceeding No. 026/92, accusing Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita. Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim Archive.

<sup>74</sup> Article *Assassinato do prefeito deixa Varzedo órfã. E tensa* (Mayor's murder leaves Varzedo orphaned. And tense), published by the newspaper *Tribuna da Bahia*, *Política* (Politics) section, on June 15, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> The Bahian newspaper *A Tarde* featured the following front-page headline on May 18: *Mortos governador do Acre e prefeito baiano* ("Governor of Acre and Bahian Mayor killed").

<sup>76</sup> Common term used by locals to refer to the followers of evangelical religious denominations, which in 1992 Varzedo were represented by the *Assembleia de Deus*, a church located on Rua Vereador Manoel Francisco de Jesus, and the *Batista Betel*, situated on Praça 08 de Dezembro, next to the Catholic parish church.

Bonfim Lago,<sup>77</sup> was gaining momentum after Nonô's own nomination prior to his death, proceedings in the Varzedo city council progressed rapidly.

As a reflection, the mobilization by Nonô's political heirs relied on the political use of his spectral figure *post-mortem*, both as an electoral banner and as a plus for maneuverings that aimed at maintaining the city's administration in the hands of the Nonôist<sup>78</sup> group. The political-instrumental semiotics surrounding the memory of the dead mayor forged discourses with the aim of politically and emotionally "resurrecting" him, turning him into a martyr,<sup>79</sup> victimizing him, and using him as a rhetorical *aegis* for political maneuverings in the municipal council. The regular session held in the city council on June 10, 1992 began at 5:30pm, foreshadowing the decline of legislative legality, which was eclipsed by the actions of councilors linked to Nonô, who had been deceased for almost a month at the time.

According to paragraph 4 of Article 72 of Varzedo's Organic Law, the vice-mayor is responsible, among other things, for succeeding the mayor "(...) in the event of a vacancy in the position." Naturally, with Mayor Nonô's assassination, Vice-Mayor Mesquita automatically took office, governing Varzedo from May 19 to 25.

Having left the municipality and the responsibilities of his position behind while police investigated his involvement in the crime, Mesquita submitted a request to the council, through a lawyer after fleeing, "seeking authorization to be absent from the city for thirty days", a loophole he found in Article 75 of the same Organic Law, which states that the extended absence of the mayor is not allowed "(...) without the permission of the municipal council."

His request was denied "unanimously",<sup>80</sup> as was the request of councilor Pedro Barreto da Silva, who had already been replaced in that regular session

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<sup>77</sup>Valter Bonfim Lago was a teacher, treasurer of the city hall (1990-1992), and mayor of Varzedo (1993-1996).

<sup>78</sup>The term refers to Nonô's followers, leaders associated with him located in the communities of the municipality. Many were elected to the municipal council in 1989 and in subsequent elections, even to the mayor's office, such as Valter Bonfim Lago, elected mayor in 1992, Erotildes Silva Souza, elected mayor in 1996, and, despite no longer directly associated with these two direct political heirs of Nonô, Manoel Souza Andrade was elected mayor as an "indirect heir" in 2000.

<sup>79</sup>Indeed, Bill No. 002/92, dated June 8, authored by Councilor José Hamilton, was approved, using the term "martyr" to establish May 17th as a municipal holiday every year, as it remains to this day.

<sup>80</sup>Copy of the minutes of the regular session held on June 10, 1992, to be included in the proceeding against Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita. Source: CM proceeding no. 026/92, p. 30. Antônio Santos de Amorim's archive. The abbreviation CM stands for *Câmara Municipal* (municipal council).

by alternate (Article 52) Edison Manuel de Jesus.<sup>81</sup> However, in the same session in which Mayor Mesquita's request for leave of absence was read and subsequently rejected by the nine councilors,<sup>82</sup> there was a request—Request No. 003/92—to “remove the Presidency of the Directing Board”<sup>83</sup> in the “reading of the proceedings” conducted by the 2nd secretary, Councilor Maria Perpétua.<sup>84</sup> The request was skillfully put up for discussion and signed by the requesting councilors: Everaldo Magalhães Santos, Erivaldo de Andrade Nery, Pedro Antonio de Souza, Edison Manuel de Jesus, José Hamilton Oliveira da Silva, and Ângelo Galdino Nicácio, that is, two thirds of the council, based on Article 24 of the Organic Law.<sup>85</sup>

What were the reasons behind this initiative, given that it was two thirds and not the absolute majority of councilors?

In the session's *Agenda*, President Áurea Barreto, whose role was in a state of limbo, continued her duty of presiding the directing board by putting “(...) Request 003/92 up for discussion (...)” That Wednesday evening approached as the council was swarming with people, a rare occurrence given that attendance was modest even in solemn sessions. However, there was a call for people to attend the session, many of them Nonô voters. In front of an audience moved by the recent death of the mayor, the first councilor to take the floor was Everaldo Magalhães Santos, who verbalized his defense of the request:

(...) it represented a political act as well as an administrative one because it reflected the will of the majority of two (2) thirds of the councilors who expressed their dissatisfaction with the inefficiency and omission with which Madam President Áurea Barreto had been steering this council, which is why six of her peers decided to remove her from the Presidency in response to a plea from the Varzedo community; (...).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Edison Manuel de Jesus, an accountant and lawyer, was a councilor of Varzedo (1992/1997-2000, 2001-2004), president of the municipal council, and president of an association. He is a municipal public servant.

<sup>82</sup> Áurea Barreto Almeida (president), José Hamilton Oliveira da Silva (1st secretary), Maria Perpétua de Souza Oliveira (2nd secretary), Antônio Santos de Amorim, Erivaldo de Andrade Nery, Everaldo Magalhães Santos, Pedro Antônio de Souza, Ângelo Galdino Nicácio, and Edison Manuel de Jesus—who took the position that was left vacant by Pedro Barreto da Silva, vice-president of the directing board.

<sup>83</sup> Minutes of the regular session, June 10, 1992. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council.

<sup>84</sup> Maria Perpétua de Souza Oliveira, councilor (1990-1992/1993-1996) and registrar.

<sup>85</sup> Article 24 - It is the exclusive responsibility of the Municipal Council to (...): I - Elect its Board of Directors, as well as remove it in accordance with this Organic Law (...).

<sup>86</sup> Minutes of the regular session held on June 10, 1992. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council.

Interpreting the statement above from a Foucauldian perspective, the councilor's "ordered speech" exhibits a selective organization:<sup>87</sup> the terms "political act", "the will of the majority of the councilors", and "dissatisfaction" endorse others, such as "inefficiency and omission of the President", "steering this council", and "in response to the Varzedo community."

It can be seen that, among the reasons examined by this paper for the proposal of Request 003/92, was the "will" of six councilors who were using the posthumous atmosphere and were defenders of Nonô's political "memory" in order to "respond to the plea" of the entity referred to as "the Varzedo community," as if the local population as a whole was "united" in demanding the resignation or—what was at stake—the removal of President Áurea Barreto signed by the President herself. The fervor of the audience—which resembled spectators more than anything else—prompted shouts of "Sign it! Sign it! Sign it!"

Furthermore, as far as what this scientific research has ascertained, there were no mobilizations on the city streets or petitions from the 8,662 inhabitants of Varzedo.<sup>88</sup> Thus, another reason for the removal would have been the use of the dismay of a significant portion of the population of Varzedo as a backdrop, leaving the main objective behind the scenes: to undermine the then president, who was linked to the opposition to Nonô and his group, based on the legal grounds of the Organic Law. This assumption was so true that two councilors, Edison Manoel de Jesus and, once again, Everaldo Magalhães, echoed before the plenary during the Long Address that Varzedo "(...) does not need the interference of outsiders in its steering, because [its] people know how to walk for their own reasons, knowledge, and leadership (...)." <sup>89</sup>

This summary, recorded in the minutes regarding what both parties said, emphasizing the idea of self-sufficiency—"does not need the interference of outsiders"—, follows the statement quoted above by Councilor Everaldo. This approach aimed to stimulate a localist discourse and, at the same time, diminish any presence of authorities or political aides from other regions in the municipal administration. The xenophobia employed was efficient in sending a message to President Áurea Barreto's team, represented by Flomário Santos, a mayoral candidate in Varzedo who was defeated by Nonô in 1989

<sup>87</sup> See FOUCAULT, Michel. *A ordem do discurso: aula inaugural no Collège de France, pronunciada em 2 de dezembro de 1970*. Tradução Laura Fraga de Almeida Sampaio. 9ª edição. São Paulo. Edições Loyola. 2003. Pp. 8-9.

<sup>88</sup> IBGE census data from 1990. Source: *Diagnóstico de Municípios - Região do Recôncavo Sul - VARZEDO*. Sebrae/Governo da Bahia. Série Desenvolvimento Regional 77, Salvador, dezembro de 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of the regular session held on June 10, 1992. Source: Varzedo Municipal Council.

and lived in Santo Antônio de Jesus, but it did not work on some politicians in Nonô's group who were from other places.<sup>90</sup>

The two reasons mentioned above as the leitmotiv for pushing for the removal of President Áurea Barreto and the directing board—undertaken by the majority of the council due to “a plea from the population” and the sorrow of the people over the tragic death of the mayor—were pretexts to deter the President's rise to the position of head of the municipal executive branch.

According to Varzedo's Organic Law, Article 41: “It is the responsibility of the President of the Council, (...)”, item IX: “To exercise, as a substitute, the leadership of the Municipal Executive Branch (...)” In the section referring to the mayor (Section I, Chapter III THE EXECUTIVE POWER), Article 73 states: “In the event of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor being prevented from attending to their duties or vacancy in their respective positions, the President of the Municipal Council shall be called to assume the position of Mayor.”

In other words, while the local legislation enacted in 1990 was strictly objective, two thirds of the council deemed it appropriate, driven by “will”, and a “response to the plea” to go against it in a subjective manner, taking advantage of the alleged social pressure, submitting the request and message containing the dissolution of the presidency. This was achieved during the same session that, for hours, polarized curious onlookers near the municipal council. Days after the deliberative meeting that removed her from office, Áurea Barreto spoke about the incident to the newspaper *Tribuna da Bahia* about the fact: “Had I refused to read the message of my removal, even though I considered it irregular, I would have been lynched by the crowd.”<sup>91</sup>

At the core of the situation, there was noticeably immense fear among the protagonists who followed Nonô<sup>92</sup> that the administration of the city would “fall into the hands” of the opposition. At the June 10 session, maneuverings accelerated the ruling group's aim to make a change in positions during the assembly. Due to her defenestration from the presidency, which left it necessarily vacant and without a vice-president, since “(...) he is currently suspended from his duties,” 1st Secretary José Hamilton ascended,

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<sup>90</sup> A prime example was Nonô's administrative secretary, Marinaldo Cardoso. Born in Iaçú, Bahia, Marinaldo completed his education in Minas Gerais and moved to Varzedo at the invitation of the first mayor of the municipality to join the administrative staff.

<sup>91</sup> Article *Assassinato do prefeito deixa Varzedo órfã. E tensa* (Mayor's murder leaves Varzedo orphaned. And tense), *Política* (Politics) section, Monday, June 15, 1992, p. 3. Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim's archive.

<sup>92</sup> Included in this group were: councilors from the ruling group, municipal secretaries, and local political leaders.

“in accordance with the regulations,” to the provisional presidency of the municipal council, Councilor Maria Perpétua to the secretariat of the new legislative administration, and the substitute and then municipal council Edison Manuel de Jesus, through an “*ad hoc* (...) nomination”, to the 2nd secretariat.

This internal reorganization came as a result of the easing of tensions following the forced signing of Áurea Barreto’s resignation. Temporarily housed in an old building that operated between the 1960s and 1980s as an annex to the educational institution Prédio Rural de Varzedo, located on Rua Coronel José Augusto and next to the provisional headquarters of the Varzedo city hall,<sup>93</sup> the municipal council in 1992 had a small physical structure,<sup>94</sup> almost the size of a small room. It became overcrowded due to the people present in the session that was fueled by hatred, insults, and prejudice directed at the president of the directing board before she officialized her forced abdication.

Regarding those moments in which the executive and legislative branches of Varzedo were at stake, one of the political figures active at the time recalled and acknowledged:

What happened there was a—it was a matter of political emotion. I even got on board with it, as I should have, because if I didn’t, others would. (...) But there was an issue. Again, there was the problem that Mrs. Áurea could have been the mayor. But again there was the issue of Santantônio [*sic*] wanting to administer Varzedo. (...) <sup>95</sup>

Given that oral accounts often provide partial versions, which may or may not offer objectivity and be riddled with skepticism,<sup>96</sup> Edison’s account is what provides elements that are unavailable in different sources<sup>97</sup> due to

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<sup>93</sup>In fact, the city hall was “temporary” for several years, with a change of location during the second term of Mayor Radaman Barreto (2013-2016). It is now located on Praça 08 de Dezembro.

<sup>94</sup>This “temporary” situation became permanent, as the building underwent renovations for years, acquiring annexes. Today, the municipal council’s headquarters is located in the same building.

<sup>95</sup>Interview given by Edison Manuel de Jesus on July 24, 2001. At the time, Edison, or Edinho as he is more commonly known, was 37 years old. He continues to live in Varzedo today.

<sup>96</sup>See CAMARGO, Aspásia. “História oral e política”. In: FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes (org.). *História oral e multidisciplinaridade*. Gávea, Rio de Janeiro-RJ. Diadorim Editora Ltda. 1994. Pp. 75-99. Pp. 78-79.

<sup>97</sup>See TRAVERSO, Enzo. *O passado, modos de usar: história, memória e política*. Tradução Tiago Avó. 1ª edição. Edições Unipop. Lisboa. 2012. Pp. 16-17.

coming from an actor in the political game as a member of the ruling group.<sup>98</sup> His view on having been part of what happened—“getting on board with it”—corresponds to what Norbert Elias calls a “continuous flow of events”<sup>99</sup> (our translation), meaning that the “emotion”, or rather, the survival of the ruling group in the Varzedo executive branch in the face of the “external threat” called “Santo Antônio de Jesus”, spoke louder against Áurea ascending to the position of mayor.

Edison explains that, when talking about the “threat” symbolized by Santo Antônio de Jesus—municipality to which the district of Varzedo belonged until its emancipation in 1989—he was referring to the then Santo Antônio de Jesus government, represented by Mayor Humberto Soares Leite (1989-1992) and especially to state deputy Renato Machado (1991-1992). Both were influential politicians from the Beija-Flor group, who had influence in the then newly-emancipated Varzedo both through local councilors and leaders and through voters.<sup>100</sup> In fact, last but not least, Nonô was linked to the group that opposed Renato and Humberto’s group, known as Jacu.

However, since memory is *subjectivity* anchored to moments experienced by those who attended<sup>101</sup> and participated in them, the account of another member of the ruling group present on June 10 biases his view:

Mrs. Áurea didn’t resign, she didn’t resign. Her mandate was, it was revoked. In fact, she lost her position as president at the time. I think I even voted in favor of that [and he did]. You know politics! I was inexperienced, too young, 22, 23 years old, you know what I mean. (...) Mrs. Áurea would automatically take over the mayor’s office, you know. Then, the political group, you

<sup>98</sup> Edison Manuel, between 1990 and 1992, before becoming a municipal councilor, a position he ran for as part of the coalition of then-candidate Nonô, served as the mayor’s personal secretary. Source: Revista A FOLHA DOS MUNICÍPIOS. Edição de nº 23, abril de 1992. Pp. 10-12.

<sup>99</sup> See ELIAS, Norberto. “Sobre o tempo”. In: *Sobre o tempo*. Tradução Vera Ribeiro. Rio de Janeiro. Jorge Zahar Ed. 1998. Pp. 33-158. P. 59.

<sup>100</sup> Humberto Leite and Renato Machado were political actors of the Beija-Flor group and had followers in Varzedo who were connected to the group since previous years, as well as supporters in the municipal council, such as councilors Maria Perpétua, Áurea Barreto, Antônio Santos de Amorim, and Ângelo Galdino Nicácio, who were elected with the support of both as well as other political figures of the group. Regarding the origin of Beija-Flor, see VALADÃO, Hélio. *Santo Antônio de Jesus, sua gente e suas origens & biografia de Rômulo Almeida*. Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba. Editora e gráfica Exemplar. 2005. Pp. 89-90. Regarding Renato Machado and his political trajectory, see AMORIM, Antonio Jorge Souza. *A política renatista: as práticas “neocoronelistas” e “neopopulistas” em Santo Antônio de Jesus - poder dos “doutores”, continuísmo e favoritismo (1985-1995)*. Monografia de licenciatura em história. Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB). Santo Antônio de Jesus-Ba, Campus V. 1998.

<sup>101</sup> See TRAVERSO, Enzo. Op. cit. P. 23.

know, got together and then decided to remove Mrs. Áurea. I don't remember the reason... uhm, to revoke her mandate... But we revoked her mandate as president, for Zé Hamilton... There was a negotiation at the time (...) and we elected Zé Hamilton as president. And then he took over as mayor. (...) I remember Flomário went there, back then, he went there with a lawyer, you know. She [Mrs. Áurea] even made a joke (laughs). (...) <sup>102</sup>

When answering the question regarding the regular session and if the president resigned, Erivaldo de Andrade Nery, also known as Val Nery, relied on his recollection and interpretation and emphasized that she was removed from office. Clarifying, at first, Áurea Barreto returned to her seat in that same session; however, from June 10 to July 8, José Hamilton served as interim president. An internal vote was held on June 8, 1992 so that, in accordance with a special session made by the “1st Secretary acting as the President of the Municipal Council of Varzedo”<sup>103</sup> during the parliamentary recess for the election of “Vacant Positions in the Municipal Council Directing Board,”<sup>104</sup> Everaldo Magalhães Santos could take over the presidency.

In part, Val Nery's use of the term “removal” concerning Áurea Barreto was not entirely a matter of semantics, as efforts were made to rearrange the legislative body through a special session during parliamentary recess in the last fortnight of July 1992. This session was convened for councilors to consider the proceedings against former vice-mayor Luiz Carlos Farias Mesquita, absconded former councilor Pedro Barreto da Silva, and councilor Áurea Barreto. The latter was thrust from legislative paradise to hell following a complaint against her by Agenor Almeida Mota and his party—the PST, *Social Labor Party*—to remove her from office. Agenor did not hold public office; he exercised his rights as a citizen.

The legislative procedure began in July and lasted until September, in the midst of the electoral race for mayors and councilors. The proceedings/cases for the removal of Luiz Carlos Mesquita and Pedro Barreto from office were completed successfully in/with the documentations gathered by the legislative committees. However, the CM (*Câmara Municipal*, Municipal

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<sup>102</sup> Voice message sent by Erivaldo de Andrade Nery in April 1, 2024, via WhatsApp, at 2:36 p.m. Duration: 3 minutes and 7 seconds. In 1992, Val Nery was a councilor, having been elected consecutively in the elections of 1989, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012.

<sup>103</sup> NOTICE and ANNOUNCEMENT No. 004/92, dated July 1, 1992. Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim's archive.

<sup>104</sup> Idem.



Council) proceeding no. 029/92<sup>105</sup> against Áurea Barreto, which aimed to file a complaint against her so that she could eventually be removed from office, stalled precisely due to the lack of “whys” and “reasons” to remove her from office as a municipal councilor. This attempt went down the cryptic road of demeaning her for her “omission” as president of the directing board and associating her with those convicted of the death of Mayor Nonô.

The veiled misogyny and the ill intentions behind the eagerness to highlight her physical disability in her leg—a consequence of her diabetes—intensified the dislike toward Áurea Barreto by many, which may have prevented her from being re-elected. In fact, the party with which she was affiliated (PSC) decided not to nominate a candidate for mayor due to internal maneuverings, which contributed to the candidacy of a single candidate, who came from the group that inherited Nonô’s political legacy.

## POINTS OF CONTENTION AND EPILOGUE

The points of contention exercised after Mayor Nonô’s death by Nonôist political figures focused on maintaining municipal power—the defenestration by force of the then president of the House Áurea Barreto through the use of the legislative internal regulations so that she and her group would not take control of the local executive branch—calls to mind Caetano Veloso’s words that “while men” exercised “their rotten powers”<sup>106</sup> behind the scenes, the consequences of the localist rhetoric were, in full view of the local community, leaving their mark.

The main point of contention was the one expressed in the June 10 session regarding “outsiders” intervening in “steering the community of Varzedo.” Now, in the reading conducted by the 2nd secretary, Councilor Maria Perpétua, bill no. 003/92, which was to be considered, voted on, and approved by the council, allowed “(...) the Mayor’s secretary to be responsible for the proceedings of the Municipal Government of Varzedo (...),”<sup>107</sup> meaning, in general terms, full authority over the administration granted “(...) to Secretary Marinaldo Cardoso to ‘be responsible for the proceedings.’”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT No. 005/92 and CALL ANNOUNCEMENT No. 007/92, dated July 16 and September 24, 1992, respectively. Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim’s archive.

<sup>106</sup> Song *Podres poderes* by Caetano Veloso, from the album *Velô*, PolyGram, 1984.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes of the regular session held on June 10, 1992. Source: Antônio Santos de Amorim’s archive.

<sup>108</sup> Newspaper *Tribuna da Bahia*, article *Assassinato do prefeito deixa Varzedo órfã. E tensa* (Mayor’s murder leaves Varzedo orphaned. And tense), p. 3.

Born in Iaçú, Bahia, in 1955, Marinaldo Cardoso de Almeida had a degree in mechanical technical drawing from the ASSEDIPA<sup>109</sup> Technical School in Ipatinga, Minas Gerais, where he also studied accounting.<sup>110</sup> Marinaldo, who was invited by the elected mayor Nonô to head the Secretariat of Administration, had no familial or property ties in Varzedo. Paradoxically and contradictorily, the localist discourse *versus* “outsiders” was applied to the “outsiders” with ties to the opposition, but did not apply to those linked to the ruling group. Double standards!

The second, and certainly most important, point of contention revolved around the political instrumentalization of Mayor Nonô’s memory for personal gain, whose organic mark remained for days on the curb of the street where the assassinated mayor’s house stood: a gush of blood spilled as the body was transferred from one vehicle to another after he was struck by three lethal shots on Sunday, May 17. From then on, reverberations, movements, and remembrances of him were used to maintain “(...) a powerful bond with those who stayed behind.”<sup>111</sup>

The election campaign for the single candidacy of Valter Bonfim Lago, known as Valtinho, benefited from that posthumous and continuously gloomy atmosphere. He was the adopted son of Mayor Nonô and his wife Erotildes Silva Souza, nicknamed Tide, and was his chosen successor in the 1992 election. The slogan of his campaign, “The continuation of Nonô’s work”, was an attempt to erase any allegations of administrative improbity in Nonô’s administrations while simultaneously evoking compassion, indignation, sorrow, and nostalgia for the first mayor of Varzedo, murdered at the age of 72 after 34 years in politics.

Due to the lack of candidates from the opposing group, the candidacy of Valtinho for mayor and Pedro de Cupertino<sup>112</sup> for vice-mayor comprised the only ticket in that election, which intensified the competition for seats in the municipal legislature. Practically and solely using a campaign vehicle

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<sup>109</sup>In the text *O Secretário do Prefeito* (The Mayor’s Secretary; p. 11), the spelling is “ACEDIPA,” but the correct acronym is “ASSEDIPA,” as it stands for *Associação Educacional de Ipatinga* (Educational Association of Ipatinga), in Minas Gerais. See: <https://www.diariodoaco.com.br/noticia/0018359-colegio-assedipa-fecha-as-portas>.

<sup>110</sup>Article titled *Nonô, um prefeito que ficará na história* (Nonô, a mayor who will go down in history) from the magazine *A FOLHA DOS MUNICÍPIOS*, edition no. 23, April 1992, pp. 10-12. In the referenced text, the title is “*O Secretário do Prefeito*” (p. 11).

<sup>111</sup>See DAMATTA, Roberto. *A casa & a rua: espaço, cidadania, morte e mulher no Brasil*. 5ª edição. Rio de Janeiro. Rocco. 1997. P. 158.

<sup>112</sup>*Pedro de Cupertino* was how Pedro Antonio de Souza, councilor and president of the Varzedo Municipal Council in the first legislature, was commonly known.

as a canvasser, circulating through the streets in the urban area and roads nearby incessantly playing a jingle with melancholic melody and lyrics,<sup>113</sup> Valtinho and Pedro (PFL/PST coalition) obtained 2,978 votes out of a total of 3,306,<sup>114</sup> thus electing seven councilors from the coalition as opposed to two from the PSC.<sup>115</sup>

The political atmosphere in Varzedo after Nonô's burial led to municipal administrations<sup>116</sup> anointed by his memory. José Hamilton, interim president of the municipal council, in accordance with the Organic Law was appointed to head the municipal executive branch in the second half of 1992 to complete Nonô's interrupted administration. The new arrangement of the legislature remained almost unchanged, with the new political figures for the 1993-1996 term replacing the seats of other *Nonôists* and some who had attempted to align with the sole majority ticket, despite being from opposing parties.<sup>117</sup>

The number of PFL members reflects the expansion of the party when *Carlismo* rose to the government of Bahia, this time through a direct election.<sup>118</sup> In the case of Varzedo, Mayor Nonô joined the PFL in August 1991, as did some allied councilors and leaders. The presidency of the provisional PFL committee in Varzedo remained with *Nonôist* and Nonô's adopted son Valtinho, who managed to be elected and elect five of the nine councilors from the PFL and

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<sup>113</sup>Some excerpts from the song, played on the campaign vehicle through a cassette tape: *A esperança renasce de um nome que já se foi/ Ele plantou sua vontade, honestidade e amor/ Renovando a sua história/ Ele vive em nossa memória/ Esse nome é Nonô/ Valtinho é a esperança que nasce (...)* (Hope is reborn from a name that is no more/ He planted his will, honesty, and love/ Renewing his history/ He lives in our memory/ This name is Nonô/ Valtinho is the hope that is born...) Source: Author's memory.

<sup>114</sup>Total number of voters in 1989. Source: [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br).

<sup>115</sup>In order: Erivaldo de Andrade Nery (PFL, 316 votes), Manuel Souza Andrade (PFL, 296 votes), Antonio Vasconcelos Teixeira (PFL, 221 votes), Ângelo Galdino Nicácio (PFL, 215 votes), Antônio Souza Andrade (PST, 188 votes), Francisco Barbosa de Oliveira (PSC, 177 votes), Heleno Azevedo dos Santos (PFL, 169 votes), Maria Perpétua de Souza Oliveira (PSC, 145 votes), and Evandro Soares de Almeida (PST, 141 votes). Source: [www.tre-ba.jus.br](http://www.tre-ba.jus.br).

<sup>116</sup>José Hamilton (1992), Valtinho (1993-1996), and Tide (1997-2000).

<sup>117</sup>There was an attempt at a political "truce" between the ruling group and the opposition with the proposal that the ruling group's candidate, Valtinho, run for mayor, respecting the late Mayor Nonô's recommendation, while the opposition would nominate a candidate for vice-mayor. This was ruled out. Before that, there was the possibility of the opposition nominating a candidate for mayor, with the vice mayor candidate coming from a coalition party. This idea was rejected by opposition figures who, taking advantage of the posthumous context, advocated for Valtinho's single candidacy, but without directly supporting him, leaving the competition for the municipal council elections. This ultimately prevailed, yielding benefits to the supporters of the cause.

<sup>118</sup>In his two previous terms (1971-1975 and 1979-1982), Antônio Carlos Magalhães took office through appointments made by the military governments, notoriously referred to as *biônicas*.

two from the PST, both allied parties of both the mayor of Varzedo and the government of ACM.

Analyzing municipal legislatures based on internal movements and maneuverings, drawing on meeting minutes, official documents, oral accounts, and memories, is a requirement for political historiography in a fragmented country like Brazil, where local politicians carry both “universal” and “specific” legacies—clientelism/patrimonialism and *mandonismo/coronelismo*, respectively—that demand revisionist perspectives,<sup>119</sup> but also yearn to be exposed by the gaze of a historian who lives and coexists—or not—with the localities.

The use of the posthumous atmosphere marked by the murder of a prominent local politician was the grounds to take advantage of the quorum and Organic Law to make decisions targeting the municipal executive branch, as exemplified by what happened in the regular session of June 10, 1992 in the Varzedo municipal council. It is possible to objectively address topics that are adjacent<sup>120</sup> (ARAS, 2017, p. 619) to personal experience and interactions—without concealed localism—in order to contribute to Clio. The detachment—in the good, inspiring sense of the word—with which one observes in the rearview mirror a moment of shock in a place decades later allows for a closer look at the narratives responsible for the construction of the official discourse. This discourse, reinforced and repeated, created the “absolutism of truth” upheld by interest groups that perpetuated a Manichean worldview.

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<sup>119</sup> See CARVALHO, José Murilo de. “Mandonismo, coronelismo, clientelismo: uma discussão conceitual”. In: *Pontos e bordados: escritos de história e política*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2005. p. 130-153.

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