The weave of kinship and the ever-mobile fishing village of Barra de Ararapira (Superagüi Island, Guaraqueçaba, Paraná, Brazil)

Juliane Bazzo

Resumo

No vilarejo pescador de Barra de Ararapira, o parentesco opera como um idioma que permite perceber, pensar, expressar e ordenar um espaço em permanente transformação. A localidade vive um processo de erosão natural, em razão do qual seus moradores vêm transferindo, secularmente, áreas de residência e rotas de pesca. Essa conjuntura natural resultou num direito territorial próprio, orientado por um conteúdo genealógico, que diverge radicalmente de outras formas de organizar o espaço, como a propriedade privada ou o domínio público. Um conflito que se materializa com a sobreposição à vila de pescadores do Parque Nacional do Superagüi em 1997, um instrumento estatal para proteção de áreas naturais, onde a presença humana é vetada a fim de assegurar os objetivos conservacionistas.

Palavras-chave: Povos e comunidades tradicionais, Territorialidades particulares, Relações de Parentesco, Conflitos socioambientais.

Abstract

In Barra de Ararapira fisherman village, kinship operates as a language that allows to realize, think, express and organize a space in constant transformation. The village is undergoing a process of natural erosion, because of this, its residents have been transferring, secularly, residence areas and fishing routes. This natural situation resulted in an own territorial law, oriented by a genealogical content, which differs radically from other forms of space organizing, such as private property or public domain. This conflict materializes with the overlap to the fishermen village of the Superagüi National Park in 1997, a state instrument for protection of natural areas, where human presence is vetoed in order to ensure the conservation objectives.

Keywords: traditional people and communities; particular territorialities; kinship relations; social and environment conflicts

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Introduction

This article presents a number of analytic reflections from my ethnography of territoriality in Barra de Ararapira, a fishing village on Superagüi Island, located in Guaraqueçaba municipality on the north coast of Paraná State, a region with substantial remnants of Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest.[1] My interest in conducting research in this locality arose from a socioenvironmental conflict, which I had learnt about while working for an environmentalist non-government organization based in Paraná state. In 1997, following the amplification of the Superagüi National Park, Barra de Ararapira was absorbed within the borders of this protected natural area. From an official viewpoint, this turned its inhabitants overnight into illegal occupants.[2] According to the National Conservation Units System (NCUS), the parks are publically owned and controlled. Once created, the 'populations resident' in these areas must be disappropriated and resettled in locations with similar conditions (Brazil 2000).

The residents of the fishing village opposed this measure from the outset. The local leaders expressed their position in contacts with the park's administrative directors during encounters with public authorities and meetings of the conservation unit's consultative council.[3] To date, amid the animosities

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1   This ethnographic study was presented in the form of my MA dissertation on the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology at Paraná Federal University (Bazzo 2010). The research in the village in question involved various field trips undertaken in 2008 and 2009.

2   Cf. Decree 97.688/1989, which created the Superagüi National Park, and Law 9.513/1997, which legislated amplification of the conservation unit.

3   Cf. Ordinance 45/2006, issued by the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), which created the Superagüi National Park Consultative Council. Local complaints to the environmental authorities were registered by myself while personally attending meetings of this council or reading through its minutes, as well as during formal and informal conversations with both sides involved in the dispute. Here it is important to mention an attempt to formalize an agreement (a Term of Commitment) in Barra de Ararapira, which was completely rejected by residents. This document

and truces, the inhabitants have largely convinced the public representatives of their claim to be historical occupants and currently still live within the protected area. This has been achieved through what I classify as a 'politics of shame,' a concept taken from Niezen (2003) and his analysis of the recognition of indigenous rights in the global arenas of environmentalism. The author defines the phenomenon as: "…the effort to influence a decision or policy through dissemination of information to an audience that is a source of political power, information that exposes the inappropriateness, harm, or illegality of a course of action (…)."

In Barra de Ararapira, the main event used by residents to mobilize the 'politics of shame' is the fight waged in the 1980s against the invasion of their lands by a private company, Companhia Agropastoril Litorânea do Paraná, prior to implantation of the park. The company secretly negotiated insular areas of the region with the Guaraqueçaba local council and tried to drive away the population by introducing herds of buffalo with the eventual aim of developing a large housing project once the area was cleared (Von Behr 1997, Muniz 2008).

Agropastoril succeeded in occupying some fishing community sites, but on reaching Barra de Ararapira the company met a surprisingly stiff level of resistance, manifested in confrontations between its foremen and the village's residents, along with the latter's denunciations of the company's actions to the public authorities. This courageous response forced the State to acknowledge the illegality of Agropastoril's enterprise and swelled the ranks of environmentalists already keen to create a park in the region. However the establishment of the conservation unit without prior notification or any kind of consultation with the local population, compounded by the later amplification of the area, which ended up threatening them with expropriation, generated what Lobão (2006) calls 'resentment' in response to the public policy. This feeling is unleashed at the moment when the natives see themselves as the "victims of an act of oversight or summary exclusion."[4]

forms part of the NCUS's regulatory framework and aims to set the conditions for 'resident populations' to remain living inside Full Protection Units while awaiting eventual disappropriation and resettlement (Brazil 2002).

4   The only document produced in support of expansion of the park boundaries was a Federal Senate Technical Report (Brazil 1996). Contrary to the real-life situation, this document asserts that the law bill for enlarging the conservation unit would exclude "…the areas of the main existing communities and an area around them capable of allowing them to continue pursuing their subsistence activities" (1996:2).

This scenario led me to a question: how are the links constituted between these fishing communities and the territory that they defend as their own? The question was formulated on the basis of Little's concept of territoriality (2002: 3), defined "...as the collective effort of a social group to occupy, use, control and be identified with a specific portion of their biophysical environment, thus converting it into their 'territory' or homeland." Although the usual translation of homeland in Portuguese is *pátria*, the author's intention here is not to refer to the national State. Rather he means that Brazil contains different territorialities within the geographic space under its jurisdiction, each of which is responsible for configuring a variety of identities for a diverse range of social groups. This conception is bound to provoke bewilderment among exponents of Brazilian law, given that it challenges cherished ideas like sovereignty and nationalism. Consequently it is extremely difficult for public authorities to recognize the autonomy of these collectivities in the context of official land ownership structures.[5]

Basing myself on Little's concept of territoriality, my research plan was to demarcate in Barra de Ararapira what the author calls a 'cosmography,' determined by five items: the ownership system, the history of occupation stored in the collective memory, affective connections with space, the social use of the territory, and mechanisms for defending the latter. Once in the field, I encountered a very peculiar space, whose essential diacritical feature is movement, apprehended by natives through an idiom of kinship. A characteristic that contrasted radically with the fixed coordinates determining the limits of a national park.

Before kinship, the sandbar

Barra de Ararapira is located in a border area of the Paraná and São Paulo coastlines. Access to the village is by sea only. To reach the settlement,

It also claims that the "...project was also conceived as a form of avoiding conflicts over the area's use in the future" (ibid.).

5   The Brazilian State has only very recently and sporadically given any formal recognition to the existence of these distinct territorialities, which remain organized under their own customary norms, despite official attempts to naturalize just two models of spatial regulation in the country: public land and private property. I refer to the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities (Decree 6.040/2007). However this policy remains mostly at the level of good intentions rather than effective actions in terms of securing the territorial rights of these singular collectivities.

setting sail from the Paraná mainland, there are two possible routes, both with environmental barriers. The quickest route, though also the most dangerous, is by open seas. Taking this path, the village is reached after traversing the sandbar formed where a sea inlet flows into the ocean – in this case, the Atlantic Ocean and the Sea of Ararapira. This topographical feature, *barra* in Portuguese, also gives rise to the name of the nearby village.

The sandbar is comprised of sand banks that form shallow waters and strong breaking waves, making passage by boat difficult. The banks also move continually, altering the shape of the sea opening and its location. Consequently the territory of the nearby village is modified by a process of erosion, which forces the inhabitants to transfer their houses, buildings and fishing routes periodically. As a natural topographical feature, it is impossible to predict its location with any certainty.6

To avoid the sandbar, the only other route is via the sea inlet, a longer but safer journey. This entails traversing the entire length of the Varadouro Canal, a construction project linking Paranaguá Bay in Paraná to Trapandé Bay in São Paulo, which effectively transformed the Superagüi territory into an artificial island (Von Behr 1997). Giving an idea of the distances involved, calculated in relation to the nearest urban centres – the municipalities of Guaraqueçaba (PR) and Cananéia (SP) – Barra de Ararapira's residents frequently refer to the village jokingly as the 'end of the world.'

What persuades people to live in such a difficult to access geographic location, a place where the landscape continually transforms? To outsiders the advance of the sea, which damages houses, buildings and boats, seems a good reason for living elsewhere. Local people, though, have no intention of leaving Barra de Ararapira, a space chosen by their ancestors to live – and not by accident. As swidden cultivators and fishermen, these ancestors looked for two essential elements: fertile lands and abundant fish. To meet this second condition, there was only one solution: stay close to the sand banks where the confluence of the sea inlet with the open ocean generates an abundance of fish, in terms of species and number.

Oral history indicates that the forebears of the current inhabitants lived especially in the so-called Caminho da Ararapira – a section of forest

6   Hence, as the oceanographer Marcelo Müller, a researcher of the region, explained to me, this process is not linked to climate changes induced by global warming, but to the inherent movement of maritime coasts (personal communication).

separating Barra de Ararapira from Ararapira, the latter a now uninhabited village on Superagüi Island, but once prosperous.7 The ancestors lived along this path because in the past the sandbar was much closer to it. During this era the number of families was still too small for the locality to be considered a village. From this site, the sandbar continued to move: it would close from time to time only to open again soon further away, assuming a new geographic contour.

As this trajectory unfolded, everything that was left behind, formerly beach, turned into mangroves, while everything ahead, formerly mangroves, turned into beach. As the mangrove swamp advanced, so did the mosquitoes, worsening the living conditions for those in the settlement. Maintaining a suitable place to live and access to abundant fish therefore meant disassembling the wooden houses and reassembling them where the sandbar had stopped. In the meantime, the family nucleuses grew and joined together, forming a residential cluster that became known as Barra de Ararapira. The pioneers exploring this territory were the first to see the potent effects of the sandbar's movements close up. Rubens Muniz, a prominent local leader, refers to these kinds of events in a text written by himself on the village's history:

… 18th April 1996. Date when I began to observe and write down the history of Barra de Ararapira. The great change characteristic of its visual appearance […] which every day transforms the image of Barra, which has already changed more than 30 times from 1938 to 1965. The erosion […] caused by a powerful water current. The riptide formed by the surging waves caused enormous damage to the forest that we called 'animal food.' We hadn't imagined what it could be like, it was so ugly, the riptide would eat away at the forest, there were days that it would consume as much as 70 metres to a depth of 4 or 5 metres. (…) It seems unbelievable, but it's true (Muniz s/d).[8]

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7   Muniz (2008) identifies Ararapira as an important trading port between the 19th century and the start of the 20th when maritime transportation was still the preferred option given the incipient state of the railway network. Multiple factors led to the declining population of the old settlement: territorial disputes between São Paulo and Paraná states at the beginning of the Republican period with the victory of the latter and a consequent decline in trade; the advance of industrial fishing into waters fished by local people; attempts to sell land illegally; restrictions on the use of land introduced with the environmental legislation and also the region's intense coastal dynamic.

8   Rubens has been recording the history of Barra de Ararapira in this manuscript since 1996. I had the chance to type up his text during field research. In this article I borrow the term 'barreano' from him to describe whatever or whoever is native to the fishing village in question.

Even today the enormous banks torn down by the tides are called *comedio* (from *comer*, to eat) because apparently people used to believe in the existence of an enormous armadillo that caused all the damage as it moved about underground feeding. "A person who lived on the Deserted Beach [a beach close to the village] told how he once came across the shell of this gigantic armadillo; this person said that it was the size of a house," Rubens recalled with amusement. Nowadays the inhabitants take *comedio* to be caused by erosion, but the phenomenon still intrigues them just as much as before. It is in the *boca da barra* – the 'mouth of the sandbar,' the native term for the boundary between the inlet and the open sea – that the process can be seen in all its force. The fishermen recount that when they traverse this area to reach the ocean, they see enormous sand banks collapsing from the pull of the waves.

Today the natural phenomenon also draws in scientists who are attempting to map it. But despite all their equipment, they can neither predict or control it with any precision. The geologist Rodolfo Angulo (2004) points out that between 1953 and 1980 the erosion consumed around 120 hectares of the village, equivalent to 120 large football pitches. According to the oceanographer Marcelo Müller (2007), much of the village in the 1950s was located even closer to the spot currently occupied by the sandbar, which forced the continuous relocation of the buildings. Rubens's mother, Maria Madalena Ramos – in her eighties, the oldest woman in the locality – told me that after marrying, she and her husband settled in part of the settlement where her family's residence had to be moved almost every year. "One morning the occupants of one home woke up to find the house on the edge of the cliff," recollected Izabel Muniz, Maria Madalena's daughter.

Because of this, Müller explains (2008), the inhabitants gradually relocated towards the area where the village is situated today, searching for a stretch of coastline less exposed to erosion. On one field trip the research accompanied the production of a map in which residents designed the layout of the village in 1969 – the space occupied in that year has already been completely swept away by the tides. It was verified that the sea ingressed violently on the most populated area in the 1950s and around 200 metres towards the site of the current territory.

Maria Madalena told me that she has now been living for 18 years in the same house. However, Rubens, her son, lives in the location most affected by erosion today: there the sea advanced 143 metres between 1980 and

2007. On the other hand, Marcio Muniz, one of Rubens's sons, set up home with his wife in an area that had once been sea: in the same time span, this section of coast gained 170 metres of land (Müller, ibid.). Hence the movement never ceases and manifests in different ways across the local region: although this may allow the villagers some respite for a while, it never lets them forget this conjuncture.

Over recent years, local people and scientists have been in close dialogue concerning the sandbar's dynamics. Rubens explained to me: "The erosion has always taken place and is unpredictable. The only real solution to this problem, Professor Angulo told me, would be a large-scale dredging project" – an undertaking somewhat unthinkable for what is now a conservation area. Müller, part of the same research team as Angulo, sent me the following e-mail in 2008: "The various times I was in [Barra de] Ararapira, whether for research or tourism, I could sense how the erosion effects everyday life and the imagination of the people living there. They have a very clear notion of how the coastal dynamic works, including the main processes involved in the erosion (...)"

During nights of bad weather associated with the so-called *moon tides* – high waters and strong waves typical of the new and full moons – Rubens never sleeps: he patrols his brick properties, no longer as easy to move as the wooden constructions made in the past. Rubens has already moved his house once and his bar three times, while his small hotel or *pousada*, was built from bricks brought one-by-one from a previous property. Sometimes Rubens sleeps over in his son Marcio's house, where the loud crashing of the *moon tide* waves on the banks does not disturb his sleep. Once his wife Hilda Pires told me: "He even once prayed to Our Lady Aparecida for her to rid him of this overwhelming fear."

The sandbar this occupies an ambivalent position in the studied locality: while its dynamic consumes the territory, it also shapes it. The sandbar is the starting point for the ethnography of territoriality because it is only through it that can we think about everything else: for the fishermen, the food that reproduces the family comes, like a godsend, from its fish-rich waters. Focusing on the sandbar therefore allows us to establish, as Woortmann (1990) observed in relation to peasant societies, the 'nucleating categories' of this collectivity, which are always relational: territory, work and family. The proviso here is that the territory needs to be understood,

as Maldonado (1993) points out with reference to maritime societies, as the conjunction of 'two worlds,' land and sea. Additionally, in Barra de Ararapira, religiosity must be added to these categories that, according to Woortmann (op. cit.), reflect "central values and organizing principles," such as hierarchy, reciprocity, honour and freedom, responsible for delineating the 'moral order' of a group.[9]

Hence it is the sandbar's centrality that allows us to posit it as a 'total social fact.' This Maussian interpretation comes from the ethnography of Mello & Vogel (2004) with fishermen from the Rio de Janeiro coastal settlement of Zacarias, who work the Maricá Lagoon where large fish stocks are also guaranteed by the existence of a sandbar. The authors observed that the open sandbar is ultimately a synonym of the 'celebration of life' – the life of the waters, the life of the fishing families, the life of the settlement itself, the divine creation in repetition. This being the case, the opposite also applies: the absence of the sandbar would entail the inexorable demise of everything. Paraphrasing Mello & Vogel (ibid: 374), the fishermen of the village studied by myself not only work on the sandbar, they are identified with it, and moreover "...they cannot exist, in any adequate and full sense, without Divine Providence." It is their identity that is constituted, in dramatic fashion, along with the sandbar's movement.

This involves a 'complex ecology' that allows us to speak of a 'locality structure,' both notions taken from Leach's ethnography (1971) in Pul Eliya, a peasant village in the former Ceylon, where the organization surrounding tanks, used to overcome water shortages, emerged as essential elements in explaining the continuity of the group. In other words, while people came and went, the same territorial scenario remained. For Leach, there is an objective reality as well as a society; however the latter is not a 'thing' compared on an equal footing to the natural environment, but "a way of organizing experience." In Pul Eliya, a tank; in Barra de Ararapira, a sandbar; in both, social connections are established around inescapable ecological facts, shaped by kinship as a 'language.' Given the similarities, Leach's study helped greatly in understanding the kinship systematics in Barra de Ararapira, a topic to which I now turn.

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9   In Barra de Ararapira, strict devotion to popular Catholicism predominates, something worthy of note given the Protestant expansion in the region.

Macrosítio: one large family

Residents of Barra de Ararapira use the term *sítio* to speak on a day-to-day basis of the space where they live. The background to the use of this word – a polyvalent term variously meaning site, place or a small rural property or farmstead – is small-scale cultivation, which was practiced extensively in the past. When motorized boats arrived in the 1980s, allowing fishermen to navigate the sandbar and expand fishing production in open sea, agricultural work, considered arduous and unprofitable, was gradually abandoned by villagers. The fate of the plantations was finally sealed with the creation of the national park, where conservation directives mean that the use of land for crop growing is prohibited.

Ethnographies undertaken among peasant communities, cited below, show that the word *sítio*, aside from designating a locality, forms an essential category in the reflection on the place of land, family and work in these groups. Woortmann (1990) explains that although there are many ways of being a peasant, there is a 'quality' that unites them, 'peasantness': manifested in different gradations, it configures a specific 'moral order' in these collectivities in terms of the relations between people and between people and the land. Thus the fact that the term *sítio* is commonplace in Barra de Ararapira, despite the fact plantations no longer exist there, indicates that 'peasantness' is linked less to agricultural practice per se and more to a way of being.

Based on research in the Brazilian northeast, the above author identified three meanings for *sítio*: the first refers to a 'closed community' where access to land is obtained through kinship; the second, encompassing the first, concerns the land worked by an extended family within this space organized by genealogy; the third, circumscribed in the second, indicates the 'house-yard complex' inhabited by the peasant nuclear family. This schema provides a good comparative basis for delineating what a *sítio* implies in Barra de Ararapira: in the village, the word can be seen to cover the first and second acceptations, while the third proves inapplicable.

For natives, *sítio* is positioned above all as the space opposite to the city. In this contrastive sense, the term goes beyond the boundaries of the village and denominates the set of fishing nucleuses from the nearby regions in Paraná and São Paulo – which I visualize as a macro*sítio*. On a map, the macro*sítio* would today encompass, going by local descriptions, the space between the southern coastline of São Paulo state and the north of Paraná. But

for the native person, the village itself is also a *sítio*, as are each of the neigh-bouring localities similar to itself – these I see as micro*sítio*s. The interplay between the macro*sítio* and its micro*sítio*s therefore configures a simultane-ously single and multiple territory.

So what makes a *sítio* different from the urban universe? Whenever they travel to the city and need to stay over, villagers can usually depend on the hospitality of relatives living there. On one of the trips I accompanied, in this case to Cananéia (SP), I was invited by a group to stay in a relative's home. As we arrived, our host greeted us one-by-one. When it was my turn she asked me: "And you, whose daughter are you?" An indispensable question because the *sítio*, in contrast to the city, is the place of kinship.

Inevitably, then, kinship relations are a constant and necessary topic of conversation, indeed something so introjected that people even spoke to me, an outsider, about relatives, living or dead, as if I knew them from way back. Unlike the city, in the *sítio* everyone knows each other. But since when? This was one of the key questions in my endeavour to map the territorial occupa-tion. The reply was invariable: "Always," because their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents already lived in the *sítio*.

Hence there is no need for a founding date as in the urban setting. It is a 'history-myth' to use a term from Godoi (1999), an account whose factual-ity matters less than its efficacy for those who recount it. To use a term from Augé (1994), the *sítio* is an 'anthropological place' – at once historic, relational and identificatory – conceived as a "world founded once and for all": every-thing is known about this world already; all the inhabitants have to do is rec-ognize themselves in it. This recognition implies each present-day individual looking beyond a personal trajectory and situating him or herself within a family time-line.

Whoever fits into this large network of kinship is called a *nativo*, irrespec-tive of the micro*sítio* to which he or she belongs; anyone who does not fit is an *outsider*[10]. Seen from this angle, even urban migrants continue to be rela-tives because, though living in the city, they maintain connections with the macro*sítio*. These connections are not just manifested in their surnames, but range from the solidarity in sheltering relatives to the organization of a home

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10   The term 'native' used in the village therefore coincides with the term used by anthropologists to designate the people or groups who they study.

that, despite being urbanized, maintains elements such as a small vegetable garden, chickens, eating manioc flour at meal time or drinking a fresh cup of coffee in the afternoon. For those from the *sítio*, the houses of the migrants function as small islands of refuge in the far from completely known or comprehended exteriority of the urban world.

"The city isn't like the *sítio*, where people have fewer worries"; "In the *sítio*, every day is a day off"; "In the *sítio*, it's always Sunday"; "I wouldn't like to move to the city because I wouldn't accept being ordered about"; "Women from the city don't to adapt to life in the *sítio*, that's why bringing them here is difficult"; "I was born here, I'm used to it. When I go to the city with mummy, I just want to come back here as soon as possible" – these are native phrases I hear from people of various ages, revealing what the *sítio* contains and the city does not: tranquillity, solidarity and autonomy, values lived through and for the group. Hence, as well as the space of kinship, the *sítio* is the "territory of reciprocity" (Woortmann op. cit.).

It can be concluded, therefore, that the macro*sítio* is not exactly a physically delimited space: in it the family acts as a 'mobile territory' (Deleuze & Guattari 1991,[11] apud Haesbaert 2007): in other words, where there is kinship and reciprocity, there is a place that can be inhabited. This panorama does not imply an absence of boundaries, but the awareness that these are not immutable, a characteristic that distinguishes the territory of the *sítio* from the territory projected by the Nation State. Based on an atomized notion of human agglomeration, the modern model of the nation seeks to contain, albeit in the imaginary, a fear intrinsic to civilize society: nomadism, contrary to the sedentarization needed for the private property system (Ramos 1998).

Following the example observed by Woortmann (1995), kinship in the scenario under analysis here is not a simple 'epiphenomenon' of the locality, but an "organizational principle," "a matrix of ideas used to think about" the collectivity. Each micro*sítio* has its own living dynamic, but inevitably finds itself linked to the others by a circuit of exchanges that includes, for instance, definitive or temporary migrations for marriage or work. This territorial plasticity is essential to understanding the organization of a place like Barra de Ararapira that is permanently mutating: the local residents explore this attribute to its ultimate consequences, given what they do within their own *sítio*.

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11   Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. 1991. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris: Minuit.

Kinship in the Barra micro*sítio*

To begin my more detailed analysis of kinship and territoriality in Barra de Ararapira, it should be emphasized from the outset that the village, while organized by customary norms, is simultaneously a demographic segment comprising part of the Brazilian Nation State. Consequently native diachrony coincides at certain points with state diachrony and, simultaneously, reveals an autonomous mode of functioning.

Woortmann (1990: 16-17) highlights the complexity of this scenario, postulating that 'peasantness,' in the unfolding of the historical process, presents distinct degrees of "ambiguous interaction with modernity": "The main path leading to modernity (individualization, secularization, rationality) opens up variants that reconstruct the traditional order, or exacerbate it [...]. Conversely, the adherence to tradition may provide the means to survive the great transformation [...]. Tradition, then, is not the past surviving into the present, but the past that, in the present, constructs possibilities for the future."

About the ancestors

The village of Barra de Ararapira has seven family trunks: Pires, the most widespread; Muniz, the second largest; Santana, Cunha and Ramos, less extensive; and Martins and Souza, the smallest.[12] The genealogical survey conducted in the field registered 132 residents, 34 nuclear families and 45 occupied residences. Five original generations were identified in the village, which can be traced back some 200 to 300 years. The ascendant memory is short, therefore, two or three generations at most.

At the time of Brazilian colonization, indigenous people from the Tupi-Guarani linguistic family lived in the territory occupied by the present-day inhabitants, the latter being the result of matrimonial alliances between the former and European migrants (Von Behr 1997). Although this earlier, genuine, presence is known to the *barreanos*, there is no reference in the kinship

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12   Although peasant populations commonly use the tree metaphor when talking about kinship relations, the term 'trunk' used here is not taken from the everyday expressions of Barra de Ararapira's residents. The inhabitants usually assert that different families exist among themselves with various degrees of kinship. However the word 'trunk' is employed in the analysis since it better expresses the idea of descent, thereby avoiding the possibility of conceptual interference with the notions of nuclear and extended family also used here.

trees to the *bugres* – the term used for the Indians by locals in the past when the swiddens still existed.

Local people frequently find objects in the forest whose manufacture is attributed to the Amerindians. Because of the coastal dynamic, they even discovered a canoe that was used for years after it was unearthed. Until recently they also lived in close proximity with the Guarani, who in the 1990s had a settlement in the forest close to the village. "These Indians were here since as long as I can remember, but they never stop in one place. Their life revolves around trekking," Antonio Marcelino Pires told me, 92 years old, the oldest villager now alive. He refers to the main diacritical feature of the Guarani people: the centuries-old migratory movement through their territory – including parts of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay – with the aim of promoting the "production and exchange of knowledge," responsible for allowing people to 'prosper,' defining 'kin collectives,' and producing their 'transitory maps' (Pissolato 2007).

The policy of combating this lifestyle through the formation of the Nation State, since such nomadism was deemed contrary to the objectives of territorial control and the country's development, was responsible for decimating many indigenous peoples and their ways of living on the Brazilian coast (ibid.). This background lends support to the description repeated by residents of Barra de Ararapira of the Guarani with whom they recently lived in close proximity: they were a people with few resources and so used to visit the village to sell craftwork and request food. The villagers had a good relationship with these Indians: they say that they were a 'docile people,' *gente mansa*, a description that contrasts with the term *bugre* used by their ancestors, meaning fierce, elusive, uncivilized.

Godoi (1999), working among peasants in Piauí state, also noted the absence of an evident indigenous ancestry in the genealogies. She argues that the origin narrative excludes the Indians because it functions as a 'sociological framework' that underpins peasant rights over the territory. Something similar occurs in Barra de Ararapira.13 It is also important to note that,

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13   On this point, Almeida (2006:90, author's emphasis) recorded the opposite while investigating irregularities in the implantation of the Alcântara Rocket Launch Base, in Maranhão state, in relation to the compulsory relocation of quilombola groups: "The interviewees do not dissociate **blacks and Indians** in the context of legitimizing ownership of the land and in opposition to those who are defined as usurping their territories."

behind this, there appears to be a fundamental teleology that still provokes heated political debates concerning the ideal functioning of the Nation State: namely, leaving behind the 'barbarity' of the Indians and achieving the status of 'civilization' of the Europeans (Ramos 1998).

Nonetheless, just like the indigenous ancestry, there is no mention of European ancestors in the genealogies of local people. The historical presence of Europeans in the region, like the Indians, is demonstrably known to the residents, but their observations concerning this fact do not indicate specifically memorized genealogical connections. The oral descriptions always support the foundational narrative based on the premise, indicated above, that the inhabitants of the *sítio* have *always* been there. A history separate, therefore, from that of the State seeking to 'civilize' a nation.

About access to land

"Land for natives, you just turn up and take it" – this was one of the replies that I received when asking about territorial access in the village, a economic response, though highly illustrative of this dynamic. The person has to be born in the macro*sítio* – and even better in the actual micro*sítio* in question – in order to build a home in Barra de Ararapira. In other words, the person needs to be part of the web of kinship, since descent in this case guarantees land. Hence, as Woortmann observed (1995), in contrast to private property, land is not configured here as a mere physical space, a means of livelihood or a marketable property. More than a 'material fact,' land comprises a family patrimony that amounts to a 'cultural construct.'

None of the *barreanos* possesses an official land deed. This certificate has never proven to be important to the native system of combined rights, which balances common use of the land for cropping with rules of private appropriation for houses and yards, governed by the reciprocity between kin, *compadres* (close friends, godparents) and neighbours. A form of organization identified by Almeida (2008) as typical of groups taken to be 'traditional' in Brazil.

In Barra de Ararapira local people take the supreme owner of the territory to be God, who offers them the land as a gift appropriated, via affiliation, through human work. On the government side, though, this situation has been fluctuating since the Land Law of 1850, which aimed to abolish the distribution and occupation of abandoned, uncultivated and unclaimed terrains (*sesmarias* and *posses*) previously encouraged by the Portuguese crown

to populate Brazilian soil. However, despite the legislation, most of the areas of past European colonization – as in the case of Barra de Ararapira – were neither measured or demarcated, thereby becoming illegal occupation from the official viewpoint.

Despite this fact, even today native usufruct of the land involves the already cited criteria of descent and work, guided by factors like gender and matrimony. Transference occurs via the male line: the man is tied to the territory by family labour, while the woman's connection appears transitory because sooner or later she may migrate after marrying. This explains why eight of the forty-five native homes mapped in the research belong to bachelors, while no unmarried woman lives alone: only widows have this prerogative, made possible by their marriage.

Aside from the native homes, three belong to tourists, i.e. people *from outside*. This is a very small number, given the flow of visitors to Barra de Ararapira is tiny. According to locals, the sites occupied by the tourists were negotiated with residents from the village. This process, unregulated in the past, is today controlled by the administration of the Superagüi National Park: anyone selling their house in the village is obliged to leave, since opening new areas in the forest of the conservation unit is prohibited (Brazil 2002).

In addition any domestic reform, whether full or partial, must now be announced to the administrators of the protected area in order to obtain authorization (ibid.), a process bogged down in uncertainties and delays. The inhabitants complain about this regulation, which interferes in practices which they themselves historically controlled, adapted to a territory in constant change due to the process of erosion. Even when located far from the sea, the dwellings still had to be rebuilt periodically since, until recently, all of them used timber as building material, gradually devoured by termites.

However the natives have no hesitation in mobilizing the environmental agency when they perceive that their space has been invaded by undesired *outsiders*. In this case, external regulations actually helped keep the kin territory intact during the tourist boom of the 1960s caused by the construction of roads connecting to the coastal region, which rapidly became urbanized (Adams 2000). I recorded accounts of denunciations made by inhabitants designed to slow down this movement towards the village.

At the same time, though, the relation with the *outsiders* who live inside the village is ambivalent. I noticed this after discovering that tourists owning

houses in the locality act as godparents of local Barra children and young people in various Catholic sacraments. Through the dynamics of godparenting, therefore, outside individuals are invited to become part of the kinship universe. In this way the gaps in this circle are closed, allowing it to be idealized as self-contained, despite the contingencies.

About consanguinity

To produce the genealogical map, I asked the natives who they considered to be close kin, rather than distant. The responses always centred on members of the nuclear family and its nearer ramifications. This involves structural arrangements with repercussions taking the form of what Schneider (1968) called, in his classic analysis of American kinship, a 'Christmas tree effect': the star represents the ancestral couple, whose siblings are almost always ignored; the branches are the children and grandchildren of this couple; and the decorations, the wives and husbands of the children, whose own kin are rarely named. These are genealogies that terminate in four ascendant generations at most and primarily include relatives constituted through consanguinity, understood as a genetic attribute.

In this ethnographic context the central symbol of kinship is sexual intercourse: this is the practice that enables a person to receive an equal proportion of genes from the father and mother, sharing with them the same 'blood,' in an inalterable relation that also implies sharing an identity, as well as the formation of a family based on the 'facts of nature.' Consanguinity, therefore, appears here as a 'given' and affinity, whose connections are rendered transitory by divorce or death, is only demarcated after the former (ibid.). In Barra de Ararapira, one clear example of this is the extensive use of diminutive terms like mummy, daddy, granny and grandpa by all age groups to emphasize hereditary ties conceived to be unequivocal and moreover necessarily affectionate.

As Schneider observes (ibid.), in this kind of context the relationship between family members is presumed to be based on "long-lasting, diffuse and mutual" love. Indifference should not exist: cooperation must be disinterested and without a time limit, differently to what happens in a friendship, for instance. Once 'given,' consanguinity is therefore measured by affective distance, which does not function on the basis of substance so much as on the relationship with a particular relative. Thus the genealogy of one person

alone does not define who his or her family members are: such designs become increasingly obscure as they move away from ego.

As a result, Schneider explains (ibid.), kin are people connected by blood or later by marriage, but who are additionally, and crucially, people with whom one maintains a concrete relationship. Hence the layout of the system remains intact: consanguinity occupies the 'given' place while suitable amorous behaviour should stem from it. Together, therefore, possessing the same blood and unconditional mutual affection are attributed the highest value. In Barra de Ararapira, this combination is manifested in an exacerbated form, bearing in mind its setting is a territory existing in a state of uncontrollable mutation, which makes kin reciprocity an urgent and indispensable given the uncertain future.

About affinity

In his study in Pul Eliya, Leach (ibid.) argues that while descent performs a key role in ensuring a territory organized under the aegis of kinship, affinity also plays its own particular part in this panorama. Relatives by marriage are indeed 'Christmas tree' decorations, as Schneider proposes (op. cit.), but it is thanks to their existence that the kinship network is actualized and remains alive. But how do people delimit who is not a consanguine in order for matrimony to be possible in a kinship territory? Ultimately everyone has more or less strong blood ties with everyone else. While consanguinity is the 'natural' fact in this social world, responsibility for systemic adjustments belongs to the domain of affinity and indeed it is through this conjunction that the system operates.

When questioned about the ideal spouse, the Barra villagers pick out two elements: firstly, the person's freedom to choose, and secondly, the preference for someone known who lives close by. Consequently in the sphere of the micro*sítio* exogamy prevails, its limits established in the endogamy of the macro*sítio*. In other words, marriage with a kinsperson at just the right genealogical distance is the ideal arrangement, with the degree of separation and proximity being orientated by the category of *cousin-sibling*, repeated incessantly by local people in reference to first-degree cousins. The cousins-siblings delimit a boundary between close kin – like uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces, on either the paternal or maternal side – with whom marriage is prohibited as incestuous, and distant kin – like second-degree cousins – with

whom marriages are permitted. Beyond the first-degree, as people say, "the person is kin, but isn't."

There is a constant tension in this universe where kin proximity constitutes a value whose survival, though, depends entirely on demarcating the distance that makes marriage possible. In this context, unions between cousins-siblings, though not prohibited, are subject to avoidance and taboo. "The elders always said that this kind of marriage brings children with problems," various residents argued. "They would say that the life of people who marry like that won't turn out well. Take the case of my parents: they were cousins-siblings and my mother lost him at sea at a young age," João Pires told me. Nonetheless, although less common, this type of marriage does still occur.

Likewise amorous ties can take place with *outside* people, that is, non-kin, but these form a minority. This contrasts with the high frequency of the unions sealed within the village, unsurprising given their capacity to conserve the land as the space of kinship. Unions between pairs of siblings, also recurrent, also seem to strengthen this kinship idiom. Of the thirty-four nuclear families mapped, twenty-three originated from marriages between inhabitants of the village itself; nine through the migration of women from other fishing nucleuses and, therefore, belonging to the macro*sítio*; and just two through the arrival of spouses from the city.

The latter is the case of Shirlei Pinto, a native of Iguape on the São Paulo coast, where she met her husband Delmiro Luiz Muniz at a festival. The couple have been together 14 years and have two children. Shirlei told me that it had been hard adapting to life in the *sítio*, where many things are different to the city. At the start of her marriage, there was no solar-energy for lighting or running water in the village – light came from lanterns and people bathed in the river. Also she was not used to eating fish and fish-derived foods, even less how to do the primarily female work of cleaning the fish caught by the men.

As time passed, she learnt. She became part of the kinship network not only by affinity but as a godparent: she baptized a child from the village, she blessed a marriage as *madrinha* alongside her husband, and she was confirmed there, godparented by another female resident. In other words, she "caught the system of the place" – this expression, used by the people studied by Godoi (1999), describes the incorporation of outsiders into the peasant group. Both there and in Barra de Ararapira, the 'place' is the part of the

environment occupied, used and "pregnant with social signification," capable of indicating who can be there and in what situations.

Shirlei, however, claims that if her husband were to agree to leave the village, she would go readily. But on this matter Delmiro told me: "We were raised here, my parents live here, it would be a real bother if we left." This assertion requires some explanation. He has two sisters, married, who live in Cananéia (SP). Hence, it would be "a real bother" if Delmiro, the only man, left the place of origin. Men are connected to the locality through work: Delmiro is his father's *camarada* or fishing companion. As we have seen, women are the ones who circulate. This is why, in the census produced during the research, the other marriage with a spouse coming from the city occupies a completely extraordinary position, since it was the man who migrated.

Uninterrupted the matrimonial cycle depends on constant adjustments: at the time of my research, there were seven residences in the village with single men, a condition ideal for marriage, while there were just two young women of marrying age, somewhere between 15 and 25 years old. In other words, all the indications are that women from other locations will shortly be absorbed into the *sítio*. Marriage ideally takes place in the Catholic church since local religious principles dictate that cohabitation without divine blessing is a sin. But despite this fact, unmarried couples, as well as unions following marital separations, are far from rare and the people living in these ways are treated socially in just the same way as those married in church.

During fieldwork I noted that the priest's irregular monthly visits – very often cancelled because sea conditions were too rough for safe crossing – were an obstacle to holding the religious weddings more easily, as well as conducting other Catholic sacraments. Even so, making the marriage official through the church was sought out by those with the conditions to do so: that is, by men and women who had not received a marriage blessing from the Catholic church before, conceded just once to each person. Civil marriage, by contrast, is not sought after and tends to be uncommon: it occurs in exceptional situations, such as facilitating retirement pension claims and alimony payments within the sphere of the fishing colony.[14] However, though

14   Vogel & Mello (2004: 145) point out that the colonies, invented in the Vargas era, represent the

aware of these benefits, the villagers give no indications that legal marriage must become a practice. This is why, people explain, married women keep their maiden names.[15]

The *sítio* reveals itself to be alien to the bureaucratization of civil life, typical to the formation of the Nation State. During the research I accompanied the odyssey of two widows as they attempted to receive a pension. To prove that they cohabited with their late husbands, given the absence of civil marriage, they had to gather a series of proofs – like children's birth certificates, not always filled in correctly, and declarations from urban traders about their joint purchases – as well as list witnesses and cover the expenses for the latter to testify in front of the authorities in the city. An immense amount of work, from their point of view unnecessary and even embarrassing, to prove marriages that are public knowledge in the macro*sítio*.

About residential organization

The houses in Barra de Ararapira are built roughly in a line facing the beach. Some are found close to the sea, others closer to the forest – a choice indicating precautions taken in response to erosion. Some are separated from other houses by hedges made from the local vegetation. The distance between them varies: those situated nearest to the sandbar are more tightly clustered, while those located further away are separated by sizeable sections of forest. Geographic notions of near and far are determined by the social centre of the village where the health centre, church and school are located: the further away from this central area, the more distant the dwellings are considered to be.

Calculated roughly, the entire village can be traversed, by foot, in around two hours. There are two options for completing this trajectory: either it can be walked entirely along the *caminho*, a track maintained by the villagers for collective use; or it can be partially completed via the *caminho* and partially via the beach in those places where the latter has not been – to use a native term – *eaten* by the tide. On this journey appear 45 dwellings occupied by

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attempt by public authorities to incorporate fishing populations: "The Fishing Colony is, then, an artifice developed to force the limits of society to coincide with the limits of the nation and the State."

15   Although, unlike its forerunner, the new Brazilian Civil Code does not suggest the adoption of the husband's surname by the wife after legal marriage, this procedure is recognized by local people as a marker of this type of union.

natives; eight spaces now unoccupied for various reasons, such as the advance of erosion, migration, widowhood or the search for privacy; and the three houses owned by tourists, cited above.

If a recently married couple still do not have their own dwelling, they can live in the husband's parents' home, though patrilocality appears as a temporary condition. After marrying the residential preference is neolocality, which takes place in two forms: either as virilocality or as the migration of the new family, at the husband's decision, in search of better fishing points.

The mapping of dwellings showed that those relating to each family trunk are clustered in space. In other words, close kin also live close together geographically. This configuration facilitates the localization of new residences: everything is initially negotiated within the family, and later officially notified, as demanded by the administration of the national park.

Two factors can interfere in this ideal spatial layout and create greater distance. The first, the most visible, is the dynamic caused by erosion: as the sea advances, it becomes impossible to build new dwellings in some areas occupied by kin. The second, less evident, is the accumulation of houses in the same space, which begins to erode family privacy. Nonetheless, even when these influences lead to residential change, there is a clear attempt to remain close to near kin in a combination of preference and contingency.

About births

Night time, the entire family has already gone to bed, when the first voice is heard:

> –*Bless you father! – says the first.*
> – *God bless you son.*
> – *Bless you mother! – he continues.*
> – *God bless you son.*

This first voice is followed by the second, third and fourth: nobody sleeps before being blessed. This little story was told to me by Marcia Maria Muniz who, after marrying, left Barra de Ararapira to live in another micro*sítio*. I accompanied a visit made by Marcia to her parents when, in the middle of innumerable recollections of her childhood, she recounted the described episode. A common practice in the village, the act of requesting *blessing* demarcates a respectful relation shown by younger people to their oldest kin. "God bless you" is the automatic response to another, which also tends to be

verbalized: "God bless you, may He give you health, fortune and happiness."

Consequently blessing demarcates age groups and the transition between them: the person asking for blessing occupies one position, while the person granting occupies another. At a certain time in life, there is an intermediary moment when the individual requests blessing from some people while offering it to others. A definitive position is only encountered when all the person's ascendants have died, which means he or she can no longer ask for blessing but only grant it. Prior to this occurring, though, irrespective of age, people request blessings, a verbal marker of kinship, especially affiliation.

In the village, whether few or many in number, a couple's children are taken as the 'natural' result of the marriage, as well as the means of constituting a family, which is a central value for this collectivity, not obtainable for a childless couple. From this viewpoint children comprise a clear proof not only of sexual reproduction, but also of the social reproduction of the group. As Woortmann observed (1986), nuclear families created on the basis of conception enable "systems of reciprocity, exchange and solidarity" between kin to be resupplied.

In Barra de Ararapira, affiliation is cognatic and bilateral. It is also possible to note, though, an agnatic tendency in the perpetuation of family trunks, observable in the transmission of patronyms to children when they are born. Although the mother can include her surname, this does not always appear and when it is included, it is not the main surname located at the end of the child's name. The fact that children are born, a priori, in the territory of the paternal kingroup clarifies this structure: the parents transmit to their children not only names and genealogies, but the right to be a member of the village. To a large extent this explains that, in contrast to officializing marriage, registering a birth is a concern.

Despite this fact, I observed that some people took just their mother's surname – an exemplary case appears in the genealogy of the Muniz family in which kinship ancestry is consolidated via a patronym traced to a woman, Ana Gertrudez Muniz. When questioned about the use of the maternal surname as the child's main family name in some cases, local people explain that the registry officer had refused to allow them to register the child with the father's surname.[16]

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16   This problem would seem to arise from the low frequency of civil marriage in the locality: in the case

Analysis of the patronyms and their transmission also reveals other specific features. One of them is the ubiquity of the surname Pires. This is one of the most frequent in Barra de Ararapira, such that there are various families today in which the father and the mother share the patronym. Consequently, in the case of this family trunk, the relation between proximity and separation for the purposes of matrimonial alliances proves even more tense. Another peculiarity is the recurrent use of middle names, for both men and women, generally religious in nature in reference to the Catholic church, such as *dos Santos* (of the Saints) and *dos Anjos* (of the Angels).

About godparenting

Children expand the kinship network by another no less crucial route: *compadrio* or godparenting. Each person born in Barra village will gain three godparents over the course of their life: a couple in their baptism and a man or a woman in their confirmation. Of these two Catholic sacraments, the first is essential for granting the status of a child of God to the newborn, while the second, conferred in adulthood, confirms the person's decision to remain a Christian.

The baptism and confirmation godparents – the first chosen by the person's parents and the second by the person him or herself – are, according to local people, like second parents, who provide advice, pray for and protect their godchildren during their terrestrial journey. Nevertheless, as noted by ethnographies of peasant populations (Woortmann 1986), the alliance of *compadrio* is not restricted to the godchild and godparents as a spiritual kinship. It also encompasses the godchild's parents, who become *compadres* of the godparents, in other words, ritual kin.

As Woortmann explains (1995: 200), this kind of social configuration reinforces genealogical connections or creates ties with people outside the system, thereby 'cementing' the kinship network: "It is as though the structure is 'stored' on the level of sacred relations." It does not involve a relation between

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of legal marriages, past Brazilian law always took the affiliation of the couple's children to be presumed, while those born outside of official wedlock were deemed 'illegitimate,' unable to be recognized. The new Civil Code today guarantees to all children, irrespective of their origin, the same rights. Nonetheless, the legislation stipulates a special procedure for registering births in the absence of official marriage, where both parents need to declare themselves expressly as parents on the birth certificate. Hence it is not enough for the mother to indicate the father's name or vice-versa (Ceneviva 1991).

individuals, therefore, but one between 'social personas' anchored by a 'totality.' Blessing re-emerges in this context, requested from godparents by godchildren, and becomes a diacritical feature of godparenting too. Parents and godparents, for their part, continually call each other *compadres* and *comadres*.

When questioned about the criteria for choosing the godparents for baptizing their children, the Barra villagers list the following: empathy with the child's parents; good character; the devotion to Catholicism and the geographic proximity for showing care and affection to the godchild. These characteristics, though always potentially identifiable in an *outsider*, are easier to perceive in those with whom one lives, a scenario that, like the dynamics of affinity, favours godparenting relations within the macro*sítio*.

At the same time, parents are not always free to choose due to the widespread custom of people asking them, during pregnancy, to be allowed to act as godparents to the future baby. I asked the interviewees whether thus request could be refused and the responses were all identical: refusing would mean a lack of mutuality, socially condemned. For this reason, if someone asks to be the godparent of a child and agreement has already been reached with someone else, generally the next child is promised to the couple who asked later.

About migratory movements

As mentioned above, the continual inter*sítio* movement is a determinant factor in the configuration of the macro*sítio* as a territory in constant formation. Research in Barra de Ararapira revealed that migrations tend to occur for two reasons: for women, marriage, and for men, work. Statistically, 23 women, originating from the 34 mapped nuclear families, have already migrated as a result of marriage. Female migrations in search of work form a minority: just two single young women were identified who had moved to urban coastal areas in search of employment.

The search for better income through work – the latter understood as a synonym for fishing rather than wage labour – is consequently seen as a male prerogative, whether temporary or permanent. Talking to the men, I discovered that many of them had previously moved to other coastal localities with their families, sometimes even more than once, in the expectation of obtaining better catches.

On this point, the Cunha family provides an exemplary case. Although

numerically large – after the Pires family and on the same level as the Muniz – it shows a considerable amount of male migratory movement. Of the 12 surviving offspring of the late Selmiro da Cunha with Iolanda Pires, just two children – a man and a woman – now reside in Barra de Ararapira. Six married men migrated, most to São Paulo fishing villages. The only single man usually spends fishing seasons with his brothers. The remaining three children, all women, have relocated after marrying.

The Muniz family, by contrast, presents a low rate of migration. Here Rosinilda Santana, the wife of Marcio Muniz, told me about an episode that had befallen the couple. They had moved to the nucleus of Juréia (SP), where fishing produces profitable catches. Rosinilda has three sisters who live there, two of them married to sons of the aforementioned Selmiro. She had been enjoying the new life: "We had a good house, a boat, but three months had gone by when Marcio became agitated to come back because of his father and mother."

Consequently the migrations involve predilections: the villagers indicate a preference to move to other fishing villages where family members live, rather than urban centres, even when the latter are coastal. The city appears as a dubious space to reside, where more money can be earned, but at the cost, as people say, of "being ordered about," paying a series of government taxes which they do not have to pay in the village, such as water and electricity taxes, and being further away from the family.

Numerically, among the seventeen male migrants identified in the surveyed nuclear families, 13 went to other micro*sítio*s, while the remaining four headed to the city, two of them settling in coastal urban nucleuses. Among the 25 women dislocated by marriage and to a lesser extent by work, 18 remained in micro*sítio*s and seven left for urban areas; of the latter women, six stayed on the coast.

As in the case observed by Woortmann (1995), the migratory movements appear here as a "solution to the social reproduction" of the macro*sítio*, since they do not lead to a degeneration of kinship ties, but are instead capable of recreating and expanding them via new life expectations, whether through marriage or through work. At the same time, they proved to be important to maintaining the micro*sítio* in particular: were all Barra de Ararapira's natives to set up families in the village, it would be extremely difficult to accommodate them spatially, considering the demands of residential preference

– living in an area with other kin, enjoying privacy and safe from coastal erosion. Moreover recalling that land and sea are a single territory there, the possibilities of over-fishing also need to be taken into account in this conjecture.

Migrations are often emotionally difficult: the village inhabitants especially relate the sadness felt when women marry, given that this implies their inevitable departure to accompany their husbands. On the other hand, the large number of marriages within the sphere of the macro*sítio* enables continuous visits between relatives from different places. Hence the migration dictated by kinship is a vital part of native everyday life, in contrast to the personal: in the wake of Woortmann's observation (ibid.: 137), the "…emergence of individual wishes, in detriment to the group's interests, is perceived as dangerous and, indeed, (…) [would lead] to the dissolution of the group's model of social organization."

About widowhood and inheritance

When I began fieldwork, there were seven widowed spouses in Barra de Ararapira, four women and three men. Over the course of the research, another three women lost their husbands, their children already adults. I was therefore able to analyze family movements caused by the death of the father, focusing on the female universe because of this statistical occurrence.

After the death of one of the spouses, there was a re-clustering of the nuclear family with the aim of offering domestic and affective support. In the situations of widowhood in Barra de Ararapira itself, filial support was given in various different ways: the transference of the widowed parent to a child's residence; the relocation of a child to a residence close to the widow(er); a child staying in the parent's house for long periods of time – in the case of the latter two alternatives, the descendants even sometimes came from other localities. However in one of the mapped cases the widowhood occurred outside the woman's place of origin: she had migrated to marry, but the couple had not had any children. After her husband's death, she returned to her own micro*sítio* in order to live close to her own consanguine kin again.

Responsibility for caring for widowed parents falls primarily to children who, at that moment, have fewer obligations to their own families: in other words, they too are widowed, or divorced or have grown-up children of their own. Woortmann (1986) emphasizes that one of the objectives of the large peasant kinship network is precisely to provide support in times of crisis. In

this context, the author writes, an ample number of descendents may represent more help in old age, with the possibility of a more equitable division of responsibilities among those assisting. These observations, therefore, provoke questions concerning the future of two widows in the village whose marriages came to an end without any surviving children.

Cognatic affiliation means that after the death of both parents, the share of the inheritance –generally involving the couple's house and fishing equipment – is not determined by strict gender privileges. The fundamental criterion identified by the natives is what they term *necessity*: siblings with better conditions in terms of the aforementioned assets – home and fishing equipment – should relinquish their claims in favour of siblings in more need. Indeed many reported that they had done precisely this. However we need to keep in mind that the male link with the land through work may confer a certain advantage to them when dividing up the inheritance.

Final thoughts

As Leach (1971) observed in his ethnography in Pul Eliya, the analysis of isolated cases does not assist our understanding of the relations between territory and kinship in places like Barra de Ararapira. In the village, we can note the presence of a 'statistical social structure' in which individual situations initially seem to lack any regularity, but do reveal an ordered form when taken en masse. To explain the notion of 'statistics' employed in his analysis, Leach likens the strategy to the use of suicide rates in Durkheim's classic study (2003 [1897]): the latter emerge as a by-product of the actions of diverse individuals of which they are neither completely unaware, nor totally conscious – the ratio is more "normal than normative."

Working on this basis, the author posits two parallel questions: what connects the suicide rate to the motives for suicide? What ensures the persistence of the Pul Eliya social system? A similar question is posed here in relation to Barra de Ararapira. It is impossible to determine by the fact of birth alone the basic facts of life of a Barra villager: whether the person will marry and with whom, if they will stay in the village or move away, whether they will have children or not, with which kin they will have the closest relations – none of this is preordained. What does not change, though, is the 'locality structure' (Leach op. cit.): there is no escape from the inexorable movement

of the sandbar, meaning that the group's continuity is dependent on it. It is precisely in this sense that territory and kinship are intrinsically connected.

If all kinship is fictional, insofar as it comprises a cultural construct adapted to the needs of each collectivity, genealogical reckoning, in the context under analysis, functions as a 'language' that informs people about belonging, access, transmission and organization, primordial elements in the production and reproduction of the group in a space marked by instability. Kinship relations need to be flexible enough to adapt to a 'complex ecology' and, at the same time, sufficiently cohesive to ensure reciprocity (ibid.). The mutual support obtained via kinship is fundamental in a territory that offers advantages for fishing and disadvantages due to the constant process of erosion.

As Woortmann proposes (1998:169), the "…environment (…) is not (…) perceived as a stage where sexual roles are performed, or as a backdrop to social dramas, but as a founding aspect of social relations." Remain with the family in village, close to where the inlet meets the open sea, but subject to the problems caused by erosion; migrate in search of new opportunities, but with the need to recreate kinship ties in the new place of residence, which carries the risk of being unsuccessful. It is from this viewpoint that dynamics of matrimony, residence, birth, *compadrio*, migration, widowhood and inheritance have to be visualized.

The preferences involved in these routines are obviously not deliberately planned to account for the physical-territorial disintegration nor to maintain identities, but nonetheless a 'statistical consequence' (Leach op. cit.) prevails in this context, shaped by the group's adaptation to the ecological impositions – although, of course, there also exist individual wishes, insofar as each person decides the best form of managing this inevitable scenario within his or her particular trajectory.

Seen from this angle, marrying in a particular way, living in a given location, godparenting a certain child are far from mere impulses. Rather they are necessities given the absence of 'stable toponymies,' as Alencar proposes (2007) in an ethnography in the riverine settlement of São João, in Amazonia, where seasonal flooding leads to the 'collapsed earth' phenomenon, which impels the permanent reconstruction of local territoriality. A "highly complex symbolic task," given the empirical non-correspondence between the spatiality of the past and the present.

By acting as a bridge between past and current generations, kinship ties

enable the elaboration of 'cognitive maps.' The recollections of the oldest inhabitants can help situate young people in a place that exists no longer – a 'landscape of the memory.' In this process, the roots of the group are fixed in space – even though what marks this space is fluidity; at the same time, future alterations are predicted and, within the bounds of the possible, controlled (ibid.).

Hence in Barra de Ararapira we find a singular notion of territorial rights, informed by the principle of descent: it is the latter that underlies all the kinship dynamics analyzed here. Descent, expressed by the transmission of patronyms, founds consanguinity; at the time of marriage, it opens up space for virilocality; it mobilizes godparenting; and it informs decision-making in cases of widowhood and the division of the inheritance. Hence it structures the use of the land and, by extension, the sea, given that these are complementary domains in the village.

Men born in the locality are conferred the right to decide how to use the territory: to make a home with their wife and children, to fish, to exploit the forest's resources and also, in the past, to plant. This set of spatial norms, in turn, is governed by a greater 'value': Divine Providence, manifested in the sandbar. Consequently it is a completely different system to the regulation of public lands or private properties.

This particular territorial right provides local people with the basis for understanding another big change due to occur: both residents and scientists warn that a new sandbar will open up in the near future. Geological research by Angulo, Souza and Müller (2009) predicts that this event will happen sometime between 2012 and 2016. And this time, according to the authors, the impact will be greater, since the mouth will move away from the region's south, where it has been located for around 700 years, to the north. Successive riptides will open a channel more or less as wide as the current one, around 1 kilometre, in the neighbouring Cardoso Island (SP). As a consequence, a tract of land measuring approximately six kilometres in length is predicted to detach from the latter and connect up with Superagüi Island.

This kind of major event would potentially reopen the discussion of state boundaries, as well as the debate on the frontiers of the region's conservation units and the exploration of oil wells currently found in the region. The researchers argue that legislators have failed to take into account the mobility of the coast when it comes to demarcating territories (ibid.). Barra's villagers

are also certain that another sandbar is going to be *breached*, but few venture a specific date. "It may be rapid or not, there's no way of knowing, it's nature," Rubens said to me.

It is precisely the villagers' dynamic conception of the local world that makes Superagüi National Park an anomalous entity for them. The conservation unit imposes a fixity that contrasts with the fluidity of the sandbar; the territory of the *sítio* where, *since forever*, the Barra villagers have lived alongside their kin and socialized with them, comes under control of the State, which restricts the use of an environment that, for the natives, is a gift of God and whose administration ultimately belongs to Him.

Sahlins (1999) rejects as chimerical the argument that local cultures are re-emerging and reinventing themselves amid the drive towards globalization – of which environmental policies form part. Instead he claims that in the face of the advance of the so-called world system, these collectivities act as they always have: they increase the levels of segmentation of the hierarchy intrinsic to their singular cosmologies in order to embrace the new in their own moulds. As a result, particular cultures do not see themselves as peripheral but rather the world system itself. The Barra ethnography reveals precisely this formula: a universal worldview is constructed from the local viewpoint, not the contrary.

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