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UNIVERSITET

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## **Give us this day our daily bread**

The moral order of Pentecostal peasants in South Brazil

by  
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2018

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**MASTERUPPSATSER I KULTURANTROPOLOGI**

**Nr 83**

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## ABSTRACT

This ethnography aims to identify the role of the Pentecostal beliefs that peasants in South Brazil use in justifying their life situations. Anthropological data were collected in the Sertão region of Jaguariaíva, in the Brazilian State of Paraná. An interpretative approach was used with concepts including the moral order of peasantness, moral economy, and multiple livelihood strategies. The core results indicated that Pentecostals in the countryside are not monolithic in terms of religion and have varying degrees of engagement with a variety of churches as well as their relations with the wider capitalism. Their economic and life-changing decisions are articulated by a moral order of peasantness expressed by dependence on Providence and the interpretation of events as a revelation of Divine will. The moral order is significant for maintaining viable peasant communities, orienting their relations to land, kinship, work, and consumption in a way that sets them apart from the “world.” Such findings question the Weberian explanations for the role of Pentecostalism in Latin American capitalism and confirm the repeasantization theory concerning the persistence of a distinctive peasant way of life.

**Keywords:** peasantry, Peasant Pentecostalism, peasantness, moral order, moral economy, multiple livelihood strategies, economic anthropology, anthropology of religion, Brazil

## RESUMO

Esta etnografia visa identificar o papel das crenças pentecostais com as quais os camponeses do sul do Brasil se expressam para justificar sua subsistência. O trabalho de campo antropológico no Sertão de Jaguariaíva, Paraná, serviu para a coleta de dados. Em uma abordagem interpretativa, a análise emprega conceitos de ordem moral da campesinidade, economia moral e múltiplas estratégias de subsistência. Os principais resultados são: o pentecostalismo rural não é monolítico e conta com diferentes graus de envolvimento com uma variedade de igrejas e com o capitalismo em geral. Não obstante, suas decisões econômicas, ou de grande impacto na vida, são articuladas por uma ordem moral camponesa expressa pela espera na providência e pela interpretação de eventos como uma revelação da vontade divina. A ordem moral tem relevância para a manutenção de comunidades camponesas viáveis, orientando suas relações com a terra, o parentesco, o trabalho e o consumo, de modo a distingui-las do “mundo”. Tais resultados juntam-se ao debate das explicações weberianas sobre o papel do pentecostalismo no capitalismo latino-americano e confirmam a teoria do retorno do camponês como categoria e sua persistência como um distinto modo de vida.

**Palavras-chave:** campesinato, pentecostalismo camponês, campesinidade, ordem moral, economia moral, múltiplas estratégias de subsistência, antropologia econômica, antropologia da religião, Brasil

*Give us this day our daily bread: the moral order of Pentecostal peasants in South Brazil*

A 45 ECTS thesis for the degree of Master in the Humanities – Cultural Anthropology by Leonardo Marcondes Alves presented at Institutionen för Kulturanthropologi och Etnologi – Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology – of the Uppsala University. During the prior stages of this research, Titti Schmidt and Eren Zink acted as supervisors. The public defense of the thesis was held on June 11, 2018 in Room 3-2028, Engelska parken, Uppsala, Sweden, with the following examination committee:

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research, as well as my master's study in Sweden, were only been possible because of family support. I am grateful for the encouragement, funding, and criticism from my parents Izaias and Neusa, and my siblings Caroline and Izaias Filho. I am also indebted to the latest addition to the family: my wife, Carla. Marriage has been a happy and unexpected event during this master program. Carla has kept me down to earth, reviewed my manuscript, and inspired me. Support has also come in various ways from in-laws, nephews, and grandmothers. Indeed, this study on *oeconomia*, to use Aristotle's term, has been a household business. To my family and my love, Carla, I dedicate this thesis.

I am also grateful to the folks of Jaguariaíva. An especial thanks to Lourdes, Lourival, Áurea and Oscar, my hosts for their efforts to make my stay as pleasant as possible. They were also patient informants, sharing their insight and correcting my inaccurate perceptions.

My stay in Uppsala was enjoyable because of many friends I met during my studies. I am thankful to them. Although it is nearly impossible to name them all, I owe thanks especially to Carolina Sundström who has not only helped me but also explained how things work in Sweden, and to Ismail Ibrahim and Birhanu Desta Woldegiorgis who were roommates, party buddies, and academic colleagues. In the city, I had the serendipity to meet Stefania Barichello. With an easy smile and quick wit, she encouraged my personal and academic growth. May she never be forgotten.

Institutional support came from other sources, to whom I am indebted. The Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography granted me a travel stipend for my fieldwork. Research advice by Titti Schmidt and Eren Zink from the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology at the Uppsala University helped me in various stages of this study. In Brazil, Alice Cunha de Freitas and David George Francis were kind to do a last-minute reading, so I could express my ideas more clearly and appropriately.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The peasants of the Sertão region of Jaguariaiva, in South Brazil, have faced many challenges. In less than a century their way of life has transitioned from a commons based subsistence agroforestry system to an economy integrated into the multinational lumber, paper, and pulp industry. Like rural people elsewhere, following this intense transformation, the inhabitants of the Sertão have struggled to earn their livelihood and maintain a viable community, linked to their homeland.

With such a life on the edge, the existence of the peasantry seemed destined to doom at any time. Since the Industrial Revolution, global, financial and industrial capitalism has affected rural societies in drastic ways. Many social researchers have predicted that peasants would either become wage proletariat and entrepreneurial farmers (Marx 1978; Kautsky 1899) or react in revolutions, rebellions or subtle resistance (Wolf 1982; Scott 1976; Taussig 1980; Queiroz 1965). Despite theories that might have their share of truth, contemporary forms of peasantry persist as distinct local groups, and there may now be more peasants in the world than ever before (Edelman 2013; Nadeau 2010; Van der Ploeg 2008). Considering such persistence, this study is a quest to understand how the peasantry maintains itself, able to adapt and shape its world in the face of the challenges.

Economic and political reasons could explain the persistence of the peasants. Still, economic anthropologists (Woortmann 1990; Edelman 2008; Hann and Hart 2011; Gudeman 2001) have pointed out that beyond the dichotomy of the moral or the rational peasant (Scott 1976; Popkin 1980), the maintenance of peasantry depends on a variety of economic rationale and “situated reason” (Gudeman 2001; Ellis 1993). Often, the peasant reasoning is interwoven with a moral attachment to land, kinship and work (Woortmann 1990; Halperin 1990). Among so many changes, religion has been correlated with modernization as it provides ideological grounds for people to interact with their novel forms of economy (Weber 2001). For this study, religion is a relevant factor because many peasant communities have experienced religious shifts among the economic and social changes – in this case, a collective conversion to Pentecostal Christian denominations.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, my purpose was to identify the particular form of economy of the peasants from various Pentecostal churches in South Brazil, to maintain and justify their livelihood. Throughout the thesis, I argue that the common beliefs, values, behavior, expectations, and guidelines of the social and economic relations that the Pentecostal churches provide make the peasant way of life possible by combining different strategies to secure livelihood.

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The personal decision-making process involved in earning a living (and an honest profit) as individual and upkeeping a peasant community can be better understood by the concept of moral economy. As discussed in the theory chapter, moral economy and the related idea of the moral order of peasantness (Woortmann 1990) that fits better for Brazilian peasants, comprises socially accepted factors that permit the existence of various actors in any economic system, including capitalism. For this reason, it is important to remember that capitalism is not monolithic. It would be analytically imprecise to use the same economic model to compare the coal-powered industrial capitalism of nineteenth century Manchester with the capitalism of Wall Street. Consequently, the particular forms of capitalism can only be understood in local situations, bearing in mind precepts of theory, as Wolf (1982) and Hann and Hart (2011) recommend to those engaging in economic anthropology.

The role of Pentecostal religion in the moral order of peasants is demonstrated on three fronts: First, for important decisions like marriage, buying land, building a home, accepting employment, moving, or starting a business, the Pentecostal peasant seeks the Divine will and Providence for creating opportunities and expects God and community to endorse his or her decision. Additionally, the churches' standards of modesty regulate consumption, making the Pentecostal peasant less susceptible to mass marketing while reducing the temptation of status-seeking in the form of financial success. Finally, within the Pentecostal churches, the peasant articulates with the broader society, participating in a reciprocal network and simultaneously enjoying the support of a moral community of shared values and expectations. These three aspects reflect the moral obligation to abide by the word of God in a world of temptation at the same time maintaining horizontal ties of reciprocity. This orientation makes it possible for Pentecostal peasants to engage in worldly capitalism with feelings of authenticity and fidelity.

The sharp divide between the sinful domain of the world and the godly realm of the believers places religion as a category apart. Religion is considered a sphere of influence of its own, which should not be reduced to a variable in response to economic phenomena or external social factors. Thus, religion operates with intrinsic logic but it also impinges upon other fields, including the economy. For example, peasants use grassroots movements and public development projects to maintain their way of life. The present study also focuses on religion because it is one of the few formal organizations with distinct identity and ethos in the region examined. By being non-state institutions, the Pentecostal churches reach beyond the household, with both local and global links. Conversely, organized peasant movements such as rural workers' unions and landless laborer movements, are virtually absent in the region.

Relations between religion and economics have been staple topics in the social sciences since Weber (2001) demonstrated the significance of religious ethos on economic behavior. The Weberian thesis that Protestant ethics have fostered the capitalist spirit has been tested as associated with Latin American Pentecostalism (Martin 1990; Stoll 1990) and Pentecostal peasants (Annis 2000; Berger 2010; Arenari 2017; Chandler 2007). However, recent assessments have discovered various Pentecostal responses to capitalism (Boudewijnse, Droogers, and Kamsteeg 1991; St.Clair 2017; Bastian 1993; Smith 2016; Nogueira-Godsey 2012) that seem to contradict the expected Protestant mentality as grounds for capitalism.

This ambiguous response to the Weberian thesis may be the emphasis that social scientists place on the Calvinist Protestant ideal type during the rise of capitalism (Martin 1990:205-206). Other chapters of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* describing the Lutheran and Anabaptist Protestant types have been less commented. With some adjustments, this latter ideal type fits an interpretation of the world by Pentecostal peasants. Worldly asceticism, the ambiguity of being *in* the world but *not belonging to* the world that (Weber 2001) ascribes to the Anabaptist type describes well the dilemma that Pentecostal peasants face in their decision making. Weber (1978) also proposed an ideal type of peasant religion: helpless, under the whims of nature and fatalistic, believing in a magical world. Contemporary empirical evidence, however, does not support this orientation. Living in a rapidly changing and increasingly pluralistic world, the Pentecostal peasants hold a thaumaturgical worldview combined with selective asceticism as held by the Anabaptists.

The possibility of a miracle makes sense while waiting for the opportunities that capitalism offers, at the same time that believers must secure their individual and collective subsistence. This mentality reflects the multiple livelihood strategies (Halperin 1990) that enable them to cope with the world. The way of life in the Sertão region of Jaguaraiáva appears to be a local form of the “Kentucky way” (Halperin 1990) though throughout this research the multiple livelihood strategies were understood to be a result of the moral order and the means for subsistence of the peasants, guided by this morality.

It is here understood that the Sertão peasants are part of the capitalistic mode of production. They live in an area that produces lumber, pulp, and paper for the worldwide market. Many are salaried workers while some are entrepreneurs with varying degrees of wealth. Most families make a living from a combination of income from wages, exploiting their own or rented small farms or informal businesses and by being recipients of public and church welfare. Many goods and services are purchased at market rates and paid with cash. However, horizontal reciprocity, barter and exchanges of favors are also common ways of acquiring many of these

same goods and services. Living standards do not vary much across Pentecostal households. Each congregation, however, is stratified, with differentiation in the distribution of power, prestige and wealth.

## 1.2. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This research is descriptive with the objective of understanding how peasants in a region of forestry plantation use their religious practices and beliefs – depending on Providence and interpreting events as revelations of God’s word – to create a moral order of peasantness that allows them to have a dignified existence as individuals and as community in South Brazil.

The following chapter reports and reflects on the experience of elaborating ethnography. It also discusses ethical concerns and limitations. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of theory and relevant literature. It sets in context the theoretical concepts of related literature on moral economy, peasants, Pentecostalism, Divine will and Word, awaiting promise, dependence on the Providence, and other research assumptions.

The following three chapters provide a background for the study. A brief overview of the geography and history of the field site are found in Chapter 4. *Faxinal*, is a word used in Portuguese to refer to a combined agropastoral and forestry system based on the commons in the State of Paraná (Löwen-Sahr 2005). It is detailed in Chapter 5, where social and economic transformations are also addressed. Chapter 6 presents the religious background, contrasting the peasant Catholicism and Pentecostalism.

Ethnographic material is scattered throughout the thesis, but the bulk of the fieldwork data is presented in Chapters 7 and 8. In the former, elements of the moral order of peasantness are presented together the outcomes of the Providence and Divine Word. The latter discusses the effects of this moral order on work, consumption, kin and land relations.

Chapter 9 analyzes how Providence and the Divine Word function, with other actors and theories for comparison. The last chapter sums up the results and suggests topics for potential research based on questions from the field.

## 2. TILLING THE FIELDS: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. METHODS

This inquiry was conducted using ethnographic methodology supplemented by bibliographical research and analyzed with an interpretative approach. The empirical part consisted of field work in the municipal region of Jaguariaíva, State of Paraná, Brazil, between February and March, 2011, with participant-observation in social gatherings, religious meetings, and school classes. Additionally, there were open and semi-structured interviews and informal group discussions as instruments for data collection. Interaction among the local population did not end with the fieldwork. There has been continued contact with local acquaintances through social media, exchanges opinions on the current Brazilian politics and discussing local issues.

Jaguariaíva is suited well for this research because the municipality is at the crossroads of changing situations, being appropriate for comparisons. Historically, the municipality has had two discernible models of agrarian economy. One model is a common-resources peasantry system, nowadays called *faxinal* in Brazil, which used to be dominant in the araucaria forests of the Sertão. The other model involves large cattle farms on the grasslands of the plateau that stretches from west to north across half of the municipality. Jaguariaíva has passed through various economic cycles including lumber and meat processing projects, with direct impacts on the countryside. In past decades, the pulp and paper industries have predominated as part of a global economic network, especially with the arrival of Scandinavian companies. Finally, the municipality is representative of many small and middle-sized cities in South Brazil, where agricultural mechanization and industrialization began with grand expectations. The reliance on commodity exports, however, left these municipalities vulnerable to international whims of the market and domestic unstable political and economic policies.

Personal familiarity with the region and with many informants came from past residence, between 1988 and 1997. My family, although it is not from the area, has never severed ties of friendship with many acquaintances in the region. From my childhood and early teen years, I recall those intriguing country folks coming by bus, talking with a distinct accent, selling baskets of pine nuts. I remember going down the slopes on the weekends, being shocked when entering homes with dirt floors, drinking the tea-like *mate*, and copious cups of super sweet lukewarm coffee.

During the fieldwork, I stayed with families of acquaintances of both urban and rural areas. Long conversations with my hosts helped to triangulate my findings. The hospitality was remarkable and contributed to my investigation. Frequently,

there were invitations for barbeques, dinners, birthday parties, church services and festivities, *mate* circles – all occasions from which I recorded observations and informal talks. During the fieldwork, A log recording activities, reflections, and interviews complemented semi-structured interviews. There has also been internet interaction, and conversations with varied content lengths and information quality from a wide range of demographics, including age, gender, social class, religious affiliation, and relationship to the countryside.

During the interviews and conversations, topics were addressed concerning the old and contemporary means of earning a livelihood. Typically, I asked how the work and life were in the Sertão. Life stories, routines for collecting pine nut, rounding up pigs, logging, and social events were topics of conversations. Hearing and commenting on preaching the ritualized church testimonies were also part of my field material. The resulting notes have been analyzed with a grounded theory approach (Bryant and Charmaz 2007), manually coding the emergence of themes and patterns. The vignettes, observations, interview and conversation excerpts presented have been selected as representative of the themes and patterns found. Despite the internal differences among the Pentecostal denominations, and further studies are needed to consider such differences, I focused on their collective ethos. Thus, the concept of “Pentecostal peasants” is a conceptual construction that draws from the various denominations, in contrast with their urban counterparts.

In addition to my empirical data collection, secondary sources, such as local histories and demographic data provided a detailed background on the municipality. Local histories were used to understand the social history of Jaguariaíva and place personal stories in context. Local chroniclers (Frizanco and Ludwig 2006; Axt 2000; Lopes 2002) are not professional historians, but organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense. They are well educated and enthusiasts of local history, with teaching experience in secondary and higher education institutions. Such histories have limited analytical content, being more chronicles and anecdotes, but are invaluable historical sources. Vidal and Cunha (2010) and Joviano (2007) offer critical portrayals from a human geography perspective and are the only academic works found that have a focus on the Sertão. Visits to the local branch of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) were helpful to understand the overall picture, not only from the statistics, but conversations and insights exchanged with the local branch personnel, who have extensive field experience in the area.

The initial intention was to study the *faxinal* system in the region. This combined low-impact agriculture with animal raising in common areas, especially in the araucaria forest, was once widespread in the State of Paraná (Löwen-Sahr 2005). However, during the fieldwork, it became apparent that in Jaguariaíva the

remnants of the *faxinal* system were too marginal to orient the livelihood of whole communities, as it still does in other places in the State. Consequently, the research shifted focus to the multiple livelihood strategies employed by the local peasant population.

The fieldwork seemed to accomplish little in terms of understanding history and my stay seemed to have been too short. Nevertheless, Bernard (2006, 72–73) maintains that even short fieldwork can be enough to amass reliable and valid data when the researcher has familiarity with the locale and the subject. Speaking Portuguese and having previous social networks at the field site helped considerably in obtaining quality data in a relatively brief time. When reassessing that data and keeping contact with the local informants, it was noticed that ostensibly good economic opportunities had been systematically dismissed. A family without land or any employment prospects resisted moving to the city, staying in the Sertão waiting for the Lord's command. Thus, attention was needed to understand how decisions were justified in relation to a religious idiom of Divine will and Providence.

In an ethnographic study, the primary mechanism to process data is the researcher. Thus, reflection is essential. A “just the facts” report would miss much of a subjective interpretation, the aim of the study. By having been raised and somewhat belonging to this area and its congregations, it was possible to become aware that what I had recorded was also what my family had experienced in many ways. My maternal grandparents lived in a *faxinal* system before planting coffee. My paternal grandparents moved to Bolivia without any apparently secure means of support in the late 1940s because of the belief that it was the Lord's will. Multiple livelihood strategies and hope for a better life have been part of us. By having lived in different countries and having access to higher levels of schooling, my worldview has become differentiated from those of my informants. It is, however, better prepared to understand decision making among different segments of populations.

## 2.2. ETHICAL CONCERNS AND LIMITATIONS

The interviews occurred only after obtaining informed consent from respondents. Thoughtful commitment to ethical handling of answers was important. Attempts were made to use a voice recorder, but informants were less comfortable with it. When one talkative informant was asked if the interview could be recorded he consented and then started answering in monosyllables, reducing the quality of the interview considerably. Conversations occasionally touched on sensitive topics from poaching jaguars to betraying a spouse. Thus, I decided to take notes, for posterior transcription.

As mentioned, interviews sometimes revealed compromising content. This required safeguarding informants' privacy. My dual status of conveniently living far away and being only temporarily in the region may have facilitated informant trust. Nevertheless, I feared respondents could have been reluctant or provided biased answers because I was coming from Sweden. Indeed, several people asked whether the Scandinavian factories had hired me to do this research. Informants complained about personal and social life, bragged, told fantastic stories, joked on the naiveté of city folks and about some of their compatriots, and revealed not-so-public facts about the local politics and corporations. Using pseudonyms in analysis would protect contributors. Although some recorded information is innocuous, except for notable people of the local history, all names have been changed.

Being sympathetic to the peasants' plight, as opposed to that of urban residents, corporations, large farms, and the state interference in their lives, risks bias. Attempt was made to mediate this by talking to other stakeholders, namely people in the forestry college, personnel from different levels of the hierarchy in the paper and lumber industries, politicians and local leaders. It was also recognized that friendship could affect my perception and report of findings. A determined attempt at impartiality thus became a guideline in conversations, avoiding giving personal opinions on economic, political, and religious matters.

Although I could relate in many ways to the field site and subjects, this ethnography is more than a product of simple reflections. The objective was to translate how a religious-mandate morality serves to express and determine peasant expectations. It is probable that in this exercise of translating, nuances are lost from one language to another and from an emic religious worldview to an etic secular anthropological worldview. From a superficial perspective, the logic of the Pentecostals may appear ambiguous and their behavior difficult to understand using other systematic rationale orientations. That is the reason that the role of ethnographer resides in translation/interpretation across cultures.



### 3. DISCERNING THE WORD: THEORY

In this study, the notion of peasantness has been defined by terms of economic anthropology. Within the social sciences, the referents and concepts of moral economy, peasants, and Pentecostalism have nuanced meanings. Besides these descriptive, theoretical concepts, the literature on peasant economy and the role of Pentecostal religion in transforming Latin American society have amassed a corpus of explanatory theories which are interesting and often in contrast with this study. Consequently, in this chapter, working definitions used for the previous concepts are presented when assessing current theories that seek to explain the role of religion and its intersection with peasant economic life. These concepts are presented in the context of the related literature, reviewing what has been addressed regarding the research question.

#### 3.1. MORAL ECONOMY AND MORAL ORDER OF PEASANTNESS

The concept of moral economy comprises institutions, meanings and activities oriented by the reproduction of the community, rather than of individual profit (Booth 1994; Edelman 2008; Palomera and Vetta 2016). The idealized and practiced morality is intertwined in the cooperation and the competitive actions of economic activities, inclusive of capitalism (Booth 1994). Thus, in the present research this concept is not applied as an alternative moral economy in the sense of a distinct peasant mode of production in opposition to or in articulation with the market society, nor does it imply an informal economy outside the rules dictated by the “official” economics of the state-sponsored capitalism (Palomera and Vetta 2016).

Of course, there are some aspects of the peasant way of life which are distinct from the capitalist model presented in standard neoclassical economics texts. In the peasant model, there is an attempt to maximize profit and minimize losses but by relying mostly on strategies of informal arrangements and social relations. The neoclassical economics model, on the other hand, idealizes individual profit, with the bulk of economically significant transactions in an impersonal market (Halperin 1990; Woortmann 1990). If the peasant household economic behavior could be translated into a neoclassical microeconomic model, applying a *ceteris paribus* condition to be ruled by market-driven prices, such model would miss many relevant factors regarding the economic decisions of peasants. A comprehensive economic model to understand the Brazilian peasantry must consider what Woortmann (1990) describes as the “moral order of peasantness” that considers the interconnection among the categories of land, labor, and family. Thus, the moral economy model provides a more complete picture of the peasant decision-making process as mediated by religious tenets.

The debate concerning the relation of morality and economic activities is as old as the systematic thought on economics. Despite the beginning with Aristotle's opposition between *oekonomia* (taking care of one's own household) and *chremastika* (pursuit of wealth) to the debut work with its suggestive title: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* by Adam Smith (Hann and Hart 2011), moral economy in the contemporary anthropological theories has been given differing connotations (Booth 1994; Edelman 2008; Palomera and Vetta 2016). The concept appears in Thompson (1971, 1991) to explain the demands for fairness by the British populace, that resulted in the riots against rising prices of food, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the anthropological literature, the moral economy concept has been applied to substantive aspects of economics.

Since Karl Polanyi (1957) proposed that economic behavior could be divided into two facets including: substantive (priority for economic activities embedded in social norms to sustain a dignified existence) and formal (guided by a market-oriented logic) aspects. Anthropologists have debated exhaustively over the universality of a utilitarian profit-maximization rationale (Wilk 1996; Molina and Valenzuela 2007; Hann and Hart 2011). The substantive aspect of economics appears in the position of Scott (1976) in debate with Popkin (1980) as to whether peasants follow a moral or a utilitarian logic. Beyond the mutually exclusive binary opposition of substantive/moral versus formal/market economy, contemporary anthropological critiques have proposed that all economic decisions - including the various forms of capitalism - contain embedded social constraints, but these decisions follow complex rationales that cannot be reduced to a model of individual profit maximization (Booth 1994; Edelman 2008; Palomera and Vetta 2016).

The complexity of the moral economy concept suits the present study well because it has a twofold advantage: being a common point in several theoretical approaches and delimiting the subjects of research. The first advantage is useful because it combines the best insights of what Ortner (1984, 2016) calls the meaning-making approach by the culturalist with the critique of social factors by the political economy. Also, it takes agency into consideration. Ortner (2016) refers to "dark anthropology" as the emphasis of many anthropological studies on the exercise of domination and inequality. Dark anthropology has two lineages, a political economy typified by Wolf (1982) and a culturalist one, epitomized by Geertz (1973). On the one hand, the culturalist approach of Geertz (1973) neglects the difficulties and struggles of the subjects and leaves them out of the historical framework. On the other, the political economy approach by Wolf (1982) could reduce the collective subject behavior to responses to their and others' interests. Political economy anthropologists have depicted the encounters between the West and local societies critically while culturalist anthropologists - inspired by various forms of reassessment of Weberian thought - have sought to understand the worldviews and

symbolic components to interpret transformation of those encounters. The choice of the moral economy concept bears in mind Sherry Ortner's critique of limitations and potentials of "moral" and "dark" approaches for the questions treated in the present research. I believe that, combining the historical and political aspects, the interpretative approach might be enlightening, as demonstrated by Comaroff (1991; 2012). In this study, this eclectic approach has also been aided by what Ortner calls the counterpart of the "dark anthropology," the "anthropologies of the good" that emphasize morality and ethics. However, the focus here is not the same broad conception of morality as seen in the edited volume by Fassin (2012) or in the thematic issue of *Journal of Global Ethics* organized by Friberg and Götz (2015). Instead, morality is narrowed to understand the livelihood process; thus, the embedded moral of an economy. The moral economy approach takes into consideration that amid hegemonic social arrangements there is still an agency, as (Thompson 1971, 1991) and Scott (1976) demonstrated, the crowd, or the peasant, rebelled or subtly resisted the accepted moral order.

Additionally, the concept of moral economy has the advantage of being a common point at the intersection between two areas of study: religion and economy. On the one hand, as part of religious phenomena, the moral standards serve as guidelines for the believer's interaction with other actors, which in turn, knowing the Pentecostal practices, have certain expectations from the believer. On the other hand, the economy is only possible as long as those involved abide by tacit or explicit expectations of behavior, within a degree, acting under the accepted norms.

Another reason for choosing moral economy as the guiding principle for the present research is that it encompasses a given population in an inventive framework for understanding them. That is what Brazilian anthropologist Klaas Woortmann (1990) does when he looks at the peasantry as beyond the perspective of the mode of production, labor or class. Peasants, according to Woortmann, are defined by their "peasantness" characteristics, which comprises peasant ethics based on "moral order, a way of perceiving relationships among men and [between men and] things, like the land" (Woortmann 1990:11). His subject matter is thus not peasantry or peasant economics, but peasantness. Using the peasantness concept, a moral order dictates not only expectations but also behavior as to how to deal with land, labor and family while balancing an intertwined capitalist rationality with morality. In Woortmann's (1990) study, an analytical review of ethnographic corpus of peasants from Northeast and South Brazil, land is not a commodity, but a gift from God. Since land is an asset and legacy, it must be worked. The family farm is the result and the place of labor. And it is not just any work, but an arduous work; therefore, an honored labor. Labor is carried out while "walking on eggshells": relatives must be treated fairly, not paid in impersonal salary, but paid with favors (and, sometimes with cash, which is not considered a complete payment for the deed

done). Salaried work on the backbreaking large plantations is only a necessity; it should never be compared with labor on the family land. Labor and land bind a family together, and, in an honorable way, they should never be disassociated. The selling of commodities on the market or to neighbors echoes this morality. Profit is acceptable, but it depends on how the transaction is conducted and with whom. With kin, there is no “business”, only family relations. Throughout this thesis, as set in this synopsis of Woortmann’s theory, what defines peasantness – hence, peasants – is the moral order.

### 3.2. PEASANTS

Narrowing the definition of peasants as the rural population oriented by a moral order of peasantness is an operating definition that brackets the discussion as to who the peasant is.

The term “peasant” has been applied to diverse groups throughout the history and globe. Thus, the peasantry is more useful as an analytical concept when understood more as a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1953) than a bound definition. Peasants are in the awkward position of being smallholders or landless workers, subsistence farmers or petty capitalists, transient migrant workers or marginals actors in a rural-urban continuum, self-exploited or having any surplus extracted by outsiders (Shanin 1971, 2005). It is no wonder that Kearney (1996) calls for its rejection as an analytical category since rural populations everywhere increasingly share multiple identities. Recently, the term has returned in the social sciences, mostly because of the resilience and political mobilization of this category of people (Van der Ploeg 2008). Narotzky (2016), in an overview on the discussion of the concept, characterizes the peasantry as the agrarian populations living in the tension of a dependent autonomy with capitalism and the State, while still embedded in the relations necessary for the social reproduction of the household.

For the sake of comparison between the residents of the Sertão and peasants from elsewhere: among the traits of this “family resemblance,” peasants are marginal to the urban state societies, providing food, labor, and a demographic reserve. However, they are disenfranchised, since the peasants are in an unequal relationship to the city, which extracts labor and products from them in the form of taxation, rent, tribute, or military draft. Yet, they retain some autonomy, in the form of relying on kinship and other relationships for their maintenance, access to land and other resources, and applying multiple strategies to earn a living.

The peasants studied in this thesis are from the State of Paraná, Brazil, where they have been variously called *caboclo*, *sertanejo*, or – recently in legal and political parlance – “traditional communities”, all of which are as theoretically problematic

as the term “peasant” in the Brazilian literature of agrarian studies (Forman 2009; Woortmann 1990; Harris 1998; Abumanssur 2011). In the region of the fieldwork, there are different rural populations: ranchers with large estates, entrepreneurial farms, salaried rural workers, city-dwelling forestry managers and lumberjacks, descendants of *quilombolas*, to name only a few. In this study, the category referred to as “peasant” comprises that “family resemblance” cited above, united by a moral order of peasantness and multiple livelihood strategies.

The research of Woortmann (1990) was published in the same year as the study on the Kentucky rural economy by Rhoda Halperin (1990). Seemingly they were unaware of each other's work and, with the spirit of the times, both avoided the usage of the term “peasant”. While Woortmann (1990) delimits his subjects by an adjective definition of peasantness, Halperin (1990) bracketed the terminology by using the term “folks”. In common, they treated the peasantry by its relation to land, labor, and social relations. Halperin (1990) in her ethnography of Appalachian rural people calls the “Kentucky way” the social and economic strategies deployed by the rural population to secure a livelihood without becoming dependent on market capitalism. There, the “folks” rely on transient trade in marketplaces, multi-tasking, temporary jobs, keeping orchards, pooling labor and aid from kinship, as well as being independent cash crop producers. Halperin (1990, 2) observes that these multiple livelihood strategies for the ways that people do things occur among rural populations around the globe. The peasant way of life in the Sertão is a variation of this “Kentucky way” for they rely on their kinship, land, and non-specialized labor to maintain themselves. The multiple livelihood strategies follow the guidelines set by the moral order.

In the same line, Halperin (1990) recognizes the multiple livelihood strategies peasants employ to make possible their existence as a group. In agreement, Van der Ploeg (2009) places the multi-source of labor inputs and not necessarily cash crop peasant farming on a spectrum in opposition to entrepreneurial farming. For this theorist of “repeasantization”, peasants are characterized by activities oriented to reducing costs and risks, diversification of crops, interest in keeping the local ecology, collaborating to avoid dependence on money and market; and consequently, maintaining autonomy by acquiring supplies and labor without over-relying on market and money (Van der Ploeg 2008, 47–49). As another common trait, peasants are subject to a “manufactured invisibility” in different societies, even though they constitute a sizable share of the contemporary world population (Van der Ploeg 2008, XVI).

The pervasive aspect of the concept of moral economy helps to recognize that capitalism is not a uniform mode of production. Taking, as an example, the prestige economy of academia. Impact factor of publication, invitations to speak at

celebrated conferences as well as acknowledgment by peers are not secure activities that can be directly converted into individual profit (perhaps attaining a tenured position). This academic economy might function by the same logic used by the Kwakiutl potlatches driven by prestige, under a strict moral economy that prescribes collaboration and competition. However, the moral economy of academia still inserted into a capitalist mode of production, separating the owners of means of production (universities, research institutes) from the laborers (professors), competition among suppliers (institutions) for consumers (students) and financial credit (grants), and products (educational services, patents and applied research solutions) sold on the market. Likewise, the peasant economy is capitalist although embedded in a moral economy.

The rural population I have studied is undoubtedly part of a global capitalist system and faces moral and economic constraints. Jaguariaíva supplies the Brazilian and international markets with resin, cheap wood for construction, plywood, paper pulp, and more value-aggregated lightweight coated and newsprint paper. Employment and services revolve around the forestry business. The large businesses – both factory and forestry management – are owned by international corporations, many of them joint-stock companies with shareholders devoid of any personal commitment to the local municipality. While in the northern part of the municipality the tillable land produces soybeans, most of the land of the Sertão is covered by forests, a type of monoculture composed of only three species of trees: “cultivated” forestry. Some large landowners on the northern side of the region combine their income sources by planting trees, raising beef cattle, or renting land to seasonal mechanized agricultural entrepreneurs. But the peasants in the Sertão do not have the possibility of multiple sources of steady income. They must search among themselves and face difficult decisions to earn their livings.

### 3.3. PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostalism is a religion of fluid and individualized interpretation but collectively lived. Consequently, it is also difficult to define. Taking as a point of departure, anthropologist Joel Robbins, who, in his overview of global Pentecostalism, defines it substantively as “the form of Christianity in which believers receive gifts from the Holy Spirit and have ecstatic experiences such as speaking in tongues, healing and prophesying” (Robbins 2004, 117). Nevertheless, this global movement has many nuances. Being too broad, the definition offered by Robbins could be applied to any group that interprets the ecstatic religious experiences cited as the result of Divine action in Christianity. This could extend from contemporary Christian Spiritists in Brazil to the Laestadian awakening in Scandinavia in the nineteenth century; or even many occurrences of such charismatic phenomena among Christian-inspired messianic-millenarian

movements (Queiroz 1965). Besides, many groups with historical and theological connections to the early twentieth century revival in the United States, that came to be known as Pentecostalism, do not use that designation as an emic reference (Anderson 2010). And neither are recent groups like the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal or middle-class Charismatic prayer fellowships within mainstream Protestantism fond of being called Pentecostals. Finally, not everyone committed to Pentecostal congregations engages in the ecstatic experiences nor are they emphasized in some Pentecostal denominations. The movement of people across different religious groups also adds complexity to the blurred boundaries.

Amid such complexity, the religious studies scholar, Allan Anderson (2010, 15) also employs “a family resemblance that emphasizes the working of the Holy Spirit” for conceptualizing Pentecostalism. Anderson’s family resemblance analogy is grounded in four criteria that are not necessarily mutually exclusive: the typological, social scientific, historical and theological. Without extensive examination of each criterion, but to illustrate the internal complexity of Pentecostalism under the typological approach, Anderson divides the movement into four categories: (a) classical Pentecostalism, whose origins lay in the North American revival among Protestants in the beginning of the twentieth century and have spread throughout the world by missionary activities acquiring local forms; (b) Older independent and Spirit churches; (c) Older Church Charismatics; and (d) the more individualistic-oriented neo-Pentecostal and neo-Charismatic Churches. In the region of the present study, groups of the types a, c, and d have significant followings. However, in the rural areas, only classical Pentecostals form sizable communities, and have general mistrust for the individualistic neo-Pentecostal message among other country folks.

Due to the internal diversity and lack of consolidated statistics that use qualitative criteria for peasant Pentecostalism, it is difficult to accept any estimates of demographics. Additionally, in terms of the role of Pentecostalism for the permanence of the peasant way of life, lack of regard for internal differences would be imprecise. This study is concerned with classical Pentecostals, including the Christian Congregation in Brazil (CCB), the Assemblies of God (AD), the Foursquare Gospel Church (IEQ), the God’s Love Pentecostal Church (IPDA), and the Brazil for Christ Evangelical Pentecostal Church (BPC). Excluded from this analysis were the Roman Catholic Charismatics, Charismatic Presbyterians, Baptists, and neo-Pentecostals groups.

In common, the denominations examined have origins in the activities of both foreign missionaries and Brazilian founders but currently are national organizations. They hold strict codes of conduct with a duality that distinguishes between the “work of God” and the realm of the “world,” the community of the

“brethren,” with clear rules of church-mandated reciprocity and expectations. They have relations of suspicion with “the unconverted and godless people.” For these classical Pentecostals, ecstatic experiences are important, with rituals of Divine healing and exorcism being prominent among the newer groups (IPDA, IEQ, BPC, IURD). However, what every group holds dear is the interpretation of life decisions, everyday facts, and events as revelations from God, even when such processes of interpretation do not occur in dramatic ways or prophecy.

Pentecostalism has been booming in Brazil since 1910 when lay missionaries, who were themselves immigrants, arrived, many from the United States. In that year, the Italian laborer Luigi Francescon began the CCB among his compatriots in the rural village of Santo Antonio da Platina, about 150 km north of Jaguariáiva, but achieved more success in the cosmopolitan São Paulo. The church has transcended its ethnic boundaries and has grown in the agricultural frontiers of Brazil, especially in small towns (Monteiro 2010). Contemporaneously with Francescon, two Swedes founded the AD in the Amazonian city of Belém do Pará, from where the movement spread to the drought-stricken regions of the Northeast and then to the southern parts of the country (Norell 2011).

In the 1950s, the second wave of Pentecostalism, this time, more an urban movement, attracted the migrant poor in centers like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Freston 1995). This new movement emphasized Divine healing and mass communication strategies. The members have been very divisive, however, splitting into diverse groups with the most notable being the IEQ, BPC, and IPDA. Incidentally, all of the founders of these older denominations have had a peasant background. Francescon was a peasant from Friuli, as were the founders of the Assemblies of God Daniel Berg, and Gunnar Vingren, born and raised in small villages of south Sweden. Brazil for Christ and God is Love were founded by rural migrant laborers, Manoel Ferreira, and David Miranda, respectively.

Around the time that Pentecostalism became a subject of inquiry by researchers from a historical and theological perspective, others (Willems 1967; D’Epinay 1968) began a sociological approach, primarily to explain the mass conversions. In the 1970s a new wave called neo-Pentecostalism, came via the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD), the International Church of the Grace of God and the Worldwide Church of The Power of God focusing on deliverance from evil and personal prosperity (Freston 1995). Additionally, myriads of independent and smaller denominations have appeared as well as separations and charismatic movements within the established Protestant and Catholic churches. In Jaguariáiva all of the mentioned denominations are present. Informants recall that the Assemblies of God came in the 1930s and other Pentecostals arrived after the 1950s.



The earlier sociological perspectives (Willems 1967; D'Epainay 1968) believed that the reasons for the moderate success of Pentecostalism had functionalist explanations. According to them, peasants in agricultural frontiers or migrants to recently-industrialized cities lived in anomie, which was counterbalanced by belonging to face-to-face communities of the Pentecostal churches. Thus, these churches were "havens for the masses" (D'Epainay 1968). The empirical findings of other competing religions also booming in the cities seemed to contradict such explanations, being replaced by relative deprivation theories (Brandão 2007; Mariz 1994), which explained that the Pentecostal churches provided not escapism, but a way to cope with life. In the same line of thought, some social theorists (Martin 1990) have seen the advancement of Pentecostalism in Latin America as a form of Protestant Reformation, which in a broad (and controversial) sense, would be a form of modernization.

These theories, which predicted a more extensive social secularization along with the adoption of a capitalist ethos by the Pentecostals, lost their explanatory power with the upcoming of the neo-Pentecostal movement. These churches – drawing heavily on TV programs and on store-fronts house of prayers open the entire day – promised the fulfillment of heavenly prosperity in this life while engaging in spiritual warfare against the devil and seizing electoral posts through the churches' articulation. Consequently, the "world" was not a profane reality to be avoided, but a realm to be conquered and turned into the sacred. To explain the success of these churches, among them the most prominent being the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, social scientists have proposed theories based upon the rational choice of religion (Mariano 2007). In this scenario, theories of empowerment, based upon the rational choice theory on religion, sought to understand the role of Pentecostalism in the competitive market of religions. Chesnut (1997), for instance, has pointed out the importance of the physical, family, and material empowerment that a variety of Pentecostal churches offers for the urban population, many all them already converted before experiencing the rural to urban transition.

In short, the plurality of religious organization and discourse led to an increase of the spiritual "supply" in the religious market, resulting in competitive actions for Brazilian souls. The neo-Pentecostal churches' ethos suits well the neoliberal ethos of individualism and get-rich-quick desires of late capitalism. In tune with the gospel of prosperity, the individual weighs his or her options to adhere to a neo-Pentecostal church. However, the rational choice theory does not explain the relative absence of neo-Pentecostals in the countryside where neoliberal forms of capitalism have also made inroads. There is a growing consumption of mass industrialized products and the noticeable presence of entrepreneurial mechanized plantations treating land as a business.

In general, the previously mentioned theories for explanation of the Pentecostal religious change in Latin America concentrate on the cities, incidentally the locus for modernization. This is not a surprise, since Pentecostalism is mostly an urban phenomenon. However, much research has been conducted in the countryside. Martin (1990, 221-29) summarizes the studies concerning rural Protestantism in Latin America, especially among indigenous groups in Mesoamerica. That survey remains an essential introduction, though a bit dated and without the privileged point of view of Latin Americans, peasants or Pentecostal researchers. Chaves (2011), for instance, an Assembly of God minister and social scientist, has researched the role of prophesying and leadership in a small independent church in a rural zone, not far from São Paulo.

The way that this religion is locally lived in rural Brazil presents a perspective distant from the idea of Pentecostalism as a cultural import from the Anglophone world, as proposed by Martin (1990) and Stoll (1990). For example, Hoekstra (1991) sees rural Pentecostalism more as a continuity of the traditional past though with some ruptures. Modernization is not a straight unidirectional event, as Chandler (2007) demonstrates when he addresses the peasant self-reliance and avoidance of receiving external rural development program assistance while comparing the autonomy of the Pentecostals and the patron-client relations of Catholics in Brazil. Conversely, Brandão (2007) and Abumanssur (2011) apply concepts of rupture and continuity (Turner 1969). The now-classic monograph by Brandão (2007) sees the small town and rural Pentecostalism as an expression of folk religiosity rather than modernization. Likewise, from an ethnographic point of view, Abumanssur (2011) explains the growing adhesion of *quilombola* and *caçara* peasants to classical Pentecostalism – and the relative absence of neo-Pentecostalism among them – in a region not far from my field site as an outcome of a successful combination of the traditional worldviews of folk religion with modernity.

Overall, a comprehensive analysis of peasant Pentecostalism is still needed, since most substantial research deals with local cases. But there are some problems in examining rural Latin American Pentecostalism using the Weberian thesis, modernization or continuity and rupture theories. As presented in the introduction, the role of Pentecostal Protestantism in fostering a spirit of capitalism in Latin America has been a subject for discussion using Weberian theory. One issue is that not everyone distinguishes the Calvinist ethos from the sectarian Anabaptist. Martin (1990) and Arenari (2017) are among the few who make that distinction; yet, others (Boudewijnse, Droogers, and Kamsteeg 1991; St.Clair 2017; Bastian 1993; Smith 2016; Nogueira-Godsey 2012) insist that the claims as to the importance of the Protestant ethic and social capital among Pentecostals to create a spirit of capitalism have been exaggerated. Pentecostalism may have no substantive economic impact

at all. Pentecostals might have reinterpreted the secular calling of Weber's Protestant ethic in transforming the spiritual, rather than the worldly life. The process of choice of which elements of religion and economic activities the Pentecostal peasant selects is not clear with the continuity and rupture paradigm. Nor is it clear what is traditional or modern since even the folk religiosity also evolves.

These critiques are pertinent. The analysis of Pentecostalism must consider the voluntary aspects of the Pentecostal churches, instability embodied by the movement among different denominations and endemic schisms, internal changes within the denominations, and consideration of the peasant world-view. Also, in general, the studies of Latin American Pentecostalism had an emphasis on conversion rather than consideration of the multi-generational ethos developed by a centenarian movement (Lindhardt 2016 is a collection of articles that breaks this over-emphasis). Another approach to non-urban Pentecostalism in Latin America examines identity. The volume organized by Alvarsson and Segato (2003) and some monographs (Barros 2003; Kristek 2005; Althoff 2014) regarding identity formation deal especially with indigenous Latin American Pentecostalism. This is the case of the Pentecostal peasant in the Sertão, for whom allegiance to the church and primary identification have considerable weight. Identifying themselves first as Pentecostal believers may have an effect on social and economic behavior and attitudes towards capitalism. These are useful aspects for the construction of an ideal type of Latin American peasant Pentecostal ethic.

Given the continuity of a distinctive Pentecostal peasantry in Latin America and its varied reactions to modernity and capitalism, the present study initially sought to understand Pentecostal peasant identity. The resulting profile and its adherence to a moral order could subsequently shed light on the modernization, Weberian orientation, identity transformation, continuity and rupture, rational choice and attitudes toward the market, of religions approaches.

#### 3.4. OTHER RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

In this section, some working definitions of concepts are clarified. For the benefit of comparison of theories based on Weber's (2001) notion of capitalism, I refer to capitalism as the social and economic organization that seeks profit by exchanges in the market, mediated by money. It is recognized, however, that capitalism has taken many forms at the global, national, and local levels (Hann and Hart 2011, 142–62). The term modernity is also problematic, and here perceived as having multiple facets. But for comparative purposes I adopt a modified Weberian approach of purported disenchantment and the rational world as an expected normality.

Community is used here to express the idea of people united by local interests, partaking of a shared social system. (Rappaport and Overing 2000, 60).

Denomination, refers to a group or network of local congregations organized with a distinctively religious identity and association. Sociological distinctions concerning church, sect and denomination are not here addressed.

The Divine will or the Word of God refers to an intuitive insight of the believer assured by the collective belief. When these emic terms refer to a future or possible event, another emic definition is used: the promise of God or Providence of the Lord. Although there are nuances presented throughout the thesis, these terms are here used interchangeably since respondents also switch from one term to the other though conveying the same meaning. In this thesis, the focus was on the moral outcome of the Word and the Providence. Thus; the actual process of discerning them was left out. Besides the decision to focus on the results of such reasonings, respect for the intimacy of processing religious experiences was another motive to leave them out of this study.

The Divine Word and Providence are forms of situated reason. The concept of situated reason is proposed by Gudeman for the various local rationales that are oriented to practical problem-solving:

Situated reason is reflexive, for it is learned in the doing and each completion provides an example to be changed, and, as practices change, so shifts the environment. Using situated reason, people adjust but draw on accepted models, they experiment yet have predictability. The concept of situated reason dissolves the borders between mind and body, person and surroundings, individual and community. (...) Situated reason is not an alternative to reasoned assessment or instrumental calculation, whether guided by self-interest or commitment to others. But situated reason, dependent on community, is always an important part of economy. Rational decision-making presumes an ordered world in the sense that items or units exist and are commensurate. Situated reason makes a world, and opens new worlds, dissolving oppositions between self and others, self and objects. It is part of economy at the base. (Gudeman 2001, 40,42)

The act of seeking “the Word” or waiting on Providence is a form of situated reason. It coexists with other local forms of situated reason, like the Brazilian ingenuity or *jeitinho*. What is unique in the peasant conception is the passive-reactive rationale placing all hope on the numinous. Despite the apparent hopelessness, it is not quietist; it harbors a secret agency with a religious idiom.

Recognition of the varieties of rationales is not new in the social sciences. Weber (1978) proposed that social actions are motivated by purpose or value

rationality, affective, and traditional action. The marginalist and utilitarian frameworks in neoclassical economics and later the moral vs. rational peasant debate in economic anthropology (Hann and Hart 2011; Wilk 1996) have downplayed other forms of reason.

Since Chayanov (1986) the discussion as to what motivates economic decisions of peasants has challenged the neoclassical microeconomic model that all individuals seek profit with every choice. Ellis (1993) lists theories that direct household decisions, such as profit maximization risk aversion, drudgery aversion, farm household theories (trade-offs among alternatives to maximize household income), shared tenancy (transaction cost reduction and risk distribution) as all utility maximization models. It is generally accepted, however, that the moral side is present in all economic decisions, not only those of peasants (Booth 1994).

## 4. THE FIELD SITE

“Did you know the Sertão was once under the sea?” “Are you looking for trilobites?”

I frequently heard these instructive questions from obliging informants. Recurrent paleontological expeditions to the municipality have made elements of natural history familiar to the residents. As a result, at first sight, people assumed I was another earth scientist. I would explain what anthropology was and that my interest primarily concerned the people of the Sertão. I was then categorized as a sort of historian or journalist. In this chapter, fulfilling my initially perceived role, I cover some aspects of the geography of Jaguariaíva.

The municipality of Jaguariaíva is located at 24°15'04" S and 49°42'21" W with an area of 1,453 km<sup>2</sup> (IBGE 2013) distributed in two plateaus: the Sertão de Cima plateau in the south; and the highlands Second Plateau or Campos Gerais that stretches from the center-south to the northeastern part of the State of Paraná, Brazil. The municipal government seat is located in the Campos Gerais plateau. The entire municipality has 32,606 inhabitants (IBGE 2013), with an average monthly household income of R\$603,84 (IBGE 2013) (roughly 1700 SEK). The income is not only low but unevenly distributed, as indicated by the .5167 Gini Index. According to the 2010 census, the Sertão had 1,638 inhabitants (IBGE, 2013), though many people have left the Sertão since the pulp factory ceased its operations in January, 2009, which reduces the accuracy of data on population size.

The municipality was colonized by Portuguese-Brazilians in the late eighteenth century (Axt 2000; Frizanco and Ludwig 2006; Lopes 2002). At that time, cattle drives and muleteers opened the Viamão Trail that linked the pampas to São Paulo. The cattle ranchers settled in the Campos Gerais plateau and received large land grants from the central government. These large tracts usually became estates, far from each other. Many land grants, however were never occupied and later considered vacant. Often the white, dedicated Catholic, male landholder furnished men and weapons to fight in the frontier and Indian wars and received militia titles such as captain or colonel. This initiated the period of authoritarian regime entitled *coronelismo*, akin to the Hispanic-American *caudillismo*. Most of the land grantees in Campos Gerais were absentee owners, leaving their ranches to foremen, salaried herdsmen, slaves, tenants or sharecroppers. This land grant system evolved into the formation of latifundia with monoculture produced for the external market. Consequently, small peasants could hardly own land and were forced to either move to more remote areas or subject themselves to a patron-client relationship.

The Campos Gerais plateau ends abruptly in a steep sandstone slope called the Devonian Escarpment. The local designation for this slope is Serra das Furnas or

Serra dos Campos Gerais, with segments having specific local names, like Paredão da Santa. This wall-like slope divides the municipality diagonally, making it challenging to travel between the Sertão and Campos Gerais before opening the dirt roads in the 1960s. The escarpment reaches an altitude of about 1,200 meters above sea level before falling to an average 850 meter altitude in Sertão de Cima (IBGE 2013).

The arduous accessibility of the Sertão made it uninteresting for the Campos Gerais ranchers to explore it. Peasant families occupied the Sertão and maintained limited contact with cattle ranchers in Campos Gerais. Although there were few legal provisions for collective land ownership, the commons became the norm as the population increased and migrated to new frontiers, disputing the open fields of Campos Gerais with the cattle ranchers. Kinship, *compadrio*, neighboring, and religious ties reinforced solidarity in a shared condition of marginality and made it possible to extract subsistence from the vibrant forest. Sub-dividing the land to obtain individual deeds was a useless venture. Thus emerged the *faxinal* system in the araucaria forest on the outer edges of Campos Gerais.

Sertão de Cima, which means “Upper hinterlands,” is an oxymoron since the region is in the lower First Plateau of Paraná. The original biome consisted of dense araucaria forest, sporadic glades (*faxinas*) and wetlands of fertile soil, the La Plata Basin. The Jaguariaíva River flows into a marsh lagoon before running through the U-shaped Condó Valley that penetrates the Devonian Escarpment and ends up in this Rio de la Plata Basin.

A few generations ago, the araucaria forest sheltered the first peasants who made the Sertão their home. The araucaria tree has a candelabra shape with a dense crown and wide space between branches, allowing different layers of biodiversity under the canopy. In the shadow of the araucaria grows the herb, *mate*, used for tea and the guabiroba fruit tree (*Campomanesia pubescens*), both important to supplement the peasant diet. When he passed through the region in the early nineteenth century, the French naturalist, Saint-Hilaire, described the importance of the araucaria:

The araucaria not only embellishes Campos Gerais but also it is extremely useful to its inhabitants. The white wood with purple veins is used in carpentry and furniture. (...) Its nuts are long and measure the half of a finger size. They are not starchy as the hazelnut; though the flavor is reminiscent of it (...) People of Campos Gerais eat the nuts and use them to feed pigs. Knowing the usefulness of this tree, they respect it and do not cut it down unless absolutely necessary (Saint-Hilaire 1978, 16–17 My translation).

As Saint Hilaire noted, grasslands dotted with sparse groves of araucaria trees spread over Campos Gerais, to the edges of the gallery forests, along the banks of river canyons. The soil in the Campos Gerais region of Jaguariaíva is shallow and sandy, not ideal for agriculture. It has historically served well for pasture and recently for pinus monoculture. Murtinho, a farm I visited, had only foot-deep soil before reaching a limestone stratum, sometimes with rocks emerging to the surface. Pesqueiro, also in the north of Jaguariaíva, has more fertile soil and savanna shrub vegetation, rare in South Brazil.

It is a transition zone between tropical to subtropical climate. Houses do not have heating systems, and the cold winds make the winter harsh with below zero thermal sensation temperatures. In the Sertão, people cope better with the winter than the city dwellers, given that Sertão homes have heating from wood-burning ovens alongside gas stoves. The difference in altitude, the slope barrier, and vegetation result in Sertão de Cima and the Campos Gerais having distinct microclimates. Even though my fieldwork was during the summer (February-March), I recorded temperatures in the Sertão as low as 14°C – somewhat cool by Brazilian standards. On a few occasions, I left a sunny plateau to be soaked in the rain at another place.

The natural and historical distinction of these two plateaus is reflected in the administrative division of the municipality into two districts: Jaguariaíva proper and Eduardo Xavier da Silva. Eduardo Xavier da Silva District, named after a past mayor, scion of a powerful family in the Campos Gerais, actually overlaps with the Sertão. However, in everyday local speech, the name Sertão de Cima, is shortened to “the Sertão” – the version used in the present research. The formal name is held in mutual disregard: while the municipal council names places, usually to honor political leaders, the local peasants insist on maintaining their traditional toponymy.

Boundaries blurred when residents were asked about the limits of the Sertão. Everyone agreed that the Sertão – in the strict sense – was the area encompassed by the arch formed by the Serra das Furnas, from northwest to east. The southern limit would thus be a mountain range called the Canastrão, Serra Manoel Grande or Serra da Paranapiacaba. The vernacular territory for the Sertão corresponds to the Jaguariaíva River basin. I also collected references to a broader Sertão, a continuous rural area with less intense contact and larger urban centers including the whole municipality of Dr. Ulysses and the districts of nearby municipalities.

It is interesting that this broad definition excludes rural areas in the Campos Gerais from the Sertão. The social and cultural perceptions of space explain the willingness to include the territorial districts of other municipalities with similar physical geography, shared economy and intense family ties. On the other hand, this



perception excludes a rural region, in the same municipality, with a different social history. Such differences demonstrate the primacy of socially-constructed notions of territory over mere acceptance of the politically-defined toponomy and boundaries.

The Sertão is subdivided into *bairros* – neighborhoods – which can mean either scattered houses over a vast area or an area of small, dense housing. Sociologist (Candido 1975, 76–79) defines Brazilian rural *bairros* as social groupings larger than a nuclear family and smaller than a village, involved in common labor, mutual help, and collective religious festivities. The result is more social interaction in a given region than would be defined by natural boundaries or land surveys by public authorities. Hamlet or scattered village would be a close English equivalent, so the term “hamlet” should be read as the word *bairro* in this study.

Most of the social life and reciprocal action traditionally occurs within the limits of the hamlet still today. A typical hamlet consists of unpaved streets, smallholdings of varying sizes, an occasional shop, and an isolated shrine. Families’ homes may be only a few meters apart or as far as a couple kilometers apart. Nowadays, industrial warehouses, piles of logs, schools, health outposts and Pentecostal chapels populate the scene.

Based on social proximity rather than strict geographical density, a hamlet has relative autonomy of economic and social life. The Sertão has the following hamlets: Bom Sucesso, Chapadão, Prados, Jangai, Gentio, Faxinal, Lanças, Limoeiro, Mellos, Água Branca, Cadeado, Canastrão, Conceição, Campina do Elias, Cerradinho Espigão Alto, São João and Cerrado da Roseira. Some hamlets have subdivisions: Lanças de Cima, Lanças de Baixo, Palhanos and Vila Rural. As mentioned earlier, the boundaries of vernacular regions are imprecise, so hamlets of nearby municipalities may be counted as part of the Sertão: Socavão in Castro, Capinzal in Pirai do Sul, Ouro Verde and Alves in Sengés, Itaiacoca in Ponta Grossa, and Varzeão in Dr.Ulysses.

The current territorial division seems to result from the *faxinal* system, when the hamlet encompassed:

- an area with access to the commons,
- respect for each other’s animal properties,
- obligations of *mutirão*, meat exchange and *mate* circle,
- organization of festivities,
- ties of *compadrio* and
- family.

Social relations are a key criterion to define the territory of the hamlet even more than natural boundaries of the landscape. When asked about the physical limits of the hamlet, the borders varied, “Bom Sucesso goes up to that curve in the road” “It’s all around this hill” “In the old times the ditch was the boundary” “It ends at the properties of families Y and X.” With eucalyptus and pinus plantations disrupting the territorial and social continuity of the hamlet, the borders became even more imprecise.

Occasionally, ditches, sometimes as deep as one meter or fences mark the boundaries of hamlets, smallholdings and the commons in the forest. Limits of household proprieties used to be imprecise too. According to the informants, in the old times, the household heads would agree verbally on their boundaries and depend on the social ties. They would rarely build a fence or dig a ditch.

According to the local parlance, properties can be either farms (*fazendas*), or smallholdings (*sítios/chácara*s) within the hamlet. According to my informants, the general criterion for such classification is propriety size: a smaller propriety (>70 hectares) would be a *sítio* or *chácara*. On the other hand, *fazendas* are properties with urban or corporate owners, no matter the size: Fazenda da Floresta Ltda, Fazenda do Dr. Costa. This implies that a *sítio* or *chácara*, save recreational properties, is land worked and lived on by peasants.

Besides personal familiarity and curiosity about this region, I found that the field site is representative of how people respond to economic, political and ecological topics in rural areas. The research was not limited to a particular *hamlet* or community. People throughout the area provided information: town folks, urban and rural commuters, people from the deep and suburban rural areas (Halperin 1990, 16–17). Thus, there were blurred boundaries between rural and urban. Even so, the interviewees espoused a way of life oriented by the moral order of peasantness. Actually, narrowing the research to within the boundaries of a municipality allowed concentration on shared conceptual instances of morality and its effect on economic behavior. This strategy is congruent with the keen observations of Geertz regarding the role of anthropological research, for whom:

The locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighborhoods...); they study *in* villages. You can study different things in different places, and some things - for example, what colonial domination does to established frames of moral expectation -you can best study in confined localities (Geertz 1973, 22).

## 5. THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION OF THE SERTÃO

At the time of the research, one year had passed since the Sguario Mill had ceased operations. Nearly 300 workers had lost their factory employment. The hamlet of Jangai, a company village in which the mill owned most of the houses, became a ghost town overnight. Only a foreman, some retired personnel, a handful of logging workers of the Sguario Company and a few former employees remained to maintain the public school. Nearly all of the businesses closed their doors. Only a tire repair shop, a small general store and a snack bar remain. Each time a house is empty, a bulldozer razes it to the ground. The former employees with strong ties to the Sertão, especially family or land relations insist on staying for a little longer while waiting for God's Providence for their future.

The situation is not much different in other nearby hamlets of the Sertão. Silent green deserts of planted trees surround the smallholdings. A constant complaint is that the soil is now more deficient, and water is less available as a result of the trees usurping these critical elements of production. Lacking access to alternative agricultural techniques and in the absence of funding, any attempt to survive solely from the land is nearly impossible. Many households, without tillable land or a steady job, must rely on a variety of strategies to earn a living. Livelihood depends on a combination of public and church welfare. Working as a lumberjack or as a laborer in the city provides a minimum wage of R\$678 or about 2,000 SEK per month, as of 2011. However, as a sub class within the society, the peasantry persists in the countryside, often justifying its decision with religious discourse which underlines an economic logic and includes moral factors.

The first section of this chapter deals with the transformation of the Sertão from a *faxinal* system to a post-industrial economy. It is not historiographical but a bricolage of reminiscences from informants and phrases from published local histories (Frizanco and Ludwig 2006; Axt 2000; Lopes 2002), as well as personal recollection of the stories heard when growing up in Jaguariaiva. The economic, political and social contexts are from Vidal and Cunha (2010) and Joviano (2007). Although not based on written record or a strict oral history methodology, I sought to triangulate the narrative with the locals. The idea was not to convey a tragic tale from a pristine, romantic idyll life in the countryside to the impending destructive doom posed by Western capitalism. It was more an impressionist narrative aimed at portraying how the peasants of the Sertão built their communities and had their social lives determined by religious conversion.

The Sertão had suffered the effects of a new economic cycle. The family stories of the “old blood” stock repeat the same pattern. Swidden agriculturalists

had expanded slowly from São Paulo to the araucaria forest since colonial times. They were always looking for new land since the soil was exhausted after a few years of burning and planting. By the time they reached the araucaria forest, on the borders of the Campos Gerais, the forest zone seemed to offer opportunity for them to settle. Nuts, mate, peccaries and a sparse forest that allowed easy manual cultivation of beans and maize guaranteed subsistence. They practiced slash-and-burn subsistence agriculture combined with raising small animals, mostly pigs, in the shadows of the araucaria trees of the *faxinal* system. Then the railroad linking Southern Brazil to São Paulo was built in the 1910s and lumber became the primary source of income, seconded by intensive hog raising to supply the industrial meatpacking plant installed in the city. From the late 1940s to the present, the industrialization created by the paper and pulp industry has changed the landscape and economic configuration of the Sertão, with a pulp mill built in the hamlet of Jangai (Vidal and Cunha 2010; Joviano 2007). The industrialization attracted many newcomers, but the boom would not last for long. The *faxinal's* extensive techniques of swine raising could not produce enough animals to supply the meatpacking plant, which shut down in the 1970s.

#### 5.1. LAND, LABOR, AND KINSHIP IN THE FAXINAL TIMES

The *faxinal* system, as practiced in Paraná and formerly in the Sertão, no longer exists in Jaguariaíva. Some typical *faxinal* system techniques, however, do still survive (i.e., pooling labor. A few letting still pigs roam freely on the roads and into the legal forest reserves). These practices, however, do not constitute a complete economic system, viable enough to maintain a group of households in the communal area. What remains also does not constitute an economic system large enough to influence other domains of cultural and social life. Nowadays, the bulk of the family economy consists of wage labor, plus additional income from gardening and raising small animals, complemented by social security benefits and self-help. Personal preference for home-made products is the reason usually given for raising animals and crops for domestic consumption or exchange.

This agrosilvopastoral economy of the past was viable because it combined the exploitation of forest resources with other cultural institutions including the commons for pasture, practices of exchange and social constraints. The commons included the communal area in the forest and pooling labor in the *mutirão* (communal labor efforts). Exchange mechanisms comprised reciprocal obligations of gifts, barter, favors, and enhancing family ties through marriage and *compadrio*. Social constraints honoring their peasant way of life regulated the interaction.

The pastoral technique was simple and consisted of free range for small animals. Usually pigs rooted in the forest for about two winters, hence the name

*invernada* (“wintering” in English) before being big enough to be slaughtered for feasts or sold in town. The manure helped fertilize the soil for planting beans and maize. The few dairy cows kept close to home would only be slaughtered for weddings, sickness, *mutirão*, feasts, or funerals. When killing cattle, the meat was shared with kin, neighbors, and *compadres*. The lack of techniques for meat conservation required prompt consumption while sharing it reinforced the social and economic relationships with those who mattered. Simple wood and stick enclosures kept the wandering livestock out of cultivated plots and gardens and protected the chicken coop. Later, when the meat factory was installed in the city, *compadres* and neighbors would gather the fattened herd of pigs and drive them to Jaguariaíva. Some owners still cut a notch on piglets’ ears to indicate ownership.

The Caboclo [local peasant] lived mostly out of the land, only trading in the city for salt, textiles, and iron tools...sickles, machetes, and axes. They would bring mate, palm heart or any animal to town hoping to sell it for cash, but making an advantageous barter was enough to return home happy. (Lourdes, an elderly inhabitant from the Sertão)

Acquisition of land occurred by simply occupying vacant land or by asking permission from neighbors to settle nearby. Land rarely was the object of cash transaction. A household would allow a *compadre* to settle in a remote corner of their *sítio* or give a plot of land to a newly-wed couple to build their home. Sometimes permission to occupy the land would be exchanged for animals, weapons, wagons or other local items.

Some households registered their land titles, first with the real estate registrar of Castro and in recent times, with that of Jaguariaíva. For a while, during the lumber boom in Jangai, there was a registrar and notary there. However, the deed did not secure legal ownership. The records were imprecise, often the properties overlapped. The draconian requirements of written proof for the possession of land prevented peasants from registering it. The result was that sometimes they became easy prey to land grabbers, well-connected con-men who would falsify deeds and register them; therefore, legally taking over the land.

The *mutirão* or *puxirão* was a collective way to pool free labor. Friends and neighbors would gather *ad hoc* for one or two days, without an explicit head or manager, to clear the forest, build homes and barns, round up cattle, plant, and harvest. On the days of the *mutirão*, the work occurred in a festive atmosphere possibly engaging all of the people in a hamlet. Besides the division of labor, there was also gender and age division. Work assignments for women, children and the elderly would be lighter. For example, in a *mutirão* to slaughter pigs, adult men would kill, scrape and dress the animals, women would prepare the meal for everyone, children gather firewood, the elderly boil the meat to render lard. The

*mutirão* provided mutual help in the most difficult aspects of the life cycle: burials, building a new home, celebrating a Saint John's feast and organizing a wedding party. The peasants held the land for grazing in the forest in common. Pigs fed freely in the designed areas while households had individual plots for maize and beans. Cutting a tree from the commons would entail the use of *mutirão*.

Women would tender small gardens around the house and gather araucaria nuts, fruit, *mate* herb and tobacco from the forest. The araucaria nut could either be roasted or boiled in water. The leather-like peel would be removed by hand, before eating, making dough for baking or incorporated in other recipes. Collecting the *mate* herb demanded intense work. Usually women went out in small parties, accompanied by their children, pruned branches from the shrub; smoked and ground the leaves in hand hewn basins. The powdered *mate* was then ready for infusion. In the mornings and evenings, families and close friends would gather to share the beverage. The host placed the *mate* into a gourd fashioned as a cup and poured hot water over it. The *mate* tea was then sipped through a metallic straw with a filter on the tip, until it finished. More water was then added to refill the cup and it was passed along to the next guest. One should drink the entire cup before returning it to the host.

In general, the peasant dwelling had few rooms furnished with modest furniture. The more affluent homes had a veranda or a living room to entertain visitors, wooden plank flooring that kept the house warmer than the dirt floors and doors for more privacy than curtains. When informants were asked how such differences of wealth were possible in times when money was scarce, and most people lived by minimal means, insightful responses explained how social capital translated into wealth:

Not everyone could afford to offer a barbeque for compadres and neighbors to build a decent house when a newly-wed couple gained a plot in a corner belonging to their in-laws to build their hut. The family would help to make a simple house. However, to make a more elaborate house, one had to involve his acquaintances. Cutting down trees, sawing and leveling planks and battens are impossible for someone to make without help. (Gercindo, a retired factory worker who has always lived in the Sertão)

The extended families, ties of godfathering (*compadrio*), and reciprocal obligations with neighbors in the hamlet supported the kinship-based peasant way of life. Marriages occurred in the late teens, ideally arranged between parents. Both parents and the couple-to-be took part in the courtship. By the family arrangements, more affluent families offered a plot of land to settle on and the spouse's family, godparents, and neighbors helped to build a home or offer some livestock. Practices of bride price or dowry were unheard of.

The peasants of the araucaria forest assimilated well the tenants and sharecroppers of cattle ranchers from the Campos Gerais. Like the “gaucho herder” of the Pampas, they were a poor, free population depending on the goodwill and tutelage of landholders from whom they had received a permit to settle on the land in exchange for labor. The ranches along the routes of the cattle drives of Viamão required a few full-time workers, either salaried or slave laborers. On the ranches’ borders, the patrons allowed unsalaried tenants and sharecroppers to erect their huts, plant and raise livestock. However, in return, they had to feed and tender the patrons’ herds, lodge the passing cattle drivers and their herds, watch the property against intruders and do odd jobs on the farm. When summoned, they had to take arms to defend the interests of their patrons. Tales of patrons’ brutish cruelty still circulate. The unspoken contracts were unjust and burdensome to the tenants. Since the araucaria forest seemed unappealing to the cattle business, it attracted many former tenants and sharecroppers, discontent with the patron-client arrangement.

Marriage and birth offered a way for *compadrio*, to extend family relations. In the Roman Catholicism of the region, a person who takes a child to the baptismal font godfathers it, that is, he or she becomes responsible for rearing the child in the Christian religion. Beyond the religious connotations, godfathering someone’s child strengthens social ties with the family of the baptized child. The parents and godparents address each other by first names or *compadre* and *comadre* (literally, “co-father” and “co-mother”), sharing ritual parenthood. This institution, akin to the Spanish America *compadrazgo*, has also served to level differences among people of different statuses. It was considered an honor to be asked to godparent a child; likewise, it was an honor to have someone of higher social standing godfather one’s child. *Compadrio* could also be established when sponsoring a couple at the wedding altar or, less frequently, in the confirmation of teenagers in the church.

A documented family affiliation ascribes status in this face-to-face society. The locals recognize persons by their genealogy. This aspect actually facilitated the collection of data in the present study. People were friendlier upon learning that I was the son of the town’s former goldsmith. With only a dozen surnames in the Sertão, tracing family background was not difficult. Some informants joked about certain family stereotypes: one family had the prettiest daughters; another family was gluttonous; another, the lazy-ones, and so on.

Norms and obligations dictated the degree of formality in social involvement. These norms and obligations had underlying values such as family honor, hospitality, and respect for the elders. Violating these norms would make a person subject to gossip. The failure of a man to provide for his family or a woman being lax in her domestic chores reinforced the expected conformity to this double standard. An example of the oral literature that elucidated such values are the cautionary tales

of Pedro Malasartes –a peasant trickster character. There are also jokes with the implicit warning that norms are to be followed. Hospitality, as an example of these values was illustrated by Thomas Briggs-Witter, a British engineer who reported the region's peasant cordiality:

It is almost impossible not to feel a hearty liking for a people who universally throw their- houses open, not only to their own kith and kin, but even to the passing stranger and foreigner. (...) The Caboclo [peasant], more humble in his establishment, but not less hospitable, will, according to his means, give you mate in lieu of coffee, and beans and farinha instead of chicken and rice. He will give up his own bedstead to you for the night, and himself sleep on the hard mud floor of his hut. Payment is always made for corn given to your animals, and a poor Caboclo [peasant] is not above accepting a small present when you leave him in the morning, but even this is rarely expected and never asked for. (Briggs-Witter 1878, 197–98).

## 5.2. RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION

The breakdown of the *faxinal* system in Jaguariaíva was due to a combination of legislative reforms, natural disasters, and further industrialization. The Green Revolution that swept the Brazilian countryside in the 1970s with innovative agricultural techniques did not reach the Sertão but the region experienced industrialization when the Sguario pulp processing mill was established there in the late 1940s.

The military government, trying to curb rural unrest, enacted the Land Statutes of 1964, creating legal mechanisms for agrarian reform at the same time safeguarding rights for land title holders. The new Statutes also guaranteed homestead rights, with an occupier acquiring land rights after five years of continuous and uncontested presence in the rural territory. The government created an agency to implement the reforms issuing land titles to households with disregard for communal lands in the Sertão.

The military regime also regulated rural labor with decrees in 1966 and 1973, matching the working relations in the countryside with those of urban workers. Older production systems like sharecropping and tenancy became prohibitive and hiring with a fixed salary or by daily work unfeasible. Small farmers, who occasionally hired temporary help, or asset-rich but cash-poor large landowners began to expel peasants living in their land. In Jaguariaíva, the new labor laws had the greatest impact on the Campos Gerais plateau. There, cattle ranchers began not allowing tenants on their land; some rented their land to Dutch small-scale farmers, and on most farms, pinus plantations replaced livestock.



The new environmental code, in force since 1965, regulates araucaria extraction permitting only cultivated trees be harvested and requiring a certain percentage of the tillable area to be preserved in native vegetation on all properties. New laws have also required Areas of Permanent Protection, with stricter regulations on hunting and mineral extraction. These regulations, however, have failed to foster sustainable development in the protected areas. Nearly half of the Jaguariaíva territory is now considered to be within the Devonian Escarpment Areas of Permanent Protection (IBGE 2013).

Only large capitalist farms, relying mainly on mechanized technology, adapted well to these reforms. Peasants became rural workers, many of them living in the city and commuting to the farms. The Sguario family expanded its business, acquiring ever more timber and land. Another pulp mill was built in Jangai. At that time, the foreign species, pinus (slash pine) and eucalyptus, were introduced in the Sertão because they reach maturity within only a few years while the araucaria requires as long as forty years. Without nuts from the araucaria, animals had less to eat. Besides, a planted forest with only two tree species has reduced biodiversity. The metaphor for the changed environment is that the new forest is a silent one (Joviano 2007).

With the enclosures, landless peasant families could no more rely on the favor of a *compadre* or relative and be a tenant or sharecropper on unused land. The peasant household became unable to sustain a minimum, comfortable standard of living. With such ecological change and land tenure, the *faxinal* system became inviable.

The swine production economy of the Sertão collapsed when Matarazzo closed the meat processing plant in 1964 and opened a textile factory (Frizanco and Ludwig 2006). But the worse blow was yet to come. After years of prolonged drought and frost, fires erupted in many parts of Paraná in the 1970s, severely damaging the araucaria forest. The local lore has it that the fire destroyed 90% of the araucaria forest in Arapoti and fifteen thousand araucaria trees in Jaguariaíva, killing about twenty people in the Sertão. Herds and crops were lost.

After the fire and frost, many peasants began selling their lands to Sguario for reforestation and moved to the city. The planted forests fatally interrupted the territorial and social contiguity of the hamlet. The forestry enterprises fenced their land and drove the cattle and pigs from the area. This enclosure was not without resistance, cases of arson and sabotage followed. No one was ever found to be responsible. Consequently, however, the *faxinal* system, without new frontier lands to expand to, began to die out.

Professionals and politicians in town began to acquire land after the new roads facilitated access. Carlos, a dental assistant born in the Sertão but long time resident of the city remembers his late employer: “The dentist, Dr. Silva, bought two alqueires (48.4 km<sup>2</sup>) of land. He used to take care of people from the Sertão. Many of them did not have money, so he bartered his services for chickens, pigs, and cows. When he passed away, he had 400 alqueires (9,680 km<sup>2</sup>).” Many peasants found jobs on the commercial farms but their relations to their patrons were vertical and mostly impersonal. Rural workers received only the minimum salary, although farm labor required burdensome tasks, sometimes seven days a week. Rural workers did not see their employers. Foremen managed the farms. The few patrons who visited their holdings were slightly more personal in their labor relations, reproducing much of the patron-client arrangements of the Campos Gerais. The patron was paternalistic and was doing a “favor” in hiring the peasant and allowing him to live on the propriety.

The peasants who stayed behind had few choices for earning a living. The most fortunate were grateful to become factory or lumber workers. By the 1980s the forestry plantations had become so profitable that smaller sawmills and newer paper factories began to appear in the region. New types of technology made life more comfortable. There was electricity, new dirt roads linked the Sertão to town, schools and shops introduced an outer world.

At that time, general stores appeared in every hamlet. These stores sold all sorts of dry goods, tools, seedlings, alcoholic beverages and groceries. Shop owners usually sold on credit, so keeping a good relationship with them became essential for residents. Demand for cash increased, so the peasant had to work for others even more, to pay the bills. Often shop owners had land themselves and an indebted peasant would become forced to work for them.

Even though the work was hard and the pay low, many newcomers settled in the Sertão. The relationship between the outsiders and longtime residents was cordial, but the wrong-doings of reportedly outsiders resulted in mistrust on the part of the peasants. Traveling salespeople, swindlers and obscure deals drained the savings of many families. Young couples eloped more often, eliminating the traditional ceremonies and the positive effects of social relations. The in-laws would usually forgive and welcome the young couple home and often helped them to settle in, but in many cases, family trust broke down. Along came alcoholism and robbery.

The pulp mill used the araucaria tree, considered valuable for its long cellulose fiber but its slow-growth and additional environmental regulations made it prohibitive to use. At the time of the present research, commercial forestry was the industry that employed the most workers. But planting foreign species of

eucalyptus and pinus had ecological and social consequences. They were planted in enclosed areas that the forestry companies had bought or rented with the result that there was a reduction of biodiversity and these species yield no fruit to sustain the local fauna or the pig herds.

A new wave of industrialization occurred in the 1980s when a modern paper factory, PISA, with international technology and capital was established in the municipality, taking advantage of the abundant pinus supply. Although the paper industry was thriving, the textile factory and the railroad ceased their operations. The city became a paved junction from São Paulo to routes in southern Brazil (Frizanco and Ludwig 2006).

One political family had controlled much of the municipal government since the 1980s, benefiting from the paper and timber industry. A secondary school teacher described how the size of the larger landholdings expanded. At the same time, professionals and corporations bought cheap lands in the Sertão to plant eucalyptus trees. Meanwhile, many peasants moved into a new poor neighborhood in the city, Primavera. The government-backed labor unions, especially the paper industry workers' union, were strong and collaborated closely with their employers. New businesses came to the region exploring the commercial forests in the late 1990s. The largest businesses were financed by Scandinavian capital. Norske Skog acquired PISA (Frizanco and Ludwig 2006). The forests in north Jaguaraiá belong to Stora Enso, which also has a paper factory in Arapoti. Another Nordic enterprise, Swede Match, built a factory in Piraf-do-Sul.

Meanwhile, peasants of the Sertão struggle to maintain themselves. In a survey (Vidal and Cunha 2010) among secondary school age respondents, it was found that the young people preferred to remain in the Sertão, but felt compelled to search for better opportunities in the city. This study demonstrated their general profiles and feelings:

- 100% of parents have incomplete primary schooling;
- Monthly family income of up to two minimum salaries.
- Only 20% of mothers work outside the household.
- 20% of parents are agriculturists; and 30% report other activities: drivers or coal oven work.
- 50% of the respondents' parents work in the logging industry.
- 80% of the respondents face difficulties in getting to school.
- 10% of the respondents have previously lived in the city and 40% of the families intend to move to the city.
- 90% attend school because it is important to build knowledge while 10% attend because they must.
- 90% want to continue studying after secondary school, 60% receive family support for study, 90% receive support from teachers.

- 80% seek information through radio and television while 20% through friends and teachers.
- 60% of students experienced some form of prejudice because of being from the countryside. (Vidal and Cunha 2010, 5)

Jaguariaíva entered the twentieth-first century facing further transformations. Brazil has been politically and economically unstable. Since the mid-1990s, the federal government has, however, increased spending on social programs that link benefits to school attendance. The result has been that the lower middle-class children have started to study more, adults buy more, and have more voice in politics. The patron-client arrangement has weakened, with the middle class becoming stronger. These changes in Jaguariaíva were reflected in the election of an oppositionist mayor. During my fieldwork, the mayor was a lawyer and large landowner in the Sertão, affiliated to the Workers' Party, then in power in Brasília. The fall in the prices of commodities, the fiscal crisis at all levels of government levels, and the impeachment of the president in 2016 led to the dismantlement of many public policies. Urban residents now complain about unemployment, difficulties in receiving welfare assistance and fear of the future. The people of the Sertão have their concerns, too. However, they are more resigned, "we are waiting for the promise of God."

## 6. RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF THE SERTÃO

In this chapter, I describe the religious institutions and practices in the Sertão. The information gathered here is based on informants' accounts of the past and current Catholic practices and on my own observations.

### 6.1. FOLK CATHOLICISM

Before industrialization, folk Catholicism predominated in the Sertão. The absence of ordained priests was compensated by the presence of lay prayer leaders, who were often healers as well. The prayer leader knew the prayers by heart, as well as a few tales about the lives of the saints. He or she also recited the rosary and took care of the shrine. If the prayer leader knew how to read, he or she would teach the catechism. These lay prayer leaders were volunteers and were customarily acknowledged by the priest, who occasionally came to celebrate weddings and hear confessions.

Religion in this context was not much about masses or the Roman Catholic theology, it was more about devotion to saints. According to the informants, the most revered saints were Saint Anthony of Padova, Saint John, Saint Gonzalo of Amarante, and Saint Mary. Every hamlet in the region had a patron saint to be celebrated. During the midwinter, the June feasts lasted for nearly two weeks. In a clearing in the woods, the peasants erected poles and spread colorful flags, and kiosks offered delicacies and beverages. There were also stands for gambling, challenging luck and skill, folk dancing around a big bonfire to the sound of guitars and harmonicas, which marked the feast highlight. The festive peasant Catholicism also had licenses for violating (or inverting) the norms:

It was ok to steal chickens on the evening of the Holy Friday. Sometimes, a prayer group came by the door and, while the household head entertained the prayer group at the front door, others went to the chick coop in the backyard to steal chickens, piglets, and goats. Late at night, they would then make a big chicken gruel and even invite the former chicken owner to eat. Sometimes, it would take weeks for the owner to find out about the theft. Animals stolen on that day could not be reclaimed, so some people even hid their animals in their homes at that day. (João, about 60 years-old)

The Sertão did not have organized lay Catholic brotherhoods, in contrast to this widespread peasant religious organization in Brazil. Religious activities were conducted in group work (*mutirão* in Portuguese), headed by the prayer leader and other zealous adherents. The most pious ones would go on a pilgrimage to town for the feast in honor of the Good Jesus of the Cold Rock or Saint Casturina – also known locally as Saint Pastorinha, a child saint in the city of Tibagi. In that town, the

followers would also visit the place where once lived a holy man. Penance and votive thankfulness were the reasons for those pilgrimages.

The economic changes of the Sertão have also affected the local Catholicism. The city priests increased their pastoral visits, organized religious instruction classes, and stimulated the Apostleship of Prayer lay devotional fellowship. This Romanized Catholicism was more about the liturgy and the official doctrine, but it also favored folk Catholicism. In the 1990s, city priests and parishioners began to organize pilgrimages to the rock wall site of Santa do Paredão in the Sertão. Religious feasts also occurred under the Church's auspices, but the alcohol, readily available by then, often made those festivities end in fights and tragedies.

The priestly Roman Catholicism, however, was not the only religion interested in the peasants' souls. In the mid-1970s, Pentecostalism arrived in the Sertão. In the next decades, the CCB, AD, BPC, IPDA, IEQ also established chapels in the Sertão. Catholic feasts are long gone now. Most of the Roman Catholic chapels are inoperative, though a few lay women recite prayers weekly, and once a month, a priest comes from the city to celebrate masses in one chapel or another. There is a sizeable number of Catholic followers, but low mass attendance. The most devout Catholics are involved in the Apostolate of Prayer, and a few attend the Charismatic Renewal in the city. There is no priest living in the Sertão, and the town priests come only once a month to visit and celebrate masses at the chapels. The Catholic feasts do not follow the *confraria* system portrayed in Mexico and Central America (Annis 2000; Althoff 2014). Although elsewhere in Brazil there are well-functioning brotherhoods, in the Sertão, the *compadrio* ties and the dispersion of the Catholics leave very few people in the hamlets to maintain yearly feasts organized as group work (*mutirão*). The weekend-long revival services of the Pentecostals replace the old-time feasts. The instruments are the same. I have recorded gospel songs played with harmonica on the low key typical of vanerão and *fandango* music. There are memories of large June festivals, and one informant took me to the place where they used to take place during these feasts. My host, Lourival, said he was disappointed with the feasts when, on one occasion, a drunk partaker shot into the air and accidentally killed a young lady, a school teacher. Since then, he has not taken part in the feasts and, later, he joined a Pentecostal Church.

Pentecostalism has broken the Catholic religious monopoly. Nevertheless, the acceptance of pluralism has prepared the peasants to negotiate their existence with people who have different interests, values, and economic perspectives, in other words, with a different capitalist spirit.

## 6.2. PLURALISM OF BABEL

The Sertão is a religiously plural environment – not all peasants are Pentecostals, and the Pentecostals are not monolithic. Century-old classical Pentecostal denominations like the CCB and AD have more success among peasants, followed by second-wave Pentecostalism, with different denominations, such as IEQ, BPC, IPDA, which, in the countryside, are more similar concerning the ethos of the older Pentecostal groups than their urban co-religions. Most country churches are relatively autonomous in their affairs. Although their ministers do not have an influential role in the denominational bureaucracy in town, they are left to manage their affairs on their own. Fellowship with the city brethren is cherished, but church affairs are brought to them only when necessary. Valuing autonomy is an integral part of the moral order of peasantness.

In the Sertão, the most prevalent types of Pentecostal denominations are the classical and the second-wave Pentecostals. The absence of neo-Pentecostals in the Sertão is noticeable but that does not mean that neo-Pentecostalism has no penetration in the countryside. Chaves (2011) made an ethnographic record about a neo-Pentecostal church in São Paulo. Although it seems to be an exception. Neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil is usually urban. Based on local leadership information, the following chart summarizes the religious scenario at the time of this fieldwork.

**Table 1:** Religious affiliation in the Sertão

Religious Denomination	Chapels in Sertão <sup>1</sup>	Adherents in Sertão <sup>1</sup>	hamlets with chapels <sup>1</sup>	Municipality membership <sup>2</sup>
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	?	500	Chapels and private shrines in every hamlet, but only Agua Branca and Bonsucesso seem active.	18 162
<b>Assemblies of God (AD)</b>	8	500	Gentil, Bonsucesso, Cachoeira, Jangai, Lanças, Campinas do Elias, Barreto, Faxinal	2 840
<b>Christian Congregation (CCB) Brazil for Christ Evangelical Church (BPC)</b>	5	200	<u>Barreirinha</u> , Gentio, Jangai, Bonsucesso, Espigão Alto	1 765
<b>Foursquare Gospel Church (IEQ)</b>	2	150	<u>Lanças</u> , Espigão Alto	1 302
<b>Foursquare Gospel Church (IEQ)</b>	2	100	Jangai, Lanças	479
<b>God is Love Pentecostal Church (IPDA)</b>	1	20	São João	213
<b>Presbyterian Church</b>	1	100	Lanças	531
<b>Universal Church of the Kingdom of God</b>	-	-	-	151

Sources: <sup>2</sup>Brazilian Census 2010 (IBGE 2013) and <sup>1</sup>reports from denominational informants.

The table is in contrast to the total religious affiliations in the municipality based on the 2010 Census. In absolute numbers, the Roman Catholic is the largest Christian denomination but the total Pentecostal groups make up one third of the residents. Popular religions, such as Spiritism and Afro-Brazilian religions, tend to be underreported or counted as a double affiliation. Those religions are neither reported nor are non-Christian religions recorded among the peasants of the Sertão.

The peasants have learned to live with their relatives and friends from different religious persuasion. The proselytism, though frequent, is less aggressive in the Sertão than in the city. Whereas, in the city, radio and TV campaigns summons the unconverted (and Catholics) to come to the Pentecostal Churches, in the Sertão, personal visits and informal talks are channels to propagate the faith, but without the insistence of their urban counterparts.

The Pentecostals, in contrast with the Catholics, usually don't drink, shun extramarital affairs and are more rigid concerning divorce and remarriage. Many Pentecostals sport modest clothing styles: formal shirts (many with long sleeves) for men, long dresses, and skirts for women. Men have short hair and clean-shaven faces, while women have long hair. In the city, such standards are not uniformly followed by the Pentecostals, in the Sertão but there is some consensus. This dress code apparently is not to set the Pentecostals apart from their Catholic or non-religious neighbors, but to recall the old times of the peasants. The modest dress code exerts an aura of equality. It reflects the ideal of no one standing above the herd.

On the way to the Sertão, while I was waiting for the bus, a curious couple began some inquisitive small talk. They looked like the typical Pentecostals. She had long hair, sported an ankle-long jeans dress and wore no make-up or jewelry. He wore a hat and long-sleeve shirt. From complaints about tobacco usage and drunkenness, I assumed they were Pentecostals. I asked them which church they attended, and they answered: "Oh, no. We are Catholics. Not the kind of mass-going Catholics, but we have never belonged to a believers' church, although we have many acquaintances that go to these churches." What makes the Pentecostal peasant different is that there is a community to enforce their norms. While Catholics and non-religious people still feel the peer-pressure, gossip or other forms of informal social control, the believers must abide by the congregation's strict rules. Disobeying them could result in becoming a social outcast – at least until accepting the church discipline or joining another church.

The Pentecostals are thus not a uniform group. There are distinctions, more concerning different denominational and behavior patterns, than doctrinal divergences. On one end, the believers who belong to IEQ, tend to be more



individualistic, less strict concerning dress codes, or inter-community marriage, and more welcoming of female church leadership. In the middle of the spectrum, the AD and the BPC employ the use of technology, like television, allow significant participation of women in worship, but not in leadership roles, and employ the only full-time ministers in the Sertão. On the other extreme, IPDA and CCB members frown upon television and cross-denominational marriage. These churches keep specific gender rules, with separate seats for men and women during services, with limited female participation, except during testimony and while leading prayers aloud. Preaching is restricted to men, and even visitors may be invited in order to “share a word from the Lord.” Their sisters and mothers are not given such privileges. Voluntary, non-paid, ministers serve both IPDA and CCB. Members of the CCB and IPDA ought not watch television nor run for elective office, while the AD, BPC, IEQ churches accept those practices. The most recent Pentecostal churches (IPDA, BPC, IEQ) perform theatrical healing sessions, while at the AD and CCB the healing prayers have undergone a routinization of charisma. The degree to which they should consider goods from the world as being sanctified for the believers’ consumption depends on the religious affiliation. So, if the denominations do not have internal changes concerning this perspective of the world, the differences among them might become more profound, with possible effects for the maintenance of the peasantry.

These denominational differences have resulted in sectarianism. A simple visit to a congregation which does not belong to the denominational fellowship may trigger a disciplinary procedure. However, the peasant Pentecostal maintains friendly relations with other co-religionists from different denominations, and often visits them on non-church occasions. This cordiality is even more intense than in the city, where sheer sectarianism is widespread. I once visited a woman hospitalized with an unknown illness. She and her family were Pentecostals and, after a prayer, some of her relatives whispered bitterly: she was sick because of her switching denominations when she married a man from another church.

The acceptance of a religiously diverse environment has prepared the peasant to deal with a plural world. The peasant may count on an influential Church “brother” in a municipal office, or a relative, to solve some bureaucratic problem, but he will also have to deal with strangers of different religious affiliations in the long chain of the city bureaucracy. Former folk healers today pray discreetly over the sick but recommend a visit to a city doctor. Worship services are lively, but they are less noisy than their city counterparts, and charismatic manifestation in peasant congregations are moderate. This negotiated plurality allows the peasant to navigate differences and adapt to an ever-changing world.

The ethnographic data, shown in the next chapter, provide a general picture of the moral order of peasantness that affects the economic decision of the Pentecostal peasant, and how this situated reasoning is employed to maintain a distinct peasant way of life.

## 7. THE MORAL ORDER OF RELAYING ON PROVIDENCE

*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. Psalm 37:6*

To say that peasants lack the skill to calculate risks and returns would sound rightfully a bit ethnocentric. Whereas they do not employ financial calculations, they must deal with asymmetry of information and transaction costs, so their risks are hard to assess. The reliance on Providence seems the sensible thing for a peasant believer because long-term planning could not be solely based on the unstable market.

Information asymmetry is unfair to peasants. Ironically, the municipality that boasts being the “capital of newsprint paper” does not have a newspaper, except those published by ephemeral enterprises that often last only for a few issues. The two radio stations of the region depend on the sponsorship of the large forestry and paper enterprises and cannot be expected to broadcast news or criticism contrary to their sponsors. Thus, in general, information about the forestry and paper industries circulates by word of mouth, with many speculations and uncertainties. Contradictory stories suggesting that the main factory of the municipality might either shut down entirely or invest in building another plant in the city, run simultaneously. In this scenario, it is questionable how one can decide about renting his/her land, pursuing a technically-related profession, or leasing heavy-machinery at high-interest rates.

The pulp industry is subject to the whims of the paper market. At a social event at the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo, about 500 km away from Jaguariaíva, I met an executive whose company owns interests in the region. He complained about the plummeting prices of newsprint and the increasing operational costs (this was in 2012, before the current political and economic crises hit Brazil). Expressing his concern for the shareholders, he made no secret that his company was seeking to transfer their investments to another Southern Corner of the country. That reminded me of an informant in Jaguariaíva, Alberto, a forestry student, who made some remarks about this topic: “Production of newspaper print will continue, just as the small AM radio stations will survive when larger FM stations succumbed to the digital radio, internet broadcasting, and music streaming. There will always be some small-town monthly newspapers or a popular tabloid paper. But Jaguariaíva is not a special place. The newsprint required can be produced in other places”.

The peasant decision-making, as in any economic person’s decisions, has consequences beyond its immediate economic returns. Accordingly, the intended

(and unintended) consequences of each economic decision affects the way of life of the actor and the person's life style, as well as the life style of others. When considering the emic justification for the economic behavior, the 'conformity to the Lord's will' rationale has a significant role for the maintenance of both personal and collective – household, extended family, religious congregation, and the peasant community– levels. The economic reasoning expressed in the religious discourse could be understood through the lenses of moral order.

### 7.1. RELIGIOUS IDIOMS OF THE MORAL ORDER

The shared religious expressions of the moral order can be summarized in the following section, in which I interpolate the peasants' actual phraseology from my field notes (between quotation marks), paraphrases that sum up the informant's frequent ideas, and my observations that emerged during the data analysis.

*Things of God, things of the world.* If a believer does not distinguish his or her activities as being either religious or not, there is no clear divide between the realm of the sacred and that of the profane. Whatever is morally pure is sanctioned or embodied in the church life. The opposite suggests that "the realm of the world is immoral, impure, dishonest, and greedy." Recurring themes in the churches' preaching or *mate* conversation circles are usually about how the anxiety for the riches of this world makes people accept backbreaking jobs. "Vanity, not hunger, makes people suffer in the world of toils." Tales abound about how ambitious people fell into sin and a spiral of personal disgrace. "The kingdom of God is freely accessible to whoever renounces his or her life for the godly path." "Whatever money can buy is evil, unless sanctified by a holy purpose."

*God's promises expressed by long-term planning.* The purpose is a crucial component of the life of the believer. Instead of setting long-term goals, the peasant sees it meaningful to cling to the Divine will. God has a special plan for the believers (election, predestination) that ultimately means perseverance from the world. Miracles can happen to fulfill this plan. Often, God delivers the faithful from con-men, from empty promises for the young people to marry outside the church, from the temptation to give up "the little land" for a steady salaried life in the city. "It is erroneous to say that the believer does not make long-term goals, is lazy, afraid to risk new things or that he/she wants to provide for old age. The believer relies on whatever is certain: the promise of God's Providence." One testimony was about a family who wished to own a piece of land. They saved for years, and one day an opportunity came. They went to the church to pray and seek the word. But they understood that the preaching did not speak about their acquisition. So, they let it pass. Later, they learned that the land was infertile, and there were legal and tax problems with its deed. They are still hoping for a positive word.

*Separateness from the world.* The price of this freely given Providence is not burdensome. The theological concept of grace – that the Divine bestows unmerited gifts and favors – is stressed among the countryside Pentecostals. For this reason, the preaching of town pastors who pressure for tithes on the verge of extortion does not seem to make sense. “Yes, there are some sacrifices the believer must make, but this is to prepare them for God's plan or to overcome temptation.” “The ultimate sacrifice is not to covet things of the world. Expensive jewelry, fancy weddings in palatial venues, drowning in alcoholic beverages, buying more land than one can till are all abominable things.” “Believers must be set apart from the world and avoid such contamination.” “Socializing by the road shop or visiting a non-believer friend or relative is permissible as long as it does not affect the relationship with God.”

*Being together to be separated.* Collectively, there is more chance to overcome the world, even though the responsibility for salvation is strictly individual. “There is no place for selfishness in the Bible. Heaven is portrayed as a banquet, as a city, as a crowd. Help your brother and sister serve the Lord. If someone is weak, give a piece of advice, extend your arms for assistance.”

*An exemplary life.* The believer must conform to the church's standards by living in peace with his/her brethren as well as by bearing good testimony before unbeliever neighbors and kin. A congregant had been unemployed for some time and was ashamed of because he could not provide for his family. The Work of Piety assisted him. One day he got a job offer in a gas station on a remote highway. He was eager to take the job but he and his wife went to a church service for confirmation. The preaching was about not leaving one's family behind. He did not take the job. As the gas station was a resting place for truck drivers, it was not an appropriate environment for a Christian. In the end, the family was still waiting for their deliverance and, meanwhile, being supported by the church.

*A group task (mutirão) for God: the good deed of guaranteeing the community's permanence.* A small Pentecostal chapel was almost closing its doors because most people had left the hamlet of Gentio for the city. Surrounded by planted forests, once a week people from other nearby churches came to the chapel for fellowship and to support the waning congregation. Although there were few local parishioners left, the informant was confident: if that chapel remains functioning, the work of God will continue.

## 7.2. CONFIRMING THE PROMISES OF PROVIDENCE

One crucial aspect of the Pentecostal peasant ethos is the trust in Providence. The belief that God will provide for their needs permits the peasant to neglect long term planning. But, trusting in the Providence entails many mechanisms that direct

decisions. An example of this trust in Providence is expressed by the practice of seeking the word.

When facing a life-changing decision, typically the Pentecostal peasant would try to obtain a Divine confirmation by interpreting church rituals or even ordinary events as revelatory acts of God's will. During the worship service, a timely sung hymn that touched the believers' heart, or examples from a fellow brother's testimonial, and, foremost, the sermon about a biblical passage makes the believer understand the Divine will. In the daily life, a frank conversation with a neighbor about a difficult topic leading to valuable insight, a stranger that unknowingly addresses a personal dilemma while he/she is waiting for a bus or missing a job interview that would require moving out are reported instances that have enlightened the believer's understanding of the word. Once the Divine Will has been revealed, it becomes a "promise from God," and the believer will live by what he/she has been assured. What God has promised is taken assurance to fulfill God's word. However, the promise, though not an assurance of a specific outcome, is actually whatever the believer will accept – either a portion of prosperity or a fate of suffering.

In its institutional form, Pentecostalism is a highly subjective, experience-based religion. Thus, the place of validation of the Word is the believer's experience. The authority of pastors or impromptu prophets is filtered by personal confirmation. The community only validates the personal experience.

The act of seeking the Word has such relevance that when I interacted with informants, they built a narrative framework with elements of a fulfillment of God's promise. The case below illustrates how seeking God's word and adhering to the promise of the Providence guide the lives of the Sertão's Pentecostal peasants.

A small farmer may feel the pressure to plant the whole of his tillable land to trees. His investment would begin to yield a return only in seven to ten years, not taking into consideration the price of wood and the overall Brazilian economic scenario, that one can hardly predict. So the returns may not be very much. I asked such a small farmer how he had decided to plant pinus trees on his propriety. He owned 20 hectares of land, of which 15 hectares were tillable. If he began to set apart two or three hectares per year to plant trees, at the cutting time, he could make between R\$1,500 to R\$5,000 per hectare per year. He would not need to make heavy investments for the moment, but in the future, would have to make soil treatment, after harvesting the timber. Meanwhile, he might have external costs since he had given up raising animals or planting a variety of crops. His family would increasingly need to rely on industrialized goods bought only with money. But the household had multiple strategies for income. The father found a job as lumberjack, while the

mother worked as a maid in the city. The older children had part-time or eventual jobs with an acquaintance that “did them a favor” by employing them at below the legal minimum wage. When I asked them whether it would not be more interesting to invest in their land, the answer demonstrated a well-balanced calculation. They said it would be nicer to have the family working together, but the agricultural product prices were too low, and they lacked access to line of credit to buy machinery and inputs. Furthermore, they would have the costs of selling their products in the city, or elsewhere, since wholesale intermediaries did not do business in the region. But, the final reason was this:

We sought the confirmation from the Lord’s word [to plant trees], and we felt that, even though everyone has to work hard off the farm, and despite the fact that the payment was so small, this was the way the Lord prepared to keep us here. When I lost the job at the pulp factory, we planned to move to the city, sell the land and buy a house there so the children would have a better education. But one day we went to church and the preacher said that it was better to have a little, but secure, rather than taking risks, and that the Lord would provide for us. My wife and I had talked and agreed that one could sell his land and buy a beautiful house in the city, but the money one day would run out and the children would be subject to bad influences. So, on that day, we felt that the word was preached to address our needs. We decided to stay here and to see what the Lord would prepare for us. A few days later, a neighbor offered us some free pinus seedlings he had bought in excess. We saw this as the fulfillment of the promise from the preaching. (Pedro and Joana).

Life cycles are even more church-regulated. Childbirth and marriage, seen as a God's blessings, are interpreted as the fulfillment of biblical promises for those who fear God. Although many Brazilian Pentecostals do not have any particular rite of passage to celebrate birth, adulthood – spiritual and social – is marked by the formal adherence to the church through baptism. Adolescence is not quite a distinct life period from childhood and adulthood in the Sertão. In old times, girls would reach marriageable age when entering puberty, while boys had to be a few years older than girls to show maturity concerning their social and economic responsibilities. Nowadays, teenagers from twelve to eighteen years old are baptized and become adults religiously. Marriage happens later, around the eighteenth to twentieth birthdays. Courtship is still under parental consent, within the good-standing members of the denomination. Sometimes, couples from different Pentecostal denominations marry, but one of them has to concede and transfer membership to the spouse’s denomination.

Providence, as revealed through God’s word, is a crucial factor for the fulfillment of the promise of happy marriage. The transition from courtship to

marriage among young people is patterned, like the typical case of Andre and Luiza, the daughter of a local lay preacher. According to Luiza:

We met at a youth meeting in Jaguariaiva, even though we both are from the Sertão. We went to an ice-cream parlor after the service, and started to like each other. We fell in love. That same night, even before we talked to our parents, we went to seek the Word during worship. The preaching was about Isaac and Rebekah. We felt it [dating] had the Lord's approval. When we talked to our parents, they were a bit apprehensive and asked me if I shouldn't seek more from the Word, because it seemed quite a rushed decision. But, one week later, his parents came to my home. Our parents had common acquaintances and they have been together in many church activities. After the prayer, everybody felt our relationship was confirmed by God. Later, we had no money for a wedding, let alone to support a home, but the Lord would provide as He had promised. By that time, Andre had finished high school and began working at the lumber mill. I was worried because it is a harsh and dangerous job. But it was what God had prepared. I was still in school, so it took all day coming and going, and I could not look for a job. But even before I graduated, I found a job. However, we didn't have a dime. Nor did our parents. But the Lord fulfilled his promises. My relatives helped Andre build a little cottage on my parent's lot. For the wedding, everybody helped. After the ceremony in the city, in accordance with the church doctrine, (they do not hold religious ceremonies; only civil weddings), we celebrated here in the Sertão in the backyard of a church brother. A neighbor gave a cow [for barbequing], the sisters from church cooked the meal, relatives and the brethren gave the furniture and appliances. My employer paid the gown rental. The promises were fulfilled to the letter. (Luiza).

This pattern of courtship and marriage is representative of the church-mandated of moral order. The decision of whom to date and marry is individual and explained by romantic love. However, this decision passes from the individual to collective approval, first from the family, later from the congregation and friends.

Interestingly, seeking the Word for a divorce is unheard of. All local churches abhor divorce, but make concessions for "the innocent party," in cases of adultery or spousal abuse. The CCB and IPDA are stricter on this matter. The AD and BPC are in the middle of the spectrum on the issue, and the pastors often give dispensation when things go wrong in a marriage. The IEQ is at the other end of the spectrum, even welcoming divorced and remarried people into active life in the church.

Like the worldly and godly things dichotomy, the theodicy – the explanation for evil – is also binary. If something undesirable came from God, it is a trial to improve or rebuke the believer. If something coming from the world troubles the faithful, it is the work of the devil. Either way, the response must be found in the spiritual realm. Repentance, praying fervently for deliverance and waiting on the



promise is the expected response. Cordeiro, a former folkloric singer, gave up his artistic career when converting to a Pentecostal church. He teaches at the secondary school in the Sertão and has fallen into the temptation of running for elective office. His Pentecostal congregation officially shuns political activism by the members, even though the unbaptized pastor's brother and regular attendee takes part in politics. Cordeiro had the double humiliation of receiving a handful of votes and being disciplined by his church. For a couple years he was an outcast in his church. He interprets the bad experience as a temptation, but he had the mercy of being forgiven and rehabilitated. A lively fellow church-brother, Augusto, a car mechanic, had lent money and done underpriced or free services for many friends and coreligionists. With time, his finances went not that good, and he became insolvent. He began to drink, and his wife left him with the children. Now, he no longer has good standing membership in the church. In the services, he comes late and leaves early, sitting next to the door. He is ashamed of his condition and waits until his tribulations come to an end.

All are equally subject to temptations and trials. One urban pastor, a businessman, saw an opportunity to buy a stolen cargo. He hesitated at first but consulted his manager and fellow minister. They prayed, and he rationalized: someone would buy the cargo anyway. He went to a storage building to acquire the cargo. He handed over the package of cash to the intermediary and waited for the man to open the storage gates. He waited for a while and went after the seller in the shed. The room was empty: he had been conned. The matter became public and he became a laughing stock in the Sertão. He protests that he has misunderstood the signs and made an unwise decision.

The act of seeking the Word, or waiting on Providence, is a form of situated reasoning. It coexists with other local forms of situate reasoning, like the Brazilian knack or *jeitinho*. What is unique for the peasant conception, is the passive-reactive rationale placing all hope on the numinous. Despite the apparent hopelessness, it is not quietist. It holds a tacit agency with the religious idiom, although I have often heard people seeking the Word to solve existential anguish, mental distress, and other "spiritual trials." People were more outspoken about the practical understanding of the Word of God. The re-run practice of confirmation not only assures the believer, but also tunes his or her desire with the will of God and the community. The perennial instability of the Brazilian economy made the believer fearing the frustrations of long term projects. This safety-net replaces long-term planning and gives room for waiting for opportunities and for relying on social resources of the multiple livelihood strategies.

## 8. EFFECTS OF A MORAL ORDER

One aspect of mastering the local knowledge requires knowing how to use the market (capitalist) economy without succumbing to it – that is, without becoming completely dependent upon cash. (Halperin 1990, 12).

After the background provided in the previous chapter, I describe the manner a religiously situated reason builds a moral order related to the maintenance of a peasant way of life. These decisions are about life-changing events, for which they count on the Divine Providence, thus managing risks. The multiple strategies to earn a living, the religious restrictions on consumption and a family-based network of self-help, obligations, and information-sharing are themes that emerged as mechanisms to maintain the Pentecostal peasants, both as a household and as a community, on the lands of the Sertão. Such decisions are not without controversy. As in every human group facing a predicament, these economic decisions have blurred morality and ethical ramifications. Nevertheless, it constitutes a moral order that, in some way, shapes the peasant.

### 8.1. WORK: MULTIPLE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Nowadays, many families rely on salaried work for survival. Many peasants have moved to the city, where their rural labor skills do not have much use. Many of them commute to the countryside to work at the lumber companies. Nevertheless, the peasant way of life and a sizeable community continue in the Sertão, deploying multiple strategies for continuity. Even families with more resources – small landowners, factory laborers, lower-paid public servants – rely on these multiple strategies. Typically, a household will pool its income from the member's transient jobs, federal government welfare, or retirement pension, combining with rural production and relying on informal networks of friendship, obligations, and exchanges, in which the Pentecostal Churches have a significant role. The case of the family of Antonio and Ana illustrates these multiple strategies.

For twenty-five years, Antonio has worked at the pulp mill in the countryside. A strong man in his early forties, he was one of the last workers to be laid off in 2010, when the factory closed its doors. Since then, Antonio has had no steady employment. Some days, he is hired as a jack of all trades at nearby farms. Other days, he jumps onto the back of a contractor's truck and goes with four or five lumberjacks to cut and carry pinus and eucalyptus trees. Without a safe employment contract, it is not every day he brings money home.

In the days without work, Antonio takes a hoe to till a small plot he rents from a kin and church co-religionist. His wife, Ana, and he grow some vegetables to sell to a restaurant that caters mostly to logging laborers. Ana left factory work when their first child was born to become a homemaker, but she makes some cash with the chickens and eggs from the coop they keep on their backyard.

Their daughter married on her late teens and moved to the city. The younger son attends the rural school, making the family eligible to receive the meager *Bolsa Família*, a grant-in-aid from a federal welfare program.

The children have had more schooling than their parents. Born and raised in a hamlet in the Sertão of Jaguariaíva, Antonio completed only the first four grades. Ana went further, as she studied up to the eighth grade, which was then available in the Sertão. They do not see many chances in the city and prefer to stay in the countryside until an opportunity arises, or as Ana says, "until the Lord opens a door for us here."

When I first visited the family after a church service, my host's son, a Pentecostal minister, discreetly brought some groceries, cash, and clothing for the family. The comfortable house, an inheritance from Antonio's father, is made of brick and wood. The decor is modest and neat: some cheap furniture from the city, a colorful homemade tablecloth, plastic, and paper flowers. Their home is not much different from their well-off or more impoverished neighbors.

Despite the uneasy economic situation, Antonio is confident. His only formal work had been at the pulp mill, where he was paid the minimum wage, so he could never afford to buy a piece of land. When recollecting their family history, the couple uses a trial metaphor for the financial difficulty. "It's probation like that of Job. As in the word of God, if the believer endures it, one day the trial will pass."

Antonio uses his free time to do maintenance work in the church. He is not alone. Emiliano, a full of energy octogenarian, does small repairs and cleans the churchyard. They see their voluntary labor as a *mutirão*. "We've never paid for someone to build a chapel. We did it ourselves, even if one or another did not have skills. The Lord taught us. It was a group work (a *mutirão*). Someone did this and that, others brought the supplies. A nearby ranch owner, even being an unbeliever, brought food. And in a few weeks, the house of prayer was open." *Mutirão* occurs more often in church-related activities than for household concerns. Even when acquaintances get together for helping a household need, it is mediated by the church, like Work of Piety, as described in this chapter. Pooling labor is a trampoline to succeed, even in market capitalism. That is the case of Joel and Cesar.

In the late 1990s, Joel left the Sertão to pursue a high school education in the city. While he lived with his married sister, he sought for a job, but the times were not easy for a country boy without marketable skills. Cesar, a friend from the church, about his age, introduced him to the jewelry business. Cesar was the eldest of four children of a retired railroad worker and a homemaker. His mother grew lettuce and other vegetables in their backyard and Cesar, as young as ten years old would cross the city with a basket selling their produce directly to customers. They became sales representatives for a small company that sold jewelry door to door. Joel and Cesar bought a car together with the money from family friends, and they began to travel and save their earnings. The marketing tactic was simple: they traveled to small towns with a showcase of laminated gold jewelry to visit technical schools and college classes to take orders for graduation rings. The network provided by their Pentecostal denomination was crucial for their success because they could have a local reference when offering their product or assessing the credit of potential buyers. In times of distress – when the car broke, or when they had not enough funds to afford a cheap hotel – their brethren were helpful. Adhering to an ascetic lifestyle, they had little expenses and spent long times away from home. While young people about their age were expending on fancy cars or other conspicuous consumption behavior, they followed a stricter understating of religious mores: they wore plain clothes and drove a small car. Ironically, they did not wear any jewelry nor did their wives (both married to church-members).

The business was never a partnership; it was rather a way of saving earnings and pooling costs. Each one sold his jewelry, dividing items of the same inventory, but offering them to the same client. Their effort paid off, and the *mutirão* worked well. A couple of years later, both salesmen had made enough money to have their own cars, and in the next couple of years they bought the business from their former boss. By the time they were in the early thirties, they had trucks, SUVs, many rental houses, and dozens of sellers distributing their product. The young entrepreneurs hired fellow church members, mostly young men with profiles like themselves, and a network of salespeople covered the whole State of Paraná and neighboring states. When I visited both businessmen in 2011, they had become role-models of Protestant capitalism. One of them lived in Curitiba, but often returned to the Sertão to see his parents and recruit new collaborators. The other lives in town, in a somewhat modest home for the wealth he amassed. They ceased their collaboration long ago and the relationship seems somewhat sour, but they still share the same social circles in the city and in the Sertão, and also do occasional business together.

## 8.2. ASCETICISM AND REGULATED CONSUMPTION

The “other”, the non-Pentecostal, termed as the “world,” is avoided as profane. Restraints on worldly-consumption prevent product fetish since some

denominations do not allow watching television or following mundane fashion trends. The objects of desire come along with the forbidden indiscriminate conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1899). In this way, rather than the market driving peasant consumption, the church ideology directs what is to be consumed. Belonging to the church legitimizes moderate ostensive consumption, while providing channels to maintain a moral economy of redistribution and reciprocity. Consequently, the Pentecostal peasant becomes less susceptible to mass marketing offers, while reducing the anxiety of status-seeking in the form of financial success.

The moral standards are not much different from the average expected behaviors in the countryside. Disapproval of drug abuse, sexual activity outside of marriage, dishonesty in business, wearing modest clothing are shared norms in the Sertão regardless of religion.

Adherence to Pentecostalism provides affiliation to a group of people with shared values of thrift. They shun vanity, saying “do not waste with what is not bread.” The ascetic way of life prevents them from having the anxiety of consuming industrialized goods, and stimulates the faithful to gain prestige with the community, and even outside it when they are seen as honorable saints. Thus, poverty gains an air of dignity.

Even when some family member or individual becomes wealthy, their lifestyle does not change much from their neighbors. I visited a couple who did not have luck in the city and came back to the Sertão. There, their extended family helped them to build a home in Chapadão. While the husband worked on the land, or as a journeyman, the wife took care of the house and of the children. The grant-in-aid that the federal government pays for every child they keep in school completes their income. The family lives a simple life, but they are content. Had they insisted on remaining in town, they would be living in a slum, eating poorly, and worrying about their children's security, as both adults were working full time in menial jobs. They do not own a television, and even abhor listening to the radio. Their church does not shun accessing mass media, but regards it as a personal decision. Their house is modest. The children have one or another plastic toy, but the bulk of their playtime is spent with imaginative games and toys they make themselves. The couple owns a single cell phone. They hardly access the internet (no regular internet provider serves their hamlet; the unreliable mobile network is the only way to connect to the internet) because “we can hardly pay for the phone” – he jokes.

One day, I followed the family on the way back from shopping in the city. The children went on the bus eating their ice-cream, while the parents carried the few shopping bags. There was not much. It was the standard Brazilian grocery basket: cooking oil, sugar, salt, rice and beans, coffee, guava sweet, milk, flour, macaroni, and

primary hygiene products. This package is sold as a complete kit, and costs, in 2011, about R\$300, nearly 500 SEK.

“That is our monthly ration. We trade (*negocio*, in Portuguese) whatever we don’t need, like milk” – the mother explained. “I have never been hired with a contract. She has always stayed at home and worked on the land. We’re not rich, but the Lord has never let us be in hunger.”

What concerned them the most, they said, was getting sick. They showed me some medicines they got that day at a free medicine program from pharmacies accredited in a federal health care system. Apart from that concern, the couple reported being happy with their condition. They worry about their children’s future, but they said the experience in the city was not a joyous one. He had to work in construction or unloading trucks. She did housekeeping. The money they earned was not enough to pay the rent and buy food. The children were growing up, and usually roamed the streets until late at night, while the parents were working. The church helped them, but it was difficult to make ends meet. They complained about the crowded buses, the mistreatment by the daily contractors, the lack of time to spend with the children, the frustration of not being able to buy a bicycle or any treat for them. Their family belongs to a different Pentecostal church, but people from other churches helped them to resettle in the Sertão. They do not want to leave it anymore.

The peasants in the Sertão interpret the economic differentiation among themselves not as social injustice, or personal merit. The most well-to-do families have houses and yards – not much different from their neighbors’ homes. Everything they have is thanks to the blessing of God. But a general store couple explained why there should be differences in religious terms: while everyone is the same under the eyes of God, some have more gifts than others. Everyone should make more from the talents received from the Providence. This is a combination of asceticism with the acceptance of the idea that some will have the chance to stand out from the herd. In general, this thought makes them less anxious about what the urban life may offer.

A good example is the less status-anxious people of the Sertão. Driven by consumption and ostentation, people in the city live under fierce competition. A consequence is the widespread psychological distress. Alcoholism and complaints about “depression” are rampant. A hospital social worker said she had to direct about thirty patients to major towns for psychological and psychiatric treatment for “depression.” She fears that under the banner of “depression” are serious mental health issues. These social and mental health disorders are relatively absent in the Sertão. This anomic situation occurs in the city, rather than in the countryside.

The competitiveness of urban life reflects on the neo-Pentecostal gospel movement of prosperity that pervades even the older classic Pentecostals. Churches are not modest meeting houses like in the countryside. Even poor store-front congregations now use PowerPoints and fancy sound and video systems. The marketing of religion leads to innovation. Pamphlets announce the visit of powerful preachers with gifts to bring prosperity, healing, and well-being. Advertisements offer objects, like roses or Bibles, to bring people closer to the Divine. The anxiety to reach a reputable position results in leadership dispute and frequent schisms and splits. Also, there is a current saying that when the Pentecostals become well-to-do, they either leave the church altogether, or seek middle-class “less Pentecostalized” congregations. In general, the rural Pentecostals mistrust their urban counterparts. Without the pressure to adhere to fads or the individual prosperity, they strive to maintain their ways.

I visited a family whose patriarch began transporting freight in his horse and wagon and who, nowadays, owns more than 70 heavy-duty vehicles, such as bulldozers and tractors, which he and his son rent to the lumber cutting business. Even though he has become assent-rich, his home did not much differ from his neighbors'. The father is a lay elder in a Pentecostal church, while the son contents himself with one of the humblest positions in his congregations: the door and restroom keeper. Their joy (and prestige) comes from being able to employ many of their brethren and family.

Leisure is restricted to social activities with the family and the church. A big event is what they call “the youth meetings”. The young people charter minibuses to travel to major cities. The parents make new dresses and suits for their teenage children: plain cotton cloth for both, flowery prints for the girls. Four or five times a year, the folks of the Sertão go on those trips and receive church guests. The visits last for a weekend (or longer, if it is a holiday), with many gather-together events for singing hymns, chatting and flirting. Usually, a family with a large house is opened to receive 30 to 50 people, and the nearby church members bring food and help to entertain the guests. The young people bombarded me with questions about the foreign countries I have had been to. When I asked them what places they wanted to visit, the answer befuddled me: their dream tour would be to visit a temple in Curitiba.

The contact with the urban way of life has engulfed the peasant and created dependence on industrialized goods. If, on one hand, electricity, roads, and mobile communication have made the global world come nearer; on the other hand, peasants' purchasing power continues to be small, because of the widespread lack of cash among them, in the Sertão. Nevertheless, the basic needs of a given household are met.

### 8.3. KIN AND LAND: NETWORKING AND ARTICULATION

The Pentecostal church replaces the extended family in the rural hamlet, while the blood kin and *compadrio* live now dispersed. Marriage can only happen among those with a good standing position in the communion of the church. The practice of a mixed-religion couple changing their religious affiliation to be a single-faith household harmonizes the relations among religions. A religiously homogenous household opens itself to receive help and integrate the network the Pentecostal Church provides. Because the Pentecostal church is a voluntary organization, both for adherence and for living by its rigid tenets, peasants could define who is “us” or “our neighbor” in the religious parlance. Contrary to market capitalism that seeks to involve as many customers as possible in its network, I noticed during fieldwork that the peasant economy is reluctant to increase or have an extensive chain of obligations. This network of economic obligations usually is not large, and is restricted to social and territorial proximity to make it economically viable. Thus, the voluntary adhesion serves as a means to select with whom one reciprocates.

One informant recalled that, in the times before electricity, people tended to share meat with neighbors and *compadres* after slaughtering one of their animals or after hunting game. It is worthy of notice that the food exchange happened even when their portion was meager. Even though there are still some of the reciprocal exchanges going on, the informant complained that electrical refrigerators and greed have thwarted friends’ engagements of such polite practices:

*Mate* is an example of widespread reciprocity. *Mate*, as a beverage, is one of the few goods that can never be sold. While the local general store sells packed herb and the *mate* paraphernalia– the gourd cup, the straw and filter –, the owner offers a gourd of the tea (*mate*) to a client, who did not necessarily come to the store to buy anything, but just to visit. Even though the general store is also a bar, offering soda and alcoholic drinks, it is an unthinkable thing to order a *mate*.

Politeness requires entertaining guests with utmost care. The rules of hospitality seem untouched by modernization. It is common, on the weekend for people to pay visits to their friends and relatives in the countryside. During these occasions, people exchange gifts. The *mate* circles are a way of socializing with a strict code of behavior. In the evenings, friends and neighbors usually come by the host’s veranda and sip the bitter herbal infusion in the same gourd container. The investment of socializing in *mate* circles, or joining a Pentecostal church, enhances the sense of peasantness. But, the church is a more stable institution than informal gatherings for sipping the beverages.



Despite denominational differences, the songs, the prayer, and the preaching of peasant Pentecostals convey the ideology of mutual care. In the countryside, I often heard sermons about the Good Samaritan parable, biblical recommendations to respect parents, not to neglect your own, as God would not neglect his church. While in the city, the recurrent sermon themes were about promises of prosperity and deliverance of everyday problems. I visited Manuel and Rose, an illiterate couple that live by their work on their small farm at the foot of a slope, and by their church activities. They credited their simple, but comfortable, lives to God and to their brethren. They have some milk cattle, a fruitful garden, and a newly built house made of the coveted araucaria planks. Through church contacts, the couple managed to acquire the land, and Manuel found a job as a bulldozer driver. When their only daughter became seriously ill, their brethren supported the pilgrimages to the IPDA headquarters in São Paulo and to the hospital. Thankful, Manuel and Rose always repeat the religious-mandate obligation to care for one another, citing biblical verses they hear all day on the radio.

Pentecostals in the city value member fellowship, which includes self-help, but in contrast to the city, church members in the countryside feel a greater expectancy to help one another in moments of distress. This obligation even crosses denominational lines. I have witnessed the members of the Work of Piety to assist people from another religious background. Meanwhile, in the city, I have heard “the Work of Piety should help our own [poor] because it is impractical and impossible to help everyone.” This difference related to the countryside also reflects a networking for employment-seekers. Although in the city the ministers invite the congregation to pray for the unemployed, in the Sertão, things are more pragmatic. For instance, a Pentecostal businessman who possesses more than a hundred heavy machinery for rental – trucks, and bulldozers – hired people even when he did not need extra workforce, after the closing of the pulp factory. Around that time, a couple in the Sertão asked their son, a successful sales executive in Curitiba, to employ many relatives and church members as sales representatives. On the other hand, the general complaint is that finding jobs in the city is harder, since no one helps. Reportedly, many who have moved to the city after losing their factory jobs ended up living in the slums of the city outskirts. Their lack of marketable skills and the intense competition made their adjustment to the city life difficult.

When I asked around about the price of a tract of land, I hardly got a straight answer. Some landowners even joked, estimating an amount for their land that was absurdly overpriced. Others asked me if I was interested in moving to the Sertão, before dismissing my question. Some offered to serve as brokers if I was indeed serious about buying and selling land “only for making some extra bucks.” There is a resistance to treat land as a commodity, even though many engage in land speculation.

The paradox of trading land in the Sertão can be represented by its price, which depends more on who is buying than on the supply and demand relation.

A man in his mid-forties lost his job at the pulp factory and sold his inherited plot to a company that plants pinus trees. His relatives and neighbors were somewhat offended because Sergio did not give them preference to buy the land. But they accepted with resignation the fact that they could hardly pay the same price that the company had paid, in full, for that land. The land was small to provide for Sergio's household and his grown-up children would not have many prospects without employment or land in the Sertão. When I talked to Sergio about that, he said he would have preferred to sell the land to one of his kin, or to keep it as a holiday destination, but he could not afford either. Selling the land for a relative, or a church brother, would entail a family rate, while selling it to someone from the city, who wanted a weekend country home, implied that the price could be better, although city folks hardly ever pay in cash, as they often want to trade, paying with some used car, an ailing small business, or with a peripheral urban lot. But in the end, he made a good deal with the pinus company, and besides, the transaction was confirmed by the Word of God.

If I had hinted that they set a different price according to the client, the folks of the Sertão would have protested, saying that they are honest and that they practice a fair price. Neither of us would have been wrong.

Most mutual assistance obligations are informal. That is, they occur among church brethren, neighbors, and family. Nevertheless, the churches also have their organized redistribution programs. The Work of Piety is a voluntary diaconal organization within the CCB. The Work of Piety in the Sertão is led primarily by laywomen with the help of male assistants. From time to time, deacons and deaconesses from a congregation in Tatuí, a city in the State of São Paulo, about 200 km away from the Sertão) bring donated grocery packages, clothes, and sometimes medicine, musical instruments, and cash. I witnessed one of those trips when the deacons brought the donations to the chapel by the house where I was staying. The local parishioners spent the night and the weekend dividing and distributing those donations to the families who were most in need. Work of Piety sisters would mend clothes which were unfit for the modest standards of the church, as women should wear skirts and men, long pants. The Work of Piety follows a discrete rule: "Lest the right hand see what the left hand gives," so there is no embarrassment among the receiving family. Being dependent, especially of a cash donation from extended family, carries some shame, but not if the donation comes from the church. Other Pentecostal denominations in the area have their benevolent initiatives as well.

Rules of good manners demand the offer of a ride. Apart from a few private buses and vans that do most of the logistics in the Sertão without regular routes covering all areas, transportation relies on hitchhiking and asking favors to ship parcels. Personal favors have unwritten rules on what is appropriate, or not. Assisting a sick person, for example, is not considered a job. Neither is helping in quick fixes at a home or farm facility for a brother or sister in need. However, tasks that take the entire day require cash payment or barter for some industrialized products. At the time of my fieldwork, there was no reliable mobile signal in the Sertão, but smartphones were beginning to become fetish objects. Often, these phones, bought in monthly installments, would be bartered for other products. Within weeks, after the owner got tired of the new toy, the smartphone would be replaced by a used motorcycle.

#### 8.4. THE BLURRED BOUNDARIES OF A MORAL ORDER

When a favor is required from coreligionists in town, the appeal is for mutual help among fellow Christians, rather than making political concessions. They seek a politician to help in the retirement process, or to secure a bed in the hospital, only after consulting co-religionists, and without making any firm voting commitments. The church serves as a means of interaction (or articulation) with the outside world. Politicians and some union leaders in town are affiliated to Pentecostal denominations. The union leader, who officially represents the employees at the Norske Skog Pisa, is a member of the CCB. He is a long-time federal and state representative, born to Russian-Swedish parents, pioneers of the AD in the city. But the political exchange of favors is not a simple market transaction.

One afternoon, my host took me to visit a family in the neighborhood. We came to the hamlet of Chapadão where, in a swampy area, four siblings divided the land they had inherited from their parents, and lived next to each other. We sat in a circle, and the *mate* went around while we talked about our interests in the peasant style of life. They told me about their reminiscences of times of yore and joked about common acquaintances. Commenting on the naiveté of the city folks was one of their favorite topics. Then my informants began to brag about how they fooled the politicians.

“The candidates [for municipal offices] only show up here in the election season. We asked them to fix that bridge. Everyone promised to get us a new one. So, we pledged our votes to each candidate, but we did not vote for any of them”.

“Did the winner get the bridge fixed?”

“You will go over it on your way back home.”

Upon our return, we took the risk and crossed the bridge, a mesh of wood logs and planks that seemed to be about to collapse at any time.

“We can’t believe the word of the politicians” – my host concluded.

The relationship with city politicians is loaded with ambiguous sentiment. Like adherence to a specific religious denomination, or a favorite soccer team, the peasants choose a politician to support with enthusiastic zeal. Heated discussions as to whether the presidency of Lula or Fernando Henrique was the best, is a topic to entertain for hours. They have their preferences for local and state politicians, as well. Despite all this passion, the general sentiment is that the smart thing to do is to request advantages from politicians – a full gas tank, a job indication, or a place in the hospital – when you get the chance. Without trust in the political system, the peasant tries to extract maximum benefits from the politicians.

Recently, many Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders have run for office. A prominent Evangelical politician born in Jaguariaiva, but long established in the capital, from time to time comes to the municipality to visit his family and to make a tour in the Protestant churches and hear requests after the services. As his name pops up in many conversations, I asked if he came or did anything for the people of the Sertão. Many of my interlocutors told one or another anecdote when they had a chance to rub shoulders with him. Knowing that many issues concerning the peasants in the Sertão wait for a response embodied into public policies – especially land title regulations and subsidy for crops, rather than the omnipresent forestry industry, I pressed for some concrete examples. Again, they reported on cases such as when a deputy arranged a hospital bed in Curitiba for a person with severe illness, or how generous he had been to donate medicinal powdered milk to a neighbor whose infant was on special treatment. But, to my astonishment, not a single informant was a supporter or claimed to have voted for him, not even his fellow denominational brethren. When I asked them if they did not feel that the politician was close to them, or whether he had a similar agenda, the answers puzzled me.

"He is a good guy, but my preference is for someone who I can negotiate with, and not be in debt." The politician in question has been in an elective or appointed office for years, having a solid career. Apparently, the peasants prefer to engage in an exchange of favors with someone close, not in terms of religious affiliation or proximity, but someone they can return a favor to, such as voting in block, than being in an unequal relationship with someone to whom their votes are numerically not that important.

Political decisions seem to be made more using the logic of immediate return and of the quality of the negotiated exchange than on the basis of being driven by

macro policies, or party orientation. Throughout the period of the political turmoil that began in Brazil from July, 2013, with street movements, up to 2016, with the ousting of President Dilma Rousseff, in 2016, politics became quite polarized and subject to exalted debates. My contacts were not different. Many defended one or another faction on internet discussions, while supporting a local politician from the opposite side. No one bothered taking an opposite position. This indifference to party policies even reached the agenda sponsored by the Evangelical Caucus. When I questioned if a Christian should vote for candidates supporting a “pro-family” instance (meaning anti-abortion, anti-LGBT rights), the issue seemed irrelevant to the rural Evangelicals. Many informants said it was important, but there were more important things to worry about. In general, the theme did not yield much conversation, even though their national-wise denominational leaders tend to align with that agenda.

The involvement with politicians matters more on a personal level. One informant shared his admiration for a local alderman who had assisted a relative in getting a job maintaining the unpaved roads of the Sertão. The relative was illiterate and without marketable skills to offer in the city. After he tried his luck in town, he came back to the Sertão, married and had children. His extended family helped him to settle down and build his small wooden house on a kin's land. Without a driver's license, and not willing to engage in the risk of backbreaking work with lumber contractors, he did not have many options. One day, an alderman visited the region and was touched by the family's abject condition. Even though the Brazilian legislation requires that candidates take a civil exam for public employment, the alderman was able to convince the mayor to hire the peasant as a road maintenance worker. When the mayor ended his term, the newly elected officials wanted to fire the irregular employee. His family (and many co-religionists) protested. The tactful alderman found a solution: he arranged the same job for the peasant, but with a contractor who had won the public bid for road maintenance in the area.

There are some limits to what one could ask of a politician. Not far from the Sertão, but in a different municipality, a hamlet reorganized their *faxinal* way of working in 2013. They had successfully applied for traditional community status, giving them tax breaks and access to credit. While some people in the Sertão are aware of community status benefits – they would receive if they organized themselves in a new *faxinal* – even the potentially qualified households did not seem interested. The reason was that this process would require a lot of costly paperwork and the intermediation of an influential public servant or a politician. The resulting long-term commitment to a politician by a group of households seemed to hinder any effort in this direction. That would be menacing for both, their pride and their sense of autonomy.

The morality of exchanging political favors or making a living (even by an irregular employment contract) is not challenged. Only open bribery seems to be considered corruption. For the most pious, the believer should never get involved in politics. But the extent of what *politics* means varies. While the CCB and the IPDA shun participation in party politics, prohibiting members to run for office, these churches do not condemn a member for receiving a reasonable benefit from politicians. Also, unbaptized adults or those less zealous in their denominations become unofficial politicians to represent their interests. The AD, BPC, and IEQ are actively involved in electoral politics, even nominating candidates, and it is normal for the church to receive something in return. Being in debt or owing a “favor” to a politician, is the reason the Pentecostal peasants give to explain their apolitical postures and avoid politicians. In accord with this discourse, the ethics of autonomy orient them in tune with their religious discourse for economic decisions, which are dependent on the Providence.

The bureaucratic process for complying with the environmental protection laws is unconformable and burdensome for the peasants. Tales of people being fined and jailed for cutting protected trees, killing wild animals or practicing slash-and-burn agriculture abound. As mentioned, a sizeable share of the territory of the municipality is listed as an area for permanent protection. That conveys stricter environmental regulation. They think the top-down regulations interfere with their way of life. Besides, they resent the fact that costs for compliance and the means to resort to legal or administrative processes to mitigate penalties favor corporate forestry business and large landowners. Furthermore, the peasants blame the affluent actors as the most polluting and environmentally depredating – even if they work for them on these very acts. However, the peasants often find ways to circumvent environmental restrictions on their own.

Collecting araucaria pine nuts, or cutting down palm trees to sell the hearts are sources of income for many families, especially the poorest ones in the deep Sertão. Venancio earns a living by doing odd jobs. He and his wife Lucia are in their mid-thirties and have a hut in a dense grove, in lands where some kin let them settle. Lucia stays at home taking care of their four children, raising chickens, collecting *mate*, and making vases from fern fibers and trunks. When she has a considerable number of vases, Venancio takes them to the city to sell. He used to come to the city fair, but the city officials prohibited him because he did not have the right papers, so he goes door to door offering their products. He is illiterate, but good with numbers. Sometimes, he is paid in cash, sometimes, he barter or sells on credit. They could not rely, however, on the unstable flow of cash income. He began trespassing on the protected environmental lands to collect wild honey, palm tree heart, and araucaria pine heart. One day, after spending the whole time selling, he was in the central square waiting for the bus to return home when two city officials and two police

guards came. They tried to seize his products, and an altercation followed. He ended up sleeping that night in jail. Fearing things could get even worse for him when he was released on the next day, they moved even deeper into the forest. He hardly goes to Jaguariaíva now. An acquaintance said he could find no indictment against him. Lucia began to take him to church (she was born in a Pentecostal family, but Venancio was "Catholic without religion"), and the Pentecostals supported the family. Venancio now compensates his lack of cash income by doing favors for his new brethren and working on a day rate for a tire repair shop owned by a church brother.

As can be seen, the moral order of the peasantness has its logic for setting what is right and wrong. For outsiders, it might sound shocking to learn that the families allow girls, as young as fourteen-years-old, to move to Ponta Grossa, or Curitiba, for unpaid housework, while the host family "takes care of their education." Usually, these urban families come to the Sertão for church events and to recruit the girls. The outcomes of this arrangement, often perceived as an opportunity from God, is hard to assess. Most stories I heard were that they frequently ended up getting married to a fellow brother in the city. Others came home after quitting abusive employers. Some ended up in the "wrong way." That is what worries many parents, so they urge the receiving families to seek support of Providence if a moving out proposal is from God.

As seen in this section, the model of the situated reasoning of the Pentecostal peasant in the Sertão is not necessarily moral, at least in the sense that it will always result in the greater good for the community. As in any economic model, or ethical approach, they face dilemmas. Asking for a favor from a politician, evading environmental laws, or sending teenage daughters away for unpaid labor, all involve tough decisions. Sometimes, they may invoke the word of God to justify those decisions, but it is part of the ambiguous reasoning.

## 9. INTERPRETING THE SIGNS: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Just as peasants form a part of a larger social order so they partake in an order of symbolic understandings, an ideology. (...) And an ideology has moral significance. It upholds "right living," thus underwriting the social ties which hold society together. (Wolf 1966, 96).

In this chapter, I analyze how the moral order of peasantness functions for the maintenance of folks of the Sertão who are oriented by diverse anthropological theories. Throughout this analysis, for the sake of validity and reliability, I compare the way of life of Pentecostal peasants with that of other actors, in a pluralistic setting, namely, their neighbors from other religions, Catholic rural laborers, in the plateau region, and urban Pentecostals. Lastly, I place the outcomes of this moral order in the context of studies on related questions that my research has addressed concerning repeasantization and the role of peasant Protestantism in Latin American capitalism. Since this thesis revolves around the topic of moral order, the multiple livelihood strategies that are both the outcome and the means to support peasants materially, are not treated deeper here.

This thesis is oriented to the question of how peasantry can be self-supported while facing the many challenges of modernity. Moreover, it discusses the extent of their autonomy, which makes them capable of adapting and shaping their own world in response to the processes of agricultural mechanization, countryside industrialization, and post-industrialization. The response is focused on the moral order of peasantness.

### 9.1. THEMES IN THE PEASANT PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE

For the challenges, there are varied responses. Recently (2013), I learned that not far from Jaguariaíva, in the city of Ponta Grossa, peasants of similar profile (even with some distant kinship ties to families in the Sertão) have organized a *faxinal*. Further south, in the region of Campos Gerais, peasants are organizing, more and more, a movement to defend their interests in the public arena. At first sight, in the Sertão, except for a somewhat inactive neighbors' association or occasional protests at government offices, there didn't seem to be an institutionalized organization to articulate the locals' interests. There are no cooperatives, and the rural workers' union is seen as a bureaucratic urban agency that complicates access to worker's benefits, or as an intermediary in dispute at the labor court. Religion appears to be one of the few institutions capable of defending the folks in the Sertão and in the outside world. The lay Catholic brotherhood, in its turn, has diminishing influence. Networks of Pentecostal congregations integrate people from different hamlets. In



this setting, if one wants to understand the persistence of the Sertão's peasants, the Pentecostal churches become a natural place to investigate.

The Pentecostal churches of the Sertão belong to a variety of denominations, sharing the objective to seek heavenly salvation, rather than things of this world. This suggests that, to say that their churches seek worldly goods might even be an insult. However, they uphold a moral order that is part of their very means of subsistence. A believer does not distinguish his or her life as Pentecostal, by becoming a professional or a laborer; there are no clear boundaries between the realm of the religious and the economic aspects in personal lives. Pentecostalism allows a re-enchantment of the world, to use a Weberian concept. Instead of the predicted rationalization, Pentecostalism creates a pluralism of worldviews: personal experience as the validation of truth, and the pervasiveness of the Divine in the realm of everyday life.

Religion becomes an identity marker. When interacting with the city, peasants might prefer to identify themselves first as Pentecostals, rather than country folks. While visiting a general store in the city, I have observed a couple applying for credit to be paid in installments. They gave their church's brethren as references and repeated emphatically that they were Pentecostal believers. When the salesperson asked for address details in the credit application they said they owned property in the Sertão. Contrary to market capitalism that seeks to involve as many customers as possible in its network, I noticed, during fieldwork, that the peasant economy is reluctant to expand or to have an extensive chain of obligations. Usually, this network of economic obligations is not extensive, but restricted to social and territorial proximity, to make it economically viable. The "other", the non-Pentecostal, may be termed as the "world" and is avoided as profane. The ban on worldly consumption prevents the fads of product fetishism since some denominations do not allow watching television or following worldly fashion trends. The objects of desire are avoided with the prohibition of mass consumption, (Veblen 1899), thus, rather than being driven by market directives for consumption, the church dictates what should be consumed. Belonging to the church legitimizes moderate consumption, while providing channels to maintain the moral economy of redistribution.

Adherence to Pentecostalism cannot be explained by functional analysis because the motivations underlying religious conversion are many. A collective conversion in the Sertão occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the pulp and lumber economy reached its peak; the society was more stable and less anomic, contradicting the earlier theories of conversion in response to social anomie (Willems 1967; D'Épinay 1968). However, the peasants had some social benefits for converting to Pentecostalism, namely upholding a moral order.

Pentecostalism among peasants is different from other peasant religious movements such as the Millenarian-Messianism. Peasants in Brazil, like other marginalized populations across the globe, have experienced Millenarian-Messianic movements to revitalize an ideal world by challenging the status quo (Queiroz 1965). In contrast, Pentecostalism selectively upholds the aspirations of the transformed society. If Millenarian-Messianism was the primitive rebels (Hobsbawm 1959), Pentecostalism is the contemporary everyday resistance (Scott 1985).

Without condemning individual accumulation of wealth, Pentecostalism also provides channels for a moral economy. Like the former *faxinal* system that combined private and communal interests, the Pentecostal church allows such balance between the private and the communal life for the peasant. Instead of the revolutionary attitude of Millenarian-Messianism, of being against the world; the worldly asceticism of the Pentecostals allows them to be *in* the world without being *of* the world. Thus, in a plural world, Pentecostalism provides a clear code of conduct to deal with the brethren and with non-believers, as well as to orient consumption. By this mean, the moral economy does not depend on the mode of production and is well adapted to the market system. From another perspective, Millenarian-Messianism movements are attempts to reinstate moral economies, while peasant Pentecostalism articulates a moral economy within the framework of a market economy.

The peasant way of life is based on a set of values, or moral order (Woortmann 1990), which regulates family, labor, and land priorities. For the peasants, upholding values like collaboration, autonomy, thrift, and stability would not be possible if they depended on the market system. The increasing individualism would distance households. Salaried labor with rigid work schedules and difficulties to gain access to land are diminished together with the frequency and quality of transactions that reinforce the values of the peasant way of life. Against that background, the Pentecostal church provides the ideology to sustain these values and the opportunity to live in a moral way.

As with the themes presented in Chapter 7, the moral order of peasantness is built on an imagined separation. The boundary between things of the world and things of God has the dual character of setting the community apart, as well as driving consumption and creating a pool of resources, including that of voluntary reciprocity. Some things belong to God, therefore, they are allowed for the peasant. Moreover, there are things of the world from which the believer must keep away. They live for the daily needs, and express long-term planning as God's promises. This promise is not an intimate mystical revelation. Instead, it is shared with their families and with the congregation. Everyone becomes aware that someone is

waiting for the moment that God is going to act. That gives dignity. An example is the case cited of the unemployed believer who refused a job in a gas station on the highway. His refusal had the support of the church and of the family. In this way, he went from an unemployed person to a believer who awaits a miracle, reducing his anxiety for having to respond to the social obligation of providing for his family. Meanwhile, separation from the world is desirable. However, it is not a solitary separation. The congregation brings like-minded believers together to make living apart acceptable. It is group work (a *mutirão*) for God, joining activities for the community's permanence. After all, they are God's people, thus, a sacred and morally acceptable people. This conception is not much different from the projection of one's own wishes in a totem (Durkheim 2001). However, it would be reductionistic to claim a direct functionalist relationship between the religious practices and worldviews for the maintenance of the group. For that reason, the framework of the moral order of peasantry provides a more comprehensive explanation.

For the peasant, converting and maintaining affiliation with the Pentecostal churches means a personal commitment to God and to the community. This commitment is reinforced by adherence to the churches' rituals, lifestyle, and code of behavior. Thus, engagement not only constructs a distinct community with its religious practices, but also provides guidance as to how to make appropriate economic decisions.

The revealed word of God may bid them to leave or remain in the Sertão. There is no consistent pattern of a policy-oriented to their persistence in the countryside. However, at the aggregate level, that is what is happening. Due to the subjective individualism and collective interpretation of the Divine word, the answers vary, as happens with the promises. In a way, the act of seeking the confirmation of the Word for making life-changing decisions transfers personal responsibilities from the individual to the projected Divine will. Saying that one is expecting "upon the Lord's Providence" is a respectable way to wait between jobs or at other transition times. If the business succeeds, it is the ordinary course of things, with God fulfilling his promises. If not, the failure is rationalized either as a lack, or a test, of faith. Thus, God is always right, and the face of the believer is saved before his brethren. The risks of the disappointments, or the inability to deal with unforeseen challenges are reduced. It can be interpreted as similar to the oracle and witchcraft of the Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1937). If an expected event happens, there must be a natural explanation, but in any case, it is an intervention of the Divine. The oracle is never wrong.

The concept of the Word is similar to the doctrine of the Inner Light of the Quakers. Among earlier Quakers, the Inner Light doctrine led their unprogrammed

services, meeting decisions, and practical ethics. This directed and progressive, subjective revelation (Bauman 1974) allowed the Quakers to interpret the will of God. The silent approval of a Quaker meeting validated the interpretation of the Inner Light. Although many varieties of Pentecostalism have rituals of disclosure of the Divine will, either by ecstatic prophetic utterances or by the interpretation of unknown tongues, the peasant Pentecostals wait for a less dramatic confirmation. It is not some charismatic authority who says whatever the Lord wants, but the faithful who must discern the meaning of the Word of God and share it with his or her congregation for approval in testimony, prayer or during an informal talk. The fellow believer may disagree, but he might use a suggestive “you should seek the Lord for further confirmation on that issue.” Once a promise has been stated, the fellow Christians will respect the time for the fulfillment. There remains a re-enchantment of the World when it is defined by acceptable norms of rationalization.

After the institutions of reciprocity, like the *compadrio*, *mutirão*, *faxinal*, and the practice of exchanging favors among neighbors, were weakened, the Pentecostal church replaced many of these institutions. People have fled the countryside; the eucalyptus forests have disrupted the territorial contiguity of the hamlets; wire fences have curbed all feasibility of making a livelihood from a *faxinal*; wages have replaced *mutirão*. Yet, a moral economy of the peasant still runs through the Pentecostal church.

The Pentecostal church replaces the extended family in the rural hamlet, while blood kin and the *compadrio* still live, dispersed. *Compadres* and *comadres* are now replaced by church “brother” and “sister.” Mutual help organizations like the Work of Piety complement state welfare and increase obligations among parishioners. Marriage can only happen among those with a good standing position on the rolls of the church. The practice of a mixed-religious couple to change their religious affiliation to be a single-faith household harmonizes the relations among co-religionists. Consequently, a religiously homogenous household opens to receive help and integrate the network the Pentecostal church provides. Because the Pentecostal church is a voluntary organization, both for adherence and for life by its rigid tenets, peasants can define who is “us” or “our neighbor” in the religious parlance.

The Pentecostal church helps to keep the social organization reasonably horizontal in the Sertão. Contrary to the thesis that the Latin American peasants have left folk Catholicism for Pentecostalism to avoid ceremonial expenses (a reference for this thesis is Annis 2000), in the Sertão, the peasant might spend even more to maintain the Pentecostal church than would the faithful in the growingly infrequent Catholic festivities. If, on the one hand, the monetary collections for the folk Catholic festivities are sporadic, on the other hand, the Pentecostals hear about

monetary collection in every church service. However, the Pentecostal congregation reduces economic differences that emerge among its members. The socially stratified Sertão has affluent peasants now: a machinery rental contractor, store owners, but, at the same time, some peasant families must accept the goodwill of the church and family to survive. The peasant does not like to owe people favors and such exchanges and aid to and from their brethren are seen not as favors, but as an obligation emerging from the valued attitudes of the moral order: helping one another. His debt is not personal but mediated by the church. Thus, the peasant Pentecostal keeps his sense of pride. It is a blessing to do a favor, as it is to receive a favor. The preference for immediate relief to those in need is expressed through reliance on the extended networks of family, church, and the hamlet. Thus, help is sought from impersonal government assistance, and, as a last resource: resorting to strong local patronage.

The ideology of the Pentecostal church allows individualism to some extent. Salvation is an individual matter, and such mentality reflects the accumulation of wealth in the Weberian way. On the other hand, obligations such as caring for the needy, as preached in the sermons, dictates the way they should cope with social differences when their peasant society is stratified. The balance mechanism is not only in the church discourse, but in the Pentecostal congregation itself as it reduces social differences through the Work of Piety, or negotiate favors with influential brethren in the city. Although Pentecostals attribute a great deal of agency and responsibility to the individual, since salvation is personal, they value believer's advancement within the community. In other words, reaching respectability within the church is preferable to the worldly recognition. This attitude is also found among the urban counterparts, as is the case of the classical Pentecostals in São Paulo. For them "fellowship at the CCB, however, can encourage people to temper their expectations of the world, and it can help to morally frame their aspirations in terms that modify the logic of the market". (St.Clair 2017, 20).

Pentecostalism can be a way to prepare the believer for a life of salaried labor, to create habits of re-investment and to naturalize social differentiation and individualization since one's lot is in God's hand. On the other hand, Pentecostal guidelines shape the labor force by making a clear distinction between a worldly and an acceptable job. To counterbalance individualization, religion also provides a safety net in the form of mutual help, political articulation, employment and business opportunities. By marrying within the church congregation and lending plots of land to family and brethren, the Pentecostal peasant increases his/her chances to retain the land.

Such institutional changes reflect continuity and rupture. Under this perspective, Turner (1969:96–97) argued that, after the breaking-down of an

established structure, the emergence of an anti-structure occurs and replaces many aspects of the former structure. Many anti-structural elements reproduce the original one. The change is never complete, resulting in continuity. Before the arrival of roads and the lumber industry in the Sertão, the *faxinal* system was the chief organizer of social life, and the economy of the peasant. After the system's breakdown, the communal oriented role continued, embodied particularly in the Pentecostal churches. The moral order of *compadrio*, the magic worldview of folk Catholicism, the commons in the form of labor (*mutirão*) and natural resources of the *faxinal*, that once had regulated and allowed the existence of peasantry in the pre-industrial the Sertão, now are replaced by the moral order of Pentecostalism. The moral order of peasantness continues to be peasant-oriented but it allows ruptures for a limited engagement with market capitalism. In this way, it acts as a contingent factor so that the rural populations can have a dignified existence, as Berger (2010) argues for among the Central American Pentecostals.

## 9.2. PLURALISM OF PENTECOST

The plural religious scenario of the Pentecostal religion influences non-Pentecostals too. Whether Catholic or not, the non-Pentecostals in the Sertão must navigate complex social relations with city bureaucrats, employers, and business stakeholders without the benefit of an additional connection.

Once the hegemony of Catholicism was broken, the peasant learned to live with relatives and friends of different religious persuasions. Nevertheless, while it is worthy to note that Catholicism has never been monolithic in Sertão, coexisting folk varieties with the Romanized clerical Catholicism. In this setting, the acceptance of Pentecostalism entails accepting a pluralism of worldviews. In this way, the pluralist world prepares the peasants to negotiate their existence among people with different interests, values, and economic logic from theirs, in other words, with a different capitalist spirit. Nowadays, the Catholic feasts in the Sertão are organized and sponsored by city dwellers and do not follow the *confraria* system portrayed in Mexico and Central America (Annis 2000; Althoff 2014). But there are different Pentecostal Churches with different practices. Not all peasants in the Sertão are Pentecostals, nor are the Pentecostals a unified close-knit community.

In contrast to the Sertão, rural workers of the upper plateau of Jaguariaiva have less institutional support for maintaining a distinct peasant community. They are salaried workers for ranchers or agribusiness rentiers. They are peons on the cattle ranches, journeymen in the soy fields, or domestic workers. They are more unstable and prone to move on when the patron dislikes them or the season is over. Most of them live in the city or in houses that belong to the landowners. The population is scattered, and the hamlets of Murtinho or Pesqueiro are more

geographical points of reference than a territory of social relations. The Catholic chapels are as little functional as those in the Sertão, but the presence of Pentecostalism is minimal, with some adherents who attend congregations in the city. Difficulty of access to land may account for the relative absence of local peasant communities in the plateau, but tenancy, sharecropping, and other asymmetric patron-client arrangements might be able to attract people to live in the region. Access to land might be a necessary factor for the maintenance of a peasant community, but it is not a sufficient explanation. The relative absence of that moral order of peasantness in the Plateau, where a patron/client (master/slave in the Brazilian sociological terminology) relationship predominates, seems to suggest that the role of Pentecostalism could sustain a local peasantry. Forman (2009) contrasts the master/slave scheme to the peasantries in Brazil, but Woortmann (1990, 39) put it more briefly and accurately, the peasant calls it “the dog's law,” or “the dog eat dog world”.

The peasant who has participated in the patron-client arrangement would avoid, as much as possible, being subject to it. In the Sertão, it is somewhat acceptable to have a salaried job in the impersonal factories of the lumber industry, but to work as a rural worker on another's person land is a sign of discredit. An informant complained about his son-in-law being subjected to work for wages on another farm while neglecting his own plot of land, because of avarice and selfishness. Not that the informant was against salaried work, he was himself a retired pulp factory laborer; but the pursuit of private economic gain while neglecting those close in the social relationship web seemed nonsense to him. Only those in real need would work as peons or journeymen. As a result, those who accept such a condition can expect help from relatives and co-religionists to escape the arrangement as soon as possible.

### 9.3. APPLIED MORAL ORDER OF PEASANTNESS

The underlying logic among the Sertão's peasants follows some of the principles describing the peasants in Southeast Asia (Scott 1976). The peasants, according to Scott (1976), operated by a risk-aversion logic to face the extraction of their surplus by colonialism. Their strategies included employing everyday resistance, sharing resources through reciprocity, and focusing on food security, (Scott 1976, 291:4–5, 1985). Likewise, in the Sertão, the Pentecostal work ethic expresses a veiled everyday resistance to the State and industrial capitalism by having different land prices for insiders and outsiders and adhering to an ascetic lifestyle that minimizes the desire to consume mass-produced products. Additionally, the Work of Piety and networks of mutual obligations and articulation for voting also represent mechanisms of reciprocity.

This subtle resistance by maintaining a moral order conforms to the thesis of Edelman (2013) and Van der Ploeg (2009) concerning repeasantization. Peasants are not doomed to disappear when in contact with modernization, but to establish their own projects of modernity. It is hard to anticipate how they will respond to newer challenges, but so far I have not found elements that imply causal relations for Peasant conversion to Pentecostalism as a response to the anomies of late modernity. Since adherence to the Pentecostal religion crosses generational boundaries and their networks surpass the urban and rural divide, kinship and religious affiliation are social resources for an economy of multiple livelihood strategies. These intense social relations are only possible because those involved adhere to a shared morality. By maintaining this moral order, the Pentecostal peasants can remain peasants.

The future of peasant Pentecostalism is difficult to predict. They combine the Weberian ideal type of Anabaptist asceticism (Weber 2001) with the peasant type (Weber 1978). They are both mystic and ascetic. The distinction between inner-worldly and the outer-worldly is relevant for them because they sanctify ordinary things by seeking the confirmation of Divine will and conforming to the standards of modesty. While the peasant waits for opportunities that come from heaven or nature (Weber 1978, 468), they rely on social and ideological resources. They wait because of an assurance that the Lord will provide. This re-enchantment of the world is not the perspective of an individualistic mystic. It has social support.

When comparing the peasant moral order with the broader Brazilian capitalism, it should be observed that it is not a utopian alternative to global market capitalism. Rather, it is a local form of capitalism. Far from an idealized and simple primitive communism, the peasant economy is as complex as the contemporary urban, industrial, high-tech, and global capitalism. Yet, some goods and services should never be paid with money. On the other hand, specialized products and services run through the market economy. Clothes circulate via donations, but seamstress services must be paid. Industrialized goods, especially electronics, may even become money themselves, as is the case of smartphones. The high-tech smartphones, whose utilitarian function will take some years for a reliable mobile signal to reach the Sertão, are used to pay for services or barter for other goods. Meanwhile, these phones serve as conspicuous consumption goods (Veblen 1899) that younger people and business people enjoy possessing and displaying in the Sertão.



## 10. HARVESTING THE RESULTS: FINAL REMARKS

### 10.1. MAKING SENSE OF A MORAL ORDER

This thesis depicts a local form of peasant economy recorded by ethnographic methods with particular focus on participant observation in the South of Brazil. Like contemporary agrarian populations elsewhere, the peasants of the Sertão of Jaguariaíva have been able to maintain their existence with a distinct way of life while facing diverse challenges posed by the globalized economy. Since they collectively converted during the 1980s, in different Pentecostal churches, I focused on the role of peasant Pentecostalism in shaping a moral order that guides their relationship with the land, kinship, with their work and with consumption. This has set them apart from the "world."

The main finding of the research was that the Pentecostal peasants express this moral order in two ways: by waiting on Providence and by seeking to understand the Divine Will. By adhering to the constraints of such moral order, the peasants have support to resist the temptations that come from the Worldly Kingdom. I argue that the moral order provided by the Pentecostal religion is a relevant factor for peasant maintenance as a community.

Peasantry integrates the multiform global capitalism by providing it with labor and commodities. However, the situated reason used by the Pentecostal peasant, to engage with capitalism, could not be reduced merely to a calculation to maximize individual profit. In this study, I found that they employ a decision-making process expressed by a religious idiom. According to this rationale, the believer must conform to God's Providence on major life decisions such as: marrying, moving out, starting a business, seeking further education, quitting a job and making notable changes in land usage, including selling it. Until God intervenes, or until the believer comprehends the Divine Word, he or she must wait for the right opportunity. Until then, they must adhere to their church's strict rules of conduct, so as to avoid any contamination with mundane things.

This worldly asceticism makes them cautious about what the "world" may offer. Thus, the norm expressed by the Divine Word is to avoid consumption of vanities or the pursuit of a place in the world or other objectives such as higher social status, political influence, or professional training. Instead, the believer must first fulfill his or her responsibilities toward the family (blood kin and church brethren). This ensures a minimum of a safety net, working, renting or having access to land, and meeting mutual obligations. In the Sertão, having access to land – even a small plot – is regarded as a sure way to secure one's livelihood, albeit combined with multiple livelihood strategies that include temporary or informal jobs

elsewhere, or with income from a family member who earns wages or has public welfare support. That does not mean that they shun the possibility of moving out, either temporally or permanently, to town, looking for jobs or further education. Likewise, if unexpectedly “God has prepared” a shining new SUV, then it is not considered conspicuous consumption, especially if the person has a good standing record of meeting his or her obligations towards the brethren. Instead, these decisions must be consistent with the Divine Will, so one should wait for the right moment. With this Divine and communal approval, the Pentecostal peasant may leave, but must often come back and fulfill his or her local duties.

The way the believer hears, understands, and acts upon God's Providence is mediated by the Pentecostal church moral guidelines and community approval. Thus, rather than long term planning, the believers wait for opportunities, which help reduce their risks and allow them to count on the religious community's endorsement for their decisions. The believer understands what is pleasing to God by interpreting religious and everyday events as they happen in the practice of “seeking the word of God.” Sometimes, the decision might seem contrary to the utilitarian market logic, but those choices sanctioned by the Pentecostal churches have enabled peasants to remain in the countryside with a dignified existence.

The emic explanation of expecting Divine intervention that will provide for their livelihood makes sense when understood as an economic decision grounded in a moral economy. The meaning of this latter concept used by recent anthropological scholars (Booth 1994; Palomera and Vetta 2016; Edelman 2008) refers to an ideal of avoiding intragroup and neighborly conflict, and reducing social inequality while engaging in economic activities of various modes of production, including capitalism. To avoid confusion with other meanings of moral economy, I chose to use the concept of a moral order of peasantry, proposed by Woortmann (1990, 11), to describe the way that Brazilian peasants relate to each other and to the land, in order to construct a peasant way of life. The effects of such moral order include maintaining a distinct peasantry, avoiding reducing the rural world to just land to simply supply commodities – in this case, forestry products – and sharply differentiating the rural population from a region of proletarians, intermediaries and entrepreneurs who over-depend on the whims of the outside market.

The concept of peasantry has been duly criticized (Kearney 1996) for its vagueness and difficulty in establishing comparisons across time and societies. Given their continuity as a distinct category, typologies like the ones proposed by Van der Ploeg (2009) are useful for one to discern the complexities of contemporary rural populations, but the ones that I identify as peasants are rural folks joined by a “moral order of peasantry” that places a centrality on kin, the land, and the labor, as proposed by Woortmann (1990). The subjects are social and economically

diverse, but share a common moral order that values kinship obligations, permanence on the land, and a critical engagement with work and consumption. In accord with that moral order, their work and consumption patterns reflect multiple livelihood strategies (Halperin 1990) and thriftiness, confirming what has been recorded in post-industrial agrarian societies elsewhere, according to the analytical concepts of Halperin (1990). The peasants I have studied are socially stratified, ranging from well-to-do farmers and heavy machinery rental entrepreneurs to unemployed, landless rural workers relying on precarious daily jobs and community welfare. Despite these social differences, they have been able to maintain a viable peasantry, adhering to a worldview according to which life events are interpreted as resulting from the Divine Will and Providence.

These findings confirm the relationship between land, kin, and work (Woortmann 1990; Halperin 1990) with a religious idiom that fit the new reality. Although both authors recognize the role of religion in the pleasantness, and the transition to capitalism, they only mention it in passing. Halperin (1990:11) comments that the Kentucky folk attribute their survival to the work of God. She also mentions a part-time preacher and the affiliation with popular Protestantism of some informants. Similarly, Woortmann (1990) sees the influence of Christian morality in the peasant ethics and credits the theory of R.H. Tawney who speaks of the correlation between religion and the rise of capitalism, but he does not provide any particular connection, nor explain how it works. This case of the Sertão de Jaguariaíva offers an explanation. Due to the need for re-conceptualizing and maintaining their existence, the peasants from Jaguariaíva have reoriented their morality to create obligations among religious brethren and committed themselves to long-standing locally-oriented relations to land, kin, and work.

The peasants of the Sertão are not only socially and economically diverse; they also have religious diversity, even though an outsider might consider them all together as “believers.” In the Sertão, there are half a dozen Pentecostal denominations with varying attitudes toward the world; different internal organization, rituals, codes of behavior, and doctrinal emphases. Despite these denominational differences, I argue that rural Pentecostalism holds a shared ethos that contrasts to the prosperity-gospel oriented theologies and practices of their urban denominational counterparts. Also, not all Pentecostals adhere with the same intensity to the church's activities; many silently disagree with their denominational practices or teachings, but still enjoy the communal life.

Pentecostalism has many effects on kinship. One of them is the endogamous practices, and another is the fictive creation of family bonds when they become church brethren. Religious affiliation is seen as an extended family commitment, and a nuclear family hardly ever has mixed religious membership, even though there are

those who change from one denomination to other. The elective system of Catholic godfathering has been disrupted by the exodus to the cities (and to other religious allegiances), so the voluntary membership in a Pentecostal congregation has replaced fictive kinship and its related obligations.

The extent of Pentecostalism exceeds denominational barriers. For instance, many peasants remain Catholics, even though they also receive influence from the Pentecostals who are most likely relatives and neighbors. Nevertheless, it is accepted, in the Sertão, that the Pentecostal families have an enduring self-help scheme of brother-helping-brother: they have a strong safety network that assists them when moving to and from town, finding jobs, and providing welfare in moments of distress. Besides, the Pentecostal economic situated reasoning seems to be a relevant factor for individual and community maintenance across religious boundaries. The non-Pentecostal peasants also benefit from their neighbors' religious ethos. Indirectly, communities are stronger based on confidence, obligations, and expected behavior. Directly, there are overlapping obligations to the extended family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers that surpass the confines of denominational membership. As mentioned, the weight of internal varieties of Pentecostalism is a factor to be considered in any serious study. However, it is not a factor to be overestimated because the dynamics of conversion transit across denominations, and the process of pentecostalization of different religious groups may result in a shared mentality, even when there are weak ties or no formal links among various Pentecostal churches.

The findings of this study join the ongoing debate as to whether Pentecostalism in Latin America fosters capitalism and modernization, somewhat drawing on Weber (2001). Earlier interpretations (Willems 1967; D'Epina 1968) suggested that Pentecostalism was a response to the anomie caused by modernization. That thesis has been widely criticized, but some theorists (Martin 1990; Stoll 1990; Arenari 2017; Acosta Leyva 2005; Annis 2000) refined it presenting the mass conversion to Pentecostalism as a vehicle for cultural change, resulting in an individualism oriented by universalistic ethical parameters. This Reformation does not necessarily mean constructing a Calvinistic rationality type. It is more like the sectarian type whose asceticism helps the Latin American poor to acquire skills and reorganize family, gender, and work relations toward ethics that are valued by neo-liberal capitalism. Alternatively, several critics (Bastian 1993; Smith 2016; Nogueira-Godsey 2012; Gill 2004; Mariz 1994) have recognized that there are some changes in terms of mentality, skills, and networking, but they are not enough to predict the formation of a spirit of capitalism. Among the reasons is the prevalence of a thaumaturgical mentality, as well as social and religious mobility, which makes it difficult to discern a logical outcome. Moreover, the empirical

evidence is weak when comparing the changes observed with the competing religions involved.

This research revealed that the Pentecostal peasant combines the Weberian ideal types of the Anabaptist asceticism (Weber 2001) with the thaumaturgical approach, waiting patiently for opportunities of the peasant type (Weber 1978). For the Pentecostal peasant, there is a watering down of the distinction between the mystic and the ascetic, or the inner-worldly and the outer-worldly nature of things, because the Pentecostal worldview sanctifies ordinary things, setting them apart either as sacred or profane. Praying for a broken motorcycle to start is as reasonable as fasting for reaching the experience of a close moment with the Divine. Another refinement of the ideal type of the peasant religion proposed by Weber is that peasants have agency. They are not so “dependent on organic processes and natural events, or economically so little oriented to rational systematization” (Weber 1978, 468). Instead, the peasant knows how to manipulate nature. Indeed, I cannot think of a peasant society that would not be able to manage and transform their physical and social environment. In Jaguariaiva, the pooling of labor in the *mutirão*, and the acts of selectively using political, technological, and economic resources have been around for a long time. From mobilizing neighbors and kin to quarry stone or collecting araucaria pine when the planted crops did not do well are strategies which depended more on local knowledge and community reciprocity than on nature, which the peasants know well. Finally, the mysticism of the Pentecostal peasant is not oriented to the outer world. Pentecostalism allows a socially-accepted re-enchantment of the world. Perhaps, it is time to add a fifth type of Weberian social action, that is, social action that is numinous. In a world of uncertainties, it is reasonable to actively wait on Providence, backed by peers, while seeking to discern what is right among a plethora of information.

## 10.2. WAITING ON PROVIDENCE: TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the use of some Weberian theories in this thesis, my aim was not to test the correlation between Pentecostal Protestantism and capitalism. That is a topic that warrants further inquiry. A possible way to shed light on the question would be by comparing several types of religion (as well as among the varieties of Pentecostalism) in the countryside and in the city. For that, this thesis serves to profile the typical Brazilian Pentecostal peasant. The results may also help to understand the urban counterparts, people at the margins of the religious, political, and economic mainstream who rely on multiple livelihood strategies and communal religious expressions of meaning-making. A comparative study of the Catholic and Pentecostal peasants would clarify how religious affiliation affects coping with social and economic problems. A simple demographic comparison would clarify

which religious groups tend to migrate to the city or have steady incomes in the countryside.

Moreover, still discussing the classical sociological themes, it would be somewhat absurd to make any predictions regarding the agrarian question. It is an open question whether they might become rural bourgeois or proletarians, or if they might move *en masse* to the city to leave the land for cash-crops, or even if they might articulate politically to maintain their interests in more organized form. In any case, Pentecostal peasant ethics may continue, though changed. Regarding political activism, since the rural Pentecostals have an ideal of avoidance of open conflict, especially on political issues like land reform or organized labor, contrasting peasant Pentecostal moral order with the political engagement of other Pentecostals in areas of *faxinal* economy or zones of land dispute is a question to consider for further research. As religion is an important identity marker, it would be interesting to learn what identity would be deployed with an open political engagement or agenda setting. It could be Pentecostals, “traditional people,” landless rural workers, *faxinais*, landowners or other groups.

Although making forecasts is not among my goals, the repeasantization theory about the persistence of a distinctive peasant way of life seems appropriate for the case of Jaguariaiva – at least until now. Other economic cycles, pig-raising, araucaria forestry, and contemporary planted forests, pulp, and paper industrialization might have affected the economic, social, and even religious configurations of the region, but a discernible peasant population is still found even after all the changes. So far, they have been able to earn a living without becoming utterly dependent on the outside market economy, or without widening the gap between the rich and the poor among themselves. But, the ever-changing ecological, political, and economic pressures make it difficult to foresee for how long the Pentecostalized peasants of the Sertão will remain there.

Another area that requires further study is how the factors of gender and age work within the black box of the Pentecostal peasant household. Besides the bias of being male and in my late twenties during fieldwork, I had a limited, formal interaction with some classes of informants due to norms of modesty and respect toward women and the elderly. Indeed, a researcher with easier access to those subjects would possibly receive different answers if he or she posed the same questions I have posed in this study, concerning the same population, at different levels of rapport.

The impact of modern technology is an urgent topic. Despite the deficient internet signal in the Sertão, the mobile internet communication, especially among the younger generation, may play a critical role in the present and near future of

local peasantry. Keeping contact with local informants, many teenagers and young adults, even in the Sertão, do not see the world as their parents do. Tensions may arise concerning values and the significance of the church, or even for contesting many of the tenets of their denominations. Also, these well-connected informants have increasing anxiety to find their place in the global world. Some are very active in expressing political opinions on national politics.

The findings of this thesis could serve for policymaking for local institutions and to avoid taking for granted the stereotypical peasant or Pentecostal. Local development projects should inquire as to what is locally meaningful. Thus, this research might be a point of departure for further applied studies. The richness of local knowledge about the environment and the predicaments of political ecology that seeks to conciliate forestry entrepreneurship and multiple crop farming, often on the same family farm, are issues worthy of investigation.

This work is interpretative. It is thus subject to different conclusions based on the same evidence and fieldwork experience at the same site, or correlations of data on the same questions and assumptions. That is not a disclaimer. Rather, it is an invitation to a dialogue on how peasants express themselves through their religion, the morally acceptable ways of making a living and maintaining themselves as communities.

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## GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

**AD:** (Assembleias de Deus) the Assemblies of God is the designation used by a handful of classical Pentecostal denominations originated mostly from the Swedish missionary activities.

**Alqueire:** is a unit of land area with varying size in Brazil. In Paraná State, it measures 2.42 hectares.

**Araucaria:** conifer tree (*Araucaria angustifolia*).

**Bairro:** in rural contexts, it refers to a socially defined territory. It can be a densely-populated small town or a scattered village. Hamlet.

**BPC:** (Igreja Evangélica Pentecostal O Brasil para Cristo) Brazil for Christ Evangelical Pentecostal Church, a second-wave Pentecostal denomination.

**Caiçara:** fishing population of coastal areas in the southeast Brazil.

**CCB:** (Congregação Cristã no Brasil) Christian Congregation in Brazil is a classic Pentecostal denomination.

**Chácaras:** smallholding with up to 5 alqueire.

**Compadrio:** godfathering. A social relationship or fictive kinship based on the compromise of sponsoring the material and spiritual welfare of the godchild in Roman Catholicism.

**Confraria:** lay prayer fellowship responsible for organizing religious festivities in rural Catholicism.

**Coronelismo:** patron-client political machine run by (and for the benefit of) agrarian oligarchs.

**Fandango:** a folk dance and music genre.

**Faxinal:** (/fa.ʃi.'naw/) a combined agropastoral and forestry system based on the commons in the State of Paraná, Brazil.

**Fazenda:** large farm, usually operating under a single-commodity plantation system.

**IBGE:** (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics is the official statistics bureau.

**IEQ:** (Igreja do Evangelho Quadrangular) the Foursquare Gospel Church is a second-wave Pentecostal denomination in Brazil.

**Invernada:** transhumance system of driving livestock according to seasonal cycles.

**IPDA:** (Igreja Pentecostal Deus é Amor) the God's Love Pentecostal Church is a second-wave Pentecostal denomination in Brazil.

**IURD:** (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus) the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God is a third-wave or neo-Pentecostal denomination.

**Jaguariaíva:** (/ʒa.gwa.ri.a.'i.və/) the designation of the municipality in Paraná State, Brazil, which is a tongue-twister even for the locals, so don't bother about correct pronunciation.

**Jeitinho:** Brazilian knack. It is a way to improvise a quick solution. When referring about hacking social norms, it appeals to emotions and social influences.

**Mate:** (/ 'ma.tə/) a tea-like herbal bush and the related infusion.

**Multirão:** a group-task or pooling of labor.

**Peasant:** in emic terms *caboclo* or *sertanejo*, which are not without controversy. Thus, to keep the focus, I rendered them as *peasant*.

**Quilombola:** communities – often rural – of descendants of run-away slaves or freedmen.

**Sertão:** (/ser.'tãw/) in general, it refers to hinterlands or backwoods. In this thesis it is a proper noun, the geographical designation for a part of the Jaguariaíva municipality.

**Sítio:** smallholdings roughly from the same size of a *chácara*, but smaller than a *fazenda*.

**Vanerão:** a folk dance and music genre.



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Fax +46 (0) 18 471 70 29 ISSN 1653-2244

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