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Life in a Brazilian Village

By Donald Pierson

— Before one is able to generalize about society with precision it is imperative to study in detail actual societies. Thus urged Professor W. I. Thomas, in a paper read to European and United States colleagues, at St. Louis, in 1912.

This advice has been offered many times by astute scholars, before and after Thomas; but it cannot be urged too often. If it had been adequately heeded, the social myths which have dominated some minds in recent decades, and which have prejudiced not only the development of the social sciences but also the lives of many of us as private citizens — especially when these myths have come to constitute the principal motivating force of political leaders — might instead have been discarded long ago as unproved and unprovable.

To generalize about an entire country, or even about a whole province or state within it, is also quite risky. This fact is particularly apparent, for instance, to persons who know intimately some part of the interior of a huge country like Brazil and have observed there the effects of unrealistic laws enacted by legislators in the capital cities. Although these legislators may have been quite able persons, and they may have been motivated by the loftiest of motives, too often they have known little about life outside the principal cities or about human beings beyond their own circle of acquaintances or class, or they have known little about the actual operation of social processes¹).

These facts suggest some of the practical reasons — there are of course other reasons as far as social theory is concerned — for studying and reporting upon life in all its ecological, economic, political and sociological detail in several and varied localities in any country. Such investigations have been undertaken in Brazil in recent years by several social researchers; and modest investigations of this kind the author and his associates have sought to carry out in five pairs of localities in the valley of the São Francisco²) and, previously, at Cruz das Almas, in the interior of São Paulo state³).

¹) See, for example, Candido Procópio Ferreira de Camargo, «Alguns problemas jurídicos em Xique Xique», *Sociologia* (São Paulo), Vol. XIV, No. 4 (August, 1952), pp. 293—309.

²) See the monographs on life in the São Francisco valley published (or to be published) by Profs. Esdras Borges Costa (*Cerrado e Retiro*, Rio de Janeiro, 1960), Fernando Altenfelder Silva (*Xique Xique e Marrecas*, Rio de Janeiro, 1961), Alceu Maynard Araujo, Levy Cruz, Octavio da Costa Eduardo, Alfonso Trujillo Ferrari, and the present author.

³) See the series of articles which appeared in Portuguese in the journal *Sociologia*, in the years 1950—1953; *Cruz das Almas: A Brazilian Village* (Washington, 1951), a study by the present author, assisted by Carlos Borges Teixeira, Levy Cruz, Mirtes Brandão Lopes, Helen B. Pierson and others; as well as an unpublished manuscript by the author.

I. The Ecological Base

a. The Locality

The village of Cruz das Almas is to be found near the eastern rim of the vast Brazilian highlands, not far from the seacoast at Santos. It lies in a depression between hills, in the midst of what was once a broad plain but which has now been eroded into extensively furrowed, wide-topped hills and uneven valleys.

The climate is that of a subtropical region at about 750 meters altitude: ordinarily healthy and agreeable with a minimum of both heat and cold. Rainfall is usually adequate during the growing season, although occasionally crops may be in need of moisture during a relatively brief period of drought. The soil, in general, is fertile. The principal disadvantage of the terrain for an agricultural people is that planting must often be done on hillsides, the slopes of which at times become quite steep⁴).

Although, in comparatively recent years, most of the mata, or virgin forest, with its tangled mass of underbrush and vines, has been almost entirely cleared away, a few patches and an occasional larger area are still uncut, especially along the river which borders the community to the east, to the north and to the west. This remaining mata is a source of firewood, lumber, bamboo, and *cipó*, as well as of game, wild fruits, and plants for medicinal or magical purposes. There is also a relative abundance of fish in the river.

b. The Inhabitants

The *distrito* of which the village is the center and which roughly defines the local community, has a population of approximately 2,700. About 9 percent, or 331 persons, live in the village itself and the remainder live on surrounding farms.

The local habitat has long been shared by individuals derived from the three basic human races. When, sometime in the late sixteenth century, the first Portuguese came into this area, they found in it indigenous Indians, and subsequently many Indians from other regions were imported into the community to serve as slaves and retainers. For the community was once a point of departure for several of the famed bandeirantes, those intrepid voyagers who explored vast areas of the South American Continent, discovering quantities of gold, silver, and diamonds, and trafficking in Indian slaves. Sometime after the Portuguese began to settle in the area, the first Africans were imported; and, in comparatively recent years, a limited number of Europeans from countries other than Portugal, especially from Italy and Spain, and also a few Japanese, have migrated to the area.

Merely casual observation of the present population reveals quite clearly the operation over a considerable period of time of the process of miscegenation. The Indian, as a biological unit, has now been completely, or almost completely, absorbed; and the African appears to be well on the way to eventual absorption. In the physical characteristics of many individuals who are predominantly white, however, there are observable slight, moderate, or even quite obvious evidences of Indian or African descent. In general, the Indian contribution has been considerably greater than the African.

⁴) See the photograph reproduced in Cruz das Almas: A Brazilian Village, plate 10, f.

The present local inhabitants, nevertheless, are predominantly European in origin. The number of persons who are not only considered «white» by their associates but who also are predominantly Caucasoide by anthropological criteria, are clearly in the majority. In skin color, in hair texture, and in the formation of lips and nose, many individuals give evidence of European origin alone. No person in the community appears to be of pure Indian descent; and the number of persons who appear to be of relatively pure African origin is small.

The population appears, on the whole, to be biologically vigorous and resistant. The rates of fertility and of natural increase are relatively high; as, similarly, are those of infant mortality, its origin, however, being due rather to inadequate nutrition, infant hygiene, and medical care, than to any general biologic weakness.

The inhabitants of this community constitute a portion of the large rural population of a still predominantly rural country. In many ways they resemble other non-urban inhabitants of the vast areas which lie between the eastern seacoast and the westernmost point of settlement, known by various names in different parts of the country, all of which emphasize their rural and largely non-literate character. In the area under study, they are called «caipiras»⁵).

c. The Struggle for Life

The simplest technique employed by local inhabitants in the «struggle for existence» is the collection of those resources which are furnished by the habitat, like clay for building houses, tucum fiber for making fish lines, cipó to use as twine or rope, and fish, *içá* and wild fruits for food. The principal means of supplying basic needs, however, has long been agriculture and the raising of a limited number of domestic animals. The primary crop is maize, although there are also grown, in varying amounts, beans, rice, sugarcane, potatoes, sweet potatoes, manioc, onions, peanuts, and a few oranges, bananas, and vegetables.

Since most farms are quite small, the work on them usually is done by the farmer and his family, although some help may be hired, especially to prepare new land or to harvest a crop. Almost all the labor of planting, cultivating, and harvesting is human labor, although a horse, a mule, or a burro may occasionally be used, especially to pull heavy objects. The principal tool is the hoe. It is not only used by every farmer in the community but is probably used on all farms more often than any other tool and, on a few of the smaller farms, more often than all other tools combined. At the time of our research a decline was observable in agricultural production, which was being at least partially offset by a rise in cattle raising and dairying⁶).

The principal opposition to the local inhabitants in their «struggle for existence» comes from a number of noxious insects. Especially prejudicial are the *saúva* ant and the *berneira* fly: the former to plants, the latter to livestock. Poisonous snakes, scorpions, and a poisonous species of spider must also be dealt with.

⁵) See «Caipira versus cidadão», pp. 107—112 de Cruz das Almas: A Brazilian Village, regarding the meaning of the term «caipira» in this area.

⁶) See «Decline of Agriculture», *ibid.*, pp. 71—75.

Basketry is the principal handicraft, crude but strong and serviceable baskets being produced from the native bamboo. Mats are woven from cat-tail stems and crude brooms are made from a plant known locally as «vassoura» or «vassoureiro» (*Baccharis*). Only one person (a woman) makes pottery. Tanning is limited to the hides of animals taken in the hunt, especially the wild pig, capivara, and deer, and a few domestic animals like the goat and an occasional sheep; and it is almost entirely for home use. The spinning and weaving of textiles, once important local activities, are no longer engaged in, the products of power looms, either national or foreign, having entirely replaced these manual arts. Perhaps a third of the women know how to sew. A few women and girls do embroidery work and some know how to crochet. One woman occasionally knits garments for her neighbors, for pay. Other manufacturing processes include the grinding of maize by water power; the preparation, principally for home consumption, of brown sugar and of small quantities of bricks, charcoal, and rum; and the making of rockets and other fireworks used in connection with local religious or secular festas.

Specialization, except that which is identified with the sex division, is little developed in the community. The men work in the fields, hunt, fish, and otherwise provide for their families. The women prepare the meals, look after the children, wash dishes and clothes, sweep the house and yard, carry in water, gather firewood, and otherwise take care of the home and the members of the family. When especially needed, they may also work in the fields.

Nearly all men, whether living on farms or in the village, work only on the land. A few men, however, in addition to producing food, add to their slender incomes by part-time employments like carpentry, basketry, barbering, grinding maize, and making brown sugar or rum; or by serving as mail carrier, gravedigger, *fogueteiro*, or village official. A few men at the time of our research were also employed in opening a quarry. There were three storekeepers in the village and two other men kept *botequins*. The only sacred specialist who gave full time to his employment was the priest, although the *capelão*, the village bell ringer, the *leiloeiro*, the acolytes, and the patronesses also assisted in the rituals of religious ceremonies. Each of the «blessers» and *curandeiros* had other and more usual employment. There were two school teachers; and five other women acted, with greater frequency than their associates, as midwives. There was no physician, nurse, dentist, or pharmacist in the community, the nearest specialist of this kind being in the neighboring towns of Boa Vista and Piracema, several kilometers away.

The staple foods used in the community are beans, rice, and maize. The time of meals is regulated more by the demands of hunger than by the clock. *Café*, prepared according to the method prevalent in Brasil, is a favorite and universal drink. «*Pinga*», the local rum, is the principal alcoholic beverage and is extensively used.

Houses, both in the village and on the farms, are made of wattle-and-daub or brick. Some of the former have been calcimined. Furniture is usually scanty and either home-made or of cheap manufacture. All families in the village and on the farms use firewood for cooking. In most cases, the supply is gathered from day to day in a nearby patch of timber, usually by the women and children.

Men commonly wear light cotton shirts and cotton trousers. Except on the colder days or upon special occasions, coats are seldom used. Women usually wear light cotton

print dresses. Men rarely go barefoot, a practice which is rather common among the women, both on the farms and in the village. The clothing worn by the children is similar to that of the parents. With the exception of earrings, which are worn by almost all women when dressed for a visit, Mass, or festa, few ornaments are used.

When they come to the village to make purchases, visit friends, or attend Mass and other religious or secular ceremonies, many farmers and their wives and children walk. Some of these journeys on foot are made from as far away as 19 kilometers. Men and boys, but rarely women or girls, occasionally ride a horse, mule, or burro, if they own one of these animals and especially if they live a considerable distance away from the village. A few families use light carts.

The principal means for transporting heavy objects used to be the oxcart and the pack train. With the introduction of the truck about 40 years ago, however, these means of transport began to disappear and they are now virtually gone. At the time of our research, the administrator of the *fazenda* which lies at the edge of the village had a truck, as also did one of the storekeepers, and each of two other men in the village, one of whom was engaged in hauling firewood to the nearby railway and the other of whom worked at the quarry then being opened.

At the time this study began, and for some time thereafter, researchers traveled to the village on horseback or in a cart from the nearest station on the railway. During the period of our research, however, local inhabitants organized a bus line⁷⁾, with regular service to the two nearest towns, one to either side of the village. Travel is limited largely to visiting neighboring towns to make an occasional purchase not possible in the village, to visit relatives and friends, to attend a special religious or secular festa, or to make a pilgrimage. Several villagers and other persons living on farms, especially the women and girls, seldom or never go outside the local community.

Most inhabitants live near the minimum subsistence level. Such property as they own is almost entirely in tangibles like land, houses and other buildings, livestock, and personal belongings. In their contacts with the outer world, they participate in a money economy. Inside the community, however, barter is still employed, at least to some extent. Practically the only means of credit is that extended to farmers and villagers by local storekeepers for purchases at their stores.

II. Solidarity and Social Control

a. Assimilation

Since shortly after the appearance of the Portuguese, not only ecological, but also economic and political dominance have been exercised by Europeans and their descendants. Both the Indians and the Africans have been assimilated; and, first the Indian cultures, and then the African, have gradually disappeared, until today the most diligent and persistent research can turn up only a few vestiges of either Indian or African cultural forms.

The present local society is strong and vigorous. It is capable alike of the ready assimilation of desirable new elements, as well as the positive and uncompromising

⁷⁾ An event accorded ceremonial sanction. See *ibid.*, pp. 104—106.

expulsion of undesirable elements⁸). Since the number of incoming migrants is small, their incorporation into the local group is readily accomplished and the change which they bring is correspondingly limited. At the same time, the local social organism is so tenacious that it might be expected to incorporate into itself a considerable number of new elements without suffering appreciable alteration.

Whether the new element will be assimilated or cast out depends largely upon 1) the attitudes and 2) the social and personal characteristics of the newcomer. Local inhabitants are self-respecting; they are proud of their village and community. If it is evident that the newcomer possesses those personal characteristics which are encouraged in the community — such as modesty, sincerity, friendliness, ability to get on with others, and willingness to work hard —, and he also gives positive evidence that he likes the village and the people among whom he has come to live, he is apt to be rather readily accepted. If, on the other hand, he lacks these personal characteristics, or if he indicates by any act, or speech or other gesture, that he holds any unfavorable attitudes toward the village and its inhabitants, the social organism will contract and leave him isolated on the outside. And if this disparagement of local residents and their community be pronounced or continued over a considerable period of time, he may find himself not only under social disapproval but actually expelled from the group. To dislike and condemnation may even be added physical violence. It would seem that the cohesion of the parts of this social organism is so great, and the primary relations which produce this cohesion are so intimate and so demanding, that there can be no middle course; either the new element is absorbed, or it is expelled.

b. Competition and Conflict

No competition or conflict of a racial, national, or class form exists anywhere in the community. Conflict occasionally emerges, however, out of competition between individuals within families regarding the inheritance of property. One's person is inviolate: to touch another individual, except in keeping with the local etiquette, is always resented; and, if done in anger, is a mortal offense. A serious affront is never forgiven nor forgotten. «Dar satisfação» to a person who has been inconvenienced in any way by one's act or omission is an imperative consideration if future relations are to be cordial.

Political differences quite often lead to contention. In fact, politics is probably the principal divisive force in the community. No small part of the thought of the older persons, especially of the men, is given over to the discussion of political personalities and events. Although the intensity of this interest varies from time to time, it is never at low ebb, and periodically — especially preceding, during, and immediately following an election —, it may build up to a point where violence results from comparatively small incidents.

Rivalry in fishing and hunting exploits, in card playing, in the drinking of rum, in the effective use of speech and other gestures, and in the development of those personal and social characteristics which are expected of the individual and which carry prestige, is a common characteristic of life in the community.

⁸) For an interesting illustration of this fact, see *ibid.*, pp. 197—199.

c. Family and Godparent Relations

Individuals are bound together in families with tenacious bonds of belonging, affection, and obligation which, by way also of inter-family marriage and the godparent system, are extended virtually throughout the entire community. In fact, the community itself takes on to some extent at least the characteristics of a large, «extended»⁹⁾ family.

In most cases, the immediate household is composed merely of a man, his wife, and their children. In many cases, however, an aunt, an uncle, a grandmother, or a grandfather also lives in the household. A few families are «joint families»¹⁰⁾, three generations sometimes living together on the same farm, in two or three houses built close together, although this arrangement is rare. The family is ordinarily consanguineous. Occasionally, however, a godchild or other foster child may be reared in the family as an integral part of it. Relations between members of the family are ordinarily intimate and sentimental. Organization is of the «patriarchal» type, the dominant status and authority of the husband and father being relatively unquestioned. Kinship is reckoned in keeping with European patterns and the terminology employed in this connection also is European.

Among the primary mechanisms of solidarity, as has been indicated, are the relations developed within the godparent system, still a virile institution in this community. Every child at baptism has a godfather and a godmother selected for him by his parents. He is ever after bound to these godparents and they to him by special bonds of obligation. At the same time, his parents are equally bound to the godparents, a fact which is symbolized by the term used when parents and godparents address each other: it is «compadre» (or «comadre»); literally, cofather (or comother). The use of this term becomes so habitual that in most cases it supplants given names or the more common nicknames and, if the compadres are also relatives, even kinship terms.

d. Ritual, Ceremony and Belief

Rituals and ceremonies of a religious character play a prominent part in collective thought and behavior. Those which are performed in the village church, in the various chapels which are scattered about the community, and in private homes are primarily Roman Catholic in derivation, as also are the dominant religious beliefs. One observes in these rituals and ceremonies, however, especially those held in wayside chapels and in private homes without the attendance of a priest, as well as in the general body of belief of almost all persons in the community, numerous elements of folk derivation. Belief in the *santos*, for instance, is extensively encrusted with folk elements, as similarly is belief in the *almas*, *promessas* (or vows), and certain rituals of the various *festas*.

Although the conceptions regarding the *santos* which are propagated in the community by the priest and other ecclesiastical functionaries, vary in no essential detail from the official conceptions of the Roman Catholic Church, the corresponding behavior on the part of most local persons varies considerably with reference to both the *santos* and the image used to represent the *santo*. Although, when specifically asked regarding the matter, most persons will distinguish between the image on the one hand, and the

⁹⁾ See Ralph Linton, *O Homen* (Brazilian edition: São Paulo, 1943).

¹⁰⁾ See *ibid.*, p. 212.

santo on the other, there is a rather generalized tendency to act as if image and santo were identical. Maria and Jesus are almost universally thought of in the community as santos of the same category as Santa Terezinha, São Benedito or Santo Antonio. There is also a rather generalized tendency among local persons to act as if the various representations of Maria, such as Nossa Senhora de Conceição, Nossa Senhora de Piedade, Nossa Senhora do Bom Parto, Nossa Senhora da Aparecidinha, etc., were each identified with a separate and distinct being. The folk tendency is to consider the primary function of a santo to be that of aiding a person in obtaining something which he desires. With few exceptions, local prayers addressed to the santos have this objective.

The principal festas of a religious character which are held annually in the village are those of Holy Week, and those dedicated to the patron santo of the village, to the Santa Cruz, to São Benedito, São José, Santo Antonio, São Pedro and São João. Two important festas are also held each year in the nearby countryside: one at the chapel of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, a «santa» thought locally to be especially efficacious in bringing rain; and the other at the chapel near the river to the north of the village, dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Aparecidinha. In addition, local inhabitants participate each year in two important festas outside the community: that of São Bom Jesus de Pirapora, which draws celebrants to the town of Pirapora from all over the region¹¹), as well as the festa of São Roque, which is held in the town of that name; and occasionally a pilgrimage is made to the shrine of Nossa Senhora de Aparecidinha, the patron saint of Brasil, some 250 kilometres from the village.

At times of personal crisis, especially upon the occasion of a severe illness or accident, a promessa is often made to a santo, the person in question promising that if he, or other afflicted person, is brought safely through the crisis in question, a specified act will be performed in honor of the santo. This may be either the only means employed to deal with the crisis or merely a further precaution, in addition to employing folk remedies, seeking the aid of a «blesser», a curandeiro, or, in rare cases, a physician. If the individual obtains that for which he has asked, the subsequent fulfillment of the promessa is considered imperative; if it is not fulfilled within what is thought under the circumstances to be a «reasonable» period of time, the individual may expect chastisement by the santo.

A limited amount of skepticism exists in the community with reference to the ideas and practices associated with Catholic ritual and belief, as well as with reference to other phenomena of the invisible world. This limited amount of skepticism would appear to be more extensive in the younger generation, especially among the young men and to be least extensive among the older inhabitants. It is more extensive among men than women, a fact probably due to the greater mobility of the men and consequent wider range of contacts¹²).

Skepticism, however, is neither widespread in the community nor is it intense in any given individual. In fact, in proportion to the total body of belief, it is rare and

¹¹) See Mario Wagner Vieira da Cunha, «Descrição da festa de Bom Jesus de Pirapora», Revista do Arquivo Municipal, São Paulo, Vol. 41 (nov. 1937), pp. 5—36.

¹²) See Donald Pierson, «Isolamento e Contato», Teoria e pesquisa em Sociologia (4ª edição, São Paulo, 1955), pp. 147—166.

the skeptic is anormal. Doubts that exist are never reflected in active hostility. A characteristic attitude in this connection is reflected in the statement, «Num creio, mais num abuso» (I do not believe, but neither do I scoff).

Into a community where for many generations only Catholic ritual, ceremony, and belief had been known, the comparatively recent coming of three new and, to local inhabitants, strange Protestant sects has introduced a measure of strain and tension. Attitudes with reference to these new rituals and beliefs vary from active opposition to a willingness to accept them as one's own. The predominant attitudes in this respect, however, are those of nonacceptance but tolerance.

e. Status and Prestige

Age is a primary determinant of status. Parents always have greater prestige than their children, even if the latter are grown. The personal characteristics of the individual are also primary determinants of status, those most admired being, as has been indicated, modesty, sincerity, willingness to work hard, and the ability to get along with other people. Occupational competence, economic condition and the status of one's own family are also important considerations. Status is little, if at all, determined in this community by racial descent; and only slightly by color¹³).

The position of woman is definitely inferior to that of man, a condition which attaches to a girl even before birth. Woman's role, almost without exception, is exercised within and as a part of the family; and it is from her activity here that her status, almost entirely, is obtained. In all matters she is subject to her husband's wishes and is expected to be obedient and submissive, a condition universally exacted by the mores and accepted as a pattern, almost without exception, by the women.

The formal character of this status and role, however, is continually being undermined by the attitudes and sentiments which normally develop out of intimate, personal relations, anywhere in the world. Sympathy, affection, gratitude, respect, and admiration often come to be felt by a man for his wife, his mother, daughter, or sister, an aunt, or a grandmother. At the same time, a woman who satisfies well the demands of her role may enjoy considerable prestige.

Leadership in the community is exercised in hunting and fishing activities, in the Masses, prayer meetings, processions and other religious ceremonies, in planning and carrying through secular festas and in the formation of public opinion, especially in connection with political activities.

f. Stability and Social Change

By reason of the comparative isolation which has long been characteristic of this community, social change has been minimal. Since the gradual solidification of the present moral order during the early years of the colonial period, the limited number of ideas and attitudes brought in from the outside have in most cases come from neighboring communities where both the society and the culture are quite similar. Although economically and politically local inhabitants are being more and more drawn into the

¹³) See the concrete facts upon which this statement is based, in *Cruz das Almas: A Brazilian Village*, pp. 190—191.

larger national society, they are still to a considerable extent culturally isolated from the influence of the large cities and their developing industrial order. Consequently, little «strain for consistency»¹⁴⁾ has been injected into the local mores, and life has tended to go on much as in the past. Consequently, evidences of social disorganization, such as crime and juvenile delinquency, scarcely exist¹⁵⁾. The population, as has been indicated, is relatively homogeneous and stable. Mobility is minimal and limited largely to movement *out* of the community rather than into it, so that the social organization suffers little disturbance from without. Literacy is also limited. The society is based largely upon kinship, *compadrio*, and status relations; and there is little movement from one status or role to another. Contacts are almost exclusively «primary»¹⁶⁾. Interpersonal relations are informal, intimate, intense, sentimental, relatively permanent, and an end in themselves.

Individuals tend to meet one another at most, if not all, points in their lives. To a considerable extent, experiences are thus common and shared, so that attitudes, ideas, and sentiments, and the «mental worlds» into which they enter, vary little throughout the community. Customs ordinarily have the weight of many years of repetition behind them; they are relatively uniform and crystallized into patterns known and, in general, accepted by all persons. The culture thus has a high degree of equilibrium and stability and channels pretty largely the habits of each individual. Institutions are homogeneous and hence support and reinforce each other. As is therefore to be expected, there is a maximum of personal accommodation, a minimum of change in the habits of the individual during his lifetime and consequently a minimum of individualization and personal disorganization.

The development of the means of transportation and communication in this region during recent years, however, is beginning to break down the former isolation. The community has been feeling more and more the impingement of the metropolitan market of São Paulo; and it is also beginning to feel the impact of ideas, attitudes, and sentiments characteristic of that metropolitan center. It is therefore probable that in the not distant future the community will experience a rather decided alteration in the manner of its living and that the rate of change will progressively increase.

Meanwhile, however, in this rural and relatively homogeneous society, the behavior of the individual is under rather effective control. Prescribed conduct, as has been indicated, is clearly defined and rather generally accepted. The comparative absence of alternatives of behavior among which the developing child is forced to choose, makes the unfolding of personality a relatively simple process.

Although this control is rigid, it is seldom, if ever, felt to be onerous, since it is exercised subtly, by way of attitudes taken over, in a spontaneous and largely unwitting fashion, early in the life of the child. Rather naturally, and with a minimum of self-consciousness, his behavior comes to be channelized by the etiquette, ritual, and cere-

¹⁴⁾ See William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Brazilian edition: São Paulo, 1950).

¹⁵⁾ A verification of the sociological fact that social disorganization is an effect, and may serve as an index, of social change.

¹⁶⁾ See «Contatos primários e contatos secundários», *Teoria e pesquisa*, 4ª edição, pp. 156—158, 163—164.

mony in which he participates; and by the accumulated body of common experiences, dogma, myth, and legend which, in the course of time, come to form, almost as if they had been absorbed with the air he breathes, the major portion of his «mental world».

With few exceptions, then, the mechanisms of this control are elementary in character¹⁷). Rapport with parent, sibling, or other relative or companion, with spouse, or other friend, in which suggestion operates spontaneously and automatically, is perhaps the most powerful and effective of these mechanisms. Especially is this true when rapport is reenforced by prestige. The more conscious influence of public opinion, in the formation of which certain issues are debated, and of law with its formalized mechanisms of control, play a reduced role in both child and adult experience. Gossip is also an effective means of control, although, because it is less spontaneous and unwitting, its action is less immediate than those of rapport, suggestion, and prestige. The effectiveness of these means of control is considerably increased by the circumstance that everyone knows personally almost everyone else.

¹⁷) See «Elementary forms of social control», Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago, 1926), pp. 788—791.

