

FAMILY AND COMPANIONSHIP: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTIVE AND WELFARE SOCIAL RELATIONS IN BELÉM IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.037-178>**Ana Maria Maciel Corrêa¹.****ABSTRACT**

This text is based on the socio-historical approach regarding the value of family life established by marital relations and godparenthood, understood as spiritual kinship. As references sedimented by the relations between individuals and groups in the society of Pará in the Belle Époque. Historical context constructing and affirming social networks between groups located horizontally and/or vertically. Social places of reaffirmation of power and dominance, as well as of dependence and subordination. Social relations are mediated by the practices or obligations of “giving, receiving, and reciprocating” the gifts received. A relational system is very present in the Brazilian coronel system. In this context, family life as an interactive social space reveals the social plots and networks in the social, political, and economic spheres, which guide obligations between peers and other social groups through protective and welfare actions present in family and godparenthood relations. The text is based on analyses by Brazilian historians, sociologists, and researchers from Pará who substantiate the problematization and understanding of Brazilian and Pará society.

Keywords: Family. Patronage. Protective Relationships.

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INTRODUCTION

Since colonial times, the family has played a fundamental role in the organization of Brazilian society. Conceived as an expanded social group and endowed with a social identification constructed and defined by relationships intertwined with other social groups.

A process of social construction and identification that is structured as an ordering parameter of a prominent social representation in the surrounding society, as it constitutes a dynamic field and builder of networks and webs of social, economic, and political significance. This points to a dialectical relationship of affirmation, inclusion, or exclusion of family groups based on the establishment of articulations that organize and sediment networks of social relationships, affirming dominance and subordination. Social differentiation becomes a founding element of social contradictions and a determinant of relational and social positions as power relations. A contradictory context formed by distinct groups that position themselves based on family relationships imbued with value and morality. A hierarchically structured organization permeated by relationships of rights and duties in which reciprocity involves relationships of consanguinity and compadres. A system of solidarity that places people and groups in mutual obligations. Reciprocity is a symbolic basis for protection, morality, and ways of life. In a scenario in which the family reveals and is revealing of the social place in which it is inserted, of the senses and meanings that demarcate its representation as an important space in society.

An important social issue, considering that this social conformation found fertile ground in the structural bases of Brazilian and Pará society. Structure-based on agrarianism and ruralism, then promoters of processes of social insertion and ascension, even in an extremely hierarchical and unequal context, mediated by relations of reciprocity and solidarity that link people and groups in relations of reciprocal obligations. In other words, traditional structural bases organize a patriarchal society.

The large estates, in this context, function as the determining pole of all relations between people, groups, and the land; consequently, its possession became synonymous with prestige and power, determining in this period of Brazilian history, (with) eminently feudal characteristics, to the extent that it presented itself as “a patriarchal (and patrimonial) society” (CORREA, 1982, p.7)

In this understanding, Guimarães (1981) points out that the latifundium became a central aspect in sociohistorical studies regarding Brazilian society. Becoming a driving and fundamental cause in the economy and national political life. Therefore, large extensions of land became private property and a reference for the power of large landowners. A colonial legacy that instituted the “feudalization” of the land. In this territoriality, the recognized power of the lord over free people. In the Republic, large landowners took on the social,



economic, and political position, as holders of the rank of Colonels. Which assured them of coercive actions over other large landowners and their residents.

This text refers to the initial study “Favoritism as a dominant trait in northeastern society during the Old Republic”. Corresponding to the final course work (TCC) in a Bachelor's Degree in History; UFPA, 1982. As a guiding question for understanding the socio-historical reality of Brazilian society throughout the Old Republic. This is an analysis based on the coronel system from the perspective of the exchange of favors that were so striking and decisive in the northeastern reality. With the support of historians who studied the coronel system and the role of family relationships and cronyism. The study was based on research and studies by great Brazilian historians and sociologists, such as JANOTTI (1981), FAORO (1977), GUIMARÃES (1981), and the sociologists, GOLDEMANN (1972), and MAUSS (1974). As theoretical and methodological guidelines for the construction of the enunciative question that guided the entire academic construction process.

The update of this initial study was guided by studies already initiated and through new studies regarding the research object and was directed towards studies and research by professors and historians who center their investigations on the city of Belém-Pará. Highlighting the research by professor Cristina Donza Cancela that addresses Marriage and Family Relations in Belém do Pará in the period (1870-1920), and by researcher Daniel Barroso: Marriage and Compadrio in Belém in the mid-nineteenth century. (2012), as well as initial studies by Izabel Augusto (2005). Important reference works for localized and very recent perception, which correspond to the locus of updating and temporality. They are important references for the resumption of this theme in its specificity regarding protective and welfare relationships within the scope of “giving, receiving, and reciprocating” relationships as social conditioning under the understanding of concepts worked by Marcel Mauss in the field of sociology and anthropology (1974). Contributions brought by the concept of DOM and COUNTER-DOM and the counter-DOM as behaviors that guide protective social relationships between subjects and groups in a given community are especially very present in the Brazilian and Pará scenarios.

This text brings the understanding regarding family relationships, especially relationships of compadres, which materialize through practices inserted in the protectionist context because they give rise to the search for social security at a historical moment in which the Brazilian State did not prioritize the political-social commitment to the popular classes.

A social reality that gave rise to social relationships mediated by benefits and reciprocity in the context of the extended family, especially between compadres.



Relationships established between socially distinct groups. An important aspect observed by Souza (1981) in his studies on vertical relationships within the family environment, especially in relationships of cronyism. In this scenario, the godfather is placed in the place of the “powerful, the richest (who) patronizes the subordinates, the poorest (...) A dominant relationship in Brazilian patriarchal society.” (SOUZA, 1981, p.29)

In this context, considering that the network of cronyism was the guarantee of the social, economic, and political power of the farmers, and when they were legally invested with the rank of colonels, they incorporated the power of the militia, as a step towards accessing a new social position, that of political godfather, seen then as having greater powers to resolve emergency and personal situations. Thus, having under their control a stronghold of different groups that, given the favors received, ally themselves with the colonels in their ventures, in the political sphere with full support through the “voto de cabresto” (vote of halter) as a reward for the benefits of the crony colonels. In this scenario, the establishment of the coronel system in Brazilian politics, because in addition to land ownership, the support of relatives and the loyalty of numerous cronies guaranteed local power in Brazilian politics. (IDEM, page 33)

This text updates the initial text by problematizing family and cronies relations in the city of Belém-Pará, in times of Belle Époque. In the transition from the 19th century to the 20th century. Considering that academic research is located in the temporality of the 19th century extending to the 1930s. A temporality corresponding to the Old Republic. Studies that clarify the family context of Belém amidst tradition and the changes arising from local economic and political transformations.

THE BRAZILIAN FAMILY CONTEXT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTIVE SOCIAL RELATIONS

The constitution of the family in Brazil is subject to the approval of the Catholic Church, which legitimizes it through marriage through a marriage bond and through spiritual kinship arising from godparenthood, which “softens” the relationships strengthened by consanguinity, as “quasi-relatives”. Marriage and baptism have become articulating elements of sociocultural relations since colonial times. The family became the center that radiated consanguinity and solidarity ties as pillars that underpin family relations. Religious rites endorsed the structuring of an extended family, a social space for the administration of the religious rites of marriage and baptism as rituals that determine “being” and “belonging” to a family. This family concept persisted in the following centuries. The family is understood as a social organization formed by the master and his legitimate offspring and extended by



the kinship formed by godparents, godmothers, godchildren, friends, dependents, servants, exposed people, and slaves. In this extended family context, godparenthood is established beyond the bonds of friendship by becoming a space for social coexistence and inclusion of godparents and godchildren in the family of natural relatives. A network of lifelong alliances is established between godparents and godchildren through relationships of reciprocity and support, especially in times of difficulty. This network of alliance and protection has been confirmed by research on the subject of family and godparenthood, which has proven that the subsistence of many godchildren was guaranteed by their godparents and relatives.

In the patrimonial and patriarchal Brazilian society, the dominance and power of command were in the hands of the master, the head of a large family. The issue of protection, security, and the resolution of life's difficulties is assumed by adult individuals, the male heads of families, seen as social actors who are protagonists of social relations, with the power to ensure protection, insertion, and social advancement. Catholic cronyism, so present in Portuguese families, The godfather, the godfather of slaves, freed slaves, and free populations, became an institution that promoted protection, care, and affection. Among the captives, it was a condition of liberation and assistance in times of illness and difficulties in life. In all social classes, the godfather assumes the role of “benefactor”, “protector” and “guardian” of his godchildren.

FROM THE ORIGINS TO THE INSTITUTION OF THE GODFOOD IN BRAZIL

The godfather is directly linked to the actions of the early Catholic Church, with similarities to the characteristics of the Roman clientele and feudal society. Clientelistic relationships were associated with the process of social inequality present in these societies. The clients, socially excluded classes, who, in seeking protection and subsistence, became “clients” with the aristocratic classes. In search of protection, they became loyal followers, available for this protection and dominion of their aristocratic “lord”, who should repay them with obedience, submission, respect, and provision of services in exchange for remuneration, donations, and assistance. In ancient times, the Church was governed by Roman Law, which in the absence of direct descendants assured the right of inheritance to neighbors, however, this condition was abolished in the 6th century. This contributed to the increase in the Church's assets.

Regarding clientelism, SOUZA (1981) notes in his research that there was a pious relationship between patron and client that involved relations of reciprocity, in exchange for



the assured protection that was given through the client's performance of duties. Among them, daily visits to their masters.

The most arrogant bosses demanded that their clients kneel before them and, once they were close, kiss their chest or right hand (...) which would have given rise to the custom of the godson asking for the godfather's blessing. (SOUZA, 1981, p. 20)

The bosses were obliged to pay in cash or food, as well as invite their clients to sit at the table, in recognition of the services rendered. This demonstrated a certain closeness in the relationships established. These social relationships became widespread, becoming a distinctive element and marker of social status in Roman society. With the barbarian invasions and the reorganization of the Roman territory, changes were observed in the cultural sphere and matters related to property and inheritance law. A ninth right was instituted that guaranteed economic and social stability to vassals and their relatives by guaranteeing the right of inheritance to their relatives. This will contribute to the preservation of their territorial domains by not fragmenting their lands and thus maintaining large feudal areas.

The social order of medieval society was based on protectionist and welfare standards, becoming a reference for the creation of godparenthood by the early Catholic Church. The protectionist and welfare parameters will become a reference for the creation of the godparenthood of baptism created by Pope Saint Hyginus (138-141) with a protective function to be assumed by godparents about their godchildren.

Initially, parents were the godparents of their children because they were considered exceptional at the time of baptism. However, the reality of orphaned children and the fact that godparenthood establishes a kinship relationship between godparents, godparents, and godchildren will encourage godparenthood beyond the parents. It will even be forbidden for parents to godparent their children because spiritual kinship makes sexual relations between parents as godparents illicit. This prohibition became universal at the Council of Trent in 615.

In Medieval Society, the number of godparents was expanded as a way of reducing conflicts, confrontations and wars between fiefdoms. Since godparenthood was seen as an effective means of reinforcing loyalty between vassals and suzerains, choosing nobles or wealthy bourgeoisie as godparents guaranteed material advantages for their children. With the weakening of the State, the family became the basic cell of society and the relationship established by godparenthood began to be characterized as a relationship of spiritual kinship between godparents.

In the period from the 9th century to approximately the 16th century, medieval society was consolidated and the Catholic Church played a decisive role in organizing and maintaining the European Feudal system. Feudalism, as a system of order based on the possession and production of land, gave the lords who owned it an effective social,



economic and political position over other social groups. Each fiefdom brought together several social classes that overlapped one another, in a hierarchical logical, and harmonious structure. Between the suzerains and their vassals there were reciprocal rights and duties based on fidelity and formally assumed commitments.

In modern times, the Council of Trent (1545-63) passed to establish rules on godparenthood as the basis and guiding axis of security in social life at the beginning of the colonization of Brazilian society. At baptism, each individual was to be given the name of a saint so that he or she would have a protector in heaven. The local community was to have a patron saint, a protective saint who would intercede for everyone. Each individual was to have godparents as second parents, to whom he or she could turn in times of difficulty or in the absence of his or her parent. Under the ideal of protection, godparenthood expanded to reach later generations and remained dominant, especially in regions marked by the vulnerability of the poorest classes. In this system, favoritism was used as a way of maintaining the relationships of dependence of the lower classes on the local powers.

BRAZILIAN SOCIETY UNDER THE ORGANIZING VIEW OF RELATIONS OF COMPADRES

The solemn institution of compadrio in Brazil occurred in the mass held by Father Serafim Leite on the Island of Itaparica on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14, 1561. On this occasion, the Ouvidor Geral became the godfather of all baptized Indigenous people, with the protectionist model of compadrio. Characterized as a vertical relationship in which the socially powerful, politically, sponsors the subordinates and the excluded

For OLIVEIRA VIANA (1949), compadrio is:

[...] more than consanguinity, the most fruitful source of family solidarity [...] it constitutes a kind of ideological and spiritual kinship, because of its religious nature; but by the strength of the dominant precepts in our hinterland institutions [...] it creates interpersonal bonds as strong as those of blood itself. (VIANA, 1949, p.2630)

In the colonial context, godparenthood was common among the population of households and the patriarchal family. Women who were mothers of children from illicit relationships sought the sponsorship of landowners as a guarantee of help and protection for their children. In the case of the free population, having a sugar mill owner, a captain-major, a colonel, or a baron as a godfather represented a condition of distinction or dignity for the godchildren and their parents, even if they were positioned at a “lower” social level than the chosen godfather.



In Brazilian society, positions are determined in terms of “possessions” and are redefined by the privileges and power arising from this position. Ownership of “goods” becomes a discriminatory and/or affirmative element of social classes, classifying and positioning them in this social scenario as rich, poor, included, or excluded. “Possession” is a reference point for social inequalities and establishing relations of dominance and subordination. Considering that the acquisition of economic assets implies prestige, power, and authority over the hierarchically “inferior” classes, economic power will ensure that individuals and groups dominate other areas of society.

Prestige and power are determinants of social relations that articulate a process of reciprocity, although without achieving a balance since the dominant group imposes itself and becomes accepted with a certain legitimacy, and actions of control and influence are recognized and consented to by society through the use of control, subjugation, and manipulation of the popular classes.

In societies where there is traditional domination based on a patriarchal or patrimonial system, the power of influence is personal, since the separation between the private and public spheres is ignored. In this type of society, it is worth noting that the family and alliance groups constitute central nuclei, in which degrees of interdependence are established based on commitments and reciprocity. It is clear in this social structure that the group that obeys submits to individuals and groups with economic and political autonomy.

Brazilian society, at this time traditional, relationships in the family context will be “clientelist” based on the obligation to give and receive, to return a favor received. Thus, from the colonial period until the first twenty years of the Republic, our society has presented a social organization based on a traditional structure, both patriarchal and patrimonial, arising from an economy centered on agricultural activity, as the pillar of social organization.

Latifundia functioned as a determining pole of all relationships between individuals and groups. A relationship with the power of coercion influences the determination of roles and positions between unequal people and groups. The protection offered by one group and the loyalty and services provided by other groups determine the dialectical context of clientelist reciprocity. An unequal context in which reciprocal relationships originated and maintained extended family, the locus of family relationships and compadres. Relationships that brought together and solidified family ties. In northeastern society, the figure of the colonel appears as the controlling element of these relationships, to the extent that the establishment of the solidarity network takes place in a hierarchical context that maintains political control and the subordination of popular groups. In a relationship based on the logic



of reciprocity through a tacit contract of obligations in which one offer always corresponds to another offer.

Crony will become an essential institution in the political history of the Northeast by defining the social status of equals and the integration of unequal. In this society, favors become responsible for the expansion and solidification of the power of the coronel. A power measured by the ability to provide favors, since their privileges were related to a series of obligations to be provided to their dependents. In coronelismo, a system of mutual commitments, exchanges of favors, and benefits between political leaders and their clientele is implemented, perceived as the basis for supporting and expanding the electorate.

Coroneiroismo was affirmed and reaffirmed at the time of voting. Control of the vote is a goal to ensure the colonel's power at the local level, as well as defining his position at the state level. In this sociopolitical context, coronelismo via cronyism becomes a political mechanism for the protection and social advancement of impoverished groups. It constitutes an end that justifies any relationship of exchange of favors, in which the vote becomes a good in exchange, amidst a structure marked by electoral bargaining. The vote as a good in exchange is similar to the "Gift and Counter-Gift system" because it involves reciprocity of favors and, on the other hand, an emotional relationship brought about by cronyism that mystifies this entire relationship of giving and receiving.

In the political sphere, CORRÊA (1982) states that:

The vote does not manifest itself as an unconscious act, but rather as part of a tacit contract, used to obtain benefits, ranging from the acquisition of material goods, such as social advancement within the stratification of kinship, or even to resolve issues of various kinds, such as marriage, financing, employment, among other favors. (CORREA, 1982, p.12)

In the political arena, large relatives become clients who secure political positions and strength. Thus, the large family becomes a political stronghold, an electorate that softens autocratic domination through gentle friendship. In this context, understanding Brazilian society involves understanding the ordering process of its economic, political, and social bases that were established during the country's colonization process. These factors explain the formation and expansion of our society. A formation that maintains its dominant roots to this day.

At the beginning of the Republic, society maintained its agrarian base, servile labor, land concentration, and an oligarchic system with its vertical social structure. The latifundium was the economic base that maintained the lordly and caudillist mentality of rural landowners, the colonels, albeit under a new image of a businessman, but a defender



of the security of the family group. Seen as the most well-off, with prestige and power in the face of a population with a precarious standard of living, passive and accommodated in their misery, ignorance, abandonment, without free will, and with a distorted and magical worldview, thanks to the process of manipulation suffered. Because they only see the world that surrounds them in its most immediate circumstances. Since the broader context becomes something distant, far away, something incomprehensible, which they only relate to through the intervention of their protective lord, the colonel, generally their godfather. A benevolent protection that takes away all perception of the relationship of domination, because it occurs in a context based on friendship that infers in them the duty to reciprocate. However, JANOTI (1981) clarifies that there was “a paternalistic attitude about “his group” relatives and clientele, but oppressive, violent about the clients of his adversaries”.

BRAZILIAN SOCIETY AND AGRARIANISM

Understanding Brazilian society involves understanding the process that organized its economic, political, and social bases, which was established during the colonization process. In this context, its organizational base was based on authoritarian relations through the recognition of the role of dominant economic and political groups. In this recognition, the organizational base was based on the ownership of properties, an element that radiated prestige and power.

A power structure that favored the place of the Brazilian aristocracy, composed of landowners. In this structure, social and political evolution is based on the ownership and exploitation of large estates. A system in which land ownership meant and continues to mean the use of land as “feudal privileges”.

Rural life took place within the boundaries of large estates and beyond their boundaries, other large estates with their organizations and laws. A portrait of an agrarian structure marked by “local bossiness”.

With the headquarters With the establishment of Brazilian agrarianism, the rural aristocracy began to direct the entire Brazilian political base during the first years of the republic. In this economic and political systematization, the landless and unemployed populations established alliances with the dominant groups, in search of protection and subsistence, becoming servile labor. This reveals the persistence of the feudal structure, the basis of republican society. There is a mere political change from the Empire to the Brazilian Presidential Republic, given the continuity of the latifundium as the economic base and the lordly and caudillo mentality.



According to Vilaça (1978), the rural landowner has the same prestige and power, inherited from colonial times, although he is vested with the role of farmer, businessman, and defender of his family group. He exercises an increased influence as society diversifies into houses, villages, and farms that surround them. (VILAÇA, 1978, p. 25)

In this context, coronelismo became dominant, although there are variations in different Brazilian regions. However, in this locus the presence of “a mass of people who derive their subsistence from their land, living in the most lamentable state of poverty, ignorance, and abandonment. (LEAL, 1978, p. 24)

A population that from a very early age throws itself into work, as a condition of survival, without caring about the conditions of domination and oppression. A subjection that reinforces the processes of dependence, is then naturalized.

THE LEGITIMATING ACTION OF THE FATHERHOOD

Parental relationships, whether of kinship or godfatherism, constitute mechanisms of domination and subordination, considering that they are relationships engendered in verticality and horizontality. They are relationships between equals and relationships between unequal. Observing the social, economic, and political strengthening of the majority group. A prerequisite for exercising leadership and social control.

Crowd relationships are rooted in our social history and have been present since the beginning of the nascent Brazilian society. A primary relationship, with the appearance of affection, Catholic religiosity, and the idea of helping godparents, godmothers, and godchildren in adverse situations. In a society that emerged without the idea of citizenship, of having rights; the Church and the colonizing State instituted godparenthood. For, the recurring discourse was that:

Each individual should have godparents, according to their parents, to whom he can turn in case of difficulty or the absence of his parents. [However, a] vertical relationship, through which the powerful, richest, sponsors the poorest, has been reproduced since the beginning of our social formation, until today. (SOUZA, 1981, p.29,30)

Considering that godparenthood was established in Brazil with the arrival of religious people together with the colonizers to establish the political, economic, and religious dominance of the Portuguese metropolis in Brazilian lands,

FAMILIES AND GODROUGHT IN THE CITY OF BELÉM IN THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

The updating and extension of the initial studies on family and godparent relationships are based on research carried out by researchers from Pará. Studies carried



out by Augusto (2005)⁴; Cancela (2006)⁵ and Barroso (2012)⁶, reveal family and godparent relationships in the city of Belém-Pará, in the transition from the 19th century to the early years of the 20th century.

Augusto's studies (2005) are based on analyses of marriage and baptism records. Focusing on systems of alliances and social networks, as means to achieve social advancement and assistance of all kinds. The table below references the social place of baptized subjects. The author states that there are few studies on the topic addressed.

Baptized Population Between 1810-1822

Population – Social Group	Social Status	% of Baptism
70 White People	Legitimate	23.9%
40 White People	Illegitimate	16.3%
13 Enslaved People	Legitimate	4.4%
57 Enslaved People	Illegitimate	16.3%
48 Enslaved People	Adults	19.4%
4 Free People of Color	—	1.4%
36 people	Illegitimate	11.9%
3 Indigenous People	Legitimate	1.0%
5 Indigenous People	Illegitimate	1.7%

Source: AUGUSTO (2005)

The table summarizes data that reveal the city of Belém as a diverse social space in terms of the origin and social status of the baptized people. It portrays the concentration of the white population, which according to the author, exerts dominance over the city and its people, as it reveals in this period studied, the baptism of 90 legitimate children, 145 people considered illegitimate, and 48 adults. In her analyses, she observes that prominent positions were concentrated among wealthy whites, especially from Portuguese families. In this social reality, marriage and baptism, in addition to being a religious sacrament, are social events that, due to their relevance, rely on collective participation. A time for establishing social arrangements, and commitments of solidarity, friendship, and support. Thus, marriage and baptism are understood as social events for the affirmation of family ties. For groups of free men, slaves, and Indigenous people, a time for guaranteeing improvements for children, was made possible by relationships of godparenthood. Barroso (2012) studied family groups, focusing on the intersection between marriage and godparenthood in Belém-PA, between 1840 and 1870. His extensive research highlights family and godparenthood relationships as a social space for building sociability and solidarity. A context in which family ties are built and solidified. In this perception, he considers the family context as a space for establishing ties between individuals and the surrounding society. Considering it as an essential structure, because “Baptisms and marriages, at the same time, indicate some particularities and general trends that serve as



indicators of social relations and cultural patterns”. (BARROSO, 2012, p. 1) In the Amazon, as the 20th century progressed, families, a space that radiated social, economic, political, and cultural alliances, although socially and culturally diverse, continued to represent the founding foundation of demographic and cultural dynamics in times of consolidation of the rubber economy. Amidst the changes, the family continues to be fundamental in the processes of social reproduction, demarcating social positions, and material and cultural assets in the region. The wedding witnesses and godparents were chosen within the family environment. It was the locus that maintained the bonds of marriage and godparenthood. Among the elite of Pará, marriage and godparenthood occurred in horizontal and endogenous relationships. This contributed to the strengthening of the family. (IDEM, 2012, p. 56)

Among the elite, godparenthood relationships were made effective by expanding alliances between equals. Among the free or poor captive population, baptism was a time to establish bonds with individuals with better material conditions or influence to obtain help, assistance, and security for a better future for their children. In this context of protection, the extended family was considered a fundamental institution for the biological and social reproduction of the population. In the case of godparenthood, when the elite sponsored children from less privileged social backgrounds, they sealed their recognition of prestige and power by expanding their family by protecting their godchildren. This guaranteed the structuring and maintenance of their social status. According to Barroso (2012, p.108), in the baptism of free children, godfathers and godmothers were profiled in the most prominent classes. He identified that “60% of godfathers were associated with some military rank, 30% with the exercise of liberal professions (doctors), 0.5% with predicates of great social distinction (such as noble titles or those linked to the Orders of Christ or the Rose) and the remaining 0.5% with various occupations (judges, for example)”. The godmothers followed the same ranks as the godfathers. It is worth noting that 24.5% of the godmothers of free children were attributed to Our Ladies. The elite, standing before the baptismal font, reinforced their power, and the impoverished free population groups sought out a godfather and guardian from the elite. The godfather was invested in the power of protection, care, affection, and social interaction that was so important for the development of poor and disadvantaged children. By becoming the basis for the construction of broad parental networks beyond the baptismal ceremony, even though they were vertical relationships, the godfathers, godfathers, and godchildren became spiritual relatives. An institution to promote benefits of all kinds, from the acceptance of the godchild by the godfather's family group to economic and political aid. It was configured as a network of reciprocal relationships, of



mutual support, especially in times of difficulty that were so necessary in a patriarchal, slave-owning, lordly society. Among slaves, this ritual reveals the sociability of these individuals and their social relationships experienced inside and outside of captivity. Relationships intertwined with family relationships and the social conditions of slavery. Relationships are established to strengthen this group through broad alliances. With relatives or allies of the master. In a search for support and protection from people in a better social position. In general, support was sought from freed people or those with social influence. Baptism records from 1840 in the parish of Sé in Belém demonstrate the tendency to choose godparents among free individuals. In 1842, of the 350 baptisms, 123 children were slaves. And the preference for choosing godparents in the free condition. However, the larger the number of slaves in a slave farm, the greater the possibility of choosing slave godparents. In the central area of Belém, the choice of godparents was addressed to the free population. In more remote areas, the incidence of slave godparents was greater. In the city, there was a greater interactive process with other slaves, the local free population and migrants from other regions, and foreigners who arrived with the expansion of the rubber economy. (IBDEM, 2012. 123, 125)

CANCELA's (2006) research focuses on understanding family relationships in Belém between 1870 and 1920, a period in which the rubber economy was consolidated. During this period, marital and kinship relationships were impacted by economic, social, and political dynamism.

Belém and Manaus experienced an intense process of urbanization, migration, population growth, and changes in architectural and landscape layouts, as well as the adoption of lifestyles associated with cultural refinement, especially the “French” model of civilization. This transformed the Amazonian capitals into “tropical cities of light”.

In this context, social life expanded due to economic dynamism, which transformed the Amazon into a global supplier of natural rubber for industrialized nations. Economic growth and the circulation of capital brought with them the ideals of “progress” and “splendor” to the region. The families of Belém find themselves facing a context of transformation and tensions brought about by the Rubber Era. The traditional elite, until then, was made up of high-ranking officials, military personnel, and owners of sugar mills and farms. Before 1870, rubber exploitation was carried out by the local caboclo population, indigenous people, and mamelucos. This production was combined with the cultivation of food products. In the caboclo model, the rubber tapper and his family worked to survive. However, the automobile industry demanded large-scale exploitation in the region.



Gradually, the Portuguese began to incorporate the exploitation of rubber plantations and commercialization through aviation companies into their activities.

The expansion of rubber production generated a multiplicity of owners of rubber plantations, aviation companies, and export companies. The merchant elite gained strength and assumed economic leadership over the traditional elite, which restructured itself and began to seek new opportunities through alliances with the merchant elite, creating a web of relationships that included marriage and family relationships as strategies to ensure commercial arrangements and support networks in the family and social context to maintain control and power.

The elite of Pará made up of farmers, merchants, rubber tappers, men of wealth, prestige, and power, and together with their families, began to represent a lifestyle according to the “civilizing standards” of progress and new forms of sociability expressed in public social life, in social clubs and family gatherings, social spaces for meeting, refinement, and reaffirmation of alliances and social networks established in a social hierarchy that outlined a new identity for Belém society. It should be noted that at this time of enrichment, the relationships between the rubber tapper elite and the poor workers excluded from growth changed and took on a new sociability. On the one hand, rubber brought economic growth, urbanization, the circulation of capital, and the enrichment of the majority groups. On the other hand, progress did not bring improvements in the lives of the popular classes, as there was an increase in “social ills” arising from the living conditions of those excluded from progress and wealth. Poverty and the abandonment of families and their dependents represented the other side of the imposing rubber society. Considering that large-scale rubber production reduced the production of basic agricultural products for the local population, there was an increase in imports and the difficulty of acquiring these products for the poor population. In rural areas, the aristocratization of rubber plantation owners and the degrading situation of rubber plantation workers. In the city, modernization and the exclusion of popular groups from the benefits of the growth engendered here.

In popular circles, family arrangements were made through marriage and/or consensual unions and relationships of godparents. In times of intense change, they were a means of ensuring security, protection, and mutual aid. In this social class, kinship and friendship relations were strengthened. And neighborhood as strategies that minimized the vulnerability and survival situations of these groups. Solidarity relationships became stronger through the establishment of marriages, support networks, and godparenthood. Considering that population growth generated a new demographic profile of the inhabitants due to the large waves of migrants from the Northeast and abroad, Belém became an



expression of both wealth and poverty expressed in luxurious houses, the mansions in the central and peripheral areas, the tenements and ranches.

Life and coexistence in the popular context changed in terms of conjugality, the networks of sociability, and the alliances between individuals and families to obtain help. Given the new circumstances of instability and vulnerability of the popular groups. Regarding this information, Raposo (1997, 135) reaffirms this adverse context experienced by the popular groups. In which families affected by poverty began to live in the same household. These are examples that reveal the new networks of sociability in the face of situations experienced or represented situations of injustice.

Carcela (2006, p.201) reports the case of a minor named Odorico registered with ATJEP, 4th district, which portrays the situation of a minor from the countryside “who suffered punishment” (a spanking and a beating) by the director of the São José school where he was a boarder. When he felt wronged, he sought out the “representative” of his father who lived in the capital; who took all the necessary steps with the police to have the case investigated. This fact highlights the role of the godfather from the capital in providing help and protection to the son of a friend in a difficult situation, in need of help. Networks of friendship and solidarity functioned as a strategy for support and survival in the city. Assistance between relatives and friends is covered by protection and a reference of solidarity to friends, relatives, and children of godfathers.

When it comes to marriage proposals, the friend or godfather would be the reference for the intentions, character, suitability, and seriousness of the suitor and the security of welcome for those relatives or friends who have recently arrived from the countryside and other areas or regions of the country, who seek to settle in this city. From these social networks, the establishment or expansion of kinship relations, alliances, and godfather relationships was established as a strategy for the survival and biological and social reproduction of these social groups marginalized in the urban space.

CONCLUSIONS

In the early years of the Republic, the Brazilian economic base was still rooted in large estates, which contributed to the lack of basic changes in society, since all power was still concentrated in the hands of rural landowners. During this period, the important figure of the “coronel” stood out, who positioned himself at the political base of the republican structure, thus revealing the still “feudal” nature of society. The latifundium, located as the economic base of the political system, considering that in this period the power of the rural aristocracy as the dominant class was reinforced, thus observing a “mere” political



transformation from the Empire to the Republic, since the economic structure was based on large land holdings. The latifundium, as an economic base, contributed to the permanence of the lordly mentality. The rural landowner maintained the same prestige that was assured to them in the Colony and the Empire.

In the early years of the Federal Republic, it continued to represent the political expression of the pre-capitalist latifundium, although at that time, under the ideals of progress, the landowner assumed a new role, now also as a businessman, but firmly maintaining his power over the family group and his role of dominance about the land, its workers, agriculture and cattle. This interference expanded, through the diversification of towns, cities, and economic activities.

In Brazil and the state of Pará, during the expansion of rubber exploration, cronyism signaled the establishment of networks of social protection, assistance, inclusion, and expansion of new social, economic, and political possibilities. Based on the alliances that are established and strengthened through marital relationships and cronyism, they promote support for economic, political, and social businesses by expanding the networks of social protection that were established through family relationships.

Crony under the ideal of protection expanded to reach later generations and remained dominant, especially in regions marked by the vulnerability of the poorest classes, functioning as a reproducer of social relations and maintaining the dependence of the popular classes on local powers. For decades, Belém remained elitist, aristocratic, and subsidized by conservative sociocultural standards, maintaining the traditional role of the family. And all networks of sociability, including relationships of godparenthood.

Although the text refers to a timeline distant from the present, in Brazil, in the state of Pará, family relationships and relationships of godparenthood are still important references in the family environment in contemporary times. Although family life has become nuclear, parental reference is very present, especially in times of difficulty. As are relationships of friendship and godparenthood, especially in the Catholic environment. In this sense, in the country, and Belém do Pará, networks of alliances are present, although with a new focus: Friends who become brothers, uncles/aunts who sponsor nephews. There is a network of alliances in everyday life, of support for different causes. Although relationships of religious godparenthood are more relaxed, we can see the legacy of relationships of support that pass through different fields, as they emanate meaning, support, and belonging. In large capitals and consequently in urban spaces, the presence of alliances that update the meaning of sponsorship, which in some way refers to the legacy of cronyism. In this new context, people and groups associate, support each other, and become defenders and



supporters. It is still common to hear the saying “He who has a godfather will not die a pagan” or “he will not die of hunger”. This ideology is very present in party politics, where candidacies and elections are negotiated. Characterized as an exchange of favors and reciprocity; being a sponsor means a condition of access to receive benefits, resolutions of causes, and employment, among other requests. In the legal sphere, the presence of the protectionist ideology is strengthened by Law No. 13,509 of November 22, 2027, which includes in the Statute of Children and Adolescents (1990), the implementation of “Emotional Sponsorship” as a judicial measure as an instrument to promote family and community coexistence for children and adolescents in shelters awaiting adoption. With the central objective of creating safe, lasting bonds that enable family life, through the establishment of effective family ties.

Thus, in this observance, the permanence of the ideology of protective and welfare family relationships is very present in contemporary Brazilian social reality, regardless of formats and rearrangements; the bonds of godparenthood, although emerging, remain as organizing support for social relationships, in the family and political spheres, and especially in the digital support network, as support relationships in contemporary times.



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