

## Cultural Formations and the Zona Franca

Amazônia, 4.9 million square kilometers, constitutes 60 percent of the total area of Brazil. Legally, the area (see Map, p. 15) includes the states of Acre, Amazonas, Pará, and Rondônia, the territories of Amapá and Roraima, the state of Mato Grosso, and the state of Goiás (divided into the states of Goiás and Tocantins by the 1988 Constitution) to the north of the 13th parallel, and the state of Maranhão to the west of the 44th meridian. All of this vast and relatively uninhabited area did not become officially recognized as a region of Brazil until the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. The Treaty of Madrid came more than a century after the earliest efforts made by the Portuguese to explore and colonize the region. These colonizing attempts have continued sporadically into the present. Although Amazônia is better known and better understood today than ever in its past, its full developmental potential and its economic integration remains that of a frontier region (Katzman 1976, 1977).

Prior to the rubber boom (1850–1910), Amazônia made only a small and insignificant contribution to the Brazilian economy. During the boom, the region became the dynamic center of economic activity. However, the impact of the boom on most of Amazônia was shallow and transitory (Wagley 1971: 53–62). As Furtado (1968: 162) has noted, the multiplier effect of investment in rubber was low, if not negative, and a substantial part of the profits made was consumed by imports. Still, the rubber boom occasioned a great deal of interest, exploration, and settlement in the region. As Amazônia became more populated, a loosely organized regional economy was formed. It combined the production of foodstuffs for subsistence and distribution in internal markets with the extraction of forest products, mainly rubber, for external markets. This traditional system of Amazonian trade, in which goods are advanced on credit along a line of middlemen who are repaid with agricultural or extractive products, is locally known as *aviamento*.<sup>1</sup> Within the context

of the aviaemento system, two interdependent and relatively different cultural formations emerged.<sup>2</sup> For convenience, these are labeled (1) the *Caboclo* and (2) the *Urban*. Even today in many areas, the persistence of these cultural formations is related to the relative stability and isolation of the environments to which nineteenth century populations became culturally adapted.

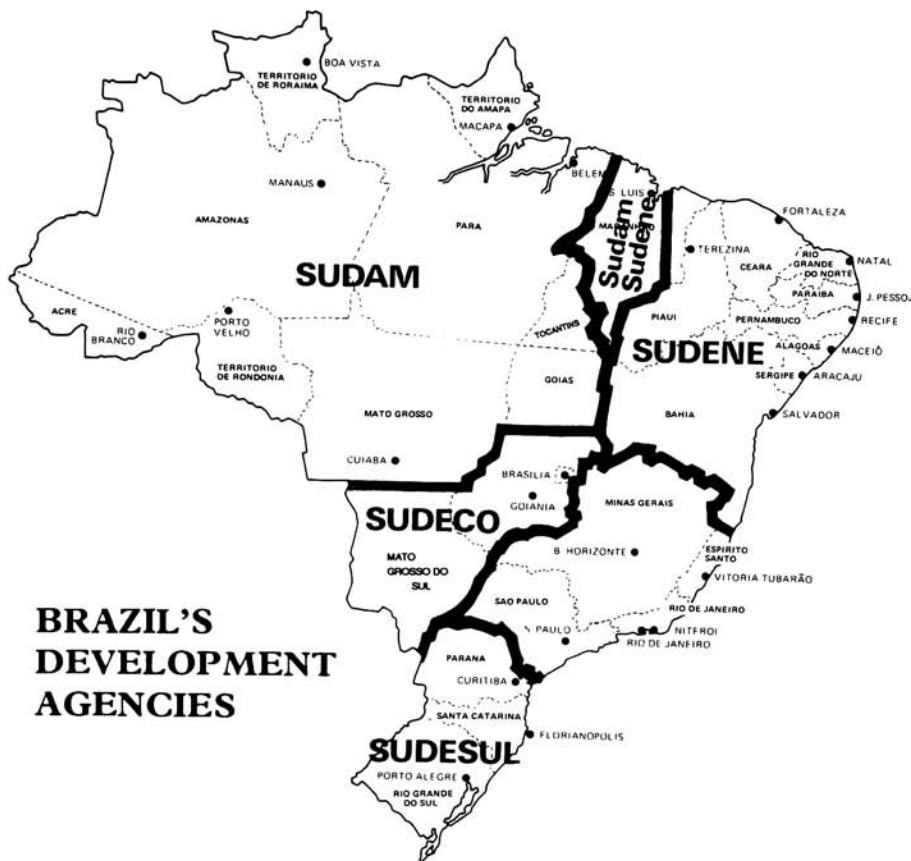
The character and relationship that obtained between these cultural formations underscores the problem of structure that now exists throughout much of Amazônia. As development programs restructure local environments for new modes of production, they give issue to social arrangements that have never existed among the local populations of the region. Moreover, as these new modes of production articulate more firmly with the national and international economies, they impose a much more tightly integrated system of regional relationships than has ever existed before. In sum, given the regional origin of Manaus' current population, the cultural formations associated with extraction and the aviaemento system of credit provide an historical glimpse of the social and cultural life that generally existed in the area before the Zona Franca.

### *The Caboclo Formation*

The term Caboclo is not always used with precise reference in the literature (Freyre 1936) but, in general, it calls attention to peasants, mainly descendants of Luso-Brazilians and Indians, who have occupied widely scattered settlements along the banks of the rivers and *igarapés* (narrow streams or creeks) of the Amazon Valley at least since the early decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> The culture characteristic of these populations was forged of Indian and Iberian elements during the colonial period when an extractive economy and a mercantilist form of capitalism was imposed upon the indigenous populations of the region.

During the early colonial period, Indian labor was appropriated from among the relatively dense riverine populations of the floodplains (*várzeas*) by slave-raids in order to establish colonies, extend the commercial exploitation of forest products, and secure Portugal's claims to the region. As the commercial and demographic transformation of the Valley progressed, riverine cultures were destroyed, their populations were either dispersed and driven upstream or away from the main rivers, or they were enslaved. Many of the survivors were brought under the protective control of *aldeiamentos* (Catholic mission villages), which were established at strategic points along the Amazon River and its main tributaries and where, as Wagley notes (1953: 34-40), they

MAP 1



were transformed into 'Jesuit Indians.' Practices laid down by Jesuit priests, Christian dogmas and Catholic ceremonies, including those relating to marriages, quickly replaced many traditional elements of the native cultures. Although Indians achieved some degree of protection under the ecclesiastical control of the Jesuits, in the aldeias their labor was made available for use by soldiers, colonists, merchants, and the Church to propel boats, construct buildings, supply food, and collect forest products for trade.

This process of cultural transformation deepened in 1767 when, to advance the development of the region, the Marquis of Pombal, brother of the Governor-General of Pará, issued a series of laws aimed at the

incorporation of Indians into colonial life. The Jesuits were expelled from Brazil and missionaries were stripped of all temporal powers over Indian populations. Mission stations were transformed into towns and villages; the Portuguese language was substituted for Tupí (at that time the *língua geral* in the Amazon); and Portuguese males were offered special inducements in the form of land grants, free tools, tax exemptions, and sometimes political posts, if they would marry native women. As Ross (1978) has emphasized, these laws promoted a shift away from the exclusive exploitation of natural resources in the floodplain of the várzea for purposes of subsistence, to the commercial exploitation of forest products, mainly in the less productive lands located above the floodplain on the *terra firme*, in combination with subsistence activities. The economy as well as the relationship of Indian populations to the ecology of the Valley was wholly restructured.<sup>4</sup>

By 1822, when Brazil acquired its independence from Portugal, the population of the Amazon Valley was mainly mestizo. While the way of life of the majority was essentially Portuguese, its culture was strongly influenced by the unique Amazônian environment and by the Indian cultures that had preceded it (Wagley 1953: 38–42). Thus, as previously noted, well before the rubber boom the Caboclo formation was firmly rooted in subsistence activities as well as the extractive economy of the region. However, before the rubber boom, the extractive economy of the Amazon was not particularly lucrative and, compared to the sugar-producing areas of the Northeast, its contribution to the national economy was truly insignificant. Still, a migratory trickle of explorers and landless peasants from other regions continued to flow into the area in search of land and independence.

The number of Caboclos is not easily estimated before 1872, when the first official census for Brazil appeared. In that year, 330,000 people are listed for the area (Katzman 1976: 447). However, between 1870 and 1910, when rubber dominated Brazil's export economy (Diégues 1960; Furtado 1963: 141–48; Katzman 1976: 446–48), the population of the Valley assumed more significant proportions. During this period, the economy of the region reached its highest level of prosperity and its population increased by the addition of more than 500,000 migrants, mainly from the drought-stricken state of Ceará. By 1900, there were more than 700,000 inhabitants in the region and this number continued to grow until 1920, when it reached 1.1 million. Following the rubber boom, Amazônia quickly reverted to its former state of almost complete economic inactivity in relationship to the national economy. Except for Henry Ford's unsuccessful effort to revive rubber production in the 1920s, the area attracted the attention of neither politicians nor

entrepreneurs. These circumstances persisted until World War II when, under the Washington accords of 1942, Brazil agreed to supply the Allied Forces with strategic raw materials. A major effort was made to revive the production of rubber. However, as Mahar (1979: 1–5) has noted, relative to costs, the results of this program were quite modest. Failing in this, the population of the region stabilized again until the 1960s when the Brazilian government initiated large-scale interventions throughout the region. As a consequence of the latter, by 1980, Amazônia contained more than 7.5 million people (Anuário 1983: 78–9) and perhaps one-third or more of this population could be classified as Caboclo.<sup>5</sup>

Practically every feature of Caboclo culture can be traced to the fusion of Iberian and Indian elements, to variations in micro-environments that dictated the principal economic activity chosen—i.e. whether it be farming, fishing, rubber collecting, the cutting of timber, the cultivation of jute, the collection of Brazil nuts, the planting of peppers, or the raising of cattle (Moran 1974: 139–52)—and, above all, to the *aviamento* system in which subsistence and related activities were embedded (Wagley 1953: 91–100).

In terms of work, the Caboclo does not have an occupation in the sense of a relatively stable status identity. He may be a horticulturalist, a rubber collector, a hired hand, a canoe-paddler, a wood cutter, or a fisherman. He generally earns a living from more than one of these pursuits simultaneously. None of these activities are considered a lifelong commitment. As Wagley (1953: 90) notes, if he is attracted or forced into rubber collecting, it is only with the hope of making a quick profit and moving on to a more favorable situation. His debts dictate the character of this movement and engender a 'strike-it-rich' attitude. Thus, if he accepts wage employment, it is considered temporary in order to remove debts or because more favorable work is unavailable or out-of-season. This pattern of economic activity is persistent. The Caboclo cannot produce all that he needs (e.g., clothing, condiments, lamps, fuel, tools, etc.); he is dependent upon markets. At the same time, the amount he earns from wages or the production of commodities for trade is always insufficient to remove his debts and provision himself and his family. Thus, bound by debts, the Caboclo is always 'moving on' and never getting anywhere. He, and as many members of his family as possible, must combine a multiplicity of activities, including the cultivation of crops and the collection of foodstuffs, in order to secure their basic necessities.

Many of these activities are seasonal but they also oscillate in response to markets for the export of forest products. During the rubber boom, for example, the market value of rubber and the unavailability of labor for collecting it were such that *seringalistas* (the owners or

lessees of extraction areas) prohibited *seringueiros* (rubber tappers) from engaging in subsistence cultivation in the *seringais* (rubber plantations) that they controlled. Seringalistas as well as *seringueiros* became almost completely dependent upon imported foods. The withdrawal of population from the production of food provisions contributed to such dietary deficiencies and high mortality rates that the government of the State of Pará attempted to induce European farmers to settle in the Zona Bragantina, an area close to Belém (see Sawyer 1979 and Bunker 1985: 65–72).

As the rubber boom terminated, the percentage of the economically active population tied to extractive activities in the primary sector, relative to the population engaged in agricultural or subsistence activities, declined. By 1950, almost half the Caboclo population of Amazonas was involved in some form of food production and the percentage was even higher for Acre (73.5), a major source of rubber in the Upper Amazon. Still, in both the Upper and Lower Amazon regions, farming and the collecting of forest products remained the two principal activities and individuals moved in and out of these seasonally and in response to favorable export markets.

As many observers have noted (e.g. Meggers 1950; Wagley 1953; Ianni 1979; Martins 1981), this pattern of economic activity, and the 'debt peonage' (Cunha 1913) which reinforced it, is itself determined by the credit (*aviamento*) and land tenure systems that developed mainly out of the rubber-collecting industry. Throughout the history of the region, legal titles to vast areas—whether issued by government or privately purchased—have been confused and precarious. Ownership was secured by effective occupation and, if necessary, by the force of arms rather than legal instruments.

The import-export companies (*aviadores*) of Belém and Manaus established trading posts (*barracões*) run by *seringalistas* who leased or claimed estates in the uplands along the rivers. These small scale entrepreneurs, the *regatões* (hucksters) who plied the rivers for trade, and the *comerciantes* (merchants) who operated collecting posts, were extended credit in the form of imported goods. They, in turn, extended credit on these goods to *seringueiros* (collectors) who repaid them in kind with rubber and other forest products. Each determined the terms of trade and each was in debt to the next, the collector to the trader, the trader to the import-export firm, and the latter to banks and rubber exporters in Brazil or elsewhere.

The force of the *aviamento* system has declined since the passing of the rubber boom. As trade has become more monetarized and the production of foodstuffs and related products more closely tied to local

and regional markets, producers have gained more freedom of choice in their dealings and the dependency relationships engendered by the *aviamento* system have loosened somewhat. However, the system's fundamental structure has persisted throughout the region (Cardoso and Müller 1977: 31). It is particularly characteristic of the jute industry (first introduced by Japanese in the 1920s) in which monopoly control of the terms of trade is exercised by the *Instituto de Fibras da Amazônia* in Belém. And for small agricultural producers and collectors who have great difficulty securing credit against their crops from banks, the *comerciantes* and *regatões* continue to exercise considerable control of the terms of trade by providing the credit needed to finance productive activities.

Thus, Wagley (1953: 95–100) found that even as late as the mid-twentieth century in the farming community of Itá, a small town in the Lower Amazon, the *aviamento* system remained intact. The rural neighborhood was formed by a trader and his collector-customers who lived scattered near the rubber trails and who came periodically to the trading post that is the center of the neighborhood. The relationship between *seringalistas* and *seringueiros* was a patron-client relationship and it was often reinforced by extending to the client the status of fictive kinsmen: as when the patron of a collector became godparent (*padrinho*) to the collector's children. In the farming area of the community, a similar pattern obtained between the agriculturalists and the local traders and storekeepers. The same was observed between the latter and their suppliers in Belém.

The settlement patterns that characterize Caboclo communities reflected micro-environmental adjustments within the constraints imposed by the extractive economy that developed within the region (Cardoso and Müller 1977: 32; Bunker 1977: 58–76). As Moran (1974: 142–44) notes, *municípios* (official county-like subdivisions) in the Amazon are much too large to form natural communities, but each *município* contains a *cidade* (small city, which is generally the seat of government) and several hamlets or *vilas*. The Cablocos generally live in rural neighborhoods that are within range of these units by walking or by boat. *Vilas* located in the *terra firme*, where manioc and other food crops are cultivated, are more concentrated and they seem to evince a somewhat greater degree of solidarity than those in the *várzea*, where people tend to live more isolated from one another. The shifting cultivator and the rubber collector lead isolated lives and their involvement in communal activities, except for trade and perhaps participation in several annual saint's festivals, is relatively limited.

The family structure among Cablocos reflects the conditions and

constraints of economic dependence and the social and physical isolation it entailed in the backlands of the Amazon. When at home, the Cabloco's household consisted of one nuclear family: the collector, his wife, and their children. The father was ideally the absolute head but, probably because of his collecting activities, women in fact tended to assume a significant position of influence and leadership within the household. In Itá, Wagley (1953: 145-86) tells us, people of all social classes shared the Brazilian ideal of a large and united family group, called the *parentela*. The *parentela* is characteristically a diffuse network of relatives by descent and marriage. It almost never forms a residential unit or household. The unity of the *parentela*, as Wagley seems to suggest, is more a function of favorable social position and the availability of economic resources, the result of circumstances that position relatives to assist and do favors for one another.

The collector in Itá was generally a man with few, if any, relatives. Hoping to escape debt, he was always looking for more favorable opportunities; thus, his habits were inclined to be nomadic and he often left his relatives behind. To the extent that kinship ties were extended, they were as much extended fictively by baptism and similar rituals as they were extended by marriage. However, these fictive kinship ties were preferred between individuals of different economic and social status, and the strength and degree of intimacy involved in them depended not only on personal inclinations and the continuity of association but also upon their instrumentality for economic or political purposes.

In Brazil marriage is a civil ceremony that is ideally followed by a church celebration. Among the Cabloco town dwellers interviewed by Wagley (1953: 169), less than 25 percent claimed both civil and religious rites at marriage; 42 percent were married only in Church; 25 percent admitted to consensual unions; and the remainder reported a civil union. Only as long as a woman was a virgin could she hope for marriage according to the ideal pattern. According to Wagley (p. 172), in Itá people claimed that three-fourths of the marriages among farmers and collectors took place 'by the police,' i.e., they were forced. The economic instability of lower-class townsmen, of the farmer, and especially of the rubber collector, contributed significantly to marital instability (Wagley 1953: 175). Thus, in the Cabloco formation, women are often heads of households formed by consensual unions that have been dissolved. It also is not uncommon for men to 'walk out' of unions that have been civilly contracted or 'sanctified' in Church. Neither of these rites are perceived to be sufficiently binding to preclude the formation of a consensual union in another community.

Religion among Caboclos is a form of folk Catholicism that com-



bines Iberian and Indian beliefs and practices (Galvão 1952; Wagley 1953: 187–256; Moran 1974: 148–53). Magical and religious beliefs of Indian origin that are integrated into Caboclo folk beliefs include, for example, the belief in *mães-do-bicho* and *Curupira*. The former, literally ‘mothers of the animals,’ are supernaturals who protect the animals of each species by stealing the ‘shadow’ of hunters and fishermen who take too many of them. *Curupira* is a small manlike creature whose feet are turned backward and who protects the forests from hunters by attracting them more deeply into it until they become lost. There is also *Anhaná*, a demon who hunts people in the forests, and who may appear as an *inhambu*, a magically malignant bird. The *boto*, freshwater dolphin, is believed to be enchanted and, as Wagley (1953: 238–9) reports, almost the entire body of the dolphin may be used for some magical or medicinal purpose. Still another aboriginal belief is *panema*, a magical concept extended to cover all sorts of bad luck (Moran 1974: 148). *Panema* can be contracted from the touch of a menstruating woman, by not sharing a catch with needy neighbors, or by mutilating the carcass of a game animal.

In the context of these and other folk beliefs, and of the Amazonian environment itself, it is not surprising that Caboclos are unusually preoccupied with the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth, disease, and with health in general. Wagley (1953: 241–52) reports that the people of Itá spent a large proportion of their incomes on patent medicines. He also describes a variety of herbal remedies, taboos, and magico-religious practices employed by individuals and by different categories of folk practitioners (including *pajés* or shamen) to cure or protect against diseases and physical accidents, and to free individuals and objects from *panema*. Many of these beliefs and practices have been carried over into cities like Manaus and Belém, where shops specializing in folk medicines and magico-religious paraphernalia do a thriving business alongside pharmacies. In some instances, these beliefs and practices form the basis for spiritist cults which prescribe medicinal baths, herbal teas, and cleansing fumigations to remove evil influences from their subjects.<sup>6</sup>

Besides these beliefs and practices of Indian origin, there exist those associated with folk Catholicism as well as those attached more formally to the official Church. Throughout Brazil, particular saints are thought to have special attributes and powers. These beliefs engender personal devotions—in the form of *promessas* (vows) and *novenas* (prayers) as well as public ceremonies and festivals. Cities, towns, neighborhoods, rural hamlets, often even families, have patron saints to whom they are dedicated. This cult of saints enjoins an annual cycle of celebrations and festivals. In Itá, for example, Wagley (1953: 188–209) found that between June 13, St. Anthony’s Day, and December 27, when the festivities for St. Benedict

ended, more than fourteen religious festivals were regularly celebrated. All but three of these were celebrated in rural neighborhoods, away from the town, and only two (St. Anthony's and St. Benedict's) were officially recognized by the Church. The festivals of June—St. Anthony's (June 12), St. John's (June 24), and St. Peter's (June 28)—are celebrated almost everywhere in Brazil. In the Amazon and Northeast regions, however, St. John's is the most festive of these celebrations and it engages the widest communal participation, including fireworks when affordable, bonfires around which families and friends gather to eat, public dances, and the like.<sup>7</sup> In fact, by comparison to the feast days celebrating St. Anthony and St. Peter, the celebrations in honor of St. John assume more the character of a public holiday than a religious festival.

What is particularly of interest is the organization of these festivals rather than their ritual detail. To celebrate these feast days, brotherhoods (*irmandades*) were created. These brotherhoods are corporately organized with elected offices, including the *procurador* (attorney for the saint), the *tesoureiro* (treasurer), the *secretário* (secretary), the *zelador* (keeper of the image), *mestre sala* (master of ceremonies), and the *andador* (official in charge of the saint's errands). As described by Wagley (1953: 188–89) and Galvão (1952), these brotherhoods were not merely an association of devotees of a particular saint. The officers, which may include both males and females, were generally individuals of highest prestige and the leaders of the community. Apart from these brotherhoods and the festivals they organized, and apart from the cooperative work arrangements (*mutirões*) which came into being from time to time, there existed in the Caboclo formation a relatively weak sense of community.<sup>8</sup>

The Caboclo formation is rooted in a subsistence economy that attaches the production of foodstuffs and the collection of forest products to a complicated network of commodity markets in which forest resources are exported in exchange for necessities that are not locally produced. Traditionally, this extractive economy was integrated by a credit system that sustained a pattern of dependent, rather than interdependent, relations from top to bottom. At various levels of the system individuals were not afforded the possibility of independent decisions in respect to economic pursuits or the production and expropriation of particular natural resources relative to prevailing market values. At the bottom of the system, horticulturists and collectors followed an essentially pre-industrial mode of production. Bound by what amounted to debt peonage, they were dependent upon patrons for their livelihood. Some Caboclos could not even move from one locality to another without the permission and support of the patron to whom they were indebted.

The colonial origins of this extractive economy, the environmental adjustments that it required, and the social and physical isolation that it imposed, all served to create and sustain among the populations it enjoined a relatively distinct cultural profile. In its institutional dimensions, Caboclo social life was largely determined by the material constraints of subsistence production or, alternatively, the collection of forest products for trade. Family units were nucleated, dispersed, and relatively fragile. When extended, they tended to be extended ritually and for instrumental purposes. Religion involved a combination of beliefs and rituals that were simultaneously responsive to the environment on which the Caboclo depended for subsistence and to the traditions of the Church. In many of its festive aspects, religion constituted a communal enterprise but this did not extend much beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood or vila.

The vila itself assumed the character of a relatively autonomous unit within a município, but beyond its frail boundaries authority was not generally recognized except as it was imposed in one form or another. Within the vila, or the cidade to which it was oriented, the trading post, the church, the primary school (if there was one), or the rubber field (if one was nearby), provided the loci for three or four power positions: specifically, the priest, the merchant or trader, the teacher, and the large landowner or his representative. These and similar positions represented the various layers of stratification within the fabric of Caboclo society.

Ultimately, Caboclo society seems to have derived its sense of public order from what might be called essentialist norms: i.e., rules that were presumably consistent with the longstanding tradition of formal legal codes in Brazil. Such rules were articulated and enforced by civil authorities with respect to contracts, the payment of debts, and the occupation and ownership of land. Conformity to these rules was further reinforced by the Brazilian version of Catholicism, a religious system that mixed rather easily with folk beliefs and practices but that also sought to interdict forms of behavior deemed immoral and, therefore, unacceptable. Combining the institutional dimensions of Caboclo society, one might generally describe the Caboclo culture as conservative, extremely deferential with respect to authority, and relatively adaptive in the context of developmental change.

### *The Urban Formation*

Although he wrote mainly of the Northeast, Gilberto Freyre (1963) has richly described the urbanization process for Brazil. In *The Mansions*

and the *Shanties*, Freyre emphasized that for more than three centuries the rural environment in Brazil remained much more important than the urban. This was certainly the case during the colonial period. Before the small *ciudades* of the colonial period, there were the large land grants, the plantations, the masters, and the slaves. The masters were the nobility, or they were persons favored by the nobility, and they were completely rooted in the rural sector. *Ciudades* originated as administrative centers or the loci of markets. Some developed in land grants given to religious communities and, until the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil in 1759, these remained under ecclesiastical control. Others developed in relationship to land privately owned and they were controlled mainly by the rural aristocracy.

As described by Freyre, the influence of rural life over the urban was accentuated in almost every aspect of the cultural life of these *ciudades*.<sup>9</sup> Cultural norms were articulated by agrarian elites in respect to leisure, cuisine, regarding the relationship between individuals of different ages, sex, and classes, and concerning politics and commerce.<sup>10</sup> Except for Recife and Rio, the only two Brazilian cities that Freyre considers to have developed a significant pattern of cosmopolitan influence prior to the late nineteenth century, *ciudades* remained largely the social constructs of elites whose economic interests and cultural traditions were essentially rural and parochial. This pattern of local control persisted until at least the end of the Old Republic (1930).<sup>11</sup> According to Flynn (1978: 13–16), the core of this system continues to exist and even today it exerts considerable influence in Brazilian political life.<sup>12</sup>

The history of urban development for the Amazon Region remains to be written.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, in terms of what has been reported and except for variations that may be attributed to the peculiarities of the region's environment and extractive economy, the pattern of urban development in the Amazon bears striking similarities to that described by Freyre for the Northeast. During the colonial period, the small *ciudades* of the Valley, including Manaus and Belém, were formed by the same economic and political forces that forged the institutional dimensions of Caboclo culture. For the most part, these *ciudades*—e.g., Santarém, Itacoatiara, Manacapuru, Tefé, Obidos, Humaitá, Porto Velho—were mission stations, or forts and centers of colonial administration, or ports of call where forest products could be exchanged for imports and warehoused for shipment. The establishment of Manaus, as described by Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira in 1786, is a case in point:<sup>14</sup>

The Fort is constructed in front of a small village of Indians and of some white residents. It is divided into two *bairros* along the northern

margin. In the first exist most of the inhabitants and it is divided into three streets... The Church is situated in the middle of the first street between the residences of the priest and of the *comandante*. The *brancos* (whites) own eight houses of which four are in the first street and four in the second. The better houses belong to the white residents... The Indians live in 36 houses of *palha* (straw) of which only a dozen are well preserved.

The commercial district was located near the Fort; the house of the Governor near the Church. As the cidade grew, this zonal pattern was generally maintained. The public market, always a gathering place where Indians and Caboclos came to sell their produce and forest products and buy clothes, food, fuel, and medicines, continued to be situated on the shore of the Rio Negro. The property adjacent to the market increased in value and became the location of public administration, commercial houses, the offices of lawyers, doctors, and the like. As Benchimol (1977: 73) reports, in this 'nerve center' the 'better elements' of the city met to converse and pass the time.

During the colonial period, residences and commercial outlets were located in the same streets. Subsequently, the places of business remained located in the center, close to the market and the offices of public administration. Wealth, concentrated in the hands of governmental and commercial elements, marked a division between the central and peripheral areas of the city. The most desirable homes were situated near the commercial center. Beyond this, on the periphery, were constructed the '*pensões de mulheres da vida*' (houses of prostitution) and the residences of the less well-to-do. As the city grew, the pattern of invasion followed this line of demarcation.

Also during the colonial period, the stratification system in Vila da Barra, as Manaus was then called, was simple and pluralistic. Not without considerable resistance, the Portuguese conquered and established control over the Indians. The social order to which this gave issue did not constitute a class structure based in the institutions of a common culture. The two populations differed categorically, by culture and by race, and the Indians were differentially incorporated by force of arms. However, this situation did not persist. The Portuguese population was deficient in women and, on April 4, 1758, a law was passed that both encouraged and legalized the marriage of whites with Indians. While Indians continued to occupy an inferior position in the community, through marriage, Christian baptism, and the ritual extension of kinship, a mestizo population emerged in the urban sector with a cultural profile somewhat different from that of the rural Caboclo. It was com-

prised not of horticulturalists and collectors but of artisans, clerks, peddlers, domestics and, in some cases, the children of merchants of considerable wealth.

By the time of Independence in 1822, the plural structure that came to exist during the colonial period in the larger urban settlements of the Amazon Valley was being transformed into a social class system. Within this system the Portuguese and their descendents retained superior status and power. However, as the population of *Manauaras* (i.e., persons born and raised in Manaus) grew, native sons, many of whom were of mestizo origin, established themselves in businesses of their own and assumed a position of intermediate status. Below them was what must have been the majority of the mestizo population—clerks, artisans, dock workers, domestics, and the like. And at the bottom, living on the periphery of the city, as many do today, were the rural Caboclos and Indians who continued as cultivators, extractors, woodcutters, and fishermen. Benchimol (1977: 80) reports that in 1836 this class system was seriously threatened by the *Guerra dos Cabanos* (War of the Cabanos), when out of a sense of oppression a group of Caboclos and Indians revolted against the provincial government in an attempt to expel the Portuguese and their descendents from Manaus.

Because of their favorable location, Belém and Manaus became key ports of trade, state capitals, and the largest and most important urban centers in the Amazon Valley. However, their population growth was in no sense explosive. In 1833, the thirty-three streets of Belém were reported as disappearing into the surrounding plantations and farms. Beyond these, accessible only by river, were bush settlements and administrative hamlets. By 1848, Belém's population is reported to have been only 15,000 (Wagley 1953: 46). When the Captaincy of St. Joseph of the Rio Negro was first established in 1757, and Vila da Barra (later Manaus) was implanted, the entire population of what is now the state of Amazonas is estimated to have been less than 20,000 (Bentes 1983: 21–22). It required more than a century for Manaus to accumulate a population of approximately 30,000.

From a demographic point of view, the rubber boom had an important impact on the Amazon Valley. Between 1872 and 1900, the population of the Northern Region (which includes Amapá, Acre, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, and Roraima) increased from 332,847 to 695,112—a relative increase of 108 percent.<sup>15</sup> By comparison, the relative increase of population in Amazonas, a major source of rubber extraction, was 334 percent (from 57,610 to 249,756). During the same period, the urban populations of Manaus and Belém increased, respectively, by only 71 and 56 percent. The total population of Belém, the major center of export and

commercial activity in the Valley, grew from 61,997 to 96,560 inhabitants; that of Manaus from 29,334 to 50,300. Thus, relative to the urban growth of Belém and Manaus, the demographic impact of the rubber boom was disproportionately rural. Nevertheless, from a sociocultural point of view, the urban impact of the boom was rather extensive.

The primary source for the capital with which the aviadores (import-export firms) of the rubber trade were established in Manaus and Belém was foreign. It was held mainly in the hands of English investors and Portuguese merchants and speculators who acquired titles in Belém to large tracts of land in Amazonas and rushed to Manaus to establish their enterprises. These investors became a significant force in the political, economic, and social life of the city. The English, for example, undertook the construction of Manaus' port facilities, its electrical plant, and the trolley lines that no longer exist. They also introduced the use of steamboats for plying trade along the river system, cutting by more than three weeks the passage between Manaus and Belém. The Portuguese, on the other hand, created the major import-export establishments, the warehouses and, in some cases, the sawmills which furnished the lumber required by these developments. The Manauaras, particularly the native sons of the former elite, were relegated to a lesser status in the context of these extractive and commercial enterprises (Benchimol 1977: 81). For the most part, they moved into the professions, filled the politically sensitive upper ranks of public administration, or they operated the smaller businesses and retail enterprises that also became important to the commercial life of the city.

The social and cultural heterogeneity of Manaus was deepened further by the addition of still other immigrants. Syrians and Lebanese drifted into the city to become hucksters and peddlers in the more informal sector of the economy. More importantly, there was a wave of migrants from the drought-stricken state of Ceará to fill the ranks of the working class. Some Cearenses, however, came to Manaus as seringalistas (proprietors of rubber holdings) and they were well established in the aviaemento system. Benchimol (1977: 81-82) reports that because of their wealth and their influence among the large number of migrants from Ceará, these seringalistas moved rapidly up the social and political pyramid in Manaus. They were so successful in manipulating elections in the places in which they lived that the Manauaras often referred to them as the '*Coronéis de Barranco*.' The more successful of these seringalistas from Ceará sent their sons to study in Europe and, following the boom, they became an established element among the local elite.

With all of these changes, the arts and professions flourished. The

Teatro Amazonas became famous for its ostentatious construction as well as for the artists who were brought from Europe to perform there. Social life began to revolve around private clubs (e.g., Ideal, Rio Negro, etc.), the most exclusive of which admitted only families of high income and status. The city acquired a cathedral (and a bishop), hospitals, and a school system that by 1910 included a university. It also acquired a Federal military battalion whose commandante enjoyed a status similar to that of the bishop and the Governor.

While the city provided opportunities for upward mobility, these opportunities were never as great as the influx of aspiring migrants. Moreover, significant status mobility enjoined forces and resources that were generally beyond local control. Nevertheless, the social class structure of Manaus deepened with new divisions—divisions between people of local origin and people from the outside, between Brazilians and foreign nationals (including Portuguese), between Manauaras of various strata and migrants from Ceará and Pará, between ethnic and racial groups, between 'urbanites' who lived and worked in the city and Caboclos who came to the city to trade or find better working conditions for themselves and their children, and between the employed and the unemployed. Even the religious life of the community was divided between the Prelacy of Manaus, the bishop who overseered the Prelacy, and the different missionary societies that established themselves in Manaus in order to missionize the interior; the latter were answerable primarily to their 'congregations' and not the Prelacy or its bishop.

In all these respects, the rubber boom brought to Manaus (and presumably Belém) a social and cultural milieu, a form of urban life, that differed substantially from the Caboclo formation that more directly expressed itself in the smaller cidades and hamlets of the region. Manaus was considerably more diversified and heterogeneous in the composition of its population, more deeply stratified in its social structure, and immeasurably more dynamic in its patterns of mobility. Still, while Belém and Manaus dominated the economic, political, and to some extent the cultural lives of Caboclo populations in the interior, these cities did not contain significant populations of urban origin. Both cities were largely artifacts of the extractive economy to which they were linked. While the wealth generated by this economy created for a time a splash of European culture in Manaus, except for a few foreigners, this was little more than an operatic production on the part of suddenly rich men to cover their rural origins and status identities by ludicrously displaying a highly polished veneer of cosmopolitan values and manners. The elite that dominated Manaus constructed a more elaborate, but still a modified version, of the cultural tradition described by



Freyre (1963) for the landed aristocracy of the Northeast and other parts of Brazil.

This urban formation persisted without much disruption in the Amazon Valley until very recent times. During the depression years that followed the rubber boom, while the local elites remained in place, struggling as best they could to maintain a way of life they could no longer afford, most of the Europeans left. At the same time, there was an influx of population from the interior. It was comprised mostly of Caboclos whose way of life had been so dependent on the trade in forest products that they could not subsist without it. Thus, in search of whatever employment they could obtain, they migrated to urban centers, first to the smaller cidades and then to Manaus and Belém. Because of this influx, between 1900 and 1940, the populations of Manaus and Belém more than doubled. The economy and urban development of these cities, however, stagnated as did the economy of the entire region. Until the 1960s, the Amazon Valley attracted the interests of relatively few entrepreneurs and politicians of national influence except for the military.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Zona Franca*

As previously noted, the first serious steps taken to develop the Amazon Valley came in 1953 with the creation of the *Superintendency for the Economic Valorization of Amazônia (SPVEA)* by the government of President Getúlio Vargas.<sup>17</sup> By law, SPVEA was to receive three percent of the regional budget to finance its operations and begin a program of socio-economic planning. These funds never materialized but, in 1955, SPVEA submitted to the Brazilian Congress the *Plano de Valorização Econômica da Amazônia*. The plan was subsequently modified in 1966. During the interim, SPVEA embarked on an ambitious program of infrastructural development, the major monument to which is the Belém-Brasília highway, a road that plunged through 2,000 kilometers of virgin forest, linking Amazônia's major port to the then new federal capital in the center of Goiás. Although SPVEA sought to encourage private enterprise in the region, without sufficient Congressional support it had no funds with which to stimulate investment. Subsequently, however, SPVEA became a funnel for limited federal funds but their allocation was largely determined by local authorities in the region.

Following the military coup of 1964, the presidency of the republic was assumed by Marshall Humberto Castelo Branco. As many writers have noted (e.g., Davis 1977: 32-43), this change in government was

extremely important for Amazônia. Having been headquartered in Belém for several years as the military Commander of the Amazon and of the 8th Military Region, President Castelo Branco was familiar with the problems of the area and with the problems confronting SPVEA. He shared the military's long-standing vision of a fully developed and nationally integrated Amazon Basin. He also considered the development of these frontier regions a political instrument. It provided the means by which the migratory flow of excess population from the Northeast to the favelas of Rio and São Paulo could be diverted to the colonization of the interior and thereby remove from the industrial South what was considered to be a major source of political instability. Thus, for reasons of security as well as economic reasons, he viewed the development of Amazônia as a matter of national urgency.

Soon after taking office, President Castelo Branco appointed General Mario de Barros Cavalcanti as head of SPVEA with instructions to revitalize its developmental efforts and programs. Subsequently, based on General Cavalcanti's recommendation that the Federal Government completely reformulate its policies and programs in respect to the region, President Branco launched *Operation Amazônia*. In and of itself, *Operation Amazônia* was not much of a development program. Its projects were limited in scope and mainly designed to create by way of new legislation the legal instruments deemed necessary to facilitate development efforts. However, *Operation Amazônia* did provide the basic orientation for future policy in the region.

Under *Operation Amazônia* SPVEA was replaced by a new agency, the *Superintendency for the Development of Amazônia* (SUDAM) and the 'legal Amazon,' defined by Article 199 of the Constitution (see Map 1), became its area of responsibility for the coordination of federal action for the economic valorization of the region. To accomplish its objectives, SUDAM was given extensive powers and considerable independence of action. Its budget was to be comprised minimally of two percent of the taxes collected by the Federal Government and three percent of those collected by the States, Territories, and Municípios of Amazônia. It could derive additional income from the interest on bank deposits, from services rendered to companies in which it participated, from gifts, subventions, or contributions made to it by other entities, from the investment of its own capital, and from tax exemptions provided by other government agencies. It could contract loans from within or outside the country. It also was empowered to proceed directly with its own personnel and resources, or by contract with other entities, public or private, national or foreign, utilizing as its financial agent the *Bank of Amazônia, S.A. (BASA)*.

As an additional benefit to the private sector, SUDAM was authorized to invest the proceeds from BASA securities in whatever research or private firms it considered important to the development of Amazônia. Further, to attract private capital (both foreign and domestic), by Law 5122 (September 28, 1966), firms sanctioned by SUDAM could qualify up to 100 percent exemption from their federal income tax (until 1982). They also were allowed tax credits up to 75 percent of the value of whatever BASA securities they might acquire. Finally, they could deduct 50 percent of their total tax bill when the resulting savings were invested in agriculture, livestock, industry, or services approved by SUDAM.

SUDAM's role in the promotion and execution of certain types of development action was lessened somewhat by the creation, or in some instances the reorganization, of more sectorial agencies as a result of subsequent planning by the Federal Government.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, SUDAM embodied the ideology of development articulated by *Operation Amazônia* and this ideology has generally persisted throughout the successive Governments that followed upon that of President Castello Branco, which terminated in 1967. Accordingly, future policy in the Amazon would be oriented toward 'development poles,' encouraging immigration, the establishment of stable and self-sustaining population groups, providing incentives to private capital, infrastructure development, and research with respect to natural resource potential. The overall content of the program called for the effective occupation of the region and its political and economic integration within the larger national society.

The economic content of the program encompassed agriculture, the extraction of minerals and forest products, and industrialization. In terms of agriculture, earlier programs gave emphasis to land distribution and colonization but, in the end, the strategy became one of promoting large-scale agroindustrial enterprises, particularly for the production of beef and beef by-products (Davis 1977: 21-46, 111-57; Ianni 1979: 219-29; Bunker 1985). In regard to minerals, with the assistance of a cooperative program between the Brazilian Department of Mineral Production, the Mineral Resources Research Company, the U.S. Geological Survey, Project Radam, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and more than 200 geologists and engineers, the mineral frontier of the entire region was mapped and opened for development by Brazilian and multinational firms.<sup>19</sup> Developments in the extractive sectors of the economy have generally conformed to an enclave-export model and, as Mahar (1979: 117) notes, the largest projects related to these developments tend to be located in eastern Amazônia (e.g., Carajás and Jari).<sup>20</sup>

With regard to urban industrialization, as Mahar (1979: 114-18)

relates, since the era of SPVEA, the approach has vacillated somewhat between the import-substitution and the enclave-export models. The distinction seems rather meaningless. The import-substitution model was given emphasis prior to Operation Amazônia and it represented an unsuccessful attempt to reduce regional dependency upon the dynamic industrial centers of the South by promoting industries (e.g., food, beverages, clothing, chemicals, etc.) that would supply the demand for imports. The enclave-export model came into prominence with the creation of the Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM). It proceeded from the assumption that by promoting industries that assemble imported components, not only will backward linkages with the regional economy emerge but, as the market for these finished products expands, it will provide the demand needed to stimulate industrialization with respect to imported components. With either approach, the ultimate commitment is to the promotion of import-substitution industrialization in key urban centers. The role of the public sector is primarily that of attracting capital to the region by providing fiscal incentives and the necessary infrastructural development.<sup>21</sup>

Whether it involved land-intensive projects in agriculture or capital-intensive projects in industry, the development ideology prescribed under *Operation Amazônia* conformed to a center-periphery model in terms of which private enterprise, domestic or foreign, was to assume a role equal to, if not more important than, that of government. Accordingly, the human and natural resources of the region were to become harnessed to a national economy for which the centers of decision were located primarily in the industrial South, particularly São Paulo, or outside the country.

With regard to urban industrialization, the most monumental achievement of *Operation Amazônia* was Decree Law 228 (February 18, 1967), which established the Zona Franca de Manaus (ZFM) and its supervisory organ, the *Superintendência da Zona Franca de Manaus* (SUFRAMA). The intent of this law was to create through fiscal incentives an industrial, commercial, and agricultural center in Manaus that would serve as the "development pole" for the western Amazon. As previously noted, firms locating within the ZFM were to be exempt from import and export duties and from the federal manufacturer's sales tax (*Imposto sobre Produtos Industrializados*). Goods exported from the ZFM to domestic markets were also exempted from the IPI and those exported with a foreign import content were subject to duties at a rate reduced in proportion to the value added in the ZFM. As an additional stimulus, SUFRAMA undertook and completed in 1973 the construction of an industrial park (*Distrito Industrial*), located five kilometers from