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From Suassuna to Guerra-Peixe: The Armorial Movement in Brazil During the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985)—Constructing Notions of Northeastern Identity Through Music and Literature

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FROM SUASSUNA TO GUERRA-PEIXE: THE ARMORIAL MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP (1964-1985)—CONSTRUCTING NOTIONS OF NORTHEASTERN IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC AND LITERATURE

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FROM SUASSUNA TO GUERRA-PEIXE: THE ARMORIAL MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP (1964-1985)—CONSTRUCTING NOTIONS OF NORTHEASTERN IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC AND LITERATURE

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Conceived by the playwright, novelist, and scholar, Ariano Suassuna (1927-2014), and officially established on October 18, 1970, the Movimento Armorial emerged as an artistic manifestation that proposed to create an erudite art form rooted in folk traditions to express the local color of the northeast region and the national identity of Brazil. Building on ideas introduced by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre and the members of the Escola de Recife (Recife School), Suassuna posited that the cultural and ethnic amalgamation between native Amerindians, African slaves, and Iberian colonizers was crystalized in regional Brazilian folklore. In his views, this folk art epitomized the heterogeneity of the region giving the northeast its distinct flavor. He proposed that regional idiosyncrasies served as the foundation for the construction of Brazil’s national identity.

In this thesis, I use the Armorial Movement as a window to explore the intersections of music, literature, and politics and investigate the intrinsic mechanisms that allowed regional identities to become interwoven into the fabric of brasilidade. I analyze a vast body of regional literature to illuminate the construction of northeastern identity through the lens of alterity, exoticization, miscegenation, and nostalgia. By juxtaposing the ideological propositions of groups such as the Armorialists in the north and the Tropicalists in the south with the political agenda of the military government (1964-
1985), I examine the interregional competition to define Brazilian identity. Furthermore, I
turn to the aesthetic conflicts between concert and folk music within the Armorial
Movement, exemplified by the propositions put forward by the classically-trained
Armorial Chamber Orchestra and the popularly-oriented Armorial Quintet. Here, I clarify
how each group differently used the *rabequeiro* as the personification of northeastern
identity. Using Cesar Guerra-Peixe’s Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra as a
case study, I explain how music sonically evoked the northeast region.

My work problematizes the dichotomic notions of tradition and modernity, central
and margins, north and south, and rural and industrial, which are commonly used to
explain the construction of regional and national identity. I do not perceive dichotomies
as contradictory forces and I do not attempt to define or reconcile opposing views.
Instead, I see dichotomies as part of a symbiotic process whereby contrasting views
actively participate in the construction of one another. The strife between opposing ideas
to define *brasilidade* opens a metaphysical space in which regional and national identity
are constantly shaped, negotiated, and contested.
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CHAPTER 1

THE ARMORIAL MOVEMENT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Spanning almost five decades since its conception in the early 1970s by the dramatist, novelist, and scholar, Ariano Suassuna, the Movimento Armorial (Armorial Movement) was a meaningful artistic manifestation that aimed to define cultural identity in the northeastern regions of Brazil. Suassuna proposed that the miscegenation between Brazilian Amerindians, African slaves, and Iberian colonizers constituted a plurality of the nation’s identity. According to his views, the conjunction of these three groups formed the basis for the art of the people, making folklore the cultural vehicle to express the heterogeneity of northeastern Brazil. Suassuna purposely chose the term "Armorial" because it relates to heraldry or the tracing and recording of pedigrees. In the words of the Latin Americanist scholar, Mark Dinneen: “By evoking the wide range of heraldry, insignia, and emblems created by popular artists the [Movimento Armorial] linked the aristocratic with the popular, and the past with the present.”¹ It is within this spirit that Suassuna conceived the Movimento Armorial as one of the most significant demonstrations of northeastern cultural identity in Brazil during the twentieth century.

Suassuna created a high art form that employed northeastern Brazilian elements to represent the identity of his country. Using the past as a cultural repository, he aspired to create an erudite art form rooted in the popular traditions of the northeast region that resisted the influences of mass-produced culture. The resulting movement encompassed

practically all areas of artistic production, including literature, dance, theater, poetry, and sculpture. Due to the longevity and complexity of the Armorial Movement, scholars such as Idelette Muzart Fonseca divided this artistic manifestation into three distinct phases: 1. Preparatory (1946-1970), 2. Experimental (1970-1975), and 3. Romançal. (1976-1981).

The Preparatory phase started in 1946, when Suassuna was a 19-year-old law student at the Federal University of Pernambuco in Recife, where he remained until 1969. Conjointly with other folklore enthusiasts, he established the Teatro do Estudante de Pernambuco (Students’ Theater of Pernambuco) to promote works of local artists, in addition to his own plays. This 23-year preparatory period allowed artists sympathetic with Suassuna’s ideals to rediscover and systematize the study of northeastern folklore. They sought inspiration in the herding songs (*aboios*) and singing contest (*cantorias*) of the backlands (*sertão*), the dramatic dances of the magic ox (*bumba-meu-boi* and *cavalo marinho*), the local practices of woodcut imprints (*xilogravuras*) and string literature (*Literatura de cordel*), and the Medieval Iberian epic poems transformed into theater (*romanceiro popular*). These elements derived directly from the mixture of Afro-Amerindian and Iberian cultural elements.

During the Experimental phase of the movement (1970-1975), Suassuna served as Director of the Department of Cultural Extension at the Federal University of Pernambuco (1969-1975). There he created the Armorial Quintet and the Armorial Chamber Orchestra to serve as experimental groups for the elaboration of Armorial musical ideas. The goal of both groups was to create erudite national music using aspects

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pertinent to the northeast region and thereby bridge barriers between popular and erudite art forms. In Suassuna’s conception of Armorial music aesthetics, he envisioned an idyllic sonic palette resembling the Medieval style of the Iberian colonizers, integrated with northeastern folkloric musical elements found in the dance features of the frevo, maracatu, and caboclinho.

Led by the guitarist, Antônio José Madureira (1949-), the Quintet incorporated into its sonic landscape the instruments used in popular northeastern Brazilian music, such as the zabumba (double-headed drum), rabeca (country fiddle), pífano (fife), viola-caipira (guitar with five sets of double strings), six-string guitar, and marimbau de lata (rustic instrument constructed with a simple wire and cans), combined with erudite instruments such as the violin, viola, flute, and guitar. In contrast, the violin virtuoso, Cussy de Almeida (1936-2010) led the Armorial Chamber Orchestra in close cooperation with the composer and ethnomusicologist, César Guerra-Peixe (1914-1993). Their approach opted to re-create Armorial music by adopting folk influences, but only with European instruments.

Although both groups shared the stage on October 18, 1970, during the first official concert that inaugurated the movement, they disagreed on what approach best suited Armorial aesthetics. On the one hand, the Quintet’s members believed that the use of popular instruments created a timbre closer to the music experienced and produced by the common folk, making Armorial music accessible to Brazilians regardless of their social class. On the other hand, Almeida argued against the Quintet’s unpolished sound and what he considered the musicians’s disregard for technique. Another point of disagreement was Almeida’s privileging of foreign musicians in his orchestra. Having
received his formal violin training at the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève, Almeida believed that Brazil did not possess a “strong tradition” of producing highly skilled string players in the same fashion as the European schools. He thought that local musicians could enhance their level of playing by learning from musical exchanges with foreign musicians, who trained in the traditions of conservatories from the old continent.

After four years of extended debate, Suassuna sided with the Quintet. He believed that the Orchestra’s sound was too Europeanized and refined to bear a direct relationship to the music of the backlands. Suassuna justified his decision to break with Almeida’s group by claiming that the Armorial Orchestra lacked the roughness in timbre and simplicity in instrumental construction that he envisioned as an essential part of Armorial musical aesthetics. The excessive number of rehearsals imposed by Almeida also created a meticulously calculated performance, which went against Suassuna’s conception of an expressive form that relied on improvisation to mimic the playing styles of popular musicians and reflect the free spirit of the northeastern folk. This debate caused a rupture in the relationship between the Quintet and the Orchestra, demonstrating that even within groups that shared similar aspirations to construct a national identity through music, the paths to achieving such goals were many.

The estrangement between the two Armorial musical currents ignited the movement’s last period in 1976. With Suassuna working as the Secretary of Culture and Education of Recife (1975), the Romançal phase saw the incorporation of the Armorial Quintet into the newly-formed Brazilian Romançal Orchestra. This group followed the Armorial Quintet’s proposal to reinterpret and reinvent the landscape of the backlands using only popular instruments. Under Suassuna’s close supervision, and with the support of funding
from the city, Antônio José Madureira served as the conductor and mentor of this ensemble. The Brazilian Romançal Orchestra (with its popular orientation) and the Armorial Chamber Orchestra (with its classical background) once again differed and competed to control the aesthetic narrative of the Armorial Movement. Within the context of this debate, Suassuna came out in defense of the Romançal Orchestra, affirming that popular tradition was a form of resistance to preserve national identity against the influences of mass-produced culture.

The debate between Armorialists reflected on a regional scale the larger ongoing discourses regarding national identity in Brazil. In the mid-1960s, a group of artists who migrated from the northern to the southern states started a new artistic movement based on the ideas of modernism. The avant-garde Tropicália movement defined *brasilidade* (or Brazilianness) by means of anthropophagy, or “cultural cannibalism.” This notion directly derived from Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto antropofágico* (1928) and referred to the consumption, absorption, and reinterpretation of foreign influences in Brazil. On July 1968, Recife-born poet, essayist, and a proponent of Tropicalism, Jomard Muniz de Britto released a manifesto called the “Inventário do nosso feudalismo cultural” (Inventory of our Cultural Feudalism)³ in response to the ideas proposed by the Armorialists. Supported by Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, and Celso Marconi, the document expressed the political views and artistic goals of the Tropicália movement.⁴


According to the ethnomusicologist, Gerard Béhague, Tropicalists aspired to “awaken the consciousness of the middle class to the Brazilian tragedy of poverty, exploitation, and oppression and to point out the true nature of modern Brazil.” Because Armorial artistic expression drew heavily on the simplicity of idyllic themes, it came under attack by the Tropicalists, who accused Armorialists of creating an art form that only existed in an intellectually divided and socioeconomically stratified society. Tropicalists believed that the intelligentsia, represented by Suassuna, perpetrated the marginalization of the lower strata by promulgating and glorifying their poverty as the essence of “Brazilianess.” They often denounced Suassuna for using his privileged social, academic, and political positions to create art for an elite audience with the purpose of ensuring cultural colonialism. Suassuna rebutted this notion by claiming that, unlike the Tropicalists, Armorialists promoted integration through cultural appropriation and cultural attribution, thus contributing to the popularization of repudiated art forms and the creation of a community that represented northeastern identity nationwide.

The Tropicalist critique had validity in the sense that Suassuna came from a socially privileged background. Born into an influential oligarchical family, he was the eighth son of the Paraíba state Governor, João Urbano Pessoa de Vasconcelos Suassuna (1886-1930), a populist official who represented the status quo and favored agricultural reform to preserve the ways of life of the sertanejos (simple folk of the backlands). In 1930, Governor Suassuna fell victim to an assassination in retaliation for the death of a political enemy, Governor João Pessoa, who strongly opposed Suassuna’s agricultural

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policies in favor of industrialization. Out of this background emerged the younger Suassuna’s ideas about the struggle of northeastern Brazilian people to keep their disappearing ways of life on the land in the face of industrialization caused by modernization. For Suassuna, the death of his father was a metaphor for the loss of a lifestyle and the triumph of modernism over traditionalism. The memory of his departed father marked his formative years, and nostalgia shaped his conceptualization of the Armorial universe.

**Review of the Literature**

Despite the cultural resonance of the Armorial Movement in the construction of the Brazilian imaginary, most of the scholarship on the subject is limited. Among the most relevant sources are Suassuna’s writings for newspapers, journals, and magazines. In these pieces, he promoted his ideas and defended himself against accusations from his detractors. A close reading of the articles from 1970-81 provides insights into the challenges that Suassuna and the Armorialists faced. In a significant article dating from August 9, 1981, he publicly announced a self-imposed literary exile that lasted until 1994, when he became Secretary of Culture of Pernambuco State. It was only in 2008 that Suassuna wrote the *Almanaque Armorial*, in which he explained the origins and ideas behind the Armorial Movement. The historian and long-term collaborator, Carlos Newton Jr. edited this work, which some intellectuals consider a posthumous manifesto published after the Armorial Movement ended.

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Among the most relevant sources by scholars other than Suassuna is the book, *Em demanda da poética popular: Ariano Suassuna e o Movimento Armorial* (1999)\(^7\) by Idelette Muzart Fonseca dos Santos, in which the author surveys the means of cultural production encompassed by the Armorial Movement. Santos does not delve deeply into musical matters. Nonetheless, her work provides a valuable research guide for scholars who seek basic information on the subject. In her book, *Emblemas da sagração Armorial: Ariano Suassuna e o Movimento Armorial* (2000)\(^8\) the historian Maria Thereza Didier approaches the theme from a political perspective by framing the movement within the context of the Brazilian dictatorship, thus providing critical insights into the sociopolitical milieu in which the Armorial Movement existed. All the authors mentioned above wrote in Portuguese and were in direct contact with Suassuna, making these writings quintessential sources for the study and understanding of the Armorial Movement.

Candace Slater, a Professor of Literature at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), is one of the few scholars who has addressed the Armorial Movement in English. As noted previously, she does not devote significant attention to music. Her focus is on the string literature (*Literatura de cordel*), a body of cheaply-printed pamphlets with vernacular stories and fables that were clipped on wires and sold in open markets. This artistic output constitutes a significant portion of the Armorial tradition, thus making her

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\(^7\) Santos, *Em demanda da poética popular*.

\(^8\) Didier, *Emblemas da sagração armorial*. 
1982 book, *Stories on a String: The Brazilian literatura de cordel* a useful source for understanding the Armorial movement. Other scholars have produced works that focus on critical aspects of northeastern Brazilian music and culture. Among the most significant texts on the subject are: *Music of Northeast Brazil*, by Larry Crook and the two studies, *Music in Brazil: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* and "The Rabeca and Its Music, Old and New, in Pernambuco, Brazil," by John Murphy. A foundational scholar in the field, Gerard Béhague contributed a vast body of literature that deals with Brazilian musical culture. His books, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (1979), *The Beginnings of Musical Nationalism in Brazil* (1971), and *Villa-Lobos: The Search For Brazil’s Musical Soul* (1994), trace the origin and the development of nationalism in Brazil, making these works essential references for any scholar studying Brazilian music. Furthermore, Béhague authored the articles on Brazil and César Guerra-Peixe in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

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Theoretical and Methodological Framework

To explore how the Armorialists navigated regional and national boundaries that intertwined with the Brazilian political situation, I draw on an extensive body of published scholarship by the historical musicologist and ethnomusicologist, Philip Bohlman, particularly his distinctions between national and nationalist borders. In his work, *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe* (2011), Bohlman explains how national music draws attention to internal characteristics that constitute the foundations of a nation. He states that: “National music reflects the image of the nation so that those living in the nation recognize themselves in basic but crucial ways.”

According to Bohlman, national music often turns to folklore as source of inspiration and authenticity. Thus, it utilizes oral tradition and symbolism found in representations of nature as mechanisms to depict and validate the image of the nation. In my thesis, I argue that the Armorial Movement represented a new type of regionalism that transmuted into a national representation of *brasilidade* from a northeastern perspective. Armorialists claimed that the essence of Brazilian identity was crystallized in traditions untouched by modernization. Therefore, they turned to folklore as a way to authenticate their claim.

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In contrast to his concept of national music, Bohlman asserts that nationalist music arises when a nation-state competes for political, economic, cultural, and territorial hegemony. In his words:

Nationalist music may contribute to the struggle over contested territory such as border regions. Possessing music becomes like possessing land: necessarily, one must claim it as one’s own. To discover nationalist music, we seldom need to look much farther than those places where there are competing historical claims for land.\(^\text{15}\)

In Bohlman’s view, one of the differences between national and nationalist music is that the former does not represent the nation through competition, whereas the latter uses competition and confrontation as catalysts to transmute national music into nationalist music. According to Bohlman, nationalist music serves the political mechanism of the state, whereas national music emphasizes the construction of a national image. In my thesis, I utilize these ideas to demonstrate how the Armorial Movement became a nationalist manifestation by competing with the Tropicalists to define national identity.

Bohlman also points out that the borders between these two conceptual constructs can overlap to create music that is simultaneously national and nationalist. In his words: “The border between national and nationalist music may well be very blurry at times, while at times the national and the nationalist may overlap so extensively as to form a hybrid. To the extent that the product of music has the potential to be both national and nationalist, contexts and historical perspectives may distinguish one from the other.”\(^\text{16}\)

This sense of mutability contributes to the theoretical framework of my thesis in which I

\(^{\text{15}}\) Ibid., 87.

\(^{\text{16}}\) Ibid., 63.
perceive the Armorial Movement as a fluid manifestation that crossed boundaries and
metaphysically occupied the spaces in between.

With his emphasis on Europe, Bohlman extended these notions beyond traditional
national borders and applied them to a new geopolitical context. In this thesis, I apply his
theories to explain how northeastern and southeastern Brazil share an imagined border
despite the geographic distances that separate them. This border came to exist due to
cultural, political, geographical, and ethnic differences as well as the polarization
between the modern and the traditional as exemplified respectively by the industrialized
southeast and the rural northeast. Within this imagined frontier, the two regions culturally
competed for “territory,” or, in a broader sense, to internally construct and control the
discourses of national identity in Brazil.

In his book, *Nor-tec Rifa! Electronic Dance Music from Tijuana to the World*, Alejandro Madrid defines borders as physical and metaphysical areas of conflict. The
territorial delineation between the city of Tijuana (in Mexico) and the southern border of
the United States marks a physical frontier where two distinct cultural perspectives meet.
At the same time, the resulting competition between multicultural identities exemplifies
metaphysical boundaries. Madrid does not conceptualize the differences between the old
and the new, modernity and tradition, and the cosmopolitan and the rural as simple
dichotomies. Instead, he sees them as continuities and discontinuities of the same

17 Alejandro L. Madrid, *Nor-Tec Rifa! Electronic Dance Music from Tijuana to the World*,
discourse. In his words, borders are “fluid give-and-take areas, where complexity, negotiation, and hybridity are everyday constants.”

Although there were no physical borders imposed by the Brazilian government that impeded the flow of people and goods between the northeast and southeast regions, I adopt Madrid's concept of metaphysical boundaries to explore the hegemonic competition between the north and the south, the Armorialists and the Tropicalists, and the complexities that intertwined these two contrasting movements into the fabric of discourses on national identity. I also integrate the conceptual frameworks of Bohlman’s and Madrid’s works with Benedict Anderson’s notions of shared identities in his book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006) and with Edward Said’s ideas of imagined geographies in his foundational work, *Orientalism* (1979). Additionally, I draw on Martin Stokes’s views on the construction of identity and place within ethnic, geographical, political, cultural, regional, and national borders.

A critical element of this thesis relates to the use of nostalgia in shaping national identity. In this respect, I draw on Svetlana Boym’s concept of restorative nostalgia to shed light on the Armorial aesthetic. According to Boym, nostalgia often appears as a defense mechanism against modernization. Thus, in her view, restorative nostalgia “does

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18 Ibid., 3-4.
not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition.”22 In this thesis, I claim that modern cultural tendencies coming from the Tropicalistas in southern Brazil threatened the existence of a northeastern identity. Consequently, the people identifying with this part of the country turned to a nostalgic past to protect and preserve a disappearing way of life that was threatened in the face of globalization. Boym’s arguments allow me to demonstrate that the Armorial Movement’s artistic representations of pastoralism and symbolism reflected a conscious decision to return to an invented past.23 I support these arguments by calling on the work of the Brazilian scholar, Durval Muniz de Albuquerque, Jr., who approaches the creation of the northeastern region through the lens of nostalgia. In Muniz’s words: “[The northeast] was a place created out of sentiment, of lyricism, of nostalgia (saudade), to embody something that never was. It was a terrain grounded in fable. It is not thus coincidental that ‘northeastern traditions’ are regularly sought in fragments of a precapitalistic, rural past.”24

Another focal point of my thesis is the representation of national identity through timbral experimentation and sonic encoding. I argue that the rabeca evokes the sertão and that the figure of the rabequeiro upholds the idyllic values of the backlands. Using the works of the historical musicologists, Deborah Schwartz-Kates25 and Melanie


Plesch\textsuperscript{26} on Argentine national identity, I compare the \textit{rabequeiro} to the gaucho (native horseman) and the \textit{rabece} to the guitar, which is considered the national instrument of Argentina. The reasons to compare the musical traditions of these neighboring countries are many. Both nations have sizeable territorial expanses with large numbers of regions inhabited by heterogeneous populations. Additionally, Brazil and Argentina experienced similar sociopolitical conditions under dictatorial governments during the late 20th century.

In her article, “Alberto Ginastera, Argentine Cultural Construction, and the \textit{Gauchesco} Tradition”\textsuperscript{27} Schwartz-Kates explains that Argentine nationalist composers trained in Europe embraced the figure of the gaucho to evoke their national identity. In this way, composers integrated European high art forms with the folk musical styles associated with the gaucho to create a sonic encoding that represented the ideals and the identity of the country. In my work, the \textit{rabequeiro} becomes the embodiment of rural traditions of the backlands of northeastern Brazil. Similarly to the Argentine nationalist composers, Guerra-Peixe aspired to elevate the figure of the folk violinist to the level of a classically trained virtuoso in his Concertino by aggregating the sonic encoding of the \textit{rabequeiro}. By incorporating the backland’s musical style into a piece of concert music, Guerra-Peixe re-codified the aesthetic conception of the \textit{rabequeiro} by translating it into a widely accepted European musical language.


If the gaucho personified argentinidad, the guitar created a connection between the native horseman and the land. Melanie Plesch’s works explore the relation between the guitar and the representation of Argentina as a real and imagined space. According to Plesch, the guitar stands for Argentina and the pampas. She explains that nationalist composers created a sonic topos, or aural encoding of the landscape utilizing the plucked and strummed strokes, rhythmic patterns, and sequences of open chords associated with the instrument that referenced the country and its identity. In my work, I explore the way that the timbre of the rabeca evokes the image of the droughts in the backlands, while the techniques applied to the instrument, such as simplified harmonic progressions, call to mind the rabequeiro’s humble way of life. Using these theories as a foundation for my thesis, I aim to produce a detailed interdisciplinary approach to issues related to the construction and negotiation of national identity in northeastern and southeastern Brazil during the military dictatorship.

As a music scholar whose work has been shaped by the areas of ethnomusicology, musicology, and performance, I believe that the authors cited above have undoubtedly conditioned my academic understanding of the sociopolitical and cultural issues related to the construction of Brazilian national identity. Yet, it is undeniable and of utmost importance to acknowledge that my experiences as a native Brazilian have also influenced my holistic perception of Brazilianness. My birthplace, social class, ethnicity, education, musical training, and family upbringing have made me acutely aware of the fluidity of the term Brazilianness and the different meanings ascribed to it by those who

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actively observe and participate in the construction of identity. For this reason, I believe that I must inform those who read this work about my origins and the way that my personal experiences allowed me to gain a strategic vantage point in understanding the process through which identities are continuously constructed, negotiated, and challenged within regional and national contexts.

Since Brazil is not monolithic but comprised of regions that are internally diverse and distinct from one another, my understanding regarding the negotiation of identity has its basis in the fact that I experienced firsthand the asymmetric power relationships between center and periphery, as exemplified by the differences between metropolitan versus rural regions of Brazil. I was born in Limeira, a city situated 90 miles east of the city of São Paulo, which is the capital of São Paulo State. Despite its proximity to the capital and its significant number of 300,000 residents such as myself, Limeira is considered the “countryside” by the people of São Paulo, who often perceive us as simple folk. The reason for this stereotype derives from the fact that Limeira was established as a farming community in 1826 and prospered with the cultivation of coffee crops. By the mid-1860s, the Fazenda Ibicaba (Ibicaba Farm) became the largest coffee producer in the nation and occupied a prominent socioeconomic position in São Paulo State. By the turn of the 20th century, the agricultural focus shifted from coffee to sugar cane crops and citrus fruits, earning the city the appellation, “The Land of Oranges.”

Since I come from an area considered “rural,” I have experienced the stigma attached to the countryside and the simple folk. In a national context, I also come from a

29 For more information regarding the Ibicaba Farm see José Sebastião Witter, *Ibicaba: Uma experiência pioneira* (São Paulo: Edições do Arquivo do Estado, 1982)
socioeconomically developed state, which puts me in a privileged position in relation to other less developed areas in the nation. For this reason, people have interpreted my identity according to their perceptions of rural and metropolitan leading me to experience discourses of central versus marginal in ways that characterized the reception of Armorial music.

**Organization**

The organization of this thesis reflects my desire to explore the construction of Brazilian national identity through multiple lenses. I designed each chapter of my work with the intent of focusing on a different field of study, including music, literature, and politics. This organization allowed me to delve deeply into each subject to analyze its role in defining regional and national identity, while simultaneously providing the reader with a comprehensive study of *brasilidade*.

In Chapter 1, “The Armorial Movement and its Significance,” I provide an introduction to the issues surrounding the construction of national identity in Brazil. I juxtapose the aesthetic sensibilities put forward by the Armorial and Tropical movements to illustrate the fragmentation of Brazilian regional identities. I show that the Armorial Movement was a significant artistic manifestation because it challenged southern cultural hegemony by offering an alternative perspective in constructing notions of *brasilidade*.

In Chapter 2, “Memórias do sertão: Memories of the Backlands,” I trace the roots of the Armorial Movement. Here, I demonstrate the way that the historic events and artistic manifestations that preceded the Armorial Movement influenced Suassuna’s conceptualization of northeastern Brazilian identity. I then show how Suassuna used the ideas proposed by Gilberto Freyre in his Regionalist Movement as the basis for the
Armorial Movement. In this chapter, I use literature as a vehicle to demonstrate that northeastern Brazilian identity was constructed through a process of interregional and intraregional exoticization and alterity, in which the south perceived the north as a retrograde backland of the country. I also explore the competition between the Armorialists and the Tropicalists in defining national identity through discourses of modernity and tradition. This analysis leads me to claim that the modern cultural tendencies coming from the Tropicalists in southern Brazil threatened the existence of a northeastern identity, causing the Armorialists to turn toward a past rooted in tradition to counterbalance the modernist tendencies of the south.

In Chapter 3, “Music and Politics in the Armorial Movement,” I frame my work within the political and social context of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985). During this period, the military leadership implemented a series of nationalist policies that extolled regional cultural differences, while they strove to aggregate local idiosyncrasies under one national identity. By investing in the notion of a diversified country living in harmony, the government attempted to create a collective sense of national pride. The conflation of an imagined Brazilian people with the nation-state reduced dissidence and artificially created an illusion of freedom and democracy. Here, I discuss the cultural policies of the military dictatorship to demonstrate how artistic manifestations such as the Armorialist and Tropicalist movements interacted with the government.

This discussion demonstrates that the government tacitly promoted Armorial ideas since they aligned with cultural policies proposed by the government. In spite of the ramifications of his ideas, Suassuna attempted to remain apolitical. To demonstrate how
the Armorial Movement negotiated its aesthetic program within the cultural policies of period, I distinguish between the notions of regional and regionalism, on one hand, and between national and nationalism, on the other, showing how the regional and the national became regionalist and nationalist as a result of the cultural politicization promoted by the military regime. Here, I argue that Suassuna wished to transform his regional movement into a national artistic manifestation. On the other hand, the government aspired to turn the Armorial Movement into a demonstration of nationalism. This chapter reconciles these dual intersecting tendencies by portraying the Armorial Movement as a fluid artistic manifestation that simultaneously existed within regional, regionalist, national, and nationalist metaphysical spaces.

Chapter 4 “From Folk to High Art: Aesthetic Conflicts Within the Armorial Movement” focuses on the aesthetic construction of Armorial music. I analyze the conflicts between the Armorial Chamber Orchestra and the Armorial Quintet. I demonstrate that both groups had distinct ideas regarding the sonic representation of northeastern Brazilian identity. The Chamber Orchestra utilized European aesthetics to construct a sense of location for the northeastern region. As an example of this stylization of Armorial music, I analyze Guerra-Peixe’s Concertino for violin and orchestra to demonstrate how the composer embraced the \textit{rabecca} as a vehicle to evoke the region. This analysis will show that the second movement of the Concertino is the most typically “Armorial” of the work because it illustrates the techniques used by the \textit{rabequeiro}. In contrast, the first and third movements apply standard Western technical elements that are present in the traditional European repertoire of the violin to convey virtuosity.
This fourth chapter establishes a contrast between the Armorial Orchestra and the Armorial Quintet, which preferred to evoke the ethos of the northeastern region by utilizing instruments found in folk traditions. The rustic timbre of traditional instruments arose as an important vehicle for the Armorial Quintet to express the uniqueness of northeast Brazil. Under Suassuna’s guidance, the Quintet went so far as to construct instruments that produced a harsh and strident sound to depict the geography of the region. In Chapter 5, “Final Considerations and Concluding Thoughts,” I discuss the repercussions of the Armorial Movement and its continued influence on Brazilian culture.

**Research Contribution**

This work aims to expand the existing state of knowledge by analyzing the Armorial Movement through an intercultural perspective. By focusing on music, literature, and politics, I strive to open a new window of understanding into the implications of appropriation, attribution, and cultural hierarchies associated with Armorial music. A critical study of this artistic current and its reception offers valuable insights into the social dynamics that shaped the relationship between folk and classical musicians. It illuminates the socioeconomic discrepancies and cultural differences between north and south, which became integral parts for the construction of discourses of national identity in Brazil during the military dictatorship. My thesis illustrates how music and literature functions as an intercorrelated space of negotiation and competition. Furthermore, this paper has an interdisciplinary approach that combines ideas from the fields of music, literature, and the social and political sciences to contextualize the construction of national identity in Brazil. For this reason, this work has a cross-disciplinary resonance,
with the potential to engage students and scholars from the diverse fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, literature, history, anthropology, and Latin American studies.
CHAPTER 2

MEMÓRIAS DO SERTÃO: MEMORIES OF THE BACKLANDS

In this chapter, I view the Armorial Movement as an aesthetic projection of the ongoing sociopolitical and economic debates and controversies that were present in Brazilian society. In this process, the past is revitalized, remodeled, and therefore reinvented according to Suassuna’s needs to negotiate and define northeastern cultural identity within regional and national spheres. To understand how Armorialists negotiated the construction of cultural identity in the 1970s, it is necessary to clarify that the Armorial Movement was not merely a regionalist response to modernist sensibilities in the south. The group aligned with many of the modernist ideas proposed earlier in the century by Mário de Andrade, who believed that the purest form of Brazilian national art was crystallized in popular and folkloric manifestations. In this sense, Andrade saw the northeast as a potential region to serve as the repository for national culture.30

The desire to return to one’s origins to locate an unsullied art form was a modern proposition adopted by many artistic manifestations such as Afrocubanism, Neo-Classicism, and Primitivism. The opposite could also hold true. Rejecting the past could also arise as an integral part of modernist thought, as expressed in movements such as Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. Since modernism is not a monolithic concept, in this thesis, I perceive the Armorial movement as an artistic manifestation cloaked in the vestments of tradition operating under the impetus of modernism.

To legitimize the Armorial Movement, Suassuna reconfigured and expanded cultural models previously established by the regionalism of Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), which proposed to use racial miscegenation between Europeans and Afro-Amerindian peoples as the basis for national identity. Freyre’s regionalism rejected the notion that miscegenation was the cause of social and economic retraction. He instead redefined the role of the *mestiço* (a person of mixed race) by turning the negative connotations associated with racial mixture into a positive asset to define the national identity of Brazil. In the preface of his regionalist manifesto, Freyre claimed that his notion of regionalism was simultaneously modern and traditional, or what he defined as “new combinations of old ideas.”

In terms of literary classification, Suassuna belonged to the third generation of modernist writers. He built on and modified the aesthetic models of earlier authors such as José Américo de Almeida (1887-1980), Rachel de Quiroz (1910-2003), Graciliano Ramos (1892-1953), Jorge Amado (1912-2001), and José Lins do Rêgo (1901-1957), all of whom belonged to the previous generation of modernist writers. The 1922 Week of Modern Art directly influenced the structural freedom and the social realist prose found in the works of the second generation of modernist authors. Through the combination of modern and traditional elements, Suassuna played a vital role in a larger cultural history, in which the Armorial Movement linked past traditions to the present, while serving as a groundwork for the future.

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For this reason, it is necessary to contextualize the Armorial Movement in relation to the historical events that shaped Brazil beginning at the turn of the 20th century. These events, which included the 1889 monarchical transition into Republican rule that followed the abolition of slavery one year earlier, the industrial modernization of the southern states that contributed to the erosion of traditional models of patronage in the northeastern sugar cane plantations, the 1922 Week of Modern Art in São Paulo, and the fall of the old Republic in the 1930s, ignited a sociopolitical, economic, and cultural revolution in the nation. The relevance of these historical events directly influenced the themes of literary works and cultural aesthetics, establishing new models to define the sensibility of the country.

The Brazilian Belle Époque (1889-1930) encompassed the years between the proclamation of the Republic and the fall of the first Republican government.32 This was a time of intense economic expansion, favoring the production of rubber, cotton, and sugar cane in the northeast and coffee crops in the southeast. The cosmopolitan coastal cities of Brazil concentrated the wealth generated by these agricultural activities. The tropical Belle Époque was also a period marked by the desire to minimize the cultural inheritance of the Portuguese colonizers to erase the condition of a colonized country. The Brazilian intelligentsia wished to establish a new identity for the nation based on cosmopolitanism and modernity, and they sought their inspiration in French aesthetics, which they regarded as the model for cultural achievement. The architectural projects of

32 The dates of the Brazilian Belle Époque are fluid. Here, I use the commonly-accepted fall of the monarchy and the first Republican government as historical points of reference.
this era resembled Parisian buildings, and the post-romantic currents of realism, positivism, and naturalism dominated literary thought. Rio de Janeiro, which at the turn of the century was the capital of the newly-formed republic, became the cultural and aesthetic center of the nation.

The period following the 1930 coup d’état that allowed the Southern Brazilian politician and lawyer, Getúlio Vargas to ascend to the presidency marked a nationalist drive to assert the country’s national identity through the affirmation of regional cultural values. Vargas’s political goal was to unify the various regions that formed the Brazilian territory under the umbrella of one sovereign nation through a process of nationalization. The cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were at the forefront of debates regarding the construction of national identity due to the concentration of political and economic power in these southeastern states. While Rio de Janeiro dictated the cultural taste of the nation, São Paulo was the economic center of the country. With the demand for sugar cane in decline, the latter city turned to coffee production, a commodity that appealed to the global market.

The collapse of the sugar cane industry was especially detrimental for cities in the northeastern region, which focused their economies on the exportation of the commodity to Europe. Cities such as Recife, the capital of Pernambuco State, which were once economic powerhouses, now fell into decline. Despite the economic weakening of the region, Recife remained an intellectual stronghold in the northeast. This city was the first in Brazil to establish a law school in 1827, which opened a space for intellectual debates and the blossoming of sociopolitical movements, such as the Escola de Recife,
which allowed the intelligentsia to take the lead in defining the cultural identity of the region.

Geographic distances also played a role in the way that the northern and southern regions perceived one another. The lack of a well-kept road system connecting city centers with peripheral regions restrained mobility. Traveling inside or outside these regions represented a considerable investment of time, money, and, quite often, physical effort. Those who inhabited the metropolitan areas of the nation would rarely leave their urban settings. Printed sources thus arose as the primary vehicle for disseminating information. The inhabitants of metropolitan areas relied solely on books and travel letters published in the newspapers to gain insights into the living conditions and social behaviors of people outside the urban centers. Journalists who wrote these accounts were educated in the universities at the metropolitan centers and, consequently, used their sociocultural values to determine what was normative and socially acceptable. Consequently, the texts published in the first half of the twentieth century reinforced regional habits through a process of exoticization and othering.

This process of exoticization operated on intraregional and interregional levels, in which positionality in relation to center and margin was the key to the issue. This model implied a hierarchical chain of stratification, in which economic power equated to sociocultural capital. The concentration of wealth in the metropolitan areas and developed sectors of the country allowed for a given region to establish cultural dominance over other areas. To clarify these relationships, I apply the term *intraregional exoticization* to a rejection by the metropolis of the sociocultural habits of the surrounding peripheral regions in the same province. In contrast, I use the concept
interregional exoticization to refer to the condition that takes place when the people from a wealthier or more developed province exoticize the people from a less developed state (whether they live in an urban or rural area). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the boundaries between this hegemonic competition were not always clear since the two cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were often in direct competition for cultural capital to define the public taste.33

The work of the sociologist, journalist, and engineer, Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) exemplifies the issues of interregional exoticization. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Cunha achieved national acclaim with his magnum opus, Os sertões (Rebellion in the Backlands), published in 1902.34 In this book, Cunha covered the military expeditions during the Canudos War (1893-1897), a pro-monarchy civil upheaval in the northeast region against the newly-formed Republican government. Founded by the messianic priest, Antônio Conselheiro (1830-1897) in the hinterlands of Bahia State, Canudos was a 30,000-strong community formed by farmers and cattle-raising European descendants and mestiços. Following the deposition of Emperor Dom Pedro II and the fall of the monarchy, Canudos refused to acknowledge the authority of the local government, which led to an armed conflict between the Brazilian Republican forces and the rural peasants. Despite overwhelming odds, Canudos withstood two military interventions, falling only when federal troops consisting of three brigades, eight infantry battalions, and two


artillery battalions armed with cannons and machine guns surrounded the village, killing nearly all the residents.35

Cunha built his work on the contradictions between the Eurocentric scientific views that dictated the currents of thoughts held by the southern intelligentsia and his nationalistic identification with the people and the landscape from the north. His brilliance stemmed from his ability to criticize the hypocritical position of an ascending bourgeoisie society in the south that demanded social advancements from the government, but at the same time, ignored the suffering of a marginalized group of people in the northeast. Drawing on issues of race and class, Cunha denounced the idealization of a Eurocentric Brazilian identity proposed by the southern intelligentsia. For him, this identity did not reflect the social reality of other parts of the country and was only possible in the coastal cities of Brazil. 36

*Os sertões* was structured almost like a field journal that contained military, scientific, and ethnographic observations. It was the first work to report on the living conditions in the backlands and provide a geographic, climatic, and social depiction of the poverty-stricken and drought-ridden backlands to a southern readership oblivious to the northeast region. Cunha criticized the military intervention in Canudos and the incompetence of politicians and the army in dealing with the rebellion. According to his conception, the violence of the conflict went against the positivistic ideas of law, order,


and progress. He asserted that those in power neglected the region, causing the poorest
groups of people to rebel. In Cunha’s view, the southern economic and social neglect of
the northeast caused Canudos to rebel against the government.37

In the first quarter of the book, Cunha described the interactions between the
sertanejos and the geographic landscape according to naturalistic perspectives and
commonly-accepted scientific ideas of the time. Forces beyond human control, in this
case, the arid climatic conditions of the backlands, conditioned the fate and the behavior
of the backlanders, who consequently had no control over their actions. In Cunha’s
opinion, the northeastern folk was a group of rebellious, impoverished savages.
According to his views, the mestiço was directly responsible for the socioeconomic
underdevelopment in the region since miscegenation tainted the purity and superiority of
European bloodlines. Cunha used the racialist theories of superiority proposed by the
French anthropologist, George Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) to justify the supposed
racial degeneration of the northeastern folk. In Cunha’s words: “A mixing of highly
diverse races is often prejudicial. ... Miscegenation carried to an extreme brings
retrocession. ... [The mestiço] is a degenerate who lacks the physical energy of his savage
ancestors and does not have the intellectual distinction of his civilized ancestors.”38 The
last three-quarters of the book, in which Cunha described the military incursions against
the rebels, seems to contradict these ideas of racial superiority. Here, he argues that the

37 Ibid.

38 Euclides da Cunha, Os sertões: Campanha de Canudos, Coleção Clássicos Comentados (São
Paulo: Imprensa Oficial SP: Arquivo do Estado, 2002), 174-175. Cited in González Echevarría and Pupo-
bravery and resilience of the *sertanejo* reflected the unexplored potential of the northeastern region.

In the early twentieth century, the perceived notions of racial inferiority and climatic determinism based on naturalistic views created a regionalist discourse of alterity, which allowed the south to construct an image of moral, intellectual, and technological superiority in juxtaposition to Cunha’s image of a weak, uneducated, and degenerate northeast. The south proclaimed its racial superiority in quasi-eugenetic terms, deeming the northeast as inferior by its own nature. Southern Brazilian intellectuals believed that miscegenation was a detrimental factor in the development of a modern nation and that the encounter between a so-called degenerate race and a harsh environment was the real cause for poverty in the northeast. On the other hand, writers and intellectuals in the south attributed the enriched development of the region to their superior European lineage and ability to use the climate to their advantage.\(^{39}\)

Two articles published in 1923 by the newspaper *Estado de São Paulo* exposed the constructed differences between the north and the south. In the first article, titled “Impressões do Nordeste” (Impressions of the Northeast)\(^{40}\) the journalist Paulo de Moraes Barros provided an account of his visit to Juazeiro, a city in the northernmost part of the state of Bahia. Barros witnessed what he called hordes of “violent, villainous bandits” and “crowds of rabble that supplicate and jabber with wild expressions,

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\(^{40}\) Albuquerque, Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 18.
grubbing in the dirt to get a hold of the priest’s cassock.” He reflected that such an inferior race could not constitute the basis for the construction of a modern nation and that miscegenation and racial inferiority were the only justification for the inhuman conditions he witnessed in the backlands.

In contrast, the second article titled, “Impressões de São Paulo” (Impressions of São Paulo) written by the Rio de Janeiro-born sociologist and historian, Oliveira Vianna (1883-1951) cast the European immigrants as pioneers who were capable of facing adversity. Vianna exalted the courage and adaptability of these foreign settlers by stating that they “arrived crossing the Atlantic, settled in, and quickly adjusted to this fertile land and, realizing the grandness of their destiny through the production of abundance.” In Vianna’s views, the European families that colonized Brazil were “always an exuberantly productive race, strong in morals and physically eugenic.” Since Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous populations could potentially taint the superiority of the European bloodlines thought miscegenation, Vianna conveniently ignored their contributions to the economic and cultural development of the south.

Cunha’s Os sertões was a foundational work that contributed to the process of interregional exoticization by popularizing the image of an absent northeast. Cunha’s discourses of otherness reinforced the racial and developmental superiority of the southern Brazilian region. They also served as a model for other southern intellectuals,

41 Cited in Ibid., 18.
42 Ibid.
43 Cited in Ibid., 19.
44 Cited in Ibid.
such as Barros and Vianna, to construct the northeastern space as a region of misery and scarcity and to promote a regionalism of inferiority. Urbanization and modernization in the southern cities reinforced the idea that the south was the cultural and economic driver of the nation, whereas the north remained rural and provincial. The works of Barros and Vianna depicted the northeastern region as culturally, socially, and economically marginal to the southern metropole. These texts justified the purported role of the south to recolonize and recivilize the peripheries.

Despite the impact of these discourses, the southern exoticization of the north only partially contributed to the construction of northeastern regional identity. Intraregional exoticization, or the exoticization by northeasterners within the northeast region itself, also promoted images of northeastern Brazil as a space of misery. Wishing to upset the power relations between the north and the south, northeastern politicians realized that they could demand federal aid and denounce what they believed to be government favoritism toward the southern region by using droughts, banditry (cangaço), and poverty as a political platform. If on the one hand, the institutionalization of social issues in the northeast gave national visibility to the region, on the other, the victimizing discourses promoted by northeastern politicians reinforced images of regional inferiority by providing a unifying negative point of reference. In the words of Brazilian historian and scholar, Albuquerque Jr.: “The south was the counter or other to what the northeast was discovering itself to be: a subaltern space of defeat, bereft of hopes to aspire to national dominance.”

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45 Albuquerque, Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 39.
By the early 1930s, a new genre of literature had emerged on the national scene that directly contributed to the intraregional exoticization of the northeast. Gilberto Freyre’s opposition to the positivist and naturalist currents of racial and climatic determinism influenced the concept of northeastern regionalism. During the First Brazilian Regionalist Congress (1926), Freyre proposed through his *Manifesto regionalista*\(^\text{46}\) that the true basis of Brazil’s national identity derived equally from the integration of cultural practices of enslaved African peoples, native Amerindians, and European colonizers. Freyre further developed his notion of “racial democracy” in his 1933 book, *Casa-grande e senzala* (The Master and the Slaves),\(^\text{47}\) in which he argued that the amalgamation of equally significant races in the northeastern region contribute to the creation of a distinctive Brazilian identity. Freyre’s sociological approach reimagined the notions of racial hierarchy that previously had placed the northeast as a subaltern region to the south. By deconstructing the assumed superiority of “whiteness,” Freyre emphasized miscegenation as an authentic source of *brasilidade*, gave visibility to the *mestiço*, and denounced social divisions based on race. His concept of racial homogeny impacted the literary production of the second generation of modernist writers.

Considered post-modernists in the sense that they emerged on the national scene soon after the 1922 Week of Modern Art, the works of the second generation of writers drew on currents of modernism. Literature of this period combine structural freedom in writing with Marxist and Freudian psychoanalytic ideas to construct what became known as the

\(^{46}\) Freyre, *Manifesto regionalista*.

neorealism, due to the influence of Marxist thought, neorealist authors were keen to criticize capitalism and the privileges of the upper classes by exposing the suffering of the lower strata. Although neorealist authors adopted a pessimistic view of society and denounced social inequality, they did not offer a solution to political and economic conflicts. The themes of these neorealist novels revolved around the decadence of patriarchal society caused by urbanization and industrialization and pervading issues of hunger, poverty, and droughts in the northeastern hinterland. Unlike the previous regionalist works that were written by José de Alencar (1829-1877) who, despite being born in the northeast, lived in the Imperial Court of Pedro II in Rio de Janeiro, regionalist writers personally experienced many of the issues depicted in their novels. Compared to the works of northeastern authors, Alencar’s fiction lacked authenticity. The reader engaged much more with Alencar’s imagination, whereas in northeastern novels, the reader vicariously lived the experiences of the author through the characters, thus creating a close connection between the writer and the reader.

Regionalist authors sought to create a link between the people and the land by associating the identity of the region with its inhabitants through the creation of characters that were easily relatable. These characters populated the backlands and reflected the glories of the past and the struggles endured by the sertanejo. The historian Albuquerque, Jr. proposed that:

It is intended that the reader identify with their behaviors, values, ways of thinking and feeling. These characters should function as revealing the essence of a regional way of being. Creating the typical is part of the mechanism that will produce regional subjectivity. But to become credible subjects, the typical characters must also embody experiences, modes of

José de Alencar was an author from the first generation of modernists. His regionalist works include: O gaucho (1870), which depicted the southern plains, and O sertanejo (1875).
speaking, and social practices that can be recognized by the reader, rather than being discovered the characters actualize elements that have already been consecrated by the codes of meaning and perception of their era. To be comprehensible, their strangeness must be to an extent familiar.\textsuperscript{49}

By the time the Paraiba-born author, José Américo de Almeida had published \textit{A bagaceira} (Cane Trash)\textsuperscript{50} in 1928, the previous generation of modernist authors had already explored the endemic issues of droughts, banditry, and poverty in the northeast.\textsuperscript{51} Nonetheless, Almeida’s work marked the inauguration of the Northeastern Regionalist Cycle of novels. The word \textit{bagaceira} referred to the sugar cane refuse produced in the mills owned by oligarch families. Almeida depicted the suffering and inhumane conditions endured by the \textit{retirantes} (drought refugees), who escape the arid plains and migrated towards the \textit{brejo} (wetlands) in search of work. Using the \textit{sertão} and the sugar cane mills as a backdrop, Almeida illustrated the animosity of the sugar cane workers towards the \textit{retirantes}. The exodus of northeastern migrants became a driving theme in northeastern literature, as exemplified by the works of the writer, translator, and novelist, Rachel de Queiroz.

Born in Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará state and raised in the backlands of the \textit{sertão}, the writer, translator, and novelist Rachel de Queiroz was the first woman to become a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (1977). She received many of the

\textsuperscript{49} Albuquerque, Jr., \textit{The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast}, 78-79.

\textsuperscript{50} José Américo de Almeida, \textit{A bagaceira} (Rio de Janeiro: Jose Olympio, 1985).

\textsuperscript{51} The first generation of modernist authors had already explored some of the relevant themes that informed the regionalist fiction of the second generation. Rodolfo Teofilo used the famine caused by droughts as the subject for his 1890’s book, \textit{Fome} (Hunger), while the \textit{cangaceiros} and the \textit{cangaço} (backland’s outlaws and their lifestyle) first appeared in Brazilian literature in the novels, \textit{O cabeleira} and \textit{Os brilhantes} (1895), by Franklin Távora and Rodolfo Teofilo respectively. The thematic consolidation of banditry, hunger, and droughts as a spatial construction of the northeast region appeared in the fiction of Domingos Olímpio and Manuel de Oliveira Paiva.
most prestigious forms of recognition in the nation, including the Machado de Assis
Award in 1958. Best known for challenging the problems of a patriarchal society from a
female perspective, Queiroz used female characters who defied normative gender roles
by rebelling against the submissiveness required of women in northeastern society. Using
the backlands as a framework, she placed people traditionally excluded and
disempowered by the relations of gender, class, and race as protagonists of her novels. A
prime example of Queiroz’s mastery in empowering female characters is her novel,
Memorial de Maria Moura (1993), which centered around the life struggles of Mary the
Moorish, a *mestiça* orphan who became a powerful landowner and dissident leader in the
male-dominated backlands. Queiroz won the Camões and Jabuti Prizes for this work.

She debuted on the national scene in 1930 with the novel *O quinze* (The
Fifteenth). Influenced by Almeida's *Cane Trash* and the currents of social realism, *O
quinze* vividly depicted the ravages of the great drought of 1915. Queiroz personally
experienced the effects of this historic event in her infancy, when her family abandoned
its ranch in the countryside and moved back to Fortaleza and later to Rio de Janeiro to
escape the drought. This semi-autobiographical novel looked at issues of displacement
and family fragmentation faced by the *retirantes*, who involuntarily migrated to
metropolitan areas in search of dignified living conditions. In *O quinze*, Queiroz cast the
*retirantes* as hunched shadows drunkenly lurching in the dry landscape. She
unflinchingly depicted scenes of hunger, thirst, fatigue, and pestilence endured by the
*sertanejos* during their death march across the backlands. Even more importantly, her
work exposed the sacrifice and the destruction of northeastern families. Her third-person

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narrative reinforced the distance between the reader and the narrator, thus intensifying the desolation experienced by the characters.

Another regionalist author that used scenes of poverty to denounce the suffering of the northeastern folk was the journalist, politician, and member of the Communist party, Graciliano Ramos (1892-1953). He posited that capitalism, urbanization, and government negligence provoked the precarious living conditions in the northeast. In his novel, *São Bernardo* (1934), Ramos explored capitalist greed to explain the impact of industrialization on the daily lives of the rural northeastern folk. Arrested for his association with the Communist party, Ramos wrote his next novel, *Angústia* (Anguish), while incarcerated. This work critiqued the pressure that society exerted on poor people. José Lins do Rêgo helped Ramos publish the novel in 1936. Ramos also explored the family tragedy of northeastern mass emigration in his novel, *Vidas secas* (Barren Lives), published in 1938. The treatment of Ramos’s characters in the novel reflected his socio-realist approach to the endemic issues of the droughts. To make a case for social protest, the author dehumanized his characters by ascribing animalistic traits to them. He showed the disregard for human life by not naming some of the characters. The two young sons were merely called boys, while the family dog had a proper name. Ramos interchangeably organized the chapters of the book to convey the idea of the cyclical issues of the droughts. The last chapter can be read as the first, reinforcing the

deterministic and positivistic ideas that dictated the lives of those who were at the mercy of the harsh climate and landscape.

Regionalist authors also created cycles of novels that accounted for distinct aspects of northeastern socioeconomic culture. José Lins do Rêgo (1901-1957) was the author that was the most strongly influenced by Freyre’s ideas. His works revolve around the sugar cane plantations, the same setting used by Freyre in his work, *Casa-grande e senzala.* Rêgo adopted the plantations and the histories of oligarchical families as a theme for his work. His writings provided the reader with valuable insights regarding the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of life in the northeastern plantations. His five most notable works belonged to his “Sugar Cane Cycle” of novels. Published in quick succession, Rêgo’s account of life on the plantations depicted first the prosperity and later the downfall of the sugar cane empire. The book that concluded the series, *Fogo morto* (Dead Fire), referred to the extinguished fire in the furnace of the sugar cane refinery, often considered the heart and soul of the plantation. More importantly, however, the name symbolized the end of an era dominated by oligarchical northeastern landowners.

The depiction of the cocoa plantations in the novels of the Bahia-born author, Jorge Amado added another layer of complexity to the regional identity of the northeast. His “Cocoa Cycle” blended the themes of droughts, migration, and competition for fertile land between plantation owners. A Marxist, Amado used his work as a vehicle to promote leftist ideas, in which he depicted the proletarian class as almost living in a state of perfect existence. Both Freyre’s and Da Cunha’s sociological ideas served as

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56 Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala.*

inspirations for Amado’s work. His novel, *Seara vermelha* (Red Field),\(^{58}\) follows the same approach as Da Cunha’s *Os sertões*. In this work, Amado deals with interregional issues of migration endured by the *sertanéjos*, who attempted to reach São Paulo to escape the droughts.

Each of these regionalist authors had a unique approach to the issues that dominated the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres of the northeast. Combined, they provided a comprehensive overview of the problems that characterized the region. The critical acclaim of regionalist authors and the poignant sociopolitical content of the regionalist novel had interregional repercussions. In many cases, the success of authors such as Jorge Amado reached audiences beyond Brazilian borders. Because the regionalist authors embedded their personal experiences into their work, audiences perceived the regionalist novel as an authentic description of the northeastern space.

The regionalist novel contributed to both interregional and intraregional exoticization of the northeast. Regionalist works of this period not only criticized the social experiences of the backlands but also exoticized the northeast region by reinforcing negative stereotypes of poverty and desolation. The use of themes relating to poverty, droughts, and migration in regionalist literature did not merely reflect the sociopolitical condition of the northeast; it actively participated in its invention and its institution as a space of misery in the eyes of the southern Brazilian readership. Given the stark contrast between the political and ideological ideas of the north and south, it is not surprising that southern Brazilians who read the writings of northeastern Brazilian authors understood

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the northeast in terms of its geographical attributes and pastoral qualities, whereas northeastern authors defined the southeastern region of the country based on its industrialization. It is within this background that Suassuna developed his concept of northeastern Brazilian identity.

**The Influence of Gilberto Freyre and the Regionalist Authors on Suassuna’s Work**

Suassuna’s Armorial Movement had strong connections to the ideologies proposed by Gilberto Freyre, especially regarding the reconfiguration of geopolitical borders and the notion of the northeast as an area of cultural and political dominance to counterbalance the influence of cosmopolitan centers in the south. Suassuna followed Freyre’s proposition that the *mestiço* constituted the true source of Brazilian identity. He expanded this notion to include not only racial but also cultural miscegenation. According to his conception, folk manifestations were the perfect example of cultural miscegenation, in which popular traditions derived from the conjunction of Iberian influences of the Portuguese and Spanish colonizers with the Afro-Brazilian slaves and indigenous populations. Suassuna’s Armorial Movement aimed to facilitate the absorption of northeastern Brazilian identity, and the Armorialists encouraged Brazilians to seek meaning in these folk manifestations. Furthermore, they regarded folklore as a vehicle to revitalize the disappearing northeastern traditions that were encroached upon by modernization. In the words of Albuquerque Jr.:

> [Folklore] could contribute to forming a sensibility founded on the conservation of custom, habits, and conceptions, constructing new symbolic codes around them that avoided the trauma and conflict of
modernizing sociability. It was recruited into inventing traditions—
traditional ways to see, speak, act, and feel.\textsuperscript{59}

Although Suassuna drew heavily on themes previously used by the 1930s
regionalist authors to construct the geopolitical and social landscape of the \textit{sertão}, he
rejected themes that cast the northeast as a space of misery. To portray the \textit{sertão} in a
positive light, Suassuna instead went back even further, selectively constructing an
archaic past rooted in Iberian medieval traditions. He thus located what he perceived as
the true essence of northeastern Brazil in the untouched backlands and in the traditional
expressions of the folk, instead of the corrupt, war-ridden and poverty-infested \textit{sertão} of
Euclides da Cunha and Graciliano Ramos or the decadent plantations of José Lins do
Rêgo and Jorge Amado. In Suassuna’s words, the \textit{sertão} was simple, yet populated by
noble folk, not “crude prophets, lunatics, and filthy bloodthirsty outlaws.”\textsuperscript{60}

By the mid 1950s, Suassuna produced some of his most celebrated works, which
contained aesthetic and structural elements that derived directly from the Medieval
European literary canon. He mixed these traditions with Brazilian popular art forms to
create an authentically northeastern form of Brazilian expression. His 1955 play, \textit{Auto da
compadecida} (The Rogues’ Trial)\textsuperscript{61} was his first experimentation with Armorial
aesthetics in literature. He mixed the Baroque traditions of the \textit{Commedia dell’arte}, the
Medieval-Renaissance \textit{auto} (morality play), and the \textit{picaresque} novel with Brazilian
popular art forms, such as the \textit{Romanceiro popular}, a type of Medieval Iberian epic poem

\textsuperscript{59} Albuquerque, Jr., \textit{The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast}, 47.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 53.

\textsuperscript{61} Ariano Suassuna, \textit{The Rogues’ Trial}, transl. Dillwyn F. Ratcliff (Los Angeles: University of
introduced by the colonizers and transformed into folk theater in the New World. Yet, this play was not merely a product of Renaissance ideas, nor the result of hybridity between European and Latin American literary currents. Like many other South American authors, Suassuna “played with the signs of another writer and another work.” It is through the process of anthropophagic appropriation, attribution, and resignification of the works of Medieval Iberian authors that Suassuna constructed his literary universe. These notions are evident in the elaboration of characters throughout the play, which is structurally based on Medieval ideas, but aesthetically unique to Brazilian culture.

Suassuna also conceptualized many aesthetic ideas related to the Armorial Movement in his 1971 fictional work, the *Romance d’a pedra do reino e o principe do sangue do vai-e-volta* (*Romance of the Kingdom’s Stone and the Prince of Come-and-Go Blood*). In this quixotic romance, Suassuna drew heavily on popular elements of the *sertão* such as religiosity, messianism, the landscape, and the pervasive droughts that afflicted the region, all of which are signifiers of northeastern identity. He also absorbed many of the themes put forward by regionalist authors. Notions of miscegenation and social justice are themes that lie at the center of Suassuna’s work. Furthermore, he absorbed the idea of an absent paternal figure, a theme explored in Rêgo’s sugar cane cycle as a metaphor for the destruction of northeastern patriarchal society. In doing it so, Suassuna immortalized the memory of his deceased father in the figure of the narrator, Dom Pedro Dinis Ferreira.

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Quaderna. Through the eyes of this protagonist, the reader glimpses the Brazilian rural backcountry during the 1930s and the social injustices that decimated the land. By reinforcing such ties with popular culture and the backlands, Suassuna aspired to assert the autonomy of Brazilian literature and make it clear that his work was not a simulacrum of European literary tradition. As we shall see in Chapter 4, Armorial music would also strive to achieve similar goals in search for Brazilian identity.

Armorial and the Tropicália Movement

Armorialists believed that the past preserved the authenticity of Brazilian culture. By revitalizing the past and tradition, Armorialists also attempted to redeem what they considered to be the true identity of the northeast region, which could serve as the basis for a discourse to define Brazilianness. By revitalizing disappearing traditions, Armorialists aimed to create a historical continuity with the present. According to Albuquerque Jr.: “Tradition would provide landmarks to guide the activities of a society in transition and impede the forces of discontinuity,” whereas folklore, “posed as a shield against the encroachments of cosmopolitan society.”

Paying tribute to the past through nostalgia became an important vehicle for discourses that attempted to define northeastern Brazilian identity.

The Armorialists were not the only group that attempted to define what it meant to be Brazilian. As mentioned before, Mário de Andrade attempted to construct a coherent discourse of national identity following the 1922 Week of Modern Art. In 1928, the

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64 Albuquerque, Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, 45-46.
modernist poet, Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954)\textsuperscript{65} published his *Manifesto antropofágico* (1928), proposing to define Brazilian national identity by means of the consumption, absorption, and reinterpretation of foreign influences as a way of divorcing Brazilian identity from the European postcolonial sphere. Although the Armorialists did not accept Oswald de Andrade’s notions of Brazilianness, in the south, a group of musicians that were northeastern emigrants led by Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, embraced his ideas. The avant-garde Tropicália movement they founded aimed to define Brazilian identity by means of anthropophagy, or what was termed, “cultural cannibalism.” While the Armorialists rejected the influence of modern culture in the construction of Brazilianness, the Tropicalists welcomed these foreign influences. They believed that Brazilian identity should be constructed based on modern ideals through a creative process of absorption and reinvention.

In 1968, the musicians belonging to the Tropicalist Movement produced a manifesto in which they expressed their goals and ideas as an artistic manifestation. Titled the “Inventory of Feudalism in the Northeast,”\textsuperscript{66} the Tropicalists proposed in this document to denounce the social inequality of the country by exposing its harsh social realities. According to the ethnomusicologist, Gerard Béhague, Tropicalists aspired to “awaken the consciousness of the middle class to the Brazilian tragedy of poverty, exploitation, and oppression and to point out the true nature of modern Brazil.”\textsuperscript{67} They accordingly

\textsuperscript{65} Despite sharing the same surname, Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade were not blood relatives.

\textsuperscript{66} Didier, *Emblemas da sagração armorial*, 103.

denounced the conservative position and what they perceived as the puritan aspirations of Brazilian culture, which, for them, figured as the emblem of sociocultural retrogression.

This manifesto stated that the Tropicalists expressly opposed returning to the past as an answer to current problems, which they believed would serve only to perpetuate social subdevelopment. Instead, they looked toward an invented future that would only be possible through a process of modernization. For the Tropicalists, it was modernity that defined the identity of Brazil, and it was only through a genuinely modern sociocultural revolution that a new Brazilian identity would emerge. In this sense, the Tropicalist movement disputed everything that the Armorialists stood for since the Armorialist’s representations of pastoralism and symbolism reflected a conscious desire to return to an invented past. Nonetheless, both groups attempted to define the same concept, in this case, brasiliade, but selected different paths.

In this respect, Svetlana Boym’s concept of nostalgia makes it possible to demonstrate the mechanisms employed by the Armorialists and the Tropicalists in constructing notions of national identity. In her book, The Future of Nostalgia (2001), Boym challenges the conception of nostalgia as merely longing for the past. Instead, she argues that one can be nostalgic for the future as well. By typologically dividing nostalgia into two categories, Boym explains that:

Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future. Consideration of the future makes us take responsibility for our nostalgic tales. The future of nostalgic longing and progressive thinking is at the center of this inquiry. Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual

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biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory. 69

Boym labels the desire to return to the past as restorative nostalgia. According to her perspective, restorative nostalgia often appears as a defense mechanism against modernization. Those operating under the influence of restorative nostalgia do not perceive the desire to return to the past as a nostalgic act. In her view, restorative nostalgia “does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition.” 70 She claims that restorative nostalgia stands at the core of national and religious revivals since “it knows only two plots—the return to origins and the conspiracy.” 71 This notion accords not only with the ideas proposed by Suassuna and the Armorialists, but also with the conceptions of Freyre and the second generation of modernist authors, who regarded the northeast as a space that preserved Brazil’s most traditional forms of culture. The modern cultural tendencies coming from the Tropicalistas in southern Brazil threatened the existence of a northeastern Brazilian identity. Consequently, northeasterners who attempted to preserve or upset power discrepancies turned to a nostalgic past to protect and preserve a disappearing way of life threatened by modernization.

In contrast, Boym’s notion of reflective nostalgia best describes the mechanisms employed by the Tropicalists to define their concept of Brazilianness. According to Boym, reflective nostalgia “does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. ... [Instead] reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.” 72 Boym affirms that, at its best, reflective

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69 Ibid., xvi.
70 Ibid., xviii.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., xvii.
nostalgia poses "an ethical and creative challenge." According to the ideas proposed by the Tropicalists, one of the most significant contradictions and ethical challenges presented by modernity was social inequality. Tropicalists believed that they could prompt society to act against social injustices by denouncing the social privilege of the middle classes. They also used their politically-charged and socially-engaged music to broadcast a message to audiences denouncing the abuses of the military dictatorship. This desire to instigate guilt to prompt a reaction was one of the driving forces behind the Tropicalist Movement.

Boym argues that these two typologies of nostalgia allow for the discernment between national memory, which in her view, "is based on a single plot of national identity," and social memory, which "consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory." This distinction can also serve to delineate differences between the long-term goals of the two Brazilian groups. On the one hand, the Armorialists employed the concept of national memory to construct an historical sense of continuity with the past in order to create a linear discourse of national identity. On the other hand, the Tropicalists preferred to absorb and reconfigure foreign influences in the hope of projecting an image of a multicultural and globalized country. In this sense, plurality was the key element behind the Tropicalists’ conception, which corresponds to Boym’s notion of social memory.

The nostalgic approach of each group reflects the interregional power dynamics between north and south in the national scenario. Furthermore, the two groups’

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
distinctive approaches to nostalgia illustrate their fierce competition to control the discourses of national identity. With the decline of the sugar cane economy in the northeast and the consequent loss of political influence in the region, the Armorialists turned back to a point in time when the northeast was still a hegemonic force. Their pretext of preserving an effacing tradition masked their attempt to preserve power, which, in this case, involved the power of a dominant ruling class of northeastern Brazilian oligarchical families. At the same time, the wealth generated by the industrialization in the south empowered the southern intelligentsia to believe that it was their duty to lead the path in the construction of a modern nation. These diverging positions reflected on a regional scale the fragmentation of Brazil’s national identity.
CHAPTER 3

MUSIC AND POLITICS IN THE ARMORIAL MOVEMENT

In this chapter, I explore the resonance of the Armorialist and Tropicalist movements within the dictatorial regime. Calling on theoretical frameworks proposed by Philip Bohlman and Alejandro Madrid, I demonstrate how Suassuna negotiated his position within the government to promote his ideas by analyzing the mechanisms that allowed the Armorial Movement to become both a regional and a national artistic manifestation, as well as cross over into the realm of nationalism. Yet, in this chapter, I do not strictly classify the Armorial movement within a single category. Rather, I show how the Armorialists constructed a discourse of national identity as a fluid manifestation that navigated boundaries and existed within the metaphysical intersections that encompassed notions of regional, national, regionalism, and nationalism.

Accordingly, I analyze the mechanisms that allowed the Armorial movement to cross from one classification to another. In doing so, I show how the regionalist movement discussed in Chapter 2 arose as a national current due to the Brazilian people’s identification with Armorial aesthetics, which called on northeastern folklore as its primary source of inspiration. Using the past as a cultural repository, I demonstrate how Armorialists aimed to create a high art form that employed northeastern Brazilian elements to represent the identity of the country. In addition, I assert that even though the Armorialists tried to remain apolitical, the ideological orientation of the group overlapped with cultural polices of the government, which used the arts as a tool to manipulate the collective consciousness of the Brazilian people. Consequently, both the government and the Armorialists believed that miscegenation and popular art forms could serve as useful
vehicles to construct a unified national identity in which the Brazilian people recognized
themselves as part of a larger nation state.

To explore how the Armorialists navigated a complex system of regional and
national boundaries and their intersections with Brazilian politics, I apply Bohlman’s
notions of national and nationalism, as set forth in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Moreover,
here as well as earlier in Chapter 2, I extend Bohlman’s conceptual constructs in order to
draw parallel distinctions between notions of regional (the characteristic features
associated with the identity of a region) and regionalism (the use of these features to
advance an ideological position or promote a strategic power relationship). In this way,
Bohlman’s terminological framework facilitates an analysis of the politicized
mechanisms that led the regional and the national to transmute into the regionalist and the
nationalist within the context of the Brazilian military dictatorship.

Viewed from this perspective, the Armorial Movement opens a window into the
way that regional identities form part of larger national discourses to define
Brazilianness. Here, I show how the debates that circumscribed the construction of
national identity represented a struggle for power, self-assurance, and cultural hegemony.
These controversies allowed groups such as the Armorialists, the Tropicalists, and the
military government to compete among themselves to define the identity of the country.
The competition to formulate discourses of national identity resulted in the creation of
epistemological borders between these groups. It is indeed within the liminality of these
metaphysical spaces that the many ideas regarding Brazilianness came into conflict.

In Brazil, six years after the 1964 coup d’état that deposed the elected President
João Goulart, the military government promoted a series of measures to legitimize the
political regime. During this period, the leaders of the country implemented a series of polices to extol national pride. During the early 1970s, the government revived and promoted the *ufanista* ideas proposed by the historian, poet, and politician, Afonso Celso de Assis Figueiredo Júnior (1860-1938) in his book titled, *Porque me ufano de meu país*,(Why I Am Proud of My Country) published at the turn of the twentieth century. Much like *saudade*, the term *ufano* did not have an equivalent in the English language that fully described the meaning of the word. Nonetheless, for Brazilians living in the 1970s, *ufanismo* as employed by Figueiredo and the government signified an exaggerated sense of patriotism, duty, and national pride.

The first decade of the Brazilian dictatorship was marked by exceptional economic growth. Reaching a peak between 1969 and 1974 during the tenure of General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1905-1985), this unprecedented economic boom became known as the Brazilian Economic Miracle, a “miracle” that, according to the military government, was only possible under the regime. Aiming to capitalize on the economic expansion and create a sense of euphoria, the military government publicized highly-inflated economic figures in the newspapers to heighten this exaggerated sense of patriotism.

In addition, the Brazilian government allocated funds to promote national integration by developing the country’s infrastructure. Through the Plano de Integração Nacional (Plan for National Integration), the government poured large sums of money into projects to modernize the radio and television broadcasting systems. They invested in the construction of roads such as the Trans-Amazonic Highway and the bridge across Guanabara Bay to improve mobility and the exchange of goods. During this period,
Brazil had a surplus of electricity, which led to self-sufficiency. This was only possible because of the government’s investment in power plants, such as the nuclear reactors of Angra 1, 2, and 3 and the Itaipu Dam, which, until 2016, was the hydroelectric power plant that produced the most energy in the world. According to government claims, projects such as these would rightfully place Brazil among the most developed nations of the globe. Thus, for the military government, the national identity of Brazil should reflect the image of a self-sufficient, industrially-modernized, and economically-developed nation.

To reduce dissidence among those who opposed the regime, the government emphasized cultural and regional differences and strove to aggregate local idiosyncrasies under one homogenized national identity. According to the Brazilian historian Didier, the military government considered cultural policies as a matter of national security since “cultural manifestations expressed the psychosocial forces of society.”75 The cultural policies of the military dictatorship often promoted the ideals of national integration. By investing in the notion of a diversified country living in harmony, the government aimed to create a collective sense of national pride unified under one national umbrella. The conflation of an imagined Brazilian people with the nation state also artificially created an illusion of freedom and democracy. Cultural manifestations of Brazilian identity arose as important vehicles to disseminate the notion of national integration. For this reason, the government valued and invested in the promotion of activities capable of transmitting to domestic and international audiences the image of a strong, modernized, and culturally diverse Brazil.

Throughout the period of military dictatorship, soccer was a vehicle for governmental propaganda. The government used the pride extolled by the victories of the national soccer team in the 1970 World Cup in Mexico as a mechanism to popularize the actions of the dictatorial regime. Soccer also served as a tool to detract attention from the abuses committed by the military against those who opposed the regime. The 1970s World Cup was the first major international soccer tournament broadcast live across Brazil. Since the event had the potential to reach a sizable portion of viewers nationwide, the military government invested in the promotion of patriotic songs exalting national pride. Ideologically charged songs such as *Pra frente Brasil* (Forward, Brazil) exemplified the ufánistic cultural propaganda of the military government by calling for 90 million Brazilians to mobilize and unite in the exaltation of the country. This nationalistic jingle became immortalized in the collective national memory after Brazil won the soccer World Championship for the third time. Rooting against the national team became as anti-patriotic an act as it was to root against the country itself.

The government disseminated slogans emphasizing national pride in printed forms through newspapers and magazines as well as on the radio and television. Messages such as, “No One Can Hold This Country Back,”76 or “This Is a Forward-Moving Country”77 arose as a constant presence in the media. During the military dictatorship, the government adopted ufánistic slogans to send political messages to the masses. Mottos such as, “Brazil, Love it or Leave it,”78 and “Those Who Do Not Live to

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76 “Ninguém segura este país.”
77 “Este é um país que vai pra frente.”
78 “Brasil, ame-o ou deixe-o.”
Serve Brazil Do Not Serve to Live in Brazil” influenced the way Brazilians perceived themselves within the nation. The government attempted to control dissidence by “othering” or casting aside those who did not fit in with the norms of Brazilianness proposed by the dictatorial regime.

The conception of national identity that the military dictatorship attempted to construct during the second decade of the regime was one of a unified, socially equal, and economically strong nation. Contradicting reality, the identity proposed by the government masked larger problems, such as social inequalities and the fragility of the Brazilian economy, which by the late 1970s, collapsed due to overinflation and excessive government expenditures on infrastructure projects. The constructed image of a unified nation under the flag of a dictatorship also ignored regional fragmentation between the northeast and southeast.

Under the Institutional Act 5 (AI-5), which legalized the practice of torture and suspended constitutional guarantees including freedom of the press among many other rights, any individual, group, or artistic manifestation that publicly disagreed with the national image put forward by the government faced severe censorship and repression under the guise of threatening national security. The Division of Security and Information headed by the Minister of Education, Jarbas Passarinho produced a document titled, Como eles agem (How They Act), accusing leftist groups of using cultural sectors and artistic manifestations to attack the government. In this document, Passarinho warned top officials that groups promoting political ideas through cultural manifestations represented

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79 “Quem não vive para servir ao Brasil, não serve para viver no Brasil.”
a danger to national security.\textsuperscript{80} To the public, however, Minister Passarinho attempted to conceal the oppressive actions of the government by giving a false impression of artistic freedom, as exemplified by his declarations: “We [the military government], give full freedom for creation. We just do not want our beliefs attacked.”\textsuperscript{81}

Although many of their concepts regarding Brazilianness related to the nationalist ideas of the government to construct a modern and progressive country, the Tropicalists were among the groups censored by the military. One of the ideas of the Tropicalist movement was to absorb and reinterpret foreign influences, as proposed by Oswald de Andrade’s anthropophagite manifesto. This notion accorded with the military’s propositions that affirmed Brazilian identity resulted from the “passive amalgamation of exterior tendencies.”\textsuperscript{82} However, the leftist political ideals expressed in the lyrics of Tropicalist songs and the participation of its founding members, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, in anti-authoritarian public demonstrations led to their persecution and censorship.

The Minister of Communications, Higino Corsetti, was another official that publicly defended the actions of the government. To him, the regime did not censor, but disciplined. He stated that the role of the government was to “establish what is good for the Brazilian people by creating well-defined rules so as not to do what is not

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 31.

\textsuperscript{81} “Nós damos liberdade de criação total . . . só não queremos que ataquem as nossas crenças.” Cited in Ibid.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 82.
permitted.” During the tenure of Minister of Culture, Ney Braga, the government implemented a series of cultural regulations known as Política Nacional de Cultura (National Policies of Culture) with the intent of controlling the discourses of national identity. Through these polices, the military government attempted to create a continuity between the past and present in order to legitimize and preserve the position of the regime by locating and preserving the symbolic past of the country’s heritage.

The National Policies of Culture institutionalized miscegenation as the cultural expression of Brazilian identity. A text published by the government in the newspaper Opinião highlighted the importance of miscegenation in the construction of national identity by stating: “It is this ability to accept, absorb, mix, [and] recreate that gives a peculiar significance to Brazilian culture, thus expressing the personality of the people who created this culture.” Through this emphasis on cultural mixture, the military government reinforced the association of regional features with the representation of the national character, which, in turn, symbolized the cultural roots of the nation. It is within this framework that the northeast region once again emerged in the national scene as the cradle for the ethnic and cultural fusions that gave rise to Brazilian identity.

As previously explained in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, Suassuna’s Armorial Movement was a regionalist movement inspired by an earlier manifestation known as Escola de Recife (Recife School) that arose in the capital of Pernambuco State. The racial theories proposed by the sociologist Gilberto Freye in his 1933 book, The Masters and

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83 “deve estabelecer o que é bom para os brasileiros criando normas bem definidas para que não se faça o que não se permitido.” Cited in Ibid., 31.

84 “É esta capacidade de aceitar, de absorver, de refundir, de recriar, que dá significado peculiar à cultura brasileira, expressando a personalidade do povo que a criou.” Cited in Ibid., 83.
the Slaves, influenced Suassuna’s racial conception of Brazilianness. Consequently, Suassuna’s Armorial Movement built on Freyre’s ideas of regionalism to create a style of literature, music, and the arts that was capable of representing the northeast region to a national audience. Similar to the ideas promoted by the government, Suassuna focused on miscegenation as the defining characteristic that constituted national identity. Freyre delineated the geopolitical borders of the northeastern region, whereas Suassuna sharpened the focus and drew attention to the land and the people who inhabited the region. For the Armorialists, the conception of Brazilian identity derived from the connection between the isolated backlands and their inhabitants. Armorialists moreover believed that the authentic origins of the nation were preserved in the regional folklore and in the rural social traditions that remained untouched by modernization.

This position relates to Bohlman’s concept of national music in the way that the Armorialists’ embrace of Brazilian rural traditions responded to Bohlman’s belief that: “National music frequently turns to folk music, laying claim to its authenticity.” In this sense, the Armorial Movement should be considered not only as a regional and regionalist movement, but also as a national artistic manifestation in the way that its members sought their inspiration in the folk traditions of Brazil. For Suassuna and the Armorial Movement, these “fragments of a precapitalistic rural past” projected an image of the people, the region, and its traditions to a national audience. Most importantly, for the Armorialists, their creative work represented the national identity of Brazil from a regional perspective that accentuated the contributions within the borders of

85 Bohlman, Focus. 60.
86 Albuquerque, Jr., The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast, 46.
the northeast. In this sense, the Armorial movement should not only be considered as a regional and regionalist manifestation, but also as a national expression and projection of the cultural aesthetics associated with northeastern Brazil.

A related issue is whether the movement should be considered nationalist according to Bohlman’s classification because of the overlap between Suassuna’s cultural program and that of the military government. In assessing this question, it is important to realize that Suassuna’s political allegiance is a complex issue that is often oversimplified by those who mistakenly view him as a proponent of the military dictatorship. It is true that his close relationship with influential politicians, such as the Mayor of Recife and the three-time Pernambuco State Governor Miguel Arraes (1916-2005), allowed him to assume key posts in the ranks of the government during the mid-1970s. When Suassuna was appointed Secretary of Education and Culture on March 1975 under Arraes’s term, he used his position to broadcast Armorial ideas to a national audience, bringing the Armorialists and the northeastern region to center stage of the debate on national identity. Suassuna also received federal funding from the Minister of Culture, Ney Braga to finance the Armorialist artistic endeavors, which included national tours with the Armorial Quintet and the creation of the Romançal Orchestra.

On March 14, 1975, the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* published an article in which Braga reaffirmed his commitment to assist Suassuna in securing funds for his projects. This publication stated that:

Suassuna was summoned to Brasilia [capital of Brazil] by the Minister of Education [and Culture] Ney Braga, who intends to help the [Armorial] movement and sponsor the excursions of the Quintet. ... Last year, the Ministério [Department of Education and Culture] provided 350,000 cruzeiros in financial aid to the [Armorial] movement. This year, the aid can be increased since in addition to many areas of cultural production,
such as, literature, engraving, painting, music, [and] theatre, an orchestra will be created.  

On January 2, 1976, the newspaper Diário de Pernambuco published an emphatic follow-up story titled, *Braga promote apoio a Ariano para movimento* (Braga Promises to Support Ariano’s [Armorial] Movement), assuring that Braga secured federal funding for the Armorialists. According to this publication:

> During the meeting with the writer Ariano Suassuna, the Minister of Education and Culture Ney Braga promised to support the Armorial Movement of the Northeast. He authorized the release of over one million cruzeiros in financial aid, to execute the cultural plans of the SEC [Department of Education and Culture] of Recife, which is directed by the author of the *Romance da pedra do reino*.  

Because the Armorial Movement did not have to endure artistic censorship, it may have appeared to those outside the group that the Armorialists received preferential treatment because they promoted the cultural agenda of the military government. Yet, in actuality, the relationship worked the opposite way. In truth, the government did not depend on the Armorialists to promote the political agenda of the military regime. On the contrary, Brazilian leaders attempted to use the Armorial Movement to their own advantage as a vehicle for self-legitimization by tacitly promoting Armorial ideas about miscegenation and folk culture as sources for the construction of a Brazilian national identity. These ideas overlapped with the propositions of the government to construct a

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87 “Suassuna foi convocado a Brasília pelo ministro da Educação Ney Braga, que pretende ajudar o movimento e patrocinar excursões do Quinteto Armorial, que se apresentou ontem no auditório do MEC. No ano passado, o Ministério deu uma ajuda de 350 mil cruzeiros ao movimento. Nesse ano, a ajuda pode ser ampliada, pois além de várias áreas artísticas–literatura, gravura, pintura, música, teatro, será criada a orquestra.” Cited in Ibid., 42-43.

88 “Durante o encontro com o escritor Ariano Suassuna, o ministro Ney Braga, de Educação e Cultura prometeu apoio ao Movimento Armorial do Nordeste e autorizou a liberação de uma verba superior a um milhão de cruzeiros para a execução do plano cultural da SEC, da prefeitura do Recife, que recebe a orientação do autor do Romance da Pedra do Reino.” Cited in Ibid., 43.
unified Brazilian nation. The politicization of the Armorial propositions caused the movement to transmute from a projection of northeast regionlism into a manifestation of nationalism.

Suassuna implemented many of the ideological propositions that served as the basis for the Armorial Movement—especially ideas regarding miscegenation and folklore as the key to national identity—as early as the 1960s, when together with Germano Coelho, Hermilio Borba Filho, Paulo Freire and other members of the cultural intelligentsia, he founded the Movimento de Cultura Popular (Movement of Popular Culture of Recife). The MCP, as it became known, was a sociocultural project sponsored by the mayor of Recife, Miguel Arraes. One of the goals of the MCP was to create a bridge between the cultural intelligentsia and the people. The intelligentsia believed that they could politically engage the population by raising awareness of the socioeconomic problems present in the nation. The MCP therefore promoted nationalist ideas under the pretext of defending the preservation of popular culture.

Much to Suassuna’s dislike, the MCP arose as a vehicle of political indoctrination. The founder of the Armorial Movement himself believed that a politically-oriented art had the potential to alienate the masses and to infringe on artistic freedom. In an article published in 1963 by the newspaper, *Ultima Hora*, Suassuna clarified his position in relation to art and politics by stating:

There are artists who confuse the two subjects, forgetting to ask the fundamental artistic question: is it really beautiful? To ask the educator’s question: will the people understand? Or ask the politician’s question: is it clear and effective enough to help to liberate the people? The role of the artist is, before anything, to create works that are beautiful and civically
inspirational because the people who have *Don Quixote* and *Os sertões* will never lose their national meaning.\(^8^9\)

Since Suassuna vehemently disagreed with the notion that culture should have a political purpose, he decided to cut his ties with the MCP.

In the end, the aesthetic ideas of Suassuna and the Armorialists did not meet with government censorship because they accorded with the National Policies of Culture proposed by the military dictatorship. However, the Armorialists made a clear distinction between "popular culture," which came from folk traditions and represented the art of the people and the "popularization of culture," which was promoted by the government as political propaganda and designed to indoctrinate the masses. According to Suassuna’s views, popular culture represented the people, not the State. Because Armorialists decided not to support the indoctrination promoted by the National Policies of Culture, one can affirm that, at least according to Suassuna, the Armorial Movement was regional, regionalist, and national, but not nationalist. However, given the perceived relationship between the Armorial movement and the cultural policies of the government, others may have seen it differently.

To conclude, the Armorial Movement played an important role in shaping the debate on national identity. This movement’s cultural resonance in the construction of the Brazilian popular imaginary made it possible for people from the northeastern parts of the country to identify themselves with the Armorialists’ constructed notions of *brasilidade*. Because of the way that Armorial aesthetics overlapped and intersected with flexibile

\(^8^9\) “Há artistas que, confundindo as duas coisas, deixam de fazer a pergunta fundamental da arte (Esta realmente belo?), para fazer a dos educadores (Sera que o povo compreendera?) ou ainda a dos polfticos (Estara bastante claro e eficaz para ajudar a libertatrao do povo?) cited in Didier, *Emblemas da sagração armorial*, 96.
notions of identity and politics during the period, the movement occupied a metaphysical space that connected notions of regional, regionalist, national and nationalist. It is this ambiguity that makes the Armorial movement worthy of study because it reflects the ambivalence of discourses that attempted to define Brazilian national identity during the military dictatorship.
CHAPTER 4

FROM FOLK TO HIGH ART: AESTHETIC CONFLICTS WITHIN THE ARMORIAL MOVEMENT

Up until this point, I have explored the construction of Brazilian national identity by analyzing the competition between the north and the south, respectively materialized in the dichotomic aesthetic propositions of the Armorialists and the Tropicalists. Thus far, I have explained that the Armorial Movement emerged from the need to preserve and revitalize traditional northeastern sensibilities threatened by modernist currents that emerged in the southern states, following a shift in the sociopolitical landscape that led to the concentration of wealth and political power in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. I presented the Armorial Movement as an artistic manifestation that constructed an erudite art form rooted in the folk traditions of the northeast to bridge the gap between learned and popular cultural expressions. This paper has shown that, throughout the years, Suassuna managed to nurture and unite artists who shared his aesthetic aspirations to create an art form that would represent the northeast to a national audience and serve as the basis for the construction of a Brazilian identity.

In the present chapter, I explore the ways that many musicians shared the ideals proposed by Suassuna, but often diverged in how they chose to realize their aesthetic goals. The conflicts between the Armorial Quintet, led by the guitarist, Antônio José Madureira (1949-), and the Armorial Chamber Orchestra, which had the violinist Cussy de Almeida (1936-2010) among its supporters, exemplified the idea that the paths to construct a musical identity for the northeast region were heterogeneous, even among those who pursued common goals. The composer and ethnomusicologist, César Guerra-
Peixe (1914-1993) was another prominent figure in the Armorial Movement since his works occupied a place in between the opposing musical aesthetics of the Armorial Quintet and the Chamber Orchestra. Guerra-Peixe composed Armorial music performed by both groups and his approach equally privileged the use of learned and folk techniques.

To explore the aesthetic propositions of the two groups, I highlight the conflicts between the Armorial Quintet and Armorial Chamber Orchestra. Here, I show how these ensembles competed to impose their distinct representations of northeastern regional identity through timbral experimentation. As I will explain, the Quintet preferred to employ traditional folk instruments and techniques that emulated the performance sound and style of northeastern popular musicians. This ensemble believed that the artistic manifestations of the common people encapsulated the traditional spirit of northeastern musical identity. On the other hand, the Armorial Chamber Orchestra proposed to construct a sonic representation of the northeast under the influence of European musical traditions. The goals of this ensemble involved creating a stylized version of Armorial Music, which is evident in Guerra-Peixe’s Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra, in which the violin assumes the role of a rabeca and the orchestra plays the part of a regional folk music ensemble.90

In 1969, Suassuna received an invitation to serve as Director of the Department of Cultural Extension at the Federal University of Pernambuco (1969-1975). This position

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allowed him to develop further his systematic study of northeastern culture, which he had started two decades earlier in 1946, during the Preparatory phase of the Armorial Movement. One of Suassuna’s main goals while working in the Department of Cultural Extension was to explore the roots of popular northeastern music, which he believed was crystallized and preserved within the traditional popular manifestations of folklore. He invited a group of artists from various musical backgrounds to conduct research and trace back the origins of northeastern Brazilian music. Among the researchers figured the classically trained violinist, Cussy de Almeida and the folk violinist, Jarbas Maciel (1933-), along with the composers of northeastern Brazilian music, Lourenço da Fonseca Barbosa (1904-1997), known as “Capiba,” and Clovis Pereira (1932-). Suassuna also counted on the expertise of César Guerra-Peixe, who, at the time, was one of the most prominent composers and orchestrators in the nation. Guerra-Peixe was also a scholar and an authority on northeastern folk musical traditions due to the publication of his book, *Maracatus do Recife* (1955),\(^91\) in which he explored and traced the origins of the rhythms found in dances from Pernambuco State.

As case studies, the Armorialists interviewed, recorded, and transcribed the works of traditional folk groups such, as the *banda de pífanos* (an ensemble formed of transverse flutes and percussion instruments) that often performed in rural festivities, along with numerous *rabeca* and *viola* players, singers, and poets. The Armorialists found commonalities between the instrumentation, timbre, harmony, rhythmic figures, melodic structure, and texture present in folk and erudite music, as well as in Afro-
indigenous and Iberian traditions. They noticed that the use of stacked intervals such as thirds and sixths in melodic and harmonic patterns was a shared feature found in both European polyphony and northeastern Brazilian folk music. The prominent use of consonant intervals led them to employ modal harmonies, which the Armorialists traced back to the Iberian Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music traditions of the colonizers.92 According to the historian, Idelette Muzart Fonseca dos Santos, all northeastern Brazilian folk music utilized modal systems.93 The Armorialists also noticed similarities between the rhythmic figures found in northeastern folk dances and Afro-Brazilian music.

Suassuna proposed that Armorial music should only adopt the instruments and musical elements found in both erudite Iberian traditions and northeastern Brazilian traditions, and he rejected anything that did not meet these criteria. For example, the Armorialists refused to incorporate instruments such as the shawm, which was absent from northeastern Brazilian music, even though it dated back to the Medieval period and later developed into the modern oboe in European orchestral music, where it was used to depict idyllic scenes. Although the *sanfona* (accordion) was an instrument strongly associated with northeastern culture and immortalized in national memory by Luiz Gonzaga, one of the most celebrated accordionists in Brazil, the Armorialists refused to employ the instrument since the *sanfona* did not have an equivalent in Iberian Medieval music. On the other hand, they did adopt the *rabeca* which had the *viol* as its Medieval ancestor and the European violin and viola as its modern counterparts. Armorialists also

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utilized the *pífano*, which had the flute as its modern equivalent, as well as the *viola sertaneja*, which derived from the Spanish guitar. To Suassuna, these instruments created a link between the musical traditions of the Iberian colonizers, who brought the instruments to Brazilian shores, and the northeastern people, who incorporated these sounds into their music-making. According to Didier, the Armorialists also drew a connection between the timbre of the harpsichord and the *viola sertaneja*. In this way, the results obtained during Suassuna’s and his colleagues’ research informed the practices of both the Armorial Quintet and the Armorial Orchestra.94

The research conducted at the Department of Cultural Extension at the Federal University of Pernambuco allowed Suassuna to develop an aesthetic of Armorial music. His idealized conception combined the Medieval musical style of the Iberian colonizers, integrated with Afro-Amerindian and northeastern folkloric musical elements found in the dance features of the *frevo, maracatu*, and *caboclinhos*. According to Suassuna’s conception, Armorial music should favor instruments of simple construction utilized by the backlanders in folkloric demonstrations and religious celebrations. Chief among them were instruments such as fiddles, guitars, fifes, and percussion. With such an aesthetic proposition, Suassuna turned to the Armorial Quintet and Armorial Orchestra to produce a sonic representation of northeastern Brazil as proposed by this artistic movement.

Despite sharing the stage on October 18, 1970, during the first official concert that inaugurated the movement, the members of the Armorial Quintet and Chamber Orchestra disagreed on what approach was best suited for conveying Armorial aesthetics. On the one hand, those who were classically trained, such as Almeida and Guerra-Peixe,

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believed that it was possible to create a representation of northeastern Brazilian identity using orchestral instruments, as long as the idiomatic language of regional music remained intact. On the other hand, the Quintet’s members believed that the best means of sonically representing the region was through the incorporation of musical instruments and practices found in folklore. They posited that the use of popular instruments created a timbre closer to the music experienced and produced by the common folk, making Armorial music accessible to Brazilians regardless of social class. For this reason, the Quintet valued a musical aesthetic that evoked the rustic sonority found in the performances of folk musicians. Almeida argued against the Quintet’s unpolished sound and what he considered to be the musician’s disregard for technique.

Suassuna resisted the idea of creating a homogenized orchestral sound using European instruments to evoke the northeast region sonically. Because he associated folk music with rustic sonorities, such as the sounds produced by the rabeca and pífano, he rejected the exclusive reliance on the timbre of refined European instruments such as the violin and viola. Almeida, who served as Director of the Music Conservatory in Pernambuco and directed a folk ensemble, explained that his players practiced 3-4 hours a day for over a year under the supervision of Suassuna to become acquainted with the Armorial musical style. In this way, Almeida broke away from the traditional Eurocentric manner of performing and interpreting music before he established the Armorial Chamber Orchestra.\(^{95}\) As we shall see, a continued artistic disagreement about the ideal

\(^{95}\) Ibid., 112.
sound of Armorial music would ultimately spark a debate that would lead to a conflict between the Quintet, the Orchestra, and Suassuna.

**The Folk Music Aesthetics of the Armorial Quintet**

The notion of a sonic *topos*, which I explained in the Introduction of the thesis, applies to Suassuna’s aesthetic proposition for the Armorial Quintet. He believed that the best way of projecting the identity of the northeastern region was to create music for the people that was inspired by their experiences. To achieve this goal, Suassuna proposed that the Quintet should incorporate into its sonic landscape popular instruments used in the music-making of rural festivities and religious celebrations in northeastern Brazil. In 1973, Suassuna spoke of his desire to utilize instruments closely associated with northeastern musical traditions by stating: “I considered [it] of the utmost importance for the Armorial Movement to use rustic instruments that belonged to the northeastern people. In my opinion, these instruments will influence the composition of Armorial music.”96

Suassuna believed that Armorial music should sonically emulate the arid and harsh landscape of the backlands. In an interview for the newspaper, *Correio braziliense* in 1976, he claimed that the use of folk instruments added a “primitive, harsh, and strong” quality to Armorial music, which, in turn, represented the character of the northeast region and its people. The unique timbre of instruments such as the zabumba, *rabeca*, *pífano*, *viola-caipira*, and six-string guitar allowed the Armorial Quintet to

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establish a connection between Armorial musical aesthetics, northeastern musical traditions, and a determined geographical and cultural space. Using the characteristic timbres produced by these handcrafted string instruments, in conjunction with an Iberian Medieval harmonic and melodic framework and Afro-indigenous rhythms, the Armorial Quintet constructed a sonic representation of the northeast that exemplified Suassuna’s ideas of a “northeastern sonority.”

For the leader of the Armorial movement, only instruments of simple, artisanal construction could reproduce the pastoral sounds found in the northeastern Brazilian landscape. In accordance with Suassuna’s instructions, the musicians of the Armorial Quintet built artisanal instruments to emulate the sounds of the backlands. One of the instruments produced by the Armorialists to depict the ethos of the region was the marimbau de lata. This rustic instrument consisted of two tin cans secured to a flat wooden plank, with a wire stretched over the cans and attached the plank at both extremities. The player struck the vibrating wire with a stick to make the instrument resonate, thus producing a pitch amplified by the metal cans.

The construction of the marimbau de lata and its harsh and twangy timbre resembled the characteristics of another percussion instrument known as the berimbau baiano. Throughout his research, Suassuna learned that the berimbau de lata was an instrument used by the northeastern Brazilian people since the time of the nineteenth century and that the name, berimbau derived from the word, marimbau. He decided to keep the name marimbau and called his instrument the marimbau de lata to distinguish it clearly from the berimbau baiano, which was commonly found in the State of Bahia. The berimbau baiano was constructed by using a convex piece of wood shaped like a bow,
with a wire tightly stretched from one end of the bow to the other. To produce the sound, the player had to strike the wire with a stick, causing it to vibrate. A gourd attached to the bottom of the bow amplified the sound. The most significant difference between this instrument and the one used by the Armorialists is the fact that, in the *marimbau de lata*, the percussionist was able to control the pitch which could be tuned and divided into chromatic intervals by sliding a piece of glass—often a medicine bottle—up and down the wire. The ability to play twelve chromatic pitches made the *marimba de lata* a versatile instrument in a concert setting.97

The *cabala* was another Armorial instrument with a unique timbre that became associated with the northeastern space. This instrument was a hybrid between the *viola sertaneja* and the *marimbau de lata*. Built using a gourd, bamboo, and multiple guitar strings, the instrument produced a rich sonority similar to the *viola sertaneja*. Moreover, the tuning system employed in the *cabala* is the same as others found in strummed northeastern Brazilian instruments. Unlike the guitar, the *cabala* does not possess a fingerboard. The player uses a guitar slide or glass bottle to alter the pitch of the instrument in the same manner as in the *marimbau de lata*. Antônio José Madureira’s brother, Antúlio Madureira, who later became a percussionist in the Armorial Movement, designed and constructed the *cabala* specifically for the Armorialists.

The Armorial Quintet illustrated its achievement in four critically-acclaimed LPs. Released in 1974, the first disc, *Do romance ao galope nordestino* (From the romance to the Northeastern galope), explored the idea of constructing a sonic representation of regional identity. The goal of this project was to create a direct connection between

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97 Ibid.
northeastern Brazilian music and the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque traditions of the Iberian colonizers. The title of the disc implied a survey of musical styles ranging from the *romance* (epic poem sung and accompanied by music) to the rhythms found in the northeastern region of the country, such as the *galope*. This disc contained pieces composed by members of the Quintet, such as the guitarist Madureira and the violinist Antônio Carlos Nóbrega, but it also included works by composers who were not members of the Quintet, such as Guerra-Peixe and Capiba.

This recording achieved a notable critical and public acclaim. In Recife, the LP sold out in the first week after its official release to the public. The music critic, J. R. Tinhórão in a review for the newspaper, *Jornal do Brazil*, called the album “a miracle.” In his opinion, the Armorial Quintet managed to revive the dormant Iberian traditions that were crystallized within Brazilian northeastern folklore. Ana Maria Bahiana mentioned that the Armorial Quintet ruptured the notion that folk and erudite art opposed one another because, in her view, the group created a connection between the sounds of the past represented by Iberian aesthetics, and the sounds of the contemporary northeast exemplified by the rustic timbre of the Armorial instruments. In her words: “Many times the steel strings of a viola [sertaneja] resembles the harpsichord in the same way that the marimbau sounds like a Moorish oud.” This disc was well-received even among those who disagreed with Suassuna’s aesthetic propositions for the Armorial Movement. Writing under a pseudonym, a former opponent of Suassuna praised the Quintet by saying: “It is not because I do not agree with the theoretical ideas of the Armorial

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98 Ibid., 121.
99 Ibid., 122.
Movement’s intellectual mentor that I will not recognize the exceptional album produced by the Armorial Quintet.”

This album did receive a few negative criticisms directed towards issues of ownership and authenticity. Some critics accused the Quintet and the Armorialists of appropriating folk music with the intent of producing music that could only be consumed by an elite and erudite group of people who were themselves far removed from the ideas represented by the Armorial Movement. These critics accused the Armorialists of “popularizing the erudite and attempting to make the folk erudite.” Others considered the disc as artificial and equated it with “the recordings made by white artists attempting to take advantage of the vigor of African American music.”

Nonetheless, the vastly positive reception of the first disc of the Armorial Quintet attests to the critical acclaim the group received. It also alludes to the extent to which audiences were able to identify themselves with the sonic landscape constructed by the harsh and rudimentary sound palette of the Quintet, which, when combined with folk and Iberian elements, arose as a symbolic representation of “northeasternness.”

**Erudite Aesthetics in the Works of Guerra-Peixe**

The two classically-trained musicians associated with the Armorial movement, Almeida and Guerra-Peixe, stood on the other side of the aesthetic spectrum. Both

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100 “Não será por discordar das posições teóricas do mentor intelectual do Movimento Armorial que vou deixar de reconhecer o excepcional disco que entrego ao público, o Quinteto Armorial.” Didier did not cite the name of Suassuna’s opponent who wrote this review published in the newspaper, Jornal do Commercio on December 25, 1974. Cited in Ibid.

101 Ibid., 123.

102 Ibid.
preferred to construct a sonic identity based on European musical aesthetics as a means of elevating folk traditions to the same level as concert music. It is valuable to draw on the conceptual framework that Deborah Schwartz-Kates applied in her study of Argentine music to understand the approach of these two musicians to Armorial aesthetics. In her article, “Alberto Ginastera, Argentine Cultural Construction, and the Gauchesco Tradition,” Schwartz-Kates analyzed the mechanisms and goals of composers who aimed to create a cultural identity by elevating folk sources in the construction of Argentine concert music. She argued that Argentine nationalist composers trained in Europe embraced the figure of the native horseman known as the gaucho to evoke their national identity. Accordingly, these composers integrated European high art forms with folk musical styles associated with the Argentine horseman to create a sonic encoding that conveyed the ideals and identity of the nation.

This aesthetic strategy had its parallels in Guerra-Peixe’s compositions, in which he embraced the image and musical traditions of the rabequeiro as a source of northeastern Brazilian identity. In his works composed for the Armorial Movement during the early 1970s, the violin assumed the role of the rabeca, and the guitar figured as a representation of the viola sertaneja through a process of sonic mimicry. To imitate the playing style of the rabeca, Guerra-Peixe often employed pedal tones in the melodic lines of the violin. The harmonic treatment found in this composer’s work derived from the late Medieval fauxbourdon tradition, which has its parallels in northeastern Brazilian folk music. Due to a flatter angle in the bridge of the instrument, it is a standard feature of

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**rabeca** playing to add a secondary voice, often a fifth below the melody. Since the instrument is tuned in intervals of fifths, the technical execution of this harmonic pedal over the melodic line is easily achieved by simultaneously playing the parallel lower open string. This technique allows the *rabequeiro* to play intervals of sixths, sevenths, and octaves by simply placing fingers one, two, and three down on the upper string. The pedal tone over consonant intervals allows for the creation of a modal harmony, which is the simplest form of polyphonic writing found in string literature.

One of the works in which Guerra-Peixe experimented with the notion of sonic mimicry is his duo for violin and guitar *De viola e rabeca* (*mourão*). The approximation between learned and folk music is evident in the title of the work (From Viola and Rabeca), which refers to the European viola and its folk counterpart, the *rabeca*. In the score, Guerra-Peixe further points toward the interrelationship between instruments by respectively placing the words *rabeca* and *viola caipira* in parenthesis under violin and *violão*, (Portuguese for guitar). This strategy had a dual purpose. First, it allowed the players who perform the work using European instruments to be aware of the sonic aesthetics desired by the composer. Secondly, it indicated that, due to the simplicity and melodic range of the composition, it is possible to perform the piece using folk instruments.

The opening measures of this work, which appear in Example 1, illustrate many of the techniques employed by Guerra-Peixe in his reference to the *rabeca*. Following an introduction resembling the rhythmic figuration of the northeastern dance *baião* in the guitar, the violin transitions from D major into D Mixolydian, a transition that begins with an arpeggiation of a V6/4 chord (A-D- F#) in measure 10. This transition into modal
harmony, implied by the introduction of c naturals into the melody and accompaniment, alludes to the Iberian tradition inherited by northeastern Brazilian folk music. Major-minor seventh chords, such as the IMm7 in measure 12, are commonly featured in northeastern Brazilian music. The violin plays the melody over a continuous pedal tone, respectively creating intervals of octaves and sixths on the first beats throughout the opening of the work. The employment of pedal tones serves as an accompaniment to the melodic material and a tonal anchor, thus evoking a folklike sonority. In this composition, Guerra-Peixe does not stretch the melodic range. Instead, he keeps it in a region that does not require shifting and it is easily playable in the first position. The largest interval sounded by the violin is a tenth (measures 12, 14, and 15), which is an inversion of a minor third, another interval commonly found in Iberian modal music. Here, the interval of the tenth is playable as a double-stop in first position through an extension of the fourth finger on the E string.

Guerra-Peixe further emulates the rabeca by imitating the sound produced by the bow as played in folk music. The use of the modern European bow used for concert music differs from that of the rabeca in many ways. First, the modern violin bow is much longer and heavier, and its inward camber allows the player to sustain the sound from frog to tip. In contrast, the rabeca bow resembles the Baroque bow in its short and light construction, which allows for greater articulation at the cost of sound projection. Due to its outward camber, the rabeca bow cannot sustain a continuous tone, and the sound becomes tapered at the tip. Guerra-Peixe mimics the diminuendo effect produced by the

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104 Luiz Gonzaga’s famous song, “Baião,” opens with the same major-minor seventh chord, thus creating a sonic link between this harmony, the northeastern region, and the dance.
articulation in the *rabeca* bow by slurring the sixteenth notes in twos in the melodic line, as illustrated in Example 1, measures 11-17. The slurs allow the player to emphasize the first note and to release the second, thus creating the desired tapering effect.

If, on the one hand, Guerra-Peixe’s harmonic and melodic treatment reminds us of Iberian influences through the playing style of the *rabeca*, on the other, his rhythmic choices point towards musical forms found in the street carnivals of Recife and other northeastern Brazilian regions. The pattern in the guitar is the same as the rhythm played by the *zabumba* (bass drum) in the *baião*. As this passage shows, Guerra-Peixe persistently uses dance rhythms to create a sonic relationship with the northeast region in his Armorial compositions.

Guerra-Peixe continued to explore the aesthetics of Armorial music in his *Dueto caracteristico* for violin and guitar (1970), subtitled “No estilo popular nordestino” (In the Popular Northeastern Style), which he dedicated to Ariano Suassuna. Set in three movements, this piece once again combined traditional northeastern musical practices with Iberian aesthetic elements. The *Dueto caracteristico* served as the basis for the composer’s later work, the Concertino for violin and chamber orchestra (1972), which Guerra-Peixe dedicated to Almeida and his Armorial ensemble. Guerra-Peixe used this chamber music piece as a medium for further experimentation with Armorial aesthetics.

In the Concertino, Guerra-Peixe combined Armorial aesthetics with elements of European concert music to construct a stylized image of the *rabequeiro*, the itinerant folk fiddler of the northeastern Brazilian hinterland. In the Concertino, Guerra-Peixe employed techniques commonly found in the musical language of virtuosic violin
concertos and combined them with northeastern Brazilian elements. The result was a showpiece that resembled northeastern regional

Example 1. César Guerra-Peixe, *De viola e rabeca*, Tempo de baiao, mm.

1-18.
folk music, but was composed utilizing a musical language that was familiar to cosmopolitan audiences accustomed to concert music. Guerra-Peixe aspired to elevate the figure of the folk violinist to the level of a classically trained virtuoso in his Concertino by aggregating the sonic encoding of the rabequeiro. By incorporating the musical style of the backlands into a piece of concert music, he re-codified the aesthetic conception of the rabequeiro by translating it into a widely-accepted European musical language.

Guerra-Peixe opens the first movement of the work with a display of virtuosity, combined with an imitation of the nasal timbre of the rabeca (Example 2). Following a brief orchestral introduction, the soloist introduces a melodic pattern of sixteenth notes in measure 2. This passage is easily playable on the D and A strings, but Guerra-Peixe provides the notation, (IV.c ad. Lib), leaving the option open to execute the passage on the G string, which demands the use of high positions at the discretion of the soloist. Such request is not unusual in virtuosic violin playing. The use of high positions on the upper G string shortens the length of the string in relation to the bridge, producing a constricted sound if compared to the open tone in the lower positions. Due to the difficulties in tuning and the challenges in producing a resonant sound in the highest positions of the lowest string, this technique simultaneously offers a display of virtuosity and an emulation of the raspy sound of the rabeca. The brilliance of this opening does not rely solely on sonic emulation. If the soloist were to ignore Guerra-Peixe’s suggestion and play the opening statement in first position, he or she would still embody the performance techniques of the rabequeiro, who cannot utilize the high positions due to the physical limitations of performance practice on the instrument.
Example 2. César Guerra-Peixe, Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra, First Movement, mm. 1-8.

As explained previously, the simplest form of a pedal tone in violin playing is the addition of the lowest open string parallel to the string on which the melody appears. This technique allows the musician to play intervals of fifths, sixths, and sevenths, which often function as passing notes leading to octaves. The strings are played simultaneously to create a sustained pedal tone below the melody. Another option is for the performer to produce a pedal tone by repeatedly striking the lower string while alternating between the highest and lowest strings, employing a technique that is known in violin playing as string crossings. Example 3 illustrates the use of this technique to create a pedal tone in the *Duetto caracteristico*.

In the *Duetto*, Guerra-Peixe evokes the musical lexicon of the *rabequeiro* by keeping the melody in the lower register, where it is playable in first position. He utilizes the same string-crossing technique in measures 23-25 of his Concertino, as illustrated in Example 4. Here, Guerra-Peixe refers to the technique of the violin virtuoso by placing the melody in the upper register of the violin, requiring shifts from third to fourth position to perform the passage. Interestingly, the sixteenth notes are slurred by groups of two to
emulate the articulation of the *rabeca* bow. By simultaneously calling on folk and erudite techniques, Guerra-Peixe creates a hybrid passage in which the player embodies the role of both the violin virtuoso and the *rabeca* player.

Example 3. César Guerra-Peixe, *Dueto Caracteristico*, First Movement, mm. 36-37, violin (upper staff) and guitar (lower staff).

Example 4. César Guerra-Peixe, Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra, First Movement, mm. 23-25.
In the middle of the first movement of the Concertino, Guerra-Peixe employs his most elaborate version of pedal tones to allude to the playing style of the *rabeca* and, at the same time, to convey virtuosity. Instead of using only one string to create a pedal tone, Guerra-Peixe adds the open strings A and E to create a sequence of double-stops in open fifths. Furthermore, he constructs the melodic sequence in this passage using double-stops, an idiomatic technique employed in virtuoso concert music which allows the violinist to play multiple tones simultaneously on top of the harmonic pedal in the open strings (Example 5). The rapid ascension from first position (C# and A in measure 87) to seventh position (the octave A in measure 92) provides an extra degree of difficulty in the execution of this passage. Another element associated with virtuoso playing is the use of *spiccat*to, a technique in which the player bounces the bow to produce a short and articulated sound. Playing fast passages in *spiccato* demands a great deal of bow control and is only possible due to the inward camber of the bow, which allows for flexibility in the stick. On the other hand, the outward camber in the *rabeca* bow makes it difficult for the stick to bounce. This is one of the reasons, *spiccat*to is not a technique employed by the *rabequeiro*.
Example 5. César Guerra-Peixe, Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra, First Movement, mm. 87-92.

The second movement, Andantino—*Simplice sempre e quasi senza vibrato*, is the emotional center and most significant part of the work because it evokes the *rabequeiro* and the landscape of the *sertão*. To emulate the playing style of the *rabeca*, Guerra-Peixe instructs the violinist to perform the movement in a simple manner and almost without vibrato (*Simplice sempre e quasi senza vibrato*). In string instruments, vibrato refers to a slight variation in pitch to produce a rich and reverberating tone through the combined motion of fingers, wrist, and lower arm. In violin playing, the musician uses the left shoulder and chin to keep the instrument in place, freeing the left hand and arm to create the motion that produces the vibrato. The *rabeca* player, however, supports the instrument by using the wrist and arm, thus constricting the parts of the body used in the production of the vibrato. For this reason, vibrato is hardly ever found in the musical lexicon of the *rabequeiro*. 
Guerra-Peixe evokes the solitude of the *rabequeiro* by composing most of the second movement as a violin soliloquy. Since there is no orchestral accompaniment in the opening of this movement (Example 6), the only polyphonic textures derive from the juxtaposition of melody over pedal tones in the solo violin, which once again emulates the music of the *rabeca*. To symbolically depict the vast and barren landscape of the backlands, Guerra-Peixe purposely avoids intervals such as thirds and sixths on the strong beats. Instead, he uses harmonically pure intervals such as fifths and octaves on beats one and three. He also evokes a sense of nostalgia in this movement by continually returning to the melodic motive first presented by the violin solo. The constant repetition of this musical idea at softer dynamic levels throughout the piece creates an aural expectation of returning “home,” to the beginning of the movement, an expectation that is frustrated by the *attaca* that leads directly into the third movement.

Guerra-Peixe used rhythms found in regional music as the structure for the third movement, which opens with a dance rhythm known as *marcha de estrada*, collected during his research in the northeast. He once again combined folk and erudite traditions to create a hybrid style that evokes both the *rabeca* and concert music. But here the *rabequeiro* embodied by the solo violin in the final movement is not the solitary folk musician depicted in the second movement. Instead, Guerra-Peixe reveals another facet of the *rabeca* by locating its music within an urban setting. He calls on the rhythmic patterns found in the dances of *frevo-de-rua* (street frevo) where the violin represents the fiddlers found in the street carnivals. In the third movement, Guerra-Peixe introduces a sequence of notes in *ricochet* (Example 7) To execute this technique, the player utilizes the flexibility of the stick to make the bow bounce in a similar fashion to the *spiccato*. 
The difference between the two techniques is that, in the *ricochet*, the performer can play multiple notes in a single stroke by making the bow skip off the string, whereas the *spiccato* only produces one note at a time. In violin playing, the *ricochet* demands even more bow control than a regular *spiccato*, and when well-executed, it becomes a display of virtuosity. The placement of dots on top of notes, especially those of short rhythmic values in fast passages, indicates the use of *spiccato*. *Ricochet* is notated by adding slurs on top of the dots, as illustrated in Example 7.

Example 6. César Guerra-Peixe, Concertino, Second Movement, mm. 1-18.
Example 7. César Guerra-Peixe, Concertino for Violin and Chamber Orchestra, Third Movement, mm. 52-57.

Guerra-Peixe constructed his Concertino using a combination of folk and erudite techniques that simultaneously alluded to the *rabequeiro* and the violin virtuoso. The reinterpretation of the *rabeca*’s sonic encoding through the lens of virtuosity allowed him to bring the folk violinist to the center stage in a concert setting. By dedicating the work to Cussy de Almeida, one of Brazil’s most celebrated concert violinist, Guerra-Peixe strengthened the connection between the Concertino and the image of the violin virtuoso.

To conclude, the aesthetic conflicts between the Armorial Quintet and the Armorial Chamber Orchestra demonstrate the different conceptions and approaches proposed by groups with similar ideas for the construction of northeastern Brazilian identity. To sonically express their depiction of regional identity, Suassuna and the Armorial Quintet preferred to utilize musical instruments found within the folk traditions of the northeast. They believed that the rustic construction and harsh sonorities of these folk instruments created a sonic representation of the qualities found in the character of the northeastern people and the features of the local landscape. The Quintet used the timbre of folk instruments as a vehicle to construct a connection between the land, the
people, and the northeast Brazilian region. In contrast, the Chamber Orchestra opted to take a different path and reinterpret folk traditions through the lens of erudite art music. With his Concertino, Guerra-Peixe became an exponent of the hybrid aesthetics proposed by the Armorial Chamber Orchestra. The combination of virtuosic violin techniques with the musical style found in rabeca playing allowed him to construct a polished image of the rabequeiro for a concert audience. The aesthetic differences between these two groups demonstrate the fluidity of northeastern identity.
CHAPTER 5

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this thesis, I use the Armorial Movement as a window to illuminate the debates between modernity and tradition, the old and the new, and the future and the past in constructing discourses of regional and national identity during the Brazilian military dictatorship. The Armorial Movement emerged in the northeast region of the country as a response to the modernizing tendencies of the south. I show how the traditionalist sensibilities put forward by Gilberto Freyre’s regionalist movement and later adopted by the Armorialists reflected the need to counterbalance the centralization of wealth and political power in the south. I then demonstrated how the south actively participated in constructing a negative image of the northeast through a process of exoticization and alterity.

In response, Suassuna’s Armorial Movement aimed to redefine and reinvent northeastern Brazilian identity to recast the region in a positive light. Although scholars have presented the Armorial Movement as a traditionalist artistic manifestation, here I claim that Sussuana’s ideas were in fact, modern and challenged epistemological scaffoldings. In this work, I present the Armorialists and the Tropicalists as two groups with opposing aesthetic ideas that operated under the impetus of modernism. Like the two-faced Roman god Janus, the Armorialists and Tropicalists were integral parts of the same discourse and shared similar ambitions centered around the construction of national identity based on different types of nostalgia.
Using Svetlana Boym’s two typologies, I argued that the Armorialists were nostalgic for an invented past. They employed what Boym defined as “restorative nostalgia” as a mechanism to construct a concept of national identity. On the other hand, the Tropicalists were nostalgic for the future and used what Boym termed “reflective nostalgia” to question the social conflicts of modern Brazil.

Through my work, I demonstrated that the Armorial Movement was a fluid artistic manifestation that simultaneously existed in a metaphysical sense within regional, regionalist, national, and nationalist spaces. The transmutation from one classification to another occurred due to the politicization of the Armorial aesthetics by the government and Suassuna himself. During the years of the military dictatorship in Brazil, the government used miscegenation as a vehicle for national integration, which allowed for marginalized groups to perceive themselves as fundamental parts of the nation. The government revitalized the ideas of racial democracy proposed by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre to promote the illusion of a racially egalitarian society. With the institutionalization of miscegenation, the military government sought to mask the socioeconomic disparity that divided the country into a southern and northeastern axis. In other parts of the world, the term miscegenation became associated with a concrete biological phenomenon that conditioned people to a predetermined racial classification. In Brazil, the word gained a positive connotation in which racial mixing defined the construction of *brasilidade*.

Since the Armorialists and the government shared the desire to construct a national identity substantiated in notions of miscegenation, Suassuna used this commonality to promote the Armorial’s aesthetic embrace, thus giving the impression that he endorsed
the cultural agenda proposed by the military dictatorship. In actuality, it was the government that tactility promoted the Armorialist’s ideas by providing funds for concerts and research through institutions where Suassuna held key positions, such as the Departamento de Extensão Cultural. The Armorial leader’s influence in the political sphere allowed the group to avoid censorship. Although the Armorial Movement encompassed multiple means of artistic production, music unquestionably emerged as one of the most meaningful and successful vehicles to promote Suassuna’s ideas. The Armorialist’s musical experimentation helped to construct the aesthetic basis of the movement. Unlike other short-lived Armorial endeavors, such as architecture and dance, music permeated all three phases of the movement and continues to this date. Together with Suassuna’s literary trajectory, Armorial music reflected the negotiation, competition, and conflicts that dominated the political and cultural discourses in Brazil during the military dictatorship. A close study of Armorial music illuminated the competition to define the discourses of national identity, not only between northern and southern Brazil but also within the northeast region itself.

Throughout this work, I delved into the ideological debates between groups that shared similar propositions to define regional identity. Such was the case of the Armorial Quintet and Chamber Orchestra, which competed for cultural hegemony. From the national debates between the Armorialists and the Tropicalists to the regional conflicts between the Quintet and the Chamber Orchestra, I believe that no other cultural strand expressed these notions of cultural competition better than music. The aesthetic strife between the Armorialists and the Tropicalists and among the Armorialists themselves demonstrated the impossibility of constructing a homogenous image of brasilidade. This
multiplicity reveals that Brazilian identity as a concept is as diverse as the very people who constitute the nation.

The intersection of music, literature and politics in the Armorial movement is a revealing topic that deserves a thorough examination. Unfortunately, many aspects of this encompassing subject remain outside of the limited size and scope of a master’s thesis. The analysis of Brazilian regionalism and nationalism within a global context merits further scholarly attention. The theoretical models of metaphysical borders between what is regional and regionalist, as well as national and nationalist proposed in this thesis can aid in explaining the negotiation of national identity of Latin American countries within a globalized geopolitical space. Additionally, stereotypes of masculinity predominate in northeastern Brazilian music, and the female figure remains secondary to its male counterpart. Further research on this critical topic can clarify the negotiation of normative gender roles within a sociocultural setting that, to this date, remains patriarchal.

**Locating Armorial Music Today**

Armorial music continues to inspire artists from various regions who aspire to sonically connect audiences with the Brazilian northeast. Formed in the southern state of Paraná, the folk group Rosa Armorial is a contemporary proponent of Suassuna’s aesthetic ideas. The interregional migration and diffusion of Armorial music in other states of Brazil is an uncharted topic. Furthermore, members of the Armorial Movement, such as the Quintet’s leader Antônio Madureira, and the violinist and *rabequeiro*, Antônio Carlos Nóbrega, remain active performers and avid promoters of northeastern culture on the national scene. Nóbrega, who is also an actor, created many theatrical spectacles fusing northeastern music and dance with poetry and folklore. The post-
Armorial works of these artists show exciting potential for additional scholarly discussion.

Guerra-Peixe’s music also helped to project Armorial aesthetic ideas to international audiences. Some of the most prominent symphonic groups in Brazil often perform his Armorial works abroad. The São Paulo State Orchestra has consistently played the *Mourão* as an encore while on tour in South and North America, as well as in Europe and Asia. His Concertino received positive critical acclaim in Europe, Asia, and North and South America. Scholars have not yet explored the international reception and interpretation of Armorial music. A study on this subject, especially within the Iberian countries that directly influenced the conception of Armorial aesthetics is undoubtedly worth pursuing in the future.

With the death of Suassuna in 2014, the Armorial Movement lost its major proponent and defender and could have ended as an active artistic manifestation. Nonetheless, Suassuna’s aspirations continue to live on through contemporary artists who seek in the past the inspiration to construct a cultural identity for the nation based on popular art forms.


