

INTRODUCTION

A REGION OUT OF PLACE

The artwork on the cover of Franklin Maxado's *O nordestino no sul* (The Northeasterner in the South), published in 1979, depicts a man working with a jackhammer. Even if we had not read the title, a series of clues would inform us this man is from the Northeast of Brazil and finds himself in an uncomfortable situation away from home. First, he is on the cover of a cordel literature pamphlet, which, as is addressed in chapter 1, is a genre strongly associated with the Northeast. Second, he wears a kind of distinctive hat worn by the *cangaceiro*, or bandit, of the Northeast, as represented in the cordel literature and film discussed in the final chapter of this book. The tool he holds and type of construction work he is performing do not match his rural bandit hat—he is clearly out of place. He is surrounded by contoured etchings that suggest that his whole body is vibrating, destabilized by the nature of his work. Finally, he carries an exaggerated frown on his face, indicating that he is not happy about the situation in which he finds himself. In fact, he looks miserable.

We might not know exactly where this unfortunate northeasterner has found himself from the image alone, but we can guess that he is likely in São Paulo, Brasília, or Rio de Janeiro, where so many northeastern migrants went in search of work. This likelihood is suggested in the type of work—construction, with a jackhammer. This kind of work was certainly also taking place in the Northeast, but it would not generally be chosen as representative of the region, which, as this book reveals, was already strongly associated with drought, extreme poverty, and tradition long before this pamphlet was published. Since the supposed rusticity of the Northeast served as a foil to the industrialization, modernity, cosmopolitanism, and progress of the Southeast (often referred to as “South” in cordel literature), we can assume that this northeasterner finds himself there. But perhaps the most glaring hint at the foreignness of the man's environment is the advertisement on the wall behind him, urging us to drink a refreshment served in a distinctive guitar-shaped bottle that suggests Coca-Cola. This product was surely carefully chosen for this piece: it was a beverage that would be used as a symbol of disloyalty to regional culture (as with the beauty queens

in chapter 6) and whose name would even, at times, be used as a slur (as with the so-called Coca-Cola girls discussed in chapter 4). This work of visual art quickly, artfully, and simply tells us that this is a tragic northeastern migrant, far from home, out of place in nearly every way, surrounded by a climate, products, and habits that were alien to him. The jackhammer, the car in the background, the suggested noise, and the bottle of Coca-Cola, for all that mattered to him, were all equally foreign.

This book examines how groups within a marginalized region of Brazil, the Northeast, asserted their world belonging, relevance, and uniqueness through the creation of regional cultural symbols and institutions. Building on Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior's extensive scholarship on the so-called invention of the Brazilian Northeast, I argue that ideas about the region and its culture reflected early and mid-twentieth-century concerns about the place of the region, not only in the nation, but in the world. Northeasterners from several walks of life—from fishermen to journalists, popular artists to social scientists, impoverished migrants to the cinematographers who represented them on-screen—discussed and debated what the region's place in the world was or should be. Northeasterners worried about how the region would be represented internationally, what the foreigner would think of it, and how they could levy international attention to pressure for national and regional change. Northeasterners did not restrict regional culture to the borders of the subnational region. They did not contain it, even, within the nation. They connected their regional concerns to a world beyond Brazilian borders, and in so doing, forced Brazilians around the nation to grapple with a debate so central to Brazilian national identity as to come to define it: its regional diversity.

These regional concerns were not unique to the Northeast, nor to Brazil. From the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, nations were both increasingly concerned with defining their regional cultures and fascinated with those they caught glimpses of elsewhere.¹ As Celia Applegate has shown, nineteenth-century discourse on group character "asserted the existence of various local, regional, and national traits as the embodied expression of centuries of accumulated historical experience and an essential groupness."² In Latin America, this tendency would merge with attempts to apply natural, geographic, and social sciences to provincial territories. As seen in the work of Eve E. Buckley, Stanley Blake, Nancy Appelbaum, Seth Garfield, Nísia Trindade Lima, and many others, from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, scientists, geographers, cartographers, state actors, and intellectuals attempted to map, describe, and categorize the people, environments, and natural resources of the subnational regions of Latin America.³ As in Euclides da Cunha's *Os sertões*, discussed in chapters 1 and 3, these scientists and intellectuals described people in ways that connected

their ethnic or racial traits with the geography and climate surrounding them, tying them inexorably to their environment. This would set the stage for race becoming a fundamental discursive tool and defining characteristic of regions, as seen in the works of historians Erika Edwards, Barbara Weinstein, and Anadelia Romo.⁴

The relationship between region, nation, and world informs our understanding of the development of the modern nation. Regions such as Oaxaca in Mexico, the Scottish Highlands in the United Kingdom, the Deep South in the United States, and the south of Italy—considered backwards but culturally authentic, and often the poorest and most agricultural—have served as counterpoints to the more dynamic capital cities of the nation. The cultural identities of these supposedly isolated regions solidified through their engagement with the world around them during moments of intense international change and the expansion of international consumer culture. The world wars (and subsequent negotiations) of the first half of the twentieth century forced the inhabitants of nations around the world, whether big or small, whether hosting battles or not, to question their place in the world. For places such as the Brazilian Northeast, it was often the arrival of Hollywood movies and the expansion of national and international radio services (supported through the efforts of the US Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, or OCIAA, to create a greater sense of hemispheric unity) that created a sense of immediate borders between regional culture and the world, inspiring efforts both to showcase and protect local, regional, and national cultures. Yet while these cultural products came from the outside, they landed within local and national conversations about modernity, progress, technological advance, and national character.⁵ Fears of accelerated technological change and cultural homogeneity spurred attempts to preserve local culture, define authentic folklore, and catalogue regional archetypes seen as rooted in the past. At the same time, ideals of progress and development intensified, accompanied by attempts to identify “backwards” regions and diagnose their nostalgic illnesses.

Ideas about the place of subnational regions in the nation or world were not confined within hermetically sealed regional or national borders. Regional intellectuals and artists from around the world compared notes and arguments about their respective regions. The correspondence shared between these regionalists from around the world (and discussed in chapter 2) gives the sense that they felt a familiarity with other marginalized regions, as if their place within their own regions and nations were analogous, or, as Applegate stated about Europe, as if “regionality in modern politics consisted exclusively of the impact of insurgent and unhappy regions, fundamentally at odds with the nation-state.”⁶ In fact, this sense that one

marginalized subnational region in one nation could have the same feeling, the same sense of belonging to, but yet not fitting within a nation, as another was strong enough for the French sociologist and anthropologist Roger Bastide to write in a letter to Gilberto Freyre that he felt nostalgia for the Northeast—a region he did not personally know—due to his own sense of regional belonging in France (as a Cévenol) and his inability to travel due to the war.⁷

Each of these nations and regions will have come to their regionalization in their own distinct manner, in much the same way they came to their nations: dependent on their historical context, their status within colonial systems, their ethnic and religious particularities, their educational demography, and so on. Forcing a universal sequence on regionalization would miss the point in much the same way as, as Applegate has pointed out, providing a universal definition for the region would.⁸ Instead, I argue that Brazil's regionalization fits a global paradigm in which, by the mid-twentieth century, most nations around the world had come to understand nationhood as being composed of distinct subnational regions. Further, these regions and their regional cultures did not obey the attempts of centralizing states to stay within their borders, but instead they engaged with the world. After all, in his letter to Freyre, Bastide felt a similar need to protect marginalized cultures from not only a centralizing state, but a globalizing world. He expressed solidarity with the northeastern regionalists who were trying to maintain their values “against certain dangers of European or North American standardization,” admitting that his own sense of regional belonging allows him to feel “so close to you, I sense the danger against which you and your friends fight.”⁹

From the perspective of the nation, regions were tools in strengthening the central state. As Applegate reminds us, the writing of history, as a profession, was closely tied to “the making and legitimating of nation-states,” and so led to a “devaluation of regions and their pasts in the nineteenth century” by “stigmatizing the provincial, the particular, and the parochial.”¹⁰ Similarly, Nancy Appelbaum demonstrates that projects to map the regions of Colombia in the nineteenth century were intended to “strengthen the state” by providing useful information about the people of Colombia's provincial regions to the central state.¹¹ As will be seen in chapter 1, the state definition of the northeastern region of Brazil as a drought zone was meant to control a space considered problematic to the nation. The intellectuals and artists who then defined and exalted a distinct northeastern regional identity in Brazil were, and still are, associated with a cult of tradition, a desire to stay in the past, an avoidance of modernity.

Focusing on the perspective of metropolitan intellectuals or the central state, though, limits our understanding of regional identity formation by

prioritizing sceptical or state interests over the voice of the regionalists. For those who upheld the case for a distinct and positive regional culture in the Northeast, this desire to define and exalt the region and its culture was an attempt to participate in the modern nation and in a globalizing world on their own terms, without sacrificing their regional particularities. They were at times upholding the nation and at others attempting to move beyond the nation that was holding them back. If we shift the lens away from the defensive responses from the center of the nation, the image of the periphery changes. If we are to take regions and their cultures seriously, the trend to decenter perspective that Applegate identifies in political history needs to be applied to cultural understandings of region as well.¹²

There is another important point of difference between the Brazilian case and the European examples. In the case of influential historians like Marc Bloch and others writing in the mid-twentieth century, regional history was “useless,” as it was really only “general history” that mattered.¹³ Yet in the case of Brazil, the most important and internationally recognized Brazilian social scientist and intellectual of the twentieth century, Gilberto Freyre, was not only one of the early promoters of a unique northeastern cultural identity, but would base his internationally famous work on Brazilian national identity, *The Masters and the Slaves*, on his understandings of the place of the northeastern region in the nation.¹⁴ In the case of Brazil, it was the region that was writing the general history of the nation.

The very centrality of the Northeast in the writing of Brazilian history forces the nation to confront what Appelbaum defines as the “tension between aspirational homogeneity and apparent heterogeneity . . . [that] has characterized modern nation formation in Latin America, and, indeed, the world.”¹⁵ Applegate also identifies this tension in the historiography of region in Europe, noting that the scholarship on nation has turned to an emphasis on “multiplicity and fragmentation, diversities and contingencies, uneven diffusions and incomplete projections.”¹⁶ This book fits within this trend, emphasizing the multivalence not only of national but also emphatically of regional identity. It moves beyond an understanding of regions as mere miniature replicas of nations, and instead emphasizes the region as a way of moving beyond the nation. The insistence of northeasterners to engage with the world beyond their borders—whether that be within the nation or beyond—presents us with an alternative conception of regional, national, and international scales. The anxieties and discomfort regions provoke on an international stage are at the essence of the discourse that constructs the modern nation. The region, in this sense, is bigger than the nation it constructs—too big to be bound within its borders.

This book shows how, in a nation that by the beginning of World War II had either disparaged or folklorized their region, northeasterners brought

their hopes and grievances directly to an international sphere, stepping out of their expected place and generating conflicted responses at the national level. The ways in which northeasterners presented (and represented) their region were as varied as the residents themselves and constantly changing. As the region's international status changed (both prior to and after Brazil's participation in World War II), so did what its residents chose to preserve of its culture, how they defined the culture, who they considered to belong within it, and who they chose to represent it symbolically. This multifaceted discussion of northeastern identity was not just words. The discussion shaped how the region participated economically and politically within the nation and even molded Brazilian and US policymakers' views of the region, influencing their approaches to public policy directed at the Northeast.

A variety of sources gathered through archival research and extensive travel inform this study, including intellectual manifestos and correspondence; newspaper articles and advertisements; memoirs and autobiographies; paintings, photographs, and ceramics; film and popular music; postcards and *cachaça* (sugarcane liquor) labels; cordel literature (popular poetry) and *repentista* (impromptu) song; ephemera from carnival celebrations; and interviews and signing books used in travel. Through key moments of heightened global participation, when the regional and international coexist in the same space, I trace how these sources, created by men and women from diverse social groups, present changes in the use of the term *Northeast*, in the delineation of the borders of the Northeast, in the meaning of belonging within the Northeast, and in the relationship between the Northeast, the nation, and the world.

Each chapter in this book presents a different event or moment of intense international interaction in which meanings of the Northeast and its place in the world are questioned and debated. I begin by addressing drought, migration, and literature created by migrants in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century (chapter 1) and end in the late 1960s with Martha Vasconcellos's victory as Miss Universe in 1968 (chapter 6) and with film on the northeastern bandit (chapter 7). Along the way, I examine the Regionalist Conference of Recife (chapter 2), a protest by northeastern fishermen and an Orson Welles movie about it (chapter 3), international dating and allegorical representations of it during and after World War II (chapter 4), a mobilization to bring a World Cup football match to Recife (chapter 5), and the popular culture and education movement known as the *Movimento de Cultura Popular* (chapter 7). Each of these chapters presents how northeasterners from several walks of life discussed the many meanings of the Northeast in the nation and the world, emphasizing brief moments of consensus in which the Northeast was transformed from a me-

teological designation into a place of rustic stoicism, from rustic stoicism to naiveté and abandon, and from abandon to political resistance.

By the late 1960s, the Northeast came to have a multivalent, often conflicting, identity. On the one hand, the Northeast came to be seen as the source of all Brazilian culture, derived from a mixing of European, African, and Indigenous cultures, and actively maintaining its authentic culture in the face of Coca-Cola, chewing gum, and rock and roll. On the other, the region would also come to represent the threat of drought, poverty, inferiority, and potential for rebellion. The former interpretation is still held today as a source of pride; the latter, as a constant reminder of Brazil's supposed inferior status on an international stage. The Northeast in these enduring narratives is at once the heart of Brazil and that which it must overcome. It is the nation's foil and its epitome.

Yet these differing narratives also have a common core: that the Northeast is more than just drought and that its problems are social and political, not merely meteorological.¹⁷ Migrants, intellectuals, teachers, the press: they all recognize the devastating effects of the drought while rejecting the notion that the region's definition and problems can be reduced to it. They instead point to the concentration of land in the hands of few elite families and a lack of social programs for the poor (including basic education, health, and labor provisions) as exacerbating the effects of the drought. Likewise, they insist on a lively culture, dotted with festivals, sustained on regional foods, narrated by cordel literature, played on accordions and guitars, and danced throughout history. Northeastern culture, to them, is not arid. It has flavor, rhythm, and color. It can be seen, smelled, heard, and tasted. Within these narratives, northeastern culture needed to be defined in order to defend the region and its inhabitants both culturally and politically. In this way, regional culture becomes a kind of workshop within which political and social ideas were constructed.

This analysis of international events in the northeastern region demonstrates that regional identity is multivalent by nature. It is in a process of constant negotiation between state and intellectual invention and popular imagination, mediated by the region's inhabitants and exiles. Becoming northeastern, then, is better understood as an incomplete process of negotiation, mediation, contestation, and only brief moments of consensus. It is a multivalent process, imbued with contradictions of class, gender, and race. It is not merely reflection and definition, but emphatically narration and creation. The meaning of the Northeast changed over time, reflecting concerns of Brazilians, from various social classes, from both within the Northeast and from other regions, and influenced by international preoccupations. Nonetheless, within its multiple meanings, the threads of inferiority, drought, poverty, and potential for rebellion stand out as dominant

narratives. Race and class are frequently employed to uphold these narratives and women and men are debated as fit to represent the region nationally and internationally based on these categories.

While the idea of the Northeast as a separate region resulted from meteorological, socioeconomic, and political factors, the region was expressed in cultural terms. In the 1920s, a lively intellectual debate on Brazilian culture and international cultural influence (referred to as Brazilian Modernism) took place throughout Brazil.¹⁸ Beginning in the 1930s, the national government also participated in cultural politics, espousing a centralized national identity, creating governmental agencies in charge of regulating this identity, and placing several Brazilian Modernist artists in public positions throughout the state cultural apparatus.¹⁹ Yet the greater the pressure to centralize national identity, the stronger definitions of regional identity became. As chapter 2 shows, the Northeast produced the first influential regionalist movement, represented at the Regionalist Conference in Recife in 1926 by northeastern intellectuals.²⁰ These intellectuals formulated a regionalist movement to define the region's culture, defend it from outside cultural influence, and emphasize its equality in relation to the south within the nation—what Ángel Rama would see as a defensive reaction to the cities and Rosa Maria Godoy Silveira would define as the discourse of a social class in crisis.²¹ In other words, it is a group of educated intellectuals that articulates a defense of the region against the more modernized, dynamic, capital cities. The Northeast, according to this formulation, was not just dry, poor, and unhealthy but also the most racially mixed and authentically Brazilian region, resistant to the cosmopolitanism of the country's southern and southeastern cities. According to the regionalists, the Northeast was not different from Brazil, but was truly Brazilian, embodying many ideal qualities of regional and national identity. Yet popular artists also participated in the definition of northeastern culture. Further, the intellectuals at the Regionalist Conference drew on elements of popular culture, within which the region was discussed, debated, and defined.

REGION, NATION, WORLD

The study of regions has an extensive historiography. Geographers initially studied regions to avoid dogmatism when formulating general statements about the world, and later, as part of a “new human geography,” focused on the study of the interaction between people, place, and space.²² Historians have also studied the formation of regions, regionalism, and regional identity, usually as subjacent to the formation of nationalism.²³ Such work is usually located within the parameters of the studies of nation and nationalism set out by Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, arguing that regions and their identities are socio-histor-

ical constructs, like the nations and national identities within which they fit.²⁴

Studies of region, regional identity, and regionalism in Brazil have followed a similar pattern, examining regionalism as an effect of the centralization of the national government, or emphasizing that the formation of regional identities is an invention of intellectuals, artists, professionals, and bureaucrats.²⁵ Recent work—notably that of Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior, Barbara Weinstein, Stanley Blake, Anadelia Romo, and Scott Ickes—has emphasized regional identity formation in Brazil as a historically constructed racial category.²⁶ Other recent studies, moving away from the category of nation, have focused on the formation of regions that transcend national boundaries.²⁷

This book examines the role of the region in both imagining and moving beyond the nation in the twentieth century. It studies the formation of the northeastern region through activities and events that transcend both the regional and national scale. In so doing, it provides a significant case study in how, by the mid-twentieth century, the nation came to be understood as a series of interrelated regions, with one region serving as both national scapegoat and root of authentic culture. This understanding of a nation of interrelated yet unequal regions developed through interactions that pushed beyond national borders and relied on debates that spanned diverse sectors of society.

Through the example of the Brazilian Northeast, this book shows that these regions exist within national and international imaginations because regions and their cultural identities *do* something: they provide a framework for understanding our place in the nation and the world. Locally, identifying with a regional culture provides a discursive tool for creating a sense of belonging within the nation, serves as a defence mechanism against national disdain, and offers a way to define local culture outside the limitations of national identity. Nationally, these regions serve as foil to national modernity, internal scapegoat for any failures at progress, and nostalgic, living reminder of national memory. Internationally, these seemingly rustic, untouched, cultures serve both as a folkloric hook into otherwise modernized (or modernizing), industrial (or industrializing) nations, while often also providing a pretence for intervention in another sovereign nation.

The Northeast was not a relic, lost in time, nor was it sealed off from the world.²⁸ This book accepts that nation and region are codependent and co-constitutive, but argues that the space of regional production is not limited to the nation. Regional cultures and their complicated identities are always both inside and outside of themselves, representing self and reflecting the other, inventing their uniqueness, incorporating the new, and reinventing the old.²⁹ Regional identity is ambivalent, or even multivalent,

by nature and in a process of constant negotiation between state and intellectual invention and popular imagination, mediated by the region's inhabitants and exiles. The multivalence of northeastern regional identity resides not only in its relation to the nation but also to its interactions with the outside world. The region and its inhabitants frequently stepped out of the place nationally imagined for them, inspiring debates about who should be allowed to represent the nation on an international stage.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Each chapter addresses a moment, event, or spectacle within which northeasterners or their region somehow participated. Some of the chapters focus on northeasterners who left the region (as with the migrants of chapter 1, Gilberto Freyre in chapter 2, the fishermen in chapter 3, and the beauty pageant contestants in chapter 6). Others focus on events that brought international visitors to the region (as with the US intellectuals in chapter 2, Orson Welles in chapter 3, the US soldiers in chapter 4, football players and spectators in chapter 5, and French educators in chapter 7). As seen in the overlap in these parenthetical explanations, some chapters manage to showcase both travel out of and into the region, with each traveler bringing with and taking away ideas about the Northeast and its place in the nation and world.

The chapters are loosely chronological, with significant temporal overlap. The chronology resides in the focus on a main event (a conference, football match, or beauty pageant, for example). The overlap is found in each chapter's attempt to situate the event or debate within a historical context while also teasing out the resonance of the debates throughout the period studied in this book. In this way, I believe, it is better to read the chapters in order, but it is possible to read them out of order, or even individually. As each chapter also highlights more general themes—like race, development, gender, sports, beauty, film, activism, and dating—I hope that they might also, together or individually, be of use to students and scholars who are interested in these themes.

This book begins with early understandings of the region and how drought and migration came to define it—a process that began in the 1920s. Chapter 1, “Foreigners: Exiles of Drought and Migration,” first offers a history of drought and migration in the Northeast, examining statistics and governmental responses. It then turns to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century understandings of drought, migration, and the backlander. It ends with an analysis of cordel literature on migration (usually written by migrants). Cordel literature on migration establishes the southern Brazilian as a foreigner and the migrants' new region of residence as foreign lands. In this way, migration from the Northeast within the nation becomes the first

interaction with the foreign. Through this encounter, cordel literature establishes the contours of northeastern culture through the repetition of what the northeastern migrant misses from home and how the migrant is treated in other regions. The intellectuals, artists, and *cordelistas* present a regional culture that is defined by festivals, foods, flora, and fauna, not drought, and identify social roots for northeastern problems that are not climactic.

Chapter 2, “Return to Sender: Gilberto Freyre, the Northeast, and the World,” examines an early intellectual movement that outlined a cultural identity for the newly formed northeastern region through the Regionalist Conference in Recife in 1926, a conference on regionalism held in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1931, the *Diário de Pernambuco*’s promotion of the Regionalist movement, and Gilberto Freyre’s *Manifesto regionalista*, published in 1954. I focus on the writings of Gilberto Freyre, who called for a regional culture that was both culturally authentic and ecologically organic to the region. Freyre not only exalted a distinct northeastern culture and regional identity but also inserted northeastern regionalism into an international historiography and movement. For Freyre and his fellow regionalists, regionalism was a way to re-envision the nation as a system of regions. The Regionalist Conference, *Manifesto regionalista*, and *Diário de Pernambuco* set the vocabulary for discussions of the Northeast as more than just drought and for demanding constructive attention to the economic problems and responsible development of the region. They described northeastern culture in terms of race and class, creating associations that would be picked up and revised by different groups throughout the period that this book addresses.

Chapter 3, “Four Fishermen and Orson Welles,” returns to popular understandings of the region. It lays out the story of a group of fishermen—referred to as *jangadeiros*—relying on rustic sail-rafts who sailed from Fortaleza, Ceará, to Rio de Janeiro in 1941 to protest national labor law, becoming national heroes along the way and drawing the attention of *Life* magazine, Orson Welles, and a film crew. Chapter 3 relies on newspaper articles, a scrapbook that the fishermen asked people to sign in each port, popular literature, and song to show how in their attempt at inclusion in the national state, these fishermen became symbols of the northeastern region. Newspapers and artists used the *jangadeiros*’ voyage to create a figure that could represent the Northeast of the *sertão* and the Northeast of the coast. They used this symbol to draw attention to regional inequalities but also to exalt the positive characteristics of the region, which, in turn, they also emphasized as positive qualities of the nation as a whole. Orson Welles’s attention was initially accepted as granting even greater resonance to the importance of the region, but after the tragic death of one of the *jangadeiros* during filming, the press began to treat the *jangadeiros* in a tone of

ridicule. The distinct ways in which the *jangadeiros* were treated locally, nationally, and internationally emphasizes that who was chosen to represent the Northeast depended on the scale of the conversation. Eventually, the *jangada* and *jangadeiro* figure were depoliticized and converted into a romantic symbol of the northeastern region, expressed in popular literature and song, described by folklorists and anthropologists, and incorporated into the region's visual culture.

Until their withdrawal in 1946, the presence of thousands of US troops in the Northeast during World War II jarred the notion of the brave, stoic Northeast represented by the *jangadeiro*. Chapter 4, "Sad Girls, Coca-Colas, and US Soldiers: World War II and Cold War Memories," presents how the conversation about regional identity changed in the aftermath of hosting the US military bases during World War II. This chapter examines how northeastern women who dated or married US soldiers were later portrayed as prostitutes, as naïve girls, or as scheming but equally naïve temptresses, ridiculously pandering to the soldiers in the hopes of moving up the social ladder. It shows how these representations fit within a Cold War context of increasing social mobilization in the Northeast. Chapter 4 argues that narratives created in art, literature, and Carnival blocks about the romantic, sexual, and matrimonial relationships between northeastern women and US soldiers sketch out the contours of two new, interlinked understandings of the Northeast: that the region will only be seduced, fooled, and abandoned by the outside world, and that it leaves the rest of the nation culturally exposed and vulnerable if it does not protect itself from said temptation of outside culture.

Chapters 5 and 6 turn to popular, mass spectacles that drew the nation's attention, even before the advent of national television. Through these events, we learn how the conversation about the Northeast is taken up by a greater portion of the population. Chapter 5, "The Northeast Needs Football, Too," focuses on World Cup football in the Northeast, examining newspaper coverage of the campaign to bring a match to Recife in 1950 and analyzing football in newspaper, regional music, and literature. This chapter demonstrates that within the space provided by mass spectator events like World Cup football, journalists, fans, and artists discussed the region, its place within the nation, and its international reputation. Newspapers explicitly discussed the importance of representing the Northeast and its potential to the nation and world through a World Cup football match. The press conveyed the symptoms of an inferiority complex and fears that the Northeast might lag behind the nation in terms of development and international exposure. Regional art, on the other hand, expressed football within northeastern genres (*cordel* literature, clay art, popular music), but emphasized harmony with national culture through football.

While discussions of the Northeast within World Cup events show a desire for inclusion, discussions of northeastern candidates in Miss Universe contests, presented in chapter 6, “The Limits of the Northeast: Miss Brazil, Miss Universe, and Northeastern Beauty,” provide the opportunity to analyze both representation and exclusion. In the 1940s and 1950s, popular and intellectual groups in the Brazilian state of Bahia had cultivated an Afro-Brazilian identity; nonetheless, until 1969, the women who won the Miss Bahia contest (going on to the Miss Brazil pageant) were white. However, local beauty pageants elected women of a wide variety of hair, eye, and skin colors. How beauty and race were fused in these contests depended on the scale of representation. Northeastern states sent to pageants based in the United States women who they thought aligned with US standards of beauty, and the Brazilian contestants’ successes only reinforced this practice. Nonetheless, back home, the Brazilian press, artists, and audiences heralded the Brazilian *mulata* as the ideal of beauty and sexuality. Further, through an examination of art and press coverage of four Miss Brazils, we find the limits of northeastern regional identity. The city of Salvador was not considered northeastern by local newspapers nor by the *Diário de Pernambuco*, but rather unique, defined through local cultural symbols, based on an Afro-Bahian identity and the rejection of US consumer culture. The Bahian sertão, nonetheless, was considered northeastern, underlining its drought, poverty, underdevelopment, potential for unrest, and need for governmental aid.

From these narratives of inclusion and exclusion, disappointment and inferiority sprouted a long-lasting stereotype: that of the resistant (or revolutionary) Northeast. Chapter 7, “A Defiant Northeast: The Movimento de Cultura Popular and Banditry,” begins with a study of the formation of the Movimento de Cultura Popular (MCP, Popular Culture Movement). The MCP was inspired by a French educational movement within which its creators participated, but was spurred on by political support from a leftist city and state government. The MCP was a multi-tendency organization, but was strongly associated with peasant organizers and the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB, Brazilian Communist Party) and its members were accused of conspiring with Cuba. While its doors were closed by the military dictatorship in 1964, it offered an alternative for poor northeasterners: access to literacy and, through it, the ballot box. The archetype of the bandit, employed in film and literature, would embody the threat of what the Northeast could do if projects like that of the MCP were halted: revolt violently. While banditry was eradicated by 1940, the bandit figure came to represent the region in literature and film in the 1950s and 1960s. Bandits were presented at the Cannes film festival (with *O cangaceiro* receiving the Palm d’Or) and in the celebrated Brazilian Cinema Novo movement, gain-

ing international fame and representing Brazilian poverty both nationally and abroad. Brazilian banditry also inspired international intellectual engagement, leading to a historiography that, unintentionally, solidified national understandings of the region. The bandit in film, literature, and the press represented the Northeast's supposed tenacity and tendency toward rebellion—characteristics deemed positive locally, shameful nationally, and dangerous internationally.

By the late 1960s, a term that had only come into common usage in the 1920s needed no introduction; without explanation, the term *Northeast* came to represent notions of tradition, stoicism, bravery, cultural vibrancy, and racial mixing, on the one hand, and yet, on the other, became the greatest national example of drought, poverty, underdevelopment, resistance, potential for revolt, and need for governmental assistance. These terms of definition came from the inside—that is, the region's inhabitants pulled them from the region's history, ecology, and accumulation of lived experiences, but reflections on the region, its culture, and its place in the nation and the world came from the region's constantly changing relationship with international presence both within and outside its borders. To define its region and protect its culture, the Northeast had to step out of its nationally accepted place, projecting itself out to the world.

While the story of the Northeast is particular, the underlying narrative is not unique. During the early twentieth century, folklorists around the world recorded the music, legends, recipes, and archetypal figures from regions whose cultures they perceived to be at risk from modernization and mass consumption. Gilberto Freyre compared his regional work with that of his friends in the US South, in Ireland, in France, and in Finland.³⁰ Antonio Gramsci wrote of the "Southern Question" in Italy, Jean Charles-Brun and André Varagnac wrote of region and culture in France, Francis Butler Simkins wrote of the US South, and Mariátegui wrote of regionalism in Peru.³¹ Regional identities around the world provided a way for different groups of people, on a local level, to mediate the relationship between region, nation, and world. In this way, the story of the Brazilian Northeast is also the story of how different groups around the world situated regional cultures—often defined in both economic and racial terms—within the nation and the world in the twentieth century.