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Racial Articulation and Labor in the 19th Century Brazil

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Abstract

This article seeks to explain how economic and local political structures shaped the ways in which public officials articulated ideas of race and labor in the nineteenth century Brazil. Employing a comparative historical method, this work advances the literature in two ways. First, it suggests that what we have come to view as a positive valuation of blackness has roots in the economic development prior to the centralized nation-building processes. Second, the findings of this study point to the effects of intra-national factors, such as economic structures and patterns of labor incorporation, in shaping how regional public officials articulated notions of “race,” labor, and progress.

Keywords

race and labor – Brazil – cross-regional comparison

Introduction

This article seeks to investigate the ways in which Brazilian elites in two different provinces in the first half of the nineteenth century articulated ideas of race and labor. I use the term “race” here in agreement with how Brazilians deployed this concept in the nineteenth century. Rather than viewing race as a biological entity, immutable, and fixed, the concept of race in this period signified social status, which included one’s perceived ancestry (through one’s phenotype) but also class status. Indicators of class status were, broadly

speaking, determined by one's occupation, skills, training, and standing in the community. Such definition of race is not very distinct from how scholars have characterized contemporaneous understandings of race in Brazil and in Latin America.¹ In other words, the categories that represented "racial" terms in Brazil in the nineteenth century was more of a representation of one's social status than an indication of parentage.² To be categorized as "white," for instance, one might have some European physical traits, but also other qualities that might "elevate" him or her to the category of whiteness, such as education, occupation, and other class status markers. At the bottom of the "social-race" ranking were characteristics associated with "blackness," such as African ancestry, low class status (e.g. manual, non-skilled, and coerced labor), and civil status (e.g. slave or former slave). Thus, the axis of social distinctions in the first decades of the nineteenth century can be defined more in line with socio-race distinctions than with a biological (e.g. parentage).

In this article, I also examine the application of the "racial labor principle" in public discourse in Brazil. According to the "racial labor principle,"³ meanings and characteristics pertaining to labor, such as work ethic and discipline, are ascribed to certain "racial" groups. According to this principle, work characteristics, such as "industriousness," work discipline, and rationality correlate with whiteness, whereas the opposite characteristics, such as "indolence" and coercive labor correlate to "blackness." At the empirical level, this paper examines the ways in which public officials in the nineteenth century Brazil ascribed these labor-related characteristics to certain segments of the population. To ascribe the characteristic of "industriousness" strictly to Europeans, for example, would mean that the boundaries around whiteness are relatively strong and stable. However, to assign the characteristic of "industriousness" to non-European groups would reflect the expansion of the boundaries demarcating whiteness. As the paper will show, the "racial labor principle" operated differently in different contexts. The provincial elites in Bahia, for instance, viewed their population, who were largely non-whites and had strong links to a slave past, as "indolent" and lacking proper work ethic. In Bahia, the link between "race" and ideas of labor appeared in discussions of slave rebellions and characterizations of those who engaged in them as idle and lacking work

1 In other Latin American contexts, other socio-cultural factors, such as language and custom play a greater role than class status in determining one's "social race" (Wagley 1965).

2 Holt, Katherine. "Glossary" The Bahian History Project: The 1835 Santiago do Iguape Household Census Database." <http://www.mappingbahia.org/project/>.<http://www.mappingbahia.org/project/sources/glossary/>.

3 Blauner (2001: 51).

ethic. Furthermore, the provincial officials in Bahia sought to recruit European immigrants, who in their view, possessed the proper work ethic and discipline for free labor. In the neighboring province of Minas Gerais, however, the provincial elites viewed their largely non-white population, many of whom were participating in the emerging proto-industries, as “industrious” and possessing the proper abilities and capacities to help the local economy flourish. These elites did not refer to the largely non-white population racial terms, but rather as “natives.” I argue that the European-native distinction, although not a direct reference to “race” per se, captured through discourse the boundaries demarcating whiteness and blackness. More specifically, I argue that in Minas Gerais, the socio-racial boundary of whiteness was more expansive to include more people, not just Europeans.

Race, Labor, and Nationalism

Scholars have argued that the articulation of race is linked to the encounters between Europeans and colonized minorities (e.g. Native peoples, Africans, and their descendants). Since the mid-seventeenth century, Miles (2003: 122) argues, “European representations of the Other [e.g. racialized minorities] were generated and reproduced in the course of history of contact between different populations enmeshed in specific relations of production and expressing distinct cultural values.” These negative representations of native and African peoples solidified in the context of the material achievements of British capitalism in the nineteenth century. When the expansion of British capitalism was measured against the colonies in Africa and former colonies in Latin America, it created a standard against which to evaluate non-Europeans (Miles 1982: 114). Blauner (2001: 51) refers to this process as “racial labor principle,” whereby free and uncoerced labor became associated with white labor, while unfree or coerced labor with non-white labor. In essence, those who were identified as a supply of “exploitable” labor were often those who were thought to belong to an “inferior” kind of human being (Miles 2003: 128–129; see also Blauner 2001: 50; Glenn 2002: 58–61; Roediger 1991: 20).⁴

4 For a different perspective, which considers the relationship between race and political ideologies, see Fields (1990). Fields argues that, the “American racial ideology is as original an invention of the Founders as is the United States itself” (1990: 101). The American creeds of Liberty and the belief in the inalienable right to life were not self-evident during the 17th century. In mid- to late eighteenth century, when the denial of liberty and self-governance became the anomaly, that a racial explanation was used to justify denying those rights to

The economic dominance of the United States and European nation-states, and the subsequent formulation of their *nation* as “superior,” generated widespread concern among Latin American elites. More specifically, the economic field became the main measurement of development for emerging nation-states. The influx of white (European) labor would help situate developing economies in par with the more industrialized nations. Moreover, the composition of the labor force was a key indicator of economic development. However, since the composition of labor throughout Latin America was largely native (e.g. non-immigrant) and non-white, elites sought to portray their countries in a positive light, especially to European crowds (Skidmore 2005: 124; Knight 1990; Also see Loveman 2009 for the links between race and modern nation-statehood).

First cherished and promoted by national elites and abolitionists in the late nineteenth century, European immigration had become a threat to national cohesion by the 1920s and 1930s. As it was the case in other Latin American countries, the main concern over immigration in the 1920s in Brazil was over the perceived unassimilability of immigrant groups, in particular Jews, Germans, and the Japanese (Stepan 1991: 165). Eugenicians argued that the Brazilianization process, or the forging of national unity, had to be safeguarded from outside threats, “especially from ethnic or national groups whose physical or cultural characteristics they believed might disturb the process of racial homogenization at home” (Stepan 1991).

The immigration restrictions imposed by the national state in the 1930s is a remarkable shift from a state-sponsored policy that helped bring millions of European immigrants to Brazil starting in the 1880s. The new nationalist project sought to promote the “native” aspects of the population, in particular the working class, and it was in this context that the positive valuation of “blackness” and race mixture became an important characteristic of national development.⁵ Intellectuals and political elites began promoting immigration restrictions in order to protect the process of homogenization through “race fusion” at home. It was precisely during this period that the “constructive mis-

Afro-Americans. In other words, it was only when whites took for granted those values, and perceived liberty as their inalienable right, the American racial ideology of domination was first created (Fields 1990: 114). Fields' theory does not fit well in Brazil since it did not adopt Republicanism after its Independence, and, consequently, no justification for slavery based on radical ideas of liberty and individual rights developed.

5 The positive valuation of blackness and race mixture was more prominently articulated by Socio-Anthropologist Gilberto Freyre in *Masters and Slaves* (1933).

cegenation” thesis, and notions of positive race mixture consolidated in Brazil as viable racial discourses.

It was in this context that a more positive view of non-whites emerged, in particular the ideas that non-whites were indeed “industrious” and could therefore participate in the construction of the modern Brazilian state (Stepan 1991). At the practical level, these elites were concerned about the “redefinition of labor” of former slaves and their descendants. Ianni (1966: 192–196) argues that the industrial class in Brazil in the early twentieth century sought to transform the meaning of non-white labor, which until the late nineteenth century had been characterized as coerced and unfree. Drawing on Weber’s conceptualization of capitalism, Ianni (1966) suggests that the industrial class were well aware about the contradictions of unfree labor and capitalist development, so they sought to redefine the meaning of labor, especially that of former slaves. The redefinition of labor was part of a broader (racial) project to “absorb” Afro-descendants into national formation, which was inextricably linked to the goal to advance the industrial sector and capitalism in Brazil (Ianni 1966: 197). In this process, work qualities such as “indolence” and “idleness,” which elites had previously perceived as inherent characteristics of Afro-descendants and the racially mixed (*mestiço*) population, were now substituted for an ideology of work (Ortiz 1985: 42).

According to the perspectives discussed above, the Brazilian elites in the early twentieth century began rearticulating the racial labor principle whereby ideas of work and race, such as the correlation between whiteness and “industriousness,” on the one hand, and blackness and “indolence,” on the other hand, began to blur.⁶ The racially mixed, largely non-white population was now perceived as the symbol of progress, industriousness, and modernity. This shift, scholars argue, can be attributed to the contradictions inherent in capitalist development and modern national formation, in which beliefs about the inherent inferiority of non-whites would hinder national and capitalist development. Latin American elites understood that without reformulating the negative perceptions about the fitness of a largely non-white population to drive their nations toward modernity, their nations would follow the determinist trap against which eugenicists in North America and Europe warned them. Consequently, elites in Brazil (and throughout Latin America) began rearticulating

6 Scholars have correctly pointed out, however, that the “whitening” of Afro- and Indigenous descendants in Brazil (and in Latin America) is inherently discriminatory since the movement from blackness to whiteness, or the movement from pre-modern, irrational, and unfree to rational, free and modern involves the devaluation of blackness (Wade 1993).

notions of race and labor that would allow for the possibility of Brazil as a modern nation state.

One key aspect of the dominant literature discussed above is that scholars assume a linear progression from a pre-capitalist economy to a capitalist and industrial type of economic organization in the first half of the twentieth century. Scholars argue that it was during the transition from slavery to capitalism when the re-definition of labor took place.⁷ There are, however, historiographical data to suggest that Brazil developed in a proto-industrial type of economic organization in the first half of the nineteenth century, which might have given rise to similar debates around the fitness and unfitness of certain types of workers in certain industries. There is also some suggestion in the literature that Latin American elites were influenced by the links between modern and rational labor and whiteness. Andrews (2004), for instance, argues that during the 1840s and 1850s, countries throughout Latin America distributed state funds to help finance the immigration of Europeans to the region, and some countries went as far as offering tax exemptions for immigrants and their families (page 136). It is conceivable, therefore, that what Andrews calls “racialized labor migration,” or the strong presumption of a connection between “whiteness” and “industriousness” motivated these early attempts.

Skidmore (1985) also hints at the connections between economic structures and race in elite discourse, as well as the timing of when such articulations might have begun. Skidmore contends that more research is needed on the experience of free people of color and on the attitudes of Brazilian workers in both the colonial era and in the nineteenth century (1985: 19). Speaking about unexplored issues related to the role of free people of color, Skidmore proposes that part of the answer “lies in a better understanding of the dynamics of Brazilian *socioeconomic history*, [and] some of the *most lasting forms* of interracial social behavior must have been established in those years [before slavery expired in 1888]” (emphasis added, 1985: 20). In this article, I build on Skidmore and Andrews early assertions by reassessing certain aspects of Brazil’s socioeconomic history in the early decades of the nineteenth century, in particular exploring the connections between ideas of race and labor.

My aim in this article is to investigate *how* provincial and regional elites articulated the “racial labor principle” in the first half of the nineteenth century, and, importantly, *whether* notions of race and labor differed in different

7 Skidmore (1993[2005]) argues that the debates around which types of workers were fit for modernity began in the 1870s, when they debated who would replace slaves once slavery was abolished. The Chinese and Africans lacked, in the eyes of abolitionists such as Joaquim Nabuco, morality and proper work orientation (21–27). See also Azevedo (1987).

economic and political contexts. Based on the general literature discussed above, about the links between capitalist development and the (re)definition of racialized labor in Brazil, I hypothesize that where proto-industrialization occurred, the boundaries around whiteness shifted in order to include individuals who had previously been excluded from such characterization. The boundary shift scenario assumes that certain individuals are perceived as possessing characteristics previously assigned to whites, such as in official categories, when the boundaries demarcating whiteness expands, or the social definition of whiteness broadens to include more individuals within it (Loveman and Muniz 2007: 917). Although I examine discursive expressions in this paper, a similar process can be examined if we consider the ways in which certain groups of people are presented in discourse, e.g. whether they are characterized as “industrious” or “indolent,” properties associated with whiteness and blackness.

Data Sources and Method

In the following pages, I rely heavily on primary sources to evaluate the distinctive features of racial ideologies in Bahia and Minas Gerais. I perform content analysis of Provincial Reports, Provincial Laws, published primary sources, primary sources from provincial census data, and secondary historical evidence. The Provincial Reports were state-level messages issued annually, and they summarized activities within each province. They covered many topics, ranging from public expenditures on education, hospitals, infrastructure, to legislative information. Although the Provincial Reports were intended to inform the central government about local-level affairs, excerpts from these reports were often published in local newspapers as a means to inform the public about affairs within their state.⁸ Thus, it is fair to assume that these reports represented at least one important means of dissemination of racial categories as they informed the population at large.⁹ Moreover, Provincial Reports symbolized the perception that provincial officials sought to convey to the public in terms of what their priorities were.

8 Judy Bieber (1999) explains that newspapers were used to inform the public about the affairs of provincial governments by publishing laws, assembly debates, and provincial reports (page 162).

9 Jenkins (1997) posits that political rhetoric is especially effective “in conjunction with newspaper proprietors, journalists, and commentators” (page 68).

My methodological strategy is organized in terms of background conditions and objective possibilities. I used Stuart Mill's Method of Difference, or the "most similar" method to select the case of Bahia and Minas Gerais. The Millian Method of Difference involves comparing cases that are similar with regard to theoretically relevant factors, but which differ in the outcome (Mill 1950: 214–215).¹⁰ I demonstrate the comparability of Bahia and Minas Gerais on the grounds that they were similar in theoretically relevant factors, such as cultural institutions, demographics, and patterns of economic structures during colonial rule, as well as dominant racial ideologies during the same period. However, I do not rely on the Millian approach to establish causation. The Millian Method is inadequate for providing historical explanations because it does not demand a specification of mechanisms for establishing historical causality (Riley 2005: 290).

In order to address these concerns, I rely on Weber's model of historical causation. Weber (1949) proposed that the main step toward an historical explanation is to construct a counterfactual analysis of events and historical facts to illustrate whether these factors can explain the outcome. It involves asking whether modifying one or a few elements would result in the same effect, or whether some other effects would be expected. This is done, Weber explains, "for the purpose of gaining insight into the causal 'significance' of individual components of the events" (1949: 185). I develop an historical analysis that explains how certain historical facts were crucial for the development of other processes. In the case of Minas Gerais, I show how proto-industrialization was crucial for the development of a capitalist class and for the high demand for wage laborers. Another historically relevant factor was failed European migration, which would have helped create a "white" working class in Minas Gerais similar to the U.S. (e.g. Roediger 1991). However, in the absence of a viable supply of European workers, capitalist elites were forced to rely on non-white labor, including African-born and native-born slaves, which prevented the construction of rigid racial categories (i.e. a strong correlation between whiteness and European ancestry). Rather, widespread participation of Afro-descendants in skilled wage labor likely made the boundaries around whiteness more flexible. My historical analysis is, therefore, in terms of describing the historical importance of certain elements by highlighting what would happen if these factors were absent or modified. A comparison with Bahia further illustrates how key elements of the Minas Gerais' social and economic structure were crucial for the development of more fluid and "blurred" notions of whiteness, as elites

10 The logic behind the Millian approach is that "whatever antecedent cannot be excluded without preventing the phenomenon is the cause of that phenomenon" (Mill 1950: 215).

perceived the largely non-white population, especially those working in the developing proto-industries, as “industrious.”

Two Slave Societies: Bahia and Minas Gerais Compared

The selection of Bahia and Minas as case studies is appropriate since they approached the end of the colonial period (1822) with very similar social, cultural, and political environments. They were characterized by striking similarities in 1) a heavy reliance on slave labor in the previous two hundred years, since the beginning of the African slave trade; and most importantly, 2) the same processes of nation-state building following independence from Portugal; and 3) a social ideology of *escravismo*.¹¹

Demographic Background

Starting in the late sixteenth century, Bahia and Minas Gerais were two of the main destinations for slaves brought from Africa. By the end of the eighteenth century, Afro-descendants made up the majority of the population in Bahia and Minas Gerais (Barickman 1998: 16; Bergad 1999). The great majority of the population consisted of African and Brazilian-born blacks, and individuals of mixed Black and White ancestors – the *pardos* and *mulattos* (Barickman 1998; Bergad 1999). In fact, Minas Gerais was the largest slaveholding province in Brazil and throughout the nineteenth century, Minas contained the most numerous slave population (Bergad 1996: 66).

The Political Context in Early Nineteenth Century Brazil

In September of 1822, Brazil declared its independence from Portugal, but it was not until July of 1823 that formal independence was attained with the defeat of Portuguese troops in Bahia. In the aftermath of conflict that officially, albeit not in practice, ended Portuguese rule in Brazil. In less than two years, however, the newly founded Brazilian state would face conflicts with neighboring countries in the War of Cisplatine (1825). Pedro I, the monarch of Brazil after independence, would face challenges at home as he abused his considerable authority. Parliament soon became a site of opposition to the monarch (Kraay 2001: 145). The second half of the 1820s and the first half of the 1830s marked a period of

11 The concept of *escravismo* is similar to the “racial labor principle” discussed above. In *escravismo*, those who were identified as a supply of “exploitable” labor were often those who were thought to belong to an “inferior” kind of human being, and often dark skin and African ancestry were correlated to types of unfree and exploitable labor.

equivocal authority and new space for political competition (Needell 2001: 271). From independence until about 1850, Brazil experimented with different political and administrative institutions, and also experienced widespread socio-political conflict. Although part of the revolts and social unrest evolved around issues of federalism and centralization of power, many revolts were aimed at the provincial authorities (Barickman 2003: 290). The competition between political elites, and exclusion and repression of slaves and other segments of the free population soon led to rebellions and revolts throughout Brazil. The perception of state power among all segments of the Brazilian society was weaker in 1835 than in any prior year. As the authority of the Crown was challenged, political divisions in the parliament and greater competition for local power emerged, which led to violent conflicts and rebellions (Needell 2006: 60).

Racial Ideology during the Colonial Period

The synonymous categorization of African with slave developed in all of the formal colonies throughout the Americas. European colonists initially attempted to force Native Americans into perpetual servitude, but such efforts were unsuccessful. Leslie Rout (1976) explains that no Indigenous peoples could be enslaved in Latin America after colonial rulers signed a decree to that effect, in the early seventeenth century, and, after 1608, only Africans could be legally enslaved (79). Rout also argues that this distinction marked the beginning of a strong correlation between dark skin and debased labor, and that “over the centuries, this may have been the greatest of all crimes committed against the New World’s Negroid peoples” (Rout 1976: 79–80). Similarly, Miles (1982: 106) argues that, during the colonial years, the “African came to be conceived as inherently possessing an economic and political status” as slaves. As in other regions in the “New World,” the process of categorizing Africans with a status of unfree persons also emerged in Bahia and Minas Gerais.

Since the beginning of Portuguese rule in Brazil, until 1763, Bahia had been a very important region. It was in Salvador, Bahia, where the colonial administrative center was located, and between 1570 and 1680 it was a major zone of sugar production (Schwartz 1985: 314). As in other parts of the Americas, the production of raw materials relied heavily on slave labor from Africa, after early attempts to enslave Indigenous people failed (Schwartz 1970: 1985). Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bahian economy continued to rely on Africans as the main source of slave labor, even during periods of economic stagnation. As a result of the dehumanizing aspects of slavery, many slaves rebelled in Bahia and formed maroon societies known as quilombos or mocambos. The slave rebellions intensified in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Bahia, as dozens of revolts erupted in different

regions of the province, and culminated in the Males Revolt in 1835 (Reis 1988). A similar pattern of labor exploitation of Africans emerged, and the connection between dark skin and unfree labor developed in the neighboring province of Minas Gerais.

Since the late seventeenth and for most of the eighteenth century, the main economic sector in Minas Gerais was export mining, which made the province a very important site for Portuguese colonization efforts. During the early years of gold extraction in Minas Gerais, the Portuguese Crown devised regulations to control land acquisition and the labor supply. Higgins (1999) explains that “as the population of available Indians declined . . . the slave-labor force in eighteenth century Minas Gerais came to be almost totally African slaves and their descendants” (30). Those who wanted to exploit gold deposits were awarded a certain amount of land depending on the number of slaves that they possessed. As early as 1702, therefore, the colonial regulations for land distribution were quickly shaping the correlation between unfree labor and blacks. For instance, Article 7 of colonial law awarded two and one-half *braças* (one *braça* was about 22.6 acres) per slave owned, and likewise awarded two and one-half *braças* per black employed (Higgins 1999: 31). Thus, the strong correlation between dark skin and unfree labor was long established in Minas Gerais, and there is reason to believe that such a pattern continued at least until the decline of the mining sector in the 1770s.

Other laws were designed to restrict black and mulatto social mobility in Minas throughout the eighteenth century. Even for those who had acquired freedom there were many barriers for mobility. For example, a provincial prosecutor in Minas Gerais contested the appropriateness of a *pardo* (mulatto) to serve as a local judge. The prosecutor claimed that the judicial candidate did not possess the quality of blood required to serve in this capacity. The letter claimed: “The quality of blood [of the judicial candidate in question] is such that it should not be allowed, since the requirement for such position is capable white men, who have respect and capability to fulfill the office’s obligations . . . and not the quality of the judge in question, because it is not fair that white men could be sentenced by a mulatto . . .” (Source: Caderno do Archivo Mineiro/Documentacao Avulsa da Colonia 1748; CMOP, box 136 Doc. 23, A.P.M). As this quote illustrates, the Mineiro society denied non-whites from occupying positions of power, even those who were not treated as “*preto*” or black. The basis for such actions was the “quality of blood,” as only those who were white were awarded the privilege of power. In this case, the judicial candidate was of mixed origin.

In addition, diverse forms of violence were used to help contain the threat that quilombos (hideaway communities of runaway slaves) posed to the slave

social order. Guimaraes (1988: 25) explains that runaway slaves and slave societies (quilombos) were widespread in Minas during the eighteenth century. Between 1711 and 1795, the captaincy of Minas Gerais destroyed over 115 quilombos, which illustrates the prevalence of runaway slave societies there and the repression that followed (Guimaraes 1988: Appendix). Thus, eighteenth century Minas Gerais was very similar to Bahia, in terms of its demographic characteristics, its reliance on African slave labor, the social barriers that prevented non-whites from ascending to positions of power, and most importantly, the strong correlation between unfree labor and dark skin. In spite of these similarities, diverging racial discourses emerged in Bahia and Minas Gerais. I attribute this divergence to the distinct economic transformations that took place in the two cases, which provided the background conditions to the articulation and re-articulation of socio-racial discourse during the period of political instability in the 1830s and 1840s.

Economic Structures: Diverging Patterns of Economic Development

The dominant economic sector in Minas Gerais from the mid-seventeenth century until 1750 was mining. Bergad (1996: 68) argues that the mining boom situated Minas Gerais as a key colonial region in Brazil, as well as the largest slaveholding province. After 1750, the mining sector began to disintegrate and alternative economic activities evolved, including cattle ranching and agriculture. In the nineteenth century, Minas' economy continued to diversify as new economic sectors emerged, and foreign capital was infused into the economy. Douglas Cole Libby (1988) posits that the province of Minas dealt with economic decline by diversifying its economic sectors and by implementing a capitalist mode of production in the early years of the nineteenth century (page 15). Libby (1988: 19; 1991: 4) argues that the slave regime in Minas Gerais lost its formal colonial features during the nineteenth century as its mercantile links with the international market became tenuous. As a result, the economic activities in Minas Gerais developed a great deal of flexibility, which according to Libby (1991:19), led to the "inevitable transition to free labor." This economic transformation in the early decades of the nineteenth century distinguished Minas Gerais from any other slave-holding province in Brazil (Libby 1991: 18–19). Moreover, the dynamic nature of the Mineiro economy was marked by processes of "proto-industrialization," referred to as "wide scale rural production of industrial goods destined for distant markets based on low-cost labor" (Libby 1991: 2).

Three industrial activities embodied this economic transformation: siderurgia, textile production, and subterranean mining. The siderurgia and the textile industries were characterized by a division of labor, the use of wage

labor, the separation of capital and labor, and the sheer size of productive activities (Libby 1991: 17–19). Subterranean mining was marked by the use of wage laborers, both free and slave (“slaves-for-rent”), and they were heavily financed by British private companies (Libby 1991: 24). With the emergence of “proto-industries,” a segment of the labor force went through a process of proletarianization. I use the term proletarianization to refer to the process of conversion from individual producers being engaged in economic activities based on subsistence production to their engaging in wage labor. Libby (1991: 15) explains that, “the industrial sector, obviously including the proto-industries, actually outstripped agriculture in terms of labor absorption.” This illustrates that, although a segment of the working population in the nineteenth century Minas Gerais participated in agricultural activities, a significant number of them engaged in the industrial sector.

The ability of the Mineiro economy to thrive was related to its flexible nature, which not only allowed for greater diversification of production, but also the flexibility to proletarianize its population (Libby 1988: 19). The number of free people in Minas Gerais who became wage laborers increased fourfold from 1831 to 1872 (Libby 1988: 92). This labor force was not sufficient, however, to meet the high demand for specialized labor in the emerging industries. Free labor was so scarce in nineteenth century Minas Gerais that some members of the capitalist class even bribed local officials to exempt free workers from military conscription (Eakin 1989: 84). Facing major labor shortages, managers and foreign investors, particularly in the industrial mining sector, reluctantly turned to slave labor. Eakin (1989: 31) explains that, “like good Victorian capitalists, [managers] believed firmly in the superiority of free wage labor over African slaves. Yet from the beginning . . . they also failed to attract sufficient free workers to run the mines.” Thus, the shortage of free workers forced capitalists to use the only source of labor readily available: African slaves.

Africans and their descendants were widely used in industrial mining through a system that Libby refers to as “slaves-for-rent.” About twelve percent of the total slave population in Minas Gerais worked in the emerging industries as wage laborers, and they were often rented for a period of five years (Libby 1988: 94–95). In theory, the capitalist class in subterranean mining preferred free labor because its members did not believe that slaves were adequately skilled to perform more specialized tasks in the division of labor (Eakin 1989: 47). One important (and perhaps unintended) consequence of the resulting labor structure in nineteenth century Minas Gerais was the development of a large segment of the Afro-descendants who had specialized skills (e.g. they were trained in the founding of metal) (Libby 1988: 165, 177–178). A close look at the provincial census in Minas Gerais in 1830, which has been recently

digitized and available for analysis by a group of historians from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), shows an extensive labor market participation in semi-skilled and skilled occupations by individuals classified as non-whites.¹² As Table 1 shows, out of the 19,152 individuals who worked in selected skills and semi-skilled occupations, 14,688 of them were classified by census takers as non-whites, or 76.7 percent of the total workers in these occupations. Most strikingly, 24.1 percent of these workers were slaves, while 30.7 percent of workers in these occupations were free or freed.¹³ These figures suggest a pattern of proletarianization among non-whites, both free and unfree, in the early decades of the nineteenth century Minas Gerais.

TABLE 1 *Number of Workers in Selected Semi-Skilled and Skilled Occupations in Minas Gerais-1830*

Civil Status	Africano/ Preto	Branco	Crioulo	Indio	Mestiço (cabra, caboclo)	Pardo	Total
No Information	77	1036	1694	6	135	5678	8634
Livre (free)	39	3415	390	1	64	1362	5273
Escravo (slave)	1424	0	2613	0	86	499	4622
Forro (Freed)	81	1	220	1	9	295	608
Total	1622	4452	4927	8	294	7837	19152

Source: População, Domicílios e Distritos Recenciados-Minas Gerais-1830. Digitized copies and tools for analysis are available from the CEDEPLAR-UFMG Institute at <https://ti.eng.ufmg.br/pop30/principal.php>. These figures are based on the author's calculations. The occupations included here are the following: "fabricante de carro" (car maker), "fabricante de ferro" (iron maker), "ferrador" (horse shoer), "ferreiro" (blacksmith), "fiadeira" (spinner), and "latoeiro" (tinsmith).

12 Source: População, Domicílios e Distritos Recenciados-Minas Gerais-1830. Digitized copies and tools for analysis are available from the CEDEPLAR-UFMG Institute at <https://ti.eng.ufmg.br/pop30/principal.php>.

13 These figures are based on the author's calculation of the 1830 provincial census of Minas Gerais. The remaining 45 percent of workers who were not listed as slaves or free/freed had missing information about their social/civil status. The occupations included here are the following: "fabricante de carro" (car maker), "fabricante de ferro" (iron maker), "ferrador" (horse shoer), "ferreiro" (blacksmith), "fiadeira" (spinner), and "latoeiro" (tinsmith). The non-white categories included "pardo," "crioulo," "Indio," "mestiço," and "preto/Africano." A glossary of definitions for race/color terms can be found in Appendix 1.

In terms of the general characteristics of the dominant economic classes in the nineteenth century Minas Gerais, there is some evidence that “industrialists” and pro-capitalists built strong political alliances with the provincial government. According to Eakin (1989: 83), the British companies had “cultivated a network of prominent Brazilians to preserve its views in political circles and in the provincial assembly.” The British companies could count on local officials to help them implement policies that were consistent with capitalist development, and, as Eakin (1989: 83) puts it, “come to their aid as fellow mining entrepreneurs.” Although more research is needed to evaluate the extent to which native-born industrialists also influenced the views of the provincial government, the provincial officials expressed continuous concern about the expansion of the industrial sector to the overall development of Minas Gerais, as I illustrate later in the paper.

The Bahian economy, in contrast, did not experience any significant changes in its overall structure throughout the nineteenth century. The export-oriented sector remained strongly connected with the international market. Although some aspects of the economy changed (e.g. the expansion of internal and locally oriented markets), the character of the economy remained predominantly agrarian. Traditional historical accounts have long described the economic structure in Bahia as based on monoculture, latifundia, and slavery. Within this structure, the large estates that employed slave labor in the monocultural production of export crops, such as sugar, tobacco, and cassava flour predominated. More recent accounts of the economic history of Bahia challenge this oversimplification and claim that, in addition to monocultural production for exports, there existed a significant local market (Barickman 1998: 3). One thing both traditionalists and more contemporary historians agree upon, though, is that the agrarian sector in Bahia relied heavily on slave labor to work. Whether these agricultural activities were large scale plantations, or smaller, local-scale farmers, unfree labor predominated. The most important aspect of the economy in Bahia was its remarkable recovery in the late colonial period (circa 1770) and the first few decades of the nineteenth century (Barickman 1998: 42). The recovery between 1776 and 1786 was marked by two important factors: an upturn in commercial activity in the city of Salvador (Bahia), and the substantial growth in exports between 1790 and 1810s (Barickman 1998: 42). There was slower growth after that until the 1830s, but the Bahian economy certainly did not experience the same drastic decline in its dominant sector as did late eighteenth century Minas Gerais. Instead, the number of *engenhos* (plantations) in Bahia increased from 126 in 1755 to over 540 in 1837. By 1855, the total number of *engenhos* in Bahia totaled 1,274 (Barickman 1998: 36). The economic recovery in Bahia had two important

consequences: one was the continuing reliance on traditional forms of slave labor, as opposed to free wage labor and “slaves-for-rent.” As a result, the Bahian economy did not foster the proper environment for the proletarianization of Afro-descendants. Libby (1988: 127) shows that 30.4% of free workers in Minas Gerais in 1872 were classified as wage laborers, whereas only 5% of free workers in Bahia received a salary during the same period. This suggests a much greater proletarianization of people in Minas Gerais in comparison to Bahia in the nineteenth century. Secondly, the economic boom solidified the power of the planter class (Reis 1988: 112). Thus, whereas the capitalist classes in Minas Gerais were able to build alliances with prominent politicians, and, therefore, be in a position to present its views to the provincial government, the interests of the planter class predominated in Bahia during the nineteenth century.

As demonstrated above, and summarized in Table 2 below, the main distinctions between Bahia and Minas Gerais are found in the economic structures, the resulting labor demand and the consequent patterns of class formation. The macro-level economic transformations and patterns of class formation in nineteenth century Bahia and Minas Gerais provided the background conditions for how public officials interpreted the realities in their provinces and articulated their views on race and labor accordingly. This discourse articulation is seen more effectively during periods of political instability and crises, when ideas become more visible as social groups compete for domination and power. Next, I examine how elites in Bahia and Minas Gerais articulated ideas of race during a period of political instability in the 1830s and 1840s, when several regional revolts broke out in various provinces of Brazil.

Racial Articulation: Insurgency and Crises in Post-Independence Minas and Bahia

The economic structures in Bahia and Minas Gerais experienced strikingly different patterns of development as of the late eighteenth century. I argue that these differences were crucial in the articulation of racial and labor discourses during the ensuing periods of crises. As Swidler (1986: 279) argues, coherent ideologies emerge when social actors compete for dominance, in particular, during periods of social instability. Here I use the language and frames of social unrest to indicate the ways in which racial ideologies were changing. In the paragraphs that follow, I examine how economic interests and class structures interacted with notions of socio-race to help solidify old links between “race” and labor as in the case of Bahia, or challenge them as in the case of Minas Gerais.

TABLE 2 *Summary of conceptual variables relevant for comparison*

Conceptual Variables	Bahia	Minas Gerais
Demographics	Largely non-white	Largely non-white
Economic Structure in Colonial Period (until 1770s)	Export Oriented: Sugar, Tobacco	Export Oriented: Mining
Racial Ideology in Colonial Period	Escravidismo: strong correlation between dark skin and unfree labor	Escravidismo: strong correlation between dark skin and unfree labor
Political Climate in post-Independence years	Instability; Decentralized State; High Social Unrest	Instability; Decentralized State; High Social Unrest
Economic Structure in late colonial and beginning of 19th Century	Export Oriented: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava	Diversification of Economy; export and subsistence oriented activities
Main Source of labor between 1770 and mid-19th century	Mainly African slaves	Dual labor supply; free and slaves worked in all sectors of the economy
Demand of Free Wage Labor	Low	High
Main type of class relations	Paternalistic/ unfree	Dual: paternalistic and unfree in some regions, but capitalist in key economic sectors
Proletarianization of free People of color	Low	High
Proletarianization of slaves ("slaves-for-rent")	Low	High

The events that took place in Salvador, Bahia in 1835 were the most well organized and violent of several slave rebellions there since 1807. Joao Reis (1988: 112) maintains that, although slave revolts had happened since the seventeenth century in Bahia, slaves had never demonstrated the level of militancy as that expressed between 1807 and 1835 (112). In 1835, a large number of African-born slaves as well as native-born slaves invaded the city of Salvador, killing and injuring many government officials and civilians, several private and public buildings were destroyed. Dozens of Africans and native-born blacks were killed and imprisoned in response to the revolt. Although the insurgents' main goal was to weaken or, perhaps, destroy the institution of slavery, they did not gain the support of free blacks and mulattoes, who were largely against the revolt (Kent 1970; Reis 1988). Without widespread participation from free people, and without political support from liberals, the 1835 slave rebellion did not succeed in weakening the economic and political power of the planter class, and it did not threaten the continuing racial devaluation of blackness in official rhetoric in that province.

Two years later, another revolt broke out in Bahia. During the Sabinada Revolt (1837–1838), a small but vocal group of radicals advocated an independent Bahia; they condemned the aristocracy, and called for liberal reforms of the legal system. During the initial stages of the revolt, the Sabinada leaders proclaimed that “Bahia was entirely and perfectly detached from the so-called government of Rio de Janeiro” (Kraay 1992: 505). Shortly after taking over the provincial government, the Sabinada leaders exposed their guarded conservatism. Although the rebels sought to captivate on anti-Portuguese sentiment, they pledged to “preserve private property, slavery, the law, the monarchy, and the altar” (Kraay 1992: 507). The Sabinada revolt was mainly led by free Brazilian blacks and mulattoes, whose grievances rested largely on being unable to occupy the political and social positions of whites, and therefore, they “did not necessarily seek a radical restructuring of society” (Kraay 1992: 517). Thus, the Sabinada leadership did not seek to change the institutions and economic organizations in the province. It is not known whether a pro-capitalist class would have sought to change these institutions, but it is plausible to argue that in the absence of a vocal capitalist class, the Sabinada leadership could not articulate an alternative model of labor and social relations to that of *escravismo*.

In Minas Gerais, an important revolt broke out in 1842. The 1842 revolt has not received attention from historians, as no published works exist on the subject.¹⁴ After a close examination of primary sources, I found that the 1842 revolt

14 After conducting keyword searches in scholarly research engines, I did not find any published work on the 1842 revolt. My knowledge of this event originated from the Provincial

presented a clear liberal political discourse, which favored free institutions and free labor, as well as the constitutional rights of people of color.¹⁵ One of my major findings from the insurgents' manifestos and other documents had to do with their rhetorical framing. The opening paragraph of the June 10th Manifesto in 1842 stated the following: "Mineiros [residents of Minas Gerais], you know the tendencies of this [conservative] faction . . . pretending to be friends with the crown, refuse to ally with the liberty of the [Brazilian] citizens . . . and their desire to implement an oligarchy which will continue to enslave the crown and the nation . . ."¹⁶ The next paragraph makes an explicit reference to the enslavement of the people: "And if it was not enough to enslave the [Brazilian] people, the annihilation of constitutional guarantees, in order to strengthen the oligarchy that dominates our nation today . . ."¹⁷ Also in the Manifesto of 1842, the leaders of the revolt accused the conservatives and the planter class of coercing blacks and mulattoes to join their opposition to liberal ideals. The insurgents claimed that "the methods used to recruit civilians who disagreed with them were of extreme barbarism . . . recruitment that not only squandered the class of citizens who were exempt, but that have decimated the *industrious* population of Brazil, who have been put in shackles, locked in dungeons . . . only because they disagreed with the dominant [conservative] opinion."¹⁸ The Liberal Insurgents also claimed that the conservatives (*caramurus*) reformed the criminal codes without debate, "which ultimately ended the liberty of citizens and their constitutional rights."¹⁹ As the passages in the 1842 Manifesto illustrate, the rebels expressed a clear anti-slavery discourse, and they openly criticized the oligarchy and the planter class for abusing the constitutional rights of free people of color, who were "exempt" from re-enslavement.

Moreover, the Manifesto also articulated the negative effects that slavery and re-enslavement of blacks and mulattos had on the "industrious population of Brazil," which suggests that they believed that non-whites were very much capable of engaging in free labor and industrialism, as long as the corrupt effects of unfree institutions were abolished. This is clear from the 1842

Reports of 1844 in Minas Gerais, in which the names of National Guardsmen who died and got injured in the revolt were cited.

15 Empirical evidence about the 1842 Liberal Revolt comes from the electronic version of the centennial jornal *Revista do Archivo Public Mineiro*, which can be found at the online website for the Public Archive of Minas Gerais (APM: Archivo Publico Mineiro). The APM provides digitalized copies of original documents.

16 A Historia da Revolucao de Minas Gerais, em 1842," page 184.

17 *Ibid.*, page 186.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

Manifesto to the citizens of Sao Joal d'el Rey, one of the most populated and most developed regions of the province. The Revolt leader there claimed: "you may be one of the Mineiros who have been most affected by slavery, and who have experienced persecutions, and who have supported the [conservative] faction that has long oppressed you . . ."20 As previously mentioned, there is no published work about this revolt, so little is known regarding the extent of popular participation, or how many insurgents were killed or injured. However, the 1844 Provincial Reports provides clues about the human casualties and injured among those who fought against the insurgents. In total, thirty-five National Guardsmen were killed in combat, and over fifty were injured (Brasil 1844: 28), which suggests that a fierce battle or series of battles were fought to overcome the insurgency.

Unlike the previous social conflicts in Minas and in Bahia, the leaders of the Liberal Revolt of 1842 articulated a strong opposition to unfree institutions on the basis of the corrupt effects that such influences had on the ability of blacks and mulattoes to contribute to the modernization and industrialization of the Brazilian society. I argue that the economic conditions in Minas Gerais favored a restructuring of social relations, in particular the advancement of capitalism based upon free wage labor. The social position of the old oligarchy was weaker in Minas than their Bahian counterparts because economic diversification fostered an environment in which a segment of the capitalist class could emerge. Members of the capitalist class had their own aspirations and needs, which could not be fully implemented as long as the old oligarchy maintained power. The leaders of the 1842 Liberal Revolt were former members of the provincial legislature and they shared the capitalists' desire to impose free institutions in the province. The interests of the capitalist class and "liberal" rebels in the 1842 Revolt coincided with the interests of the free colored population, who had constantly been subjected to re-enslavement and coercion by the planter elites. In Bahia, on the other hand, the capitalist class was much weaker vis-à-vis the landed class, which blocked the possibility of a vocal and influential group of elites who could articulate a viable alternative to paternalistic and unfree institutions.

The comparative analysis above suggests that during the periods of crises in the 1830s and 1840s, Bahia and Minas Gerais were moving in different directions in terms of how political and economic elites articulated notions of race. In the case of Bahia, the revolts helped solidify *escravismo*, which was characterized by the strong relationship between African ancestry and perpetual servitude. In Minas Gerais, on the other hand, the consummate representa-

20 *Ibid.*, page 204.

tives of a capitalist class whose economic interests included converting people of color into cheap wage laborers were able to challenge the old ideology of *escravismo*. Archival documents provide some sense of the diverging patterns of socio-racial discourses in the two cases in post-crises periods.

The Official Discourse of Race in “Organized Politics” in Bahia and Minas Gerais

As I hope to demonstrate in the following paragraphs, the official discourse around race, labor, and violence changed dramatically in Minas in the nineteenth century, as provincial leaders seemed to draw fewer distinctions between the social characteristics of whites and non-whites, at least with respect to who was fit for free wage and industrial labor. A comparison with Bahia highlights this pattern. In Bahia, the official discourse was one of apparent distinctions between the “idle,” “lazy,” and “violent” blacks, by reference to those who participated in rebellions and insurgencies (mostly non-whites), and the law-abiding, hard-working whites (through reference of Europeans). Moreover, the racial categorization of blacks in Bahia was not limited to the discursive arena, but also acted upon through coercion, as the deportation laws and census taking projects illustrate.

Bahia: Security and Race

Following the slave revolts of 1835 and the political revolt of 1837–38 (the Sabinada Revolt), provincial officials in Bahia sought to construct an image of blacks in official discourse in negative terms, and the boundaries between whiteness and blackness were rigidly drawn. More specifically, my content analysis of official documents shows the connections that provincial officials drew between rebellions and lawlessness and notions of blackness throughout the 1840s. Public safety in Bahia continued to be a concern, as with vice-president of Bahia claimed that, “the crimes against property and people have multiplied tremendously” (Brasil 1840: 6). Provincial officials argued that high crime rates and public disorder due to “idleness of certain classes, the inconveniency of the criminal laws, and other unknown circumstances have delayed the progress and the morality of civilization” (Brasil 1841: 8). Provincial leaders made explicit the connections between blackness and idle behavior. They claimed that “generally, idle behavior is the main cause of vices . . . and that the idlest men are, in general, those most likely to engage in rebellions” (Brasil 1842a: 5). The provincial reports also highlight how ideas of race and ancestry were inextricably linked to social and class status. The provincial

reports referred to individuals deemed “idle” (*ocioso*) as “poor men” (*homens pobres*) when discussing their lack of work orientation as free laborers (*homens livres*), but rather accustomed to working as slaves (Brasil 1842a: 5). Because the vast majority of incidents of public disorder and rebellions in early nineteenth century Bahia were mobilized by Afro-descendants (e.g. the 1835 Males Revolt and the 1837 Sabinada Rebellion), we can assume that references to the “idleness of certain classes” likely alluded to non-white Brazilians. Here the discourse around public safety implicitly referred to the work ethic of those who engaged in rebellions (mostly free blacks and African slaves) and their propensity to commit crimes. In other words, the representation of blackness in official discourse entailed a kind of natural deficiency in their work ethic, which suggested unfitness for free labor. This connection was clear when the provincial vice-president referred to the insurgents and criminals as “uncivilized, immoral, and rebels against the law” (Brasil 1844: 5).

While Afro-descendants were being portrayed in official discourse as “idle,” “uncivilized,” and “immoral,” the images of whites and Europeans were articulated in more positive terms. The social construction of whiteness was entwined with the type of labor that was desired to help modernize the agricultural sector. The vice-president of Bahia wrote in 1844 that, “if we have made improvements in the sugar, tobacco and cassava, we could further develop these sectors by improving cropping techniques . . . which can be achieved by bringing foreigners who have love for wealth . . . [and] it is precisely for this reason that we need to increase our free population” (Brasil 1842: 7).

As Andrews (2004) stated regarding the desire to recruit European immigrants in Latin America, I found that Bahian elites were well aware of the alleged superiority of Europeans in the moral, technological, and political realms in the 1840s. In 1843, the vice-president of Bahia alluded to this point when he wrote: “The experience and work ethic change the condition of the individual, and also the condition of the whole population; often this can be attributed to one genius man, a philosopher like Socrates, who knows how to introduce high morals to the families, or a statesman, like Peter of Russia, who acquired his status by spreading the industry and civilization in his vast states” (emphasis added, Brasil 1843a: 6).

To be sure, the planter class overwhelmingly depended on African slave labor, as previously described. The main economic sectors in the province were export-oriented and elites were well aware of the need to incorporate better techniques of production to compete in the world market, especially as Cuba dominated sugar production in the nineteenth century (Bergad 2007). However, in light of the declining availability of African-slave labor and the need to “import” more advanced techniques of production, economic and

political elites advocated supplying the agricultural sector with colonios (European migrants) to help expand the agricultural sector.

In trying to make the case that Bahia was a favorable place for European immigrants, the vice-president emphasized the abundance of land in the province that could integrate 600,000 immigrants (Brasil 1842a: 9). He explained that in one of the regions in Bahia “we could offer thirty “lakes” (the local standard for measurement) of virgin lands, which are fertile for most types of agricultural cultivation . . . that could hold over one hundred workers, without including women and children . . . If the Europeans are well informed of these opportunities and the richness in our province they would certainly exchange their fields [in their home countries]” (Brasil 1842a: 9).

In the early 1840s, several legislative proposals were on the table to help manage large amounts of public resources intended to attract European immigrants, including housing subsidies and transportation costs, among others. The fact that the state was willing to consider spending limited resources on foreign workers, but not on its native-born free population (largely non-white) suggests the strong correlation between ideas of racial superiority (i.e. the civilized nature of Europeans) and labor ideals. The vice-president laid out a specific plan for funding and recruitment of immigrants:

It is essential that the provincial federal reserve negotiate with the landed class . . . to create a fund for agricultural development . . . and that the landed class sacrifice and pay six percent in taxes toward the fund [for colonios] . . . Part of the money is to finance the traveling costs associated with the move from Europe and for the purchase of animals, tools, machines, and transport of products from and to the agricultural fields . . . When the agricultural fund reaches 200,000 milreis, the respective directors will find agents in several locations in Europe, who will be in charge of recruiting colonios . . . (Brasil 1843a: 8–13)

In addition to devising a concrete plan to recruit European immigrants, the provincial leaders also specified a particular type of immigrant:

. . . [the recruitment of colonios should be funded] as long as the prospective immigrants are not from big cities, but rather those who have experience with agriculture of subsistence, and who have family members who are used to working with them in the fields . . . (Brasil 1843a: 8–13)

As the passage above illustrates, part of the strategy of provincial officials was to recruit European immigrants from rural areas who, had been living in

self-sustaining agricultural environments, and not from larger cities. This suggests that the main economic objective was the development of the agricultural sector and not manufacturing. Furthermore, the quotes above suggest that the Bahian elites sought to recruit European settlers and not merely workers, as elites intended to give immigrants land for settlement. This thesis is supported by other sections of the Provincial Reports, such as when the vice-president claimed that the companies in charge of recruiting European immigrants “should be directed primarily to cropping and agriculture” (Brasil 1942a: 7). The apparent preference for European immigrants over native-born colored Bahians was clearly based on the supremacy of white immigrants over blacks.

In addition to these early forms of immigration policy, the provincial government implemented several laws designed to limit the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the colored population. The constitutional rights of certain Brazilian citizens were taken away as the provincial government faced increasing threats from rebellions and revolts. In 1839, for example, the province approved a law to suspend for two months civil and political rights of citizens who were suspected to pose a threat to public security. Those who were deemed suspect of associating themselves with rebellions could be arrested without a probable cause from their homes. Shortly after the 1835 Males Revolt, the province deportation law was enacted to remove Africans and free blacks from the province and send them to Africa, in particular those who were under suspicion of engagement with insurrections (Brasil 1858: 136). One of the provisions of Law 9 of 1835 (the deportation law) stipulated that manumitted Africans, who by the Brazilian constitution were considered full citizens, were prohibited to own land, and it was illegal to rent houses to them, unless special permission was granted (Brasil 1858: 138). It is unclear where the Africans, both free and slave, found housing after the deportation law was enacted, but they likely lived found residence in illegal housing. This law effectively reduced the status of free Africans and their descendants to that of second-class citizens. Other legislative actions also debased the status of free blacks in Bahia. Bahia's Law number 65 of 1835 allowed the police and other officials to enter the houses of “suspected” insurgents without a warrant. This law in effect suspended sections 7 and 8 of Article 179 of the Brazilian Constitution, which stated the following:

Article 7: Every Citizen has in his house an inviolable shelter. No one can enter his house unless one has consent to do so, or for rescue in case of fire, flood . . .

Article 8: No one can be arrested without probable cause . . . and without an arrest warrant signed by a judge in whom the warrant will state clearly

the reason for the arrest, the names of their plaintiffs, accusers and witnesses if available (*Constituição Política do Imperio do Brazil* 1830: pages 80–82).

I maintain that the arrest and deportation laws shaped racial categorization because they reinforced the image of blacks in Bahia as “vicious” and prone to violence. Through the mere practice of “searching” for suspects of insurrections, whom were non-whites (African-born and native-born slaves, and freed individuals of color), they were reinforcing the notions of non-whites as criminals and disloyal to the interests of the state.

One mechanism that Bahian authorities adopted to facilitate the large-scale deportation of Africans was to conduct a population count. Barickman (2003: 293) explains that right before considering a large-scale deportation of Africans, provincial leaders in Bahia approved provincial Law 8, which sought to compile detailed statistical information about all of the people living in the province. Barickman (2003) suggests that the population count in Bahia was motivated by their efforts to identify where the Africans, both free and slave (e.g. the runaway slaves), so that large-scale deportation could be carried out. Legal efforts to deport Africans from Bahia suggest that officials believed in the degenerative effects of blackness on the overall morality, civility, and progress of the province. The racial devaluation of blackness in official discourse in nineteenth century Bahia, and the legislative response in the form of deportation laws, fit a process of racial categorization described by Richard Jenkins (1997). Jenkins (1997: 68) maintains that, “moral entrepreneurs, politicians, in conjunction with newspaper proprietors [and] public officials may participate in the development and promotion of moral panic about ethnically constructed issues,” therefore shaping patterns of racial categorization.

As these accounts illustrate, the devaluation of blackness existed in all spheres of social life, including with regard to work and security. From the standpoint of state elites, there was a large gap in terms of racial valuation between whites and blacks, and these differences were very explicit. Whites were perceived as virtuous and industrious, and blacks were perceived as idle and unfit for free labor. This negative link between blackness and the work ethic was translated into pro-European immigrant policies, as well as legal denigration of blacks into second-class citizens.

Minas Gerais: Security and Race

As described earlier in the paper, the province of Minas Gerais also had a history of black insurgency during the colonial period as well as highly racialized social conflicts in the 1830s and early 1840s. Unlike Bahia, however, provincial officials did not openly ascribe negative characteristics to blacks, such as

“idleness,” “immorality,” and “incivility.” In the 1843 provincial report, for instance, the vice-president elaborated on the much-contested social unrest that took place in Minas Gerais in 1842. The two incidents that were mentioned in the report were perceived as unrelated events and the result of different causes. The first one was a massive gathering of three thousand mining workers whose motivations were not political. Although the report did not elaborate on its motivations, it is plausible to conclude that since they were all mining workers, that the root of protest was class based. The second rebellion was perceived as politically motivated and provincial leaders saw rebels merely as “completely deranged” individuals. It is worth noting that government officials did not attribute the causes of these rebellions in racialized terms, such as “idleness” or the lack of work ethic as in Bahia, but rather as isolated events (caused by few crazy individuals) or caused by occupational grievances (as in the mining rebellion). This is important because there is virtually no apparent connection between the character of those who engage in disorderly activities and racial attitudes in Minas Gerais.

Thus, when provincial officials had to deal with social unrest, they seldom made generalizations about the work ethic of insurgents, at least not in “racial terms.” Moreover, public officials in Minas Gerais seemed to be quite optimistic about the safety of the province during “peace time,” and they attributed the lack of social unrest to the quality of its citizens. More specifically, officials went further to justify the overall peace to the “good character” of the Mineiro people, who “fortunately have been engaged in the industry” (Provincial Report 1846: 5). Thus, whereas the Bahian government explained the rebelliousness of its native people through their “idle and vicious” behavior, the argument often made to justify the need for European immigration, Mineiro officials perceived the work ethic of their native population as connected to social order. This seemingly optimistic view of Mineiro society existed in spite of a long history of racialized social conflicts, in particular the 1831–1835 revolts and the Liberal Revolt of 1842. In 1847, Minas’ officials were still optimistic about the state of affairs in the province, in particular regarding public safety. The vice-president maintained that, “the good Mineiro people enjoys the peace . . . allowed by civilizing tendencies that seem to dominate this period” (Brasil 1847b: 3).

Minas Gerais: Labor and Race

As in Bahia, the general inclination among government elites in Minas Gerais was to recruit foreign workers with a good work ethic, and individuals with affinity for the rule of law (Brasil 1837: xx). While Bahian officials were willing to spend a significant amount of resources identifying blacks and removing them from the country because of their perceived corruptive influence on

society, state officials in Minas Gerais sought to actively recruit them as free laborers. Government officials in Minas Gerais sought to meet labor demand in the agricultural sector and in the public sector (e.g. public works projects) with African immigrants, who were to be hired (as opposed to enslaved) off the coast of Africa directly. Surprisingly, the 1843 Provincial Report even laid out a plan to use private companies in charge of recruiting free African workers. The vice-president of Minas suggested that the government “look for [private] companies that are willing to find and recruit Africans, who would be brought to Brazil as free people . . . to work in the construction of new roads, the exploration of mines . . . and receive in the first years a salary which will gradually increase to the current levels [of current workers] (emphasis added, Brasil 1843b: 62). The apparent acceptance and tolerance of Africans in Minas Gerais suggests one important distinction from Bahia: state elites in Minas Gerais did not perceive Africans as a possible threat to the modernizing or industrializing processes in the province, at least in official discourse. Moreover, as the above quote illustrates, Africans were to be used as free labor, and they would gradually receive the wages of native workers, which assumes that they have a certain level of work ethic to engage in non-coerced labor. This is not so say, however that African immigrants were perceived by elites as the ideal source of labor for emerging industries (i.e. skilled industrial labor). Instead, they tended to correlate “industriousness” with notions of “whiteness.”

The preference to help expand the industrial sector and manufacturing was given to immigrants from the “white race.” This point is clearly articulated by the vice-president of Minas Gerais in 1843:

the issue of immigration from abroad is indeed very important, because [immigrants] bring with them in addition to a good people, that guarantee the growth of the white race, but who also bring with them what is most important: the development of new industries and the improvement of those [industries] that already exist in our province . . . (Brasil 1843b: 61)

As the passage above illustrates, there was a strong correlation in the minds of political leaders between “whiteness” and industrial labor as early as the 1840s in Minas Gerais.

In spite of this, however, a certain level of permeability about who could be considered “industrious” is noted. For instance, my analysis of provincial reports suggests that official leaders acknowledged the ability of native workers, who were largely people of color, in industrial sectors. In 1840, the vice-president of Minas Gerais explained in the provincial report, “we know that

our industrial sector has gained momentum, and the improvement in industrial mining, foundry, and other manufacturing sectors that rely on native labor but also foreigners, [to] whom we owe key techniques that were unknown to our ancestors . . ." (emphasis added, Brasil 1840: LIX). Thus, although making a reference to "foreign" workers who brought with them more advanced knowledge of industrial production, government elites acknowledged the contribution of native workers as well. Other remarks support this view. In 1843, the vice-president of Minas Gerais explained that, "although the industry is not entirely developed, it is developed enough to show the tendency and the ability of our citizens"²¹ (emphasis added, Brasil 1843b: 58). It is worth pointing out that strides toward industrial production happened without any significant contribution from European immigrants, who did not arrive in large numbers until early in the twentieth century. This suggests that the native-born workers who participated in the emerging proto-industries were being recognized in official discourse as "industrious," and therefore possessing a certain level of good work ethic. As mentioned earlier, and shown in Figure 1, 76.7 percent of the skilled and semi-skilled workers in Minas Gerais in 1830 were non-white. These figures suggest a heavy reliance on non-white labor in emerging proto-industries in Minas Gerais the first half of the nineteenth century.

Although provincial officials in Minas Gerais continued to advocate for the need for European immigrants, they were increasingly more optimistic that the Mineiro people were as fit for industrial environment as their European counterparts. Provincial officials claimed that, "with the population increase, with the investment in work habits, education and morality . . . we will improve our industrial capacity . . . to practically show to other countries that we are not inferior in any regard" (Brasil 1851: 22). This passage highlights important features of social relations in Minas. First, it shows that, as early as 1851, Brazilian elites were well enough connected to the world-market to understand that Europe was the most industrialized region in the world. These elites had already developed a racial ideology in which whiteness was a desirable quality for industrial labor. In other words, by the mid-nineteenth century, whiteness was already entwined with industrial labor.

However, rather than advancing an narrow view of "industriousness" (i.e. that only Europeans could be industrious), they proposed that, with education and training, the native population in Minas who were largely Afro-descendants could also achieve the status of "civilized" and "industrious," or be approximate to white workers. One possible exception to this claim is the

21 Brazil did not make a distinction between citizens and non-citizens based on race upon its founding in 1822 or thereafter.

evidence about the recruitment of African immigrants, who were sought to fill the less skilled occupations, in the agricultural sector or public works projects. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that elites in Minas viewed the native non-white population (as opposed to African immigrants) as “industrious.” The fact that government elites sought to “prove” to foreign eyes that the Minas’ working force was not inferior to other (developed) nations highlights a change in the belief in the “natural” unfitnes of non-whites to engage in free wage labor. Moreover, the conversion from “uncivilized” to “civilized” could be achieved through “education and “training.” The apparent potential for acceptance of non-whites into the category of “industrious,” “civilized,” and of similar characteristics and work ethic as their European counterparts suggests that the boundaries between “blackness” and “whiteness” became more blurred by mid-nineteenth century in Minas, and not in later periods as current research suggests. This is an important aspect of the overall racial discourse in Minas because it reflects an important feature of the racial democracy ideology: it suggests an idea of progress embodied in industrial development, which assumes the ability of non-whites to achieve the status of “whiteness” through industrial activities and free wage labor. By recognizing at the official level that the Mineiro people were capable of succeeding in industrial activities, it, in effect, contributed to a process of whitening of the population. In other words, the social criteria for delineating the boundaries of whiteness are loosened or blurred to also include groups previously categorized as blacks or mulattoes.

As the empirical evidence presented above illustrates, government elites in Minas Gerais expressed an optimistic view of the capacity of non-whites in the province to become industrious, and therefore fit for free wage labor, an idea Bahian elites had only ascribed to Europeans during that period. By rejecting the idea of the natural inability of non-whites to become civilized, unlike provincial leaders in Bahia, the official rhetoric in Minas Gerais recognized the contribution of the largely non-white Mineiro society in industrial activities, and they also expressed optimism about the ability of non-whites to become as “industrious” as Europeans.

Discussion and Conclusion

One key finding in this paper is that Brazilian elites were well informed about racial ideas emanating from Europe as early as the 1840s, in particular the belief that Europeans were better fit for industrial wage labor and civic life vis-à-vis Africans and Indigenous people. Content analysis of Provincial Reports and secondary sources from Bahia and Minas Gerais illustrates supports Andrews

(2004) claim that the links between “whiteness” and ideas of “rational” forms of labor (i.e. good work ethic and “industriousness”) were established as early as the 1840s. However, the paper shows that ideas of race and labor did not influence elites in the same ways. My empirical analysis shows that elites in Bahia and Minas Gerais interpreted and responded to these ideas differently. Provincial officials in Bahia portrayed their largely non-white population in negative terms, referring to them in multiple contexts as “idle” and “uncivilized.” The combination of deportation laws, the devaluation of blackness in public discourse, the aggressive recruitment and planning of European immigration, and the absence of any official recognition of Afro-descendants’ ability to achieve progress suggests that the boundaries between whiteness and blackness were more rigid and static in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, the evidence presented here shows that there was no mention of any deportation laws in the provincial reports examined for this paper (years 1835–1865). Rather, the evidence suggests that government officials in Minas Gerais were open to African immigration. African immigrants were to be recruited as free workers and they were to receive a salary, which would gradually increase to the levels of native-born workers, as the evidence presented here shows. This suggests that African immigrants were perceived as fit for free wage labor, and the fact that they would increasingly receive higher wages might suggest the potential for the transition from unskilled to skilled labor. More research is needed to examine whether the provincial officials followed through with such recruitment efforts, and if so, whether African immigrants were indeed incorporated as wage laborers.

My empirical analysis also shows two interrelated processes among elite discourse in Minas Gerais: one was the recognition of native workers’, who were largely Afro-descendants, ability to perform skilled wage labor; the other process was the desire to promote further industrialization in the province. The provincial officials believed that attracting European immigrants, and further educating and training the native population, which could, in the words of provincial leaders, “practically show to [European] countries that we are not inferior in any regard.” This type of elite discourse in nineteenth-century Minas Gerais was remarkably similar to processes that contemporary scholars found in the early decades of the twentieth century. These elites expressed the desire to attract European immigrants to help “industrialize” the country (e.g. Skidmore 1993 [2005]), and to continue to take steps toward training and exposing their native population to “modern” institutions, in particular through education (Davila 2003).

Furthermore, the evidence presented in this paper suggests that Minas Gerais went through a process of “boundary shifting,” referred to as an expan-

sion of the social definition of whiteness (Loveman and Muniz 2007: 917). In the “boundary shift” scenario, the social definition of whiteness broadens to include more individuals within it, in particular those who had not previously been categorized as white. Although the Bahian elites preferred to recruit exclusively European workers, which suggests their interest in the “whitening” of the province, they did not articulate a racial discourse in which the boundaries demarcating whiteness (i.e. the level of “industriousness”) also expanded to include Afro-descendants.

In Bahia, government elites and the planter class sought to recruit a specific type of European immigrants, more specifically those who came from rural areas. This suggests that although Bahian elites sought to “whiten” the province through immigration, they rejected the idea that Afro-descendants could acquire cultural and social “whiteness.” The elites in Bahia did not articulate a discourse which accepted the notion that Afro-descendants could become “industrious,” a status that only European immigrants had from the perspective of Bahian elites. The boundary around “whiteness” in Bahia was not broad enough to include non-Europeans in the nineteenth century.

Moreover, my findings suggest that the articulation of ideas of labor and race was not linked to a central government or to nation-state building projects, as much of the literature suggests. By focusing on two provinces in the same country that were going through the same phases of national development, I sought to highlight in the paper how patterns of labor incorporation helped shape the ways in which provincial officials viewed their workers. The proletarianization of blacks (free and slave) led capitalists and their representatives in local government to articulate the notion that Afro-descendants were fit, at least partially, for industrial labor. Future research should attend to *how* and *why* certain regional ideologies become nationalized and not others. In particular, future research should examine whether the provincial officials and other elites in Bahia and in Minas Gerais continued to articulate similar views found here in later periods.

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Appendix 1 “Glossary of Racial/Color Terms in the Nineteenth century Brazil”

The category “branco” referred to individuals whose physical characteristics suggested European ancestry. However, according to Katherine Holt, this category was more a signifier of social status than a strict notion of racial (biological) background. Similarly, the category “pardo” suggested Portuguese and African ancestry, but it was more of an indication of perceived social status. Also, the category pardo signified some proximity to slaves, but less so than the category “preto.” The category “preto” suggested African descent, but the difference between preto and pardo was a greater proximity to a slave past than pardo. The category “crioulo” meant a Brazilian-born slave. The term “cabra” was a derogatory term that denoted African ancestry, but darker than pardo. The category “caboclo” referred to individuals whose appearance suggested Portuguese and Indian ancestry. As with other categories, caboclo was more a reflection of social status than ancestry per se.