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## Inhalt

Joaquín Roy: *La Unión Europea y España ante la ley Helms-Burton* 213

Esteban Mira Caballos: *La economía de la Española a través de las cuentas del tesorero Cristóbal de Santa Clara (1505 - 1507)* 247

## "Race", Society and Culture in Afro-Latin America

Reinhard Liehr, Matthias Röhrig Assunção and Michael Zeuske: *Afro-Latin America's Legacy. Introduction* 269

Barbara Potthast-Jutkeit: *The Slave Family in the Caribbean: A Research Review* 279

Consuelo Naranjo Orovio: *Immigration, "Race" and Nation in Cuba in the Second Half of the 19th Century* 303

Reginaldo Prandi: *African Gods in Contemporary Brazil: A Sociological Introduction to Candomblé Today* 327

Stephan Palmié: *Fernando Ortiz and the Cooking of History* 353

Matthias Röhrig Assunção and Michael Zeuske: *"Race", Ethnicity and Social Structure in 19th Century Brazil and Cuba* 375

Authors 445

# "Race", Ethnicity and Social Structure in 19th Century Brazil and Cuba

Matthias Röhrig Assunção and Michael Zeuske

"She had that sallow complexion which results from the coupling of a black woman and an Indian man; but the frizzy hair and oval face did not allow the assumption of such a marriage, but that of a black mother and a white father. [...] But to which race did this girl belong? That is difficult to say. Without doubt it could not be hidden from the eyes of an expert that her red lips had a dark strip or rim and that the colour of her face finished in a certain half shadow at her hairline. Her blood was not pure and one could be absolutely certain that somewhere in the third or fourth generation it had been mixed with Ethiopian blood."<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

Brazil and Cuba not only share the experience of slavery but also its late abolition. In the French and English colonies of the Caribbean, as in the Spanish colonies on the continent, slavery was abolished during the "Age of Revolutions" (1789 - 1848).<sup>2</sup> In Cuba and Brazil, on the contrary, the elite of plantation owners could not only maintain the institution, but, through intensive slave trading (until 1850 in Brazil and into the 1860's in Cuba), were able to consolidate it and even, as in the case of the southern United States, expand into new areas. This late blossoming of slavery was not without consequence for the societies of both countries. It shaped the development of the national Afro-American cultures, the construction of "race"-categories and social hierarchies and placed its unmistakable stamp on the process of nation-building to

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<sup>1</sup> Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés o La Loma del Ángel* (La Habana: Editorial de Letras Cubanas, 1996, pp. 17, 33).

<sup>2</sup> Slavery was officially abolished in Peru, Venezuela, New Granada and Ecuador during the years 1851-57. Slaves did then not play any longer a relevant role in the economy of those countries, even if abolition was an important political event in each of them.

this day. In Cuba, the process of abolition of slavery was closely linked to the struggle for separation from Spain (Independence Wars 1868-78/80 and 1895-98; Abolition 1886) as well as the construction of a new state (Republic 1902). In Brazil, slavery and its abolition (1888) were closely connected to the opting of the elite first for the Empire (1822-89), then for the Republic (1889).

It is half a century since Frank Tannenbaum undertook his seminal comparison of the slavery systems and "race"-relationships in the Americas.<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, his idealistic approach and lack of empirical data received more criticism than acclaim, but his contribution lies mainly in the debate which he stimulated. In the ensuing years important comparisons on this theme have been mostly drawn between the United States and Cuba,<sup>4</sup> the USA and Brazil,<sup>5</sup> or within the Caribbean.<sup>6</sup> For Brazil, Cuba and the English speaking Caribbean there is a substantial literature, anthologies as well as monographs, which analyse slavery, abolition and post-emancipation under joint perspectives.<sup>7</sup> However, although Cuba and Brazil share a series of similar developments, comparisons which concentrate on these two countries are all but non-existent: the most important recent exceptions are the works of Lúcia Lamounier and Rebecca Scott.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen. The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Knopf, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Klein, *Slavery in the Americas. A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White. Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), Célia M. M. Azevedo, *Abolitionism in the United States and Brazil: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995); Heloisa Toller Gomes, *As marcas da escravidão. O negro no discurso oitocentista no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos* (Rio de Janeiro: EDUERJ, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies. A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University, 1996); María Dolores González-Ripoll Navarro and Luis Miguel García Mora, *El Caribe en la época de la independencia y las nacionalidades* (Morelia: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 1997); Roberto Marte, *Cuba y la República Dominicana. Transición económica en el Caribe del siglo XIX* (Santo Domingo: Universidad APEC, no date of publ.); Luz María Martínez Montiel (ed.), *Presencia africana en el Caribe* (México, D. F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> See the detailed list in the introduction to this issue.

<sup>8</sup> Lúcia Lamounier, "Between Slavery and Free Labour. Early Experiments with Free Labour & Patterns of Slave Emancipation in Brazil & Cuba" (in: Mary Turner, ed., *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves. The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas*, pp. 185-200, London: James Currey, 1995); Rebecca J. Scott, "Defining the

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We are unable here to enter fully into all the debates which these comparative works have inspired over the last fifty years. We do, however, want to bring a point to the fore which is central to our comparison and which should clarify our approach: the difference between the racial classification systems within Afro-America. The investigations in the 1940's<sup>9</sup> as well as the work fostered by UNESCO in the 1950's<sup>10</sup> established the fluidity of the colour and racial classifications in Brazil, which were compared to the rigid classification system of the US and generally seen in a positive light. Marvin Harris, for instance, concluded optimistically: "The larger significance of the confusion about racial identity in Bahia is that it clearly precludes systematic discrimination and segregation."<sup>11</sup>

Hoetink, author of the most influential comparative work on the Caribbean, established a similar contrast between the societies of the English and Dutch Caribbean, which are strictly divided into racial categories, and the "colour-continuum" of the Spanish Caribbean. He describes the classification systems of the Spanish Caribbean as follows:

"Whites (and especially those from the metropolis) were clearly favoured socially over blacks, it is true, but the vast majority of the population had amalgamated sufficiently to leave no room for fixed colour lines. Rather, a color continuum developed within which subtle differences in skin color, hair texture, and facial features were noted and essentially catalogued in an extensive vocabulary, with all its social implications, but without any group striving after (or succeeding in) the maintenance of strict endogamy, which might have created a clear separation from all others."<sup>12</sup>

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Boundaries of Freedom in the World of Cane: Cuba, Brazil and Louisiana after Emancipation" (in: *American Historical Review*, 99.1: 70-102, Washington, D. C., 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact in Bahia* (Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press, 1942); Ruth Landes, *City of Women* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

<sup>10</sup> See Charles Wagley (ed.), *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (Paris: UNESCO, 1952); Marvin Harris, *Town and Country in Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Thales de Azevedo, *Les élites de couleur dans une ville brésilienne* (Paris: UNESCO, 1953). More generally, see also Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York: Walker and Company, 1964).

<sup>11</sup> Marvin Harris, "Racial Identity in Brazil" (in: *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 1.2: 21-28, Madison, Wis., 1964), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Harry Hoetink, "'Race' and Color in the Caribbean" (in: Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, eds., *Caribbean Contours*, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, pp. 55-84), p. 61.

The colour-continuum has long been seen as a positive characteristic, through which the comparatively smoother racial relations of Brazil and Cuba expressed themselves, which, for their part, were the heirs of a "milder" type of slavery. It was used as evidence for the existence of a "luso-tropical" racial paradise as early as the 19th century, later especially by Gilberto Freyre.<sup>13</sup> Since Tannenbaum, Cuba was also classed as corresponding to the "milder" Spanish type of slavery. The roots of the Spanish Caribbean and Luso-Brazilian peculiarity were traced back to the times of slavery. The concept of a "racial democracy", which became a firm component of the official ideology of the military dictatorship in Brazil up until the 1980's, developed through references to the mildness of Brazilian slavery.<sup>14</sup> It established itself in Cuba mainly under the dictator Batista (1934 - 1959), who himself was of mulatto and Indian origin. It was no accident that Fernando Ortiz published his book *El engaño de las razas* at this time, in which he attacked the concept of race as a deception.<sup>15</sup>

With his "mulatto escape hatch" Degler coined possibly the most impressive formulation of the difference between "multi-racial" Brazil and the "bi-racial" United States. The existence of the middle category of the mulatto in Brazil and — cum grano salis — in Cuba contributed to the fact that no really rigid colour lines could be drawn here. Along with other authors, Degler referred to the substantial possibilities for social advancement and for the crossing of the colour lines in both societies: from black to mulatto, from mulatto to white.

Degler's work was based on a critical re-reading of the existing literature, not on a new empirical database. The ascent of individual mulattoes does not necessarily, however, disprove the vehemence of segregation. A mulatto elite developed in the so-called "bi-racial" societies such as the US as well, its role having been given greater consideration in recent times.<sup>16</sup> Degler's insistence on a colour-continuum, with which ultimately a social continuum is associated, hides the real discrimi-

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<sup>13</sup> Gilberto Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala. Formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal* (Rio de Janeiro: Schmidt Editor, 1933).

<sup>14</sup> See Emília Viotti da Costa, "O mito da democracia racial no Brasil" (in: *Da Monarquia a República: momentos decisivos*, pp. 248-265, 3rd ed., São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985).

<sup>15</sup> Fernando Ortiz, *El engaño de las razas* (La Habana: Editorial Páginas, 1946).

<sup>16</sup> Vgl. Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color. The Black Elite, 1880 - 1920* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993); Thomas E. Skidmore, "Bi-racial U.S.A. vs. Multi-racial Brazil: Is the Contrast Still Valid?" (in: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 25: 373-386, London, 1993), pp. 374-380.

nation (which he himself recognized) and especially the bottlenecks in the so-called continuum, where segregation predominates. Besides, the escape hatch is less a causal explanation for the continuum, but rather the result of a complex development, for the understanding of which one has to consider not only the widely discussed differences between slave systems but also the political culture of clientelism, the legal and cultural traditions, as well as the changing balance of power — and this history has still to be written.<sup>17</sup>

The already mentioned empirical works of half a century ago, which critically discussed whether the existence of the colour-continuum and the fluidity of racial classification systems eliminated or toned down discrimination, all portrayed the reality of discrimination at this time; the majority of them, however, explained it through the use of class differences. In other words, they reduced "race" to class. Thus, they did not attribute any autonomy to the category of "race" and also could not capture the complexity of the relationship between "race" and class.<sup>18</sup> Only a minority of black intellectuals, such as Abdias Nascimento in Brasil or Serafín Portuondo Linares in Cuba, insisted even then on the autonomy of the "race" from the class question.<sup>19</sup> They had, however, little influence on the academic discussion and for a long time were surrounded by a wall of silence.

The merit of the "race" discussions in recent years lies in that the meta-category "race" has been freed from economicist restrictions. More recent works attempt to prove that the existence of the colour-continuum in Brazil and Cuba can not be taken for granted, but that

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<sup>17</sup> A fundamental work on late 19th and 20th century Brazil in this respect is Carlos A. Hasenbalg, *Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979).

<sup>18</sup> See Howard Winant, "Rethinking Race in Brazil" (in: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 24: 173-192, London 1992), pp. 174-177.

<sup>19</sup> Abdias do Nascimento, *O quilombismo. Documentos de uma militância pan-africanista* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1980). Linares was the son of a member of the Partido Independiente de Color and himself a member of the Communist Party. He was sharply criticized by his party for "dividing the working class", which is still the official position of social science in Cuba. See Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share. The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1888 - 1912* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 7-12; Vera Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1993); Marie Poumier, "La expresión del pensamiento negro en Cuba bajo la Constitución de 1940" (in: James Cohen and Françoise Moulin Civil, eds., *Cuba sous le régime de la constitution de 1940. Politique, pensée critique, littérature*, pp. 269-287, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

— according to the authors — it was a control myth of the white elite, including mulattoes who passed the colour line. It is, therefore, nowadays less permissible to talk in an unreflected way of the colour-continuum and the lesser discrimination of multi-"racial" societies than fifty years ago. The idea of the colour-continuum and the resulting supposed lack of discrimination has come under strong attack in Brazil since the 1970's: on the one hand from a growing number of academic works, on the other from black movements, which strengthened during the democratization process. The latter attempt to persuade all Brazilians who have some African ancestry to systematically define themselves as "black" (negro), and not "mulatto". They can feel themselves to be supported by empirical research, which establishes an almost equal discrimination of mulattoes and blacks.<sup>20</sup>

This topic has been taboo for a long time in Cuba. However, Aline Helg, in a recent work on Cuba, described it as a society, which, contrary to conventional opinion, is shaped by sharp contrasts and discontinuity. It is, ultimately, a "two-tier racial system similar to that of the United States, however, with one significant difference: in Cuba, the line separating blacks and mulattoes from whites was based on 'visible' African ancestry, not on the 'one drop rule'".<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Alejandro de la Fuente, in his works on quantitative and social history, and more recently, on the history of ideas, has demonstrated the considerable participation of Afro-Cubans in almost all domains of public life and the subversive effect of the racial democracy-myth — despite the undoubted presence of discrimination. De la Fuente has pointedly set up his findings against Helg's perspective, which he considers, rightly, to be reductionistic and finalistic.<sup>22</sup> Something similar can be seen from the works of Rebecca Scott.<sup>23</sup> Scott emphasizes the inter-ethnic alliances in collective actions (War of Independence, strikes, etc.) but refers in a

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<sup>20</sup> Cleusa Turra and Gustavo Venturi, *Racismo cordial. A mais completa análise sobre o preconceito de cor no Brasil* (São Paulo: Ática, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Alejandro de la Fuente, "Negros y electores: desigualdad y políticas raciales en Cuba, 1900 - 1930" (in: Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, Miguel Angel Puig-Samper and Luis Miguel García Mora, eds., *La nación soñada*, pp. 163-177); Alejandro de la Fuente, "Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900 - 1912", paper presented at the "Taller de Historia" (Cienfuegos, 5-7 March 1998), p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Scott, "Raza, clase y acción colectiva en Cuba, 1895 - 1912: la formación de alianzas en el mundo de la caña" (in: *Revista del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas*, 9: 131-157, Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, 1997).



more recent work to the latent racism in political conflicts between whites and Afro-Cubans, when the latter questioned the hegemony of the whites. Ada Ferrer analyses the predetermined breaking points of the continuum with the concept of the "silence of the Libertadores", where the equality aimed at by blacks and coloured Cubans collided with the type of equality accepted by whites.<sup>24</sup>

What conclusions can be drawn from these discussions? Firstly, that systems of racial classification need to be neither homogeneous nor monolithic within a society. Indeed, the numerous terms with which Brazilians and Cubans characterize shades of skin colour and other phenotypic features with polished subtlety are part of only one out of several possible classification models. When asked by social scientists about ascriptions of skin colour, interviewees naturally choose the system which allows the most exact classification between the poles of light and dark. This does not, however, exclude that the same person, in another context, only operates with the three basic categories black (*preto/prieto*), mulatto and white, and in a third context even uses just the two categories black (*negro*) and white. As Yvonne Maggie established, the concept of skin colour held by Brazilians changes according to the classification area (origin, culture, social inequality).<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the contrast between "bi-racial" and "multi-racial" systems is not necessarily as clear-cut as has so far been assumed.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, it has been too often underestimated that conflicting systems receive differing levels of support from individuals in society and also that the white elite is not all-powerful.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ada Ferrer, "Social Aspects of Cuban Nationalism: Race, Slavery, and the Guerra Chiquita, 1879 - 1880" (in: *Cuban Studies*, 21: 37-56, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1991); Ferrer, "Esclavitud, ciudadanía y los límites de la nación cubana: la guerra de los diez años, 1868 - 1878" (in: *Historia Social*, 22: 101-125, 119, Valencia 1995); Ferrer, *To Make a Free Nation: Race and the Struggle for Independence in Cuba, 1868 - 1898* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1995); Ferrer, "The Silence of Patriots: Race and Nationalism in Martí's Cuba" (forthcoming in: Raúl Fernández and Jeffrey Belnap, eds., *José Martí's Our America*, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Yvonne Maggie, "Zur Illusion des Konkreten. Zum System rassischer Klassifikation in Brasilien" (in: Rüdiger Zoller, ed., *Amerikaner wider Willen. Beiträge zur Sklaverei in Lateinamerika und ihren Folgen*, Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> This is also the conclusion by Skidmore, "Bi-racial U.S.A."

<sup>27</sup> Winant, "Rethinking Race in Brazil", p. 183.

All in all, it is quite clear how difficult the articulation of the various factors involved in the explanation of the origins of "race"-relations and discrimination is. The post-modern debate about the "racialization" of societies has resulted in that the category of "race" has been granted increasing autonomy beside the meta-categories of class and gender. Michael Omi und Howard Winant suggest an analysis of these processes on the basis of the "racial formation-theory", for which the concept "racial projects" is of central importance:

"The theoretical concept of *racial projects* is a key element of racial formation theory. A project is simultaneously an explanation of racial dynamics and an effort to reorganise the social structure along particular racial lines. Every project is necessarily both a discursive or cultural initiative, an attempt at racial signification and identity formation on the one hand; and a political initiative, an attempt at organisation and redistribution on the other."<sup>28</sup>

In the following we will attempt to reconstruct this multi-dimensional process for Cuba and Brazil in the 19th century. The concept of "racial project" enables us to examine implications and the relevance of each system and model, to conceptually grasp its relationship to concrete historical discrimination and social structure. The politically eventful 19th century is especially suited to highlighting the dynamics of racial conceptualisations which could, in times of crisis, change abruptly and erratically. Recent research into the social and political history of both countries allows for a much more accurate picture of the foundations and extent of discrimination, the models of social order, the quantitative proportion of Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Cubans, as well as of the social mobility in one post-colonial and one colonial slave society, even though there are still some major research lacunae.

A methodological problem arises from our analysis of texts, in which models of social order are codified. On the one hand, language reflects reality, on the other, it reproduces and "naturalizes" specific interpretations of that reality. In spite of their ideological constraints and an underlying slavocratic mentality, the racial categories used in the historical sources possess considerable accuracy; contemporaries knew fairly well what exactly was being described or referred to. The racial terms

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<sup>28</sup> Winant, "Rethinking Race", pp. 183-184. See also Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States. From the 1960's to the 1990's* (2nd ed., New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 53-62.

were also often used by those so described to identify themselves with their peer group. The language of modern "political correctness" tends to wipe out the historicity of racial issues and the specificity of social and ethnic groups identified by these historical denominations are belatedly smoothed out by using contemporary terms. This is best demonstrated by the use of terms such as Afro-Cubans and Afro-Brazilians, which were not coined before the 20th century. In the following we will therefore strive to mainly use the original source expressions, such as "mulatto" and "coloured", and only for reasons of interpretation or language economy shall we use neologisms such as Afro-Americans.<sup>29</sup>

The racial projects and their concepts were of fundamental importance for the development of ethnic identities in both societies. Fundamental problems arose when internal models of segregation and social discipline had to be coordinated with the drawing of external boundaries and the building of a nation. Competing social and political projects vied for hegemony amongst the elite (in Brazil: republicans and monarchists; in Cuba: separatists, annexationists, autonomists and unionists). Alternative projects were formulated by Afro-Americans, even though they did often not set them to paper. Any comparison must not only consider the level of discourse and predominant opinions but should also seek to trace the origin of each "racialist" way of thinking, link it to specific socio-ethnic groups, and try to assess their influence on public opinion and on the culture of the country.

It can be assumed that Cuba and Brazil were relatively similar with regard to the dominant "white" and the subaltern "black" cultures. They do, however, display two basic differences of a chronological and structural nature: Brazil achieved independence in many respects as early as 1808, which was formalized in 1822; Cuba, on the other hand, was a colony until 1898 and then became subjugated to the neo-colonialism of the US. Havana was until 1825 above all the American nerve centre of the Spanish colonial empire and "Cuba" meant from an imperial perspective mainly Havana, which was then, and until 1898, the strategically most important port of the remaining colonies. Chattel slavery and the sugar industry did not become dominant on the island until the beginning of the period of Independence on the mainland (1810 - 1830).

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<sup>29</sup> See the discussion in George Reid Andrews, "Brazilian Racial Terminology" (in: George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888 - 1988*, Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 249-258.

Secondly, the island character of Cuba and the continental dimensions of Brazil have, of course, also to be considered: this is one of the reasons why Klein, Scott and Lamounier at the time only compared one continental plantation region with Cuba (Virginia, Louisiana and São Paulo, Bahia). As our interest lies in the first instance not with the economy but with the racial projects, which were formulated by elites for whole colonial or national territories, regional frameworks are not sufficient. Yet the regional level must be considered too, especially in relation to projects of competing elites or Afro-American counter-hegemonic concepts.

Not only has the difference between town and country to be considered in both Cuba and Brazil, but above all the contrast between the areas where monoculture and chattel slavery dominated and those territories where large plantations were only one amongst several branches of production. Pérez de la Riva described the areas of the first category with pointed emphasis as "Cuba A", the latter ones as "Cuba B".<sup>30</sup> On a macro-regional level we can also describe the Brazilian Northeast and the Southeast as the most important plantation regions, or "Brazil A", whereas the other three macro-regions (North, Southwest and South) can be classed as "Brazil B". Because of the continental dimensions of Brazil, however, each of these macro-regions, even each province contained zones "A" and "B". In the following we will, with regard to statements about social-economic structures and political developments, confine ourselves to examples from the most important plantation regions of Brazil and Cuba in the 19th century.

## 2. Basic Principles of Discrimination

By the end of the 18th century both Cuba and Brazil already had a long history of legal and informal discrimination behind them, the essential features of which warrant a brief mention here, so that the changes in legal practice and the re-drafting of the racial projects of the

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<sup>30</sup> Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El barracón y otros ensayos* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), pp. 75-91, 339-361, 362-435; see also Jorge Ibarra, "Regionalismo y esclavitud patriarcal en los Departamentos Oriental y Central de Cuba" (in: *Estudios de Historia Social*, 44/47: 115-136, Madrid 1988).

19th century appear clearer against this background. We can distinguish between two types of discrimination, depending on whether it related to the slave status or to religion, the ancestry or the skin colour of those discriminated against. The relationship between both types and their intermingling resulted in the kind of discrimination specific to the mature plantation colonies of the 19th century.

By legal definition slaves were the property of others and had to submit to the unrestricted power over their person. Their status was based essentially on a continuation of the Roman legal system, to which commentators still referred in the 19th century. However, the relevant points in Spanish legislation (the *Siete Partidas*, 1265/1348) and Portuguese law-making (the *Ordenações Manuelinas*, 1514 and the *Filipinas*, 1603) relate rather to the situation of house slaves than to that of modern chattel slavery on the American plantations.<sup>31</sup> They concerned themselves only with particular problems such as compensation for the purchase of ill slaves, punishment of slaves or the theoretical right to be sold in the case of maltreatment. All in all, the two colonial empires did not have a systematic legislation which would define in detail the relationship between master and slave on the lines of the French *Code Noir* (1685). Regional legislation (such as the *Ordenanzas de Cáceres* in Cuba and the *posturas municipais* in Brazil) attempted to regulate at least some of these functions.<sup>32</sup> The Spanish crown at first intended to exclude slaves and their descendants from the kind of patronage which existed for Indians.<sup>33</sup> Trial records do show, though, that the administration of justice enabled these groups to be represented in court by "Defensores de pobres encarcelados" or "Protectores de esclavos".<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A. Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 251, 261; Décio Freitas, *Escravidão de índios e negros no Brasil* (Porto Alegre: EST/ICP, 1980), pp. 25-29.

<sup>32</sup> Levi Marrero, *Cuba: economía y sociedad* (15 vols., Madrid: Ed. Playor, 1972-88), V, pp. 35-40.

<sup>33</sup> Magnus Mörner, "Die sozialen Strukturen im Wandel" (in: Walther L. Bernecker et al., eds., *Handbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, vol. I: "Mittel-, Südamerika und die Karibik bis 1760", pp. 454-503, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), p. 464.

<sup>34</sup> Gloria García Rodríguez, *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud. La visión de los siervos* (México: Centro de Investigación Científica "Ing. Jorge L. Tamayo A.C.", 1996), p. 5.

The main difference between the Spanish and Portuguese colonies consisted in the lower significance of slavery in Spanish-America before 1750. Spain was focused on silver mining and Indian slavery had been officially forbidden since 1530/42, while in Brazil, despite repeated abolitions in the 17th century and under Pombal, it continued to exist, de facto and de jure, until 1831. Spain did not possess trading posts in Africa, so the protest against slave trade could develop unimpeded. A tradition of religious criticism of the slave trade of other powers, and even of slavery itself, therefore developed in Spain, especially on the part of the Dominicans and the Capuchins.<sup>35</sup> In Brazil, in contrast, because of the central importance of African slavery for the colonial economy since the late 16th century, no fundamental criticism was levelled against the slavery of blacks. Occasionally individual voices demanded that slave owners treat those people who had been "entrusted into" their care with restraint and in a "rightful" and Christian manner. They also demanded that the slaves were not to work on Sundays and holy days.<sup>36</sup> On the whole, though, it was more a case of guidelines for planters, showing how profit could be combined with Christian ideals. They contributed decisively to the construction of a "slavocratic" ideology in its different varieties,<sup>37</sup> but they did not question the status of slaves, deprived of almost any rights, or the discrimination practised against non-white

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<sup>35</sup> In Cuba by Francisco José de Jaca de Aragón and Epifanio de Borgoña (1681): "La esclavitud africana es injusta. Todo cristiano es libre" (Fray Francisco José de Jaca de Aragón), quoted in: Marrero, *Cuba*, V, p. 184; see also: Eugenio Petit Muñoz, Edmundo M. Narancio and José M. Traibel Nelcis, *La condición jurídica, social, económica y política de los negros durante el coloniaje en la Banda Oriental* (Montevideo: Talleres Gráficos "33", 1948), vol. I, part 1, pp. 512-527; Luz María Martínez Montiel, *Negros en América* (Madrid: Ed. Mapfre, 1992); Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "La postura de la Iglesia frente a la esclavitud. Siglos XVI y XVII" (in: Francisco de Solano and Agustín Guimerá, eds., *Esclavitud y derechos humanos. La lucha por la libertad del negro en el siglo XIX*, pp. 25-32, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Históricas, 1990); Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery. From the Baroque to the Modern 1492 - 1800* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 128.

<sup>36</sup> For Spanish America, see Alonso de Sandoval, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud* (Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1987; original title: *De instauranda Aethiopia salute*, Seville 1627); for Brazil: Jorge Benci S.I., *Economia cristã dos senhores no governo dos escravos* (São Paulo: Grijalbo, 1977; 1st ed., 1705); André João Antonil (João Antonio Andreoni, S.I.), *Cultura e opulência do Brasil ...* (São Paulo: Itatiaia/EDUSP, 1982; 1st ed., 1711); Manoel Ribeiro da Rocha, *Etiópe resgatado empenhado, sustentado, corrigido, instruído e libertado* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1992; 1st ed., 1758).

<sup>37</sup> Ronaldo Vainfas, *Ideologia e escravidão. Os letrados e a sociedade escravista no Brasil colonial* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986), pp. 149-153.

freemen. The state involved itself as little as possible in what it saw as the private relationship between master and slave in both colonial realms, an attitude which Stuart Schwartz aptly characterises as one of "malign neglect".<sup>38</sup> This, however, led to the development of a kaleidoscopic diversity of local and regional legal traditions and practices, which need to be clarified by further research.<sup>39</sup>

Works on this subject tend to stress that both Spain and Portugal acquired during the Reconquista, that is, even before the foundation of their non-European empires, a legal tradition as well as a concrete historical practice in dealing with ethnic minorities on the Iberian peninsula. For Spain, and to a lesser degree also for Portugal, the exclusion of Jews and Moors was constitutive for the definition of the "Catholic Nation". First in line to be enslaved were "infidel" Moors, later "Pagans", but not fellow Christians. The first instances of discrimination against Moors and Jews (in the 14th century in Spain, 1446/7 in Portugal) occurred therefore mainly on a religious basis. Only after the compulsory conversion or expulsion of Jews and Moors (from 1391 onwards in Spain, not until 1497 in Portugal) did a group of people emerge who were discriminated against purely on the grounds of their descent, known as New Christians. The persecution of New Christians was to be often an efficient means for certain Old Christian factions of the Iberian societies to eliminate competing groups.<sup>40</sup>

After the conquest of America, the Iberian legislation against Jews, Moors, Gypsies and New Christians, based on the concept of "blood purity" (*limpeza de sangue/limpieza de sangre*), was extended to the colonial subjects. Portuguese legislation discriminated against Indians from as early as the start of the 16th century, though not before 1671 against mulattoes and blacks.<sup>41</sup> Thereafter, in theory but often also in practice,

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<sup>38</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar plantations*, p. 261.

<sup>39</sup> Local practices in Spanish America are analysed by Norman Meiklejohn, "The Implementation of Slave Legislation in Eighteenth Century New Granada" (in: Robert Brent Toplin, ed., *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America*, pp. 176-203, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974); Petit Muñoz, Narancio and Traibel Nelcis, *La condición jurídica*, and, specifically for Cuba, by García Rodríguez, *La esclavitud*.

<sup>40</sup> Anita Novinski, *Cristãos novos na Bahia* (São Paulo: Perspectiva/EDUSP, 1972), pp. 28-30; Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, *Preconceito racial no Brasil Colônia. O cristãos novos* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983), p. 57.

<sup>41</sup> Carneiro, *Preconceito*, p. 55; Charles R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415 - 1825* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

they were denied access to positions in the administration as well as in religious brotherhoods, the church and the universities.<sup>42</sup> Until about 1580 the first generation mestizos of the Spanish empire enjoyed a relatively high status, with acts of discrimination being brought in in stages.<sup>43</sup>

It is, however, in dispute how systematically this legislation was employed. The trials of New Christians by the Inquisition in Brazil illustrate that not even in the New World this group was safe from persecution. On the other hand, the number of New Christians who owned sugar mills in the Northeast of Brazil or belonged to the upper echelons of the merchants' class (for instance in Cartagena) showed that, despite discrimination many could belong to the elite. Even those convicted by the Inquisition could, once they had served their punishment, often return to positions of authority in Brazil and Spanish-America.<sup>44</sup> It is similarly difficult to measure the exact extent of discrimination against well-to-do mulattoes and mestizos in the colonial period. In theory, the *homen bom*, who had access to positions and authority, should be white and ~~New~~ Christian, though we are aware of many exceptions, even in Spanish America.<sup>45</sup> Does this allow the conclusion that discrimination against non-white social climbers was not systematically practiced but only used in the event of conflict?

Old

In Spain as well as in Portugal discrimination against subjects of "impure blood" reached in the 17th century the level of an obsession.<sup>46</sup> Only in the second half of the 18th century did the reform legislation of Pombal and Charles III abolish certain parts of the legal discrimination, especially those elements directed against the New Christians and

<sup>42</sup> A. J. R. Russel-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 67-83.

<sup>43</sup> Konetzke, "Die Mestizen in der kolonialen Gesetzgebung. Zum Rassenproblem im spanischen Amerika" (in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 42.2: 131-177, Cologne 1960).

<sup>44</sup> Novinski, *Cristãos novos*, p. 162; James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America. A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 226; Nikolaus Böttcher, *Aufstieg und Fall eines atlantischen Handelsimperiums. Portugiesische Kaufleute und Sklavenhändler in Cartagena de Indias von 1580 bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1995).

<sup>45</sup> For instance the case of bishop Morell de Santa Cruz in Cuba, see Richard M. Levine, *Tropical Diaspora. The Jewish Experience in Cuba* (Gainesville, Fla.: The University Press of Florida, 1993).

<sup>46</sup> Novinski, *Cristãos novos*, p. 44.



the descendants of Indians and whites (mestizos, or *caboclos* in Brazil). Marriages between white men and Indian women were expressly approved of in Brazil and the use of the name *caboclos* for their descendants was even forbidden under threat of punishment.<sup>47</sup> The lifting of legal discrimination against mestizos formed part of a late-absolutist reform project, designed to place the colonization of Brazil and Spanish-America on a more rational basis, both in terms of colonial revenue and of nation-building. As the Jesuits were driven out at the same time, it fell especially to the mestizos in Brazil to act as agents and to secularize and lusitanize the colony and to secure its frontiers.

Even though enlightened ideals had already reached the Iberian peninsula at this time, hardly anyone within the Portuguese elite questioned slavery as such.<sup>48</sup> Little changed in this respect even under Pombal. The draconian punishments for slaves contained in the *Ordenações Filipinas* were not lifted, but instead the slave trade and the Brazilian export trade expanded by means of monopolistic trade companies. Discrimination against mulattoes and blacks remained in force.<sup>49</sup> During the whole colonial period free blacks and mulattoes did not enjoy a separate judicial status which would have set them apart from the slaves.<sup>50</sup>

The reforms of the Spanish Bourbons of the late 18th century were intended, within the framework of physiocratic and mercantilist ideas, to achieve a "modernization through mass slavery". This was meant to imitate the models of Saint-Domingue and Jamaica, considered successful by 18th century standards. A body of slave laws was released in 1784

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<sup>47</sup> Boxer, *Race Relations*, p. 98.

<sup>48</sup> Boxer, *Race Relations*, pp. 104-111, shows this by using a text published in Lisbon in 1764 ("Nova e curiosa relação ... expostas a favor dos homens pretos em um dialogo ..."), which discusses the legitimacy of slavery through a fictitious dialogue between a Brazilian slaveowner and a Portuguese lawyer.

<sup>49</sup> Slavery was abolished in Portugal in 1761. However, humanitarian reasons played no role in this early abolition. See Boxer, *Race Relations*, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> "No separate policy was formulated specifically for the free colored. Legislation on coloured issues was founded on ethnic criteria and total failed to recognize any distinction in civil status between slave and free colored" (A. J. R. Russel-Wood, "Colonial Brazil" (in: David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, *Neither Slave nor Free. The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 130.

and 1789,<sup>51</sup> which was meant to give the newly created plantation societies in Cuba, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico a judicial framework. At the same time they contained the first explicit "racial projects". This period is not unjustly characterized as one of "slave euphoria" amongst the reformers: "physiocratic development and progress through slavery" could have been the motto of these economic policies. The local sugar elites adopted the repressive sections of the Bourbon legislation in their projects, developed discrimination further, and completely threw out the elementary protective guidelines for slaves desired by the crown. The position of slaves in Cuba was finally regulated in 1842 by the *Bando de Gobernación y Policía de la Isla de Cuba*, which for the first time codified protective regulations and maximum punishments.

Crucial changes with regard to the legal status of slaves and "colour-eds" took place in Brazil only after Independence (1822). The colonial *Códigos* were replaced by the Constitution of 1824 and the Penal Code of 1831. Discrimination on the basis of skin colour or descent was in theory ended by this legislation, the one important exception being that of the freedmen (*libertos*). The basic status differentiation between slave and freedman remained, of course, relevant. Rebellious slaves found themselves as a result of the new Penal Code to be subject to special and tougher penalties.<sup>52</sup> The physical punishments and mutilations of the colonial legislation were abolished, but not the whip and the block (*tronco*) for slaves — slavery without the whip was unthinkable.<sup>53</sup>

In the Empire the free, non-white population continued to be differentiated not only according to "race" (*preto/pardo*) but also according to status (*ingênuo* = free born, *liberto* = freed). All free males, *ingênuos* as well as *libertos*, were granted citizenship by the Constitution. On the other hand, though, especially in the 1820's and 1830's blacks, and particularly *libertos*, were treated like slaves by local and regional legislation. Just like slaves they were subject to physical punishment and their freedom of movement was restricted. In the case of conditional freedom the freed could theoretically even be enslaved again. The colonial era's unclear division between blacks and freedmen, on the one hand, and

<sup>51</sup> Manuel Lucena Salmoral, *Los códigos negros de América española* (Alcalá de Henares: Ediciones Unesco, 1996), pp. 61-94.

<sup>52</sup> See Código Criminal do Império do Brasil, título IV, cap. IV, arts. 113-115.

<sup>53</sup> Compare the similar comment by the jurist Tomás Alves Jr. (1864), quoted in Jurandir Malerba, *Os brancos da lei. Liberalismo, escravidão e mentalidade patriarcal no Império do Brasil* (Maringá: EDUEM, 1994), p. 37.

slaves, on the other, was thus perpetuated, even though it was clearly opposed to the Constitution. This may have been due to a lack of consensus within the elite with regard to this question, although often it was a conscious strategy on their part designed to put the new citizens back into their "rightful" place within the social hierarchy. Thomas Flory has called this appropriately a "calculated confusion".<sup>54</sup> Discrimination on account of descent or skin colour remained relevant even in legal practice. Skin colour continued to determine the "quality" of a person. The credibility of witnesses in criminal proceedings, for instance, could be supported or attacked by referring to their skin colour.<sup>55</sup>

A series of repressive legal rulings were also issued against the free coloured in Cuba (1837 ban on free coloured immigration; 1844-55 temporary dissolution of "milicias de pardos y morenos libres"; expulsion of all "foreign" blacks and free mulattoes; 1855 introduction of an identity card system).<sup>56</sup> Yet not even in the 19th century was their status legally formalized until 1876-79. A half-hearted submission of Cuba to the Constitution of 1876 was proclaimed, which meant that Cuba would be governed by special laws and a penal code (1879).<sup>57</sup> In the social realm, marriage rules tried to prevent the free coloureds from infiltrating the "white" group.<sup>58</sup> In other words, everything was done to stop the growth of the coloureds, which was a cause for concern to the colonial authorities.

Both the reform policy of the Spanish crown since the late 18th century and Brazilian independence led to a re-drafting of the slavery legislation, which tried to attend to the needs of plantation slavery and

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas Flory, "Race and Social Control in Independent Brazil" (in: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 9.2: 199-224, London 1977), p. 202.

<sup>55</sup> For examples from one region, see Matthias Röhrig Assunção, *Pflanzer, Sklaven und Kleinbauern in der brasilianischen Provinz Maranhão, 1800 - 1850* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1993), pp. 303-309.

<sup>56</sup> Midlo Hall, *Social Control*, pp. 128-132.

<sup>57</sup> *Constituciones y leyes fundamentales de España (1808 - 1947)* (edición preparada por A. Padilla Serra, Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1954), pp. 142-156; see also: *Código penal vigente en las islas de Cuba y Puerto Rico mandado observar por real decreto de 23 de Mayo de 1879* (Madrid: Pedro Núñez, 1886) and Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros esclavos* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), pp. 351-353.

<sup>58</sup> Verena Martínez-Alier, *Marriage, Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba. A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974); and more recently: Verena Stolcke, *Racismo y sexualidad en la Cuba colonial* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992).

also to more clearly define the status of slaves. Even though the conflict between liberal laws and the necessity the planters felt for exercising "private" force could not be resolved, the complex legislation and local legal practices of the 19th century demonstrate the maturity and strength of the ruling planter classes in both countries.<sup>59</sup>

The status of freed slaves and coloureds, on the other hand, remained undefined well into the 19th century in both countries. A series of laws and legal practices continued to treat them almost as slaves. While in Cuba the free coloureds were excluded as a group until 1878, the situation seemed somewhat better in Brazil in so far as the liberal Brazilian Constitution considered all free born coloureds to be equal to whites and did not foresee any form of discrimination. Here, exclusion occurred rather through socio-economic means or through informal practices of discrimination, which over the past three centuries of colonization had become established traditions or implicit "racial projects".

A similar shift in the means used to justify discrimination can, however, be seen both in Brazil and in Cuba — with or without formal independence: from religion in the 16th century through "descent" in the 17th and 18th centuries to "civilisation", "blood", "skin colour" or "race" in the 19th century. Even though these different types of discrimination often overlap historically, the differences between the concepts are important in the same way as shifts of accents or new definitions, such as the term "race", which only got its clear discriminatory "modern" meaning with positivism, the reception of Gobineau and the abolition of slavery in the 1880's.

### 3. "Race-" and Skin Colour Hierarchies: Contemporary Models of Social Order

Racial and skin colour hierarchies were transformed into models of social order by contemporaries towards the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. These were claimed to reflect social reality. The Age of Revolutions also ushered in a transitional period at the ideological level, which on the island of Cuba set in in the second half and in Brazil not until the end of the 18th century. It is therefore

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<sup>59</sup> Compare the discussion of this point in Malerba, *Os brancos da lei*, pp. xiii, 139-141.

not surprising that the contemporary models of social order also employ different categories which reflect this transition.

The Portuguese Luis dos Santos Vilhena, who emigrated to Bahia in 1787, divided the population of the city in his monumental work of 1802 into the following seven classes:

"the corps of magistrates and finance, the ecclesiastical corporation, the military [...], the corps of merchants, the noble people, the mechanical [professions] and the slaves"<sup>60</sup>

Vilhena still followed the European model of a society of estates. As Katia Mattoso noticed, he did, however, place the civil service, clergy, military and trade, that is, the corporations controlled by the Portuguese, before the "nobility" of the Creole plantation owners: "It was the glance of the colonizer on the colonized Brazilians".<sup>61</sup>

Not all Portuguese writers who emigrated to Brazil, however, used this European corporate model. Brother Francisco dos Prazeres Maranhão, the presumed author of *Poranduba Maranhense* (1820), divided the inhabitants of the plantation province of Maranhão into four "classes": Whites, Indians, Blacks and *pardos*. The latter he defined as the mixed descendants of the first three classes, also known as mestizos.<sup>62</sup> He further characterized every "class" according to income and occupation, but also their general characteristics. A similar classification of society in the same province was provided by Raimundo José de Sousa Gaioso, who came to Brazil in 1787, in his *Compêndio Histórico-Político* (1818).<sup>63</sup> According to him, the "filhos do reino", in other words, the European Portuguese, were the first and most powerful class of citizens, the second class consisted of the Brazilian descendants of Europeans. Gaioso identified the third class of inhabitants as the "mixed generation", differentiating between the two main groups of mulattoes and mestizos. Despite

<sup>60</sup> Luis dos Santos Vilhena, *A Bahia no século XVIII* (3 vols., Salvador: Ed. Itapuã, 1969), I, pp. 55-56. The title of the 1st edition was *Recopilação de notícias soterapolitanas e brasílicas ...*

<sup>61</sup> Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX. Uma província no Império* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1992), p. 596.

<sup>62</sup> "Poranduba Maranhense ou Relação Histórica da Província do Maranhão ..." (in: *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, t. 54, vol. 83: 9-184, Rio de Janeiro 1891), p. 134.

<sup>63</sup> Raimundo José de Sousa Gaioso, *Compêndio Histórico-Político dos Principios da Lavoura do Maranhão* (Rio de Janeiro: Livros do Mundo Inteiro, 1970), pp. 115-120.

his general dislike of this class of "half-castes", he could not help recognizing their exceptional economic role. Then came the negroes (*negros*), the largest part of whom were occupied in agriculture, followed by the last class, that of the colonized Indians.

The interesting thing about the classifications of Gaioso and Prazeres is that they conceive their "classes" on the basis of racial categories, combining them, however, immediately with an appropriate economic characterization (wealth or occupation) as well as an evaluation of the psychological qualities of each group (laziness, arrogance, and so on). They attempted, therefore, to create an ideal world of absolute correspondences, in which each person could be allocated to a "class" which also corresponded to their position in society, on the basis of their external characteristics, e.g. "race". Possibilities for promotion were not allowed for in such a system, the membership of the lower "classes" was legitimized by their (inherited?) character deficiencies.

These classes, grounded on skin colour or ancestry, ultimately expressed social status, and in this respect both authors stick closely to the tradition of colonial caste ideology. Conservative whites hung on to this even after independence and this racial model was renewed after the middle of the century by positivist racial thought.<sup>64</sup>

Three basic approaches can be distinguished in Cuba, which forged the racial conceptualisation of the elite during the 19th century. The crown attempted to codify a basic racial or caste system for the coloured population of the developing plantation society in the *Código Negro Carolino* of 1784.<sup>65</sup> This model of social order was based on the values of *limpieza de sangre* and attempted to completely segregate a "class of black slaves" also by legal measures from the rest of the population. At the same time the proportion in the "mixture" of blacks and whites, the necessary number of generations with "legitimate birth" needed for

<sup>64</sup> See Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *O espetáculo das raças. Cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil, 1870 - 1930* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1993).

<sup>65</sup> The "Código Negro Carolino" (1784) was applied during ten years only, e.g. until the handing over of the colony of Santo Domingo to France (1795), but the explicit intention was to apply it to all Spanish colonies. Also relevant was the "Real Instrucción de Su Magestad sobre Educación, Trato y Ocupaciones de los Esclavos ..." (known as "Código Negro Español", 1789). Both are reproduced in: Richard Konezke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica* (3 vols., Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1959-62), III/2, pp. 643 ff. (n. 308) and pp. 553 ff. (n. 280).

admission into the "white" status and the distance in generations from the slave status defining the different classes of free coloureds were established.<sup>66</sup> It can thus be seen as a legal project of "whitening", a labour legislation and a plan to creolize the free coloureds and guarantee their strict separation from the "black slave class". Since 1795 wealthy *pardos* could buy their "whiteness" through a "Real Cédula del Gracias al Sacar".<sup>67</sup> The *Código* tried, therefore, to create a *clase negra* on the one hand, but left channels of advancement open for mulattoes, on the other.

The racial project of Havana's sacharocracy was formulated in 1811 most explicitly by Arango's *Representación*.<sup>68</sup> Slaves were, according to the guidelines of this project, to be economically integrated, but they and their descendants should gain none of the rights which whites enjoyed. The status of free coloureds should also be downgraded, so that they could be employed in the sugar industry. Already in 1792 Arango demanded in his *Discurso sobre la Agricultura* that the batallions of free blacks and mulattoes be dissolved, since they were all "negroes":

"They are all negroes: they have all more or less the same plights and the same motives to feel resentful toward us".<sup>69</sup>

Emphasizing this sharp contrast between "white" and "black", Arango stretched the term *raza negra* to include all Afro-Cubans. It was a Cuban version of the "one drop rule", justified with reference to civilisation and the *limpieza de sangre*. On a political level, too, Arango intended to push through his strictly segregationist project and advocated a strict exclusion of free coloureds:

"[...] if the doors to identification with us are thus closed to all the descendants of our present slaves, one should deprive [them] as well of the [access to] civil liberties".<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Midlo Hall, *Social Control*, p. 138.

<sup>67</sup> Marrero, *Cuba*, XIII, p. 64; Magnus Mörner, "Slavery, Race Relations and Bourbon Reorganization in Eighteenth-Century Spanish America" (in: James Schofield Saeger, ed., *Essays on Eighteenth-Century Race Relations in the Americas*, pp. 8-30, Bethlehem, Pa.: Lehigh University, 1987), p. 23.

<sup>68</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, *Obras* (2 vols., La Habana: Dirección de Cultura, 1952), II, pp. 224-226.

<sup>69</sup> Arango, *Obras*, I, pp. 114-162. Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba* (4 tomos in 5 vols., La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1973), I, p. 191.

<sup>70</sup> "Representación de la Ciudad de la Habana a las Cortes, el 20 de julio de 1811 ... por el Alférez Mayor de la Ciudad, D. Francisco de Arango ..." (in: Pichardo, *Documentos*, I, pp. 219-251), here pp. 230-231.

Arango belonged consequently to the founders of the concept of *raza negra*,<sup>71</sup> which in its emphasis on the dividing line between "whites" and all bearers of any traces of "African blood" corresponded not only to the local interests of the sugar aristocracy, but influenced the larger Creole population as well. There are no corporative elements left here, it is rather a case of class structure based on racial identity only.

A third approach emerged in the context of the early independence movements, represented by Creole elites who did not participate in the sugar boom. The conspirator Luis Francisco Bassave y Cárdenas, for instance, saw all Indians and mestizos as members of the "white class", as well as any person with an uninterrupted paternal white ancestry, whether they were born in wedlock or not. He also concerned himself with the "whitening" of free blacks and mulattoes. That is why he drew up the following breeding programme: child of a white and free negress, mulatto; child of a white and free mulatto, *quarterón*: child of a white and free *quarterona*, *quinterón*: child of a white and free *quinterona*, "white". One category was already missing compared to the *Código Negro*. One should understand mulattoes, up to the *quinterón*, as the "class of *pardos*", and all those beneath the status of mulattoes as *morenos*.<sup>72</sup> This project of a liberal separatist involved, in contrast to the models of the crown and of Arango, a "whitening plan", which also included blacks, regardless of whether they were enslaved or free.

Such rigid whitening models were hardly formulated in Brazil during the period of Independence. Gaioso published a "table of mixtures", which was hailed by Freyre as "the most careful taxonomy of the miscegenation":<sup>73</sup> To become "totally white", a mulatto had to "interbreed" in three consecutive generations (*quartão*, *outão*, *branco*) with whites, and for the reverse "blackening" ("Para ficar negro") Gaioso used the same terminology. Remarkable is here, however, that he quotes as his source of inspiration exclusively non-Brazilian authors. The terms used by him (*quartão*, *oitão*) are apparently also translations from Spanish or English. The Portuguese equivalents<sup>74</sup> of these common expressions in

<sup>71</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup> Pichardo, *Documentos*, p. 258.

<sup>73</sup> Gilberto Freyre, *Sobrados e mucambos. Decadência do patriarcado rural e desenvolvimento do urbano* (3rd ed., Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1961), II, p. 634.

<sup>74</sup> Few dictionaries of Portuguese register the terms *quadrarão* and *oitavão*. There is no evidence for its use in common language or in literature, with the exception of Gilberto Freyre. See Thomas M. Stephens, *Dictionnary of Latin American Racial and Ethnic Terminology* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1989), pp. 339, 350.



Caribbean slave societies were apparently never used. The fundamental differences between the "multiracial" classification systems of Brazil and the Caribbean has hardly been analysed in the corresponding bibliography, as Brazil is always contrasted to the "bi-racial" USA.

One explanation may be found in the less formal political culture of the Portuguese, which is noticeable in Brazil. Brazil was also an older plantation economy than Cuba and there was not the same necessity to develop racial projects within "national" concepts against external colonialism during the whole of the 19th century. Demographic factors also played an important role. The ruling class of Brazil was conscious of its mixed descent since the 16th century (*brancos da terra*). In Cuba, on the contrary, the Bourbon reforms brought about a rapid aristocratization of the plantation elite of Havana, which restrained the old *hato* owner upper class (who were, as in Brazil, in part descendants of the first mestizo generation). The stronger miscegenation with Indian groups in the first phase of colonization in Northeast Brazil, and later in frontier areas on the periphery, led to a much more complex picture. It was not so easily reducible to a linear black/white hierarchy, but was constructed rather as a triangle (white at the top, blacks/Indians at the bottom) with three (instead of one) mixed categories in the first generation (mestizo, mulatto, *cafuzo*).

A strict racial classification was therefore more difficult in Brazil than in Cuba. Here, through the art movement called *siboneyismo*, Indians were (re-)invented in 1855 as the ancestors of an indigenous free peasantry, but this trend did not impose itself, even though it would always play an important part in the arts. In Brazil, on the other hand, the early questioning, or partial abolition, of Indian slavery, combined with the abolition of legal discrimination by Pombal also led to the weakening of one of the "feet" of the triangle. Indians were increasingly classified in the middle group of "mixtures", as they no longer bore the stigmata of slavery. This trend towards a linear model did not, however, gain total acceptance, and even today not all racial terms can be placed clearly along one linear hierarchy (for instance: *cafuzo*, *Cabo Verde*).<sup>75</sup>

On the whole, Brazil distinguished itself with fewer attempts of systematic classification using racial criteria. Though it was admittedly clear to the elite of the Empire that "Brazil means coffee" and "coffee

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<sup>75</sup> This could well be the origin of the "confusion" between racial denominations such as *moreno* und *mulato* registered by Marvin Harris.

means negroes", the Brazilian planter discourse, however, lacked emphasis on doctrinaire aspects.<sup>76</sup> Despite the large variety of racial descriptions and a sensitivity to the shadings of skin colour, only three or four "classes" were constructed on racial grounds (white, mulatto, black and Indian). Class definitions, which were based upon skin colour or ancestry, did not, in the main, go beyond the general class of "mestizos" or *pardos*. Admittedly, subtle differences were recognized within these classes, but were, however, not elevated to a class in their own right, as was the case in the English, Dutch and French Caribbean. Many contemporary writers maintained the ambivalent mixture of social, racial and legal criteria and distinguished:

"the three following classes: the whites and those which by their position constitute what is called the good society, the people of more or less lower extraction, and finally the slaves".<sup>77</sup>

The opposition between the two "racial classes" became widely established in the national discourse and mentality of Cuba. These concepts were used by black and coloured political actors alike, as well as by intellectual spokesmen. Though subtle differences still existed, the established dichotomy between "blacks" and "whites" in language and mentality could not be broken down in subsequent periods.

The models of social order studied here established skin colour hierarchies, which pretended to reflect reality. At the same time, however, they attempted to influence society in order to naturalize these hierarchies and thereby increase their acceptance throughout all social groups. We must, therefore, first of all question the relationship of these models to concrete historical reality, and secondly the acceptance of these models by others, especially the subaltern groups.

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<sup>76</sup> Gomes, *As marcas da escravidão*, p. 97. The quote is from the deputy Silveira Martins.

<sup>77</sup> Francisco Ferreira de Resende, *Minhas recordações*, quoted by Ilmar Rohloff de Mattos, *O tempo saquarema* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1987), p. 113.

#### 4. "Race" and Social Structure

Colonial models of social order already led Magnus Mörner in an earlier work on "race mixture" to maintain that the social structure of Spanish America "was created by transferring to the New World the hierarchic, estate-based, corporative society of medieval Castile and imposing that society upon a multiracial, colonial situation".<sup>78</sup> A series of later works, however, fundamentally questioned this interpretation and underlined the class character of late colonial societies.<sup>79</sup>

All empirical work on social structure points towards a reciprocal influence between different types of status parameters and the class situation. To have money "whitened" one, just as "being white" opened many doors. Even freedom lightened up: free blacks were often qualified as *pardos*, a term which, when used to refer to slaves, only meant mulattoes.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, slavery or work associated with it could "blacken": Indian slaves of 16th century Brazil, for instance, were known as *negros da terra*. Every slave, even in the ensuing years, was a *negro*. The bitterly poor contract workers from the Canaries were classed as "white slaves" in Cuba. Wagley based his concept of "social race" on these observations.<sup>81</sup>

In 19th century Brazil and Cuba at least four major principles of social order can be identified, which can be regarded as the main parameters of social hierarchy: the place in the production process or wealth; the legal status (slave/freedman/free); skin colour, ancestry or

<sup>78</sup> Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Company, 1967), p. 54.

<sup>79</sup> See J. K. Chance and W. B. Taylor, "Estate and class in a Colonial City: Oaxaca in 1792" (in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 19: 454-487, Cambridge 1977); R. McCaa, S. B. Schwartz and A. Grubessich, "Race and Class in Colonial Latin America: A Critique" (in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 21.3: 413-425, Cambridge 1979); and Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race, Mexico City, 1753" (*Hispanic American Historical Review*, 62.4: 569-606, Durham, N. C., 1982). For a revised view by Mörner, see Magnus Mörner, "Labor Systems and Patterns of Social Stratification in Colonial America: North and South" (in: Wolfgang Reinhard and Peter Waldmann, eds., *Nord und Süd in Amerika. Gegensätze, Gemeinsamkeiten, Europäischer Hintergrund*, pp. 347-363, Freiburg: Rombach, 1992).

<sup>80</sup> Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro, "A cor inexistente. Relações racias e trabalho rural no Rio de Janeiro pós-escravidão" (in: *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*, 22: 101-128, Rio de Janeiro).

<sup>81</sup> Charles Wagley, "The Concept of Social Race in the Americas" (in: *The Latin American Tradition*, pp. 155-174, New York 1968).

the biological "race"; and "civilisation", determined mainly by religion (Christian/Heathen) and culture (European/Creole/African).<sup>82</sup>

Schwartz has shown in his monumental work on Bahia how these different organizational principles merged with each other already during the colonial period.<sup>83</sup> For instance, the new colonial colour hierarchies did not completely displace the old European status categories, but gave them new meanings. On the one hand, the superimposition led to an increasing complexity of the social structure. On the other hand, Schwartz underlined the "profound tendency to reduce complexities to dualisms of contrast — master/slave, noble/commoner, Catholic/genile".<sup>84</sup> The potential contradictions between the different hierarchies were removed by ensuring that every single person should be allocated to one, and one status alone:

"A system that combined social definitions and rankings based on estate, function, corporate identity, religion, culture and color might have proved so confusing and liable to inherent contradiction as to become no system at all. But such was not the case. The tendency was always for the various criteria of rank to become congruent in a single individual."<sup>85</sup>

Katia Mattoso, however, defined the social structure of 19th century Salvador already according to four income groups.<sup>86</sup> This shows the further development of the city during the Empire as well as the relevance of the urban/rural contrast for the social structure and, last but not least, also the different approaches of the two scholars (Schwartz/Mattoso). The development from status to class society, however, took a decisive step during the 19th century. In the following the three main social groups of both countries — planters, slaves and free "coloureds" — will be compared and their opportunities for advancement and regional differences will be discussed.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup> A. J. R. Russel-Wood distinguishes in his meticulous analysis of Brazilian colonial society as much as 16 criteria of social differentiation. See *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 77.

<sup>83</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, pp. 245-253.

<sup>84</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, p. 246.

<sup>85</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>86</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia*, pp. 596-599.

<sup>87</sup> Historiography usually looks at planters and merchants as the constitutive elements of the elite. We lack the space here to discuss the relationship between those two groups. In general, however, merchants did not elaborate specific racial projects, which would clearly differentiate them from the one formulated by planters.

### 4.1 Planters

Independence brought Brazil no fundamental economic changes apart from the liberalization of foreign trade. However, the economic balance shifted during the 19th century visibly in favour of the South-east. The sugar and cotton plantations of the Northeast could not maintain their hold on the market against strong international competition in the restructured world economy. A lack of capital and the unwillingness to be innovative on the part of the planters of the Northeast may have been contributory factors, but also the more favourable geographic position of Cuba, the availability of uncultivated land as well as the readiness to invest on the part of Hispano-Cuban slave dealers and — later — US-American capital.<sup>88</sup> Because of the lack of integration between the different regions and their partly diverging interests (in export or domestic markets), national unity was threatened by the dissent of peripheral elites. In 1840, at the latest, the value of coffee exports from the provinces of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo overtook that of sugar exports and represented already 40% of the total exports.<sup>89</sup> Coffee plantations therefore formed the economic backbone of the Empire and the coffee boom contributed greatly to the political stabilization after 1840. The creation of a legal framework to maintain slavery, the control of political institutions by the planter elite and the centralism of the Empire — all these developments strengthened the class-consciousness of the planters and encouraged the development of a relatively homogenous class of *fazendeiros*, which may never have existed as such in colonial times. Rohloff de Mattos spoke in this context of a seigneurial class ("classe senhorial").<sup>90</sup> The crown attempted to support this process by awarding titles of nobility to the planter elite and public servants of outstanding merit. As this distribution was increasingly

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<sup>88</sup> Peter L. Eisenberg discusses the reasons for those divergent developments in *Modernização sem mudança. A indústria açucareira em Pernambuco, 1840 - 1910* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra/Unicamp, 1977), pp. 235-239.

<sup>89</sup> Celso Furtado, *Formation économique du Brésil de l'époque coloniale aux temps modernes* (Paris: Mouton, 1972), p. 98. For a recent overview of the different regional economies, see João Luís Fragoso, "Economia brasileira no século XIX: mais do que uma plantation escravista-exportadora" (in: Maria Yedda Linhares, ed., *História geral do Brasil*, pp. 131-176, 3rd ed., Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1990).

<sup>90</sup> Ilmar Rohloff de Mattos, *O tempo saquarema* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1987).

determined by political and financial opportunism, no real *esprit de corps* materialised; some outstanding politicians even refused to accept a title.<sup>91</sup>

Homogenization, therefore, had its limits, and regional differences as well as those between Brazil A and B played an important part even after 1840. From 1854, and above all, from 1870 onwards, some coffee planters, especially on the agrarian frontier in the west of the São Paulo province, started to experiment with free labour, employing European immigrants, mainly through sharecropping. This has led to lengthy discussions about the eagerness for reform of planters in Western São Paulo, who were labelled capitalist reformers by several scholars.<sup>92</sup>

Even less of a homogenous planter class developed in Cuba. A fundamental conflict arose between Havana's elite and those of the Interior, especially the cattle breeding provinces between Sancti Spiritus and Puerto del Príncipe (Camagüey), as well as those of the Oriente. While until the beginning of the 18th century we perceive the elite as a relatively homogenous but regionally segmented upper class of *hateros-ganaderos*, since 1760 the in quantitative terms relatively small sugar elite from Havana and Matanzas emerged,<sup>93</sup> known as "planter-officers" (Kuethe) or as "sacarocracia" (Moreno Fragnals).<sup>94</sup> They thought of themselves as the elite of the "white class". The crown needed Cuba first of all as a testing ground for Bourbon reforms and since the beginning of the 19th century as an outpost against Independence on the continent. It therefore gave in to almost all the economic demands of the Creole planter elite, left from 1825 onwards the economic and financial administration in their hands, and — in spite of contracts with Great Britain — allowed

<sup>91</sup> Eul-Soo Pang, *In Pursuit of Honor and Power. Noblemen of the Southern Cross in 19th Century Brazil* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1988), pp. 265-269.

<sup>92</sup> See Paula Beiguelman, *Formação política do Brasil* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira, 1967); Octavio Ianni, *Raça e classes sociais no Brasil* (2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1971), pp. 38-41; Verena Stolcke and Michael Hall, "The Introduction of Free Labour on São Paulo Coffee Plantations" (in: T. J. Byres, ed., *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*, pp. 170-200, London: Frank Cass, 1983). For a critique of this viewpoint see Robert Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery, 1850 - 1888* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 163-169, 248-249, and Jakob Gorender, *O escravismo colonial* (São Paulo: Ática, 1978), pp. 555-572.

<sup>93</sup> We can not discuss here the limited, yet significant coffee-boom in Cuba (1800 - 1844), in which members of this elite played a part. After 1845 coffee production was rather an enterprise of small, often "coloured" peasants of the Oriente.

<sup>94</sup> Manuel Moreno Fragnals, *Cuba/España, España/Cuba. Historia común* (Barcelona: Crítica/Grijalbo Mondadori, 1995), pp. 145-156; Allan Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753 - 1815. Crown, Military, and Society* (Knoxville, Tex.: The University of Texas Press, 1986).

the smuggling of slaves from Africa.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, the crown centralized formal political power in Cuba through the office of military pro-consuls, the Captain Generals. The result was the emergence of a new, Hispano-Cuban planter class,<sup>96</sup> which invested its capital in the modernization of the sugar production through the expansion of Cuba A, in the sugar export to the US or in Spanish-Cuban trade monopolies. It also displaced, or simply — over debts incurred through the modernization process — bought out, the old Creole elite of Havana. Both groups were increasingly concerned with modernization based on slave labour and advanced technology. After the crisis of 1857 "sugar and chattel slavery" was a Hispano-Cuban enterprise, no longer a purely Creole one.

The Creole elite in the interior, especially the traditional cattle breeders of Puerto Príncipe and the oligarchies of the Oriente, who were still using traditional methods of sugar production, fell behind in the process of modernization. They also felt disempowered through the alliance between the Spanish and the up-and-coming Hispano-Cubans in the west of the island. The Ten Years War contributed further to the destruction of the economic and political foundations of this traditional Creole elite.

#### 4.2 Slaves

Neither in Brazil nor in Cuba did slaves constitute a "class" in the economic sense, as they executed a wide spectrum of unqualified to qualified labour in the sphere of production and reproduction. However, the poor, free population also carried out many of these jobs. For that reason Schwartz underlined the nature of the status of slavery:

"I emphasize here the crucial legal distinction because I wish at the same time to deemphasize the economic one. [...] as a description of labour system, slavery and free labour are not particularly helpful in understanding

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<sup>95</sup> Examples of this policy include the liberalization of the slave trade (1789), the so called "comercio libre" (1765, 1778 and 1818), the lifting of restrictions on timber for the building of plantations (1815), the control over immigration and the full ownership of land, including the right to divide estates (1817 - 1819).

<sup>96</sup> Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. 21-22; Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio: complejo económico social cubano del azúcar* (3 vols., La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978), I, passim.

colonial Brazil. [...] Slave labour and free labour were not two separate worlds, but, rather, two points along a continuum, each with its advantages and problems."<sup>97</sup>

The largest group, that of the field slaves, made up a clearly contoured class in both countries. Sugar plantations needed a relatively big *gang* of field slaves and a small group of specialized workers for sugar production. The latter were exclusively men. They formed the slave elite of the plantations and enjoyed a series of privileges. Large sugar plantations could have 200 or more, mostly African slaves (*bozales/boçais*). The majority were African men, as long as high profits and the transatlantic slave trade could guarantee a constant supply of slaves. In 1862 Cuban plantations counted 174 men for every 100 women.<sup>98</sup> Given the decline of the Northeast Brazilian sugar industry, the trend towards a more equitable balance of the sexes linked to a process of creolization set in much earlier than in Cuba. Even the average size of plantations had shrunk considerably by the start of the 19th century: only 11,6% of all slaves in the sugar cane areas of Bahia lived on plantations with more than 100 slaves.<sup>99</sup> The average number of slaves on the coffee plantations of the Brazilian Southeast was also well below 100, in fact, 40% of the slave population belonged to planters with less than 20 slaves. This meant that in the Northeast, as well as the Southeast, the large majority of field slaves belonged to small or medium-sized owners.<sup>100</sup> In the newer coffee regions the superiority in numbers of the male population also declined, albeit later: in the district of Vassouras male slaves represented 77% of the slave population in the 1820's, and only 56% in the 1880's.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, pp. 252-253.

<sup>98</sup> Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba. The Transition to Free Labor, 1860 - 1899* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, p. 464, Table 6-18.

<sup>100</sup> Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro and Eduardo Schnoor (eds.), *Resgate. Uma janela para o oitocentos* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1995), p. 233.

<sup>101</sup> Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras. A Brazilian Coffee County, 1850 - 1900. The Roles of Planter and Slave in a Plantation Society* (2nd ed., Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p.78.



**Cuban and Brazilian Populations, by Status and Colour**

Cuba <sup>102</sup>	1774	%	1827	%	1862	%
Whites	96,440	56.9	311,051	44.1	729,957	53.7
Free Coloured	36,301	20.3	106,494	15.1	221,417	16.3
Slaves	38,879	22.8	286,942	40.8	368,550	27.1
Others	-	-	-	-	39,314	2.9
Total	171,620	100.0	704,487	100.0	1,359,238	100.0

Brazil <sup>103</sup>	1798	%	1817/18	%	1872	%
Whites	1,010,000	31.1	1,043,000	27.3	3,787,289	38.1
Free Coloured	406,000	12.5	585,500	15.3	4,245,428	42.8
Indians	250,000	7.7	259,400	6.8	386,955	3.9
Slaves	1,582,000	48.7	1,930,000	50.6	1,510,806	15.2
Total	3,248,000	100.0	3,817,900	100.0	9,930,478	100.0

Sources: See n. 102 for Cuba and n. 103 for Brazil.

Even within the mass of field slaves, equal in terms of the nature of their work, processes of social differentiation can be identified. Creole slaves always enjoyed better prospects of advancement than *bozales brutos*, who were despised by their masters.<sup>104</sup> How far this view was shared by all slaves, as is claimed by many historians, is debatable. Great respect for the *negros de nación* can be gathered from the work of Esteban Montejo as well as from other sources. Recent research allows the conclusion that a nucleus of long established slaves monopolized privileged positions to the detriment of newcomers (for instance in the disposal of the *conucos*, the small plots of land, which planters allowed slaves to have). Family ties and godparentage (*compadrio*) could maintain these small privileges over several generations.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Source: Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville, Fla.: The University Press of Florida, 1976). Not included in the 1862 census figures: "Negros emancipados": 4,521 (0.3%); Asians: 34,050 (2.5%); Yucatecs: 743 (0.1%).

<sup>103</sup> Sources: Colonial census from 1798, contemporary estimates for 1817/18, First National Census (1872). Taken from Carlos A. Hasenbalg, *Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979), p. 140.

<sup>104</sup> Internal differentiations and hierarchies in Cuba are described by García Rodríguez, "La estructura informal de la plantación" (in: García Rodríguez, *La esclavitud*, pp. 29 ff.).

<sup>105</sup> Robert W. Slenes, "Senhores e subalternos no Oeste Paulista" (in: Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, ed., *História da vida privada no Brasil: Império*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), pp. 267-272; Manolo Florentino and José Roberto Góes, "Paren-

The main difference in both countries was between the chattel slaves of the plantations and the groups of urban slaves, though the contrast may have been more pronounced in Cuba. In 1841 the so-called house slaves made up 45% of the slave population on the island, by 1862 their proportion had dropped to 21%. The proportion of slaves in the *ingenios* rose during the same time from 23% to 47%.<sup>106</sup> The urban slaves formed a large group in both countries, which was unique in its number and variety for the Americas. In 1835 about 27,500 slaves lived in Salvador (42 % of the city's population),<sup>107</sup> in Rio de Janeiro in 1849 almost 80,000 (38% of the population).<sup>108</sup>

The urban slaves, amongst whom Creole negroes and women were in the majority, carried out a variety of tasks: gardeners, domestics, porters, coachmen, peddlers, messengers and craftsmen. Slaves forced into prostitution by their masters must also count as part of this group.<sup>109</sup> Porters, coachmen and craftsmen often worked for a salary, which they had to hand over to their masters. Many owners of a few slaves financed their rentier existence in this way. These so-called "slaves for hire" (*negros de ganho* in Brazil, *negros alquilados* in Cuba) enjoyed greater freedom of movement and more opportunities to earn a *peculium* or even their liberty. If, on the one hand, they are seen to be a relic of the "patriarchal" slavery of the 18th century in Cuba (in contrast to the chattel slavery of the 19th century), they represent at the same time the transition to free labour. The porters in Salvador<sup>110</sup> even organized in

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resco e família entre os escravos de Vallim" (in: Castro and Schnoor, *Resgate*, pp. 139-164), p. 156.

<sup>106</sup> Instituto de Historia de Cuba (ed.), *Historia de Cuba. La Colonia: evolución socioeconómica y formación nacional de los orígenes hasta 1867* (La Habana: Editor Política, 1994), p. 403, table 51. For comparable Brazilian figures see Robert Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery, 1850 - 1888* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1972), p. 299.

<sup>107</sup> João José Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil. A revolta dos Malês* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986), p. 16.

<sup>108</sup> Mary Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808 - 1850* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 65.

<sup>109</sup> Sandra Lauderdale Graham, "Slavery's Impasse: Slave Prostitutes, Small-Time Mistresses, and the Brazilian Law of 1871" (in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33: 669-694, Cambridge 1991).

<sup>110</sup> João J. Reis, "A greve negra de 1857 na Bahia" (in: *Revista USP*, 18: 7-29, São Paulo 1993).

1854 a real strike. That is why some authors have termed slavery in the cities "slavery without overseers".<sup>111</sup>

All in all, it is quite clear that both in Brazil and in Cuba the tasks the slaves performed are of fundamental importance when it comes to classifying them *within* their status group: the unqualified workers on the plantations found themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy, the craftsmen, overseers and house slaves at the top. However, even here the status of the owner played an important part. Mary Karasch shows in her work on Rio de Janeiro how much the slaves of rich families benefited from their high standing: The domestic of a rich aristocrat enjoyed a far higher status than the house slave of an impoverished widow.<sup>112</sup> This differentiation can be assumed even amongst field slaves in Cuba, who at the time of the Abolition assumed the name of a prestigious last owner. In Brazil slaves on the whole also assumed the family name of their master.

In both societies slavery withdrew in the 19th century to the most dynamic sectors of the export industry: sugar areas in Cuba and coffee areas in Brazil.<sup>113</sup> The decline of slave ownership among the "white" or "coloured" middle classes ultimately weakened the foundations of slavery in society at large as these groups increasingly denied support to an institution in which they had no longer any personal interest.

#### 4.3 The free "Coloureds"

Was the poor free, who was neither slave nor slave owner, always "out of place" in plantation societies which defined themselves mainly by virtue of slave ownership? This, at least, is suggested by the bulk of historical works on Brazil and Cuba. Even though since the 18th century, the poor, non-slave owning freemen and women made up at least a third of the population, they simply do not appear in works such as Freyre's *Big House and Slave Hut*, nor in most of current Cuban historiography. This is partly due to the relative lack of archival sources, but

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<sup>111</sup> Leila M. Algranti, *O feitor ausente. Estudos sobre a escravidão urbana no Rio de Janeiro* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988).

<sup>112</sup> Karasch, *Slave Life*, pp. 68-70.

<sup>113</sup> In 1877, 57% of all Cuban slaves lived in Matanzas and Las Villas, areas with the most advanced technology for sugar production. The majority of them worked on rural estates. See Scott, *Slave Emancipation*, pp. 86 ff.; Knight, *Slave Society*, p. 22. Similar numbers can be found for the coffee zones of Brazil after 1870.

also because their role in society is being underrated. For Maria Sylvania de Carvalho Franco, author of a classic work on the poor freemen in Brazilian slave society, their position was characterized by the "dispensable character of the subject in the socio-economic structure".<sup>114</sup> Works about the poor freemen use the category "declassified", a term first coined by Caio Prado Junior, in order to indicate their marginal role in colonial society.<sup>115</sup> According to Laura de Mello e Souza, freedom had little value and brought this group few advantages in comparison with slavery.<sup>116</sup> Poor Freemen were treated as vagrants because of their uselessness to the slave economy, which again justified their social declassification. On the other hand, as in the case of Saco in Cuba, they could be portrayed, as dangerous, because they had become economically successful competitors of the "poor whites".

One problem lies in the contradiction between their heterogeneity as a group and the comprehensive group identity which their contemporaries ascribed to them and which was also partly taken over by them (compare Part 5). We must, therefore, distinguish here between more specific groups of poor freemen and ask to what extent they were "declassified" or how complete their integration into society was. A further problem is the already mentioned incongruity between the legal, racial and economic criteria, which led to differing group definitions, especially in the case of the free "coloureds". As slaves, freedmen and freemen often carried out the same tasks, on this level the boundaries between slaves and free coloureds became blurred. The boundaries between free-born "blacks" and "mulattoes" and between light "mulattoes" and "whites" were always diffuse in both countries, and classification occurred on the grounds of wealth and social standing. Though statistical research into wealth on the basis of inventories has established clear-cut income classes,<sup>117</sup> these classes can not, however, be correlated to well-defined skin colour categories.

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<sup>114</sup> "Caráter prescindível desse sujeito na estrutura sócio-econômica", see Maria Sylvania de Carvalho Franco, *Homens livres na ordem escravocrata* (2nd ed., São Paulo: Ática), p. 104.

<sup>115</sup> Caio Prado Júnior, *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* (22nd ed., São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1992), p. 281.

<sup>116</sup> Laura de Mello e Souza, *Desclassificados do Ouro. A pobreza mineira no século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1986), pp. 14, 222.

<sup>117</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia*, pp. 602-652.

The group of freed slaves (*horros/forros* or *libertos*) is the most clearly defined and because of the availability of sources also the most widely researched. Their qualifications, for example the trade learned while still a slave, as well as the conditions of freedom, were crucial factors in their social success.<sup>118</sup> The freedmen made up, however, only a small part of each generation of free blacks, or "coloured" population, concentrating in towns and cities.

Because of the disregard for manual labour by white immigrants and Creoles, almost all lower urban services, crafts and petty trade in Cuba were in the hands of blacks or *pardos* by the middle of the 18th century. Similar developments occurred in the Brazilian cities. However, more prestigious trades (*artes nobres*) were controlled by small white entrepreneurs. Coloured urban craftsmen occupied a clearly defined position in the models of social order and can definitely not be considered as "declassified". Talented "coloured" woodcarvers and sculptors could certainly gain prestige and wealth.<sup>119</sup> By far the largest group, however, was employed in less well-thought of occupations. *Negras horras* as itinerant street vendors of food, washerwomen, prostitutes and landladies in the world of soldiers and sailors were typical figures in the port of Havana which catered for fleets and galleons.<sup>120</sup> European travellers were equally impressed by the large number of black peddlars on the streets of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. These free "coloureds" and free "blacks" can only partly be seen as "declassified". Before the era of chattel slavery in Cuba they were counted as belonging to the caste of *gente pobre*, even though they often prospered economically, in relative terms. No sector of free coloureds as big or as socially important as this existed in any of the other plantation colonies in the Caribbean. This group developed into a status group of its own; some authors called them a coloured petty bourgeoisie.<sup>121</sup>

According to the available literature on Cuba only the subculture of the *negros curros* of the dock areas, the endemic rural bandits (though

<sup>118</sup> Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, *O Libertos: o seu mundo e os outros. Salvador, 1790 - 1890* (Salvador: Corrupio, 1988).

<sup>119</sup> See Marcia Cristina Leão Bonnet, *Entre o artifício e a arte: pintores e entalhadores no Rio de Janeiro setecentista* (M.A. Diss., Dept. of History, UFRJ, 1996), pp. 119-148.

<sup>120</sup> Marrero, *Cuba*, XIII, p. 156.

<sup>121</sup> Tomás Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba, 1902 - 1958. Apuntes para la historia de la lucha contra la discriminación racial* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1990), p. 17.

admittedly "whites" also formed a large part of this group), the landless and the members of the "hampa afrocubana" can be considered as declassified. In Brazil, the landless poor freemen fit this definition best; they were dependent on the "generosity" of the landowners. Smallholders on the frontier, who occupied land but did not hold any title to it, were also discriminated against by the elite and described as vagrants.

However, both countries also had a rural "coloured" elite. The middle class of *lavradores* represent a peculiarity of the sugar industry of Northeast Brazil: they owned slaves, who planted sugar cane for them, they sometimes owned land, but they had to have their crops processed at the mill of a *senhor de engenho*. Since the 18th century mulattoes were increasingly to be found in this group.<sup>122</sup> Yet again, *lavradores* were a very heterogenous group. Paternalistic (and often familial) relationships tied them to the *senhores de engenho*, and, in contrast to the mulatto planters of St. Domingue, no collective articulation of their interests took place in Brazil. Occasionally, "mulattoes" can also be identified amongst the rich planters of Brazil.<sup>123</sup> On the whole, to gain access to land was easier for smallholders and medium sized owners in those areas, where the land was not monopolized by plantations, that is, "Brazil B". In Cuba the owners of smaller properties (*fincas*),<sup>124</sup> tenants and squatters were also concentrated in the eastern part of the island, that is, Cuba B. As there were hardly any sugar plantations with chattel slavery and the diversified agriculture was dominated by smallholdings, "coloureds" had easier access to ownership here, especially in the mountain regions. In addition, the proportion of free blacks and coloureds was greater in the east than in the west. In western and central Cuba a group of small and middle sized cane farmers known as *colonos* developed since the 1870's; they were responsible for the actual planting and production of sugar cane. "Coloureds" also belonged to this group; the planter class began to become "coloured". As in Brazil, this group was not homogenous and it must have been impossible for any of these coloured *colonos* to rise to the status of owner of a sugar factory (*central*).

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<sup>122</sup> Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, p. 305; Vera Lúcia Amaral Ferlini, *Terra, trabalho e poder. O mundo dos engenhos no Nordeste colonial* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988), p. 221.

<sup>123</sup> Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (2 vols., London: Longman, 1817), II, p. 212.

<sup>124</sup> R. Duharte Jiménez, "El ascenso social del negro en la Cuba colonial" (in: *Boletín Americanista*, XXX, 38: 31-36, Barcelona 1988).

In Cuban towns and cities long emancipated "coloureds", who met the pre-determined social norms (marriage) could become house and land owners, as well as slave owners, for instance as employers at the harbour mole, as subcontractors in the building sector or managing employment agencies.<sup>125</sup> The most important representatives of this "coloured" elite, who had almost reached the status of a bourgeoisie, emerged in Havana and Matanzas in the liberal professions, as dentists, barbers, teachers and artists or owning tailoring, hairdressing and carpentry enterprises as well as laundrettes and funeral services. The harsh repression against all *negros* (including mulattoes) in 1844, however, interrupted the trend towards the development of a mulatto elite in Cuba until the 1860's and also allowed a group solidarity to develop among all "coloureds" in the sense of belonging to one *raza*.

In Brazilian towns and cities a number of mulattoes achieved the rise into the elite. We are able to present a series of relevant individual examples,<sup>126</sup> but because of the difficulties concerning sources and colour categories already mentioned, there exists hardly any research which traces the rise of "Afro-Brazilians" as a group. However, the main ascent routes that can be identified are inherited property ownership (through illegitimate children of plantation owners), academic careers in the liberal professions or in the civil service as well as trade and crafts. Mattoso underlines the higher social mobility in Salvador, compared to that of rural Recôncavo:

"It also was a hierarchical society, but the boundaries of the social groups which constituted it were not rigid, nor impossible to overcome for men of talent ready to accept the rules."<sup>127</sup>

The social rise of mulattoes (rich blacks were mainly classed as "mulattoes") in Brazil, however, always occurred at the cost of giving up their

<sup>125</sup> Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, *El negro en la economía habanera del siglo XIX* (La Habana: UNEAC, 1971), *passim*.

<sup>126</sup> Well known examples are the engineer and abolitionist André Rebouças, the philosopher and university lecturer Tobias Barreto, the doctor and founder of Afro-Brazilian studies Nina Rodrigues. An outstanding biography of the doctor and senator Alfredo Casemiro da Rocha has been written by Oracy Nogueira, *Negro político, político negro* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1992).

<sup>127</sup> Mattoso, *Bahia*, p. 601.

non-white identity. Viotti da Costa demonstrated this with the example of the writer Machado de Assis: it was a faux pas to call him a mulatto.<sup>128</sup>

Even though coloureds in Cuba, especially after 1878, could rise into the elite through journalism, writing or the liberal occupations, as had been the case with Martín Morúa Delgado or Juan Gualberto Gómez (to name only the most famous), the widest channel of mobility for mulattoes opened up in the Wars of Independence. Final figures for the participation of each "racial" component in the first War of Independence are not at hand, and this subject is the cause of a major political and ideological conflict in Cuba. It is, however, undisputed that especially mulattoes and free blacks, but also several former slaves, were able to rise to high and even highest positions of military power. Some commanded whole regiments, which were made up of whites and non-whites. Historians unanimously argue that during the second War of Independence Afro-Cubans formed the backbone of the Ejército Libertador Cubano. In 1898 they represented between 30 and 80% of the troops (depending on region and commanders) as well as 40% of the officer corps; 22 of 140 surviving generals were blacks or mulattoes.<sup>129</sup> Antonio Maceo, a mulatto from Oriente, became the symbol of this phenomenon; he rose to the rank of deputy commander-in-chief, in other words, he was second in the Cuban chain of command after Máximo Gómez, a white Creole from Santo Domingo.

Comparable military promotional opportunities did not exist in the Brazilian Empire. The formation of regiments along "racial" lines (blacks, *pardos*, Indians, mestizos) also led to the appointment of "coloured" officers in colonial times.<sup>130</sup> During the Independence period many "coloured" officers were in command of such units, rising to that position through merit.<sup>131</sup> The drastic reduction of the armed forces after

<sup>128</sup> Costa, *O mito da democracia racial*, p. 258. See also the well known episode in Koster, *Travels*, II, pp. 209-210.

<sup>129</sup> Michael Zeuske, "Die diskrete Macht der Sklaven. Zur politischen Partizipation von Afrokubanern während des kubanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieges und der ersten Jahre der Republik (1895 - 1908). Eine regionale Perspektive" (in: Michael Zeuske, ed., "Nach der Sklaverei. Grundprobleme amerikanischer Postemanzipationsgesellschaften", *Comparativ*, 7.1: 32-99, Leipzig 1997), pp. 34-35.

<sup>130</sup> Russel-Wood, *Black Man*, pp. 84-93.

<sup>131</sup> For Bahia, see Paulo César de Souza, *A Sabinada. A revolta separatista da Bahia, 1837* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987), p. 137, and Hendrik Kraay, "The Politics of Race in Independence-Era Bahia: The Black Militia Officers of Salvador, 1790 - 1840" (in: Hendrik Kraay, ed., *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics. Bahia, 1790s to 1990s*, pp.



1831 and the dissolution of the black and mulatto batallions, however, put a stop to this route for advancement. The National Guard, which was formed at the same time to replace the former militias, was seen as a citizens' army, in which the non-white lower middle classes were also represented. As long as officers were elected by their troupes, mulattoes theoretically still had a chance of promotion — and commissions in the National Guard of the Empire were seen as coveted status symbols by the elite. Most whites, however, did not want to serve under the command of a "coloured", and as early as 1834 the appointment of officers was taken over by district councils, later by the governors and the central government. This brought a quick end to the racial-democratic interlude which could have allowed for great opportunities for free "coloureds" to acquire social status.<sup>132</sup> Prominent mulatto officers from the former coloured militias were systematically not confirmed in their ranks when they requested to be integrated into the new units.<sup>133</sup>

The war with Paraguay (1865-70) brought about an expansion and a professionalization of the armed forces and led to an intensified conscription of free blacks and coloureds. In addition, volunteers were recruited for the batallions of "Voluntários da Pátria". A substantial part of these were slaves, whom their patriotic masters had made available to the army or the navy. Those who survived received the sought after letter of freedom; 2,900 in the town of Rio de Janeiro alone.<sup>134</sup> In contrast with Cuba, however, the Brazilian army was a regular one. The commander-in-chief, Duque de Caxias, who had already made a name for himself in repressing various slave and peasant uprisings, wanted to exclude blacks and former slaves from this process, as he felt that they were of no use to a modern citizens' army.<sup>135</sup> Many blacks and former slaves were decorated for their bravery and fierce fighting. The undermining of the social hierarchy feared by Caxias promptly followed, when the veterans,

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30-56, Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

<sup>132</sup> Jeanne Berrance de Castro, *A milícia cidadã: a Guarda Nacional de 1831 a 1850* (São Paulo: Ed. Nacional, 1977), p. 141.

<sup>133</sup> Many disappointed coloured officers in Bahia consequently joined the republican and autonomist Sabinada rebellion in 1837. See Hendrik Kraay, "The Politics of Race".

<sup>134</sup> Jorge Prata de Sousa, *Escravidão ou morte. Os escravos brasileiros na Guerra do Paraguai* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad/ADESA, 1996), p. 95. There are no central registers of freedom letters given and therefore we do not have exact figures for the whole country.

<sup>135</sup> Ricardo Salles, *Guerra do Paraguai: escravidão e cidadania na formação do exército* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1990), p. 147.

distinguished with military honours, returned home and showed themselves unwilling to continue to let themselves be treated as second class citizens. Ultimately, though, the corporative interests of the white officers won through, former slaves and blacks never achieved officer status. Even Candido da Fonseca Galvão, symbol of the black veterans of Rio de Janeiro and better known by the name of Dom Obá II d'África, resigned from active service as a sub-lieutenant (*alferes*).<sup>136</sup>

Differences in the regional economies, such as between the main plantations areas and the "B"-regions, naturally also led to important differences in social structure, racial composition and even "race relations". The social structure of the "A-regions" in Cuba changed rapidly between 1790 and 1830; "race relations" worsened so much even for free "coloureds" that they withdrew either to the towns or to the mountains and frontier regions.<sup>137</sup> A "black" land of freedom developed in Oriente, especially since the pressure of the central colonial administration was not so intense there. The contrast between Oriente and the West broadened, especially in the aspect of race relations, but also with regard to access to land. This overlapped partly with the rejection of the Western elite by the whites from Oriente.

The contrast between the Northeast and the Southeast of Brazil had already been noticed by Degler: "As a rule of thumb, the further south one travels in Brazil the more intense the degree of prejudice".<sup>138</sup> He even held this variation responsible for the differing results produced by sociological research into "race" relations, but preferred not to analyze this. These differences are neglected by research even today<sup>139</sup> or have been interpreted too much in the direction of tradition/modernity. Yet a recent study underlined the stronger racism in the Northeast!<sup>140</sup> The

<sup>136</sup> Eduardo Silva, *Prince of the People. The Life and Times of a Brazilian Free Man of Colour* (London: Verso, 1993). Further short biographies of black veterans can be found in Manuel Querino, *A Bahia de outrora* (Salvador: Livraria Progresso, 1955), pp. 79-80.

<sup>137</sup> García Rodríguez, *La esclavitud*, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>138</sup> Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, p. 99.

<sup>139</sup> This has been noted by Judy Bieber, "Race, Resistance, and Regionalism: Perspectives from Brazil and Spanish America" (in: *Latin American Research Review*, 32.3: 152-168, Austin, Tex., 1997), p. 168. Demographic and economic reasons for the contrast in "race"-relations between the Northeast and the Southeast, dealing mainly with the period 1870 - 1930, are discussed by Hasenbalg, *Discriminação*, pp. 121-149.

<sup>140</sup> Fernando Rodrigues, "Racismo cordial" (in: Cleusa Turra and Gustavo Venturi, *Racismo cordial*, São Paulo: Ática, 1995), p. 29.

opposition between a "backward" Northeast and a "modern" Southeast does not explain the differences, for instance, within the Northeast. Here the regional political cultures, the history of black organizations, their endeavours to achieve recognition as well as a series of other factors need to be further researched.

The comparison shows that, on the whole, the social structure of both countries was largely similar. Conflicts within the planter class seem to have developed more clearly between "Cuba A" and "Cuba B" to the extent that this opposition could be articulated as two competing political projects, "Cuba Grande" vs. "Cuba Pequeña" (see Part 5). Similar conflicts can be detected in Brazil, but the regional peculiarities of the periphery could not be combined to form the unified alternative of a "Brazil B" as the country was divided into so many different regions and sub-regions. More decisive was here the shift of the regional equilibrium from the Northeast of the sugar planters to the Southeast of the coffee barons.

Class hierarchies expressed themselves in both societies by means of racial categories, which, in turn, were used as metaphors for the class situation. The overlapping of models of social order, however, indicated neither the identity of the various systems, nor a true confusion of the hierarchies, even though contemporaries made use of the confusion for strategic purposes. The skin colour-continuum corresponded, to a certain extent, to a socio-economic continuum, in both societies the numerous urban middle classes filling the large gap between the wealthiest planters and the exploited field slaves. The continuum contained, however, major rifts which were difficult to bridge as they were substantiated by the strong segregation of both societies as well as a rising social inequality in the 19th century.<sup>141</sup> Class boundaries were ultimately based on racial and status boundaries as well as strict economic criteria.

Possibilities of advancement for free slaves and, more especially, the free coloured population can be identified both in Cuba and in Brazil. They were, however, restricted by status and racial barriers, so that it was only in exceptional circumstances possible to achieve the rise from the very bottom to the very top within one generation. The strong segmentation within societies led to the development of elites within each group. An important difference between both countries was the

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<sup>141</sup> This has been shown for Bahia by Mattoso (*Bahia*, pp. 525-652).

different weight of specific advancement possibilities. While the army represented an important avenue of advancement for mulattoes and blacks in Cuba, especially into the political leadership, this door was increasingly closed in imperial Brazil. Instead, numerous "coloureds" were able to make careers for themselves in the liberal occupations, in politics and in public institutions, a few of them even reaching the very top. The mulatto academic (*bacharel*) and the black officer can stand as archetypes for the different channels of social mobility in each country. In Cuba, on the other hand, the "disappearance" of the middle class mulatto elite from the public sphere between 1844 and 1860 contrasted with the quantitative weight of this group and its importance in the service sector, the crafts and journalism. This might be explained by lacunae in historical research, but could also well represent a closure of the "mulatto escape hatch", caused by the panic after the so-called uprising of La Escalera (1843-44), and conceived by the colonial administration and the Creole upper classes — a point which needs to be further looked into. In Brazil, on the other hand, the repression after the 1835 slave uprising in Bahia did apparently not affect the light-skinned mulattoes.

From a macro-perspective of the 19th century one can conclude that free coloureds in Brazil and in Cuba, despite economic, intellectual or military success, were still stereotyped as "uncertain elements" and therefore advancement could always be achieved more easily by relinquishing one's non-white identity.

## 5. "Race" and Ethnicity

Which ethnic identities developed in Cuba and Brazil and to what extent could they assert themselves? Which boundaries were ultimately decisive? Alongside the original identities of colonizers and colonized new forms developed since the 16th century. Though a common stereotype for Latin America in general and Brazil in particular describes the colonial history as an "encounter of three races", a closer examination reveals more complex processes of ethnogenesis.

The colonizers themselves originated from societies which were not only divided by class hierarchies, but also shaped by huge regional differences. Immigrants from all peripheral regions of the Iberian Peninsula were discriminated against as backwoodsmen, which contributed to

the strengthening of their group identity in the Americas. This was even more the case with immigrants from the Atlantic islands that had been colonized by Europeans. Families from the Azores and the Canaries were settled by the Iberian crowns as smallholders without slaves in the frontier areas of Brazil and Cuba, which put them on a par with poor mestizo peasants.

Canary Islanders and Galicians were for a long time regarded in Cuba as semi-slaves due to their poverty or the agricultural tasks they carried out. Brazilians also used *galego* as a derogatory term for Portuguese or Galician immigrants. However, the colonial situation in both countries led over generations to a progressive weakening of this discrimination and ethnic differentiation between those groups, which could all be deemed to be "white", evened out.

The first political indication of an ethnic differentiation of white colonists, or those regarded as whites, from the Iberian motherlands can be seen in the uprisings of the late 17th and early 18th centuries against traders, Jesuits or the colonial administration itself.<sup>142</sup> In historiography this emergence of regional identity was called nativism and often seen as a sign of proto-nationalism on the part of particular elites. Even during the Independence period this nativism was, because of the isolation of each region, probably more widespread than a more comprehensive nationalism, even though patriotic historians in both countries have tried to push national discourses to the forefront.<sup>143</sup>

Apart from these "whites" or "sons of the country" (which invariably referred to a particular region), colonial societies were constituted by a multitude of ethnic groups, separated by demarcations which have still not been satisfactorily explained. Common language usage induces us to talk generically of "Indians" or "Negroes" or even "Africans", who, in fact, did not exist in reality in this general form before their enslavement

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<sup>142</sup> In Brazil: Beckman-rebellion (Maranhão 1684), "Guerra dos Emboabas" (Minas Gerais 1708), "Guerra dos Mascates" (Pernambuco 1710); in Cuba: Veguero-rebellions 1717-1723, rebellions against the repression of smuggling 1729, 1735-37 und 1749.

<sup>143</sup> In Cuba the problem of nativism and regionalism has so far not been analysed, due to the hegemony of the national discourse, but see Louis Pérez Jr., *Cuba Between Empires, 1878 - 1902* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), p. 105-106; Michael Zeuske, "El papel de la región en las transformaciones cubanas: clientelas y movilización afrocubana en el hinterland de Cienfuegos", paper presented to the international conference "Cuba: El Centenario" at the Karls-University Prague, Prague, 13 September 1997.

or their subjection to colonial rule. Historians and anthropologists used, and sometimes still use, terms for the indigenous population of America as well as for displaced slaves (Tupi, Gê or Siboneyes for Indians; Sudanese, Bantus or Yoruba for Africans) which originated from European classification models, not original auto-denominations. They derived them from the pragmatic classifications of slave traders or used linguistic generalisations as a basis rather than ask themselves by which means those concerned identified themselves.

There can be no doubt that the subjugated Indian groups and the abducted African slaves were exposed to brutal exploitation and, at the same time, to the pressures of acculturation of the colonial institutions and the settlers. The question is, how effective was this pressure and what were its results?

Since Frazier, one line of interpretation sees the traumatic experience of enslavement, the crossing of the Atlantic and the consequential separation from family members and social networks as such a fundamental rupture, that Africans in the New World could only preserve fragments of their culture and identity for their new life.<sup>144</sup> According to Darcy Ribeiro these circumstances hindered "The development of nuclei of solidarity, which could have maintained an African cultural heritage". This forced slaves to "passively adapt themselves to the culture of the new society".<sup>145</sup>

On the other hand, research in recent years has shown that, given the structure of the slave trade (irregular arrival of slave ships, dominance of specific ethnic groups in each period), the distribution of slaves on individual plantations could never be carried out so systematically as to rule out the concentration of larger groups of slaves of one ethnic origin. This meant that even though plantation owners might have envisaged an ideal slave chattel, which, for safety reasons, was ethnically heterogenic and could only communicate by using the colonial language, in practice this was often not the case. The image of non-communication between African slaves and their "passivity" is opposed by the fact that

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<sup>144</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1939). For a summary of the arguments of the debate between Frazier and Herskovits, see Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture. An Anthropological Perspective* (2nd ed., Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 62-65.

<sup>145</sup> Darcy Ribeiro, *O povo brasileiro. A formação e o sentido do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995), p. 115.

many Africans spoke several languages or were able to learn other languages on their often months-long journey from their place of origin to the coast. A further counter-argument is provided by the close relationship between many African languages (for instance between the so-called Bantu languages from the Congo-Zaire-Angola region or between the languages of West Africa), which allowed for communication amongst African slaves of different ethnic origin without having to resort to the colonial language.<sup>146</sup> In the large ports the concentration of thousands of slaves in a narrow space made the preservation of their ethnic identity easier and encouraged its further development. Contemporary reports highlight the welter of languages in ports such as Salvador, Rio and Havana.

Structural similarities were not confined to the language of the slaves, but also extended into the realms of material culture and religion. The latter especially played a crucial role in the development of neo-African identities in Brazil and Cuba. In this context we must briefly look at the concept of "nation", as it was applied in the Atlantic area and the Colonies. Slave traders, government officials and missionaries in Africa began to use this European term to identify the ethnic origin of slaves. This had the pragmatic advantage of ascribing to each slave a series of distinguishing features, ranging from language to character traits, which would be of use to the buyers in the Americas. This naturally led to the development of common stereotypes, such as the fierce Coromantee, the depressive Congo, the Igbo with a tendency to commit suicide, and so on. However, these stereotypes also contained an element of historical truth, which highlighted different social, political and mental structures.<sup>147</sup> Slaves who had already been captives in Africa, who had been reduced to serfdom since birth or who were used as domestic slaves, surely experienced American plantation slavery in different ways to those of noble birth or who had been warriors and had been enslaved because of a lost battle or a raid.

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<sup>146</sup> For a discussion of the enslavement as a fundamental rupture of the slave's biography and in linguistic communication, see Ulrich Fleischmann, "Naciones Africanas en América: mestizaje de un concepto" (in: Matthias Perl, ed., *Akten zum Kongreß der Spanischen Karibik*, forthcoming).

<sup>147</sup> Stephan Palmié, *Das Exil der Götter. Geschichte und Vorstellungswelt einer afrokubanischen Religion* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 77, 108 ff., calls the "nations" of the slave-traders naive but empirically grounded "national character-concepts".

It has been repeatedly pointed out that these nations do not always correspond to historical ethnic groups. The Portuguese, for instance, used the term "Mina", which was derived from their trading post El-Mina in present-day Ghana. "Mina" encompassed slaves from different ethnic origins, who were sold through this port. The terms used for the Central African coast, such as Angola and Benguela, were similarly vague, referring to a specific kingdom or a whole region.<sup>148</sup> This inconsistency explains why each colonial power partly used different "nations" to classify the origins of African slaves. Despite the partial overlap of "nation" and ethnic origin of the African slaves, some of these designations have not only been preserved in the colonies, but began to express new, colonial identities.

This can be best illustrated by the example of the Yorubas of West Africa, the Nagôs of Brazil and the Lucumies of Cuba. In contrast to the idea often found in Latin American literature that Yoruba was a pre-colonial name for a clearly defined group of people, the term does not appear in African sources until 1780. The political structure in the Bay of Benin was characterized by hundreds of independent territories (usually a town with its hinterland), each with its own ruler (*Oba*). Most of these mini-states became tributaries of larger states, such as the kingdoms of Oyó, Ijebu, Egba, Ketu, and Ijesha. A dialect continuum and a common myth of origin (the belief in Oduduwa, father of all Yoruba-Kings) linked these realms to each other.<sup>149</sup> Ethnic identity developed on the basis of kin and the cult of ancestors in each of the territories or city-states, but was also determined through their allegiance to one of the dozens of the larger kingdoms. Inhabitants therefore used the names of these mega-states to identify themselves, for instance, Oyó, Egbado or Ijebu. The attachment of the individual mini-states to the larger realms changed, however, constantly because of the many wars, which led to territorial shifts, new relationships of dependence and payment of tribute. Consequently, the definition of individual ethnic groups during the time of the transatlantic slave trade can never be handled in a rigid way.

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<sup>148</sup> For an overview of the political structures on the Central African coast, see Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, pp. xiv, xxviii-xxxviii.

<sup>149</sup> Robert S. Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* (3rd ed., London: James Currey, 1988), pp. 7-10.



A modern Yoruba-consciousness developed from the middle of the 19th century because of decisive political changes, the growing influence of Islam and the activities of Christian missionaries, who created a standardised "pan-Yoruba" idiom, *koiné*, for Bible translations.<sup>150</sup> The term Yoruba, presumably from Hausa, first of all defined only Oyó. The designation Nagô, on the other hand, derived from the states of Porto Novo and Egbado, whose inhabitants called themselves Anagô. The Fon from neighbouring Dahomey used "Nagô" rather as a derogatory term for all Yoruba speaking groups, which was then probably adopted by the Portuguese in the same vein.<sup>151</sup> Like the term Yoruba, Nagô first of all defined a specific group, and the meaning was then expanded by neighbours to mean all those who spoke related dialects. The term Lucumí, which is so important in Cuba, seems to have been derived from an original nickname (Olukumi = my friend).<sup>152</sup> Sandoval used the term for different Yoruba groups as early as 1627.<sup>153</sup> Another explanation is, according to Olfert Dapper in his "Description de l'Afrique" (1686), the existence in the 17th century of a kingdom called Ulcami, or Ulcuma, which lay between Benin and Arder in West Africa.<sup>154</sup> Most scholars derive the term "Lucumí" from "Ulcami".

In Brazil and Cuba ethnic identities could, under favourable circumstances, survive without a total break with the African past. For instance, during the 1830's slaves still called themselves Oyo, Egba, Ijebu or Ijesha in Salvador. In the 19th century at least 13 sub-groups within the "Lucumies" can be traced in Cuba (Lucumí-egbado, Lucumí-oyo, Lucumí-iyebu, amongst others). At the same time they were identified by other slaves as well as by "whites" as "Nagô" or "Lucumies". As one of those arrested in the slave uprising of 1835 explained: "Even though they are all Nagôs, each one has his own homeland." Reis concluded

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<sup>150</sup> Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias, "Enquanto isso, do outro lado do mar ... os Arokin e a Identidade Iorubá" (in: *Afro-Ásia*, 17: 139-171, Salvador 1996), p. 140.

<sup>151</sup> Vgl. Smith, *Kingdoms*, p. 55; Luis Nicolau, "The Nagô 'Nation' in the Tambor de Mina: A Religious Tradition or a Political Identity?" (in: W. Rea, J. Picton and A. Oyo Tade, *Yoruba: Diasporas and Identities*, Eastern Arts Press, forthcoming).

<sup>152</sup> Smith, *Kingdoms*, p. 9.

<sup>153</sup> John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. xxiv; Sandoval, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*, p. 123.

<sup>154</sup> Olfert Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam: Wolfgang, Wesberge, Boom, van Someren 1686), pp. 303-322.

from this: "These famous 'nations' in reality included smaller identities, more profound and real".<sup>155</sup>

The survival of ethnic diversity among Africans also led to inter-ethnic conflicts, which substantiates the view that the Africans did not really make up a monolithic, united group. It is well known that many uprisings failed because only slaves or free Africans of a certain ethnic background took part while slaves of other ethnic origins not only stood by, but even actively collaborated with their masters. Inter-ethnic rivalries also played a role on the plantations.<sup>156</sup>

The more important aspect from a macro-historical perspective is, however, that slaves and their descendants re-appropriated the neo-colonial concepts of "nations" when torn between the pressures of acculturation and the continuation of African ethnicity. As can be seen from the quotation of the slave above, the concept of a Nagô-nation was readily used by slaves themselves — unfortunately it is hard to say from exactly which date onwards. However, Nicolau suggests "that it was primarily through linguistic identification, and then by realising their cultural and religious commonalities, that West Africans coming from neighbouring kingdoms and villages found a way to stress their unity by constructing a new collective identity".<sup>157</sup> In 19th century Salvador an adapted form of the Yoruba (or "Nagô") language developed into a lingua franca, which was also used by slaves of other ethnic origins. This new inter-ethnic solidarity expressed itself in the identification of organizations, such as certain Christian brotherhoods, *cabildos de nación* or *cantos* (Street corners of the town, where slaves and freedmen offered their services as porters or craftsmen), which were categorized as "Nagô" or "Lucumí".

For slaves, religion, together with language, represented a fundamental pillar in the construction of a neo-colonial identity. Slave religions developed during the course of the 19th century, which identified in the main with the most important colonial nations. In Brazil: Yoruba/Nagô,

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<sup>155</sup> Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, p. 190. See also the English translation, *Muslim Rebellion in Brazil: The 1835 Slave Uprising in Bahia* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 154.

<sup>156</sup> One important evidence for this can be found in Stuart B. Schwartz, "Resistance or Accommodation in Eighteenth-Century Brazil: The Slaves' View of Slavery" (in: *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 57.1: 69-81, Durham, N. C., 1977), pp. 75, 77; for Cuba see García Rodríguez, *La esclavitud*, pp. 30 ff.

<sup>157</sup> Nicolau, "The Nagô Nation".

Jeje/Fon, Bantu/Angola; in Cuba: Yoruba/Lucumí (= Santería), Congo/Bantu (= Palo Monte), Arará/Fon/Ewe (= Tumba Francesa). However, this process was not always homogenous. Firstly, different nations developed in the black regions of Brazil and Cuba because of the differing proportions of each African ethnic group in each of them, the variations of the slave trade to every port, as well as locally specific cultural and political developments. For instance, Nagô, Jeje and Angola "nations" emerged in Salvador, but Jeje-Mina, Mina-Nagô and Fanti-Ashanti in São Luís; Lucumí around Havana and Matanzas (here also Arará), but a superposition of Lucumí- and Congo traditions in the "new" sugar areas of Las Villas province.<sup>158</sup> Secondly, this formation of neo-African "nations" is not complete to this day, but is still undergoing constant change. Not one, but several Candomblé nations of Salvador claim Yoruba heritage: Ketu, Efa and Ijesha — clear proof of the longevity of the ethnic-religious identity of the old Yoruba kingdoms underneath the level of a pan-Yoruba nation. However, the trend lies clearly in the absorption of weaker lines by stronger ones. For instance, in the case of Salvador, Ketu asserted itself over the other two, just like the nations of Congo and Cabinda are becoming increasingly absorbed by Angola.<sup>159</sup> In Cuba the larger nations also increasingly absorb the smaller units.

A strict separation in ritual practice as well as mythology was understandably not easy to maintain, as can be seen by the many borrowings not only between individual Nagô or Lucumí nations, but also between Angola, Jeje and Nagô or Lucumí and Congo. The maintenance of these differences as well as the insistence on the "purity" of tradition of each nation is therefore to be understood as a re-invention of tradition.<sup>160</sup> It can be assumed that identifying with these neo-colonial nations increasingly lost its biological aspect because of the progressive creolisation of slaves after the abolition of the slave trade. Individual descent was not as important as the concrete practice of associations, which were ascribed

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<sup>158</sup> Roberto L. López Valdés, "Las religiones de origen africano durante la República neocolonial en Cuba" (in: *Del Caribe*, 5.12: 33-40, Santiago de Cuba 1988).

<sup>159</sup> Vgl. Reginaldo Prandi, *Herdeiras dos Axé. Sociologia das religiões afro-brasileiras* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1996), pp. 16-17. The development of "nations" in Candomblé and Santería in the 20th century is a broad subject in itself which can not be dealt with here.

<sup>160</sup> See Beatriz Goís Dantas, *Vovó Nagô e Papai Branco. Usos e abusos da África no Brasil* (São Paulo: Graal, 1988).

to specific nations. This ultimately led the concept of the nation to change from an ethnic and political meaning to a theological one.<sup>161</sup>

Blacks and whites could refer to their ancestry to define their identity. This was, of course, more complicated for the mixed population, who could not identify with one specific ethnic origin only and was often not accepted by the former. The first expression of national consciousness is therefore generally attributed to the mestizos and mulattoes. According to Darcy Ribeiro "they were Brazilians or they were nothing". The mulatto poet Plácido was one of the first intellectuals to link the concept of homeland with being Cuban: "I cannot leave my fatherland: I am Cuban".<sup>162</sup> Ethnic non-existence, it is claimed, forced the mulattoes to become Brazilians or Cubans.<sup>163</sup> That view is, however, rather too simplistic. As already shown, it was perfectly possible for these descendants of slaves, who were born in Brazil or Cuba, to maintain a more specific ethnicity. This could also be the case for "mixed" descendants, in other words, not "pure" black since the stereotypical external features (skin colour, hair, etc) determined the racial categorization rather than ancestry. Some black *cabildos* or societies established that they were willing to continue this tradition by giving their organisations programmatic names, such as the "Sociedad de instrucción y recreo de Naturales de Africa y sus hijos Nación Lucumí Nuestra Señora de Santa Bárbara. Antiguo Cabildo Africano", which was established in Cienfuegos in 1842.<sup>164</sup>

Biological ancestry ("pure" or "Mestizo") was not the most important factor for the descendants of Indians either, but rather the socio-cultural circumstances of their integration into colonial society. The brainwashing by the Jesuits and other orders was apparently so effective, that those "generic Indians", who grew up in Brazilian mission villages or in Cuban settlements considered "Indian", did not cultivate identities of specific Indian groups.<sup>165</sup> Despite this, a "tabula rasa" was not the

<sup>161</sup> Vivaldo da Costa Lima, "O conceito de 'Nação' nos candomblés da Bahia" (in: *Afro-Ásia*, 12: 65-89, Salvador, 1976), p. 77.

<sup>162</sup> Quoted in: Sergio Aguirre, "De nacionalidad a la nación de Cuba" (in: *Revista de la Universidad de la Habana*, 196/7: 42, La Habana 1972), p. 65.

<sup>163</sup> Ribeiro, *Povo brasileiro*, pp. 128, 131.

<sup>164</sup> "Registro de asociaciones (Colonia)", legajo 21, expediente 382, Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos.

<sup>165</sup> For the concept of "generic Indian" and the process of acculturation in the Amazon 1750 - 1900, see: Carlos de Araújo Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia, de maioria a minoria, 1750 - 1850* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988).

result here either, but instead the de-tribalised Indians were quite capable of merging original Indian and Christian beliefs into new, syncretic forms.<sup>166</sup> Not only many aspects of the material culture, which so firmly shaped the character of colonial Brazil (manioc flour, hammocks, etc.), but also myths and legends, ritual practices and forms of behaviour that influenced the everyday life of the "generic" Indian, were taken over by the mestizos. In Cuba all but a few Indians had died out by the middle of the 20th century, but similar processes can be observed here, especially in the cult of the "Virgen del Cobre", the main saint of the island.<sup>167</sup>

The existence of regional designations for these "generic" Indians, as well as their mestizo descendants, such as the *caipira* in the Southeast or the *caboclo* in the Amazon region, also shows that "half-castes" created for themselves a new identity. This was, however, not necessarily a Brazilian one, but related more to the historically grown regions, which were forced into the Brazilian state after Independence.<sup>168</sup> It can be clearly seen in the Cabanagem and the Balaiada, regional uprisings in northern Brazil in the 1830's, in which the strongly regional consciousness of the *caboclos* found its expression.<sup>169</sup> Descendants of "generic" Indians in Cuba did not form specific identities, even though the term "raza cobriza" was temporarily used for the Mayas, who were abducted from Yucatan and used as slaves in Cuba. The Cuban *indios* have been mainly linked to some, mostly remote, mountain regions, such as the "Indios de Yateras" from Oriente, with their identity remaining locally conscribed.

In the same way signs of a generic black consciousness — without any differentiation of African origin — can be identified in both countries, for which "Haitianism" became the first political expression (compare Part 6). The identity of creolised black slaves in Cuba is explained

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<sup>166</sup> The most important recent work on this topic is Ronaldo Vainfas, *A heresia dos índios. Catolicismo e rebeldia no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995).

<sup>167</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. Símbolo de Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente 1995).

<sup>168</sup> The regional or even local identity of Brazilians at the beginning of the 19th century is also emphasised by Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil. The Forging of a Nation, 1798 - 1852* (Stanford, Calif.: University of Stanford Press, 1988).

<sup>169</sup> Even Ribeiro recognised this: "A Cabanagem punha em causa uma forma alternativa de estruturação do povo brasileiro gestada entre os índios destrabalizados da Amazônia. Foi a única luta que disputou, sem saber, a própria etnia nacional, propondo fazer-se uma outra nação, a dos cabanos [...]" (*O povo brasileiro*, p. 319).

by the statement of Esteban Montejo. He talked nearly always of "the Cubans" as the others; his group is that of the generic "creolised negro" (*negros criollos*), even though the origins of his parents (Congo and Lucumí) are clearly defined.<sup>170</sup> He saw himself only temporarily as a "Cuban" during the War of Independence, 1895 - 1898.<sup>171</sup> He strictly contrasted his group of "creoles" with the old "*bozales*", who, on the one hand, were ridiculed because of their cultural non-conformity, but, on the other, were assigned a place of honour and seniority as "*negros de nación*".

How far could mulattoes develop their own positive identity, which would extend beyond a mere census category? The existing literature strengthens the impression that in Brazil the unstable, forever shifting definition of mulattoes between the two poles, black and white, prevented the emergence of such an identity or made it altogether impossible. Russell-Wood lamented with regard to the colonial era the "lack of over-all solidarity or cohesion" of the free coloured population as well as the absence of "epic figures, who would embody a collective social ideal".<sup>172</sup> In other words, the lack of mulatto leadership can be explained by the fact that potential candidates had been swallowed up by the "mulatto escape hatch". However, new possibilities for the development of an independent mulatto identity<sup>173</sup> opened up during the Age of Revolutions, as the example of "coloured" officers in both countries shows. During the Cuban Wars of Independence General Antonio Maceo developed into a mulatto leader par excellence and was seen as the representative of all coloureds, including blacks.

A series of newspapers appeared in Brazil in the 1830's which by their very name claimed to represent the interests of the mulattoes (*O Mulato, ou o Homen de Cor; O Brasileiro Pardo; O Crioulo; O Cabrito*).

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<sup>170</sup> Miguel Barnet (ed.), *Der Cimarrón. Die Lebensgeschichte eines entflohenen Negerknechten aus Cuba, von ihm selbst erzählt. Nach Tonbandaufnahmen herausgegeben von Miguel Barnet* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1970; english ed.: *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, translated by W. Nick Hill, New York: Pantheon Books, 1994); see also Michael Zeuske, "The Cimarrón in the Archives: A Re-Reading of Miguel Barnet's Biography of Esteban Montejo" (in: *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 71.3/4: 265-279, Leiden 1997).

<sup>171</sup> Barnet, *Der Cimarrón*, pp. 157 ff.

<sup>172</sup> A. J. R. Russel-Wood, "Colonial Brazil" (in: David W. Cohen und Jack P. Greene, *Neither Slave nor Free. The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies in the New World*, pp. 85-133, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 130.

<sup>173</sup> See also Skidmore, *Biracial U.S.A.*, p. 382.

The background of this "mulatto press" is unfortunately too insufficiently known to allow any firm conclusions. Flory highlights the instrumentalisation of the "race" issue by conservative and radical-democratic politicians, and even suggests that this press cannot be interpreted as a self-expression of mulattoes.<sup>174</sup> There was a mulatto press in Cuba as well, which at first even alluded to specific nations (*El Africano, El Carabali*), but after 1878 stressed through its names political or social problems instead.<sup>175</sup>

The term *Povo de Cor* (People of Colour) was often used by whites but during the Independence period in Brazil also by mulattoes as a means of self-identification; in Cuba mainly mulattoes used terms such as *raza, clase* or *pueblo de color* as a means of self-identification. The sources do not always allow to see clearly which groups were encompassed by these terms and whether they had always and in every region the same meaning. It can generally be assumed that it included the free blacks, but not slaves, at least not Africans. *Preto* (*prieto*) usually meant an African,<sup>176</sup> at least in Bahia, Havana or Matanzas and today it is used to define an "unambiguously" black person. Slaves born in Brazil or Cuba were generally called *crioulos* or *criollos* (*ladinos*). Free blacks born in Brazil or Cuba, on the other hand, were often classed as *pardos* or *morenos* ("browns"), their freedom and their status as Brazilians or Cubans protecting them, so to speak, from being black in the sense of *preto* or *negro*. That is why the term "coloured people" is not always synonymous with mulatto, but in fact more comprehensive. As a self-definition it could therefore bring all the resentment of non-whites to a common denominator, as it referred to all groups who suffered under the discrimination of the white elite or even all whites. At the same time it could positively express the emerging sense of a common identity. For Raimundo Gomes, the radical-democratic leader of the Balaios, for instance, *povo de cor* contained mainly *caboclos* and *cabras* ("dark skinned mulattoes"), *pretos* and *negros*, however, were not mentioned — but not

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<sup>174</sup> Flory, *Racial and Social Control*, p. 210.

<sup>175</sup> Deschamps Chapeaux, *El negro en el periodismo cubano en el siglo XIX* (La Habana: Ediciones R, 1963); Fernández Robaina, *El negro en Cuba*.

<sup>176</sup> See João José Reis and Eduardo Silva, *Negociação e conflito. A resistência negra no Brasil escravista* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1989), p. 96, und Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, p. 176.

expressly excluded either.<sup>177</sup> In Cuba mulattoes explicitly used the concept of *raza de color* or *pueblo de color* to express either pride in their own achievements and to totally repudiate racism against all Afro-Cubans (Maceo), to propagate the *blanqueamiento* of mulattoes (Morúa Delgado) or to reinforce a political claim to leadership of all non-whites, as was the case, for instance, with the Partido Independiente de Color (1906/07 - 1912). Juan Gualberto Gómez, on the other hand, explicitly used the term *raza negra*, which for him meant all persons of African ancestry, including the slaves emancipated after 1886.

Self-definitions as "Brazilians" and "Cubans" developed parallel to this, partly overlapping with the concept of "coloured people". It could be used by white Creoles as a demarcation both against Europeans as well as Africans (and under certain circumstances against "coloureds"). For the "coloured people" of Brazil the term Brazilian referred in the first instance to themselves. Hence, the loyalist Portuguese and Spaniards used the racist nickname of *cabra* (Brazil) and the term *negros* (Cuba) to denigrate patriots. This alluded to the supposedly mixed ancestry of the patriots, even of those who considered themselves "whites". At the same time it served to condemn the — in the loyalist view — subversive and unholy alliance of whites and "coloureds". The use of derogatory terms by loyalists could also bring about their reappropriation by the patriots. For some radical-democratic patriots, or *exaltados*, to accept to be a *cabra* could express the patriotic ambition to represent Brazilians of every skin colour.<sup>178</sup> In return, the Brazilians called the Portuguese *caitados* ("bleached").<sup>179</sup> The examples quoted from the mulatto press and the *exaltados* do show that racist insults such as *cabra* could be reappropriated by blacks and mulattoes. The collective attacks on the Portuguese organized by radical patriots in the 1820's and 1830's (*mata-marotos*, *lustros* or *quebra-quebras*) surely contributed in their own way to the

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<sup>177</sup> Compare the quote by Gomes in Matthias Röhrig Assunção, "Social Structure in Plantation Societies. A Comment" (in: Reinhard and Waldmann, *Nord und Süd*), p. 404.

<sup>178</sup> A patriot from Bahia even called the blond, blue-eyed prince Dom Pedro a *cabra*, since he was Brazilian-born. Quoted in Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Formation of a Colonial Identity in Brazil" (in: Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, *Colonial Identities in the Atlantic World, 1500 - 1800*, pp. 15-50, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 15.

<sup>179</sup> A couple of other derogatory terms were used in Brazil for the Portuguese: *mari-nheiro* (seaman, sailor), *pé de chumbo* (lead-foot) and *maroto* (scoundrel).



strengthening of ethnic divisions between Portuguese and Brazilians.<sup>180</sup> A similar reappropriation happened in Cuba with the Spanish nickname *mambí*.<sup>181</sup> Used at first to denigrate white Cubans because of their supposed connections with *negros* and bandits, it was quickly turned around by them to become a term of self-identification for all Cuban patriots, while Spaniards, in turn, were denigrated by identifying them with the caricature of the lecherous and avaricious *gallego*.

In their effort to erect boundaries between Brazilians and white Europeans, on the one side, and black Africans, on the other, patriot intellectuals raised the mythical Indian to become the symbolic ancestor of the nation. Patriotic Brazilians adopted neo-Indian names. Even a mulatto like Francisco Gomes Brandão called himself henceforth Francisco Gê Acaiaba de Montezuma.<sup>182</sup>

In Cuba, on the other hand, a conservative counter-model, the "siboneismo", developed, which created a mythical "noble" Siboney-Indian as forefather of the free smallholders (*guajiros*) and also of the old white families, whose ancestors had mixed with Indians at the time of the Conquista. Though also directed against the threat of Africanization of the island's population, it was less successful than its Brazilian counterpart. After the terror wave of 1843-44, (white) intellectuals defined only whites as "Cubans" on a national level. The emergence of a mulatto self awareness was cut short in 1844: thereafter no coloured dared raise his voice. The poet and freed slave Juan Francisco Manzano grew silent, Plácido was executed, and during the 1840's Cuba had the

<sup>180</sup> For a discussion of anti-Portuguese actions in Bahia, see Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, pp. 40-47; in Rio de Janeiro, see Gladys Sabina Ribeiro, "'Pés de chumbo' e 'Garrafeiros': conflitos e tensões nas ruas do Rio de Janeiro no Primeiro Reinado, 1822 - 1831" (in: *Revista Brasileira de História*, 12.23/24: 141-165, São Paulo 1991/92); and in São Luís, see Matthias Röhrig Assunção, *Pflanzer, Sklaven und Kleinbauern in der brasilianischen Provinz Maranhão* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1993), pp. 332-335, 363-368.

<sup>181</sup> Plural *mambises*. Following Joseph Smith, *The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and the Pacific, 1895 - 1902* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 4, note 4, this term derives from the name of a coloured officer, Juan Mamby, who fought 1846 in Santo Domingo. Other explanations relate it to a Bantu word ("mbi") for rebels or criminals or to an Indian term for those resisting Conquest (see Fernando Ortiz, *Glosario de afronegrismos*, La Habana 1990), pp. 301-302

<sup>182</sup> Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, "Vida privada e ordem privada no Império" (in: Alencastro, *História da vida privada*, pp. 11-94), pp. 53-54.

highest suicide rate amongst coloureds.<sup>183</sup> Only twenty years later did the first War of Independence create new space for the affirmation of non-white pan-Cuban identity for blacks and mulattoes.

The comparison between Cuba and Brazil shows that ethnic identities did not always develop along "racial" lines, but rather came about on a basis of cultural belonging. The development of new identities for Africans abducted to the Americas occurred on a level between "tribal" and "pan-African", as the example of the Lucumies/Nagô shows.

In Brazil the first signs of a separate "coloured" identity can be seen during the turbulent Independence period (1822-40). The changed framework after 1840 (subjugation of regional autonomy and radical-democratic uprisings, successful centralization) led, however, to its destruction, and discussion of this type of "racial issue" was not tolerated for a long time to come.<sup>184</sup> Social control was successfully strengthened in Cuba by driving back Haitianism and the simultaneous consolidation of the "Cuba-Grande-Project" in the west of the island. The beginnings of the articulation of a "coloured" identity can be detected at the same time as in Brazil, especially among the economically quite successful free coloured elite in the central cities of Havana and Matanzas.

However, the role of regionalism requires further thorough analysis. In the Cuban interior during the Wars of Independence whites and coloureds defined themselves mainly along the lines of historical "countries" (*países*) as *Habaneros*, *Matanceros* or *Villareños*. The old name for Oriente is "Cuba" and the masses of coloured and black *mambises* referred to themselves as *orientales* or as originating from "Cuba" (meaning from Oriente). In Brazil, too, this situation prevailed for a long time after independence and regional identity remained the strongest right up until the 20th century. On the whole, the importance of the national framework for the development of ethnicity has been clearly established. Therefore it remains for us to examine the relationship between the particular racial projects and the national models in both countries.

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<sup>183</sup> Michael Zeuske, "Schwarze Erzähler — weiße Literaten. Erinnerungen an die Sklaverei, Mimesis und Kubanertum" (paper presented at the 29th Deutscher Romanistentag, Jena, september 1997, publication forthcoming).

<sup>184</sup> Flory, *Racial and Social Control*, p. 216.

## 6. "Race" and Nation

In Cuba and Brazil the transition from colony to nation took quite different historical forms. However, comparable fundamental options can be established for this process. In this section we will attempt to compare these proposals and establish links with their inherent racial projects. The political projects contained statements on a series of problems, which were seen by contemporaries as fundamental decisions about the character of the emerging nation-state. The most important questions for our purpose are those of independence, or the form of the new state, political participation and economic development.

The idea of maintaining the colonial status only found limited support on the part of the Brazilian elite, and this essentially from the resident European Portuguese who profited from the colonial trade monopoly. But even a large majority of the European Portuguese could be won over to a conservative form of independence, which was symbolized by the transplantation of the Portuguese dynasty. Though after 1824 independence was no longer an issue to be debated, there were, however, until 1840 and then again after 1870 conflicting ideas regarding the structure of the nation-state. Empire or republic; centralism, federalism or confederalism were the different options, with the Empire standing for centralism, or a moderate federalism, and the Republic for all types of federalism.

In Cuba the status quo was maintained at first by the sugar elite, who formed an alliance with the neo-absolutist crown against Spanish and Latin-American political liberalism. In return, this elite obtained major concessions from the crown and practically held informal control of the island during the first half of the 19th century. When liberalism strengthened in Spain and the metropolis introduced new forms of hispanization and colonialism, the idea of annexation by the United States spread amongst the elites. After its defeat and the failure of new attempts at reform, revolutionary separatism extended after 1868 from Oriente claiming to represent the whole nation. It united radical supporters of independence, abolitionists, egalitarians, autonomists and annexionists under one roof, separation from Spain being the smallest common denominator.

The different concepts of the new state more or less corresponded to the different views about the best possible economic development and the degree of inclusion of the lower classes. The elites in Brazil and colo-

nial Cuba, with few exceptions, never questioned that the plantation should be the corner-stone of the economy. That is why up until the early 1860's many Cuban planters believed in the uncontrolled importing of slaves, the highest possible segregation of the slave from whites and freemen as well as the exclusion of the entire free coloured population from politics. These ideas established themselves between 1815 and 1825 in the west as the "Cuba Grande"-project (a Cuba based on big plantations and slaves, ruled de facto by the sugar elite). The moderate alternative, the "Cuba Pequeña"-project (a Spanish — or later independent — Cuba based on small holdings and free immigration of Europeans), was democratic-monarchical and was fed by a fear of "Africanization" through the "Cuba Grande"-model.<sup>185</sup> It did not fundamentally question slavery, but envisaged a gradual abolition as well as compensation for the owners. The "Cuba Pequeña"-project was later adopted in whole or in part by reformers and revolutionaries. In Brazil, the radical wing of the abolitionists around Rebouças and Nabuco were the first to formulate projects of agrarian reform accompanying the abolition of slavery — evidence of the absolute supremacy of the plantation ideal in the Imperial public sphere until the 1880's.<sup>186</sup>

Within the plantation paradigm, a broad debate about different reform options developed in both countries. Would African slaves be replaced best by free Africans or "coolies", or should European labourers be used and which would be the best labour methods? The choice of solutions — "coolies" were imported into Cuba, but not into Brazil — depended on a series of factors, not least the racial projects pursued by the relevant decision makers (compare also Consuelo Orovio's article in this issue). Profit-orientated planters were mainly concerned with the cost of labour, while groups linked to the state (Church, administration) and intellectuals also wanted to see the political and socio-cultural consequences taken into consideration. In Cuba liberal reformers around Saco especially feared an undermining of their planned "white Cuban nationality" through an "Africanization" of the customs and traditions of the

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<sup>185</sup> Michael and Max Zeuske, *Kuba 1492 - 1902. Kolonialgeschichte, Unabhängigkeitskriege und erste Okkupation durch die USA* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1998), pp. 212 ff.

<sup>186</sup> André Rebouças, *Agricultura nacional. Estudos econômicos. Propaganda abolicionista e democrática* (Recife: Massangana, 1988; 1st ed., 1883); Nabuco, *O abolicionismo* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988; 1st ed., 1883).

lower classes by the *negro bozal*, but in Brazil, too, there arose fantasies of fear, the dread that Bahia could become a "Land of Hottentots".<sup>187</sup>

In Brazil, however, because of the intensive transatlantic slave trade since the end of the 16th century and the specific conditions of the colonial society, a substantial black and coloured population of Creoles had developed by the end of the 18th century. By contrast, the bulk of the black population in Cuba around 1850 was African-born because of the relatively more recent introduction of chattel slavery and the late suppression of slave smuggling.

Racial projects surfaced most clearly in the debate about the extent of political participation, though even here it is not always easy to draw a dividing line between class and "race". The exclusion of slaves, former slaves, blacks and the lower classes in general was usually supported by the most conservative and hierarchical projects, while the idea of their inclusion tended to be advocated by more radical groups. The correspondence between these positions, however, was not absolute, since the need for political alliances required compromises. The "Cuba Pequeña"-concept, for instance, was initially supported by the colonial Church; the Spanish crown effected an almost radical reduction of the voting requirement (since 1892 only 5 Pesos) during the second War of Independence (1895-98) and Cuban separatism had to open up, after 1870, to radical abolitionism and the concept of universal citizenship of the French Revolution (voting rights for all men over the age of 21).

Even though a conservative authoritarian state and society were ultimately pushed through in Brazil (slavery, centralism, imposed Constitution, "Poder Moderador" of the Emperor reducing popular sovereignty), this model still had some liberal elements, which should not be underestimated. The Constitution of 1824 imposed by Pedro I allowed all free, Brazilian born persons, irrespective of skin colour, the basic rights of citizenship. Clearly discriminated against were, however, all Africans, slaves or free: they were regarded as foreigners, in other words, without rights and unwelcome as soon as they had obtained their freedom. In their case, naturalization was made so difficult, that no one would be tempted to apply for it. Because of independence, in contrast, European Portuguese became almost automatically naturalized as "adoptive Brazilians" (which after 1898 was also the case in Cuba with regard

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<sup>187</sup> Regarding the fear of "africanization" see Alencastro, *Vida privada*, p. 29; José Murilo de Carvalho, *Teatro de sombras. A política imperial* (São Paulo: Vertice, 1988), p. 52.

to Spaniards),<sup>188</sup> and this opportunity was always open to all European immigrants in the course of the 19th century.

Freed slaves (*libertos*), on the other hand, only enjoyed limited political rights. Brazilian citizenship was, however, granted to those who were born in Brazil.<sup>189</sup> They could, though, only take part in primary elections, which determined the electors (*eleitores*) for the second round of voting. *Libertos* themselves could not become *eleitores* or members of parliament.<sup>190</sup> The exclusion of the large majority of the Brazilian population, however, came about through the requirement of a minimum income of 100,000 réis. This can, on one hand, be used as an argument to prove that discrimination in Brazil was social rather than racial. It certainly also corresponded more to the liberal European models than the exclusion of free blacks on racial criteria. However, this regulation must be seen in conjunction with the other measures of discrimination already mentioned — of which the racial character cannot be denied. In any event, the conservative factions of the elite wanted to exclude both the poor and the "coloureds", the order in which this happened did not really matter to them.

Cuba's constitutional break with Spain came about in 1837 because the Cortes declared that the Spanish Constitution did not apply to the island, and its colonial status was therefore implicitly reaffirmed. In this context, the reformer José Antonio Saco formulated possibly the clearest segregationist project of the nation, excluding both Spaniards and Africans: "The Cuban nationality ..., is that, which is made up of the white race [and] which ... comes to about 400,000 individuals."<sup>191</sup> Since Cuba had in 1878, at the end of the first War of Independence, been provisionally placed under the control of the Spanish Constitution of 1876, it was the tax system, in force until the electoral law of 1890, which excluded the "coloureds" and all the poor from political participation. The Spanish state at least made them subjects, even though it became obvious through the massive promotion of white immigration that blacks were not welcome.

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<sup>188</sup> De la Fuente, "Zwei Gefahren, eine Lösung: Einwanderung, Rasse und Arbeit in Kuba, 1900 - 1930" (in: "Nach der Sklaverei", *Comparativ*, 7.1: 99-122, Leipzig 1997).

<sup>189</sup> Constituição do Império do Brasil, tit. II, art. 6.

<sup>190</sup> Constituição do Império do Brasil, chap. VI, art. 95-96. The legal difference between freedmen and freemen was only abolished in 1881 (Silva, *Prince of the People*, p. 121).

<sup>191</sup> José Antonio Saco, *Replica de Don José Antonio Saco á los anexionistas que han impugnado sus ideas sobre la incorporación de Cuba en los Estados Unidos* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Compañía de Impresos y Libreros del Reino 1850), pp. 54 ff.

After the second War of Independence and the Spanish-American War, that is, during the first US occupation (1899 - 1902), conservative and segregationist models had once again a strong hold on Cuba. The racism imported from the United States played an important part here, codified through the electoral reform of 1900. Voters had to fulfil one of the following criteria: literacy, property worth 250 US \$ or honourable service in the Liberation Army. Education and property criteria excluded blacks to a large extent from the political process, leading to the foundation of the so-called "dependent or neo-colonial Republic" of 1902. The US Secretary of War wrote that the aim of the electoral regulation was to exclude a "[...] great proportion of the elements which have brought ruin to Haiti and Santo Domingo".<sup>192</sup> "Coloureds" and ex-slaves had enjoyed more civil rights towards the end of the colonial period than during the first US American occupation. However, it was not only the imported racism, but also the racial projects, hegemonic at that time, of white leaders, mainly former separatist officers, which were responsible for this. They had become so firmly established, that they had only temporarily been "silenced" during the War of Independence. This combined with arguments over the heritage of the War, the definition of nationality as well as the position of each ethnic component within the Cuban state. The patriotism of the new elites after 1902 progressively "forgot" the ideals of equality held during the Wars of Independence. Only a few mulattoes and even fewer blacks, such as Martín Morúa Delgado, Juan Gualberto Gómez, Pedro Díaz or Lino D'Ou, were able to join the white political elite as "icons of participation". The real struggle over the citizenship of Afro-Cubans did not begin until after 1900. Before this date they were all "subjects" in the official perception of the Spanish crown, or "citizens" from the perspective of the Cuban patriots, who in their search for allies were striving for fraternity. The multi-ethnic alliances established during the War of Independence disintegrated after 1898, but were reactivated by liberals, especially those gathered around José Miguel Gómez in the fight for the presidency in the early days of the Republic; another factor working in this direction were the shared memories of the times of equality during the War.<sup>193</sup> De

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<sup>192</sup> Elihu Root to Leonhard Wood from Washington D. C., 20 June 1900 (quoted by Pérez Jr., *Cuba between Empires*, pp. 311-312).

<sup>193</sup> See Zeuske, "Die diskrete Macht der Sklaven" (in: "Nach der Sklaverei", *Comparativ*, 7.1: 32-99, Leipzig 1997).

la Fuente has pointed out, though, that some important indicators of formal "racial" inequality lost their importance during this period.<sup>194</sup>

In Brazil, counter-hegemonic models were most clearly formulated in the turbulent two decades after independence<sup>195</sup> and then again towards the end of the Empire. In the first period, integrative, radical-democratic models were represented by the left wing of the liberals, the so-called *exaltados*. They attempted to extend the suffrage, or, to be more precise, to extend the requirement of a minimum income of 100,000 Réis as much as possible, so that, for instance, soldiers could also vote. The liberal, democratic and decentralising reforms of 1831-34 contributed ultimately, however, to the growing political destabilization of the Empire, which led to many regional uprisings. The majority, therefore, supported a return to more moderate positions and united with their former enemies, the conservatives, in order to eliminate the threat of "anarchy". This actually led to the elimination of the pressure from the streets, which at that time was the most important form of political participation available to the lower classes. Elections in the Second Empire were anyway a farce, in which the ruling party could determine the outcome.<sup>196</sup>

The following two examples will illustrate how far alternative views of nationhood were prepared to go. During the Sabinada, a separatist revolt in Salvador, the capital of Bahia province, the rebels proclaimed in 1837 a provisional republic. The movement established a volunteer corps, to which slaves were also recruited. They were promised their freedom, half their pay being kept as compensation for their owners. However, only Brazilian-born slaves were recruited, while Africans were explicitly excluded.<sup>197</sup>

In the Balaiada-uprising in Maranhão (1838-41) smallholders, cowboys and cattle *fazendeiros* rebelled against the conservative provincial administration, accusing it of having sold out to the "Portuguese" and to be harassing "Brazilians". Appeals by the leader Gomes proclaimed that the same blood flowed through the veins of *caboclos*, *pardos* and whites.

<sup>194</sup> De la Fuente, "Race and Inequality in Cuba, 1899-198" (in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25: 131-168, London 1995).

<sup>195</sup> Fernando A. Novais and Carlos Guilherme Mota, *A Independência política do Brasil* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1996), pp. 67-80; Barman, *Brazil*, pp. 130-159.

<sup>196</sup> Carvalho, *Teatro de sombras*, pp. 139-161; Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in 19th Century Brazil* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 101-145.

<sup>197</sup> Paulo César de Souza, *A Sabinada. A revolta separatista da Bahia, 1837* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987), pp. 146-148.



The Brazilian people were to include everybody, but slaves were at first not mentioned, or, at least, were not explicitly included, and alliances with rebelling slaves were entered into only towards the end of the conflict because of rebel defeats.<sup>198</sup> Both examples demonstrate the limits of radical-democratic liberalism in the first half of the 19th century in Brazil.

Only radical abolitionism finally accommodated the slaves, Africans as well as Creoles, and included them into the nation. Joaquim Nabuco underlined that the descendents of slaves were as numerous as those of whites and concluded that: "the negro race gave us a people". He emphasized the contribution slaves had made to the Brazilian economy and defined abolitionism as a political movement, which wanted to "rebuild Brazil on the basis of free labour and the unity of the races in freedom".<sup>199</sup> Nabuco, however, wanted the movement to be restricted to free citizens, who were to bring about abolition "on behalf of the negro race". He no longer wanted to stir up the fears of the elite over a "black wave" and did not foresee an active role for the slaves in this fight. He was overtaken in this respect by other abolitionists, who attempted to incorporate the slaves' resistance into the movement. "Racial alliances" between slaves, free "coloureds" and the white middle classes developed with the more militant abolitionism of the 1880's.<sup>200</sup>

The prominent egalitarian José Martí made it clear shortly before the second War of Independence that the different races should be superseded by Cuban nationality.<sup>201</sup> Through the multi-ethnic alliances of the Wars of Independence the separatists slowly began to realize that "Cubans" really could mean more than just black or white. Martí's texts on these issues were, however, fairly unknown, and as an implicit programme of the separatists with regard to racial conflicts, it rather covered

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<sup>198</sup> Maria Januária Vilela Santos, *A Balaiada e a insurreição de escravos no Maranhão* (São Paulo: Ática, 1983), pp. 87-99; Matthias Röhrig Assunção, "Elite Politics and Popular Rebellion in the Construction of Post-Colonial Order. The case of Maranhão, Brazil (1820 - 1841)" (in: *Journal of Latin American Studies*, forthcoming).

<sup>199</sup> Joaquim Nabuco, "O mandato da raça negra" (in: *O abolicionismo*), pp. 36-37.

<sup>200</sup> Maria Helena Machado, *O plano e o pânico. Os movimentos sociais na década da Abolição* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ/EDUSP, 1994), pp. 243-244.

<sup>201</sup> Ramón de Armas Delamarter-Scott, "José Martí: su República de mayoría popular" (in: Consuelo Naranjo Orovio and Tomás Mallo Gutiérrez, eds., *Cuba, la perla de las Antillas. Actas de las I Jornadas sobre "Cuba y su historia"*, pp. 261-278, Aranjuez/Madrid: Doce Calles, 1994).

up than clarified the real problems of Afro-Cubans.<sup>202</sup> The aesthetic egalitarianism of Martí was to a certain extent "racially blind", as Ada Ferrer has shown.<sup>203</sup> The visibility of certain protagonists, such as the position of the mulatto Antonio Maceo as second in line in the Independence army, counted for far more.<sup>204</sup>

During the War of 1895 an unparalleled inter-ethnic mobilization developed in a plantation society where slavery had been abolished only ten years before. The "Ejército Libertador Cubano", embodying a new, brotherly "nation of Cubans" and with its black officers, was a unique institution in the Western hemisphere.<sup>205</sup> Under this perspective it was not so much the political proclamations by Martí, though their importance must not be underestimated, but the channel of social mobility created by the war, which should be seen as a kind of massive and unexpected "mulatto escape hatch" through which generals and colonels could acquire "white" reputations as long as they conducted themselves according to certain cultural norms. The position of these "black Libertadores" could not be undone completely even by the US-Americans during the first occupation (1899 - 1902).

Despite many difficulties a national model of "brotherhood" of all Cubans developed during the Wars of Independence, especially during the War of 1895 - 1898. It can be considered the model of a democratic alliance. However, the depth of Cuba's ethnic regionalism is demonstrated by the reluctance of the mainly coloured troupes from Oriente to leave their region and undertake the "invasion" of the west which was seen as essential by the military leadership. Oriente, the "Land of Freedom" for coloured smallholders, was perceived as being "black". This could also have a negative impact on other Cubans. The mainly black troops under the command of General Quintín Bandera, who had come to Santa Clara to support the invasion, were seen as threatening strangers from the "black Oriente" in a "white region" where white Creole officers set the tone.

<sup>202</sup> José Martí, "Mi raza" (in: *Obras Completas*, 27 vols., La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), II, pp. 298-300; "Manifiesto de Montecristi" (in: Pichardo, *Documentos*), I, pp. 483-491.

<sup>203</sup> Ferrer, *The Silence of Patriots*.

<sup>204</sup> Philip S. Foner, *Antonio Maceo: The "Bronze Titan" of Cuba's Struggle for Independence* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977).

<sup>205</sup> Michael Zeuske, "Estructuras, movilización afro cubana y clientelas en un hinterland cubano: Cienfuegos 1895 - 1912" (in: *Tiempos de América. Revista de Historia, Cultura y Territorio*, 2: 93-116, Castellón de la Plana 1998).

Could specifically black projects develop in the face of the oppressive hegemony of the "white" models? Haiti was, without doubt, the most important black-segregationist model in the first decades of the 19th century. Blacks and whites saw it as a general uprising of slaves, followed by radical abolition and the take-over of power by blacks and *pardos* as well as the elimination of the whites. It was not a homogeneous model, though, as Toussaint, Dessalines and Pétion stood for quite different political projects. The influence of Haitianism as a model can be seen especially during the Brazilian Independence period in Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, Bahia and Maranhão.<sup>206</sup> Yet, on the whole, its influence on the black population was rather marginal, and it was more often used by the elite as an excuse to impose drastic security measures.

The most relevant proto-national project of slaves and freedmen was articulated in 1835 by the *malés* (Islamic blacks) in Salvador. The *Malé*-uprising was based on ethnic solidarity as well as religious inspiration. Haussá und Nagô made up the nucleus of the Islamic conspirators, but they found support within the larger Nagô community and also within some other African ethnic groups. Brazilian blacks and mulattoes did not take part, as they were seen as having aligned themselves with the whites; the mulattoes as well as the whites were to be subdued and enslaved.<sup>207</sup> However, because of the substantial proportion of mulattoes and whites in the total Brazilian population, it was clear to many of the black revolutionary leaders that they would need allies. The instigators of the "Tailor's Conspiracy" (Salvador 1798) had already approached other groups and had couched their demands in the more universal language of the French Revolution.

No autonomous black political movement developed after 1835 until the 1930's, not least because of the harsh repression of the *malés*. Militant free blacks became involved in abolitionism, which, in fact, already counted a series of blacks and mulattoes amongst its most prominent leaders, such as the journalist and ex-slave Luis Gama, the engineer André Rebouças or the journalist José do Patrocínio. They did not, however, represent any segregationist projects or the formation of specifically black organizations, but backed the utopia of a possible future racial democracy.

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<sup>206</sup> Luiz Mott, "A revolução dos negros do Haiti e o Brasil" (in: *História. Questões e Debates*, 3/4: 55-63, Curitiba 1982); Novais and Mota, *Independência*, p. 71; João Reis, "O jogo duro do Dois de Julho: o 'Partido Negro' na Independência da Bahia" (in: Reis and Silva, *Negociação*), pp. 90-94.

<sup>207</sup> Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, pp. 148-150.

Haitianism played a more important role in Cuba than it did in Brazil. All conspiracies and rebellions between 1791 and 1844,<sup>208</sup> whose basis was black or coloured, were linked to this model, which is hardly surprising in view of the geographical vicinity. On the other hand, the manipulative use of Haiti as an "icon of fear"<sup>209</sup> in the rest of the Spanish Empire should not be overlooked in the context of the general paranoia of the drive for independence. All black political movements and projects in Cuba after 1794 were immediately placed under "Haiti suspicion", as is shown by the conspiracies of 1843, which justified the preventive terror of "La Escalera". Especially the links between the Cabildos of free blacks and plantation slaves which formed the basis of the Aponte-conspiracy (1812) were characteristically interpreted by one of the rare "mulatto" historians of Cuba, José Luciano Franco, as the first proto-national expression covering the whole of the island.<sup>210</sup> There was, without doubt, a proto-national and "black" project, which followed the "Haiti model". However, since the model in itself, was not homogeneous and no direct sources are available, and as Aponte mainly appealed to Lucumies, we should not draw any rash conclusions. The conspiracies of 1843 seem to have failed, amongst other reasons, because the free mulattoes and blacks could not reach an agreement with the black plantation slaves.<sup>211</sup>

Not until some forty years later, in the context of final abolition (1886), did the "Directorio Central de las Sociedades de la Raza de Color"<sup>212</sup> under the leadership of Juan Gualberto Gómez gain some

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<sup>208</sup> David Geggus, "Slavery, Wars, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789 - 1815" (in: David G. Gaspar and David Geggus, *A Turbulent Time. The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, pp. 1-50, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1997); Johanna von Grafenstein Gareis, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe, 1779 - 1808. Revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercoloniales* (México, D. F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997), pp. 197-298.

<sup>209</sup> Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, pp. 4 ff.

<sup>210</sup> José Luciano Franco, *La conspiración de Aponte* (La Habana: Publicaciones del Archivo Nacional de Cuba, 1963); José Luciano Franco, "Esquema de los movimientos populares de liberación nacional (1511 - 1868)" (in: José Luciano Franco, *Ensayos históricos*, pp. 11-44, La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974).

<sup>211</sup> Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).

<sup>212</sup> Ohilda Hevia Lanier, *El directorio central de las sociedades negras de Cuba, 1886 - 1894* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1996).

improvements for the black population with regard to its social status<sup>213</sup> and political participation. This, however, only represented the legal aspect of the efforts of Juan Gualberto Gómez. The other side of the Directorio's fight, illegal under colonial legislation, was represented by the fact that the organization was part of the movement for an independent republican Cuba, "with all and for the good of all". In other words, he accepted a project "deracialized" according to Martí, but which in reality represented a "white" hegemony. Explicitly ethnic projects of the nation could therefore not establish themselves in Cuba: the black (Aponte 1812) as well as the exclusively white nationalism of the period 1830 - 1860 failed.

The black neo-African cultures of both countries were increasingly criminalized; this was legitimized by reference to their "barbaric character". Large-scale efforts to expel former slaves from the nation by forcing them to emigrate failed, however. Nevertheless, there was quite a substantial repatriation of blacks to Africa.<sup>214</sup> This would indicate that not a few former slaves and freed coloureds resisted the integration into a white nation, in whatever way it was presented. A year after the abolition of slavery two free coloureds and several ex-slaves in Cuba submitted a project to form a colony for three to five thousand slaves on the west coast of Africa in order to bring Christian civilization to their "parents and relatives" there.<sup>215</sup>

## 7. Conclusions

Both in Cuba and Brazil fundamental developments in social mobility and structure as well as in the formulation of implicit and explicit racial projects can be identified during the 19th century. The comparison

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<sup>213</sup> Official documents were not supposed to use any longer the terms *morena/o* and *parda/o* and all citizen were entitled to be called *don* or *doña*.

<sup>214</sup> Rodolfo Sarracino, *Los que volvieron a Africa* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1988); Michael Zeuske, "Guinea in Kuba oder zurück nach Afrika?" (in: *Matices. Zeitschrift zu Lateinamerika-Spanien-Portugal*, 3: 6-9, Cologne, 1994); Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, *Negros, estrangeiros. Os escravos libertos e sua volta à África* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985).

<sup>215</sup> "Cuaderno de notas del expediente promovido por D. Francisco Cuevas y otros vecinos de Sta. Isabel de la Lajas, elevando instancia a S. M. la Reina exponiendo proyecto de establecer una Colonia en la Costa Occidental de Africa", Archivo Nacional de Cuba, La Habana, Gobierno General, leg. 60, no. 2641 (1887).

between both countries makes clear how important the social and political balance of power was to the forging of racial projects.

In spite of reform policies in both countries a series of bottle-necks can be identified, where the social and racial continuum broke down and opportunities for advancement were blocked. The reasons for these lay less in economic class boundaries than in legal, racial and cultural barriers. In both countries the stigma of slavery led even after emancipation to discrimination despite gradual improvements in the wake of the abolition process. Important bottlenecks on the path towards advancement were the ethnic-cultural boundary between Africans and Creoles and the racial boundary between *pardos* and "whites", which especially in Cuba was maintained by the whites by every means available.

The lifting of legal segregation did not necessarily lead to greater social mobility for those discriminated against. The example of the military in Brazil shows that colonial structures sometimes allowed for greater opportunities for advancement, even if within the rigid barriers of colonial caste or status. During the Empire informal measures proved to be efficient enough to exclude blacks from the officer ranks. In Cuba, on the contrary, the elite had to allow blacks almost equal participation in the military due to a different political balance of power. These icons of advancement achieved the highest possible visibility as a public, coherent non-white group, something their counterparts in Brazil never accomplished.

Race, ethnicity and nationality were three inter-dependent, though ultimately different variables, whose relationship must be viewed in a new light. The development of ethnic identities, in particular, questions the traditional idea of Afro-American "tribalism" and Euro-American nationalism, and must be analysed within a trans-national framework of the "Black Atlantic", as can be seen by the example of the Nagô/Lucumies/Yoruba.

While the longer tradition of the Brazilian plantation society allowed only a subliminally white definition of nationality, the more recent transformation of Cuba into a plantation economy as well as the leading role of Hispano-Cuban planters led to the creation of an explicitly white model of the nation. Because of the clearer contrast between Cuba "A" and "B" and the national question which during the 19th century remained unresolved, the social actors formulated their alternatives more clearly and, in many ways, more radically than in Brazil. The political stability of Brazil after 1840 led to the development of a consensus

within the elite. The policy of conciliation ("conciliação") became a basic element of the national political culture. The consensus allowed a better control of the possibilities of advancement for blacks and "coloureds" and also for general structural conditions through which black culture and identity could be kept within their barriers.

A less offensive defence of slavery was the price which had to be paid for achieving a consensus. In this respect the weight of moderate liberalism, to which large factions of the elite, including the emperors, adhered, is not to be underestimated, particularly in view of the assumption that liberalism represented only "misplaced ideas" in Brazil. Similar arrangements for the gradual abolition of slavery in both countries show that liberal reform policies could take place under very different political conditions.

Which racial projects were ultimately the most successful? The radical segregationist "Cuba Grande"-Project could guarantee a unique economic boom into the 1860's. After 1868, however, the "white" separatism of elites from the Interior had to adopt part of the reforms from the "Cuba Pequeña"-project as well as allowing room for a black military elite, which was quite unique in the Americas. A more moderate segregationist model established itself in Brazil during the Second Empire, which preferred to discriminate against the free "coloureds" (but not the slaves and freedmen!) by informal mechanisms. It corresponded more to the political culture of the country and could ultimately be more efficient.

The comparison between both countries shows how formative the political and social history of the 19th century has been for the development of racial, ethnic and national identities. Certain aspects of the concrete historical reality certainly corresponded to a social as well as a racial continuum. Like the famous racial democracy, however, they served as much to legitimize the existing structures or, at the most, as an utopia yet to be realized. Even if Martí's dream of the abolition of "race" through the creation of the nation has been to some extent realized in both Afro-Latin countries, they are, nevertheless, ruled to this day by elites who consider themselves to be white.