"'IT TENDS TO SET THE PRICE OF ALL OTHER THINGS': THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MANIOC FLOUR IN SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BAHIA"

by

ROLANDO J. RODRIGUEZ

(Under the Direction of CASSIA ROTH)

ABSTRACT

In this paper I argue that manioc farmers, traders, and consumers in Bahia exercised considerable leverage in the manioc flour trade, making them active participants in colonial governance projects. This was so – I contend – because manioc flour functioned as a type of currency alongside specie. More generally, by framing manioc flour as a baseline currency, I propose an historical interpretation of imperial sovereignty, colonial institutions, and markets that engages the subjectivity of Bahia's non-elite population.

INDEX WORDS: Bahia, Manioc Flour, Political Economy, Currency, Sovereignty

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents and the memory of my tía Leana.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On the eve of Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822, prince Dom Pedro convoked a constituent assembly in Rio de Janeiro to draft the first constitution of the newly independent Empire of Brazil. Supported by many liberals seeking to curb the power of the monarch, the assembly's draft constitution was vetoed by Dom Pedro in 1823 and replaced with one that gave ample powers to a hereditary constitutional monarchy. In the annals of Brazilian history, this document became known as the "Manioc Constitution" (*Constituição de Mandioca*).[1] This unassuming moniker referred to the draft constitution's system of indirect elections that based voter eligibility on income measured in *alqueires* (36.27 liters), a dry measure of manioc flour.[2] According to this system, parish residents wishing to serve as electors were required to have an income of at least 150 alqueires of manioc flour, while provincial electors were required to have at least 250 alqueires.[3] To be elected to office, deputies and senators were required to have an income of at least 500 and 1000 alqueires of manioc flour, respectively. The express purpose of this system was to ensure that political participation was restricted to the rural elite of the new nation, while excluding the lower classes, the enslaved, indigenous communities, and Portuguese

[1] Olindo Menezes, "A propriedade, o direito de voto e a 'constituição da farinha de mandioca,' *Revista do Tribunal Regional Federal da Primeira Região* 32, n. 1 (2020): 1-4. I want to thank Dr. William Summerhill for pointing out the existence of this moniker.
[2] *Annaes do Parlamento Brazileiro: Assambléa Constituinte 1823*. Tomo quinto (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Imperial Instituto Artístico, 1874). The alqueire was a dry measure of capacity. It was a rough equivalent of the English bushel, i.e., eight gallons.
[3] *Annaes do Parlamento Brazileiro*. 150 and 250 alqueires of manioc flour could feed between approximately sixteen and twenty-seven people in a year. The yearly ration of manioc flour per person was approximately nine alqueires.

merchants.[4] Notably, the eventual fate of the Manioc Constitution signaled the mutual influences between Portugal and Brazil that shaped the latter's independence.[5] However, at a more basic level, this document revealed the important history that manioc flour played in Brazil's colonial period, perhaps as important for the new nation of Brazil as any of the cash crops associated with its plantations.

Throughout Brazil's colonial period, European settlers, indigenous communities, and enslaved Africans consumed manioc on a widespread scale in the northeast, the Amazon, and parts of the southeast regions. Notably, Brazil's indigenous communities had domesticated manioc thousands of years before the arrival of the Portuguese. Along the way, indigenous peoples devised processing techniques for extracting the prussic acid that made manioc poisonous. Starting in the sixteenth century, when Portuguese settlers and enslaved Africans appropriated manioc cultivation in Brazil, this crop became the major staple of settlers, indigenous people, and the enslaved alike – becoming, in essence, the "bread of the land." However, despite its wide consumption, Portuguese settlers concerned with building and preserving status and harboring prejudice against indigenous customs, sometimes avoided public contact with manioc flour – even if they consumed the staple at their dinner tables. This was revealed, for example, by a petition from Salvador's municipal attorney, who in 1693 asked the local council to exempt him from distributing manioc flour to the local garrison.[6] In response, the

[4] Portuguese merchants had access to money and credit, but most did not own manioc farms. On the other hand, meeting the 150 alqueire requirement was difficult for the poorest of Brazilians, especially when we account for the usual investments in enslaved labor that accompanied the tending of a manioc farm. The 500 and 1000 alqueire requirement was well within the reach of large planters and landholders.

[5] For a discussion of Portuguese and Brazil relations after the latter's independence, see: Gabriel B. Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian world, c. 1770-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[6] *Atas da Câmara, 1684-1700*, v. 6 (Prefeitura do Município Salvador, Bahia: Documentos Históricos do Arquivo Municipal, 1949), 215–13. Henceforth, *Atas da Câmara*. Since the mid-seventeenth century, Salvador's municipal council was responsible for provisioning the local garrison. The duty of distributing manioc flour to Salvador's soldiers fell partly on the shoulders of the municipal attorney.

other members of Salvador's council (*câmara*) denied his request on the grounds that no other person would distribute manioc flour because of its "status" – an indirect reference to manioc's indigenous roots.[7] Only an express order from the crown, the officials reasoned, would force a person to distribute manioc flour.[8] Similar aversion was also expressed by the church in the sublime sphere of catholic transubstantiation. In 1707, the chief canonical document of the Bahian archdiocese ordered parishes to make sacramental bread from wheat rather than manioc flour.[9] Evidently, manioc flour's indigenous origins could not be reconciled with wheat's symbolic connections to bread and the body of Christ. Still, this open repudiation of manioc belied a society heavily invested in the consumption, production, and commerce of this major staple. In fact, the values that Bahians attached to manioc flour were part of larger social and economic developments that helped launch one of the most lucrative slave-based plantation economies in the Atlantic. In the past, scholars' exclusive concern with export crops, plantations, and gold obscured manioc's historical importance. In fact, historians of colonial Bahia were long impervious or dismissive of the diverse social relationships, productive activities, and trade networks that did not fit the framework of sugar, plantations, and slavery. However, as I will argue, manioc flour not only was important to the early development of Bahia's markets but also was implicated in the fiscal and monetary projects of state governance.

European settlers' simultaneous appropriation and repudiation of indigenous practices is a common theme in the history of colonial Spanish and Portuguese America. European settlers both disavowed and appropriated indigenous tobacco use in the early modern Atlantic, for

[7] *Atas da Câmara*, v. 6, 213–15.
[8] *Atas da Câmara*, v. 6, 213–15
[9] *Constituições primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia: propostas e aceitas em o Synodo Diocesano, que o dito Senhor celebrou em 12 de junho do anno de 1707* (São Paulo: Na Typographia de Dezembro de Antonio Louzada Antunes, 1853). https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/handle/id/222291.

example.[10] In Bahia, the administrative capital of colonial Brazil until 1763, this dynamic of "syncretism and disavowal" was also a characteristic of settler interactions with manioc.[11] However, although colonial officials and ecclesiastical institutions distanced themselves from direct contact with the crop, the colonial apparatus writ large was invested in the appropriation and regulation of regional manioc markets. In fact, during the onset of colonization in the early sixteenth century, Portuguese settlers in Brazil relied on a constant supply of manioc flour from indigenous communities, with the Crown directing Bahia's first captain-general in 1549 to establish a market – "one day or more a week" – for the exchange of manioc flour and other foodstuffs.[12] Some historians have framed these early exchanges in manioc flour as a barter relationship, with its subsequent breakdown explained by the rise of plantation labor.[13] However, the fact that manioc flour and slavery developed in tandem in subsequent centuries complicates this antagonistic framing of manioc trade and enslaved labor. Moreover, starting in the mid-seventeenth century, Bahia's public authorities became heavily invested in the regulation of manioc flour exchanges and regularly collected manioc flour as a tax. In giving manioc a public-sanctioned value, authorities incentivized the poor and middling manioc farmers engaged in slave-based manioc production and commercialization. Notably, manioc's public sanctioned value reinforced an already existing sphere of manioc flour exchange functioning at the local and

[10] Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 10.
[11] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*, 10.
[12] Alexander Marchant, *From Barter to Slavery: The Economic Relations of Portuguese and Indians in the Settlement of Brazil, 1500-1580* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1942). For a more general discussion of exchanges between Brazil's indigenous communities and Portuguese settlers, see Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas, 2005); John M. Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery, Settler Society, and the Portuguese Colonial Enterprise in South America*, ed. and trans. James Woodard and Barbara Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Jorge Couto, *A construção do Brasil: Ameríndios, portugueses e africanos, do início do povoamento a finais de Quinhentos* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1997).
[13] Marchant, *From Barter to Slavery*, see Chapter 4.

regional level. In Bahia, from the mid-seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, public authorities regulated the production and consumption of manioc flour, creating two distinct manioc producing regions (see Map 1 and 2). While royal and colonial authorities subjected each of these regions to price regulations, manioc farmers in each region proved intransigent on all accounts.[14] In fact, in this thesis I argue that manioc farmers, traders, and consumers in Bahia exercised considerable leverage in the manioc flour trade, making them active participants in colonial governance projects. This was so – I contend – because manioc flour functioned as a type of currency alongside specie. More generally, by framing manioc flour as a baseline currency, I propose an historical interpretation of imperial sovereignty, colonial institutions, and markets that engages the subjectivity Bahia's non-elite population. Furthermore, I argue that the history of manioc flour in Bahia challenges perspectives that view unmediated state control over measures, trade, taxes, and currency as the exclusive framework for imagining sovereignty.[15] Importantly, while this framework foregrounds the actions and thoughts of Bahia's non-elite population, the agency they exercised through their dealings with manioc flour did not necessarily translate into more just historical outcomes.

A Heuristic: States, Markets, and Political Economy

Before we begin our discussion, a few words on the concepts of state, markets, and political economy are necessary. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bahia – with a few exceptions – the state was relatively decentralized. This did not mean that the Portuguese crown

[14] Royal and colonial authorities set the maximum "market" price of manioc flour produced in the Recôncavo at 640 réis per alqueire. Manioc farmers in the neighboring captaincy of Ilhéus – immediately south of Bahia – were forced to negotiate manioc flour prices well below the legally sanctioned "market price." See discussion below.

[15] For a compelling account of money and currency as a governance project see Christine Desan, *Making Money: Coin, Currency, and the Coming of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Desan, "The Constitutional Approach to Money: Monetary Design and the Production of the Modern World," in *Money Talks: Explaining How Money Really Works*, ed. Nina Bandelj, Frederick F. Wherry, and Viviana A. Zelizer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 109–30; For a market-based account of money, see John Hicks, *A Market Theory of Money* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

or Bahia's royal administrators did not exercise authority. It simply meant that negotiation was an integral part of the metropole-colony relationship. Generally, in the following pages, when I speak of the state, I am referring to royal and colonial officials that partook in colonial life despite the many legal and canonical codes and metropolitan directives that guarded against such involvement. As one scholar has pointed out, royal and colonial bureaucrats in Bahia were such integral parts of society that one could speak of "the Brazilianization of bureaucracy."[16] In this regard, what one historian affirmed for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quito could also apply to Bahia, "social networks first constructed the administration and then influenced it. Not only did this system mirror the wider society but it was also an integral part of it. The administration was public because it belonged to the people of the city, not to a state."[17] In Bahia's case the "people of the city" referred to a small subsection of its inhabitants, with the majority of its population – the enslaved, indigenous communities, and the poor – remaining largely outside social networks of power. Moreover, once exercising power, those forming part of Bahia's royal and colonial administration eagerly sought out the favors of Portuguese authorities – preserving a constant dialogue between metropole and colony.

When I speak of Bahia's "markets" I refer to spheres of exchange, production, and consumption that were constituent parts of larger social and cultural environments – what one scholar has recently termed "embedding contexts."[18] The market in this sense did not refer

[16] Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sovereignty and Society in Colonial Brazil*, 321.
[17] Tamar Herzog, *Upholding Justice: Society, State, and the Penal System in Quito (1650–1750)* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 9; See more generally, Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).
[18] Colin P. Elliot, *Economic Theory and the Roman Monetary Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), Chapter 2. See also Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001). For perspectives that consider institutions in economic history while adopting a more neo-classical approach, see, among others, Stanley L. Engerman and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, *Economic Development in the Americas since 1500, Endowments and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

exclusively – though it sometimes did in the minds of some Bahians – to a sphere of supply and demand governed by a neutral price mechanism. Borrowing from one scholar, we can say more generally that Bahia's economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was a *function* of society rather than a structure.[19] Simply put, I take markets to be institutionally bounded spheres sensitive to non-economic factors. Thus, when I speak more broadly of Bahia's political economy, I refer to the interactions between administrative authorities and the embedding contexts of markets – each in constant dialogue with royal policy. While these notions are meant as tentative conceptual signposts, as a heuristic, these preliminary definitions can help us move towards a more thorough historical understanding of the state and markets in colonial Bahia by foregrounding the way spheres of human activity overlapped.

The organization of this paper follow a conventional path. I start with a discussion of the early historiography on the economic history of colonial Bahia (and Brazil) and its emphasis on sugar, plantations, and the export economy. This is followed by a discussion of the historiography on manioc flour and its importance to the development of Bahia's internal markets. As we will see, this literature challenged the plantation and export-centered perspectives of early economic and social historians of Brazil. After a brief discussion of the pre-colonial history of the cassava plant and its cultivation, harvesting, and processing – a legacy of thousands of year of indigenous knowledge – I will elaborate on the place of manioc flour in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bahia. This includes a discussion of its production, consumption, and the regulation of its trade – as well as its importance to the war against the Dutch West India Company in northeast Brazil from ca. 1624 to 1654. The second half of the paper transitions into a discussion of manioc flour's consumption as an important dimension of

[19] Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972), 76.

Bahia's early economic, social, and institutional history. In this sense, I tie the Crown's fiscal administration of manioc flour – its public sanctioned value - to the relative value of manioc flour and metallic currency – a calculation that was important to the majority of Bahia's population. After engaging the subjectivity of historical actors as consumers, I move on to a discussion of manioc flour's importance to Bahia's foodstuff market – suggesting a positive correlation between manioc flour prices and foodstuff prices more generally. I end with a discussion of manioc farmers and their use of manioc flour as a form of currency in their dealings with the Crown. Collectively, the claims I propose suggest that manioc flour offers new understandings of state-making, sovereignty, markets, and institutions that up to now have been dominated by the paradigm of grain-states.

Chapter 2

The Export Economy of Colonial Bahia: Slavery and Plantations

The interpretation of Brazil's economic history in terms of successive economic "cycles" defined by sugar, gold, and coffee, became a convention after the publication of Roberto Simonsen's *História Economica do Brasil* in 1957. The book framed each respective cycle as an epoch-defining export boom in colonial Brazilian history. These cycles shared some basic characteristics: resource extraction to satisfy European capital and markets, an influx of enslaved labor, the marginalization of internal productive activity and capacity, and economic growth defined by structural involution.[20] For Celso Furtado, these structural limitations in the economy had an important social dimension as well, for it led to "the substitution of general law by local custom," illustrated by – among other things – widespread demonetized transactions.[21] Other historians of Brazil's colonial period – some employing the notion of capital accumulation, while others focusing on the uneven relationship between peripheral and core countries – developed frameworks of economic development that cast productive activity outside the export sector as "decadent" and of little importance to Brazil's development.[22] Despite some differences in interpretative approaches, scholars that focused on export production argued that Brazil's colonial economy was segmented into commercial and subsistence sectors. The latter, whether it was undertaken by peasants on small plots of land or on sugar plantations by enslaved people,

[20] Roberto Simonsen, *História econômica do Brasil: 1500–1820* (São Paulo: Nacional, 1978).
[21] Celso Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil: A Survey from Colonial to Modern Times*, trans. Ricardo W. de Aguiar and Eric Charles Drysdale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 94.
[22] Caio Prado Jr, *The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil*, trans. Suzette Macedo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil;* Fernando A. Novais, *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial (1777–1808)* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1979).

was considered marginal and dependent on the fluctuations of the export economy.[23]

In the past, scholars framed the relationship between Bahia's subsistence and export economy as a zero-sum game.[24] From this perspective, favorable European prices for Bahian sugar and tobacco led to the expansion of export agriculture at the expense of the region's chief subsistence staple – manioc flour. This model was based on the following assumptions: during favorable European prices for sugar, Bahian planters reduced manioc flour production on their lands and channeled all their resources toward export production, resorting to local manioc "yeoman" farmers to feed the enslaved. This increased overall demand for manioc flour in Bahia. Sugar planters also increased production by bringing more land under cane cultivation, thus displacing Bahia's small farmers engaged in subsistence production. Lastly, the favorable international prices for sugar and tobacco encouraged small farmers with access to land to shift to export production. The assumptions of this framework, as Schwartz points out, led many historians to frame "export and subsistence agriculture, like their parallel productive forms of slave plantation and peasant household…as dichotomies – metaphors for slavery and freedom, dependence and autonomy, feudalism and capitalism."[25] Moreover, scholars often used this model as a substitute for a more empirically grounded explanation of Bahian subsistence crises during the colonial period. As we will see, export and subsistence agriculture were hard to untangle in practice – challenging the idea of a marginal and dependent subsistence sector.

By the late 1970s, scholars studying Brazil's colonial history and its "underdevelopment" through an exclusive focus on the export economy were confronted with more nuanced historical interpretations. Starting in this period, historians began paying more attention to agricultural

[23] Jacob Gorender, *O escravismo colonial* (São Paulo: Atica, 1992).
[24] See especially Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil*; Novais, *Portugal e Brasil*.
[25] Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 66.

activity that was not directly tied to sugar production and other cash crops. Referred to variously as the "Brazilian system" or the "peasant breach," these agricultural activities centered on enslaved Africans' production and commercialization of foodstuffs.[26] Among the foodstuffs grown by enslaved people on Bahian plantations, manioc was by far the most predominant. In fact, some enslaved Africans that grew their own food produced a surplus that they sold to their enslavers, to other plantations, or otherwise marketed in nearby towns.[27] Importantly, this did not make sugar plantations self-sufficient, though as some scholars have pointed out, this "Brazilian system" was seen and used by planters as a form of social control and a means of decreasing production costs.[28] For many planters, this system was worthwhile given that across colonial Brazil as much as 20 to 30 percent of total expenses on sugar plantations was accounted for by food provisions for the enslaved.[29] More important still, the system was a confirmation of the "penetration of commercial agriculture into the heart of the slave system."[30] In other words, historians demonstrated the occasional market opportunities available to enslaved people on sugar plantations, thus opening new lines of inquiry into the nature of plantation society.

One of the most important contributions to this new framework came from a scholar who focused on the relationship between sugar plantations and the development of colonial Bahian society writ large. Stuart B. Schwartz's historical analysis of sugar plantations, sugar export markets, and enslaved labor in Bahia was innovative in its depiction of both the reach and

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[26] Ciro Flamarion Santana Cardoso, *Agricultura, escravidão e capitalismo* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1979); Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*; Tadeusz Lepkowski, *Haiti* (Havana: Casa de Las Americas, 1968).
[27] Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels,* 83. The historiography on the "Slaves' Economy" is vast. See among others Justine Hill Edwards, *The Slaves' Economy and the Rise of Capitalism in South Carolina* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2021); Vanessa S. Oliveira, *Slave Trade and Abolition: Gender, Commerce, and Economic Transition in Luanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2021); Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2020).
[28] Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, 82–85.
[29] Schwartz, 82.
[30] Schwartz, 84

limitations of monoculture, planters, and export production. For example, Schwartz demonstrated how the power of sugar mill owners was conditioned by their dependence on merchant loans and tithe contractors. He also elucidated the role and experiences of enslaved people in the commercial production of foodstuffs and the wage laborers that kept sugar mills running. More generally, the author did not reduce the development of colonial Bahian society to a history of the plantation. According to Schwartz, while the sugar plantation served as a metaphor for colonial Bahian society, it did not explain its social structure. This argument encouraged other scholars to look outside the plantationist framework for a more comprehensive account of Bahia's social, institutional, and economic development.

Historians that turned their attention to the role of manioc flour in colonial Bahia highlighted its importance to the export economy and to the development of a wide range of productive and commercial activities in Bahia's domestic markets. In the late 1970s, agricultural and social historians, many of whom were in dialogue with Schwartz, challenged the idea that a distinct subsistence economy functioned on the margins of Bahia's export sector. Building on the notion of the "peasant breach," these historians inquired into forms of productive and commercial activity that existed outside the plantation. In particular, Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva's discussion of the legal regulation and monetized exchanges of manioc flour and its small-scale, slaved-based mode of production, challenged the existence of a subsistence sector defined exclusively by barter and a household economy.[31] Moreover, focusing on the period between 1680 and 1790, Silva argued that Bahia's colonial economy was "non-capitalist," a response to debates about the transition from feudalism to capitalism that shaped the

[31] Agricultural and social historians acknowledged the importance of household production, but they also emphasized how these household units were in turn part of larger networks and spheres of exchange and production. See: Maria Yedda Linhares and Francisco Carlos Teixeira Silva, *História da Agricultura Brasileira: combates e controvérsias* (São Paulo: Editora Brasilisense, 1981).

historiography of slavery and colonial Latin America.[32] Rather than categorize Bahia's economy as either capitalist or feudal, Silva foregrounded both the role of the state as a catalyst of economic activity and the private exchanges that created and transformed domestic markets. Using this framework, Silva accounted for the history of manioc flour in Bahia through the interactions of state regulation and market exchanges. Silva also uncovered the small and middling farmers engaged in slaved-based production. Notably, these farmers were conditioned by ambitions and concerns that both distinguished them from and tied them to large plantations owners.

In the early 1990s, after his pioneering work on Bahia's sugar plantations, Schwartz turned his attention to forms of social organization and modes of labor that coexisted with and were inextricably tied to Bahia's export economy. Drawing on official correspondence, censuses, and local registers from the eighteenth century, Schwartz demonstrated how manioc production in Bahia's inland bay area – the *Recôncavo* (see Map 1) – was undertaken by poor farmers and more generally that "the production of foodstuffs for the market by small farmers characterized the Bahian market."[33] At the heart of Bahia's manioc markets were small and middling farmers that owned between two and five enslaved people. As Schwartz pointed out, because manioc farming required little capital and could be undertaken on sandy, "marginal" soils, it was accessible to a wider section of Bahia's population. Throughout Bahia's colonial period, overproduction and the regulation of manioc prices was a problem for farmers. Their livelihoods were also jeopardized by harvest shocks due to heavy rains, disease, or prolonged droughts. Small producers were especially vulnerable to oscillations between exceptionally good and

[32] For a good introduction to this historiography as it pertains to colonial Latin American, see Steve J. Stern, "Latin America's Colonial History: Invitation to an Agenda." *Latin American Perspectives* 12, n. 1 (1985): 3–16.
[33] Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, especially Chapter 3.

exceptionally bad harvests. In fact, small manioc farmers depended on harvests that "were neither too good nor too bad" – an equilibrium that ensured some returns.[34] That manioc farmers depended on enslaved labor to increase productivity meant that "marginal" producers that could not buy enslaved people were at a disadvantage. Collectively, farmers dealt with the challenges of price regulations and overproduction by holding back supplies of manioc flour and artificially increasing prices, a practice colonial authorities could never entirely control.

The model that posited an opposition between Bahia's export and domestic economy lingered, however, until B.J. Barickman published his work on Bahia's sugar, tobacco, and manioc markets.[35] In his study of Bahia between 1780 to 1860, Barickman unequivocally established the interdependence between the export and domestic sector. Using post-mortem estate inventories, censuses, and official correspondence, and mixing qualitative and quantitative analysis, the author showed that during the period under study, the output and earnings of the export economy and domestic manioc production increased simultaneously.[36] Undoubtedly, sugar, tobacco, and manioc producers competed for land and productive inputs, with the latter usually at a disadvantage. Still, for the period studied, the author established a positive relationship between Bahia's export and domestic sector. Barickman also foregrounded the mixed husbandry and crop rotation that tobacco farmers practiced and that allowed them to undertake manioc production. In fact, manioc flour sales constituted a significant source of additional income for tobacco farmers.[37] Notably, while Barickman conceded that "prosperity in the export economy tended to increase prices of [manioc flour]," he did not see this a sign of an

[34] Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, Chapter 3.
[35] B.J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780–1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[36] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, Chapter 4.
[37] Barickman, Chapter 7.

inherent incompatibility between export and domestic production, only a call to "explore and analyze, for different regions of Brazil, the evolving relationship between production for export, the internal economy, and slavery."[38]

While the previous studies contributed to a better understanding of the specific interactions between Bahia's manioc markets and its export sector, Pedro Puntoni's history of manioc flour in Bahia foregrounded its fiscal and imperial dimensions. In his study of the *conchavo* contract – a system of forced purchase and sale of manioc flour established between Salvador's municipal council and manioc-growing regions in the captaincy of Ilhéus (see map 2) – Puntoni framed the history of manioc flour in the context of the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco (1630–54) and Portugal's War of Restoration (1640–88) against Spain.[39] During this period, the Portuguese Crown transferred the onus of paying and feeding Bahia's local garrison to Salvador's municipal council – a gesture signaling both a fiscal burden and increased municipal autonomy. In this respect, the author focuses on how Salvador's municipal council expanded its jurisdiction through the regional provision trade. Moreover, by controlling the "geographic distribution of manioc production," Puntoni argues that Salvador's municipal council subsidized sugar production by regulating manioc flour prices and protecting sugar-producing lands from the encroachment of manioc farmers.[40] In this sense, the author sees manioc production in seventeenth-century Bahia as part of a structural and pervasive system of expropriation that defined Brazil's relationship to merchant capital and European markets. Generally, while Puntoni's foregrounding of manioc flour's fiscal and governance dimensions is helpful, he stops

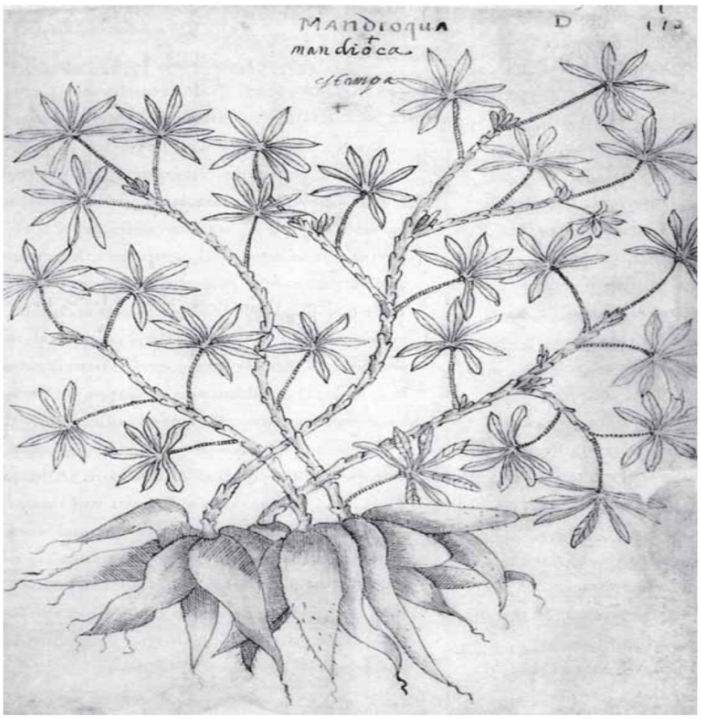
[38] Barickman, 189-194.
[39] Pedro Puntoni, "O Conchavo da farinha: espacialização do sistema econômico e o governo geral na Bahia do século XVII," in *O Estado do Brasil: poder e política na Bahia colonial, 1548-1700* (São Paulo: Alamedam 2013), 147-170.
[40] Puntoni, "O Conchavo da farinha." 147-170.

short of a thorough consideration of the open-ended dynamics that made manioc flour a fundamental part of Bahia's colonial history.

When we look at the historiography of colonial Bahia before the 1980s, we notice that scholars' exclusive focus on the plantation and the export economy led to the dismissal of internal markets as marginal activities limited by structural involution – an argument that itself needs reframing. This approach also subsumed discourses about production, consumption, and trade under the personalistic power of planters or the "primitive accumulation" of merchant capitalist relations. However, building on the work of Linhares, Silva, Schwartz, and Barickman, - and by revisiting Bahia's manioc markets and focusing on its actors and embedding contexts - I argue that we can get a more thorough understanding of how people in colonial Bahia thought about their own roles in the economy, and in turn, the meaning of economic activity in their own lives. Because manioc farming was accessible to poor and middling farmers – some of whom were formerly enslaved – studying manioc markets is also an opportunity to expand and revise our understanding of the constituent actors and discourses that helped forge economic activity in colonial Bahia. In this sense, I contend that a framework combining intellectual history and political economy can help elucidate the experiences and ideas of historical actors to whom manioc flour was both an indispensable subsistence staple and a source of value across various contexts. This approach connects Bahia's enslaved, poor, and middling population as consumers and producers to the colonial officials engaged in manioc flour regulation. To fully appreciate this point, a few words on the history of manioc is necessary.

Chapter 3

A Brief History of Manioc: Cultivation, Harvesting, and Processing



Source: *História dos Animais e Árvores do Maranhão*, Cristóvão de Lisboa, ca. 1625-1631.

When human beings turned the tuber of the cassava plant into a source of sustenance, they mimicked the physiological relationship inscribed in the plant's morphology.[41] Before being pulled from the ground, the tuber of the cassava plant serves as a storage root that allows it to withstand challenging conditions in between seasons. During each dry season the nutrients stored in the tuber allows the plant to continue growing until new rains allow for the recuperation of

[41] R.J. Hillocks, J.M. Thresh, and A.C. Bellotti, *Cassava: Biology, Production, Utilization* (New York: CABI Publishing, 2002). Cassava and manioc are interchangeable terms in popular parlance and in the scientific literature. Tuber and root are also interchangeable.

growth and the germination of new leaves. A ripe manioc root can remain in the ground for over a year before drying. Notably, when settler communities in Bahia appropriated manioc for their own ends, the plant's root became a source of sustenance with links to other more abstract forms of human value: money and currency.[42] However, this development in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bahia was a by-product of a much longer history of human interaction with manioc.

Scholars that study the prehistory of manioc tentatively place its origins in the Amazon Basin – more specifically in the lowland savannahs south of the Amazon rainforest in what are now the Brazilian states of Rondônia and Matto Grosso.[43] Some studies suggest that initial manioc cultivation began 10,000 years ago in the North Pacific coast of South America, although direct evidence of initial cultivation dates from 7,000 BCE on Peru's northern coast.[44] Much of manioc's prevalence in the Americas can be credited to its resilience. The plant thrives in poor soils and can be generally grown in sandy loams. It also withstands periodic droughts, is resistant to pests and viruses, and thrives despite the presence of weeds. Manioc cultivation – usually undertaken with stem cuttings – is successful in places that receive between 500 to 1,000 mm of annual precipitation, though it can withstand up to six months of periodic droughts.[45] The crop is susceptible to high concentrations of soil humidity and is therefore optimally grown in well-

[42] I am using money in this context to refer to an underlying credit relationship that can function through public or private institutions – widely construed – or through a mixture of both. It refers to both the trust and coercion that accompanies the historical development of a monetary system. Currency is an instantiation of money with its specific institutional, cultural, and material arrangements. For a long-term, cultural history of money, see the multi-volume collection: *A Cultural History of Money, v. 1-6*, ed. Bill Maurer (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); For a critical appraisal of a cultural history of money see Francesca Trivellato, "Economic and Business History as Cultural History: Pitfalls and Possibilities," *I Tatti Studies* 22, n. 2 (2019): 403–10; For a good introduction to neoclassical and other non-culturalist theories of money see Hasse Ekstedt, *Money in Economic Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[43] Christian Isendahl, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc (*Manihot Esculenta Crantz*): A Brief Synthesis." *Latin American Antiquity* 22, n. 4 (2011), 452–68.

[44] Isendahl, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc," 452-–68.

[45] Isendahl, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc."

drained soils. Generally, manioc cannot thrive where frost interferes with its minimum six-month growth cycle – though in general, most varieties require ten to twelve months to fully develop. Outside of occasional slash and burning, manioc requires little agricultural work.[46] In fact, manioc's labor-intensive stage begins when its root is processed into flour and other derivates with stone and wooden tools, shells, basket presses, and water.

Referred to by botanists and scientists more generally as *Manihot esculenta*, this nomenclature refers to a highly variable species with different concentrations of hydrocyanic acid, or HCN, a poisonous and potentially fatal chemical compound.[47] Generations of indigenous societies subjected varieties of manioc with high HCN levels – referred to as "bitter" manioc – to detoxifying techniques. European settlers who subsequently appropriated these techniques did so without any significant modification.[48] In fact, the only major technological innovation in the processing of manioc took place in the nineteenth century, when animal- and water-powered wheels used for grating and shredding substituted stone tools and shells.[49] Notably, while indigenous communities also consumed cassava with low levels of HCN – the "sweet" variety (*aipim*) – it seldom became a major staple.[50]

Generally, high yields make manioc an attractive crop. Figures from 1948 to 1952 indicate that manioc yields in Brazil equaled 14.2 million calories per hectare compared to 7.5 million for yams and sweet potatoes and 4.4 million for corn.[51] Reports from eighteenth-century Bahia indicate that in one day a person could cultivate enough manioc to feed two people for one

[46] William O. Jones, *Manioc in Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), Chapter 1.
[47] P.A. Lancaster, J.S. Ingram, M.Y. Lim, and D.G. Coursey, "Traditional Cassava-Based Foods: Survey of Processing Techniques," *Economic Botany* 36, n. 1 (1982): 12-45.
[48] Isendhal, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc," 456–57.
[49] Barickman, *Bahian Counterpoint*, 163–68.
[50] Isendhal, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc," 456.
[51] Jones, *Manioc in Africa*, 25.

year.[52] Collectively – as one scholar notes – these characteristics made manioc cultivation "a dominant feature of smallholder subsistence economies."[53] However, as we turn to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we will see that manioc was consequential for Bahia's general population beyond the subsistence sphere.

The cultivation of manioc in Bahia and other areas throughout Brazil varied little from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Manioc farmers and enslaved laborers cleared first-growth forests or secondary growth areas with iron axes and used fire to dispense with underbrush.[54] The resulting ashes were allowed to settle on the fields to maximize the uptake of magnesium, calcium, potassium, and other nutrients.[55] After a brief interval, farmers began to prepare the fields by inserting stalks cut from available manioc plants into dirt mounds (*covas*). These mounds facilitated drainage and reduced the likelihood of waterlogging and rotting during the heavy rains of the winter season.[56] In the southern Recôncavo region, farmers occasionally planted maize and beans in between the rows of cassava stalks, though always as secondary crops. Occasional weeding was necessary throughout the nine-to-eighteen-month growth cycle, and measures were taken to reduce the threat from caterpillars, ants, and cattle.[57] Barring heavy rains or extreme droughts, cassava stalks could grow to one meter and could produce up to ten roots. These roots were the basis of what became manioc flour.

The processing of cassava root into manioc flour was an elaborate process requiring significant time, energy, and expertise. The thatched, earthen floor huts where indigenous communities processed the cassava root – called *casas de farinha* ("flour houses") by the

[52] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 76.
[53] Isendhal, "The Domestication and Early Spread of Manioc," 454.
[54] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 163–68.
[55] Barickman, 163–68.
[56] Barickman.
[57] Barickman.

Portuguese – underwent few alterations in the aftermath of colonization. Manioc flour itself was the by-product of a series of steps that began with the scraping, washing, and grating of the root until a pulp was produced. A wooden press was then used to rid the pulp's contents of HCN. Frequently, a cylindrical palm-leave basket (*tupipi*) was used as a press by placing a weight on one of its ends. As the basket contracted from the pressure exerted by the weight, the prussic acid in the cassava pulp was expelled and collected in a trough. The sediments of the resulting liquid were used to produce tapioca – an important by-product with subsistence and commercial value in Brazil and in the circum-Atlantic.

The principal by-product of the cassava root – manioc flour – required one final step before being rendered for consumption and exchange. Once the root was pressed and the pulp sifted by hand, a coarse grain was produced. The grain was then toasted on a clayed or iron griddle that laid atop an open firewood hearth. This was done to expel any leftover cyanide and to add flavor. To prevent burning, individuals stirred the grain using clayed or wooden spatulas. Direct exposure to the hearth's heat and constant stirring made this a taxing process for the farmers, the enslaved, and dependents (*agregados*) involved in this task. Texture and smell helped those in the casa de farinhas determine when manioc flour was ready for consumption. Once ready, Bahians used manioc flour to prepare a porridge (*pirão*) by adding meat, fish, or shrimp stock. When no stock was available, those of little means added water to the flour, producing a high calorie porridge with little vitamins and low protein value.[58] While Bahians saw a wide variety of foodstuffs in their local markets – including jerked beef (*charque* or *carne do sertão*), fowl, shellfish, salted codfish, rice, beans, maize, palm oil, white sweet potatoes, wheat, vegetables, and fruits – many of these items were inaccessible to poor Bahians.[59] In fact,

[58] Barickman, 14.
[59] Barickman, 45.

the diet of Bahia's poor and enslaved consisted mostly of manioc flour and jerked or fresh beef – the latter usually of low quality.[60] Tobacco farms were an exception in this regard, as sources indicate that enslaved people on tobacco farms were also fed maize and beans.[61] During certain seasons, Bahia's poor consumed portions of sweet cassava (*aipim*), sweet potatoes, and beans.[62] While the region's inhabitants produced many manioc derivates – including different grades of flour, biscuits, and tapioca – the poor, the enslaved, and soldiers consumed mostly the coarse flour known as *farinha de mandioca.* This manioc flour not only fed the majority of the region's population but also helped forge the markets of one of the most important regions in the early modern Atlantic world – Bahia, the Bay of All Saints.

[60] Notably, all along Bahia's coast and in the region's many mangroves and wetlands, those desperate for food could sometimes acquire fish and shellfish. However, by the early eighteenth century, sugar mill demand for firewood had undermined Bahia's mangroves, thus diminishing their importance as sources of food for Bahia's most vulnerable population. See Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 107.
[61] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 47.
[62] Barickman, 48.

Chapter 4

Bahian Counterpoint Reconsidered: Manioc in the Bay of All Saints

Salvador da Bahia was the capital and administrative and religious center of Brazil from 1549 to 1763. In 1675 it became the seat of Brazil's only colonial archbishop, and the city's port was among the most important within the Portuguese empire and the larger Atlantic world for more than 250 years. Salvador's population was approximately 15,000 inhabitants in 1681, a figure that increased to 33,365 inhabitants by 1775 – roughly the size of Philadelphia on the eve of the American Revolution. As an entrepot where people and goods converged, Salvador hosted a transitory population of merchants, politicians, and diplomats from India, West and West Central Africa, Europe, and East Asia. The city boasted a Jesuit college that provided formal instruction to the children of Salvador's elite – offering instruction in Latin grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, natural science, and theology. A branch of the Santa Casa da Misericordia of Lisbon – a lay brotherhood with charitable ends and financial ambitions, was established in Salvador in 1549.[63] The Santa Casa provided social services for the poor and the promise of spiritual salvation for the wealthy.

The demographic breakdown of Salvador's residents reflected the city's trans-Atlantic ties. This was especially true in relation to Africa. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, Salvador's commercial ties to Angola and the Mina Coast via the trans-Atlantic slave trade shaped its demographic and cultural development. Between 1500 and 1875, approximately 1.3

[63] A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Bahia, 1550–1775* (London: MacMillan, 1968).

million enslaved Africans disembarked on Salvador's shores.[64] One scholar estimates that 45,882 enslaved people lived in Bahia around 1724, approximately 57 percent of the captaincy's total population.[65] In that year, of the total enslaved population, 12,132 lived in Salvador while 24,217 could be found in Salvador's inland bay area.[66] The Recôncavo – as the inland bay area was called – was the center of the region's sugar plantations, tobacco farms, and slavery – all served by a formidable network of rivers. While dirt roads made ground transport difficult throughout the colonial period, riverine transport was efficient, robust, and from the perspective of Bahia's authorities, hard to regulate.

Manioc farmers were concentrated in the Recôncavo townships of Maragogipe, Jaguaripe, and Nazaré (see Map 1) – though manioc farming could also be found on sugar plantations, tobacco farms, and other areas of the region.[67] Farmers in these townships were the principal suppliers of manioc flour to Salvador and the Recôncavo into the nineteenth century.[68] In the mid-eighteenth century, Nazaré featured a local market where 7,000 to 9,000 alqueires of manioc flour were bought and sold weekly. Located in Salvador's southern Recôncavo region, Nazaré enjoyed easy access to the region's many rivers – especially the predominant Jaguaripe river. Manioc farmers and traders in the area used these rivers to market their product in Nazaré, alongside other locally and regionally produced foodstuffs, ironware, and cloth. The Jaguaripe river in turn allowed traders to send manioc flour from Nazaré to Salvador – usually a day's journey by river. Other farmers and traders preferred to send manioc flour to Nazaré and Salvador on horseback, with one scholar estimating that as many as 1,500 horses carrying

[64] Slavevoyages.com.
[65] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, 88.
[66] Schwartz.
[67] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, Chapter 1.
[68] Barickman, 125.

manioc flour converged on Nazaré during the mid-eighteenth century.[69] Because manioc farmers in Nazaré, Jaguaripe and Maragogipe supplied Salvador and the Recôncavo, scholars often consider marketable output and shipment figures from each of the three townships collectively to estimate market shares for the latter two areas. Although inconsistent data makes a yearly breakdown nearly impossible, we can provide rough estimates by using shipment figures from each township to estimate the potential number of inhabitants fed in Salvador.

Salvador and the Recôncavo constituted an ample market for manioc farmers in Nazaré Jaguaripe, Maragogipe. Table 1 shows manioc flour shipments from the Recôncavo's three manioc-growing townships to Salvador. Despite the limitations of calculating for separate years, when juxtaposed to figures of Salvador's population, the manioc flour shipments from each township provide some dimension of the southern Recôncavo's importance to Salvador's provisions market.

TABLE 1

Estimates of manioc flour shipments from Recôncavo townships to Salvador, 1757-1786

Township	Year	Alqueires
Jaguaripe	1786	37,130
Maragogipe	1780	40,000
Nazare	1757	51,902

Sources: B.J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780–1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 90–91; Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, "A morfologia da escassez: crises de subsistência e política econômica no Brasil Colonial (Salvador e Rio de Janeiro: 1680–1790)" (PhD. diss., Universidade Federal Fluminense, 1990), 126–130.

Based on a yearly ration of nine alqueires of manioc flour per person, the combined 129, 032 alqueires of manioc flour from the Recôncavo's three townships could feed approximately

[69] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 76-79.

14,336 people in Salvador between 1757 to 1786. When we consider that Salvador's population in 1759 was estimated at 37,000 inhabitants and by 1780 had risen to 39,209 inhabitants, we see that manioc flour provisions from Nazaré, Jaguaripe, and Maragogipe fell significantly short of meeting the needs of Salvador's inhabitants. Nevertheless, we need to remember that these are rough estimates. We also need to be mindful of other factors that complicate attempts to calculate and interpret market share.

A few variables need to be kept in mind as we sketch a rough picture of manioc flour consumption and exchange in eighteenth century Bahia. For example, Salvador's elite consumed wheat flour, maize, and other manioc flour substitutes – easing demand for manioc flour, if only slightly. Also, manioc flour that was bought directly in the respective townships by private parties that travelled from Salvador was not necessarily registered by local officials as outgoing marketable surplus.[70] Structural factors such as "contraband" or "informal" exchanges were also significant and must be considered alongside the chronic harvest shocks caused by droughts, floods, and disease. Finally – and this is a crucial point – the inhabitants of the Recôncavo were consumers of manioc flour and in all respects competed with the inhabitants of Salvador for this staple. The importance of Salvador as a major urban entrepot notwithstanding, Bahia in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was generally rural and even as late as 1800, 80 percent of its population lived in rural areas.[71] In fact, throughout the colonial period, the Recôncavo was always more populous than Salvador. Moreover, as Table 2 demonstrates, the majority of its population was enslaved.[72]

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[70] The shipment figures cited above were taken from an official register of outgoing launches traveling to Salvador. These documents show that these shipments were made on behalf of people living in Salvador. Many in Salvador – including the transitory merchant population – travelled directly to the Recôncavo to purchase manioc flour. See Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 126–32.

[71] Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, 72.

[72] By comparison. the population of Salvador in 1724 was 24,993 – enslaved people comprising 48 percent of this total. See Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 51; Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, 88–89. Enslaved people usually

TABLE 2

Population of Recôncavo, 1724 and 1780

Year	Total Population	Enslaved Population (%)
1724	39,688	61
1780	102,853	50–60

Source: *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 88–89.

Notably, because children under the age of seven and indigenous people were not counted in eighteenth century ecclesiastical censuses – the source of these figures – we can consider the these conservative population estimates. However, even accounting for underestimation, the 102,853 inhabitants reported for the Recôncavo in 1780 would have created a demand for 925,677 alqueires of manioc flour – a significant share that outweighed Salvador's market.

The manioc flour produced in the Recôncavo's townships – as in most of Brazil – depended on enslaved labor. Most small farmers involved in the production of manioc had little or no access to capital – though a fortunate few were more successful. In his initial dealings, a manioc farmer usually relied on household members, poor rural laborers (*roceiros*) and dependents (*agregados*) to tend to his farm. With time, good fortune, and some capital, a manioc farmer could use his earnings to purchase enslaved people – either African or Brazilian-born. While figures are incomplete, some sources give us a sense of slaveholding among manioc farmers in the Recôncavo. For example, a 1781 ecclesiastical report from Nazaré indicates that twenty-seven manioc farmers owned a total of eighty-four enslaved workers (approximately

received between 0.647 liters of manioc flour per day (the equivalent of a quarter-alqueire per week) and 0.907 liters per day (one tenth of a quarter-alqueire).

three enslaved people per farmer). Eight years later, the 336 manioc farmers registered in Nazaré owned 1,000 enslaved persons (almost three enslaved people per farmer). The other two manioc-producing townships – Jaguaripe and Maragogipe – displayed similar characteristics though the average number of enslaved people per farmer is distorted by information drawn from sugar plantations and tobacco farms. Nevertheless, even in the early nineteenth century, sources indicate that 75 percent of farmers in Jaguaripe owned between five and eight enslaved people and only 25 out of 1,167 farmers owned more than 20. The latter subgroup most likely corresponds to those involved in sugar and tobacco production.[73]

Manioc Trade and War: Policies and Agents in Bahia's Market

Most of the products that entered Salvador's market came from the Recôncavo and some from further inland (*sertão*) via the region's many rivers. Throughout the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the port of Salvador featured a seaside market bustling with barrels, rolls, baskets, and crates of sugar, tobacco, hides, cotton, fruits, whale meat, fish, and of course, manioc flour. During the seventeenth century and until 1716, the portside market was supplied by small provision boats (*barcos vivandeiros*) commanded by private traders that made the trip from the Recôncavo's manioc-producing townships to Salvador. Salvador's market was mostly frequented by small local traders – including freed and enslaved black women.[74] Generally, Salvador's local commerce was subject to the licenses, standards, weights, measures, and prices established and administered by the city's municipal council.[75] On the other hand, wholesale purchases were conducted on a "floating shop" of smacks, launches, brigantines, and

[73] Stuart B. Schwartz, "Padrões de propriedade de escravos nas Américas: nova evidência para o Brasil," *Estudos Econômicos* 13, n. 1 (1983): 259–87; Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 151.
[74] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, see Chapter 4.
[75] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 223.

sloops that came from longer distances and generally anchored in Bahia's harbor.[76] These more distant traders provided Bahia with dried meats, wheat, fowl, and occasional supplies of manioc flour.

The war front established against the Dutch West India Company in Brazil's northeastern captaincy of Pernambuco changed the general structure of Bahia's provisioning trade in the early seventeenth century. Starting in the 1620s, Bahia became the home base for the military campaign that expelled the Dutch from Pernambuco in 1654. Provisioning Bahia's 2,100 soldiers and high-ranking military officers became an essential part of this campaign. For Bahia's authorities this meant regulating the manioc trade. To this end, in 1638, Bahia's governor-general and municipal council began to subsidize the logistics of the manioc flour trade from the Recôncavo to Salvador. Price regulations also became a common policy, though they were briefly interrupted by intervals of "free trade" when prices of manioc flour were allowed to float. As a rule, a maximum "market" price of 640 réis per alqueire was established for manioc flour produced by Recôncavo farmers.[77] Moreover, what was previously a lax regulation of the manioc trade, conducted mostly by private traders (*regatões*) and small provision boats, became in the 1630s a more stringently supervised trade, with Salvador's municipal council practicing a stricter enforcement of its regulations. A series of measures evidenced this new policy. In 1704, the governor-general and municipal council appointed and financed official traders (*mestres de embarcação*) to ensure more direct control of manioc flour trade from the Recôncavo.[78] In 1716, municipal officials ordered that goods brought to Salvador's market be sold first to the "people" (*povo*), and only subsequently to the "hawkers" (*quitandeiras*) or "hagglers" of the city – an

[76] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 72.
[77] The price of manioc flour was regulated until 1795.
[78] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 40. *Mestres de embarcações* could also work as private traders.

indirect reference to the freed, free, and enslaved Black women that ran Salvador's street side commerce.[79] Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bahia's governor-general and municipal council also tried to force sugar mill owners, planters, and trans-Atlantic slave merchants to grow manioc, often unsuccessfully.[80] Finally, a "Public Granary" was established in 1785, though as one scholar points out, this institution did not function like the granaries of Europe and the storehouses of Spanish America – where they interfered directly in the market.[81] In sum, all of these measures were focused on ensuring a sufficient and consistent supply of manioc flour to Salvador's general population at accessible prices. However, the task of providing manioc flour to Bahia's garrison would fall more directly on the shoulders of manioc farmers in the southern captaincy of Ilhéus.

The *Conchavo da Farinha*: Feeding Salvador's Garrison

With the onset of war against the Dutch, the townships of Camamu, Boipeba, and Cairu in the captaincy of Ilhéus (see Map 2) were subjected to a burdensome contract (*conchavo da farinha*) that forced farmers to sell a quota of manioc flour to Salvador's municipal council at a regulated price. These prices were below the "market" price that Salvador's municipal council established for the Recôncavo. In principle, the contract was renegotiated every three years, though the price of the sírio, a measure that fluctuated between 1.5 and 2 alqueires (54.4 and 72.6 liters, respectively), was seldomly established above 500 réis – the equivalent of 250 réis to 333 réis per alqueire. The original contract – established in the 1620s – stipulated that farmers in Ilhéus could sell manioc flour at market price after meeting their quotas, though authorities in

[79] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 41.
[80] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 42. Manioc flour was the principal provision on trans-Atlantic slave ships and voyages. Trans-Atlantic demand for manioc flour was significant throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Bahia's governor-general and municipal council tried to regulate the commercialization of manioc flour in Angola and the Bight of Benin until the late eighteenth century. See Christopher Ebert, "From Gold to Manioc: Contraband Trade in Brazil during the Golden Age, 1700–1750," *Colonial Latin American Review* 20, n. 1 (2011): 109–30.
[81] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 75–85.

Salvador seldomly observed this policy. While the conchavo was in principle an agreement between Bahia's governor-general and Ilhéus' townships, in practice it was administered and enforced by Salvador's municipal council. Like the Recôncavo, the manioc trade from Ilhéus to Salvador underwent significant changes with the onset of war against the Dutch.[82]

The southern-most point in the commercial network that tied Salvador to the manioc-growing regions of Ilhéus was the township of Camamu (see Map 2). A small port town with a population of 3,200 residents in the mid-eighteenth century, Camamu's size belied its importance as an important redistribution center for the manioc flour that fed Salvador's garrison. Today the 180-mile trajectory from Camamu to Salvador by car and ferry enjoys the comforts of paved roads and relatively safe navigation across Salvador's Bay. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, however, the traders and boatmen that transported manioc flour from Camamu to Salvador and the Recôncavo navigated a complex network of rivers and underwent a challenging course northward along Bahia's coastline. Boats of various sizes – launches, smacks, and pataches – were often shipwrecked as they attempted to cross the bar into the coastal town of Jaguaripe in Salvador's Recôncavo.[83] Until the mid-eighteenth century, most manioc farms in the region of Camamu were located on the banks of rivers that facilitated shipment to Camamu's port.[84] This dependence on riverine transport also characterized the townships of Boipeba and Cairu – the other two major sources of manioc flour in Ilhéus.[85] Notably, the same rivers and bays that facilitated the transport of manioc flour from Ilhéus to Bahia also played a role in the

[82] For a discussion of the mutual constitution of the state and the market in the context of the grain trade in early modern France, see: Judith A. Miller, *Mastering the Market: The State and the Grain Trade in Northern Europe, 1700–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a compelling rebuttal of Miller's arguments see Steven L. Kaplan, *The Stakes of Regulation: Perspectives on Bread, Politics, and Political Economy Forty Years Later* (London: Anthem Press, 2015).
[83] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez,"170.
[84] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 168.
[85] According to some estimates, the population of Boipeba and Cairu in 1757 were 2,417 and 2,200, respectively. See Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem: a Capitania de Ilhéus no antigo sistema colonial* (Ilhéus: UESC, 2011).

exacerbation of tensions among the different parties that vied for control over manioc production, consumption, and trade.

The profile of manioc farmers in Ilhéus was similar to their counterparts in the Recôncavo – with the notable exception that some farmers in Ilhéus paid rents to Jesuit landlords.[86] Estimates for 1724 indicate that of a total population of 5,578 inhabitants between the three townships of Camamu, Boipeba, and Cairu, 2,774 people were enslaved – many of the latter being Brazilian born.[87] The experience of manioc farmers in Ilhéus was conditioned by the conchavo contract imposed by Salvador's municipal council. As we saw earlier, manioc flour produced in this region was earmarked for Salvador's garrison. To this end, Salvador's municipal council prohibited farmers in the region from cultivating sugar, tobacco, and raising cattle. They also regulated who could purchase manioc flour in the region.[88] A regulatory apparatus designed to ensure the free flow of manioc flour from Ilhéus to Salvador was also established. Before the Dutch invasion and the establishment of the conchavo contract, private boatmen dominated the manioc trade from Ilhéus to Bahia. These traders generally purchased directly from manioc farmers in Camamu, Boipeba, and Cairu, selling their supplies in local markets throughout the Recôncavo and Salvador.[89]After the establishment of the conchavo, the boatmen were subjected to regulatory measures that required them to carry permits, safe-passes, passports, and receipts. Municipal authorities in Salvador and the respective townships issued and verified these documents and threatened violators with imprisonment and exile to Angola.[90]

[86] Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem*, 54.
[87] Dias, 47-48.
[88] Fleets travelling to India were allowed to purchase manioc flour in Ilhéus. See Dias, 187.
[89] The historiography on the manioc trade in Ilhéus before the Dutch invasion and the conchavo is thin. This is largely due to the fact Ilhéus' "vocation" as a manioc-growing region was established with the onset of the Dutch invasion and the conchavo.
[90] Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem*, 180.

Salvador's municipal council also appointed *mestres de embarcações* – traders who worked on behalf of the council but who also served as third parties to private transactions – as official traders of the conchavo. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, mestres de embarcações were a source of great distress for Salvador's municipal council, as many colluded with merchants and their legal representatives (*procuradores*) to divert supplies of manioc flour. In other words, serving as intermediaries between a principal (merchant) and an agent, *mestres* were parties to vast networks of informal exchanges.[91] Notably, immediately before the conchavo expired at the start of the eighteenth century, Salvador's municipal council appointed commissaries in the councils of Ilhéus' townships. These commissaries – sometimes paid via commission and other times provided with a salary – were charged with buying manioc flour directly from farmers and shipping supplies to Salvador's municipal council via mestres de embarcações or other officially pointed boatmen.[92] Generally, commissaries in Camamu, Boipeba, and Cairu could call on the military to ensure the free flow of manioc flour, though violence and direct coercion seems to have been used by officials with hesitancy.[93] Notably, like the mestres, commissaries also participated in extra-legal networks of exchange – enticed by the opportunities offered by Bahia's "informal" markets.

Once in Salvador, shipments of manioc flour were verified by a quartermaster (*mestre de campo*) and stored in warehouses kept for the garrison's provisions (*armazens*).[94] Rations of manioc flour – ¼ of an alqueire (9.07 liters) every ten days – was distributed to soldiers either by Salvador's municipal council attorney or a sergeant-major, with the former being generally

[91] For a compelling history of reputational systems between principals and agents in Geniza merchant networks, see Jessica L. Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Geniza Merchants and their Business World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[92] Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem*, 162.
[93] Dias, 97.
[94] Dias, 189. Scholars have devoted little time to the storehouses kept for Salvador's garrison. The primary sources I consulted for this project were also unhelpful in this regard.

favored by local municipal authorities.[95] As these descriptions point out, Bahia's authorities embedded the regulatory system "in the organization and the ordinary operations" of the manioc trade only partially and to a limited degree – allowing significant leeway for pre-existing networks of exchange and actors.[96] Stated differently, authorities did not entirely appropriate "manioc pathways."[97] Thus, the development of Bahia's manioc markets was not entirely a process imposed from above, but rather a contentious project between crown and non-elite subjects.

Manioc Flour and the State: Regulation, Sovereignty, and Governance

Throughout the colonial period, authorities implemented price and trade regulations through an ever-changing system of directives, measures, and officially appointed market inspectors (*almotacé*). However, farmers in the Recôncavo and Ilhéus generally controlled the agricultural cycle and processing of manioc. While Salvador's authorities sometimes arrested or exiled individuals that disrupted the free flow of manioc flour to the city, they seldom interfered directly in the operations of manioc farms and they never placed the casas de farinha under the direct control of public authorities.[98] The casas de farinha were an integral part of a farmer's household, and authorities generally upheld a farmer's right over the processing of manioc. The regulation of supply was likewise indirect. Though there is evidence that storehouses were kept for the garrison's provisions, Salvador's first public granary wasn't established until 1785. Even then, this institution never interfered directly in markets by manipulating supply, serving instead

[95] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 46-47.
[96] Steven L. Kaplan, *The Stakes of Regulation*, 15; James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).
[97] For a compelling history of grain and empires, see Scott R. Nelson, *Oceans of Grain: How American Wheat Remade the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2022).
[98] There are reports of Salvador's authorities sending – or threatening to send – military officials and soldiers to force farmers to harvest their fields, but judging from these documents, it seems as though officials generally preferred to avoid such drastic measures. See Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem;* Silva, "A morfologia da escassez."

as space for the supervised exchange of manioc flour, beans, wheat, and other goods.[99] Moreover, despite authorities' efforts to ensure timely harvests, farmers often made decisions based on current and prospective manioc flour prices. Unlike some early modern European societies, there was no separate policy in Bahia that regulated bakers – mainly because there were none.[100] Likewise, because Bahia's governor-general and municipal council set the "market" and conchavo price of manioc flour, there was no complex relationship between grain, measures, and price.[101] The region's regulatory scheme in fact belied a vast network of informal exchanges that gave manioc farmers, traders, and consumers leverage and flexibility in their dealings. In this sense, the existence of an informal sphere should caution us against making conclusions about the state's taming of Bahia's manioc markets – a claim we could be tempted to make if we look at the relatively stable, legal prices of manioc flour from the mid-seventeenth to the second half of the nineteenth century.[102] In what follows, I will show how this latter claim is further complicated by the way Bahia's population – including soldiers, militiamen, farmers, and some administrative officials – ascribed value to manioc flour through their engagements with taxes, specie, and price fluctuations.

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[99] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 73.

[100] The literature on the *annona* and assiz of bread is vast. For more recent works, see Jan de Vries, *The Price of Bread: Regulating the Market in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Buchanan Sharp, *Famine and Scarcity in Late Medieval and Early Modern England: The Regulation of Grain Marketing, 1256–1631* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Steven L. Kaplan, *The Stakes of Regulation;* James E. Shaw, *The Justice of Venice: Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy, 1550–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[101] Unlike certain early modern European societies, in Bahia the cost of transportation was paid directly by Salvador's municipal council to the commissaries in Ilhéus' manioc-producing regions. In certain areas of early modern Europe, the cost of transportation was embedded in the discrepancy between measures that increased as one moved away from the "heart of the market." In this system, the price of a unit of grain was held constant, while the measures increased as the distance from the market increased, the difference accounting for transportation costs. See Witold Kulda, *Measures and Men*, trans. R. Szreter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), especially Chapter 14.

[102] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, 76–96; Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 307; Alden, "Price Movements in Brazil," 349–50.

Chapter 5

The Many Values of Manioc Flour: Taxes, War, and Currency

Around 1701 the governor-general of Bahia responded to an official inquiry from the Portuguese crown regarding the feasibility and potential benefits of establishing a public granary for manioc flour in Salvador.[103] In his letter, the governor-general responded that unlike "the bread of Europe," Salvador's major staple was neither harvested in specific seasons nor stored in designated places. In Bahia – he noted – manioc was harvested year-round. Moreover, considering certain varieties of manioc flour could only be preserved for six months, the official thought it best to keep manioc in its "natural store." This strategy would allow farmers to preserve ripe manioc tubers within the soil for at least a year and the resulting manioc flour could be kept for an additional six to eighteen months. Thus, for Bahia's governor-general, the calculus was clear – and in his response to the crown, he was unequivocal about the best way to maximize manioc's value to the colony.

Notably, the governor-general's letter was written in a period of general concern over a potential invasion of Salvador by hostile European forces. As the letter made clear, Salvador's authorities considered how to optimize manioc's value over time – especially during periods of potential invasion. In this sense, the governor-general's letter is not simply an acknowledgement of manioc as Bahia's major staple – one fulfilling immediate subsistence needs. This document in fact also suggests that authorities were thinking about manioc as a store of value. Moreover, the governor-general's calculus demonstrates how Bahia's authorities thought about and

[103] Papeis Vários, t. 27 – Cod. 1087 (K VIII Ik), fl. 381-383, *Os Manuscritos do Arquivo da Casa de Cadaval Respeitantes ao Brasil*, V. 2, Coimbra, 1995.

managed future risk through their understanding of manioc's agricultural cycle. This public acknowledgement of manioc's value foregrounded one of the many "embedding contexts" through which manioc flour circulated. Simply put, these embedding contexts were the material and symbolic relationships through which authorities, farmers, and consumers ascribed value to manioc flour. The governor-general's letter foregrounds a fiscal-military context, one that gave manioc flour a state-sanctioned value that co-existed with other spheres of exchange at the local and regional level.

'Public' Credit and Manioc Flour

Portuguese royal authorities and Bahia's colonial administrators used manioc's natural storehouse to manage risk and articulate military strategy. However, the importance of manioc flour for royal and colonial administrators was perhaps clearest in its fiscal dimension.[104] During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the tithe was one of the most important sources of revenue for Bahia's royal treasury.[105] In fact, in 1680, Bahia's tithe contract constituted approximately 71 percent of total crown revenues in the Portuguese Atlantic. Though customs duties became a more important source of revenue for the crown in the mid-eighteenth century; as late as 1730 the total value of tithe contracts in the Portuguese Atlantic exceed customs revenues by 66 percent.[106] In Bahia, the tithe financed the local garrison and military infrastructure, making it of strategic importance for the Portuguese crown and Bahia's colonial

[104] There is little historical work on the *miunças* – the tithe generated from "small-scale" production.
[105] Luiz Antonio Silva de Araujo, "Dízima da Alfândega, contratos e comércio Atlântico," in *Alfândegas do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro e Salvador, século XVIII: estudos de administração fazendária*, eds. Angelo Alves Carrara and Paulo Cavalcante (Juiz de Fora: Editora UFJF, 2016), 83–110.
[106] Angelo Alves Carrara, "As receitas imperiais portuguesas: estrutura e conjunturas, séculos XVI–XVIII [documento de pesquisa]," Relatório parcial de pesquisa, versão 1, abril (2011), 55; Angelo Alves Carrara and Paulo Cavalcante, eds, *Alfândegas do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro e Salvador, século XVIII: estudos de administração fazendária* (Juiz de Fora: Editora UFJF, 2016).

administration.[107] While the tithe applied to all land production in the colony – including manioc flour – sugar was by far the most important source of revenue.[108] Generally, the tithe was farmed out to merchant contractors with access to credit and specie because the crown required payment in silver and gold coins. However, even in the context of one of the most lucrative royal contracts during Bahia's colonial period – a revenue source intimately tied to sugar – the role of manioc flour was significant.

While the importance of sugar as a revenue source was unquestionable, sources from 1712 to 1724 indicate that contractors were required to pay a percentage of tithe contracts in manioc flour. For example, from 1713 to1714 nearly 24 percent of the value of the tithe contract was due in manioc flour, totaling 18,000 alqueires – approximately 17:280$000 réis.[109] For the years 1715–1716 and 1716–1717, approximately 21 percent and 12 percent of the tithe was due in manioc flour, respectively.[110] Because these quantities of manioc flour were earmarked specifically for Salvador's garrison, the fiscal dimension of these transactions for the state was evident. More generally, however, this fiscal arrangement also marked manioc flour as form of public credit in two specific ways: First, as a contribution to the common good and therefore as an affirmation of the mutual obligations between crown and subject; and second, as a means of discharging public obligations, a function recognized by the state. Viewed from this perspective,

[107] Export taxes were levied on crates of sugar (two réis/crate), salt, and imported wine. See Carrara and Cavalcante, eds, *Alfândegas do Brasil*, 255–58.
[108] The tithe is a one-tenth tax imposed on all land production – usually due to the church. However, within the Portuguese empire, a 1535 papal bull bestowed the tithe to the Portuguese king in his capacity as grandmaster of the Order of Christ, a military order inherited from the Crusades. See Angelo Alves Carrara, *Receitas e despesas da Real Fazenda no Brasil, século XVII* (Juiz de Fora: Editora UFJF, 2009).
[109] Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, hereafter, (AHU), BA, 2 serie, cx. 9, doc. 755. 18,000 alqueires could feed approximately 2,000 individuals for one year. In 1710, a doctor's salary employed in the hospital of Salvador's lay brotherhood was 40$000 réis. See Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists*, 380.
[110] (AHU), BA, 2 série, cx. 17, doc. 1544.

we can consider the tithe another dimension of a larger fiscal-military context within which manioc flour approximated or functioned as a form of currency in Bahia.

Currency can take on many forms, and this form in turn shapes the role it plays in mediating exchanges among individuals and between individuals and the state. Thus, to argue that manioc flour functioned as a type of currency is to say that it embodied some of the more general characteristics embedded in money, without necessarily serving as legal tender. As one scholar has pointed out with regards to money, "…in the end, money holds value for paying off obligations due to the public (fiscal value) as enhanced by its worth as the most liquid resource individuals can hold (the cash premium)."[111] In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bahia, the public sanctioned value of manioc flour complemented "the cash premium" that manioc flour embodied in daily, local transactions. Notably, the use of crops as commodity money in colonial Bahia was not unusual. In fact, it was part of the landscape of competing interests in the colony. During this period, royal and colonial authorities occasionally declared sugar as legal tender and set its price.[112] According to one scholar, this was done to mediate disputes between indebted sugar mill owners with little access to specie and merchant creditors requiring repayment in deflated sugar prices.[113] The point here is that money and currency, whether we view these through the prism of credit relationships or the circulation of commodity money, were part of larger social, political, and cultural dynamics. However, if we can frame and understand sugar as legal tender given its importance to Bahia's export economy, an understanding of manioc flour

[111] Cristine Desan, *Making Money: Coin, Currency, and the Coming of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[112] *Atas da Câmara v. 2 (1641–1649*) (Salvador: Arquivo Municipal, 1949).
[113] Fernando Carlos G. C. Lima, "Sugar and metals as commodity money in colonial Brazil," *Discussion Paper 008* (2012). https://ideas.repec.org/p/ehs/wpaper/10013.html.

as a baseline currency requires a more thorough discussion of both its symbolic and material importance in the domestic market of colonial Bahia. Let's turn to this sphere next.

Fiscal and Contractual Dimensions of Manioc Flour: Bahia's Armed Forces and the Moral Economy

The public credit dimension of manioc flour paralleled and reinforced the legal and extra-legal exchanges of manioc flour among Bahia's inhabitants. Notably, the individuals involved in these exchanges valued manioc flour on their own terms and according to their own needs and concerns. In effect, the fiscal administration of manioc flour constituted one dimension of a much larger sphere of manioc flour exchanges. More specifically, this fiscal arrangement highlighted the limitations of specie in upholding transactions between crown and subject. This limitation was embodied in the relative value of manioc flour and specie.

Why did Bahia's royal treasury not pay its soldiers entirely in gold and silver coins? The answer to this question lies partly in the fact that a soldier earning 1,866 réis a month could not afford manioc flour when its price increased beyond a certain level.[114] At peak prices, a month's worth of manioc flour for one person could cost 900 réis.[115] If we add family members and dependents to the equation, the limitations of soldiers' monthly wages become more apparent. This in large part explains why Bahia's royal treasury provided manioc flour rations to the local garrison and militia. Moreover, this situation suggests that to understand the fiscal administration of manioc flour more thoroughly, we must consider the exchange relationships that framed consumer choices with respect to manioc flour and specie. By looking at petitions from Bahia's

[114] Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do sertão nordeste do Brasil, 1650–1720* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 2002), 217.
[115] Dauril Alden, "Price Movements in Brazil Before, During, and After the Gold Boom, with Special r=Reference to the Salvador Market, 1670–1769," in *Essays on the Price History of Eighteenth-Century Latin America*, eds. Lyman L. Johnson and Enrique Tandeter (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 349–50.

military personnel we can begin to understand this other side of the fiscal dimension of manioc flour.

The military forces of colonial Bahia reproduced in part the hierarchical structure of Portugal's armed forces. However, as one scholar points out, the military in Bahia (and Brazil more generally), tended to conform to and serve the interests of local and regional hierarchies and the ad hoc demands of colonial authorities.[116] The military in Bahia consisted of regular or professional troops (*tropas de linha*), militias, and auxiliary forces (*ordenanças*). Regulars were sometimes volunteers or children of military families, though a good many were forcibly recruited. Most of these men – including Portuguese settlers and their descendants – lived in poverty and looked favorably upon the prospects of leaving behind the oppressive conditions of abusive labor conditions and local political feuds.[117] Military service, it turns out, didn't offer better opportunities for most of these men. In principle, regulars were paid a salary and given rations of manioc flour, uniforms, an occasional horse, and medical services. In practice, however, remuneration was erratic, and the real value of salaries paid in specie was susceptible to coin devaluations and high manioc prices. On the other hand, while the royal treasury paid militias and auxiliaries during expansionist wars in the interior (*sertão*), when demobilized, these volunteers and forced recruits received no pay. Many had to partake in other activities to survive, especially when militia and auxiliary commanders could not or refused to pay them directly. Notably, free and freed people of color, the enslaved, and indigenous people served in the militias and the auxiliary forces.[118] Like their white counterparts occupying the non-elite

[116] Vitor Izeckssohn, "Ordenanças, tropas de linha e auxiliares: mapeando os espaços militares luso-brasileiros," in *O Brasil Colonial, 1720-1821, Volume. 3*, eds. João Fragoso and Maria de Fátima Gouvêa (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2014), 483–522; Aurélio Alves de Souza Ferreira, *História militar do Brasil: regime colonial* (Rio de Janeiro: Impressa Militar, 1945).
[117] Izeckssohn, "Ordenanças, tropas de linha e auxiliares," 492.
[118] Like other parts of the Americas, military service offered a means of social mobility and freedom to the marginalized population of Bahia. See Izeckssohn, "Ordenanças, tropas de linha e auxiliares," 492. See more

echelons of Bahia's armed forces, their living conditions were also precarious and their prospects for social mobility rare. Moreover, when we consider the broader demographic and geopolitical trends in eighteenth century Bahia, we see how many of these individuals faced the added challenge of higher demands for manioc flour – their main source of sustenance.

Starting in the late seventeenth century, the growth of Bahia's population and increased trade with neighboring and more distant regions put pressure on local demand for manioc flour. Bahia's population increased from approximately 79,864 in 1724 to 241,00 in 1759.[119] Increased imports of enslaved Africans from the Bight of Benin to Bahia from 1695 to the 1730s also increased demand as manioc flour served as the main provision on trans-Atlantic slaving voyages.[120] Notably, during the first half of the eighteenth century, Bahia imported 414,290 enslaved Africans, an increase from 196,889 in the second half of the seventeenth century.[121] Once in Bahia, slave merchants sent the enslaved to Brazil's gold mines in the southeast (Minas Gerais) – a journey fueled by manioc flour.[122] In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, Bahia also provided manioc flour to the newly established Colony of Sacramento in the Rio de la Plata estuary, to the settlements that emerged along the access routes to the gold mines, and to the captaincies of Pernambuco to the north and Rio de Janeiro to the south. For many Bahians, these trends made manioc flour harder to access – a difficult situation made worse when we consider that manioc was a highly inelastic good for Bahia's marginalized population.[123] This meant that Bahia's poor and even some middling consumers – a cross-section of the armed

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generally Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds, *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
[119] Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, 88-89.
[120] Gustavo Acioli Lopes, "Brazil's Colonial Economy and the Atlantic Slave Trade," in *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867*, ed. David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 52.
[121] Slavevoyages.com
[122] Gustavo Acioli Lopes, "Brazil's Colonial Economy," 31–70.
[123] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint*, Chapter 3.

forces – did not or could not shift to other foodstuffs when high demand increased the price of manioc flour.[124]

As we saw previously, the crown provided manioc rations to Bahia's military. Despite being a royal concession, Bahia's governor-general and municipal council administered soldiers' provisions.[125] Notably, dissatisfied soldiers and militiamen often surpassed local authorities and petitioned the crown directly to re-negotiate manioc flour rations.[126] These petitions provide a window into how a subsection of Bahia's population ascribed value to manioc flour and how they viewed its relationship to status, specie, and exchanges more generally. Although the context of these petitions varies, some reveal that soldiers and militiamen worked out notions of status and justice among their cohorts by negotiating manioc flour rations with authorities, thereby suggesting manioc flour's symbolic value.[127] For example, in 1727 three artillery captains petitioned the crown for an increase in rations arguing that the crown had given infantry captains a similar concession. The crown in fact had recently given a pay raise to all captains in Bahia, but it increased manioc flour rations for infantry captains only. Feeling wronged, the petitioners protested that equal distribution of manioc flour among all captains – a middling segment within Bahia's military hierarchy – was a matter of "justice," and that equal salaries in specie could not compensate for the unequal distribution of rations. The artillery captains' reference to justice in the petition suggests that, in fact, manioc flour was part of a broader constellation of values that scholars have often framed in terms of a moral economy.

While the notion of a moral economy is relevant in discussions of early modern empires and colonial societies such as Bahia, certain assumptions about what it entails need revision as

[124] (AHU), CU, cx. 8, d.1351-1355.
[125] Silva, "A morfologia da escassez," 306.
[126] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 29, d. 2622.
[127] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 29, d. 2622.

do the unwarranted extrapolations of scholars who attempt to apply E.P. Thompson's model to all of Europe and the Americas.[128] As one historian has recently pointed out, moral economies "aimed at more than guaranteeing subsistence for the entire population," and were in fact grounded on segmented markets that provided unequal access to goods.[129] Based on the dual notion of Scholastic justice, the segmented markets of a moral economy embodied notions of both commutative justice, allowing for equality within transactions, and distributive justice, based on differentiated access to goods on the basis of status and "extra-economic attributes."[130] Notably, while distributive notions of justice reinforced social order and hierarchy, its commutative dimension created opportunities for bargaining and negotiation for individuals partaking in contractual transactions.

Viewed from the perspective of history, the dual notion of Scholastic justice was in fact subject to and shaped by various social, political, cultural, and economic factors. In colonial Bahia, the petitions concerning manioc flour certainly functioned within a moral economic sphere – given manioc's status as "bread of the land" and as a good of first necessity. To the extent that notions of commutative and distributive justice are helpful for understanding the relationship between Bahia's armed forces and the Crown, this only becomes clear when we historicize the way both ascribed value to manioc flour. In effect, this requires that we consider the small-scale dynamics of manioc flour exchanges. Thus, from the perspective of Bahia's military, the petition considered above indicates that Bahia's captains used manioc flour to

[128] E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: The Merlin Press, 1991), Chapters 4 and 5; João Fragoso, "A Economia do bem comum e a formação da elite senhorial do Rio de Janeiro no Império Português (século XVI e XVII)," *Dimensões* n. 13 (2001): 14–28.
[129] Francesca Trivellato, "The Moral Economies of Early Modern Europe," *Humanity* 11, n. 2 (Summer 2020): 197; Mary L. Hirschfeld, *Aquinas and the Market: Toward a Humane Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[130] Trivellato, "The Moral Economies," 196. See also Izhak Englard, *Corrective and Distributive Justice: From Aristotle to Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

negotiate status among military counterparts. It also suggests that captains used manioc flour to bargain with the Crown – in essence, exercising their contractual freedom as parties to a contract. Moreover, the captains' petitions, when placed alongside the embedding contexts that conditioned the value of manioc in Bahia more generally, suggest that soldiers were not only coming to terms with their right to "contract freely," in the sense of negotiating equitable amounts of manioc provisions, but that manioc flour's relative value in Bahia's markets was central to this development.

While the insistence of Bahia's captains on manioc flour might at first glance seem prosaic, we cannot on that account assume that the motives for their requests are equally transparent. Certainly, petitioners could have requested more specie in lieu of manioc flour, giving them, in theory, access to commodity money with greater exchange value. However, in practice, the relative value of manioc flour and currency in colonial Bahia – and Brazil more generally – complicates this hypothesis. When we consider the general fluctuations in the legal value of currency during the seventeenth century – most notably, a 30 percent decrease in the nominal value of silver coins in 1688 – coupled with the meagre and often unpaid wages of Bahia's military and militias, petitions for manioc flour take on an additional layer of meaning. To understand this dynamic, we need to look further south to the captaincy of Rio de Janeiro – a region that also depended on manioc flour to feed its population. There, in 1719, the governor of Rio de Janeiro wrote a letter to the crown stating that the local garrison refused a salary raise in lieu of manioc flour rations.[131] The garrison's refusal is understandable when we consider the proposed monthly raise would have amounted to only 72 percent of the monthly value of manioc

[131] (AHU), ACL, CU, 017, cx. 10, d.1102.

rations.[132] This episode – very likely reflecting a more prevalent calculation among Brazil's armed forces – demonstrates how fiscal policy was shaped by the dynamics of manioc prices and how Brazil's armed forces gauged manioc's relative value in relation to specie. Moreover, this episode also suggests that when the Crown was unable or unwilling to maintain the value of gold and silver currency – a constant throughout the seventeenth century – soldiers placed a higher premium on manioc flours' use- and exchange value, despite the fluctuating legal prices of manioc flour.[133] After all, the bread of the land could always be transacted for higher prices in Bahia's "informal" market.

Generally, the fluctuating nominal value of currency and the non-payment of salaries created considerable uncertainty for captains and other military personnel of middling and low social status. The anxiety created around the instability of metallic currency would have compelled consumers to look for other entry points into Bahia's markets – an assessment that would have been based on observed consumption patterns and exchange relationships. Manioc flour's prevalence as a subsistence and commercial crop, a means of payment, and a form of tax offered concrete strategies for Bahia's residents in this regard. Generally, specie and credit were the domain of Bahia's wealthy and their clients. While some members of Bahia's military and laboring population partook in these patronage networks, most did not. Moreover, Bahia's poor – which included a large subsection of the armed forces – were often the most vulnerable to the

[132] (AHU), ACL, CU, 017, cx. 10, d.1102. The sources for 1725 indicate that an alqueire of manioc flour (approximately 30 kilograms) in Rio de Janeiro had a market value of 1,280 réis. Using this figure, we can provide a rough estimate of the value of a monthly ration of manioc flour for 1719. Considering that monthly manioc rations for soldiers during this period averaged three-quarters of an alqueire (approximately 20 kilograms), a month's worth of manioc provisions cost approximately 853 réis. On the other hand, the Crown's proposed raise amounted to an additional 620 réis for the soldiers – well below the 853 réis calculated for a monthly ration of manioc flour. See Alden, "Price Movements in Brazil," 349–50; Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists,* 380–81; Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do sertão nordeste do Brasil, 1650–1720* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 2002), 217.

[133] Elliot, *Economic Theory and the Roman Monetary Economy*.

general effects of currency shortages. In a rare display of "concern" for the artisan class of Bahia, Salvador's municipal council wrote a letter to the Crown in 1693 illustrating how residents who worked for a living lost their livelihood when salaries were not paid.[134] For example, they explained that shop owners who were unable to pay workers were obliged to reduce their workforce while others chose to close their shops entirely.[135] With no work, artisans and other laborers migrated to Salvador's interior, where "compelled by the exigencies of hunger" many abandoned themselves to "sin" – presumably an indirect reference to prostitution, drinking, and crime.[136] Although this letter refers specifically to urban artisans and laborers, we could make the case that Bahia's poor soldiers, inactive militia, and auxiliary forces faced similar difficulties. For example, although the salaries of active military and militia members were in principle guaranteed by the Crown, there were times when the government delayed or withheld salaries. Even when the royal treasury paid salaries on schedule – often in clipped and devalued coins – the value of currency counted for little for those who earned meager wages.[137] Thus, currency itself was an unstable medium and its exchange value was often outweighed by the use-value and market premium of manioc flour – a calculation that would have been familiar to some members of Bahia's and Brazil's military since the mid-seventeenth century.

For the most vulnerable members of Bahia's military, the relative value of manioc flour and currency made living conditions difficult. This was the case for members of Bahia's Henriques regiment – a militia of freedmen of African descent.[138] For these individuals, meager

[134] Cartas do Senado, v. 4, 1693, 10–12.
[135] Cartas do Senado, 10–12.
[136] Cartas do Senado.
[137] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 29, doc. 3588 to 3590.
[138] The Henriques regiment was formed in the context of the war against the Dutch in northeast Brazil from 1624 to 1654. During this period the Dutch West India Company (WIC) occupied Bahia for brief intervals. The neighboring captaincy of Pernambuco was occupied by the WIC until 1654. See among others Wolfgang Lenk, *Guerra e pacto colonial: A Bahia contra o Brasil Holandês (1624–1654)* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2013); Hebe Mattos, "'Black

wages often made manioc flour more desirable than currency. A petition from Henrique militiamen helps us understand their calculations. In 1743, four low-ranking members of the regiment petitioned the Crown for a monthly raise from 640 réis to 1280 réis, a salary that accompanied the usual rations of manioc flour of 9.07 liters (1/4 of an alqueire) per 10 days. The petitioners claimed they were married and justified their petition as an attempt to redress their misery and poverty. While they make no direct mention of children – based on the average number of children for freedmen in the nineteenth century – we can reasonably assume that each petitioner would have had at least two children.[139] At four members per family, these petitioners would have had to account for approximately 27 alqueires of manioc flour (for 3 people), at a total value of 12,852 réis per year. Assuming the Crown approved their raise, their total yearly earnings would have amounted to 15,360 réis per year, a value slightly above the total yearly expenditure for manioc flour. If, on the other hand, the Crown denied their request, their yearly salary of 7,680 réis would have fallen well short of the 12,852 réis required for manioc provisions.[140] These calculations do not account for the fact that legally established manioc flour prices – 476 réis per alqueire in 1743 – did not guarantee those prices on the market. In fact, sources from Bahia's governor-general, municipal council, and consumers are unequivocal about inflated manioc flour prices from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.[141] In effect, the calculus employed by Bahia's armed forces constituted another embedding context that allows us to see

Troops' and Hierarchies of Color in the Portuguese Atlantic World: The Case of Henrique Dias and his Black Regiment," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 45, n. 1 (2008): 6–29.

[139] Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, "Slave, Free, and Freed Family Structures in Nineteenth-Century Salvador, Bahia," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 25, n. 1 (1988): 69–84. For other regions of colonial Brazil, the average family size ranged from five to twelve people. See Donaldo Ramos, "Marriage and the Family in Colonial Vila Rica," *Hispanic American Review* 55, n. 2 (1975): 200–25.

[140] More accurate calculations would include other expenditures and productive inputs from other family members. The figures provided above are meant as preliminary calculations of family consumption of manioc flour in eighteenth century Bahia.

[141] Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, "A morfologia da escassez: crises de subsistência e política econômica no Brasil colonial (Salvador e Rio de Janeiro, 1680-1790)," (PhD. diss., Universidade Federal Fluminense, 1990).

how manioc flour functioned as a type of baseline currency in seventeenth and eighteenth century Bahia.[142] Moreover, if we look to the circumstantial evidence relating to foodstuff prices in Bahia during the eighteenth century, it seems as though manioc flour had an impact on the market more generally – further supporting our hypothesis about manioc's functions as a type of currency.

Manioc and Currency: A Case for an Intellectual History of Exchange, Value, and Prices

The relative value of manioc flour and currency were in constant flux throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Generally, supplies of manioc flour and currency were subject to the contingencies of colonial policy and geopolitics, production and commercial trends, and environmental developments. While historians have generally considered the impacts of currency on the formation of Bahia's markets and on "consumer capacity," they have treated manioc flour as an appendage to broader questions of production, monetization, trade, and primitive accumulation.[143] Building yet going beyond these interpretations, I argue that manioc flour's impact on Bahian society was more foundational because it was embedded in different contexts through which it functioned as a store of value, a unit of measure, and a form of public credit. This facilitated the "exchangeability" of manioc flour through symbolic and material relationships that permeated all spheres of Bahian society.[144] While exchangeability here does

[142] From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, land rents (*foros*) and conflict with indigenous communities and quilombos limited access to land in Bahia's interior, this despite the colony's vast territorial expanse. Access to land would certainly constitute a viable alternative for those struggling to feed themselves and their families. See *Livro do Tombo v.1* (Prefeitura Municipal da Cidade do Salvador, Documentos Históricos do Arquivo Municipal, 1953); Vera Ferlini, *Terra, trabalho e poder: o mundo dos engenhos no Nordeste colonial* (São Paulo: EDUSC, 2003), especially Chapter 4.

[143] I borrow the term consumer capacity from Lemire to indicate the different strategies used to participate in exchanges. See Beverly Lemire, *Global Trade and the Transformation of Consumer Cultures: The Material World Remade, c. 1500–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), Chapter 4; For a more recent account of manioc flour encompassing all of colonial Brazil see Manoela Pedroza, "A roça, a farinha e a venda: produção de alimentos, mercado interno e pequenos produtores no Brasil colonial," in *O Brasil Colonial, 1720-1821, V. 3*, ed. João Fragoso e Maria de Fâtima Gouvêa (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2014), 381–418.

[144] Pedroza, "A roça, a farinha e a venda."

not imply a rational-choice paradigm of micro-economic behavior, the petitions that we discussed point to individual and collective interests that served as motivating factors in Bahia's manioc markets.[145] Again, these motivating factors were conditioned by embedding contexts that ranged from the Crown's fiscal choices to the more open-ended calculations of Bahia's soldiers. These findings add nuance to previous interpretations that frame Bahia's manioc market as a unidimensional moral economy.

By focusing on the perceptions of Bahians, we learned that manioc flour shaped the way some people understood and negotiated status, value, and exchange. Notably, unlike currency or cash crops, manioc circulated widely in Bahia and was not restricted to the elite and wealthy. Manioc farmers, consumers, and boatmen were mostly poor Bahians and people of low social status. Generally, the ubiquitous exchange of manioc flour marked Bahia's landscape and the lives of its inhabitants in ways that cash crops such as sugar did not. Moreover, there is also evidence that Bahia's authorities articulated ideas about trends in the local market by observing the effects of manioc prices on other goods. For example, in a letter written by Bahia's governor-general to the Crown in 1742, the royal official claimed that "manioc flour being the main sustenance of the people [*o povo*], it tends to set the price of all other things".[146] He also explicitly noted that local goods were cheap due to low manioc flour prices.[147] Notably, the governor-general's assessment of manioc flour's impact on Bahia's market is supported by other testimonies that suggest a correlation between high manioc prices and increased prices in foodstuffs.

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[145] Toby Green, *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the Rise of the Slave Trade to the Age of Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019); Green, "Africa and the Price Revolution: Currency Imports and Socioeconomic Change in West and West-Central Africa During the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of African History* 57, n. 1 (2016): 1–24.
[146] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 75, d. 6238.
[147] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 75, d. 6238.

When legal manioc prices soared to 960 réis per alqueire in 1710, reports from Bahia's residents in subsequent years pointed to general inflation. A 1711 petition from an official from the Santa Casa da Misericórdia – Salvador's lay brotherhood – noted such a trend. According to the petition, an increase in the price of foodstuffs (*mantimentos*) and imported Portuguese goods had depleted the brotherhood's coffers, forcing its members to lend money to the institution to keep its hospital in operation.[148] While scholars have often attributed this price increase to a general import tax introduced in 1711 – which affected the import of enslaved Africans – and a price increase in salt – an imported good that was used for dried meats – these measures were in fact not implemented until 1717.[149] This suggest that manioc flour's role in this inflationary trend is more significant than previously thought. Further evidence for our hypothesis comes from a petition written to the crown in 1716 by the chief custodian (*guarda-mor*) of Bahia's High Court of Appeals (*Relação da Bahia*). Petitioning for a raise, the official claimed that his salary of 50,000 réis could not account for the 500 percent increase in the price of foodstuffs.[150] While the increase noted by the official might be an exaggeration, his perception is line with previous reports of inflationary trends during times of high manioc flour prices. Moreover, while no figures could be found for the price of manioc flour in Bahia for 1716, this period saw more lax regulation of prices by authorities, which meant manioc producers would have been able to

[148] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 7, d. 542. The Santa Casa da Misericórdia's finances was also subject to embezzlement and the illicit dealings of patronage networks. The brotherhood functioned as one of the most important creditors for planters, sugar mill owners, and merchants in colonial Bahia. Patron-client relations between members of the brotherhood and debtors often resulted in loan defaults. Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists*.

[149] Historians have established a causal link between the proposed measures and a revolt led by soldiers, military officers, and the merchant João de Figueiredo Costa in Bahia in 1711 – known as "Revolta do Maneta." While the new import tax and the higher price of salt were important, the structural role of manioc flour in this episode needs more explication. See Luciano Raposo de Almeida Figueiredo, "Revoltas, fiscalidade e identidade colonial na América portuguesa: Rio de Janeiro, Bahia e Minas Gerais (1640–1769)" (PhD. diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 1996).

[150] (AHU), ACL, CU, cx. 10, d. 839.

negotiate better prices. This makes it likely that manioc flour prices – if not at the level of 960 réis per alqueire – was still relatively high in 1716.[151] Moreover, even if public officials were successful in bringing prices down temporarily, it is likely that the general import tax and price hike in salt anticipated for 1717 increased demand for manioc flour in the interim. In sum, these testimonies are important indicators that manioc flour had a wide impact on Bahia's market, serving occasionally as a measure of value against which other foodstuffs were priced.

The observation made by Bahia's governor-general allows us to advance other hypotheses. In this regard, despite the brevity of his testimony, the governor's reading of events is significant because it illustrates the importance of manioc flour in the development of pragmatic understandings of price-setting mechanisms in Bahia. Stated differently, his letter suggests that Salvador's authorities went beyond price regulation debates in their understandings of manioc flour's role in Bahia's market.[152] In effect, Salvador's officials acknowledged that manioc flour was a constitutive element of local markets and made sense of general price trends through their observations of manioc flour prices. Although these subtle engagements are often overshadowed by the ubiquity of price regulation documents in the archive and a focus by historians on a "moral economy" of manioc flour, this letter suggests that authorities understood the formative role of manioc flour in exchange relationships more generally. In this way, much like our earlier readings of petitions allowed us to complicate our understandings of Bahia's "moral economy," our reading of the governor-general's letter allows us to move beyond unidimensional framings of "just price" debates. Thus, when considered alongside our discussion of petitions and currency, this letter reinforces the idea that manioc flour functioned *alongside*

[151] Dias, *Farinha, madeira e cabotagem*.
[152] Manioc flour prices were regulated until 1795. See: Richard Graham, *Feeding the City: From Street Market to Liberal Reform in Salvador, Brazil, 1780–1860* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 175.

currency as a symbolic and objective measure of relative value, helping Bahians make sense of a regional market increasingly integrated with neighboring captaincies and the circum-Atlantic.

Conclusion

Servicing the Crown and Grain States Re-Considered

In his instigating study of early states, James C. Scott argues that cereal grains were important for archaic states because they could serve as the basis for taxation.[153] They were in his words, "visible, divisible, assessable, storable, transportable, and 'rationable.'"[154] While other crops – he continues – had "some of these desirable state-adapted qualities…none [had] all of these advantages."[155] Although much of his analysis regarding the adaptability of grain to state-formation holds up well, his rhetorical question – "Why have no cassava states appeared in the historical record?" – needs revision. As our discussion of manioc flour in colonial Bahia has made clear, the historical record does provide precedent for a "cassava state." However, our uncovering of a cassava state does not in fact constitute a refutation of Scott's discussion of grain and early modern states. In many respects, the history of manioc flour in Bahia confirms the difficulties that Scott points out regarding states that are confronted with a crop that is not "legible, assessable," and that can be planted and harvested year-round.[156] As the author highlights, "the 'aboveground' simultaneous ripening of cereal grains [had] the inestimable advantage of being legible and assessable by state tax collectors."[157] In Bahia, the fact that manioc lacked this characteristic gave farmers leverage in their negotiations with the Crown. This, coupled with the fact that manioc was widely consumed, "divisible, storable, transportable,

[153] James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).
[154] Scott, *Against the Grain,* 129.
[155] Scott, 129.
[156] Scott, 131.
[157] Scott, 131.

and rationable," made the fiscal administration of manioc a highly centrifugal process. As we will see, even when Bahia's royal treasury and colonial administration expropriated manioc flour with apparent impunity, Bahia's farmers never lost sight of their important role in the governance project that was the manioc trade.

In 1744, Manuel de Mello Garcia petitioned the crown for the satisfaction of a debt that his father contracted on behalf of the royal treasury. According to Garcia, his father – serving as sergeant-major of the township of Maragogipe in 1712 and 1713 – provided 11,633 alqueires of manioc flour to Salvador's royal treasury.[158] The petition claimed that Garcia's father had acquired manioc flour from Maragogipe's farmers on a "good faith" promise of future payment. In fact, Garcia's father and the farmers considered this transaction both a service and a "loan" to the Crown. The original request by Bahia's governor-general to Garcia's father in 1712 was issued in a time of general fear over a French invasion of Salvador. The governor-general was preparing for war and wanted to ensure provisions for Salvador's inhabitants and local garrison. Notably, when Garcia's father arranged the loan between the royal treasury and Maragogipe's farmers, he not only acted in the name of the common weal, but also indirectly revealed the latitude that manioc farmers enjoyed in their dealings with the Crown and Bahia's colonial administration.

The situation depicted in Garcia's petition at first glance might seem like an unremarkable demonstration of the arbitrary authority of Bahia's royal treasury and colonial administration. Certainly, the image of helpless and frustrated farmers reinforces this reading. The official correspondence that accompanies Garcia's petition seems to support this interpretation. Documents from the royal treasury responding to Garcia's solicitation show that

[158] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx.80, D. 6588.

officials dismissed his petition after an internal investigation concluded that insufficient evidence precluded a final determination concerning Garcia's claims. This despite reports from Garcia that the royal treasury had paid his father 4:896$120 réis in 1718 for 6526 alqueires of manioc flour.[159] Perhaps anticipating queries regarding the outstanding balance – an estimated 3,482$170 réis for 5107 alqueires of manioc flour – Garcia declared that his father had not been paid the remaining sum because receipts issued by the garrison's quartermaster had been lost.[160] Garcia's father died before he could receive further payments, leaving almost 44 percent of the loan unpaid. Notably, when Garcia wrote his petition in 1744, Maragogipe's farmers were pressuring him for the discharge of the outstanding amount. In fact, the manioc farmers had provided an ultimatum: Garcia could secure payment from the royal treasury, or he could pay himself.[161] The fact that the loan was under the name of Garcia's father prevented the farmers from petitioning the Crown directly. Notably, despite the royal treasury's breach on this occasion, Maragogipe's manioc farmers understood that their control over manioc flour supplies gave them leverage over the long-term. In fact, on many occasions, Maragogipe's manioc farmers exerted their bargaining power with success – either by gaining concessions from the Crown or exchanging manioc flour through informal channels.

As Garcia's petition demonstrates, the relationship between Maragogipe's manioc famers and Bahia's royal treasury – an institution of the Crown – produced tensions that revealed the fiscal and contractual understandings between Crown and subject. More specifically, the petition suggests that manioc farmers – and some of Bahia's military officials – viewed the Crown's

[159] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 80, d. 6588. 6526 alqueires of manioc flour would feed approximately 725 of Salvador's residents. In the early eighteenth century, the sum of 4:896$120 réis would pay the yearly salary of approximately 2,623 soldiers in Bahia.
[160] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 80, d. 6588. Garcia makes no indication of who lost the receipts.
[161] (AHU), ACL, CU, 005, cx. 80, d. 6588.

fiscal authority through the prism of farmers' bargaining power. That Maragogipe's farmers framed their service to the Crown as a loan is a testament to this fact. Moreover, this scenario also illustrates how farmers in fact often thought about manioc flour as a form of currency. Importantly, the fact that the Crown's fiscal demands were mediated by the bargaining power of farmers has historical precedent and fits into a larger pattern that characterized early modern empires and their forms of governance.

Scholars of the early modern period have demonstrated how the fiscal arrangements of certain European empires – whether these functioned through "formal" administrative structures or "informal" channels of mutual obligation – depended on the relative bargaining power of rulers and subjects.[162] In most cases, the Crown and royal authorities had to negotiate with colonial elites to generate tax revenues and build a fiscal apparatus.[163] Sometimes this led the Crown to strategic alliances with a privileged "selectorate" – a select group in the colonies with intimate ties to royal authority and the colonial administration.[164] For example, in Bahia, the tax farmers that collected the tithe during the colonial period were often wealthy merchants with access to capital and members of Salvador's municipal council.[165] This arrangement was the case generally throughout colonial Brazil wherever a royal monopoly contract was involved. Notably, the relationship between the Crown and Bahia's manioc farmers did not conform to this framework. In fact, it differed in two important ways. First, there was no official law requiring

[162] Edgar Kiser and Margaret Levi, "Interpreting the Comparative History of Fiscal Regimes," in *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, eds. Andrew Monson and Walter Scheidel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 557–71.
[163] For a good introduction to "pre-modern" fiscal regimes see Andrew Monson and Walter Scheidel, eds., *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[164] Kiser and Levi, "Interpreting the Comparative History of Fiscal Regimes," 557–71; See also David Stasavage, "Why Did Public Debt Originate in Europe?" in *Fiscal Regimes and the Political Economy of Premodern States*, 523–34.
[165] Rae Jean Dell Flory, "Bahian Society in the Mid-Colonial Period: The Sugar Planters, Tobacco Growers, Merchants, and Artisans of Salvador and the Recôncavo, 1680–1725" (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1978).

that Recôncavo farmers make fiscal contributions in manioc flour, only that they sell at a legally determined "market" price. However, as Garcia's petition points out, a relationship between Crown and subject based on mutual obligation could sometimes act in place of a more formal fiscal arrangement.[166] Seen from the perspective of manioc farmers, this arrangement provided the opportunity to finance the Crown, market their product, and gain leverage with the royal treasury and Salvador's municipal council – despite the risks involved in these transactions. Second, manioc farmers were not part of Brazil's colonial elite. This meant their bargaining power did not derive from capital, political power, or military prowess, but from their control over manioc flour. Generally, the threat of withholding, evading, or otherwise manipulating the supply of manioc flour gave Bahia's farmers leverage, especially during times of impending war. Both royal and colonial officials acknowledged this situation and tried to curb the autonomy of manioc farmers by regulating manioc flour prices and trade. However, despite these measures, Bahia's farmers often capitalized on manioc's illegible and evasive characteristics to avoid taxation.[167] This in effect gave them control over a crop that served as a store and measure of value and that allowed them to partake in the exchange relationships that were forged via the bread of the land. Ironically, as both royal and colonial administrators increased regulations over manioc farmers and their crop, manioc's functions as a baseline currency became more pronounced, further decentralizing the governance project that was the priority of royal and colonial administrators.

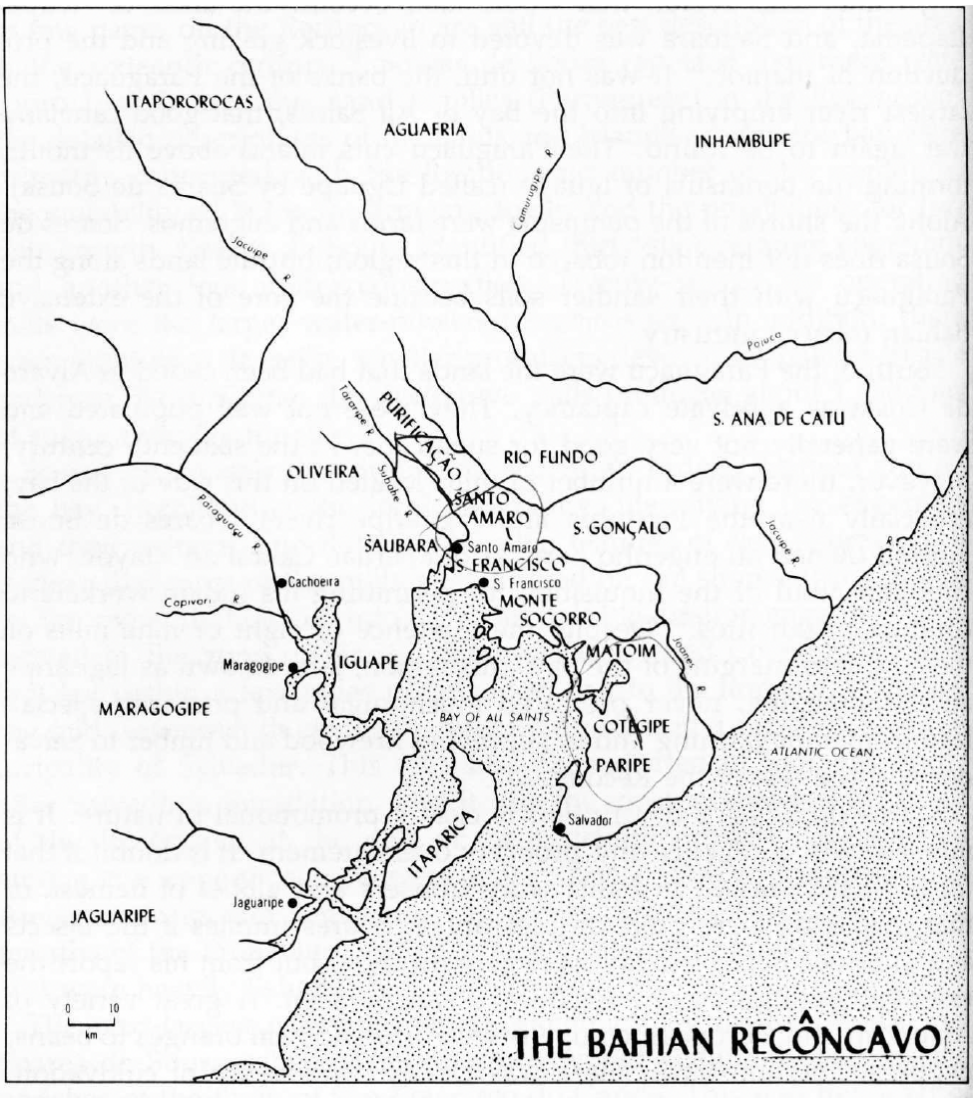
In his analysis of Bahia's export and internal economy, Barickman warned against a "rash revisionism" that downplayed the role slavery in the development of Bahia's internal

[166] In effect, the "market" price of manioc flour established by Bahia's authorities could be seen as a fiscal mechanism with both formal and informal dimensions.
[167] James C. Scott, *Against the Grain,* 131.

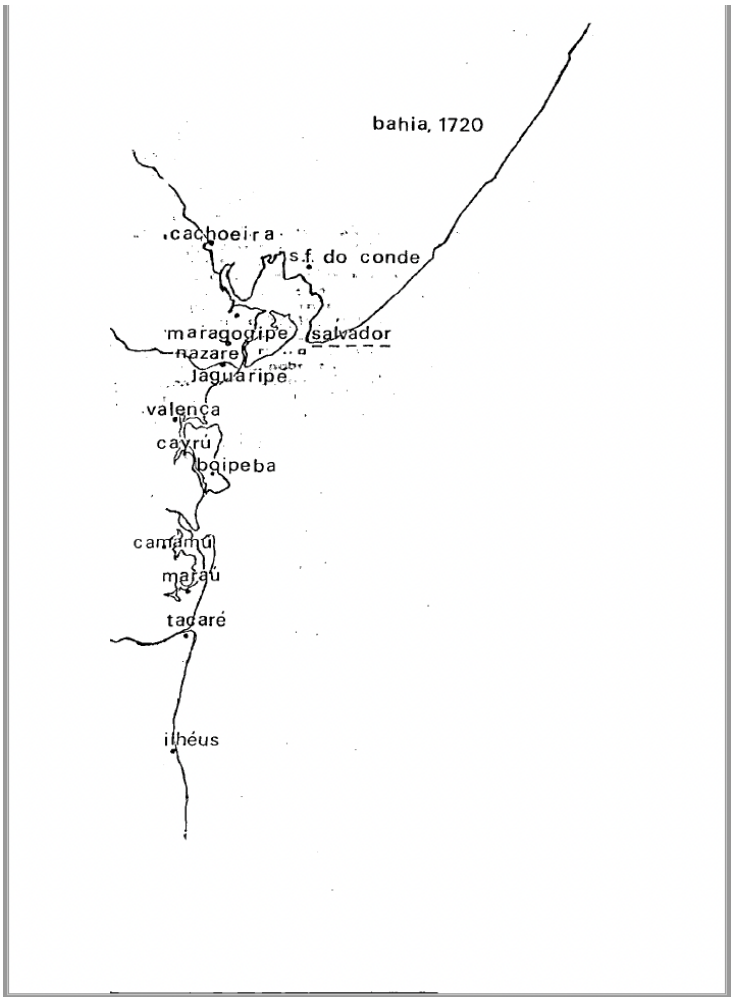
market and institutions.[168] Because this paper focused on Bahia's free non-elite population – Barickman's point is appropriate here by way of conclusion. As we saw, manioc farmers were willing participants in the slave economy, and as a petition from 1698 points out, they sometimes used high slave prices in Atlantic ports to justify inflationary trends in Bahia's market.[169] Thus, manioc farmers might have been poorer and further removed from the levers of power, but their worldview was equally shaded by the pervasiveness of slavery. Moreover, the fact that farmers' calls for higher manioc flour prices and the easing of trade regulations was conceded by Bahian authorities based on high slave prices shows how the history of small-scale production, trade liberalization, and slavery in Bahia was interrelated. While this point is not new, it is worth foregrounding that the protagonists of this story were not wealthy merchants or planters, but a subsection of Bahia's non-elite population. However, more significant still is that the source of manioc farmers' bargaining power originated in a major staple that was implicated in both the "formal" and "informal" institutional arrangements of Bahian society. Thus, as we saw, manioc flour was important to Bahia's fiscal and monetary institutions but was also part of pervasive and evasive spheres of non-state centered relationships and transactions. This framework, I argue, presents an opportunity to historicize the relationship between "formal" and "informal" spheres in colonial Bahia in relation to production, consumption, and trade. By doing so, we can expand our understanding of the constituent actors, relationships, and ideas that shaped colonial Bahian institutions and markets without falling into a circuitous debate surrounding the "nature" of capitalism or the "entrepreneurial" dimensions of slave societies.

[168] Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint,* 69.
[169] *Atas da Câmara, v.6 (1684-1700)* (Salvador: Arquivo Municipal, 1950), 352–54.

MAPS



Map 1. *Source*: Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia 1550–1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 84. The townships of Maragogipe, Jaguaripe, and Nazaré were manioc-producing townships. Throughout the colonial period, these three townships supplied manioc flour to the bourgeoning population of Salvador and the Recôncavo.



Map 2. *Source:* Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, "A morfologia da escassez: crises de subsistência e política econômica no Brasil colonial (Salvador e Rio de Janeiro, 1680–1790)," (PhD. diss., Universidade Federal Fluminense, 1990), 154. From ca. 1630–1698, the three villages of Cairu (*Cayru* on map), Boipeba, and Camamu provided a monthly quota of manioc flour to Salvador's municipal council. This manioc flour – subject to the "conchavo da farinha" contract – fed Salvador's garrison. However, contraband and other forms of non-compliance made the implementation of the "conchavo" a contentious affair. Salvador's authorities occasionally resorted to imprisonment and exile to encourage compliance.

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