

## INTRODUCTION

I am off to São Paulo . . . a State . . . that is the exemplar of our progress, of our culture, of our civilization, and one that produces, not only for its own consumption, but also to furnish the wealth that all of Brazil requires for the satisfaction of its needs.

—**Júlio Prestes, 1927, upon leaving Congress to assume the presidency of São Paulo**

In *The Strategy of Economic Development* (1958), economist Albert O. Hirschman remarked at length on a phenomenon characteristic of many “underdeveloped countries,” a process he dubbed “dualistic development.” According to Hirschman, innovation and progress in underdeveloped economies cluster around “growth poles” that create significant, and escalating, interregional inequalities, a trend he considered both inevitable and, in the short run, desirable. “This transitional phase” would allow a nation to make the most of its existing resources and, if the conditions were right, the fruits of progress could be expected, eventually, to “trickle down” or diffuse out to the less developed region(s). He did readily admit that dualism “brings with it many social and psychological stresses” and expressed some concern about “the tendency to magnify the distance that separates one group or region from another,” including the circulation of derogatory and racialized stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> But while Hirschman lamented the readiness of the average Italian “to declare that Africa begins just south of his own province,” he betrayed no concern that he himself deployed adjectives that could serve to entrench the differences between regions in ways that went well beyond standard economic indicators or contingent economic advantages. Explaining the circumstances in which “polarization

effects” would set the stage “for a prolonged split of [a] country into a progressive and a depressed area,” he noted that these effects “were fairly typical of such *backward* regions as Brazil’s Nordeste, Colombia’s Oriente, and Italy’s Mezzogiorno.”<sup>2</sup> Even Hirschman, an astute and empathetic observer of the human condition, appears to have been untroubled by the polarizing effect of his own developmentalist language, routinely using terms such as “backward” and “progressive” to describe and naturalize regional inequalities.<sup>3</sup>

A central premise of this book is that these “social and psychological stresses” and racialized stereotypes are not just regrettable and ephemeral by-products of uneven economic development. Rather, I will argue that they are important constitutive elements of historically structured spatial inequalities.<sup>4</sup> For Hirschman, and for most other social scientists and historians, dualistic development, or economic divergence, is the result of the intrinsic logic of economic systems—a matter of labor supply, available inputs, adequate infrastructure, the needs of capital, and so forth.<sup>5</sup> Without dismissing these factors, I would argue that each and every one is mediated by historical circumstances that are shaped by discourses of difference and the grids of political and cultural power that they produce. The first wave of prosperity—always unequally distributed on both horizontal and vertical axes—in a particular locale is typically the result of a fortuitous coincidence of timing and topography. How that initial surge gets transformed into a sustained process of economic development, and how that locale becomes defined as a region, bounded and separate from other geopolitical spaces, is a consequence of a range of historical factors, including the capacity of well-positioned collectivities to construct an identity for themselves and their “region” that naturalizes its progress.<sup>6</sup> In other words, far from being just a by-product or reflection of already-existing uneven development, I would argue that discourses of difference are generative of policies and decisions that consolidate and exacerbate regional inequalities. Indeed, they are crucial to defining what we mean by a region in the first place, and to what David Harvey aptly calls the “the grossest of fetishisms”—the idea that a “place” has causal powers.<sup>7</sup>

It is not surprising that Brazil figures prominently among Hirschman’s examples of dualistic development. Except perhaps for Italy, no nation has been more consistently associated with regional contrasts than Brazil.<sup>8</sup> The image of “the Two Brazils” has loomed large in the national imagination since the early twentieth century, and while the Norte or Nordeste has regularly been designated as the “backward” or “traditional” Brazil, the largely uncontested center of Brazilian progress and modernity has been the city and state of São Paulo.<sup>9</sup> By the 1880s São Paulo’s booming coffee economy had already established it

as Brazil's leading agricultural producer, and by the 1920s, it had emerged as the leading locus of manufacturing as well. Although it occupies less than 3 percent of Brazilian territory, São Paulo today accounts for well over a fifth of the national population and nearly a third of Brazil's gross domestic product. If it were a sovereign nation, São Paulo would rank fourth in terms of population (after Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia) and third in terms of wealth (after Brazil and Mexico) among the countries of Latin America.

Although paulista propagandists routinely insisted that the origins of São Paulo's surge could be found in the distant colonial past, the region's economic hegemony dates back only to the late nineteenth century. The coastal plain that formed the most fertile and accessible plantation zones in northeastern Brazil during colonial rule narrows to nearly nothing once it gets to São Paulo, so that the province played a marginal role in the early export economies. Lacking the sorts of irresistible inducements—such as precious metals—that drew waves of settlers to the inland province of Minas Gerais in the eighteenth century, São Paulo remained thinly populated, with large stretches of its interior inhabited by indigenous groups or *caboclo* farmers whose main goal was subsistence. Even during the mining boom, which stimulated internal commerce with paulista farms and estates, the scale of production remained modest compared to the strongholds of the plantation economies.<sup>10</sup> The provincial capital, near the littoral but perched atop a steep escarpment, remained little more than a large village well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and was briefly overtaken, population-wise, by the nearby city of Campinas, some sixty miles to its north. At first even provincial coffee production, located mainly on the slopes of the paulista portion of the Paraíba Valley, could be seen as a mere extension of the well-established plantation zones across the border in Rio de Janeiro province.

It was only in the final decades (1870s–1880s) of the Brazilian Empire, with coffee planting taking root on a significant scale in the paulista North and West, and with the railway system enlarging accordingly, that São Paulo, city and province, began to evince some of the characteristics later associated with its exceptional economic performance. Population growth—first mainly due to the forced relocation of African slaves, and then the more voluntary influx of European immigrants—expanded the labor force and the market. The maintenance demands of the railroad network fueled the growth of a half dozen major interior cities such as Jundiá, Sorocaba, and Piracicaba, that became not only commercial entrepôts but centers of considerable industrial production as well. Santos, the main port city, drew both former slaves and immigrants searching for regular employment on the waterfront. But the most

dramatic manifestations of the economic surge could be found in the state capital, where a previously compact, walkable city swelled into a sprawling metropolis with multiple working-class districts in the eastern quadrant and a growing zone of middle-class residences to the west and south. Wedged in between, and emblematic of the concentrated wealth derived from rapid economic growth, was the *bairro nobre* (noble neighborhood) of the Avenida Paulista, inaugurated in 1891, where the coffee barons and industrial magnates built their posh *palacetes*.<sup>11</sup>

The construction of regional (“paulista”) identity has been inseparable from São Paulo’s ever more spectacular economic success story. But it has also been inseparable from another “spectacular” narrative of a very different sort—the representations of poverty and backwardness in the Nordeste, a region routinely homogenized and rendered as a spectacle of “mayhem and misery.”<sup>12</sup> The geographic area gradually being classified and homogenized as the Nordeste actually encompassed a very diverse set of topographical, social, and economic formations. The coastal zone was carpeted by fields of cane and dotted with sugar mills and industrial-scale refineries; the near interior was a semi-arid zone of cotton cultivation and subsistence farming; and the backlands or *sertão* was a region of cattle ranching and hardscrabble farming, relieved by fertile areas of natural and artificial irrigation. The region also included several large urban centers and some significant industrial enclaves, and had a population whose color and ethnicity were as varied as its landscape and social structure. From this strikingly diverse stretch of Brazilian territory emerged São Paulo’s “Other,” a uniformly backward region plagued by droughts, a stagnating economy, and, above all, a wretched population whose very bodies bore the stigmata of their poverty and misery. Without this regional “Other,” the discourses of paulista exceptionalism would be far less compelling. The patently different life chances for a Brazilian from São Paulo and a resident of the Northeast has served to “naturalize” paulista claims about their region’s exceptional capacity for progress and modernity.<sup>13</sup> Again, Hirschman was not unaware of this “tendency to magnify the distance that separates one group or region from another.” However, what I think did escape him, at least in his study published in 1958, was the centrality of this tendency to the construction of regional and national identities, and therefore to the very politics of economic development.<sup>14</sup>

These qualifications aside, Hirschman’s comments offer important insight into the use of racial stereotypes and innuendo to widen the distance between groups or regions. This was not an entirely startling revelation on his part; some forty years earlier, the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci, describ-

ing the relationship between northern Italy and the Mezzogiorno (which he dubbed “colonialism of a special type”), said the following about northern Italian attitudes toward the southerners: “It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North, by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly; the Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal, and barbaric.”<sup>15</sup> Hirschman was less confident than Gramsci that he could identify the precise origins of pejorative regional stereotypes, and less pessimistic about their sociopolitical implications, but he observed similar attitudes. Aside from the (northern) Italian claims about where “Africa starts,” Hirschman noted “the derogatory use of the term ‘indio’ in some Latin American countries to designate whoever is economically or socially one’s inferior.”<sup>16</sup>

In Brazil, where the indigenous population had a relatively marginal presence by the late nineteenth century, the term “indio” was unlikely to serve this purpose (except perhaps in the Amazon), but there were other racial images readily available to those eager to construct a discourse of difference.<sup>17</sup> São Paulo—or more precisely, the paulista elites—emerged as major economic and political players during the final decades of legal, state-condoned slavery in Brazil, and during the heyday of what has been called “scientific racism.”<sup>18</sup> It would have been literally unthinkable for those crafting narratives of paulista exceptionalism at the turn of the century to contest the link between whiteness and progress, or between blackness and backwardness. And this tendency was hardly confined to elites in São Paulo; throughout Brazil, members of the *classes conservadoras*—men of wealth and erudition—regarded European immigration as the key to modernizing the post-emancipation economy and considered the large population of color to be a “problem” for the future of the Brazilian nation.<sup>19</sup>

In some respects, the narratives of paulista exceptionalism that emerged in these decades could be categorized as a variant of the discourses of white supremacy that were widely disseminated during the height of European imperialism prior to World War I, and that endured well into the next global conflict.<sup>20</sup> But in São Paulo, as elsewhere in Brazil, there were discursive currents that questioned the “racial science” of the Northern Hemisphere, with its extreme pessimism about the effects of “miscegenation.” Brazilian intellectuals and policy makers did embrace a certain version of eugenics; even a vocal

critic of scientific racism, Antonio Baptista Pereira, defended Brazil's capacity for progress by insisting that Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and other racial theorists "didn't take into account the broad eugenic power of the Portuguese."<sup>21</sup> But historian Nancy Stepan has demonstrated that Brazilian enthusiasm for the "wellborn science" was tempered by a persistent Lamarckian version of evolutionary theory that made environment as important as heredity. And there was already, in the decades immediately following abolition, a sense that overly blunt public avowals of race prejudice were somehow "un-Brazilian."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, in São Paulo, as elsewhere in Brazil, there were individuals of (not too much) color, with talent and connections, who circulated within the ranks of the regional elite.<sup>23</sup> Thus, even as paulistas promoted the whitening of the regional population, whether through representational strategies or subsidized immigration policies, most did not adopt a full-blown discourse of white supremacy, or advocate sharply drawn boundaries between black and white.

At the same time, the relative sensitivity of the racial question and the instability of color lines in the Brazilian context help to explain the appeal of region as a marker of difference. Regional identity, I will argue, was a racialized category given its recourse to innate or natural characteristics to explain the contrasting trajectories of Brazilian regions. In privileging whiteness as a source of regional exceptionalism, paulista identity also implicitly drew on and reproduced negative constructions of blackness and African culture that were staples of Brazilian slave society.<sup>24</sup> But constructions of regional identity, both positive and pejorative, did not depend upon explicit references to racial difference, whether grounded in biological or cultural idioms, and thus maintained the standards of "cordiality" in Brazilian public discourse.<sup>25</sup> And as regional economies diverged, the tangible material differences between locales such as São Paulo and the Nordeste could be mobilized to legitimate narratives of modernity and backwardness. That the spaces respectively defined as São Paulo and the Nordeste were dramatically different, and that their populations bore the signs of this difference on their bodies and in their minds, became something that could go without saying—the ultimate sign of a successful, or hegemonic, construction.

### **Region and Nation**

Regionalism is a long-standing theme in historical studies of Brazil and other Latin American nations. Colombia, for example, has been dubbed "a nation of regions," and until recently historians tended to treat such regional divisions—in Colombia and elsewhere—as resulting from self-evident and natural geographic features that separated and defined different climatic and

geological zones of the nation, and generated specific types of economic activities and cultural proclivities.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, central to scholarly studies of regionalism has been the assumption that it was an impediment to the formation of homogeneous and cohesive national identities. In effect, regional loyalties were stubborn remnants of a colonial past, or the unfortunate consequence of natural geographic barriers.<sup>27</sup> As hindrances to national cohesion, they should or would fade away with the (inevitable) triumph of the nation.

Although regionally defined studies, as opposed to studies of regionalism, became a staple of the Latin American historiography when the new social history was in vogue,<sup>28</sup> most scholars doing research at the regional level failed to problematize or even contemplate the relationship between region and nation; typically historians simply treated the two as “the part and the whole” and assumed that regional identities were a priori categories, rather than the result of political struggle.<sup>29</sup> But some of the historians engaged in regional studies did try to think in more innovative ways about the articulation of region and nation. Starting in the 1970s a group of North American historians published a series of volumes that focused on the politics of Brazilian regionalism, with particular emphasis on the decentralized features of Brazil’s First Republic (1889–1930). “Regions” in these works coincided entirely with the geopolitical boundaries of the various states being studied (Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Paraíba, Pernambuco), rather than being determined by geography.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, these studies demonstrated that a reconfiguration of political arrangements that privileged political networks at the level of the individual states could produce or resuscitate regional identities. But the direct linkage between politics and regional identities drawn in these studies meant that they left undisturbed the standard historical narrative in which, ultimately, the centralizing power of the state suppresses regionalism and creates a more viable nation.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike the political-history bent of these monographs authored by North American scholars, studies of regionalism and regional identity published by Brazilian historians in the 1980s and 1990s tended to reflect the twin influences of neo-Marxist political economy and the new social history. Building on the concept of “internal colonialism” first broached in the Latin American context by Mexican sociologist Pablo González Casanova in the 1960s, this Brazilian historiography criticized the earlier tendency to naturalize regional divisions and identities, and argued that regions had to be historicized with reference to the process of capitalist development.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, this scholarship rejected the diffusionist reasoning that treated poorer regions as mere “residuals” of an earlier economic order. From this structuralist perspective

regionalism, in the last instance, had to be understood in terms of the articulation of different modes of production or the uneven nature of capitalist development, and the role of the nation-state in mediating the interests of hegemonic and subordinate elites.<sup>33</sup>

This neo-Marxist approach had several salutary effects on the discussion of regionalism and regional identity. First of all, it emphasized the idea of a region as the product of historical processes, and not simply of geographic features or even geopolitical conventions, and it treated the definition of a region as inherently unstable, and apt to fluctuate from one era to another. And perhaps more important, it insisted that regional history could not be understood outside the context of national, and even global, history. Regional history was not merely a way to understand the particularities and peculiarities of a specific region, but a manifestation of broader national currents and tendencies. Thus, in her introductory essay to the important collection *República em migalhas* (roughly, Republic in fragments) Janaína Amado observed that several contributors to that volume defined “region” as a “spatial category that expresses a specificity, a singularity, within a totality; thus, the region configures a particular space that is articulated to a more broadly delineated social organization.”<sup>34</sup>

Among the scholars adopting a “materialist” approach to Brazilian regionalism, those who hewed too closely to a literal conception of internal colonialism—which, as we have seen, was already present in Gramsci’s writings on Italian regionalism—often found themselves engaged in a futile search for evidence of the actual transfer of wealth from the impoverished Nordeste to the economically robust Center-South.<sup>35</sup> The more sophisticated essays in *República em migalhas* favored, instead, the aspects of Gramsci’s writings about regionalism that analyzed the region as the space where dominant classes form alliances and construct hegemony.<sup>36</sup> These insights were crucial to shifting the discussion away from regionalism as a source of fragmentation or distortion, and toward understanding how hierarchies of power and influence can be formed from regional identities. At the same time, this approach problematically assumes the existence of self-conscious social classes prior to the construction of the region, similar to Gramsci’s consummately manipulative northern bourgeoisie, which, fully formed and conscious of its interests, cleverly promotes disparaging images of the southern populations among the susceptible northern working class. Moreover, even though the contributors to *República em migalhas* historicized the concept of region, rejecting the positivist notion of a region “as a given, already accepted and fully formed,” and inserted regional history into a larger totality or historical narrative, they



still accepted a certain fixity of categories, a certain stability of boundaries, between the region and the nation.<sup>37</sup>

It is at this juncture that the post-structuralist historiography of nations (and, by extension, regions) as imagined communities allows us to rethink regionalism now as a discursive effect and praxis inseparable from the construction of national historical narratives, and enables us to destabilize the very boundaries between region and nation.<sup>38</sup> One of the principal premises of this study is that there is no necessary opposition between region and nation; following Prasenjit Duara, I would argue that nation formation may actually produce or reinforce regional or provincial loyalties as competing political groups/projects imagine the nation through their assumed regional identities.<sup>39</sup> In other words, not only is region *not* the antithesis of nation, but it is an indispensable site from which to imagine the nation. Thus, regionalism in São Paulo should not be understood as a sign of the failure of the paulistas to construct a national project; rather, I would contend that regional discourse formed the basis for a national project that implied a hierarchy of regions and situated São Paulo at the center of the Brazilian nation. It was, to be sure, an inequitable vision of the nation, but it was a national project nonetheless. As historian Tania de Luca observes in her study of the pioneering paulista monthly the *Revista do Brasil*, “More and more the nation was being identified with the State of São Paulo.”<sup>40</sup> This could be (mis)read as an allusion to growing separatist sentiment, but the meaning is actually the opposite. Once we eschew a strictly spatial notion of the region and the nation, it becomes easier to understand how the paulistas imagined their part as the whole. And once we take seriously the differences implied in the concept of internal colonialism, it becomes problematic to understand São Paulo as an instance of “incomplete hegemony.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Orientalism in One Country**

Given the regional disparities associated with “uneven development” in Latin America, it is not surprising that a Latin American social scientist coined the term “internal colonialism.”<sup>42</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s this concept not only served as the standard analytical framework for understanding spatial inequalities in Latin America, but also proved to be an idea that “traveled” to contexts as diverse as Britain’s “Celtic Fringe,” Italy’s Mezzogiorno, the Peruvian highlands, French-speaking Canada, Inuit peoples of Arctic North America, African-American and Chicano communities in the United States, and Brazil’s Nordeste. Whether discussing the subordinate position of a specific region or minority community, academics applied the concept of in-

ternal colonialism to explain relations of domination and exploitation that seemed comparable to formal colonialism but that operated *within* a particular national space.<sup>43</sup>

Although the internal colonialism concept stimulated a great deal of interesting research, its structuralist/materialist roots meant that scholars employing this framework treated racial/ethnic difference as a preexisting condition that dominant elites could opportunistically exploit for economic advantage. Thus one researcher, writing in 1976, dismissed “racial-cultural heterogeneity” as an aspect of internal colonialism in Brazil since he perceived no significant distinctions in racial composition between the Northeast and the Center-South.<sup>44</sup> Such a conclusion rested upon an essentialized, objective definition of race, whereas both Hirschman and Gramsci understood that the racialization of regional difference operated mainly in the realm of representation. Historian Nancy Appelbaum traces the way nineteenth-century Colombians “elaborated a racialized discourse of regional differentiation that assigned greater morality and progress to certain regions . . . marked as ‘white.’ Meanwhile, those places defined as ‘black’ and ‘Indian’ were associated with disorder, backwardness, and danger.”<sup>45</sup> Given that these “racial” categories were themselves unstable, the labeling of a region as “black” or “white” has to be understood as a process that is not reducible to local inhabitants’ skin color or origins. Central to my own work is the contention that paulistas have routinely represented themselves as “white” and nordestinos as “nonwhite” regardless of genetics or physical appearance.

In the wake of the cultural and linguistic turn of the 1980s, the scholarly discourse shifted away from internal colonialism—a concept that emerged from the social sciences—to what we might call internal orientalism (or more fancifully, “orientalism in one country”), a concept that emerged from literary and cultural studies. Based on the critical theory first elaborated by Edward Said with regard to British imperial representations of Asia and the Middle East, it offers a more fluid and flexible framework for understanding spatially organized hierarchies of knowledge, wealth, and power than internal colonialism.<sup>46</sup> Rather than a set of specific socioeconomic processes and interests, orientalism emphasizes the emergence of discourses that permit a certain sociocultural group to create a sense of its superiority and its entitlement to wield authority over other groups. Said saw orientalism—that is, the construction of the “Orient” as Europe’s Other—as an enabling rhetoric that underpinned the entire European imperial enterprise, and operated to produce hierarchies of power and authority whether or not an economic surplus was being extracted from the colony by the metropolis.<sup>47</sup> This same approach

can be employed to explore the ways in which individuals and groups equate themselves with a particular region—assumed to be more modern, urban, and “progressive,” while constructing other regions/populations as backward, stagnant, and semicivilized, thereby seeking to consolidate a dominant position for themselves within the boundaries of a single nation.<sup>48</sup> This rendering of the nation not only relies on a binary construction that “magnif[ies] the distance” between the dominant region and its “Other,” but also requires the elision of portions of the nation that might attenuate regional difference.<sup>49</sup>

The concept of orientalism has yet another feature that makes it useful as an analytical tool for this study: unlike internal colonialism, it is specifically focused on the colonizing power. One of Said’s principal points is that orientalism tells us much more about the desires, aspirations, and identities of its occidental architects than it does about the reputed “Orient.” Although in certain venues regionalism might be associated with oppressed minorities, some of the most enduring regionalist movements of the last century emerged precisely from populations that, far from considering themselves as subaltern, oppressed, or exploited (in the usual sense), enjoyed or demanded a dominant position, to which they claimed to be entitled as a result of their superior qualities.<sup>50</sup> The aggressive assertion of regional supremacy usually comes accompanied by the insistence that the region in question is exclusively or disproportionately responsible for the greatness and sustenance of the nation; thus those who identify with that region chafe at having to share national political power or fiscal resources with other, “inferior” regions. This translates into a demand for a position of *superiority or privilege*, not equality, a mandate that would be difficult to assert without recourse to racist idioms and imagery, tropes supposedly frowned upon in Brazil’s “racial democracy.”

### **The Place of Racial Democracy in Brazilian Society**

Even before the abolition of slavery in 1888, Brazil had earned something of a reputation abroad as a racially open, fluid, and tolerant society, particularly in comparison to the United States, with its rigid and frequently violent forms of racial exclusion.<sup>51</sup> Yet much of the historical literature dates the birth of the idea of Brazil as a “racial democracy,” a phrase not widely adopted until the 1950s, to the publication in 1933 of Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa-Grande e senzala* (translated into English as *The Masters and the Slaves*).<sup>52</sup> As Micol Seigel aptly puts it, Freyre’s work is “too often credited (or blamed) with the stunning paradigm shift from whitening to ‘racial democracy.’”<sup>53</sup> But precisely because of the inflation of Freyre’s role in the crafting of this central element in Brazilian national identity, scholars have been inordinately interested in identifying

the sources of inspiration for *Casa-Grande e senzala*. Freyre himself cites an episode in 1921, during his time as a graduate student at Columbia University, when he gazed upon a group of mixed-race Brazilian sailors disembarking from a ship “in the soft snow of Brooklyn.”<sup>54</sup>

Freyre’s remark that the sailors struck him as “caricatures of men” is striking evidence that the paulistas were hardly alone in associating shades of whiteness with degrees of fitness for citizenship. What distinguished paulista intellectual circles was not necessarily a greater inclination to treat racial difference as the central explanation for the contrasting fates of Brazilian regions, but a greater capacity to claim whiteness, and even to define what it meant to be white within the Brazilian context. Whether through policies of subsidized immigration or strategies of representation, the paulistas could claim an “essentially” white regional identity, and consign those “mulatto and *cafuzo*” sailors to the rapidly receding past.<sup>55</sup> But Freyre, from the declining northeastern state of Pernambuco, had no choice but to see in the sailors’ faces his region’s (and by extension, his nation’s) future. Historians located in the United States, and many based in Brazil, tend to assume that Freyre constructed his vision of a racially harmonious Brazilian society vis-à-vis the racist United States, and his experiences in Texas and New York surely furnished part of the inspiration for his research. But his writings both prior to and after the publication of *Casa-Grande e senzala* suggest that he was, at least in some instances, imagining a Brazilian nation from the regional space of the “Nordeste” as against the whitening pretensions of the paulistas, which would have assigned his region and its “populations” to an ever more marginal position within Brazilian society.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to the saga of progress and modernity emerging from São Paulo, whose central figure was the colonial pathfinder and enslaver known as the *bandeirante*, Freyre constructed a historical narrative that centered on the intimacies of the patriarchal plantation household in the colonial northeastern sugar-growing zones.<sup>57</sup> Unlike paulista writers, who zealously minimized the African influence on the society of the “plateau” (a reference to São Paulo’s upland location away from the coast), Freyre celebrated the intermingling, both sexual and cultural, of Portuguese and African cultures in the coastal complex of plantation slavery. And he exalted this mixture, plus a lesser indigenous influence, as both the defining/distinctive feature of Brazilian national identity and the source of Brazil’s unique racial harmony.

Despite the striking differences in these historical narratives, it would be inaccurate to describe Freyre’s magnum opus as offering a vision of Brazil that was diametrically opposed to the paulista perspective.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, I would

argue that *Casa-Grande e senzala* was so successful in part because it did not directly challenge existing assumptions about whiteness and progress, while foregrounding features of Brazilian culture (tolerance, benevolence) whose implications were highly gratifying to all but the most stiff-necked racists within Brazil's lettered classes.<sup>59</sup> In Freyre's heavily romanticized portrait of the patriarchal plantation, Europeans are still the source of civilized culture and erudition, selectively absorbing African and indigenous influences. And his introduction to the volume echoes the common elite expectation that the "African" influence in Brazilian culture would inevitably fade (though in Freyre's case, this prediction seemed couched in some regret).<sup>60</sup> Thus, *Casa-Grande* could serve as the foundational text for the discourse of racial democracy and provide a basis for thinking of Brazil as a modern nation, even as it left undisturbed certain assumptions about the relationship between whiteness and a more modern and progressive Brazilian future.<sup>61</sup>

There is no shortage of scholarly critiques of Freyre's work. He has been rightfully skewered for reinforcing the fiction of Brazilian slavery as a benevolent institution (though he may have been somewhat ambivalent on this question, given the many episodes of violence and cruelty detailed in his study of plantation life).<sup>62</sup> His claims about the special Luso-Brazilian proclivity for harmonious blending with non-Europeans would subsequently be deployed, with Freyre's blessings, as a justification for continuing Portuguese colonialism in Africa.<sup>63</sup> Most important, his promotion of the image of Brazil as a land of racial harmony—his early work makes no reference to racial *democracy*—has been repeatedly denounced as a myth that has served to mask enduring racial prejudice and to delegitimize racial identity as a basis for political activism.<sup>64</sup> In effect, it has been derided as the "myth of racial democracy" (with myth here meaning something false and misleading) and disdained as a convenient rationale that allows elites to dismiss protests against racial inequality as unfounded or even unpatriotic.<sup>65</sup>

In the past decade, the less polemical scholarship on race relations in Brazil has shifted away from simply denouncing racial democracy as a "myth," to recognizing the broad-based embrace of this idea, including among the poor and people of color, for whom it represents not so much a depiction of Brazilian reality as an image of the society to which Brazilians should legitimately aspire.<sup>66</sup> But this only further begs the question of how we are to explain the coexistence, in the same national space, of a robust discourse of racial democracy and copious evidence of racism and racial inequality. One common explanation is the gap between discourse and practice: Brazilians of all racial backgrounds want to claim that they are without prejudice, but in daily life

still make decisions or engage in behaviors that privilege those with whiter skin or more European appearance.<sup>67</sup> This formulation of the problem, while making apparent sense, ends up treating racism in one of two ways, neither of which seems tenable. One is to see racial prejudice as existing outside the realm of rational thought or cultural meaning, as a sort of unconscious reflex or primordial reaction. The other is to see it as the product of cleverly deliberate individual and institutional calculation meant to favor whiter Brazilians over darker ones. Again, both seem unpersuasive explanations for the alleged discourse/practice gap.

I would like to suggest a different approach, one that precludes the idea of a gap between (racially democratic) discourse and (racist) action, and assumes instead that racialized images of modernity and progress have deeply informed discriminatory policies and practices. More specifically, I would argue that, historically, the economic success of São Paulo has cemented the widely assumed association between whiteness and civilization, between whiteness and modernization, between whiteness and productivity.<sup>68</sup> And the fact that this association can be expressed in regional terms, rather than explicitly racial ones, has meant that racialized discourses of modernity and progress have been able to coexist, or even mingle, with discourses of racial democracy for much of Brazil's post-emancipation history. As we will see, there have been moments when these different strands of national identity have not been so smoothly interwoven and have produced certain tensions and frictions. But more commonly, I would argue, one has informed the other, and together they have framed a vision of Brazilian society that eschews explicit expressions of racial prejudice but continues to link whiteness with progress. Rather than seeing these discourses as operating in opposition to each other, I would characterize their relationship as one of imperfect, and sometimes strained, complementarity.<sup>69</sup> There are, to be sure, political moments when these stresses and strains produce genuine shifts in the way paulistas, and Brazilians in general, conceptualize the meanings of racial difference. But for the period this book examines—the 1920s to the 1960s—I believe the more noteworthy, if disheartening, trend is the persistence of an equivalence between whiteness and progress.

### **What about Rio?**

Thus far I have counterposed São Paulo's narrative of modernity and progress to the Nordeste's reputation as a region of backwardness and misery. Yet most Brazilians, when talking about São Paulo (usually meaning the city) in a comparative vein, would draw a contrast not with the Nordeste, but with Rio

de Janeiro. Unlike most “hypercephalic” Latin American nations, Brazil has the distinction of being the home to two “megacities,” separated by a distance of only some 250 miles, and these circumstances virtually invite comparison, both systematic and casual. Indeed, Brazilian culture is replete with jokes, anecdotes, and tropes about the different character of the nation’s two leading cities, and about the divergent dispositions of the *paulistanos* and *cariocas*. Everyone knows the old saw that says paulistanos “live to work” while the cariocas “work to live.” Not surprisingly, whenever I’ve given talks in Brazil about my work on paulista identity, someone in the audience has chided me for not paying greater attention to the rivalry between Rio and São Paulo.

It would certainly be a mistake to ignore the Rio/São Paulo competition altogether, especially when discussing the early decades of São Paulo’s emergence as a major center of political and economic power. After all, Rio had been the capital of Brazil, whether as colony, empire, or republic, since 1763, and was the nation’s most populous city until the 1950s, when São Paulo overtook it. Moreover, even as Rio’s economic position waned, and it was supplanted by Brasília as the nation’s capital, the “marvelous city” continued to be Brazil’s most internationally renowned metropolis, the center of tourism, culture, both high and low, and the nation’s media capital. As Tania de Luca found in her study of the *Revista do Brasil*, paulista intellectuals in the early 1920s were anxious to establish cultural parity with the federal capital, as well as to assert São Paulo’s status as the more authentic Brazilian city. Contributors to the journal even resorted to linguistic comparisons to demonstrate that Rio de Janeiro was too “Portuguese” and cosmopolitan in its idioms to be the true center of the Brazilian nation.<sup>70</sup> In a similar vein, a study of Brazilian modernism and national identity by Angela de Castro Gomes reveals the “hegemonic perceptions” of the paulista modernist cohort, and the systematic minimization of carioca influences in the movement.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the rivalry with Rio certainly was a significant element in the way urban paulistas crafted their own identity. And race intermittently figured in the way paulistanos explained the contrasting characters of the two metropolises, as when Júlio de Mesquita Filho claimed that Rio’s cultural “decadence” was a result of its excessively large population of African descent.<sup>72</sup>

However, for a number of reasons, the legendary competition between Rio and São Paulo will not occupy a major place in what follows. One minor consideration, for a study of regional identity, is Rio’s status as a city or federal district, rather than a region per se. True, the referent for “São Paulo” typically oscillates between the city and the state, with the latter often being collapsed into the former. And one of the points of this study is that space, as a marker

of place and identity, should not be treated as concrete or stable. Residents of Rio regularly comment that an advantage of being from that city is the absence of identification with a region—a specious claim that persists as a constitutive element of carioca (regional) identity.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, the exclusively urban character of Rio de Janeiro complicates any comparative discussion of paulista/paulistano and carioca identities.

A far more significant consideration is the relative absence of serious political implications in the rivalry between Rio and São Paulo. Indeed, the very term “rivalry” is a clue to this, for it implies a somewhat level playing field, a competition between near equals, whereas the São Paulo/Nordeste binary is not conceptualized on either side as a “rivalry,” but rather in terms of domination and subordination, or superiority and inferiority. Such is not the case even in the more disparaging paulista depictions of Rio de Janeiro as a city burdened by its colonial/imperial past, whose residents—accustomed to living off government sinecures—lack the industrious and enterprising spirit of the modern metropolis.<sup>74</sup> Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Rio would continue to be an obligatory destination for any paulista intellectual or professional who wished to claim polish and sophistication. It provided a space where journalists, artists, and literati from all regions of Brazil could exchange ideas and form friendships that did not necessarily erase regional loyalties, but did reinforce the articulation of region and nation.<sup>75</sup> The anthropologist Hermano Vianna cites the arrival in Rio in 1924 of French intellectual Blaise Cendrars as a significant moment in the growing vogue for things “authentically” Brazilian and mentions the names of a group of young intellectuals who went to the port to greet the French visitor—among them several paulistas, including the modernist poet and unapologetic regional chauvinist Guilherme de Almeida.<sup>76</sup> Many of these individuals maintained a lively correspondence that reveals an intimate transregional realm of communication. Thus the Minas-born historian and journalist Rodrigo de Mello Franco de Andrade, based in Rio, exchanged correspondence regularly with the paulista “bohemian” writer Antonio de Alcântara Machado. In a letter dated December 1931, he mentioned seeing “Gilbertinho” Freyre almost daily and remarked that Freyre had just signed a contract to publish a book on the history of the Brazilian family to be titled *Casa-Grande e senzala*.<sup>77</sup> And both politicians and intellectuals from São Paulo were keen to cultivate a positive image of themselves and their region among their carioca colleagues, maintaining a “Centro Paulista” in Rio where eminent sons of São Paulo presented lectures on the glories and achievements of their home region to an audience whom they clearly sought to impress.<sup>78</sup>



As should be evident, the “Rio” that paulista elites and intellectuals valued for its sophistication and culture was the “white” city inhabited by wealthy and/or educated Brazilians, many of them from other regions. As Vianna shows, some paulistas were also drawn to the other Rio—a city composed largely of Afro-descendentes and Portuguese immigrants struggling to get by, and an alluring source of distinctively “Brazilian” music, martial arts, and cuisine. But this aspect of the marvelous city also provoked considerable ambivalence: in contexts where paulistas sought to heighten the difference between their home city and the nation’s capital, and insist on São Paulo’s greater aptitude for progress, the focus might shift to this other Rio, with its more popular and disorderly character. For instance, in 1965, when Rio celebrated its own IV Centenário, the paulista daily *O Estado de São Paulo* took great offense at a carioca politician’s claim that the ex-political capital was still Brazil’s “cultural capital.” Not only did the newspaper assert São Paulo’s cultural preeminence, but claimed that the African influences in Rio’s samba schools and religious practices were signs of the city’s “social regression.”<sup>79</sup> More typically, though, when paulistas imagined their urban “rival,” they envisioned a place where Brazilians who exhibited a certain taste and cultivation would always be welcome and always feel at home.<sup>80</sup>

### Defining Indefinite Terms

An introduction is customarily the place where an author defines what he or she means by terms such as “race,” “liberalism,” and “modernity.” When we use terms such as these, we are expecting them to do interpretive work, and it is therefore reasonable for the reader to demand some explanation of what we mean by them, and what kind of work we want them to do. Yet, most scholars who are attentive to language these days know that the meanings attached to words like “race” and “modernity” are contingent—they shift over time, or from one context to another, and to fix meaning in these cases may be to sacrifice historicity in the interests of clarity. The word “race” (or the Portuguese *raça*) is notoriously polysemic; it could be used in the very same text as a synonym for people (as in the *raça paulista*) and for groups defined by supposed biological/somatic traits. And to make it more complicated, I would argue that the use of the term “raça” for something like “raça paulista,” though apparently a different usage, may well have traces of that other, more familiar meaning. Modernity, meanwhile, has been imbued with a dizzying array of meanings. Oswald de Andrade, a leading paulista modernist, identified African musical rhythms as “the contribution of ethnic forces to the creation of modernity” in a lecture at the Sorbonne in 1923.<sup>81</sup> A year later, in his famous

“Brazilwood Manifesto,” he expressed analogous sentiments, but also called for more inventors and engineers, instead of “speculators and dilettantes,” invoking a productivist meaning of modernity that paulista industrialists were eagerly fashioning to heighten the contrast between themselves and “traditional” elites in other regions, and which they would have regarded—on *their* modernity meter—as the exact opposite of African contributions to Brazilian culture.<sup>82</sup>

To be sure, it is not just a matter of how words such as race and modernity are used in the sources that I will cite and quote, but also how *I* will be using these terms, or versions of them (e.g., “racialized discourses”). How will I be judging whether a particular position is being articulated in a way that draws on or reinforces racist premises? Are claims to an aptitude for modernity always complicit with hierarchical distinctions between backwardness and progress? These are questions best addressed in the body of the text, in the discussion of historical events that serve to clarify the meanings attached to certain language and phrases, and where an observable density of usage can make meanings more apparent. That said, I can identify some assumptions about categories such as race and gender that underlie this study. Not only do I operate from the widely accepted premise that these categories are cultural constructions, but also that how they are constructed and deployed, and what they signify, can be highly unstable, especially in the case of race and racism.<sup>83</sup> Many works in this vein draw a distinction between “biological racism” and “cultural racism,” and those are distinctions worth making in some contexts since they help us understand how racist discourses might be contested, and to what extent they can be articulated with other discourses.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, I think we have to be careful not to treat the former (“biological racism”) as the “real” racism and the latter as somehow less so. Virtually all racialized discourses are pastiches—rarely does an argument about “race” have strictly biological or cultural referents.<sup>85</sup> In this volume, I will generally be regarding a discourse as racialized if the language implies traits or characteristics that are supposedly innate in a particular group, identified with a specific place of residence or origin, regardless of what the alleged means of transmission of those traits might be. Moreover, even the adjectival categories of “biological” and “cultural” cannot exhaust the possibilities, as illustrated by the following quote—with a telluric logic—from an issue of the magazine *Paulista*, published in 1930 by the American Chamber of Commerce: “PAULISTA is the name commonly used to designate natives of the State of São Paulo. It implies that one’s roots have penetrated deep into the rich soil of this great State and have drawn up the pioneer characteristics inherent in its development.”<sup>86</sup> As should

be apparent, racial difference in what follows is not confined to referents such as skin color or somatic appearance. On the other hand, ideas about race are not fashioned in an entirely arbitrary manner; given Brazil's long history of enslavement of people of African descent, and the advantages that have concomitantly accrued to those with lighter skin or more European lineage, we can expect certain historical assumptions about whiteness and blackness to shape the way Brazilians construct regional identities.

Compared to “race” and “modernity,” the meaning of liberalism would appear to be considerably more stable and fixed. Thus, the eminent Brazilian literary theorist Roberto Schwarz famously declared that, in the postcolonial slave society of nineteenth-century Brazil, liberal ideas were “out of place,” a claim that is viable only if we assume that there is a correct version of what constitutes liberalism, and a proper context that activates its essential features.<sup>87</sup> Schwarz's influential argument has been widely contested by historians from a variety of perspectives, and its very premises have been eroded by the post-structuralist turn in historical studies, with its approach to language that assumes unstable relationships between words as signifiers and what is being signified. Furthermore, a plethora of adjectives have been employed by historians to distinguish among the many versions of liberalism that have circulated in Latin America and elsewhere, including some (popular liberalism, authoritarian liberalism) that would seem utterly oxymoronic to a scholar with a narrower definition of the term.<sup>88</sup>

Although I would hardly advocate a return to a fixed and narrow definition of liberalism, I would insist that the latter term is certainly not as polysemic as “race” or as fluid in its meaning as “modernity”—hence the need for modifiers. Because, historically, a variety of ideas have been closely associated with liberalism, it is a political discourse that could be “at home” among elites in a slave society, where its defense of property rights would be foregrounded, but that might also generate contradictions—for example, demands for individual rights and equality before the law—which could not be readily dismissed. Particular groups in particular historical moments may seize upon a specific aspect or version of liberalism, and define it in that vein, but once they adopt the “liberal” label, they leave themselves open to the charge of betraying liberal principles if they ignore other claims for which they may have little need or sympathy.

The mid-nineteenth-century coffee boom in Brazil reshaped the political and cultural world of the province of São Paulo. Among the many consequences of this period of intense economic and demographic change was a revitalized regional identity that had among its formative elements a critique

of the “excessive” power of the central/monarchical government and a demand for greater provincial autonomy. Such ideas could be comfortably articulated within a liberal or liberal/republican framework of federalism, private property rights, and limited (central) state power.<sup>89</sup> In that sense, paulista regionalism was an identity that was “born liberal.”<sup>90</sup> At the same time, the paulista elites’ intense apprehension about social disorder following the abolition of slavery (1888), and their jockeying for hegemony in the new federalized political system following the overthrow of the monarchy (1889), meant that theirs would *not* be an expansive definition of liberalism. As in many liberal-republican societies prior to the 1930s, paulista liberals privileged property rights and public order over social welfare and created a variety of barriers to greater popular participation in the political process. Even those paulista liberals who decried oligarchic politics and entrenched patron-client networks typically envisioned the ideal citizen-voter as having certain class, gender, and racial traits that would exclude the great majority of São Paulo’s residents from the political sphere.<sup>91</sup> Thus, while liberalism served as a sort of ideological glue for an emerging regional elite, and remained an enduring feature of regional political identity, it tended to reinforce, rather than challenge, a hierarchical vision of Brazilian society both within and beyond the borders of São Paulo.

### **Special Occasions**

The central chapters of this book are structured around two specific “events.” One is the regional uprising in 1932 known as the Constitutionalist Revolution. The other is the commemorations in 1954 marking the four hundredth anniversary of São Paulo’s founding. By focusing on two moments in history when, for quite different reasons, large numbers of individuals who identified with the city and/or state of São Paulo were actively engaged in producing representations of *paulistinidade*, and promoting paulista identity, I am seeking to reduce the risk of the evidence I offer being dismissed as arbitrarily selected or de-historicized. The 1932 uprising produced a torrent of print, visual, and oral representations of paulista history, economic life, and social character, as did the IV Centenário in 1954.<sup>92</sup> This rich evidentiary base offers the historian a range of representations, but also sufficient documentation to discern the way in which certain images were imbricated and reiterated, and certain meanings crystallized—at least for a while. Of course, I could imagine the opposite objection: that by concentrating on these two exceptional historical moments, my study is presenting a distorted view of paulista identity, one that merely reflects the special circumstances of these two historical instances. But I do not intend to make an argument about continuity or persistence per se.

I would readily admit that the intensity of regional sentiment manifested during these moments was not routine or typical, and that one cannot abstract from these “special occasions” to a stable, persistent tenor of regional identification. In particular, the willingness of tens of thousands of paulistas (and potentially many more) to kill and die in the name of São Paulo during the 1932 uprising is precisely what I am interested in explaining, rather than seeing it as a consequence of a fully formed, preexisting regional identity.<sup>93</sup> In both instances (1932 and 1954) I would argue that those engaged in formulating representations of paulistidade drew from a stream of ideas and images that was already coursing through paulista society, but that only became the basis for collective action in very specific circumstances. And in both instances I would point to organizations, monuments, and locales that resulted from these historical events (the veterans’ associations from 1932, the Parque Ibirapuera from 1954) that then became important referents, as agents or symbols, in the reproduction of paulista identity.

The timing of these two events, and their separation by more than two decades, are also features that make them especially appropriate choices for this study. Aside from allowing me to explore the changing meanings of race, gender, liberalism, and modernity in the context of shifting representations of paulistidade, this chronological arc permits me as well to destabilize the linear narrative of the triumph of nation over region. The 1932 uprising, not coincidentally, occurred at a moment when regional political loyalties were coming under fire, and when the Vargas regime was seeking to dismantle the state machines that had been a key feature of politics under the Old Republic (1889–1930). As we will see, for many authors, the paulistas’ defeat marked the end of an era, a sort of “swan song” of the republican regional elites.<sup>94</sup> In its aftermath, regional identities would be swept aside (according to this narrative) in favor of a burgeoning nationalism promoted by a robust recentralized nation-state. That is precisely why São Paulo’s IV Centenário is such an opportune event for this study. It was a celebration of regional greatness and exceptionalism at a moment of escalating nationalist rhetoric and near-universal declarations of Brazil as a model racial democracy. As indicated above, my point is not to insist that regional identity was more (or less) important than national identity, but rather that neither region nor nation could be imagined separately from the other.

Finally, the focus on these two distinct moments, two decades apart, serves to illuminate changes in the venues and vehicles for identity formation. To be sure, some of the changes reflect the very different nature of the two events being analyzed: the types of publicity permissible for an armed insurrection

are substantially different from those available to commemorative activity organizers. Others, however, reflect new ways of thinking about publics and about the relationship between self and society, as well as the shifting resources for shaping public opinion. During the mobilization against the Vargas regime and for a constitution in 1932, the major vehicles for political expression were, predictably, the press, radio, and public gatherings. Perhaps more important, writers and speakers routinely conceptualized their audience as “all of São Paulo”—an apparently inclusive category that, as I will argue, entailed its own exclusions. Periodically there were appeals to specific groups, such as workers or immigrants, but the basic script remained unaltered regardless of the social segment being addressed. By the early 1950s, in contrast, organizers of the IV Centenário could enlist the aid of public relations and opinion research firms, and target particular segments of the population for different publications, events, expositions, and activities. In an urban landscape that featured massive general strikes, sporadic protests about miserable living conditions on the periphery, and dramatically expanded political competition, it had become difficult, even impossible, to imagine São Paulo as a single “community.”

### **A Note about Identity**

In an article published in February 2000, sociologist Rogers Brubaker and historian Frederick Cooper took their colleagues to task for (over)using the category of identity, which they regarded as having become so ubiquitous as to be rendered meaningless. In a take-no-prisoners critique, they targeted virtually every school of thought that used identity as a category of analysis, including those who worked with a “harder,” more essentialized notion of identity, and those who took what they called a “soft constructivist” position that emphasized fluidity and fluctuation. Scholars of the first tendency, according to Brubaker and Cooper, err in accepting a category of practice at face value, thereby reifying identities—a criticism I find completely convincing. As for scholars of the second, “soft” school, their treatment of “identity” as something fluid, unstable, and multiple, “leaves us without a rationale for talking about ‘identities’ at all,” according to Brubaker and Cooper.<sup>95</sup> Here I am less persuaded. Despite the authors’ call for careful attention to language, their own critical use of terms such as “soft” and “fluid” seems to have led them to the questionable conclusion that identity, from this perspective, is not a useful category for the (tough?) analytical task of understanding how identities can “harden, congeal, and crystallize” into something powerful and often dangerous. Not only do I find their point here unpersuasive, but I find

their critique of constructivism markedly inconsistent. While they initially disparage the constructivist approach as too wispy and ambiguous, they later on insist that “even in its constructivist guise, the language of ‘identity’ disposes us to think in terms of bounded groupness.”<sup>96</sup> This, however, is not a problem of constructivism per se, but of a poor application of the interpretive framework it offers.

In making this bold theoretical intervention, Brubaker and Cooper may be tossing out the baby with the bathwater. Again, I entirely agree with the authors’ criticisms of the “hard approach” to identity and what I would call sloppy constructivism; we should never treat identity as “always already ‘there,’ as something individuals and groups ‘have.’”<sup>97</sup> Instead, I regard identity as a discourse or truth claim available to certain groups or individuals, and not others. Further, I would argue that identities operate in different registers. Under certain historical circumstances (which I suspect are too idiosyncratic to lend themselves to any kind of social science modeling), political and cultural entrepreneurs can mobilize populations to take action, even take up arms. Here identity operates, not as the cause of the movement, but as a marker of difference that makes it unthinkable not to join, in part because one then risks being identified with the despised other. Such experiences may or may not harden boundaries of difference, but even if this intense identification proves ephemeral, traces remain as a way of thinking about the world that can reinforce hierarchies and divisions in more “casual,” day-to-day encounters, regardless of whether one makes friends or finds marriage partners across shifting boundaries.<sup>98</sup>

One alternative would be to dispose of the admittedly overused term “identity” and just refer to “paulistinidade,” or paulista-ness, instead of paulista identity. But aside from the clumsiness of the English translation, I think we lose something in excising the word “identity” since paulistinidade refers to an unstable bundle of traits associated with an imagined region called São Paulo; it omits the process—what Brubaker and Cooper would call “identification” or “self-definition”—by which individuals or groups claim or assume these traits.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, these alternative terms, though perfectly appropriate in certain instances, are less satisfactory when we shift to a more intense political register in that they involve an active, conscious, deliberate choice, and individuate the process in a way that obscures the role of collective “structures of feeling,” which serve to make the refusal of certain identities almost unimaginable.<sup>100</sup> Thus the repeated use of phrases implying not only unanimity, but even the merging of minds and sentiments, in descriptions of the 1932 Constitutionalist Movement. Typical is the following commentary, by

journalist Paulo Nogueira Filho, regarding the urgency of forming a “United Front” (Frente Única) against the Vargas regime: “It was hardly necessary to undertake a profound study, but merely a dispassionate one, to observe that in São Paulo what was happening was a phenomenon of the general will, whose dictates were consolidating with irrepressible power. Hence, the paulista masses, from the moment they became conscious of themselves, would under no circumstances allow themselves to be ruled by men in whose spirit there survived the vestiges of the dominant mentality in the slaveholding pens.”<sup>101</sup> The point is not that paulistas were actually “thinking with one mind,” or responding to the beat of “a single heart,” to quote the title of a recently televised *novela* set during this period of paulista history. Rather, it is to see the way Nogueira Filho, by posing the issue in this manner, seeks to make it unthinkable for someone who would claim to be paulista *not* to join the movement. Self-definition implies a range of options, as if the individual were shopping for a suitable persona, but movements organized around an identity, whether socioeconomic, regional, racial, ethnic, or sexual, typically seek to erase other possibilities, and to make the identity in question the only imaginable choice. In his reminiscences of his service as a volunteer in the Constitutionalist forces, the former law student Luiz Gonzaga Naclério Homem repeatedly admits, with evident regret, to harboring doubts about the Causa Paulista.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, at various points he wonders why, in light of his lack of enthusiasm, he felt compelled to volunteer: Was he afraid of being considered a coward? Or of disappointing his family and friends? The case of Naclério Homem, far from calling into question the potency of paulista identity, does just the opposite. No identity, no matter how powerful, can be expected to erase individual idiosyncracies of thought and feeling. It is precisely his decision, despite a lack of conviction, to fight for “the beautiful ideal” that speaks to the strength of regional *identity*.

In the decades that are the focus of this book, any political or cultural entrepreneur intent upon producing a study of paulista identity that presented it as something stable and real would almost certainly open with the history of colonial “Piratininga,” just as a narrative of (North) American exceptionalism would likely begin with the pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock. Needless to say, that’s *not* where this book will begin. Chapter 1, “Paulista Modern,” centers on the initial period of economic and demographic growth following the coffee boom, but particularly on the 1920s. The latter decade was a time when paulista intellectuals, politicians, and journalists of various stripes advanced



the notion that their home region had a special proclivity for modernity. But it was also a time when Brazilians from other regions, though expressing pride in São Paulo's prosperity, began to vigorously contest paulista claims to political hegemony, thereby prompting more elaborate assertions or defenses of regional superiority. The decade (and the chapter) ends with the seizure of power by the *gaúcho* politician, Getúlio Vargas.<sup>103</sup>

The next four chapters explore different aspects of the Constitutionalist Movement that culminated in the uprising against the Vargas regime in 1932, an event also known as the “Guerra Paulista.” Chapter 2, “Constituting Paulista Identity,” examines the discourses, many of them rooted in racist arguments, that circulated in São Paulo during the early 1930s and that served to intensify a sense of crisis and harden lines of difference between paulistas and Brazilians from other regions, especially the Nordeste. Chapter 3, “The Middle Class in Arms? Fighting for São Paulo,” looks at the process of mobilization for war and the experience of combat, with attention to both the actual composition of the battalions that fought for the Causa Paulista, including the all Afro-Brazilian Black Legion, and the ways in which the paulista volunteer was imagined in print and visual representations of the armed struggle. In a similar vein, chapter 4, “Marianne into Battle? The Mulher Paulista and the Revolution of 1932,” focuses on the prominent role played by women in the Guerra Paulista, and the gendered representations of paulista history and identity. In particular, this chapter examines what we might call the discursive management of the potentially disruptive presence of women in the public sphere, and the way in which the figure of the “Mulher Paulista” served to depoliticize women’s participation. Closing this section, chapter 5, “Provincializing São Paulo,” explores the responses to assertions of paulista superiority from various opponents of the Constitutionalist Campaign, but especially from the press in the Nordeste. These counter-discourses illuminate the limitations of a national community imagined through the lens of regional superiority.

The next section takes the reader to the 1950s and to an urban São Paulo that is preparing for its four hundredth anniversary celebrations. Chapter 6, “São Paulo Triumphant,” examines the various “uses” of the IV Centenário, and more specifically, the structuring of the yearlong commemorations as a massive response to the question “Why São Paulo?”—that is, why, of all Brazilian regions, did São Paulo emerge as Brazil’s center of modernity and progress? At the same time, it considers the tensions between organizers who sought to highlight São Paulo as a center of taste, refinement, and the latest trends in “highbrow culture” and those paulistas, especially elected politicians, who sought to give the commemorations a more “popular” character. Chapter 7,

“Exhibiting Exceptionalism: History at the IV Centenário,” carries on this discussion, but in the specific context of historical reenactments and exhibitions during the IV Centenário. A principal concern in this chapter is to explore the different ways in which paulista history continued to be “whitened” even during the mid-1950s, the heyday of “racial democracy.” It also illuminates the central role of the past even during an occasion apparently oriented toward the future.<sup>104</sup> Although the forging of collective memory is a theme throughout the book, it takes center stage in chapter 8, “The White Album: Memory, Identity, and the 1932 Uprising.” Here I look at the changing forms of commemoration, and the shifting meanings embodied by the events of 1932. Starting with the fifth anniversary solemnities, just months before Vargas’s declaration of an *Estado Novo*, and then continuing into the IV Centenário in 1954 and the “Silver Jubilee” in 1957, I examine the different ways in which the memory of the uprising served as a marker of paulistidade. Finally, the epilogue/conclusion suggests some connections, if not continuities, between the developments of 1932 and 1954 and the paulista liberals’ embrace of a profoundly illiberal seizure of power by the Brazilian military in 1964. Even that event, typically interpreted on a national or even international scale, cannot be fully understood without reference to the spatial inequalities and racialized discourses that have informed so much of Brazil’s postcolonial history.