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Gender, generation, and personal destinies: histories of women and men textile workers in Bahia, Brazil

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Abstract

This paper analyzes gender inequalities in the industrial development of Bahia, Brazil, on the basis of work-histories of women and men textile workers in Salvador, residents of a former workers' villa owned by Fábrica São Braz, a factory which closed in the late 1950s. It compares and contrasts (dis)continuities found along gender and generation lines, showing that while most of these workers were not absorbed by new industry, this was especially true for the older generation and particularly marked in the case of women: 1) women worked at the less skilled occupations in the mill, many of which became obsolete with the production of synthetic textiles; 2) while traditional industries had relied primarily on the employment of women, new industry employed mainly men; and 3) jobs away from their neighborhood made the reconciling of wage work and domestic activities more difficult for women. They were left with few options but that of resorting to the so-called 'informal sector', becoming laundresses, domestic servants, petty-commodity producers, operators of food stands, and the like. This break with their condition as industrial workers would be extended to the succeeding generations of women in the community. The daughters of former factory workers are no longer factory workers themselves. These findings show that the divide resulting from the workings of patriarchal gender ideology has sharply imprinted the history of textile workers in Bahia. This calls for efforts towards the 'gendering' of Brazilian labor history.

Keywords: Textile Workers. Gender Divide. Deskillling of Industrial Workers. Labor History. Bahia, Brazil.

Gênero, geração e destinos pessoais: histórias de operárias e operários têxteis em Salvador, Bahia

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as desigualdades de gênero e geração no desenvolvimento industrial da Bahia, com base nas histórias de trabalho de mulheres e homens operários têxteis em Salvador, moradores de uma antiga vila operária da Fábrica São Braz, uma fábrica que foi fechada no final dos anos 1950. Remete-se, em especial, às (des)continuidades encontradas ao longo das linhas de gênero e geração, revelando que, embora a maioria desses trabalhadores não tenha sido absorvida pelas novas indústrias de sintéticos surgidas a partir dos anos 1970, isso se deu de forma marcante para as gerações mais velhas e particularmente no caso das mulheres: 1) as mulheres trabalhavam nas ocupações menos qualificadas da fábrica, muitas das quais se tornaram obsoletas com a produção de têxteis sintéticos; 2) enquanto as indústrias tradicionais dependiam principalmente do emprego de mulheres, a indústria moderna passou a empregar principalmente homens; e 3) os empregos longe do bairro de residência tornaram a reconciliação do trabalho assalariado e das atividades domésticas mais difícil para as mulheres. Restaram-lhes, assim, poucas opções, além de recorrer ao chamado "setor informal"; elas se tornaram lavadeiras, empregadas domésticas, artesãs, operadoras de barracas de comida e similares. Esse rompimento com sua condição de operárias foi estendido às gerações seguintes de mulheres na comunidade. As filhas de ex-operárias não são mais operárias. Esses achados mostram que as divisões e desigualdades resultantes da ideologia patriarcal de gênero marcaram fortemente a história dos trabalhadores têxteis na Bahia, o que exige esforços no sentido de se 'gendrar' a história do trabalho no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Operariado Têxtil. Desigualdades de Gênero. Industriários. História do Trabalho. Bahia, Brasil.

Introduction¹

In the mid-nineteenth century the province of Bahia in northeastern Brazil experienced a rise of industrial development, emerging as the main cotton textiles manufacturing center in the country. By 1880, one-third of all textile mills in operation in Brazil were located in Salvador, the capital-city of Bahia and its environs. Together, they responded for close to 35% of all textiles produced in the country at the time, placing Bahia in a leading position in the production of manufactured goods throughout the last decades of the imperial regime (STEIN, 1957; AZEVEDO; LINS, 1969).

However, this period of flourishing industrial development in Bahia was short-lived. By the late 1880s, the center of cotton manufacturing was already shifting to the southern region, first to Rio de Janeiro and later to São Paulo. In 1907, Bahia already figured among the lesser manufacturing producers in the country. Furthermore, after 1910, the rate at which new factories were established in the area began to dwindle, coming to a near halt by the 1920s (AZEVEDO; LINS, 1969; FARIA, 1980).

For the next three decades, Bahia experienced a period of seemingly 'industrial involution' (TAVARES, 1965), marked by the increasing deterioration of its local textile industry. It was only in the late 1950s, after the discovery of petroleum off the shores of Salvador and the subsequent creation of Petrobras, Brazil's National Petroleum Company, that this situation began to be reversed. Petroleum paved the way for the economic development of the area, incorporating Bahia into new patterns of capitalist accumulation (FARIA, 1980; OLIVEIRA, 1987). But the revitalization of the local economy could not change the fate of its cotton textile industry. On the contrary, it sealed its demise. The growing economic importance of Salvador in the internal division of labor demanded the construction of new highways linking the area to the main industrial centers in the South, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This greatly facilitated the flow of their products into the local market and intensified

¹ This work is based on chapters of my PhD dissertation defended at the Department of Anthropology, Boston University, in December 1996 (SARDENBERG, 1997). A previous version was presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, Penn., December 2-6, 1998. It has been updated since then with data collected through surveys conducted in Plataforma in 2005 and 2009.

competition. Salvador textile manufacturers operated with old mills, old machinery, and without significant incentives for modernizing their factories. They could not meet the demands of the market (FARIA, 1980), given that the development of the petrochemical industry in the area directed interests to the production of synthetic fibers. This required new technology, new machinery, and a more skilled labor force, making it easier to build anew than to convert the old factories. By the mid-1960s, most of these factories had silenced their spindles and looms for good (FRANCO, 1983).

The deactivation of the mills sealed the end of an era in the history of industrial production in Bahia. Most importantly, it also represented the closing of a chapter in Bahia's labor history. Yet, the interplay of these developments did not impact to the same extent nor in the same way on women workers as compared to men workers. As I intend to demonstrate in this work, pre-existing gender divisions in the traditional factory system, allied to women's domestic roles, created obstacles to their involvement in the 'new' industry. As a result, most women who had been previously engaged in production in the old cotton textile factories were forced to find work in the so-called 'informal' labor market.

My re-constructions in this work are based on data collected through field research conducted in the early 1990s (SARDENBERG, 1997), counting as well on documental research undertaken in the archives of Companhia Progresso & União Fabril da Bahia. However, it focuses primarily on interview data related to work-histories of women and men who worked at Fábrica São Braz, one of the major textile mills in Bahia. Set in Plataforma, a suburb of Salvador, this mill was founded in 1875 and closed in 1959, operating for most of its existence primarily on women's labors. It was based on a 'factory-workers' village' system (LEITE LOPES, 1979; 1984; 1988), providing company housing to those families whose members were employed in the mills.

More than a means of tending to labor recruitment and meeting other operation needs, however, the villa system also provided for the institution of what José Sérgio Leite Lopes (1988, p.15-22) has termed *servidão burguesa* (bourgeois serfdom), that is, a form of social relation in which the worker, in contrast to the classic proletarian of the industrial revolution, was only partially

'free'. Factory owners exerted direct control not only in the sphere of production but also over the sphere of reproduction of the worker through the concentration of industrial capital and ownership of territorial property. Such an arrangement often meant that the domestic life of the worker not only took place in the backyard of the factory, but also that it was directly controlled by the work process and the timing of the activities of the work day. This was symbolically expressed by the sounding of the whistles of the factory, calling and returning workers to and from their families.

Though remaining in operation during the decades of involution, the factory had been in a process of increasing deterioration for quite some time. In the 1930's, when falling profits promoted the merging of different companies, this factory had been incorporated into the aforementioned Companhia Progresso & União Fabril da Bahia, a conglomerate of textile factories in the hands of the Bernardo Catharino family, who owned most of the landed property in the outskirts of the city. Investments in rental property brought greater returns than factory production; no effort was made to modernize the factories in the face of external competition. In 1959, production at Fábrica São Braz was stopped; when it was reactivated a few years later, it employed less than half of its previous workforce. In 1967, Fábrica São Braz was incorporated into the Fábrica de Tecidos Fátima and its name was changed to Fatbraz, S.A. However, it operated under this name for only a short time. In 1968 it closed down again, and has not reopened since (BEVILAQUA, 1992)

The closing down of this factory occurred at the same time in which major economic changes took place in Bahia. Indeed, in the following three decades, the metropolitan area of Salvador developed at a rapid pace, corresponding to a new moment in the history of capitalist expansion in Bahia. Beginning in the 1960s Salvador was to rise as one of Brazil's major petrochemical industries; the Petrochemical Complex Pole of Camaçari, situated in an area just outside of the city, and figures as the largest industrial center in the Northeast Region. The tourism industry also had a significant upsurge over the following decades, with spill-over effects on all sectors of the local economy.

At the same time, the development of the agro-industry in the interior of Bahia contributed to increasing land speculation and the speeding up of the process of expropriation of the peasantry (SOUZA; FARIA, 1980). All of this has stimulated increasing migration to the metropolitan area of Salvador and significant population growth, leading Salvador to become the third largest city in the country, surpassed in population only by São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Yet, although the local and regional economies expanded considerably in the period outlined, opening up new job opportunities, this expansion fell short of absorbing the available (and growing) work force. In 1992, for instance, when the first work-histories for this study were being registered, the unemployment rate in Salvador was close to 10%. In addition, over 55% of those engaged in gainful occupations were found to be involved in activities which could be loosely identified with the so-called 'informal labor market'. Of special note is the fact that, despite the expansion of industry in the area, only 12,4% of the economically active population was involved in activities included in the industrial sector (AZEVEDO, 1992).

Contrasting these findings with data available for the decades preceding industrial expansion in Bahia during the 1970s and 1980s, it is possible to detect some clear discontinuities both in terms of the class of local entrepreneurs as well as in the composition of the work force engaged in industrial production. There was a clear shift along sex/gender lines: while up to the 1950's women represented over 80% of the 'traditional' urban proletariat in Bahia, in the 1990s the industrial work force was clearly male dominated in that 83.4% of all industrial workers were men while women represented a mere 16.6% (AZEVEDO, 1992). This shift was also evident when one considers the evolution of the female labor force. As Iracema Guimarães and Nadja Castro (1987) have shown, although the female labor force has grown considerably since 1960, there was marked trend towards the shift of women from industrial production to activities related to the service sector. Between 1960 and 1970, in fact, there was a considerable reduction in the percentage of women working in industry, which has been associated with the closing down of most of the remaining textile and cigar factories which had traditionally relied on female labor (GUIMARÃES; CASTRO, 1987).

This shift in the composition of the industrial labor force of Salvador must be regarded as an expression of gender divisions in the labor market, as manifested in the sexualization and/or sexual segregation of occupations, in sectors of the economy, as well as in specific branches of industry (BRUSCHINI, 1994). Whereas the previous period of industrialization was centered on textile production, which has historically engaged women workers, industrial development in Bahia in the 1970s and 1980s took place mostly in those areas which are generally identified with a male labor force - such as the petrochemical and construction industries. Yet, as it will be seen ahead, even the 'new' textile factories operating with 'high technology', and installed with the support of SUDENE (see below), did not absorb large proportions of women in their workforce (FRANCO, 1983).

In this work I am concerned with demonstrating how this shift affected employment opportunities for the women and men of Plataforma interviewed for this study. I take into account not only the effects of the closing of the factory, but also other changes that have taken place in the area, which resulted in the transformation of Plataforma as well. Since the closing of Fábrica São Braz in the late 1950s, Plataforma has evolved from *vila operária* relatively isolated from city life, to a densely populated neighborhood of the *periferia* of Salvador, caught up in the webs of urbanity and its ensuing problems.²

Trends in the Industrial Development of Bahia

In Plataforma, many workers interviewed in the early 1990s still remembered 1954 as the year in which Getúlio Vargas "left this life to enter history."³ For Dona Anita, however, 1954 and Getúlio's death also represent a turning point in her life. Soon after his funeral, she was called to the personnel office at Fábrica Conceição and told that despite being a good weaver with nearly

² On a general level, in Brazil, the term *periferia* refers to the complex of neighborhoods, which are usually located on the fringes, or outskirts of major cities. However, the notion of *periferia* in Brazil also implies social condition, specifically, to those residential areas which are not only away from the centre but also "precarious, needy, and underprivileged in terms of public services and urban infrastructure", and which are immediately associated with the poor. (CALDEIRA, 1984, p.7)

³ The quote which in Portuguese reads "*saio da vida para entrar na história*," comes from the letter dated 08/25/54 left by Getulio Vargas before committing suicide.

nine years of experience in that factory, she was no longer needed. For the next four years D. Anita roamed around from "job to job" until finding work at Fábrica São Braz in 1958, only to be dismissed a year later when the factory closed down: "After Getúlio died I went from job to job. The workers suffered a lot without him, they suffer still today." (SILVA, 1993, verbal information).⁴

In the course of this work, as the developments surrounding the closing of Fábrica São Braz and its impact on the work histories of women and men from Plataforma are discussed, it will be seen that D. Anita was not alone in her roaming around in search for employment in that period. Nor is she entirely wrong in timing the onset of her troubles to the period following Getúlio Vargas' passing or even to his figure. But the existing links are much less direct and flow in a different direction than the way she understood them.

In a wider perspective, they have to do with the crisis of the textile industry in the Northeast which began to brew in the late 1930s during Vargas' government. It was at that time that the first steps towards the creation of a national market were taken through the centralization of power and of revenues in the federal government. This made it impossible for the different states to legislate over their internal and external commerce. As a consequence, the regional barriers previously created by protective tariffs were brought down, promoting the flow of commodities throughout the national territory and thus increased competition for regional/local markets (OLIVEIRA, 1987).

Nevertheless, the full impact of these measures on the textile industry of Bahia would be delayed for nearly two decades; indeed, they would not be felt until around the time of Getúlio's death. Until then, the lack of more effective means of communication and transport linking the Northeast to the South, where superior and more competitive products were fashioned, had acted as a deterrent to their wider distribution. In addition, World War II market demands not only diverted the flow of products towards international exports but also gave a boost to textile production in all regions (STEIN, 1957).

⁴ To protect the anonymity of the workers interviewed for this work, their names listed here are fictive.

With the end of the war, however, interests were to be directed to the national market once again.⁵ This time it would prove to be disastrous to the traditional textile industries in Bahia. Southern entrepreneurs dominated CETEX, the Executive Textile Commission (*Comissão Executiva Têxtil*) which had been created by Vargas in 1944 as part of the industrial mobilization war efforts (DEAN, 1969; STEIN, 1957). This ensured them not only greater advantage in the allocation of production quotas during the war but also in post-war incentives to the modernization of factories.⁶ They would be further aided by the construction of the Rio-Bahia highway which, started in 1949, facilitated access to the Northeast and thus the circulation of commodities from the South into the region (FARIA, 1980; OLIVEIRA, 1980). Finally, but certainly not less important, southern entrepreneurs would find in the rising textile workers of the Northeast unexpected allies in penetrating local markets. With the rise of labor movements in the region, northeastern entrepreneurs could no longer depend on a 'docile' workforce to fight competition by keeping production costs low as they had before. Pressured on all sides, northeastern entrepreneurs had either to modernize or silently perish.

It is important to emphasize, nevertheless, that this need to modernize would come amidst a nation-wide drive towards industrialization and development, fully supported by the national and regional/local governments. Important strides in that direction would be taken during Juscelino Kubitschek presidential term (1956-1960). In his inaugural speech, Kubitschek pledged to lead the country into the 'modern era,' making it advance "fifty years in five" with his program, the *Plano de Metas* (FARO; SILVA, 2002; MARANHÃO, 1981). As a symbol of this 'new' era, Kubitschek built Brasília, a pharaonic project to transfer the seat of government from Rio to the heart of the Brazilian hinterlands. However, the major efforts of his administration were to be directed to the development of the

⁵ In 1946, following the fall of Vargas' dictatorial regime, textile exports were suspended to force a lowering of the prices of textiles in the national market which had risen significantly during the II World War (DEAN, 1969; STEIN, 1957). Although this suspension lasted for only part of that year, currency policies regarding the official exchange rate of the dollar maintaining it artificially lower than the parallel market did not encourage exports. At the same time, these policies provided the incentive for the importation of new machinery (VERSIANI, 1972).

⁶ It is well to note that only Lundgren Inco., located in Paulista, Pernambuco, was among the top industries allocated large quotas by Cetex, all the other companies being located in states of the Center-South (LEITE LOPES, 1988, p. 322).

national automobile industry which, though centered in São Paulo, would have in time a ripple effect throughout the country.

Of special interest to the matters here treated was the fact that "the project of industrialization in the Center-South," as observed Francisco de Oliveira (1987, p. 41-42), "had a fundamental fallacy in its supporting base: Brazil's energetic matrix lacked petroleum." Systematic surveys to find it were thus started by the newly created PETROBRAS (Brazilian Petroleum). The first one, carried out precisely in the Bahia Recôncavo area, revealed the existence of rich fuel reserves. By the mid-50s, the Landulpho Alves Refinery installed in the area of Mataripe was in full production (TEIXEIRA; GUERRA, 2000). For the next three decades, the reserves at the Recôncavo would sustain Bahia as the only national fuel producer, supplying nearly one-fourth of the national demand (OLIVEIRA, 1987, p.43).⁷

The maximization of these reserves in the form of the development of the petrochemical industry in the area was not to be materialized until nearly two decades later, under the military regime. However, the installation of PETROBRAS in the Recôncavo had immediate effects. The large direct capital investments coupled with those in related construction work and along with them, the input of the mass of salaries flowing in the local economy, began to revitalize it (AZEVEDO, 1975).⁸ But it was not until the 1960s, with the creation of the Superintendence for the Development of the Northeast, better known by the acronym SUDENE, that the economic 'revolution' of Bahia took hold (TEIXEIRA; GUERRA, 2000).

Aiming to redress the regional disparities engendered by the process of uneven development in the country, SUDENE opened the way for capital investments in the Northeast.⁹ This came by means of federal incentives matched by equally enticing incentives on the part of the State of Bahia towards

⁷ The discovery of fuel reserves in Bahia dates to 1939 but the Landulpho Alves Refinery was installed only in 1949 (VIANNA FILHO, 1981, p.11).

⁸ Between 1955 and 1959, for instance, the investments on PETROBRAS local projects grew from 8.1% to 66.9% of the total internal industrial income of Bahia. Likewise, the percentage of wages paid to PETROBRAS personnel in industrial income would grow from 7.64% in 1958, to 38.7% in 1969 (AZEVEDO, 1975).

⁹ The steps leading to the creation of SUDENE and its results are discussed by its creator, Celso Furtado (1979; 1971).

the creation of industries in the area as well as the modernization of pre-existing ones. They included not only large tax exemptions and the financing of the importation of the necessary equipment, but also the construction of the Industrial Center of Aratu (C.I.A.), located just north of Salvador in the Recôncavo Area and with a port of its own (Porto de Aratu), where sizable lots equipped of all the necessary infrastructure were sold to the investors at a nominal price.¹⁰

To the industries settled in C.I.A. were added those of the Petrochemical Complex of Camaçari (*Polo Petroquímico de Camaçari*). Created in the early 1970s to function in the county of Camaçari, adjacent to Salvador, the Polo Petroquímico would count on 17 major industries in its initial project. Linked to PETROBRAS' efforts in the area and also benefiting from federal and state incentives, the development of the Polo Petroquímico responded for more than four billion dollars of capital investments in the region (ALBAN SUAREZ, 1986), completing the process of inversion of Bahia's role in the regional division of labor. To paraphrase Francisco de Oliveira (1987, p. 45), from a 'capital exporter', Bahia became an 'importer', attracting not only Center-South investors but also international, multinational companies. The effects of this 'revolution' in the labor market of the Metropolitan Area of Salvador (AMS) were considerable. In Oliveira's own words:

Between 1940 and 1970 the structure of employment in the AMS changes radically. The Metropolitan Area is completely 'de-ruralized': it goes from 23.6% of the PEA (Economically Active Population) in agriculture to only 5.7% in 1970; industrial employment goes up from 16.5% to 26.1% in the same period, while in the wide tertiary sectors growth is also accentuated: from 59.9% in 1940 to 68.2% in 1970. [...] In absolute terms, there was the creation of 76,000 new industrial jobs, 180,000 new jobs in the tertiary (sector), and a total of 256,000 new urban jobs (OLIVEIRA, 1987, p. 51-52, my translation).

¹⁰ The results of this project are outlined by Luiz Viana Filho, governor of the State of Bahia at the time and one of the major local figures pushing for the 'development' of the region: in 1967, there were 39 industries set to be installed at CIA, representing investments in the order of approximately 300 million *cruzeiros*. In 1970 there were already 129 with planned investments of 2.1 billion *cruzeiros*, ensuring 21.000 direct and 105.000 indirect jobs. They were fruit of the spending action of the government of the state which, until 1970, invested in that Industrial Center 108 million *cruzeiros*. In synthesis, we had, in 1970, 25 companies in full production; 37 in phase of being implanted; and 125 with optional letters. There was no more eloquent proof that the efforts of the Bureau of Industry and Commerce were fully compensated (VIANNA FILHO, 1981, p.30, my translation).

During the next two decades following the implantation of the Polo Petroquímico, these tendencies continued to be accentuated (DIAS, 2004; TEIXEIRA; GUERRA, 2000). However, despite this remarkable expansion of the industrial labor market, employment in the more traditional industries such as textiles did not grow at the same rate. Whereas, in 1959, for instance, these industries responded for 70% of the Aggregated Industrial Value (AIV) and 77.6% of industrial jobs in the Metropolitan Area of Salvador, in the period 1960-1970 these percentages had already fallen to 30% of the AIV and 46% of the jobs. This drop was particularly marked in the textiles sector: from representing 24% of the AIV and 28.2% of industrial jobs in 1959, by 1970 this sector only accounted for 13.5% of the inversions and 12.8% of the labor force occupied in industry (OLIVEIRA, 1987, p. 47; OLIVEIRA; REICHSTUL, 1977).

Although in part these declining percentages reflect the expansion of the more 'dynamic' industries in the period, they express more closely changes occurring in the textile industry on a national level which have resulted in reductions in the workforce employed in this industrial sector. These changes are apparent when considering the size of the workforce in Brazil employed in textile production in the decades between 1940 and 1970. As displayed on Table 1, between 1940 and 1950 the boost to textile production related to war efforts resulted in an increase on the numbers of workers employed in the textile sector. However, during the 1950s, the modernization of the production process through greater automation of looms and spindles contributed to a reduction of the workforce needed to operate them.¹¹ This tendency towards increased automation continued in the following decade with the introduction of synthetic fibers in textile production.¹² More resistant to breakage than natural fibers, synthetic ones allowed not only for the simplification of the production process but also for the use of greater speed in the functioning of the machinery, leading

¹¹ Despite the long existence of automatic looms in the United States and Europe, they would only be used in Brazil in a larger scale after World War II. It is estimated that in 1950, for instance, 80% of the looms in operation in the country were still of the mechanical type (PEREIRA, 1979, p. 54).

¹² This tendency can be apprehended by the decrease in the number of spindles and looms in operation between 1960 and 1970. While a study conducted by CEPAL (1962) revealed that in 1960 there were of 3,610 thousand spindles and 95 thousand looms operating, researchers from UNIDO (1972) accounted for only 2,930 thousand spindles and 80,500 looms in 1970.

to a continuous reduction in the workforce employed directly in production (FRANCO, 1983; SAFFIOTI, 1981; VERSIANI, 1972; 1996).

Table 1: Evolution of Employment in the Textile Industry in Brazil by Sex
1940-1970

Year	Total	Men	Women	% of Women
1940	290.298	101.218	189.080	65.1
1950	368.960	161.023	207.937	56.4
1960	319.983	162.777	157.206	49.1
1970	313.317	163.507	149.810	47.8

Source: Saffioti, 1981, p. 29.

Let it be noted, however, that these reductions occurred solely in relation to women, not to men. To the contrary, as Table 1 reveals, the actual number of men textile workers increased throughout the period here considered. As to women, although there was an increment in their absolute numbers during the period 1940-1950, the proportion they represented in relation to men suffered a decrease. This process of inversion of the textile workforce on gender lines was maintained in the following decades: indeed, from representing 65.1% of these workers in 1940, women would account for only 47.8% in 1970.

In part, this inversion was underscored by the sophistication of the production process which created greater demands for a more skilled workforce.¹³ However, in the Northeast in particular, the closing of many of the old mills such as Fábrica São Braz which traditionally employed primarily women in production was an equally important factor (SINGER, 1980).

In the case of Bahia, the effects of these developments are apparent when considering the distribution of the workforce by sex and sector of activity in different years. Actually, since the 1960s - in spite of the expansion of the

¹³ In addition, with the elevation of the organic composition of capital, there has been also a raise in the weight of the personnel not directly employed in production in relation those who are (GUIMARÃES; CASTRO, 1987).

industrial labor market in the region - the proportion of women in urban areas engaged in production activities has increasingly diminished.¹⁴ As displayed on Table 2, for instance, in 1960 these activities absorbed 46.2% of the women economically active in the cities; by 1970 this proportion had already fallen to 28.4%, coming to a mere 16.6% in 1980. This sharp drop was underscored by a negative growth in absolute terms; in 1980, the number of women involved in production was actually smaller than that registered two decades earlier. Men, in contrast, moved in the opposite direction; the proportion of those engaged in production in 1980, was 10% higher than the corresponding figures in 1960.

Table 2: Composition of Occupied Population by Sex and Sector of Activity*
Bahia 1960/1980

Sex & Sectors	1960		1970		1980	
	Abs.	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	%
WOMEN	191,555	100.0	259,727	100.0	445,369	100.0
Production	88,524	46.2	73,668	28.4	73,967	16.6
Commercial	14,314	7.5	25,378	9.8	91,279	20.5
Services	88,717	46.3	160,683	61.8	280,123	62.9
MEN	354,446	100.0	559,693	100.0	953,927	100.0
Production	146,992	41.5	264,258	47.3	488,923	51.3
Commercial	144,598	40.8	196,137	35.0	313,019	32.8
Services	62,856	17.7	99,298	17.7	151,985	15.9
TOTAL	546,001	-	819,422	-	1,399,296	-

*Excludes activities in the agricultural sector

Source: GUIMARÃES; CASTRO, 1987, p. 8.

¹⁴ The 'alienation' of women from industrial production in Brazil has been treated in several works. See, for example, SAFFIOTI, 1981. More recent studies have shown that a reversal of this trend has occurred in particular sectors of industry (BRUSCHINI, 1994; 1995;).

It is well to note that although these trends are not restricted to Bahia, finding expression also on a national level, they have been particularly marked in that state.¹⁵ What seems to explain the situation is that in Bahia, it is the development of the petrochemical sector - which relies primarily on a male workforce - that responds to a larger extent for the expansion of the industrial labor market in the decades in question. Of particular interest to the discussion that follows is the observable shift of women from production activities to those related to the circulation of commodities and, even more sharply, to the services sector. Although in statistical terms this dislocation is but a trend, no matter how marked, in the case of the former textile workers at Fábrica São Braz it is a change which they have experienced in their own lifetime. This will become apparent as their work-histories following the deactivation of the factory are disclosed.

Retracing Work-Histories

Let it be recalled that in 1932, when União Fabril and Progresso Industrial merged, the newly formed company incorporated eight mills, six of which were still in full operation. By 1959, however, União Fabril only had two mills operating, Fábrica São Braz being the only original one. The other mill was the Fábrica de Gazes Industriais - FAGIP which was created in 1956 to produce gauze,

¹⁵ In this work, I follow the conceptualizations of economic activities outlined by Iracema Guimarães and Nadja Castro, as follows: "Production, in the strict sense, referring to material production involving the spheres of extraction, production and transformation of raw-materials. That is, processes that involve the creation of commodities whose use values are material and perfectly separable from the direct producer and/or the act of creating them. [...] The spheres of circulation and consumption constitute what has been conventionally denominated 'tertiary sector' of social-economic life. [...] The sphere of circulation involves the range of activities that complement the sphere of production in a distinct manner. In it are referred the movements of four sub-spheres, as follows: the circulation of capital which includes the activities of financial intermediation strictly linked to the processes of capitalization of the Bahian economy; the circulation of commodities originating from the sphere of production (excluding real estate circulation), distribution (in its strict sense) of the commodities in general, communication (which permeates the spheres of production, circulation and consumption), and the services to the producer, denomination given to the auxiliary services to production in their wider sense. In the sphere of consumption are comprehended two major levels: collective consumption and individual (or personal) consumption. This encompasses both services produced predominantly for large scale consumption, to collective consumption which is realized in a simultaneous fashion as well as those activities related to the reproduction of the labor force in a physical-biological level, through services produced in great part through familial and/or domestic labor" (GUIMARÃES; CASTRO, 1987, p.4, my translation).

functioning in the same building where Fábrica Paraguassu, closed a few years before, formerly had operated.

By the end of 1959, however, Fábrica São Braz too was closed. According to the president of the company interviewed in the 1990s, this came as a result of technological inefficiency. The problem, he confided, was that "the machines were too old, too antiquated, it would take a lot to change everything." (GORDILHO, 1993, verbal information). His cousin and son of the president of the company at the time of the closing has raised other issues regarding this 'inefficiency':

My grandfather (Comendador Catharino) was mainly a merchant, not an industrialist. He did not reinvest much in the factories, he did not renovate the machinery. Then, after the war, the prices of cloth went down [...]. Another problem was that the accounting was not that great then. They didn't calculate production costs and the like. Besides, workers got paid by the week and they got paid in cash. They received little envelopes with their pay and it was really difficult to get all the necessary change to pay all those workers, close to fifteen hundred of them. So, you see, it was not just the machines that were old, the whole system was antiquated. (CATHARINO, 1993, verbal information)

His observations do conform with the findings in a 1951 United Nations report on the cotton textile industry in Latin America. According to this report, the backwardness of this industry in the region had two fundamental causes: first, "stagnation of technical progress" in the machinery and, second, "lack of progress in management" (STEIN, 1957, p. 184).¹⁶

Ten years later, an evaluation of textiles factories in the northeast conducted by SUDENE to account for the 'crisis' then experienced by the industry in the region, found it still backwards. The report attributed to "obsolete equipment," "excess of labor hands," and "lack of financing" great part of the blame along with economic factors. The solution encountered by SUDENE's planners was then modernization of the equipment and retraining of the workforce. However, this 'solution' involved the laying off of hundreds of workers

¹⁶ It is not surprising then that although attempts to introduce 'scientific management' began around the 1920s (RAGO, 2007), it was only around the 1950s that Taylorism and Fordism were to find their way in the organization of the work process in Brazilian industries. See, for example, VARGAS, 1985.

since what was implied was the substitution of mechanical for automatic machinery which "could obtain the same level of production with one-fourth of the workforce previously employed" (AÇÃO CATÓLICA OPERÁRIA, 1981, *apud* LEITE LOPES, 1988, p. 563, my translation).

Anticipating SUDENE's findings and recommendations, early in 1959 Fábrica São Braz had already begun to install automatic machinery in the shopfloor. However, the following notation registered on the records of the weaver Jovelina V. Santos on 6/10/59, suggests that this substitution was not easily accomplished:

Hired to work with 12 automatic looms, (she) worked only 6, giving a very poor production. Affirming that she could work looms for plaids, she was transferred to this type of machine. It was observed that she did not have any experience with this kind of loom; (she) was dismissed for lack of production. (FÁBRICA SÃO BRAZ, 1959)

In addition to a scarcity of trained workers to operate the new machines, the company also encountered resistance on the part of the older employers. As D. Luciana recalls: "Shortly before they closed, they got these huge machines, the size of a whole room and wanted people to work them all by themselves. Nobody wanted that, it was too hard, too much for one person." (SOUZA, L., 1992, verbal information).

Although no precise information is available, it all seems to indicate that problems of this order led União Fabril to opt for the same procedure followed in the case of FAGIP: instead of a gradual 'modernization' of the installations and retraining of the workforce, they would close Fábrica São Braz and start anew. The factory was closed at the end of 1959 but less than two years later, it was reactivated. However, operating now with new equipment, the factory would only employ the equivalent to one-fourth of the workforce that had originally staffed Fábrica São Braz.¹⁷ Whereas in the 1940s, for instance, a weaver in the old factory had operated two looms, in the early 1960s they were expected to work from

¹⁷ Unfortunately, the payroll books and other documents, materials related to the operations of the factory from 1960 onward were not made available for this study. All the information about factory operations during this period was obtained solely through interviews with the present directorate of the company as well as from former workers.

eight to twelve looms, this representing an 'economy' of three to six workers. Despite this economy in personnel, however, the factory did not bring the desired profits. In 1967, it was leased to Fábrica de Tecidos Fátima and renamed FATBRAZ but it had a short life span. In 1968, FATBRAZ was also deactivated, and thus, by 1970, União Fabril had only one factory, FAGIP, in operation.

It is important to emphasize that in the accounts of the people of Plataforma, it is the closing of the 'old' factory in 1959 - of Fábrica São Braz and not that of FATBRAZ in 1968 - that draws the line between the 'before and after' in the life of the neighborhood as well as in the personal work histories of former factory workers. This is not difficult to understand: for many of these workers, the closing of Fábrica São Braz signified the end of their lives as factory workers. However, not all of the former workers interviewed in the course of this study were dismissed in 1959 when the factory first closed down. Some, such as Sr. José, for example, left the factory on their own 'volition' in the mid fifties. Others, as in the case of D. Telma, were already retired by the time the factory closed down and mass dismissals occurred. Nevertheless, many of these 'voluntary' resignations (or retirements) came at a time when the company, already planning on a close out, was encouraging workers to resign by offering them indemnity settlements. Sr. José's narrative of his resignation illustrates how this was done:

I left the factory in 1957. I had 29 years on the job, not quite 30, and I heard they were calling in the older ones to give them one *'conto de reis'* for each year [on the job]. I say, hey, I am going to get thirty *contos*. I owe the cooperative, I owe the pharmacy, and I have ten children. I owe the charcoal men, I owe the bakery, I owe the butcher, and I can pay for everything and see what I do with the rest. So I went to the office to see the lawyer. He asked how long I had been there and was getting the papers ready for me to sign. The manager was there and he said: "Well, Sr. José, the company is not making any settlements, we are not calling people in for that. The company is just giving a little bonus [*'um agrado'*] to those who find it better to resign." Then they said that the company would give me 500 *'mil reis'* for each month. "You will get fifteen *'contos'*." But I didn't want that. So I went home. This was on a Wednesday, March 19, 1957 [...] On the 22nd I had a fight with my wife at home and left without breakfast. I got to work and there was a kid selling bananas. Water bananas [*'banana d'água'*], real big ones, 200 *'reis'* for six. I ate the bananas and a little while later I had to go to the bathroom. I smoked a cigarette... Then I felt sick. I stayed in the bathroom and one of my colleagues

came in and said: "José, your machine is all messed up [*embolada*]." I opened the door and said: "Hey, stop my machine, I will be out in a jiffy." But then he says: "Hey man, you are looking green." So I went to find the overseer and he gave me a pass to go home. I was sick. And I didn't come back. It was on March 22, 1957. The bananas made me sick. It was the *banana d'água*, I haven't eaten any since. The overseer had given me a pass. That was on a Friday, then came Saturday, the 23rd, Sunday, the 24th, on the 25th, a Monday, I went to the central office and sat there with the lawyer. Except that I thought everything was arranged for them to give me thirty *contos*, but then he told me to wait a moment, "let me check on the situation," he said, and was back in a jiffy. He said he got me an extra five. I was sure it was going to be thirty, but they 'ate ten.' After 29 years on the job, nearly 30, they only gave me twenty *contos*. That is, they had it all worked up, they talked me into it and all they gave me was twenty *contos*. This is the story. In 59, the factory closed. But had I not accepted that settlement, had I not resigned, I would have moved up (*'aí eu ia crescer*). Because the manager here, he really liked me, I would have moved up. Because people who did worse than I, moved. But I got too flustered, I didn't wait and so I didn't get anything good there. And I used to make good money; when they paid us everybody knew what I made, the whole factory knew it. I used to earn more than assistants, more than an office-clerk, I was good. We got paid on production and I produced a lot [...].¹⁸ (PINHEIRO, 1993, verbal information)

D. Telma's story was not too much different. Unlike Sr. José, D. Telma is not very precise with dates. But she does remember that a few years before the factory closed down, she 'got word' that the company was making settlements with the older employees. Although she could not remember exactly how long she had been at the factory, she figured it must be close to forty years and that she could probably retire and get a good resignation settlement. As she narrated:

I worked there for more than forty years but not because I wanted. I didn't know better, I didn't know how much time I had. Then I heard about the settlements and went to see the men in the office. There was one there who was my *compadre*, so I went to him and asked: "Hi *compadre*, I brought here my work book for you to check how much time I have before I can retire." "Hey, my *comadre*, let me see. About three years." Then I say to myself, "Oh, my God, how can I go on for another three years. Oh, Jesus!" But time went on and then one day I cut my finger in the machine and

¹⁸ Currency in Brazil has changed names several times. In 1957, the official currency was the *cruzeiro* but it was common for people to still speak in terms of *contos de reis*, the former currency. Although the value of the *cruzeiro* in relation to the dollar has varied considerably, it is estimated that Sr. José received approximately US\$1,200.00.

they gave me fifteen days of vacation. I said OK, I will go to Baixa dos Sapateiros for an outing. I said I was going for an outing but I carried all my documents with me. I went to Comércio and then I saw this guy with bandages coming out of a building. So I asked him: "Hey, do you know where I can find the INPS office?" And he goes: "It's right here, you have to talk to D. Margarida. You go up and right at the door there is this guy, Severino. You ask him for a number. When she comes in you talk to her." So I went and got the ticket with number one. Less than ten minutes later Margarida arrived. "What do you want," she asked me. I said "I came here to find out about my retirement." She asked for my workbook and she looked at it for a while and asked: "Are you working?," and I said 'yes.' "Working?". "Yeah. But I am on vacation, they gave me fifteen days because of the accident. I am on leave and vacation." She said: "Yeah. That is right." Then she looked again at my book and counted my time. "Do you know how many years you have here?." I said: "No. If I knew I would not be here." She said: "You're right. You have almost forty years." Now, can you imagine how many years I lost there? How much time I lost? But I also made it because today I have money to eat, right? Anyway, she got all the papers ready. By the time I went back to work, my retirement had gone through. She had told me: "Look, you are going to get a good bonus from your boss. A good one. He will give you the difference, the years you worked extra, he has to give you that in cash." So, I was looking for the settlement. Did I get it? No sir, to this day they have not given me anything. Then the wall in my house began to give in. So I went to the office and they asked me: "What do you want?". I said: "I want to talk to Dr. Henrique." So I go in and tell him:" Doutor, I was wondering if you could get me a sack of cement. I just retired and have not received my monthly payment yet. The wall in my house cracked up and I don't have the money to fix it." Do you know what he said? He goes: "If I give you a sack of cement the company will go bankrupt, the company doesn't have any cement." Well, you know, the company did go bankrupt, the factory closed. Do you think it was because of a sack of cement that I asked for? Do you see God's hands, my dear? Do you see? They closed down, didn't they? And I am still here, going strong!¹⁹ (AMARAL, 1993, verbal information).

At the time of her retirement, D. Telma was in her early fifties and as she puts it, still "going strong, and ready to work." She was still trying to build her own home and claims that it would have been impossible to do so on her retirement pension: "It was a little nothing, I had to find another job." (AMARAL, 1993, verbal information). Having worked almost her entire life as a spinner, she began to

¹⁹ INPS stands for *Instituto Nacional de Previdência Social*, the equivalent to the Social Security Agency. Up to the 1960s, however, when INPS was created, industrial workers retired through IAPI, that is, the *Instituto de Aposentadoria e Pensão dos Industriários* (Industrial Workers Retirement and Pension Institute).

make the rounds in other textile factories hoping to find employment but with no success. Despite being an experienced worker, her age counted against her: "I was no longer a kid and the factories wanted young arms." (AMARAL, 1993, verbal information). Eventually, she found a job in a small twine factory, but worked there only for a few months, four at the most, because, as she put it: "The wages were not worth the trouble. It was too far from here and the ride back too dangerous." But she could not find work in any other factory, resorting instead to a job in the nearby Aratu Naval Base as a laundress helper.

While working at the Base, she befriended the men who worked there and started to take in their wash to do on her spare time at home. In time, she had a clientele large enough to leave her job at the Base and work at home as a laundress. She cannot remember for how long she pursued this activity until she finally "decided that I was getting too old for that." A few years ago, D. Telma started to work as a street vendor, preparing and selling '*acarajé*', an Afro-Brazilian delicacy, at Itacaranha beach. Although she was 84-yrs old at the time of our last interview, she was still planning on getting the beans ready to make the *acarajé* to go to Itacaranha on the following Sunday. For that purpose, she was counting on two of her great grandsons who live with her, to help her carry the goods to her vending spot on the beach: "But they will only help me if I give them a little something (*'um agrado'*)." (AMARAL, 1993, verbal information).

Few of the other older women interviewed still enjoy the strength and stamina displayed by D. Telma. However, their work-histories also extended for many years after leaving or being laid off from the factory. And as it was the case of the D. Telma, so too those who were nearing or past forty at that time experienced difficulties in finding placement in a factory setting, resorting instead to so-called 'autonomous' occupations in the service sector to make a living. This was the case of D. Carlinda, D. Delana, and D. Elenita: after leaving Fábrica São Braz, these former spinners looked for jobs in other factories without success, working as home-based laundresses until the time for their retirement.

Differently than these women, men of their generation were more successful. After leaving Fábrica São Braz, for example, Sr. José had no trouble in finding work at another textile factory, the factory at Boa Viagem, where he

resumed his activities as a spinner. However, he remained there for only a few years; due to his failing health, he was forced to go on a prolonged sick leave and retire. "That cotton dust finally did me in," he observed and added: "The doctor said I could not work in a factory anymore." (PINHEIRO, 1993, verbal information). As in the case of D. Telma, his retirement benefits were never enough to make a living. Thus, since the early 1960s, Sr. José has run a one-man umbrella repair shop, first in his own home and more recently, out of a little stand under the railroad pass, not too far from the gates of the old factory. His 'real' business, however, is the 'Animals' Game' (*jogo do bicho*): Sr. José is the local 'game bookie' (*bicheiro*).²⁰

In the same row of stands under the railroad pass where Sr. José has his shop is the stand run by Sr. Luiz where he sells bread and coffee. He bought the stand on 1962 but before doing so, Sr. Luiz also worked at the Boa Viagem factory. As he explained:

When I became an assistant, my situation got better. But in 1959 the factory closed and put everybody out on the streets...When I left, I was not old enough to retire. Back then [to retire] you had to be fifty-five with thirty-five years of work. I had worked [at the factory] for thirty-seven years but I was not fifty-five yet so I marched around [...] (CALDAS, 1993, verbal information)

As noted, at Fábrica São Braz Sr. Luiz had been an assistant but he was close to fifty years old when he was laid off and thus "too old" to find placement at another factory under the same position. Thus, at Boa Viagem, he worked in the repair shop but only for a couple of years before buying the stand. "I figured I could do better working for myself," he so claimed. Despite all the years he spent as a factory worker, Sr. Luiz eventually retired as a "stand keeper" (*barraqueiro*):

When my time came [to retire], I went to the company but they told me they had already burned all the documents [from the factory]. But a friend who used to play soccer with me said that he was going to give me a hand, that he was going to look for my papers. He found them and told me that my time to ask for retirement had already passed, that I should go to the union. There, they told me it would be better for me to join the barraqueiros union to retire (CALDAS, 1993, verbal information).

²⁰ Jogo do Bicho, or Animals' Game, is Brazil's version of the 'numbers game.' Although played by great part of the population in the cities, the game is still illegal.

Let it be pointed out that in the examples here cited, the men fared better than the women not only in finding employment in a factory setting (even if only for a few years) but also in managing to come up with income generating activities for their retirement years which are more profitable and less demanding than that found by the women as laundresses. Were it not for the help of their children or other relatives, in fact, D. Telma, D. Carlinda, D. Delana and D. Elenita would face even greater hardships in trying to make ends meet on just their meager retirement benefits. Next to owning a home, running a business of their own even if just a street stand (*banquinha* or *barraquinha*) is actually one of the greatest aspirations of these women.²¹ As D. Delana declared: "I wish I could have started a *barraquinha*. I could make more money with that but you need money to get started and I never had money to spare." (SANTOS, D.1993, verbal information).

D. Alice's work-history is worthy of attention for unlike the other women discussed thus far, she was still in her late twenties at the time of dismissal from Fábrica São Braz and thus still young enough to find a job in the Boa Viagem factory as a weaver. Nevertheless, she did not stay there for very long. A few months after starting at the new job, the factory installed new looms more modern and sophisticated than the older ones. She was not fast enough in learning how to operate them and was eventually dismissed: "The new machines were too complicated, too difficult. I was too slow with them so they let me go." She tried to go back to Fábrica São Braz with no luck: "They were letting a lot of the older ones go by then, they wouldn't take me back." (SILVA, 1993, verbal information). At the time, D. Alice had a small child and decided that "rather than march around" she would stay at home, helping her mother who worked as a laundress. Within a few years, she would meet an "older man", twice her age who came to live with her and fathered her other four children. While they were growing up she remained at home: "My companion was already retired when I met him; he had his pension and did some construction work, he didn't let us go

²¹ Similar findings regarding aspirations of setting up a *barraquinha* to complement income after retirement were also reported by Angela Vianna (1980) on the basis of a study conducted in Nova Brasília, a squatter settlement located near the airport on the other side of the city.

without anything." (SILVA, 1993, verbal information). However, as he grew older and ailing and thus unable to earn extra money as a construction worker, D. Alice was forced to re-enter the labor market. This happened in the early 1970s and by then, the Industrial Complex of Aratu (CIA) was already in operation. As a former weaver, D. Alice looked for a job in the textile factories in CIA. She did find placement at Nordisa but as a cleaning help, not as operária. As she observed: "It was a very modern factory, it was a lot different, the machines were all different and I was too old to learn." (SILVA, 1993, verbal information).

Indeed, the gap of nearly a decade between the demise of the more traditional textile industries and the creation of the post-SUDENE factories, worked against the 're-conversion' of the older workers into the new industries. By the time these industries began to operate, those workers were no longer at an age in which companies would deem it worthwhile to invest in re-training them. This would be reserved only for the younger ones with many years ahead for service to the factory. In particular, training would be reserved to men since their work careers were not likely to be interrupted due to pregnancies and/or childcare.

Still in his late twenties but already an assistant when Fábrica São Braz closed in 1959, Sr. Lauro was among the privileged (MOREIRA, 1993, verbal information). He even escaped being laid off for a few months before the closing, he was transferred to FAGIP, in the neighborhood of Ribeira. As noted in the previous chapter, FAGIP had been founded in 1956, functioning in the same building, which had once held Fábrica Paraguassu, also owned by União Fabril. Although FAGIP produced gauze instead of textiles, it had been installed with modern machinery and Sr. Lauro received training in using and maintaining them. Thus when Uniao Fabril re-modeled and reactivated Fábrica Sao Braz in 1961, Sr. Lauro was among those who were called back to work. He became an overseer, working there throughout the taking over of the factory by Fábrica de Tecidos Fátima in 1967. And he was still there a year later when, already operating as FATBRAZ, the factory was finally closed. For the next two years (1969 and 1970), Sr. Lauro worked first as a repairman in small shops then back at FAGIP until he was called to go to Nordisa which began operating at CIA in 1971. He remained

there working as an overseer until his retirement in 1982, a few years before Nordisa closed. Even after retiring, however, Sr. Lauro continued to work at factories, employed by a subcontracting firm, which provided maintenance assistance to CIA industries.

Like Sr. Lauro, D. Joseildes was still in her twenties when Fábrica São Braz first closed down. In addition to being still young, D. Joseildes was an experienced drawer (*maçaroqueira*) and was also among those called back to her job when the factory re-opened in 1961. A few years before Fatbraz closed, however, D. Joseildes stepped on a snake on her way to work, had a nervous breakdown and resigned from the factory. A few months after this incident, however, D. Joseildes did go back to work but not to Fábrica São Braz. She worked at Fábrica dos Fiaes, staying there for only three months: "It was too hard there, I couldn't put up with it." She then worked at another small textile factory in the neighborhood of Liberdade, but only for a year:

On December 20, the factory closed and laid off everybody. That was in 1970. In 1971, a compadre of mine who was working at Nordisa called me to work there. Nordisa was just starting then and I was one of the first ones to work there. I was there to get Nordisa started, I worked as a drawer. (SOUZA, J., 1993, verbal information)

Although she claims the wages at Nordisa were good and she liked the job, "it was too far from home." D. Joseildes had four children by then, two still young, and she found it difficult to reconcile her job with her home duties: "When I worked here, I could come home for lunch and check on the children. I couldn't do that working at CIA, and 'my nerves' (*meus nervos*) gave way. It was too much for me" (SOUZA, J., 1993, verbal information).

D. Joseildes eventually left Nordisa and retired early because of her 'nervous' condition. She eventually bought a foodstuff tent (*quiosque*) at Ribeira Beach which she ran with the help of her daughters. Because she had to undergo surgery, she leased the tent and was waiting for the lease to be over to go back into business.

Difficulties in reconciling childcare with a job far away from home also weighed heavily in D. Linda's decision to leave Nordisa. The youngest in the group

of former workers interviewed in the course of this study, D. Linda was only seventeen in 1959 when Fábrica São Braz first ceased operations. For a while, she was employed as a domestic servant until she found placement at FAGIP. After Fábrica São Braz was reactivated, she returned to her former job in the spinning sector where she claims to have performed several different activities:

At the factory I was a spinner. But I did everything, the only thing I didn't do was work in the weaving sector. I worked alone in the '*esbarro*', that is, when the spinner hits the thing wrong, it stops (*esbarra*), it breaks and I would fix it. I worked in the starching section ('*engomadeira*'), in the drawing room ('*banco grosso*'), as a twister ('*banco fino*'), I knew how to do everything [...] (SANTOS, L. 1993, verbal information)

During that period, the factory was working on shifts and D. Linda - then separated from her husband and raising four youngsters on her own - took advantage of this by taking another job to complement the family's income. At the time, her brother was working for the City ('*Prefeitura*') and able to secure her a position as attendant in a public grade school in Plataforma. She worked in the school during the morning and then took the second shift in the factory. In 1971, she was called along with D. Joseildes to work at Nordisa in the spinning sector. By then, however, she was already living with her second husband who eventually suggested that she should leave that job to care for the children:

My husband had nothing against me working but when the children were small and I worked two shifts [...] he said that it was wrong for me to leave the children alone. One of them became sick with dehydration and malnutrition and then he said that I should quit and stay home taking care of the house. He would be responsible for everything until the children got older. (SANTOS, L. 1993, verbal information)

D. Linda left the factory but kept her job with the city. After her retirement, she ran a small liquor store in the neighborhood. At present, she helps in managing a community bakery, as stated: "I like to work out of the house, I don't like the idea of staying at home, I don't like children screaming in my ears [...]" (SANTOS, L. 1993, verbal information)

The Intersection of Gender and Generation

In discussing the formation of the urban proletariat in the Brazilian Northeast, José Sérgio Leite Lopes and Luís Antonio Machado da Silva (1979, p. 23-25) have proposed that the 'factory-worker's villa' system and as such, the condition of bourgeois serfdom represented the first moment of the process. The disintegration of this system, either through the closing of the factories or modernization of the production process which they see as representing the next moment, resulted in the laying-off of increasing numbers of workers. Three different paths - which may also be seen as different phases - would then characterize the third moment. First, 'de-professionalization' or 'de-skilling': former factory workers who would not be reabsorbed into the new industry (i.e., the post-SUDENE factories) but to other sectors of the economy, often into the so-called 'informal labor market'. A second possible path (or phase) would be that in which although not absorbed into the new industry, workers would still maintain their professional status working in small repair shops or as autonomous skilled workers. Finally, the third and last path or phase would be absorption into the new industries and re-conversion into the 'classic' factory worker, 'free' in the double sense referred to by Karl Marx (1977, v. I, p. 714).

Leite Lopes and Machado da Silva emphasize, nevertheless, that this process has been neither linear nor homogeneous. It has not necessarily affected the same social group; that is, it is not the same group of workers that will go through the phases outlined above. In their own words:

It is possible that a determined number of former workers in factories with workers' villages may have suffered all these transformations or, inversely, [...] that a worker in a new, post-SUDENE factory may have been the protagonist of such changes before arriving at his new situation. However, these transformations will generally come through affecting different social groups or at least different groups of workers. Thus, the 're-conversion' of a worker in the traditional factory-village system into one employed by the new post-SUDENE factories is an exceptional fact: between one job and the other, there is a hiatus which is occupied by a social group which has suffered the deterioration of the quality of life for being deprived of their former work conditions (LEITE LOPES; MACHADO DA SILVA, 1979, p. 27, my translation)

The same authors further observe that the occupation that workers previously had in the factories would play a determinant role in the paths their work-histories would follow. Those formerly engaged in maintenance and other skilled occupations which could be pursued individually, and/or were not directly tied down to the production process, would have a better chance in starting a business of their own or in finding placement in small shops and, eventually, in the new industries. In contrast, those whose former activities were in the production lines such as in the case of spinners and weavers, would tend to experience the process of '*desobreirização*' (de-proletarization) to its fullest. More dependent on the machines and on cooperation, they could only exercise their occupations within a factory setting. However, lacking the necessary skills and training to find placement in the new industries, their chances of reintegration into factory work would be minimized.

Doubtless, the work-histories delineated in the previous section are far too few to be representative of the range of 'personal destinies' of the workforce at Fábrica São Braz following the closing of the factory. Nevertheless, these histories do suggest that along with 'previous occupation', gender and generation intersected and articulated so as to further restrict the range of job opportunities open to the workers here considered. In this respect it is important to stress that the gender divide in the factory was such that all women worked in the production lines whereas the more skilled occupations were reserved to men. Thus, it should not be surprising that the women would be more likely to experience greater difficulties in being reintegrated into the industrial sector. As in the case of D. Anita discussed in the introduction of this work, women more than men would find themselves roaming around in search of a job.

To be sure, younger women such as D. Linda and D. Joseildes not only were reintegrated into Fábrica São Braz after it reopened, but were also called to work in Nordisa, the post-SUDENE textile factory installed at CIA. However, precisely because they were younger and still in their reproductive years with young children at home, they would be more subjected to the constraints of the gender divide in the domestic sphere. While a factory functioned in Plataforma, the proximity between workplace and place of residence minimized the existing conflicts between factory work and domestic work so that women could perform

both. With a job away from the neighborhood and thus with the increasing distance between workplace and home - that is to say, the increased separation between the space of production and that of 'reproduction' - and the corresponding added time to cover the distance between the two, exacerbated these conflicts (experienced by D. Joseildes as a 'nervous condition'), eventually forcing them to abandon the job at Nordisa for a work situation closer to home.

In this respect, the considerations made by Zahide Machado Netto regarding findings from a study conducted in two different neighborhoods of Salvador where women also 'traded off' better paying jobs for those closer to home are certainly pertinent:

Along with the difficulties of access to jobs [...], there are also problems in reconciling work away and far from home with domestic work. By their turn, the difficulties and cost of transportation and the growing distance between places of residence and those where they can sell their labor power, all of this compels women towards seeking to solve within their own neighborhoods the allocation of their labor (MACHADO NETTO, 1983, p. 10, my translation)

Zahide Machado Netto observed that a job in the neighborhood, even if sporadic and without any fringe benefits, was usually preferred over those involving traveling away, given that proximity to home allowed women to be closer to their children, be home at lunch time and, at the end of the workday, to dispose of more time for domestic chores. Similar findings characterize other studies, in Brazil and elsewhere, focusing on women's work and the family as well (BENERIA; ROLDAN, 1987; BILAC, 1978; BRUSCHINI, 1990; MACHADO DA SILVA, 1979).

In the case of the women here discussed, such an option would have implications of wider significance as well. Indeed, for D. Linda and D. Joseildes (as experienced by the 'older' women factory workers), this also meant a break in their work-histories in that they would shift from engagement in industrial production to involvement in commercial and/or activities identified with the services sector.

The succeeding generations of women of the neighborhood have thus seen their opportunities for industrial employment diminish both in function of the

reorganization of the spaces of industrial production in the city as well of the restructuring of the local labor market along gender lines. On the one hand, the contraction of the traditional industrial sector - particularly that of textiles which has historically relied on the employment of women - and, on the other, the expansion of the so-called 'dynamic' industries most notably the petrochemical industry, noted for its preference for a male labor force, have equally contributed to the alienation of women from involvement in production activities.

Table 3: Occupational Status of Sons and Daughters of Former Factory Workers

Occupation Status	Daughters		Sons	
	N	%	N	%
TOTAL	49	100.0	33	100.0
Inactive				
Housework	16	32.6	-	0.0
Student	1	2.0	1	3.0
Unemployed	8	16.3	8	24.3
Occupied	24	49.1	24	72.7

Source: Data collected by author, 1994

The effects of the new patterns of the gender divide in the labor market are apparent when considering the occupation of the children - daughters in contrast to sons - of the former factory workers here considered. From a total of 49 daughters for whom information was available when I carried my original field research in 1994, none worked as a factory worker nor was involved in any other sort of production activities. Actually, as shown on Table 3, the proportion of these daughters who were active in the labor market (24/49 or 49.1%) was not necessarily low; it was equivalent to the rates of activity for women found in a national and local level for that year.²²

²² The rates of activity for women in Brazil have climbed considerably in the last decade, particularly in urban areas: in 1981 this rate was equivalent to 33.7, while in 1990 it reached 40.1. In the Northeast region, these rates were lower than the national average: 30.2 in 1981, and 37.7 in 1990 (IBGE 1991 *apud* BRUSCHINI, 1994, p.6).

However, in consonance with the trend discussed earlier in relation to the shift of the female labor force in Bahia from the production to the services sector, of the 24 daughters who were engaged in gainful economic activities, more than half (15 or 62.5%) worked in the services sector (Table 4). Moreover, these daughters exercised some of the same occupations which embrace nearly 80% of the Brazilian female labor force in the 1990s. They were nurse's aides (4), domestic servants (2), school attendants (2), seamstress (2) hairdressers (2), elementary school teachers (2), and manicurist (1). Likewise, among those involved in commercial (circulation) activities, five (5) were store clerks while four (4) worked as office clerks, occupations which were also among those presently engaging great part of women workers in Brazil (BRUSCHINI, 1994; 1995).

Table 4: Sector of Occupation of Sons and Daughters of Former Factory Workers

Sector	Daughters		Sons	
	N	%	N	%
TOTAL	24	100.0	24	100.0
Production	-	0.0	12	50.0
Commercial/Circ	9	37.5	7	29.2
Services	15	62.5	5	20.8

Source: Data collected by author, 1994

In contrast to the daughters, half of the sons who are presently gainfully employed (12/24) are involved in production activities as construction workers (6), skilled machinists (4), and as mechanics involved in maintenance and repair activities (2). Of the remaining twelve, seven (i.e.,29.2%) are involved in jobs included in commercial and or circulation activities whereas, as opposed to the daughters, only five (20.8%) are active in the services sector.

Final Considerations

Within the last six decades, Plataforma has experienced significant changes engendered by the revitalization of Salvador's economy following the discovery

of petroleum in the area and the subsequent creation of Petrobras and SUDENE. The economic development of the area has engendered a re-organization of the urban space. New roads were built linking the Subúrbio to the center of Salvador while real estate speculation displaced the poor population towards the outskirts of the city, leading to the inflow of new residents in Plataforma and its surroundings. Along with the closing of the factory, this development contributed to the de-characterization of Plataform as a *vila operária*.

In this work, I have shown that with the closing of the factory, most former factory workers experienced a process of *'desobrerização,'* that is to say, of 'de-skilling' in that most were not absorbed by the new industry developing in the area. This was especially true for the older generation of workers and particularly marked in the case of women. First, women had worked at the less skilled occupations in the production line in the mill, many of which were made obsolete with the development of new machinery and appropriate techniques to synthetic textiles production. Second, unlike the traditional cotton textile industry which had relied primarily on the employment of women, the petrochemical industry employs mainly men.

Moreover, the fact that women had to seek jobs away from their neighborhood made the reconciling of wage work and the accomplishment of domestic tasks more difficult. This, allied to the non-absorption of women by the new industry in the area, left them with few options but that of resorting to the so-called 'informal sector.' They became laundresses, domestic servants, petty-commodity producers, operators of food stands, etc. More importantly, this break with their condition as industrial workers would be extended to the succeeding generations of women in the community. The daughters of former factory workers are no longer factory workers themselves.

The demise of the traditional cotton manufacturing industry in Bahia and the simultaneous rise of the petrochemical industry in the region demarcate as well a moment of transition in Bahian labor history. The women and men who worked at Fábrica São Braz and in other similar textile mills and factories first established in the nineteenth century, represent the 'old', the 'traditional' urban Bahian proletariat. This study has shown that this 'traditional' proletariat was

essentially poor, female, illiterate, lived in *vilas operárias*, and was caught in the webs of industrial paternalism. In contrast, industrial workers in Bahia engaged by the petrochemical industry - which demands a highly skilled work force - are overwhelmingly male, better educated, moved away from the poorer neighborhoods, and are noted for creating labor unions that have demonstrated their combativeness in strikes that have paralyzed the Petrochemical Pole in different occasions.²³ They have, as such, guaranteed a 'family wage' and thus been able to materialize the 'ideal' model of the family: indeed, their women have retired to the confines of 'domesticity' (GUIMARÃES, 1987; 1996).

In Plataforma, few workers and their families have made this transition. The former workers here portrayed and many of their children have remained in the neighborhood. They are now part of the working masses inhabiting the overcrowded, poor neighborhoods in the outskirts of Salvador, still largely dependent on the income of their women (SOUZA, C., 2006).

In this work my primary concern was to reconsider the process of industrialization and class formation in Bahia from the perspective of the workers who were a part of that history. This procedure has brought to light faces and facets of this process which, for the most part, have been ignored. In particular, it has revealed that the history of workers cannot be regarded as a 'homogeneous' process. More importantly, it has not been the same for women as opposed to men. The gender divide resulting from the working of patriarchal gender ideology has profoundly marked the history of the workers. More recent studies focusing on women industrial workers have come to similar conclusions (LIMA, 2009; MATOS, 2002; PAIXÃO, 2007; RAGO, 2007). They have shown, as I hope I have, that Brazilian labor history must be 'genderized.'

²³ Among the numerous studies on industrial workers in Bahia today, see for example, GUIMARÃES; CASTRO (1988, 1990a, 1990b), GUIMARÃES (1991).

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