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Free Colored in a Slave Society: São Paulo and Minas Gerais in the Early Nineteenth Century

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Brazil was traditionally depicted as a plantation economy dominated by slaves and slave owners. However, all recent studies have denied the picture, painted so ably by Gilberto Freyre over a half century ago, of a dichotomous society dominated by the plantation; in fact, most scholars have stressed that Brazil looked more like the United States than the West Indies in the relative weight of slaves and slave owners in the population.¹ Our survey of São Paulo indicates that on average roughly a third of the population were slaves and roughly a third of the free population were slave owners. These figures are representative of most of Brazil, and compare favorably with those ratios in the United States in the nineteenth century.²

Although nineteenth-century Brazilian slave society differed little from the contemporary southern United States in terms of the size and relative weight of slaves and their masters, it differed substantially in the color of its free population. Whereas the free population was over 95 percent white in the United States, whites tended to be less than half the free population in most of Brazil.³ By the early nineteenth century, Brazil had the

¹ Much of this work began in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s, with studies of slavery in the southeastern region. One of the first to reassess this theme in English was Stuart B. Schwartz, "Patterns of Slaveholding in the Americas: New Evidence from Brazil," *American Historical Review* 87, no.1 (1982). Good summaries about slavery in Minas Gerais can be found in Clotilde Andrade Paiva and Herbert S. Klein, "Slave and Free in Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais: Campanha in 1831," *Slavery & Abolition* 15, no.1 (1994); and for São Paulo, see Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein, "Slaves and Masters in early Nineteenth-Century Brazil: São Paulo," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21, no. 4 (1991). For more detailed studies of Minas Gerais, see Clotilde Andrade Paiva, "Minas Gerais no século XIX: Aspectos demográficos de algunos núcleos populacionais," in *Brasil: História Econômica e Demográfica*, ed. Iraci del Nero da Costa (São Paulo: IPE/USP, 1988); idem, "A natalidade de Minas Gerais no século XIX: Algumas hipóteses" (paper presented at the Conference on the Population History of Latin America, Ouro Preto, Brazil, July 1989); and Clotilde Andrade Paiva et al., "Estructura e dinâmica da população de Minas Gerais no século XIX," Unpublished CNPQ Research Report of 1990; Douglas Cole Libby and Márcia Grimaldi, "Equilíbrio e estabilidade: Economia e comportamento demográfico num regime escravista, Minas Gerais no século XIX," *Anais: VI Encontro Nacional de Estudos Populacionais (ABEP)* 3 (1988); Clotilde Andrade Paiva and Douglas Cole Libby, "The Middle Path: Alternative Patterns of Slave Demographics in Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais" (paper presented at the World Demographic History Conference, Vera Cruz, Mexico, 1992). Older studies based on these unpublished manuscript census include among others, the works of Francisco Vidal Luna, *Minas Gerais, escravos e senhores: Análise da estrutura populacional e econômica de alguns centros mineratórios, 1718–1804* (São Paulo: Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas da Faculdade de Economia e Administração da Universidade de São Paulo (hereafter IPE/USP, 1981); Francisco Vidal Luna and Iraci del Nero da Costa, *Minas colonial: Economia e sociedade* (São Paulo: FINE, Pioneira, 1982); Iraci del Nero da Costa, *Minas Gerais: Estruturas populacionais típicas* (São Paulo: EDEC, 1982); Iraci del Nero da Costa, *Vila Rica: População (1719–1826)* (São Paulo: IPE/USP,

² It should be stressed that Minas Gerais and São Paulo were slave regimes or systems (as defined by M. I. Finley and other scholars) because of the concentration of slaves in the most capitalist parts of the local economy. But slaves themselves were not the most numerous workers in these regions. In the United States, slaveholders in the southern states represented only 31 percent of the total free population in 1850. See Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2 vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1932), 1:482.

³ On the roughly 5 percent of the free households which were colored in 1830, see Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830* (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1925). Gray estimates that in 1860 in the U.S. South, only 3 percent of the population was made up of free colored. See Gray, *Agriculture*, 1:481–82. On the few hundred free

largest free colored population of any slave society in the Americas. At the time of the first national census in 1872, some 16 years before final abolition of slavery, the free colored—all of them had slave origins—numbered 4.2 million persons, compared to just 1.5 million slaves. These free colored were, in fact, the largest single racial/status group within Brazil itself.⁴ In sharp contrast to the United States where less than one percent of all slave owners were non-white, Brazilian freed persons of color were well distributed throughout all the provinces of the Brazilian empire, as much urban as rural in their settlement pattern, and a significant number of them were heads of slave-owning households.⁵ Yet that was a time when the slave-based coffee economy was reaching its maturity and the price of slaves was on a long-term rise.⁶

Despite their importance in Brazilian slave society, few of all the recent investigations of African slavery in Brazil have focused on the economic and social role of the free colored population within Brazil before the end of slavery.⁷

Brazilian society like all other American slave regimes was by its very nature racist and the white elite discriminated in various ways against its free persons of color, even as it permitted a very active level of manumission. But how effective and important was that discrimination in controlling economic and social mobility? We have had little sense of how these free persons of color were integrated into the world of free persons and the market economy: Were the free colored largely cut off from normal avenues of economic and social mobility through legal means, as occurred among the free colored in the United

colored who owned slaves, see the classic study by Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Owners of the Slaves in the United States in 1830* (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924). For an updating of Woodson's study for one particular state, see Leonard Koger, *Black Slave Owners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790–1860* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1985). For a pessimistic assessment of the situation of the free colored under slavery in the United States, see Irac C. Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

⁴ See Herbert S. Klein, "The Colored Freedmen in Brazilian Slave Society", *Journal of Social History* 3, n° 1 (1969); Herbert S. Klein and Clotilde Andrade Paiva, "Free Persons in a Slave Economy, Minas Gerais in 1831," *Journal of Social History* 29, n° 4 (1996); and Herbert S. Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), chap. 10.

⁵ For recent studies showing the relative importance of free colored persons as slave owners in various municípios of Brazil, see the two studies by Francisco Vidal Luna, *Minas Gerais: Escravos e senhores* (São Paulo: IPE/USP, 1981) and "São Paulo: população, atividade e posse de escravos em vinte e cinco localidades (1777-1829)," *Estudos Econômicos*, 28, n° 1 (1998); Klein and Paiva, "Free Persons in a Slave Economy"; Paiva and Klein, "Slave & Free in Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais". For studies on two municípios in Bahia, see B.J. Barickman, "As cores do escravismo: Escravistas "pretos", "pardos" e "cabras" no Recôncavo Baiano, 1835" *População e Família* 2, n° 2 (1999).

⁶ See Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Herbert S. Klein and Stanley Engerman, "Nineteenth-Century Cuban Slave Prices in Comparative Perspective", *American Historical Review* 88, n° 4 (1983); and Laird W. Bergad, *Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, 1720-1888* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), chap. 5.

⁷ There have been, of course, a number of studies on the free colored. But these have either focused on special aspects of their lives or have discussed very small and unrepresentative samples, or have included them in the larger context of an undifferentiated poor free population. The religious life of the urban free colored in the northeast has been studied by A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery & Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982). The wealth of a sample of first-generation ex-slaves, also in an urban context, has been analyzed in Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, *O liberto: O seu mundo e os outros, Salvador, 1790–1890* (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988). For studies on the hardships suffered by both white and free colored poor under slavery, see Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, *Homens livres na ordem escravocrata* (São Paulo: Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, Univ. de São Paulo, 1969); and Laura de Mello e Souza, *Desclassificados do ouro: A pobreza mineira no século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: GRAAL, 1982), and most recently by Hebe Maria Mattos, *Das cores do silêncio: Os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista, Brasil, século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1998). An interesting comparative analysis of their treatment in the urban criminal system is found in Leila Mezan Algrant, *O feitor ausente: Estudos sobre a escravidão urbana no Rio de Janeiro* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988).

States?⁸ Or were the barriers to mobility largely economic? Were free non-whites able to respond to market incentives and integrate themselves into the larger free society despite the white elite's racist expressions of hostility to blacks?⁹ In Brazil there were no legal constraints to geographic or economic mobility, but to what extent did the free non-whites succeed in maintaining the skills they acquired as slaves, or compete with whites for land or slaves.

Though we cannot fully answer these questions, our analysis of 2 major counties (*municípios*) in Minas Gerais and 15 counties in São Paulo provides a reasonable picture of the role of these free colored people within early-nineteenth-century society. Like the rest of Brazil, a majority of the population in these provinces consisted of free people, with a significant percentage of free blacks and mulattoes. Most of our data comes from unpublished provincial censuses that form the basis for much of the newer social and economic histories of the nineteenth-century economy and society of south-central Brazil.¹⁰ These so-called *mappas* provide detailed annual censuses and production data in the provinces of São Paulo and Minas Gerais from roughly the 1770s until the early 1850s, with the most complete runs coming from the 1820s and 1830s.¹¹ It should be noted that our data do not provide the distinctions found in some Brazilian primary sources of this period between free persons of color born free (*livres*) and those who were manumitted (*forros* or *libertos*), though it would appear from the few data that we have that the manumitted persons tended to have far higher ratios of women than those of the free colored population born free.¹² We use the term *free colored* to refer to both groups,

⁸ Although some free colored were able to own property in various southern states, the law was bitterly opposed to their mobility. For the economic holdings of the wealthiest few hundred free colored in the southern slave states, see Loren Schweininger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1990); and his essay “Prosperous Blacks in the South, 1790–1880,” *American Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (1990). Although a few succeeded, the norm was for a great deal of active legal discrimination and blocked mobility. In Virginia, for example, they were legally denied access to mobility and property in the slave period. See Luther Porter Jackson, *Free Negro Labor & Property Holding in Virginia, 1830–1860*, 2d ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

⁹ See Celia Maria Marinha Azevedo, *Onda negra, medo branco: O negro no imaginário das elites século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987); and Lilia Mortiz Schwarcz, *Retrato em branco e negro: Jornais, escravos e cidadãos em São Paulo no final do século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987).

¹⁰ For a detailed listing of much of this work see note 1 and the recent essays by Francisco Vidal Luna, “Características demográficas dos escravos de São Paulo (1777–1829),” *Estudos Econômicos* 22, no. 3 (1993); and Luna, “São Paulo: População, atividades e posse.”

¹¹ The censuses for 1829 to 1831 are found in the *Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo*, “População,” lata 37 (São Paulo); lata 5 (Areias); lata 94 (Jundiá); lata 154 (Santos); lata 43 (Cunha); lata 213 (Curitiba); lata 197 (Antonina); lata 184 (Taubaté); lata 173a (Sorocaba); lata 222 (Paranaguá); lata 24–24a (Bragança); lata 141 (Piracicaba); lata 191 (Ubatuba); lata 201 (Castro); and lata 216 (Guaratuba). The data for Sorocaba comes from the census of 1836, all others are based on the census reports of either 1829 or 1830. The Minas data is available in the Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, *Mappas de População*, pasta 1, doc. 12; pasta 7, doc. 1; and pasta 10, docs. 2, 6, 14–22. We would like to thank Prof. Clotilde Andrade Paiva, CEDEPLAR, Univ. Federal de Minas Gerais, for making available to us the census data from Minas Gerais.

¹² In the two *municípios* in Bahia, which Barickman examined, the census takers in 1835 did distinguish between those born in slavery and subsequently freed and those who were born free. The data shows that the *forros* or what he calls *libertos* were a minority of the free population among the free persons of color—only 12 percent in the smaller *município* of Santiago do Iguape, and just 5 percent of the total in São Gonçalo dos Campos—making but 7 percent of the 8,407 free persons of color in this census year. These newly freed were far more likely to be women than men; the free colored population in general with only 79 males per 100 females *libertos* in the two communities compared to 92 males per 100 females among those *ingênuo* born free. I am grateful to Barickman for providing me with the breakdowns of color and sex of these two groups in this census. On the color of these groups, see Barickman, “As cores do escravismo,” 25. This same difference between *libertos* and those free colored born free was also found in a late-eighteenth-century church census of a rural Minas Gerais parish. Here the sex ration for the *libertos* was 87 men per 100 women and an almost normal 97 men per 100 females among the free born persons of color. In contrast to the Bahian counties, this parish had a very high ratio of 44 percent of the 3,200 free colored were *libertos*. See Douglas Cole Libby and Clotilde Andrade Paiva, “Manumission Practices in a Late-Eighteenth-Century Brazilian Slave Parish: São José d’El Rey in 1795,” *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 1 (2000), 102–3, tables 1, 2.

without distinction of their status at birth. Moreover, we have kept the color terminology as given in the São Paulo censuses, which breaks down the free colored population into *pretos* (or blacks), and *pardos* (or mulattos, or browns).¹³

We selected several counties in Minas because that was the region with the largest number and ratio of free colored of any province in Brazil. São Paulo was one of the newer plantation regions that expanded rapidly although African slavery arrived relatively late there; consequently, São Paulo had a smaller ratio of free colored. In the 1830s the free colored probably surpassed the total number of slaves in Minas Gerais, but in São Paulo they still remained less than half of the total colored population in the province; the free colored of Minas numbered several hundred thousand, whereas there were only about 66,000 in São Paulo at this time.¹⁴ Thus a comparison of these two regions provides important end points for the spectrum of roles and possibilities to which the ex-slaves had access during the slave period.

The 15 São Paulo counties we selected are representative of São Paulo during this period, in terms of their distribution by region and economic activity, and account for about 60 percent of the provincial population. For Minas Gerais, we chose two extreme examples of free colored participation: the traditional mining region of Sabará in central Minas, with its predominantly black population; and the agricultural settlement of Campanha in the southeastern frontier with São Paulo, with its predominantly white residents.¹⁵ Each region defines the end points of the free colored and its position within Minas society.

The paulista counties include three largely urban populations: Santos, which was the primary port of the region; the capital of São Paulo province; and Curitiba. At the same time these counties represent the five major regions within the province. This includes Areias, Cunha, Taubaté from the rapidly changing Paraíba Valley region which was the first center of coffee production in the province, an important sugar exporting region and the home to a major food crop economy which supplied the imperial capital at Rio de Janeiro. The expanding agricultural frontier region of the west Paulista zone with its important sugar exporting centers is represented by Piracicaba, Taubaté, and Jundiá; the coastal counties by Antonina, Paranaguá, Ubatuba and Santos, while Bragança and the city of São Paulo represent the capital region and the special environment of the southern region of the province is represented by the counties of Sorocaba, Curitiba, and Castro. Both counties of Minas Gerais are roughly similar in the structure and size of their population and in their dedication to agricultural and craft activities. Although some mining activity still occurred in Sabará (gold mining had made the region famous in the eighteenth century, although it declined after 1750), it was no longer the predominant sector of the local economy. By the end of the eighteenth century the province of Minas Gerais had become a very complex agricultural, cottage industry and mixed mining economy of which gold production was a minor element. The Minas Gerais economy with its exports of sugar, cane alcohol, food staples, and low-quality woven cotton cloth, more resembled the

¹³ In most cases neither Minas Gerais nor São Paulo census material separately listed Africans. Thus most scholars have used the *preto/crioulo* distinction, given in the local mappas, to define birth origin of the slaves and free colored. That is, we assumed that pretos were Africans and crioulos were Brazilian-born pretos. All demographic indices that we and other scholars have used suggests that this is a correct interpretation of these definitions. In the case of pardos, or mulattos, the census designation often used was "mestiço." For Minas, see Paiva & Klein, "Slave & Free"; and Klein & Paiva "Free Persons in a Slave Economy."

¹⁴ In terms of their relative share of local provincial population, these 15 paulista counties with their total of some 128,000 persons represent about 60 percent of the total state population in the 1830s. The two mineiro municípios held some 74,000, which represented about 12 percent of the total provincial population, which in turn was the most populous province of the Brazilian empire in the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ These two communities have been examined in greater detail in Klein & Paiva, "Free Persons in a Slave Economy."

economy of neighboring São Paulo. Both Campanha and Sabará were rather typical of the province as a whole, in their concentration in agriculture, with a minor but important share of activities in crude textile manufactures, some metal and wood working, and some mining activity. In the two zones there was a significant sugar refining industry producing cane alcohol (*aguardente*) for local consumption and both also had a very active commercial sector. Though there was considerable self-sufficiency, both zones were closely tied into a larger zonal economy that included very active trade with the neighboring coastal provinces.¹⁶

Controlling for differences in size and relative importance of the resident free colored population, our examination of the population census data shows that the free colored, except at the elite level, were found in all the occupations practiced by their contemporary white neighbors and had much the same social, occupational, and demographic characteristics as their non-slave originated peers. Regardless of whether they lived among predominantly Afro-Brazilian populations or among predominantly white ones, there was relatively little difference for the free colored in their patterns of work and social organization from their white neighbors. In addition, our analysis illustrates that free persons of color were significant slave owners in their own right.

Our selection of counties was determined by their differences in racial composition as well as economic activity. Using the extremes in racial composition represented by these 17 counties in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, we can control for racial density as a key factor in determining integration or rejection of the free persons of color into non-slave society. By the racial standards of south-central Brazil in the first half of the nineteenth century, these regions incorporate the extremes. Among the 15 counties, 7 had a higher ratio of whites than Campanha, which was one of the “whitest” counties in Minas Gerais. In turn, none of the paulista counties had as low a ratio of non-colored as was found in Sabará (see table 1).

All these counties from São Paulo and Minas Gerais had approximately the same ratio of slaves, that is, just over a quarter of the total population. Combining the slave and free colored population resulted in all but 7 of these counties having a majority of the total population being non-white, though because of their size these 7 meant that the 15 paulista counties overall had a slight majority of their population being white.

¹⁶ According to an 1836 tax list, Campanha had 93 *engenhos* (sugar mills) and Sabará some 157, thus accounting for 14 percent of the province’s total. They were also listed with 472 and 275 country stores (*vendas*) respectively, which together accounted for 16 percent of the total in Minas Gerais. Clotilde A. Paiva and Marcelo M. Godoy, “Engenhos e casas de negócios na minas oitocentista,” *VI Seminário sobre a economia mineira* (Belo Horizonte: CEDEPLAR, Univ. Federal de Minas Gerais, 1992), 38, table 1.

TABLE 1
POPULATION OF THE FREE COLORED IN THE 17 MUNICÍPIOS OF MINAS GERAIS
AND SÃO PAULO, 1829-1830

Province	Município	Total Population	Total Population			Free Colored	
			% of slave	% of free-colored	% of white	% of all colored	% of all free
Minas Gerais	Sabará	39.138	28	55	17	66	77
	Campanha	34.440	29	24	47	45	34
São Paulo	Antonina	4.695	21	41	38	66	52
	Areias	12.146	45	13	42	23	24
	Bragança	13.603	18	20	62	52	24
	Castro	5.923	24	19	56	44	25
	Cunha	3.192	46	17	37	26	31
	Curitiba	13.064	15	30	56	67	35
	Guaratuba	1.003	15	63	23	81	74
	Jundiai	5.848	36	26	39	42	40
	Paranaguá	6.275	19	12	69	38	15
	Piracicaba	10.291	35	17	45	31	28
	Santos	5.146	46	26	28	36	48
	São Paulo	21.833	24	28	47	52	36
	Sorocaba	10.088	21	11	68	34	14
	Taubaté	10.417	22	10	69	31	12
	Ubatuba	4.877	35	9	56	20	13
	TOTAL	128.401	27	21	52	43	28

Sources: The São Paulo total population data comes from the census of 1828 & 1829 listed in, Dr. Antonio de Toledo Piza, RELATÓRIO DO ANNO DE 1900 APRESENTADO AO DR. BENTO PERREIRA BUENOS, SECRETÁRIO DE ESTADO DOS NEGÓCIOS DO INTERIO E DA JUSTIÇA (São Paulo: Repartição de Estatística e Archivo do Estado de São Paulo, 1903), pp. 692-706; the Minas Gerais is found in Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, Mappas de População, Pasta 1, doc.12; Pasta 7, Doc 1; and Pasta 10, docs 2,6,14-22. Finally the census for São Paulo city & Piracicaba are from 1835 and comes from Daniel Pedro Muller, "Quadro Estatístico da Província de São Paulo,"(São Paulo: Coleção Paulística,XI, 1978) Quadro D, 132-54, 247-49.

We did not find a negative correlation between slaves and free coloreds or between the presence of large numbers of whites and freedmen. Free-born colored and liberated slaves and their offspring were an important element everywhere; in fact, their distribution was highly correlated with the distribution of whites and also with the distribution of slaves across these 15 São Paulo counties.¹⁷ Roughly they accounted for a fourth of the total population in all the paulista counties. The relative importance of the free colored in the total population (about a fifth of the total) again showed the São Paulo counties closer to the quarter of total population standard of Campanha than to the majority situation of Sabará.

This was the case, even though slaves were on the whole a more important share of total population in São Paulo than they were in Minas Gerais. Although free persons made up 43 percent of all non-whites (again a figure quite close to the Campanha norm) they were but 28 percent of all non-slaves, thus well below even the Campanha model and very far from accounting for four fifths of the population as in Sabará. Thus for all their importance within the São Paulo regions, the free colored had still not reached the level of

¹⁷ The correlation between the free colored and the white population over these 15 counties was positive at 0.71 and for slaves and free colored at 0.56.

importance that they had already obtained in neighboring Minas Gerais. Given the fact that the free colored in São Paulo would eventually reach levels of importance similar to that of Minas by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it might be argued that this difference in 1829 was more a question of differing historical trajectories than any major difference in societal attitudes towards the free colored themselves. Minas Gerais amassed a large population of slaves quickly in the first half of the eighteenth century and then faced a declining or stagnating economy until the early decades of the nineteenth century, whereas São Paulo started from a much lower base of slaves at a much slower level of accumulation, which also explains the slower growth of a free colored class.

Despite the lower ratios of free colored found in these paulista counties, what is still impressive is just how significant the free colored were among the total colored population this early in the nineteenth century. The decade of the 1820s was a major period of African slave importation to Brazil, and by the census of 1835 Africans made up 45 percent of the total provincial slave labor force, the same ratio that they were in these 15 counties. Yet even in these expanding zones with their ever-increasing ratios of African-born slaves, the free colored were 43 percent of the total colored population. Again this was closer to Campanha than Sabará. All this suggests that the role of free citizens was well defined for blacks and browns in south-central Brazil almost 60 years before the final abolition of slavery, and even an intensification of the slave trade to this zone did not reduce their importance.

Moreover the demographic structure of the free colored would suggest that their potential for growth was quite high. On average, they were younger than the slaves, with the highest ratio of women. This differed sharply from the male-dominated slave population and the balanced sex ratio of the whites. The fact that there were 91 men for every 100 free colored women in the 15 São Paulo counties is most likely due to the systematic dominance of young women among manumitted slaves in all studies done on manumission.¹⁸ Moreover, this dominance prevails whether the emancipator is male or female.¹⁹ Unfortunately, our census material does not break down the free population into those born free and those manumitted in their lifetime, nor does there currently exist for any other Brazilian region a large sample of origins data for the free colored by which to generate a firm estimate of the relative importance of these recently freed persons in the total free colored population. But the fact that this overall imbalance of the sex ratio of the free colored population is exhibited even in the census of 1872, would suggest that the steady manumission of slaves, the majority of whom were women, meant that this

¹⁸ This compares to a balanced sex ratio for whites, and a slave sex ratio of 129 males per 100 females. These sex ratio data come from the status, color and sex breakdowns for these 15 municípios in the census of 1836. Daniel Pedro Muller, *Ensaio d'um Quadro Estatístico da Província de São Paulo*, (São Paulo: Governo do Estado de São Paulo, 1978), 124–29.

¹⁹ In his survey of 6 earlier studies of manumission in the colonial Latin American world, including Brazil, Johnson found that women predominated in all these manumission lists, and that self-purchase usually involved half the freedom acts, see Lyman L. Johnson, "Manumission in Colonial Buenos Aires, 1776–1810," *HAHR* 59 (1979), 262, table 1. This also holds true for all the latest studies done on Brazil. See, among others, Kathleen J. Higgins, "Gender and the Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: The Prospects for Freedom in Sabará, Minas Gerais, 1710–1809," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no.2 (1997); Meiko Nishida, "Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban Slavery: Salvador, Brazil 1808–1888," *HAHR* 73 (1993); and Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, *Liberdade, rotinas e rupturas do escravismo, Recife, 1822–1850* (Recife: Ed. Univesitária UFPE, 1998), chap. 10. See also, the older studies of Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso, "A propósito de cartas de alforria: Bahia, 1779–1850," *Anais de História* 4 (1972), and her "A Carta de alforria como fonte complementar para o estudo de rentabilidade de mão de obra escrava urbana, 1819–1888," in *A moderna história econômica*, ed. Carlos Manuel Pelaez and Mircea Buescu (Rio de Janeiro: APEC, 1976); and Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Bahia, 1684–1745," *HAHR* 54 (1974); Peter L. Eisenberg, "Ficando livre: As alforrias em Campinas no século XIX," *Estudos Econômicos* 17, no. 2 (1987); James P. Kiernan, "The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Paraty, 1789–1822," (Ph.D. diss., New York Univ., 1976); Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), chap. 11; and Libby and Paiva, "Manumission Practices in a Late-Eighteenth-Century Brazilian Slave Parish."

population was unusual in its sexual balance compared to both the slave and free white population.²⁰ It also meant that this population most likely had higher reproductive rates than the slaves, but probably even higher than the whites as well.

The free colored were well distributed in the provincial population. Although they were 21 percent of the total population, they were a quarter of all heads of households. Moreover they were well distributed throughout the counties. They ran from 12 percent of all households in some of the smaller towns, to a third or more of the households in the larger counties of Santos, São Paulo, and Curitiba, and even reached three quarters of the population in the coastal town of Guaratuba, a rate quite close to that of Sabará (see table 2).

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVE & NON-SLAVE OWNING HOUSEHOLDS IN
17 MUNICÍPIOS OF MINAS GERAIS & SÃO PAULO, 1829-1830, BY COLOR

Município	All heads of households	Total men	Total women	Slave households			Non-slave households		
				White	Brown	Black	White	Brown	Black
Sabará	6.510	4.414	2.096	1.035	744	37	553	3.248	901
Campanha	5.380	4.313	1.067	1.380	166	52	2.132	1.422	350
Antonina	850	665	185	167	7		287	352	34
Areias	1.561	1.362	199	547	41	1	662	282	27
Bragança	1.981	1.810	171	402	12		1.091	433	11
Castro	957	743	214	213	10	1	532	194	3
Cunha	407	316	91	177	11	1	97	111	10
Curitiba	2.423	1.880	543	397	8	2	1.200	759	53
Guaratuba	201	170	31	27			26	148	
Jundiaí	903	710	193	230	19		298	348	8
Paranaguá	1.242	946	296	232	8		843	143	16
Piracicaba	1.070	948	122	206	12		615	209	8
Santos	475	310	165	167	44	4	117	106	37
São Paulo	1.631	1.010	621	568	57	3	486	437	73
Sorocaba	1.549	1.182	367	340	7	3	931	250	17
Taubaté	1.969	1.615	354	452	12	0	1.284	200	19
Ubatuba	771	626	145	257	10	1	418	70	11
TOTAL*	17.990	14.293	3.697	4.382	258	16	8.887	4.042	327

Sources: Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, "População," Iatas 37 (São Paulo-Capital); 5 (Areias); 94 (Jundiaí); 154 (Santos); 43 (Cunha); 213 (Curitiba); 197 (Antonina); 184 (Taubaté); 173a (Sorocaba); 222 (Paranaguá); 24-24a (Bragança); 141 (Piracicaba); 191 (Ubatuba); 201 (Castro); 216 (Guaratuba). The data for Sorocaba comes from the census of 1836, all others are 1829 or 1830. The Minas data is found in Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, Mappas de População, Pasta 1, doc.12; Pasta 7, Doc 1; and Pasta 10, docs 2,6,14-22.

Notes: *The total for households with sex, color and slave ownership is 17,912 because of missing data on some of these variables. Using just sex by county, the total is 17,990.

²⁰ For the province of São Paulo in 1872, the sex ratio for the 355,745 freed persons of color, was 79 men per 100 women. This compared to a sex ratio of 125 men per 100 women among the slaves and 99 men per 100 women among the whites. These numbers were calculated from the new total figures, which Clotilde Paiva has generated from the 1872 census which were corrected for errors in addition in the original summary published volumes. Paiva kindly made these new calculations available to us.

Among the households that owned no slaves, the free colored were well represented everywhere. In the paulista counties they made up a third of such households; in fact, they were in the majority in a pretty diversified group of 6 of both primarily urban and rural counties (Cunha, Jundiá, Santos, São Paulo, Antonina, and Guaratuba), reaching an extraordinary level of 85 percent of such non-slave-owning households in the small coastal town of Guaratuba. Here again, the paulista counties were closer to the 37 percent non-white norm of Campanha than Sabará, whose dominance of non-white households among the non-slave owning households was almost identical to that of Guaratuba. Not unexpectedly, given the relative importance of women in the free colored class, free colored women who headed households tended to control a larger share of such households than free colored men did among the men heading these non-slave owning units. Typically free colored women made up just under half of such female-headed households, compared to free colored men who represented just under a third of the total of such households.

However, when we examined these same households by the criteria of slave ownership, this same level of importance and distribution was not evident. Free colored were significantly underrepresented as slave owners, being but 6 percent of the slave owners in the 15 São Paulo counties, and just 14 percent in the two Minas Gerais counties. Most free persons of color in both provinces did not head households that owned slaves. There was some modest variation by county, with a few of the urban centers sometimes having a higher ratio of slave owning families among the free colored population. Thus in the port of Santos, the free colored were 22 percent of all slave-owners (and a quarter of all free colored owned slaves), but even here the average slave holding was smaller than the norm in the rural agricultural communities. Only 283 free colored families owned slaves in the 15 counties surveyed, being only 6 percent of both all slave owners and all free colored households. This compared to a 35 percent slave ownership ratio among the whites, who were 96 percent of all slave owners. Even though the counties of Minas Gerais had twice the ratio of slave owning free colored households, even here whites had a higher representation, with 47 percent of their households holding slaves. Although slave ownership was an option for the free colored, and differed by the sex of the head of household, it was clearly a possibility for only a minority, even in Sabará. In the latter town, were they accounted for three quarters of all free persons, the free colored headed 43 percent of the slave-owning households (see table 3).

TABLE 3
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE 17 MUNICIPIOS OF MINAS GERAIS AND
SÃO PAULO BY SEX, COLOR, & SLAVE OWNERSHIP, 1829-1831

		Non-slave-owning households								
Province	Município	Total			Men			Women		
		Total	Men	Women	White	Brown	Black	White	Brown	Black
Minas Gerais	Sabará	4.699	3.054	1.645	611	3.336	752	153	1.069	423
	Campanha	3.833	3.086	747	2.238	1.339	256	330	335	82
São Paulo	15 municípios	13.256	10.531	2.725	7.379	2.937	215	1.508	1.105	112
		Slave-owning households								
Minas Gerais	Sabará	1.811	1.360	451	812	525	22	223	200	29
	Campanha	1.588	1.298	290	1152	118	28	242	32	16
São Paulo	15 municípios	4.656	3.694	962	3.506	175	13	876	83	3

Sources: Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, "População," latas 37 (São Paulo-Capital); 5 (Areias); 94 (Jundiaí); 154 (Santos); 43 (Cunha); 213 (Curitiba); 197 (Antonina); 184 (Taubaté); 173a (Sorocaba); 222 (Paranaguá); 24-24a (Bragança); 141 (Piracicaba); 191 (Ubatuba); 201 (Castro); 216 (Guaratuba). The data for Sorocaba comes from the census of 1836, all others are 1829 or 1830. The Minas data is found in Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, Mappas de População, Pasta 1, doc.12; Pasta 7, Doc 1; and Pasta 10, docs 2,6,14-22.

This very low participation of free persons of color among the slave-owning households could probably be explained by economic factors. To own slaves required a level of wealth that was greater than the average for even the majority of free white heads of household. Only 28 percent of all households owned slaves in the 15 paulista counties and the 2 in Minas Gerais, and even among paulista households headed by whites, only a little over a third owned slaves. Nevertheless, free persons of color were still far behind their white peers in owning slaves. This fact can probably be better understood as one of the economic legacies of slavery rather than as a result of race prejudice. Free persons of color had much lower levels of initial savings when they reached free status than those that most whites began life with. As we will see when we examine their occupations, the free colored tended to be less involved in farming than their white compatriots, another indication of their lesser initial income levels than was probably among whites who headed households.

But greater historical and familial initial poverty may not account for the internal divisions within the free colored of all counties. The very high ratio of either browns or mulattoes to blacks is evident everywhere among the free persons of color in the total populations of these counties. Although pardos (or browns) represented 61 percent of all Afro-Brazilians slave and free in Sabará, they were 84 percent of the free colored. In Campanha 45 percent of all Afro-Brazilians were pardos, but they were 83 percent of the free colored class. In the 15 São Paulo counties in the census of 1835 the same pattern could be observed in an even more distorted fashion. Here browns were just under a quarter of the total population, and just under half of all non-whites, but they were only 16 percent of the slaves and 94 percent of all free persons of color.

TABLE 4
BROWNS (PARDOS) AS SHARE OF VARIOUS POPULATION CATEGORIES, MINAS GERAIS
AND SÃO PAULO

		Browns as a share of various population categories								
Province	Município	Total Browns	% of total population	% of free colored	% of Slaves*	% of all colored	% of all Non-slave	% of free colored Non-slave	% of all slave Owners	% of free colored owners**
Minas Gerais	Sabar	19.767	51	84	15	61	69	72	41	95
	Campanha	8.165	24	83	13	45	37	81	10	78
So Paulo	15 municpios	29.787	23	94	16	49	30	93	6	94

This discrimination by color among non-slave-owning households could be due to the residual racism in the society as a whole, which penalized blacks more than browns, or it could be that the origins of persons entering the free colored class was more likely to favor the mulattoes over the blacks. The racial prejudices of the white society did guarantee that manumission would favor those of mixed racial background as opposed to their non-mixed brethren. Blacks tended to purchase their freedom more than did their pardo peers.²¹ On the other hand, among the free persons of color, many of whom by now had been born free, mulattoes could be produced from relationships between whites and mulattoes or whites and blacks, or even whites and Indians, whereas all blacks came only from parents who were both black. It could be assumed at this level of abstraction that both miscegenation and prejudice were probably working jointly to favor the more rapid growth of the mulatto class of freemen. These same color biases also appeared when we examined the 6 percent of the free colored households that owned slaves. In the paulista counties pardos represented 94 percent of the free colored who headed these slave-owning households. There were 267 such pardo families in the 15 paulista counties compared to just 16 preto families who owned slaves. They are also evident in the two Minas Gerais counties where there were 898 pardo families that owned slaves and only 87 households headed by blacks that owned slaves.

But race was not the only factor that stratified the households in these regions. Both for whites and non-whites, the sexual division among heads of households led to important differences in a series of characteristics, among which was marital status. In fact, the sex of the head of household was more important in determining marital status of the head than was race or ownership of slaves. Single-headed households of the unmarried or widowed tended to be more the norm for women than for men. In turn, these single unmarried or widowed female-headed households operated in different economic spheres from those headed by men of whatever color. It has generally been assumed from all studies of household types, that those headed by single or widowed women tended to be less stable in social terms and poorer than households headed by two adults. In this respect, color shows only moderate difference, and whites, blacks, and mulattoes are quite similar in their marital rates in both Minas Gerais and So Paulo regions for both sexes and for the two types of slave-owning and non-slave households. Women in these more heavily urban counties were more single or unmarried than men. It has been suggested that single women who headed these urban households migrated from farming regions as a result of loss of lands and economic livelihood in the rural parishes rather than because of increased economic opportunities available to them in the city centers. In a study of the capital region county of Santana de Parnaba in this period, it was found that these urban

²¹ In the city of Salvador, from 1808 to 1842, half of the African-born men and women (all blacks, of course) purchased their freedom, as compared to only 20 percent among the Brazilian-born male and female slaves (many of whom were mulattos). Nishida, "Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban Slavery," 380–81.

women were more likely to have illegitimate children and poorer skills and occupations than their male cohorts.²²

The influence of sex on marital status of head is also present in the presumably wealthier slave-owning households. Whereas males heading slave-owning households were predominantly married, women heading such homes were overwhelmingly widows, not that different from the non-slave-owning households. But here it was more likely that the widows heading these wealthier households had inherited them from their husbands, and were thus not in the same poverty situation as their peers in the non-slave owning households. Nevertheless, it is still worth stressing that the ratios between the sexes remain constant even as wealth increases. It would seem from these data that women, whether slave owning or not, whites or free colored, were more likely to remain unmarried than men.

But what role did color have in relationship to the occupations of these heads of household.²³ Rural São Paulo and Minas Gerais in the nineteenth century, just as contemporary North America, had a large proportion of its population even in the rural areas engaged in non-agricultural activities.²⁴ Just over half of all non-slave households were dedicated to farming in all these communities, but a substantial minority of households were engaged in non-agricultural activities. After farming, crafts and commerce were the most numerous primary occupations in São Paulo and in this distribution between farm and non-farm occupations it turns out that color was important. Though free colored made up a third of all households whose occupation was known, they were only a quarter of the farming households. They did far better in the non-agricultural activities, being just under half of the major categories of artisans, day laborers and poor, and they dominated in the few service jobs and strangely among the few who lived on rents. They were just a little over a quarter of the farmers and liberal professionals but were underrepresented, in terms of their importance as heads of households, in the merchant class and the army, and surprisingly did quite poorly among the seamen and fisherman (being only a quarter of the total). When examined in terms of their own internal divisions, farmers made up well over half of the total of such free colored classes, followed by artisans and the poor as the next most numerous occupations. Thus if one were to summarize their occupational position among the households not owning slaves, it would be to say that they were found everywhere, and in no occupation less than a fifth of the total group. They were overrepresented in the poorer occupations and underrepresented as farmers, merchants and liberal professionals, the more well to do occupations; in fact, farmers and artisans made up 63 percent of all free colored households (see table 5).

²² Alida C. Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil, Santana de Parnaíba, 1580–1822* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992), chap. 5.

²³ In all the nineteenth-century mappas which have been examined, the occupation of slaves is not given. It has been assumed by almost all scholars working with these censuses that in the majority of the cases the slaves were employed in the same occupation as their masters, with the obvious exception of the liberal professions.

²⁴ On the equal importance of non-farm activities in nineteenth-century North America, see Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1987), p. 26. They estimate that of their almost 21,000 rural households sample in the Midwest and Northeast, 44 percent were involved in non-farm activities.

TABLE 5
KNOWN OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITY OF HEADS OF SLAVE & NON - SLAVE-OWNING
HOUSEHOLDS IN THE 15 MUNICIPIOS OF SÃO PAULO, 1829

Sector	Non-Slave Owners									
	Whites		Browns		Blacks		% Within Occupation			% free colored by occupation
	men	women	men	women	men	women	whites	browns	blacks	
Farmers	4.671	513	1.522	212	92	25	74	25	2	26
Seaman & Fishermen	161	8	26	7	2		83	16	1	17
Artisans	470	354	281	339	23	24	55	42	3	45
Liberal Professionals	68	4	23		1	1	74	24	2	26
Rentiers	3	1	10	3	4		19	62	19	81
Merchants	359	51	61	31	10	5	79	18	3	21
Transport Workers	130	2	64	1	3		66	33	2	34
Service Workers	1	5	4	15	3	2	20	63	17	80
Day Laborers	592	16	482	28	39	1	53	44	3	47
Poor & Beggars	284	443	197	367	18	43	54	42	5	46
Soldiers	119		31		1		79	21	1	21
Total	6.858	1.397	2.701	1.003	196	101	67	30	2	33

Sector	Slave Owners									
	Whites		Browns		Blacks		% Within Occupation			% free colored by occupation
	men	women	men	women	men	women	whites	browns	blacks	
Farmers	2.073	446	77	17	4	1	96	4	0	4
Seaman & Fishermen	26	1					100	0	0	0
Artisans	165	171	36	16	6		85	13	2	15
Liberal Professionals	162	1	2	4	1		96	4	1	5
Rentiers	14	35	2	5		1	86	11	2	13
Merchants	682	63	26	11	1		95	5	0	5
Transport Workers	50	1	6				89	11	0	11
Service Workers	1		2	1			25	50	0	50
Day Laborers	13	5	2	1			86	14	0	14
Poor & Beggars	24	88	8	24		1	77	19	1	19
Soldiers	134	2	8				94	6	0	6
TOTAL	3.344	813	169	79	12	3	94	5	0	6

Sources: Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, "População," latas 37 (São Paulo-Capital); 5 (Areias); 94 (Jundiaí); 154 (Santos); 43 (Cunha); 213 (Curitiba); 197 (Antonina); 184 (Taubaté); 173a (Sorocaba); 222 (Paranaguá); 24-24a (Bragança); 141 (Piracicaba); 191 (Ubatuba); 201 (Castro); 216 (Guaratuba). The data for Sorocaba comes from the census of 1836, all others are 1829 or 1830 The Minas data is found in Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, Mappas de População, Pasta 1, doc.12; Pasta 7, Doc 1; and Pasta 10, docs 2,6,14-22.

However, when it came to slave-owning households, they were in a far more limited role. All free colored heads only represented 5 percent of the households owning slaves whose occupation could be determined. These richer free colored households were overrepresented in the same professions as their non-slave owning peers and did as poorly among the farmers and merchants. Within their group an almost identical ratio of them were dedicated to farming, but the next most important category was merchants and together these two categories accounted for four fifths of these 262 slave-owning households. Thus the patterns found among the non-slave holders were not that different from the free colored who owned slaves. Moreover, in both slave- and non-slave-owning

households in São Paulo, they were overrepresented among the poor and day laborers. Even in Minas Gerais, being a *jornaleiro* was a very common occupation for the free colored in non-slave-owning households, while in Cunha it even stood out as the majority occupation for both black and mulatto males. These lower social and economic status occupations were less frequently found among the white households, even in those owning no slaves, though there was wide variation by county. Only in the very poorer regions of the province, such as Castro, Curitiba, and the mixed farming zone of Cunha was it at all significant. In Cunha and Curitiba over a quarter of the white heads of non-slave-owning households were in these two categories, but this rate was half that among the free colored non-slave-owning heads of households in these same counties, while in the southern county of Castro two thirds of both the free colored and white households were listed as poor and jornaleiros.

Evidently the free colored, while found everywhere and participating in all occupations, were nevertheless at the lower end of the social and economic scale in their majority. This was to be expected given their slave origins and ultimately poorer background, more limited education, and lack of capital. But these free colored, however poor, were not alone at the bottom of the social system, as the very significant participation of whites in the poor and day laboring categories indicated. Thus free colored could be found everywhere and in sometimes surprisingly significant numbers in sometimes more elite occupations.

But color was not alone in defining occupational distribution. Sex was also an influential factor determining occupational activity of the head of household and this crossed color and slave holding lines. Clearly in both slave- and non-slave-owning households more women were dedicated to crafts than were the men and were far less likely to be engaged in either commerce or the liberal professions. In both free and slave households, among these 15 counties, only 35 percent of the women who ran these households were doing farming (as opposed to 60 percent of all male households) and 27 percent of them were crafts persons (as opposed to just 7 percent of the male households). They were also far more likely to be listed as poor and beggars than the men (29 percent versus 8 percent of all households) and finally less likely to be day laborers than men (1 percent as opposed to 8 percent of male households). They were far more likely to be engaged in the textile related activities of spinning and weaving and this was consistent across color lines and to a lesser extent across the slave ownership boundary.

Although color did have some influence over occupation, non-whites tended to follow the same trades as their white male or female compatriots even if at lesser rates and those who owned slaves were more likely to follow the trends among white slave owners than they were to follow the patterns of their fellow free colored who did not own slaves. Color, of course, was influential in defining certain occupations, though often less important than gender, the wealth of the individual region or the factor of slave ownership. Thus, except for the liberal professions, we find free colored reasonably represented in all the leading occupations of the province, and not isolated in any one geographic region or occupational category, although they are probably more urban oriented than the whites, as their lesser participation in farming might suggest.

If sex was as important as color in the occupation of heads of households, what was the impact of color on the actual ownership of slaves themselves? Can we see more profound differences here than we saw with occupations? Did white slave owners own more slaves than colored ones relative to their role in this class? First of all it is worth noting that the average size of slave holdings did vary considerably among the 15 counties, going from 4 slaves per owner in Curitiba to 10 slaves per owner in Piracicaba and Areias, and the number of slaves even varied in their relative importance within

different counties.²⁵ But there are some obvious consistencies. There was a very sharp difference between whites and non-whites slave holders, in fact far more difference than between men and women of whatever color. Thus the free colored slave owners averaged only 3 slaves per unit compared to 6 per unit for all slave owners in the paulista communities. Even in the black-dominated community of Sabará, the 764 pardo slave owners only owned an average of 3 slaves per household compared to 8 per household for the 1,035 white slave owning households. Thus the sharp differences noted for the paulista communities were repeated as well in both mineiro counties. The impact of color at the elite level was quite strong.

This difference in size of slave holdings translated into very different shares of slaves by color of head of household. Thus the free colored as a whole owned but 3 percent of the slaves, even though they made up 6 percent of the owners, and this pattern was repeated when the owners are divided by sex (see table 6). Even in Sabará, the ratio of slaves owned was half of their relative weight among slave owners. The unusually large class of free colored slave owners in Santos was also like Sabará, with a very high 40 percent of the slave owners being free colored, but accounting for only 15 percent of the slaves owned. Clearly the non-white slave owners were far less wealthy than were the white slave masters and not only were a distinct minority among owners, but held a very small parcel of slaves within the province.

TABLE 6
RELATIVE WEIGHT OF FREE COLORED SLAVE OWNERS & RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF WHITES IN SLAVE - OWNING HOUSEHOLDS IN THE 17 MUNICÍPIOS IN 1829

Province	Município	% of free colored								
		Of all owners	Slaves owned	All male owners	Slaves owned by males	All female owners	Slaves owned by females			
Minas Gerais	Sabará	43	24	40	24	51	25			
	Campanha	12	8	11	7	21	18			
São Paulo	15 municípios	6	3	5	3	9	4			
	(n)	4.656	29.030	3.694	23.772	962	5.258			
		Whites			White households as a % of all households			As % of all non-slave households		
Province	Município	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Minas Gerais	Sabará	400	153	553	33	40	35	13	9	12
	Campanha	1.802	330	2.132	61	58	61	58	44	56
São Paulo	15 municípios	10.885	2.384	13.269	77	65	74	70	55	67

Sources: Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, "População," latas 37 (São Paulo-Capital); 5 (Areias); 94 (Jundiaí); 154 (Santos); 43 (Cunha); 213 (Curitiba); 197 (Antonina); 184 (Taubaté); 173a (Sorocaba); 222 (Paranaguá); 24-24a (Bragança); 141 (Piracicaba); 191 (Ubatuba); 201 (Castro); 216 (Guaratuba). The data for Sorocaba comes from the census of 1836, all others are 1829 or 1830 The Minas data is found in Arquivo Público Mineiro, Seção Provincial, Mappas de População, Pasta 1, doc.12; Pasta 7, Doc 1; and Pasta 10, docs 2,6,14-22.

²⁵ The actual distribution of slaves among these slave-owning households, as measured by the Gini coefficient of inequality were mostly in the upper 50s or lower 60s, with only Cunha, the classic subsistence farming zone, standing out as an unusual zone with a Gini below 50. The GINI coefficient for distribution of slaves by slave owners was 0.599 for Sabará, 0.557 for Campanha, and for Santos 0.574. The figures for Areias and Jundiaí respectively were 0.633 and 0.647 with Cunha having the lowest Gini at 0.498.

When examining slave ownership by sex, the differences between men and women is far less profound when examined in terms of their shares of slave ownership and shares of slave owning households. Though clearly women slave owners were a minority, their actual share of slaves held was close to their weight in the class of slave owners, a situation quite different from the free colored slave owners. While there was some difference by sex in terms of holdings, the numbers show a relatively small variation. Thus, as was noted earlier, white women in the 15 paulista communities held an average 5 slaves per owner, while the white males had 7 slaves per owner. In turn, among the free colored, women on average had 2 slaves and men held 3 slaves per household, but these non-white women were more important as a ratio of slave owners, accounting for a third of the free colored owners, than were white women who only represented a fifth of all white owners. Free colored women, were also significantly more important among all women slave owners, than were the free colored males among all male slave owners. But males still dominated within this class of households. Of the 879 slaves owned by the free colored, males held 74 percent of them even though they represented only 67 percent of the 282 free colored slave owners. This, of course, was due to the fact that on average males of whatever color always had more slaves per capita than did women. But despite these internal differences, the free colored of whatever sex were much poorer than the whites of whatever sex in this elite class.

Slave ownership more than color, however, appears to influence quite strongly the age of the heads of households in these early-nineteenth-century counties. Slave-owning white males were on average six years older than their white non-slave owning peers (44.8 years of age verses 38.5 years for the non-slave owners), and that age spread was five years among the browns (45.6 years vs. 40.2 years). These differences also held for women who had almost as large a spread as did the men (51.8 years for white women slave owners and 44.9 years for non-slave owning women heads of households; 46.2 years and 43.9 years for browns respectively). This could have occurred due to several factors, but it seems as though all households may have formed early in the age of both heads, regardless of income and wealth. Over time, these households accumulated wealth and slaves, increasing their average age. This meant that some important minority of non-slave holding households were in a state of transition, but they eventually joined the ranks of the slave-owning elite. Consistently we found that non-slave households of the poorer whites were headed by considerably younger men and women. This may either signify a transitional situation or more likely that the poor whites, like the majority of the free colored, were organizing households earlier than more wealthy persons. That is access to initial resources for creating households was not that large and couples could begin early to live together, marry and have children. Only when it came to owning slaves was capital accumulation important, and therefore such households tended to have older heads.

Although whites dominated the slave-owning elite and owned the overwhelming majority of slaves, it is important to point out that there was a growing class of non-white slave owners. Sexual differences were important here. Colored males were more likely to be owners than colored females, but the women did better in their gender group than did the male slave owners. This most probably had to do with the fact that many of these non-white women maintained small workshops, in which slave and free labor was used to produce local and regionally purchased manufactured goods, with textiles being the leading product.

While prejudice may have accounted for this important difference among slave owners by color, regardless of sex, the impact of color on slave holdings could also be explained by economic factors, with color indicating a previous condition of servitude and a lesser share of capital and education than was commonly available to the whites. Here as well, browns did better than blacks everywhere.

But how do these free colored compare to the other major group of poor within paulista society, that is the whites who owned no slaves? These non-slave-owning whites, whom we could designate as poor whites, also worked the land, raised animals, transported goods, produced cloth and carried out the same basic craft activities as the free colored. But like most free colored, they were too poor to own slaves to help them in their tasks. These formed the majority of even the white part of the population and yet in many aspects they shared a status closer to their free colored neighbors. The majority of the white households owned no slaves in the 15 counties we have been studying for São Paulo in the late 1820s and early 1830s. This would appear to be the norm for all of Brazil. Others have suggested that the poor white farmers everywhere in pre-abolition Brazil were a majority of the whites of rural society and that for whites as well as free colored, slave ownership was not the norm.²⁶ Given that slave ownership along with the ownership of property were key elements in defining wealth in nineteenth-century Brazilian society, then it is evident that poverty was common among whites, if not as common as among the free colored.

Color, in fact, did not make for much distinction among the poor. Poor whites, were more likely to be closer to their free colored peers than to their white slave owning brethren when it came to occupation and other social and demographic characteristics. In terms of their economic activity, the factors associated with poverty show themselves clearly. Poor whites were far less likely to be in agriculture for both men and women, and more likely to engage in craft activity, thus suggesting much less land ownership than their slave owning fellow whites. Moreover, day laborers, rarely present among the slave owning whites, were almost as well represented among the poor whites as they were among the non-slave-owning free colored, though they tended to be more involved in odd job work than begging, in contrast to the free colored.

Socially the free colored and the whites seem little different in terms of their marriage patterns. Within these paulista counties they are married at about the same rates. The unusual factor is that the slave owners tend to be less married and widowed than either group, at least among the men. But the real difference comes with the distribution of marital status among the women. If ever-married (married plus widows) ratios are considered an indication of stability in the household and relative economic security, then the poor women of whatever color are at the bottom of the scale. Even women owning slaves tended to be less married than their male counterparts and this pattern crosses the color line.

Though color and gender influence the social and economic condition of the paulista households, it was slave ownership in and of itself which defined two quite different economic classes within São Paulo and Minas Gerais in the early nineteenth century and was probably as important as color in defining ones position within Brazilian society. In many ways, poor whites and free colored shared many characteristics in common, especially in terms of their occupational activities. When this division of slave ownership is examined by color, however, it is evident that the free colored were a distinctly different group within the master class, far more likely to be artisans than landowners, and having on average far fewer slaves than their white peers. Thus at the level of slave ownership we can see far more distinction in terms of color than among the mass of non-slave owning households. For the poor of São Paulo, wealth was the most important variable defining socio-economic position. But for the elite of the society, color still played an important role in defining access to resources.

It is evident from the analysis of these regions in 1829–1831, that the free colored population and the non-slave households in general were the poorer part of the average

²⁶ Iraci del Nero da Costa, *Arraia-Miúda: Um estudo sobre os não-proprietários de escravos no Brasil* (São Paulo: MGSP Ed., 1992).

county no matter what their economic activity. Owning slaves was obviously a key indicator of wealth in these communities and probably meant the control over more and better lands as well. Though the majority of even non-slave households were in agriculture, these poorer families tended to be far more involved in crafts or commercial activity than households that contained slaves. There were also several demographic indices that suggest that the non-slave households were less married, smaller in size, and were headed by younger persons than was the case with the slave-owning units.

Non-slave-owning households in general were also more likely to have higher proportions of colored than of whites. Moreover color in these households had some effect, however as whites in such households were usually more agriculturally based than their colored brethren and tended to be better represented in the more skilled occupations. Among women, clearly spinning and weaving were almost as important as land ownership and agriculture, though again it is the white women who tend more to weaving than spinning and more toward seamstresses than the women of color. Though here too, it would appear that the *pardas* were usually closer to their white peers than they were to the other Afro-Brazilian women.

What can be said then about the free colored in early-nineteenth-century Brazil as seen from their position in São Paulo and Minas Gerais? Unlike freedmen in the southern United States, the free colored were definitely not a marginalized or isolated group, without access to resources in an open market economy. A fair amount of economic mobility had already occurred for an important segment of these free persons of color, and they participated in most of the occupations and household arrangements that their white neighbors enjoyed. Although our data does not provide detailed information on migration patterns, other studies have suggested that one of the defining features of the free colored in mid-nineteenth-century Brazil was their high degree of geographic mobility.²⁷ Moreover the comparison between these municípios shows that the presence or absence of a white majority did not significantly influence this mobility. That prejudice may still have existed is evident from even the color divisions within the free persons of color category. Browns were the dominant group among the free colored, and in most cases did better than black free persons. Moreover their social and economic position often shows little difference from the poor whites in their respective communities, and they probably differed little from most of the semiskilled and skilled working-class whites as well. They were obviously not to be found in the dominant government positions or other occupations representing supreme authority and both browns and blacks were not equal to their fellow slave owners when they did own slaves. But the free colored were an integrated mass of workers who shared most of the characteristics of all the free born and white population among whom they lived. Thus 50 years before the end of slavery, Brazilian free persons of color were an important, competitive, and integrated element within imperial society. If this pattern of social and economic integration holds for other regions of Brazil prior to 1888, then this social, economic and even geographic mobility of the free colored before emancipation may go a long way towards explaining the relative willingness of the Brazilian non-white population to support the social order even after the abolition of slavery and despite the persistence of racial discrimination to the present day.

²⁷ See Mattos, *Das cores do silêncio*