

Herbert S. Klein, "The African American Experience in Comparative Perspective: The Current Question of the Debate," in Sherwin K Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III, eds., *Africans to Spanish America, Expanding the Diaspora* (Bloomington: University of Illinois Press, 2012), pp. 206-222"

I would like to return to a theme that has been much neglected in the recent discussions on the African diaspora in the Americas, and that is the question of the comparative differences and similarities between slave regimes in the Americas, and their influence on post-manumission integration of Africans. This is a theme which goes back to the first modern studies of Africans in the Americas. From Fernando Ortiz in Cuba, to Nina Rodrigues in Brazil, there was a general awareness among Latin American scholars that there were differences in the way Africans were integrated into the various societies in the Americas.¹ North American scholars such as E. Franklin Frazier, Frank Tannenbaum and Stanley Elkins picked up on these themes and tried to place the U.S. experience in this comparative framework.² For a time, from the 1940s to 1970s, it appeared that this comparative analysis was leading to some interesting questions and debates about institutions, cultures and social organizations.³ But this discussion has died with the rejection of the comparative differences school in North American historiography, and in turn the concentration on detailed local studies within Latin American historiography, both of which movements have failed to return to this question in any detail.

For the earlier Latin American authors, the harsh racism of the United States, as they examined it in the post slavery period, was a result of what they all saw as a more restrictive slave regime in the United States compared to all other systems. The two color

racial model which evolved in the U.S., the extraordinarily harsh 19th century legal system which Ortiz referred to as the “iron law of slavery,”⁴ the long hostility to freed blacks, and their marginalization among the free persons in the Jim Crow post emancipation South were all taken to mean that the United States was different from most Latin American societies. This is not to say that these authors did not recognize the inherent racism in all the post-slave systems in the Americas, but that they conceived the United States as a case apart.⁵

The post 1970s attack on the comparative school came from U.S. scholars who, while they celebrated the “exceptionalism” of U.S. history in other areas, denied it here. The work of Eugene Genovese was crucial in this respect. He argued that the harsh legal system did not express the true nature of the slave system, which in fact was mitigated by paternalism into a regime which differed little from other slave societies in the Americas.⁶ Others scholars such as C. Van Woodward would argue that the positive natural demographic growth of the U.S. slave population compared to the more normal negative population growth of the slave societies in the rest of the Americas was clear evidence that the treatment of slaves was better in the U.S. and therefore, if anything, the Latin American societies had a harsher slave system.⁷

But the existence of laws in the southern states must be explained and they do in fact signify something about the reality of ideas, beliefs and actions. They did have a profound impact in defining both the North American slave and free colored societies which emerged as a result. The demographic variation in fertility and mortality of slaves among various American societies has more to do with the intensity of the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on the age and sex of arriving Africans; with differing health

conditions between Latin America and North America, and with varying lactation practices which influenced fertility, than it has to do with the “better” or “worse” treatment of the slave population.⁸ Slavery was nasty and brutish in all societies and the labor extracted from all slaves everywhere was harsh and far more demanding than ever requested of free wage workers. It was also extracted everywhere by the use of corporal punishment.

This concentration on the “better” or “worse” treatment of slaves shifted the ground away from institutions and social and economic practices and led to a total rejection of the comparative school as a viable model, at least in North American historiography. Except for the recent attempts to deal with the “slave community” theme in comparative perspective,⁹ there is little new discussion on this theme, with the assumption by most scholars in North America, that all slave systems were equal and that if anything, the Latin American slave regimes were “worse.”

I would argue that in fact important differences did exist among slave regimes in the Americas and these differences had important social, economic and political consequences for the Afro-American populations. Let us start this comparative analysis by examining what is similar in all slave regimes. To begin with almost all the major slave systems created in the Americas had the same economic ends. In a world where land was cheap and labor was costly, and where alternative European labor could not be attracted by prevailing American free wages, Africans were employed as the cheapest alternative labor force.¹⁰ But given their high costs, they were usually associated in most cases with the most advanced export sectors in the given societies, producing for a world market.¹¹ The only major variation from this model was the more domestic and urban

slavery practiced by the Spaniards in the heavily Amerindian societies, where Africans were concentrated in domestic service and crafts and the primary producers of domestic and exportable products were the Indian peasants.

Except for the French and English West Indies, almost all the major slave societies had roughly a third of their population consisting of slaves and roughly a third of the free persons owned slaves. Moreover the majority of slaveowners held just 1 slave, while the average slave holding was on the order of 5-10 slaves per owner and the average plantation size was roughly in the 50-100 slave range. It was the non-Hispanic sugar islands that stand out as different, with a majority of the population being slaves and average plantations holding several hundred slaves.¹²

But there was little difference in the organization of this plantation slave labor in export agriculture. All plantations, whatever their product or size, organized labor in a similar fashion. Workers were grouped into unisex gangs based on their age and physical abilities. These field labor gangs were supervised by slave drivers who routinized the work tasks and administered them with the use of whips creating so-called “factories in the field” type of labor organization. In these gangs women and men equally performed the basic field-work tasks of planting, maintaining and harvesting the crops. Beyond the field hands everyone found some work to do no matter what the age or sex. These slave labor systems were unusual in that the economically active population was the highest of any laboring populations at the time--on the order of 80% of all slaves performed some economic task--compared to around 50-60% among most peasant groups.¹³

There were of course differences in the plantation regimes based on the technology of production. Sugar was a harsher labor regime for slaves than coffee,

plantations that had three growing seasons required more labor than those which might have two or fewer harvests and so on. Some crops required a great deal of technical work to produce, such as sugar, and others required few skilled tasks to create a final product such as coffee, and this would influence relative skill levels in the slave population. All plantation regimes tended to reserve skilled labor for male slaves, though in non-plantation labor women slaves performed a wide variety of skilled occupations. These rural servile labor regimes thus shared common features across all societies and a 19th-century traveler would have noticed little difference in work routines in plantations anywhere in the Americas.

Although gang labor and slave discipline were the same everywhere, there were still some important economic differences among these regimes. The skill level of the slaves often depended on the relative scarcity or availability of competitive white labor. If blacks and mulattoes, free and slave, formed the majority of laborers in a given society, then slaves were often better trained for skills than in those societies where competitive white artisans existed. Equally, in these societies which lacked large groups of competitive white, Indian or *mestizo* laborers, and could import large numbers of Africans, it was more common to find slaves in many more occupations than in those societies in which there was more competitive non-Afro-American labor. Brazil of course stands out as a prime case where slaves could be found in virtually every occupation and at every level of skill. There were even Afro-Brazilian slave sailors used as crews on slavers going to Africa to purchase slaves.¹⁴ But in all urban centers of Latin America from the 16th to the early 19th century Afro-Latin Americans were to be found well represented in most of the major crafts, and although more likely to be apprentices

and journeymen than their white co-workers, they were even found to be masters in many crafts.¹⁵

This openness of the labor market for slaves and free colored makes for some crucial differences in slave regimes, since in a country like Brazil, for example, only about a third of the slaves were working on plantations in the first national census of 1872, and the majority were to be found working in everything from unskilled urban work to rural produce farming, from mule transportation to whaling.¹⁶ Many worked in family units alongside the slave owner families themselves or with free landless workers at their side. This same pattern can also be found in Cuba and Puerto Rico as well.¹⁷ All this made for a more complex labor market for Afro-Americans than was to be found in North America. Although the plantation slaves remained relatively isolated, slave laborers could be found everywhere else mingling with free workers both colored, white, Indian and mestizo. Thus the relative importance of rural and urban slave labor is as important as the relative importance of plantation labor within the rural area. In this, for example, the U.S. was more like the Non-Hispanic West Indies than like the other continental and Hispanic island slave regimes.

Slaves were used in every conceivable task needed for these societies to function. They were rented out, apprenticed and even allowed to live on their own in large numbers. Although renting slaves and urban slavery existed in the United States they occurred on a smaller scale than in most Latin American countries, and became progressively more reduced over time. Moreover just as state and master control over urban slaves became ever more strict in the United States in the 19th century, they seemed to become ever looser in Latin America as time went on. Municipal governments

in Latin America were forever complaining about the failure of urban slave owners to discipline, house and feed their slaves, but little was done to control them.¹⁸ In contrast, in 19th century North America there was effective and increasing control by the state over the lives of urban slaves and their restriction to the homes of their masters.¹⁹ These changes were not related to economic efficiency. In fact, economically, it was more effective to allow slave labor the greatest mobility possible for it to be profitable. Allowing slaves to make contracts, arrange for their own housing, clothing and food, all reduced maintenance costs for owners. Restraining owners, increasing their maintenance expenses, all in the name of security, was in fact an uneconomic policy. Reversing Elkins' model of the "dynamics of unopposed capitalism" we could say that Brazil and Cuba were the true capitalist societies, and that the United States was willing to sacrifice economic rationality for other preferred ends.

How did the state and its laws respond to these emerging American realities? All slave legal system shared much in common. As Orlando Patterson has shown, all slave systems have to legally destroy the rights of slaves for them to be economically mobile. Masters everywhere could discipline their slaves, use them in any occupations they wanted, and could sell them to anyone. In all cases their rights as masters were backed by the state.²⁰ There were however, by the 19th century some differences emerging within the American slave regimes. Most of these differences grew out of local customary practices which modified the rights of owners. If slaves were living on their own and providing their owners with a rent they had to make contracts and handle their own finances. Although legally no slaves could own property or make contracts, urban slaves in fact tended to own property and make contracts independent of their owners. On all

plantations slaves produced much of their own foods, and they often sold this food to itinerant peddlers who went around the farms--an issue much commented upon in Cuba. Thus slaves sold food and other goods which they produced on their own plots, though they had no legal rights to do so. In fact, if not in law, these garden plots were often considered the property of the slaves who worked them. With their own property slaves soon were allowed by the state to purchase their own freedom, a system which evolved in customary law and soon became fully elaborated in the local slave codes. In Brazil and Cuba, self purchase by slaves was a customary act that eventually received legal support. This was the primary source for African born slaves to obtain their freedom and was of course far more common in urban than rural areas. Nevertheless it was part of a complex set of rules which supported a normal process of manumission.²¹

It would seem that in the 18th century all slave systems in the Americas produced roughly the same proportion of manumitted slaves. In all societies fathers freed their slave children and their mistresses, owners for religious or moral reasons freed their slaves, and loyal support was sometimes rewarded with freedom. There are even cases of self-purchase to be found in all slave regimes. All this began at a slow pace and produced a modestly growing free colored class. But in the 19th century some slave societies began to close these avenues of manumission, while others progressively expanded the right of self-purchase and encouraged other processes of manumission. In Brazil, for example, not only could slaves be freed with formal contracts (*cartas de alforria*) before notaries, but large numbers were simply declared free at their baptism, a process which occurred in most Latin American countries.²² State laws and courts accepted all these manumission procedures and protected them. In turn, these legal

encouragements to manumission led to an ever more rapidly expanding free colored population which soon exceeded the slave population in the 19th century. By the first national census of Brazil in 1872, some sixteen years before emancipation, for example, there were 4.2 million free colored and only 1.5 million slaves. For the U.S. in 1860 the figures were reversed--with almost 4 million slaves and less than half a million free colored. In no other major slave society were the free colored so numerous and so important a part of the population as in Brazil. But everywhere in the Iberian world, by the early part of the 19th century, free colored either equaled the number of slaves or were quickly passing them in importance. Nothing like this occurred either in the French or English colonies and nations.²³

In North America, the 19th century local state legislation progressively restricted this manumission process and tried to isolate and even expel the free colored from their territories. Masters were progressively restricted in their right to manumit slaves within their borders, no support was given to self-purchase arrangements, and for the African-Americans who were free, there were ever increasing restrictions, and even physical mobility was curtailed. This legislation was successful and the free colored population was kept to a low ratio of the total Afro-American population before 1860. Moreover over half of these free colored lived outside the southern slave states. It was estimated that in 1860, only 3% of the free population in the Southern States were colored freedmen.²⁴ Why this increasing fear of manumission was dominant in the United States by the 19th century is worth exploring and has until now has received little attention. It has been suggested that this hostility toward freedmen was seen as a challenge to the legitimacy of the slave system by English planters, who were progressively elaborating a

positive defense of slavery which saw slavery as the only proper condition for African-Americans. Why did other slave societies not view this the same way? Why did an emerging and large free colored class in Latin America not threaten traditional master-slave relations?

A great deal of this difference in attitude toward the freedmen can be seen as well in the differing political, economic, and social role of the free colored within each of the slave societies. Once free, the Afro-Americans played a much more important role in their respective Latin American societies than in the English colonies and nations. Both Spain and Brazil organized the free colored into military units and used them to deal with international wars and internal rebellions. In Spanish America Indians were prohibited from serving in the militia, but the free colored, organized into units of mulattoes and blacks, were required to serve the state. Everywhere they were a very important element in the military. In many cases these troops were even used outside their home territories by the imperial governments. In the case of Brazil *pardo* and *preto* units were the norm until the 1830s, and even after the creation of a unified National Guard under the Empire, free colored were vital within the military establishment. Thus everywhere the free colored were granted the right to bear arms, and they used this right to extend their own private rights. In all countries the militiamen obtained access to privileged military courts, and in Mexico they succeeded in escaping the tribute tax charged to free colored as well as Indians. Also, elite free colored gained power as officers of these units. This is not to say that these colored militias were not discriminated against in terms of occupations within the army or in getting the worst duties. But it is clear that they were an important part of the state apparatus from early in the slave periods.²⁵ In fact, many

of the revolutionary leaders in the early and late 19th century independence movements in such countries as Mexico and Cuba came from this free colored class.

The free colored in Latin America had few impediments to their geographic mobility, which were the same as all free persons within their societies. In Brazil they moved about freely between urban and rural areas, and from province to province as evidenced by the judicial records of the time. The restrictions to geographic mobility developed within 19th century North America, did not occur in Latin America. Free colored resided everywhere they could afford to live. Studies of residence by color for such cities as Mexico or San Juan have also shown that free colored lived next to and often intermingled with white and mestizo families, and it was as common for free colored to rent spaces in their apartments to whites, as often as for whites to rent out spaces to them.²⁶ Though the urban ghettos of the United States are usually assumed to have originated in the post emancipation era, it is nevertheless telling that no such systematic intermingling of the races by individual residence has been shown for the U.S.²⁷

Although all but the elite occupations were open to the free colored, even royal restrictions on this economic mobility progressively declined over the colonial period and were eliminated altogether in the 19th century Latin American republics. From Lima to Mexico City, there are numerous cases of free colored who obtained royal permission to engage in elite occupations that were officially denied to them. This included everything from government and church positions, to those of restricted crafts.

A minority of free colored even owned slaves, a phenomenon that occurred in all the slave societies including the United States. In the case of Brazil where these colored

slave owners have been well studied, they were a significant minority of such owners in most regions and were mostly artisans running small workshops. In this context free colored women were a very significant part of the slave owning free colored class. In the United States they represented a far smaller ratio of the slave owning class, were far more male and were more restricted to farming occupations than occurred in Brazil.²⁸

The slaves and free colored in both the rural and urban areas of Latin America mingled rather freely with whites. Although most African manifestations of religious practices were severely repressed and religions like *Candomblé* and *Santería* were underground in the slave period and often violently suppressed, there were numerous fiestas and other gathering places and public events for blacks and whites to mingle, and we even find slaves appearing at these places. The Latin American judicial records are filled with slaves who socialized with whites and free colored in the local taverns that were major social gathering places. There are also numerous cases of slaves escaping to cities and living as free colored.

There were even large numbers of free colored communities which emerged by illegal means in these societies. Although it has been suggested that slave rebellions were more numerous and more violent in Latin America than in North America, these events were few and far between in most slave societies. Again runaway slaves were common to all slave regimes. But where the Latin American and even West Indian societies differ from North America is in the size and extraordinary number of runaway slave communities in the former regions and their scarcity in the latter. Brazil is filled with hundreds of towns named Quilombo, which was the designation for runaway communities, and the Cimarron communities all over Latin America and the Caribbean

islands were quite important and numerous. The causes for the relative importance of these slave communities outside North America were primarily due to ecological conditions such as mountainous semi-tropical and tropical terrain where isolated communities could be successfully maintained. Also, the permanent loss of escaping slaves into the free colored population was far more common in Latin America than in North America due to the existence of larger free colored communities and of more urban centers, both of which gave significant cover to escaped slaves. Moreover, once established over several generations, most of these runaway communities in fact converted into free colored agricultural communities and became a part of the free rural landscape.

Possibly because of their economic importance, or their inability to seriously influence elite politics, the free colored were offered a wide range of rights that were denied to them in North America. They could vote if they had the property qualifications, bear arms, live wherever they could find work and housing, and by the 19th century, they had few restrictions on their occupations or educational opportunities. Though the state sometimes treated the free colored more harshly than their white peers, they nevertheless were treated quite differently from their slave brethren.²⁹ They could appear in court cases as witness and complainants; they could make legal contracts. As Tannenbaum was wont to say they were “citizens” within all the republics and empires they lived in.

This is not to say that the free colored were equal to whites, or that discrimination did not occur. In Brazil there was even some measure of discrimination between those who were born free and those who were freed during the course of their lifetimes. All ex-

slaves emerged from slavery with no savings and only the human capital they carried with them in terms of skills, languages and abilities. They thus formed the base of the poor in all Latin American societies, a position they shared with an important minority of downwardly mobile whites. It has been suggested in studies for Mexico City for example, that discrimination among the poor was quite limited and color was a very fluid marker that could change during the course of a lifetime. For those who moved up the economic and social scale, discrimination clearly increased the higher they rose.³⁰ The cases of children suing parents for the right to marry in late 18th century Spanish America show that middle ranking whites were highly discriminatory toward blacks and mulattoes.³¹ Among the very elite, should a free colored make it that far--and very few outside of the French West Indies reached these exalted ranks--discrimination was probably less pronounced since class was a far more rigid barrier. But even this status did not guarantee equality, and the free colored planter class of Saint Domingue faced bitter hostility from the white planter elite which was one of the key factors that prepared the way for the slave rebellion of 1791.³² Nor was a frightened white elite above attacking the free colored as a dangerous element in their societies, as occurred in the supposed Escalera affair in Cuba in the early 1840s.³³ Color was clearly a marker of status in Latin American society, but the definition of status, class and identity involved more markers than just skin color. This was in sharp contrast to the United States and the English colonies where skin color was the only marker used to discriminate among peoples, thus making prejudice easier to function.

What of the religious and social life of the slaves and free colored? Clearly, although the Catholic countries baptized their African slaves from the earliest days of

their residence in the Americas, the Church had only a moderate impact on their daily lives. Religious holidays and Sunday rest days were usually enforced and most slaves were taught the basics of Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church did not hesitate to incorporate Africans as members, in contrast to the Protestant churches which substantially delayed their acceptance. There is also no question that slaves took the sacraments and participated in Catholic rituals if a priest were available to them.³⁴ But there were relatively few priests, especially in rural areas. The church, however, enforced the holidays and most Catholics respected these days without labor.³⁵ The church was also a place for manumissions and there is ample evidence to show various levels of church support for slaves who were married. Also godparenthood rituals were observed among the slaves, mostly using their fellow slaves as godparents for their children. Finally, in Brazil, there is abundant evidence in the south central zones of significant legal slave marriages, along with systematic efforts of the Church to guarantee that married couples remained together, even if teenage children were not always protected in the process. Although slave marriages could be found in Mexico and other Latin American societies, they were relatively more important in Brazil.³⁶

Where the Church had a greater impact was among the free colored. It was the free colored who organized many of the famous religious brotherhoods and even succeed in constructing their own churches, as can be seen in numerous Brazilian towns and cities. The brotherhoods of free colored probably involved a very large proportion of the free colored community and became an important part of their social life and festive activities. They clearly served also as effective mutual aid and burial societies. This is not to say that religious activity was not important in protestant societies, but the

autonomy of the brotherhoods was formally recognized by the priesthood and they were a fundamental part of both white and free colored society. Like the militia, the religious brotherhoods were also important outlets for upwardly mobile free colored to find expression and recognition.³⁷

Clearly the longer history of the slave trade to the major slave states of Latin America was a fundamental factor in the transfer and survival of African cults and religious ideas in Latin America compared to their less deep roots in North America.³⁸ But the survival of Afro-religious practices, so important to the Afro-American communities in Latin America, was also due in part to their ability to syncretize with folk Catholic practices, something less viable within Protestant practice.³⁹

So what can we then say about the comparative similarities and differences among all of these societies? It would seem to me that most of the major continental slave societies up to 1800 were more or less moved in the same direction in terms of labor organization, the rates of manumission and the relative importance of slaves and slave owners and the size of slave holdings in the various societies. Cuba and Puerto Rico shared most of the features of these continental regimes, and the West Indies, because of their unusual demographic structures, represented quite alternative models. But after 1800 the United States began to move in a different direction, and essentially began to oppose the normal tendencies toward opening the system through increasing manumission and incorporating the free colored as welcomed members of free society.

How this occurred is easy to see, but answering the question why is much more complicated. Instead of permitting the normal economic and social evolution of the slave regime, as was occurring in all the Latin American countries in the 19th century, the

slave-owning elite of the United States decided that the system had to be closed down, with slaves denied access to literacy and freedom on an ever increasing scale of harshness. It is no accident that the United States was the only society to produce a positive defense of slavery.⁴⁰ It might be that in democratic societies white elites and free white workers feel more frightened by the potential social and economic mobility of free colored. This fear of the emancipated slave probably existed as well in Latin America, but it was never powerful enough to create rigid barriers against the normal economic functioning of the market economies. Elites felt secure in highly stratified and non-representative systems, and the working class was so infiltrated with free colored that systematic discrimination was virtually impossible and would have led to economic chaos. Intermarriage, craft identity, military participation and other cross boundary institutions weakened the fear that blacks would displace upper level white artisans or threaten their status, even if they entered the ranks of master craftsmen in a few of the trades. What is most strange about this is that the North Americans were dealing with a far less African influenced population than, say, in Brazil or Cuba. Few Africans lived in North America in the mid 19th century compared to large numbers who could be found in the societies which did not end their slave trades until this period. Nor would a far more active emancipation rate on the level of Latin American societies threaten the United States slave population with extinction. North American slaves were reproducing at over 2% per annum so that the slave force easily could have lost 1% of that growth to manumission and still survived.

It is also clear that when emancipated, the North American free colored played a far less decisive market role than their counterparts in Latin America.⁴¹ Small white

farmers and artisans blocked their integration in numerous ways in the U.S. South. Even after the civil war, it has been suggested that the land market in the South was closed to most of them.⁴² Whether in Latin America it was the more established guild system which guaranteed effective education in skills and crafts, or the lack of a competitive white artisan class which challenged their skills, there is little question of the ability of ex-slaves to carry their skills successfully into the free labor market, something which was far more difficult to achieve in the United States. With restricted physical mobility, active market competition from whites, and probably handicapped with rudimentary plantation skills, it was extremely difficult for emancipated slaves to transfer their skills across the barrier of freedom in North America.

This closing of opportunities for ex-slaves was even more apparent when final emancipation occurred in the United States. Until 1900 in fact, well over 90% of African-Americans still resided in the South and discrimination against them was pervasive.⁴³ In contrast, in Brazil, few ex-slaves were to be found in the core plantation areas of the West Paulista plains or the advanced sugar and coffee municipalities of Rio de Janeiro after abolition occurred in 1888. Though there were regions with higher ratios of black and mulatto residents, in general, ex-slaves could be found everywhere after final emancipation. On the other hand, the geographic immobility of ex-slaves in the US South lasted into the early 20th century. By contrast, black geographic mobility was the norm not just in Brazil but in all Latin American societies both before and after emancipation.

While recognizing that freedmen everywhere formed the poorest element in all slave and ex-slave societies, it is nevertheless evident that the laws and attitudes which

promoted or rejected manumission and accepted or opposed the economic and geographic mobility of freedmen and ex-slaves were crucial in defining the nature of these African-American populations long after the end of slavery. If this argument of essential differences on these key variables makes sense, then it is evident that we can only explain the differences and their causal factors by a more detailed comparative work on the attitudes of the white slave owning elite in each society and the nature of the local labor markets. Why one slave owning class fears the change of slave status while another accepts change without fear of loss of control, may be due to a host of different political and demographic factors. Are democratic regimes more racist than non-democratic ones? Are societies with less European immigration more willing to rely on the skilled and unskilled labor of Afro-Americans than those societies with a steady immigration of free white workers? Do Catholic cultural values make slave owners more accepting of manumission than do Protestant societies? How do the French West Indies fit into this schema?

Much of the new social and cultural research of recent years, which is well reflected in the essays in this volume, has shown the importance of African survivals in the Diaspora and suggested their effective utility for individuals facing integration in these New World white dominated societies. But as yet, much of this scholarship has been based on single case studies or the experiences of a very few individuals, without explaining their uniqueness or commonality to larger groups. Nor have the necessary linkages been established in many of these studies to the basic social and economic structures of the slave societies in which these individual slaves and free colored functioned. Without this context, it will be difficult to see how these individual

experiences functioned within differing societies, or how these societies differed, if at all, from each other.

Clearly I think that the most important questions worth investigating in detail are those explaining how the social, economic and legal position of the slaves influenced the process of manumission and the subsequent integration of free colored into white society. Also important is determining why and how elite attitudes among these slave societies differed in relation to slave manumission and the rights of slaves to acquire skills. In each slave regime it is essential to determine what roles were available by which slaves could obtain access to skills, to space away from the master's daily control, and other forms of social and economic autonomy. Equally, the nature of the free population at the time of slavery is a vital area to integrate into slave studies. The size, color and distribution of the free working classes are essential areas of concern. Without examining the free colored we cannot fully understand the slave regimes. The nature of white-black competition within the free labor market and the attitude of the white working classes toward their Afro-American peers should be studied. Equally important are the white elite attitudes toward freed colored persons before and after abolition of slavery. These are just a few of the areas worth exploring if we are to explain the obvious differences which existed among the slave societies in the Americas. Moreover, elucidating both those features that all slave societies shared, and those in which they differed from each other, will go a long way toward explaining the different patterns of integration of Afro-Americans in the post slave societies which emerged in the Americas.

NOTES

¹Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, Os africanos no Brasil (2nd ed. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1935) and Fernando Ortiz, Hampa Afro-Cubana: Los negros esclavos (Havana: Revista Bimestre Cubana, 1916).

² Donald Pierson, Negroes in Brazil, a study of race contact at Bahia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942); Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen, the Negro in the Americas (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947) and Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery. A Problem in American institutional and intellectual Life (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1959).

³ The works of the Brazilian sociologist Gilbert Freyre were extremely important in this debate, see especially his Casa-grande & senzala; formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal. (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1943) which was published in English as The masters and the slaves (Casa-grande & senzala) a study in the development of Brazilian civilization (New York, Knopf, 1946)

⁴ "A legislation of iron, is what the North American colonists had given to themselves, independently of the Britannic Metropolis." Ortiz, Hampa Afro-Cubana, p. 362.

⁶ See Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), part 1.

⁷ C. Vann Woodward, American Counterpart: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

⁸ See Herbert S. Klein and Stanley Engerman, "Fertility Differentials between Slaves in the United States and the British West Indies: A Note on Lactation Practices and their Implications," William and Mary Quarterly, XXXV, no. 2 (April, 1978), 357-374.

⁹ See for example. Peter Kolchin, Unfree labor: American slavery and Russian serfdom (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987).

¹⁰ The classic article which provides the model for explaining land/labor ratios and their influence on the turn to slavery is Evsey D. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis," Journal of Economic History, 30:1 (March 1970), 18-32.

¹¹ See Herbert S. Klein, African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Although this statement is generally true in all slave societies, there is a lively discussion as to whether the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil in the 19th century was a possible exception. There a very large slave population seemed to maintain itself via local craft and food production for the domestic market. For the debate on this theme see Amilcar Martins Filho & Roberto B. Martins, "Slavery in a

Nonexport Economy: Minas Gerais Revisited,” Hispanic American Historical Review Vol. 63, no. 3(1983) with comments by Robert Slenes, Warren Dean, Eugene Genovese, and Stanley Engerman, and their reply in ibid. Vol. 64, no. 1 (1984). The arguments of the Martins brothers is most fully critiqued in Laird W. Bergad, Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1720-1888 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and for a temporary use of slaves in food production in São Paulo in the early coffee period see Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, “African Slavery in the Production of Subsistence Crops: The Case of São Paulo in the 19th Century,” in David. Eltis, Frank Lewis, and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, eds., Slavery in the Development of the Americas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), pp.120-149.

¹² See the suggestive essay of Stuart B. Schwartz, “Patterns of Slaveholding in the Americas: New Evidence from Brazil,” The American Historical Review Vol. 87, No. 1 (Feb., 1982), pp. 55-86.

¹³ See for example, Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time on the Cross; The Economics Of American Negro Slavery (Boston, Little, Brown, 1974), Gabriel Debien, Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises (Basse-Terre & Fort-de-France: Societies d’histoire de la Guadeloupe and Martinique, 1974), Michael Craton, Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery (New York: Doubleday, 1974), Barry W. Higman, Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Slave Population of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834 (Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Manuel Moreno Fraginals, El ingenio: complejo económico social cubano del azúcar (3 vols.; La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978); Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein, Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Bergad, Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais.

¹⁴ See Herbert S. Klein, The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), chapter 3.

¹⁵ On urban craft activities, for example, one of the best surveys is found in Frederick P. Bowser, The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974). For some of these urban activities for free colored in Cuba see Herbert S. Klein, Slavery in the Americas, A Comparative History of Cuba and Virginia. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), chapter 9.

¹⁶ Klein, African slavery, chapter 6.

¹⁷ Franklin W. Knight, Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); Laird W. Bergad, Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Social and Economic History of Monoculture in Matanzas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Francisco A. Scarano, Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: the Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800-1850 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

¹⁸ See Bowser, The African Slave in Colonial Peru, and Mary C. Karasch, Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the cities; the South, 1820-1860 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964), Claudia Golden, Urban slavery in the American South, 1820-1860 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

²⁰ Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press., 1982)

²¹ Agostinho Pedrigao Maiheiro, A escravidão no Brasil (2 vols.; Rio de Janeiro, 1866), Stuart B. Schwartz, “The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Bahia, 1684-1745,” The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Nov., 1974), pp. 603-635; Mieko Nishida, “Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban Slavery: Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888,” The Hispanic American Historical Review Vol. 73, No. 3 (Aug., 1993), pp. 361-391; Ortiz, Hampa afro-cubana, pp. 285-290; Norman A. Meiklejohn, “The Implementation of Slave Legislation in Eighteenth-Century New Granada,” in Robert Toplin, ed., Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America (Westport, Ct., 1974). On the difficulties in carrying out self purchase in the USA see Sumner Eliot Matison, “Manumission by Purchase,” The Journal of Negro History Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1948), pp. 146-167.

²² James Patrick Kiernan, "The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Paraty, 1789-1822" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1976), and his article "Baptism and Manumission in Brazil: Paraty, 1789-1822," Social Science History, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn, 1978), pp. 56-71.

²³ See Klein, African slavery, appendix tables.

²⁴ Lewis Cecil Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860 ((2 vols.; Washington, 1932), Vol. I, pp. 481-482.

²⁵ Among other studies see Herbert S. Klein "The Colored Militia of Cuba, 1568-1868, " Caribbean Studies, VI, no. 2 (July, 1966), 17-27; Ben Vinson III, Bearing Arms for His Majesty: the free-colored militia in colonial Mexico (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Hendrik Kraay, Race, State and Armed Forces in Independence-Era Brazil: Bahia, 1790s-1840s (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Joseph P. Sanchez, "African Freedmen and the Fuero Milita: A Historical Overview of Pardo and Moreno Militiamen in the Late Spanish Empire," Colonial Latin American Historical Review 3, no. 2 (1994); Alan Kuethe, "The Status of the Free-Pardo in the Disciplined Militia of New Granada," Journal of Negro History Vol. 56, no. 2 (1971): 105-17; and the special issue on this subject edited by Ben Vinson III and Stewart King for the Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History Volume 5, Number 2, Fall 2004. On the French experience see Stewart R. King, Blue Coat or Powdered Wig? Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2001)

²⁶ See e.g. R. Douglas Cope, The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), and Jay Kinsbruner, Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice In Nineteenth-century Puerto Rico (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

²⁷ See David M Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser and Jacob L. Vigdor, "The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto," Journal of Political Economy vol.107, no. 3 (1999), pp. 455-506.

²⁸ For recent studies showing the relative importance of free colored persons as slave owners in various municípios of Brazil, see the two studies of Francisco Vidal Luna, Minas Gerais: Escravos e senhores (São Paulo,; IPE/USP, 1981) and "São Paulo: população, atividades e posse de escravos em vinte e cinco localidades - (1777-1829)," Estudos Econômicos, 28:1(jan-mar. 1998), pp. 99-169; Herbert S. Klein and Clotilde Paiva, "Free Persons in a Slave Economy, Minas Gerais in 1831," Journal of Social History, Vol.29. No.4 (June 1996), pp. 933-962; Clotilde Paiva and Herbert S. Klein, "Slave & Free in 19th century Minas Gerais: Campanha in 1831" Slavery & Abolition (London), Vol. 15, no.1 (April, 1994), pp.1-21; and for two municípios in Bahia see B.J. Barickman, "As cores do escravismo: escravistas 'pretos', 'pardos' e 'cabras' no Recôncavo Baiano, 1835," População e Família (Svo Paulo), Vol.2, no.2 (Jul-dez. 1999), 7-62. Also see Iraci del Nero da Costa, Arraia-Miúda, (Svo Paulo, 1992), and Luna and Klein, Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850, chapter 7. On the few hundred free colored who owned slaves see the classic study by Carter G. Woodson, Free Negro

Owners of the Slaves in the United States in 1830 (New York, 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 over the situation of the free colored under slavery in the United States see Ira C. Berlin, Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

²⁹ See e.g. Leila Mezan Algranti, O feitor ausente: estudos sobre a escravidão urbana no rio de janeiro, 1808–1822 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988)

³⁰ See Cope, The Limits of Racial Domination

³¹ Susan Socolow: "Acceptable Partners: Marriage Choice in Colonial Argentina, 1778-1810," in Asunción Lavrín (ed.), Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 209-246.

³² On the Free colored in the French West Indies see Yvan Debbasch, Couleur et liberte. Le jeu du critère ethnique dans un order juridique esclavagiste (Paris, 1967).

³³ Robert L. Paquette, Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988). On the free colored in general see the recent work of Philip A. Howard,

Changing history: Afro-Cuban cabildos and societies of color in the nineteenth century

(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998).

³⁴ While slaves had limited access to the civil courts, there are innumerable recordings of slaves appearing as legal witnesses in ecclesiastical proceedings, especially in marriage contracts, see Herman L. Bennett, Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole consciousness, 1570-1640 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), chapter 4.

³⁵ See Stuart B. Schwartz, Sugar Plantations in the Formation of a Brazilian Society (Bahia, 1550-1835) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.102-103.

³⁶ On slave marriages among rural slaves in the province of São Paulo see Luna and Klein, Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850, chapter 6. For Rio de Janeiro see José Roberto Góes, O cativo imperfeito. Um estudo sobre a escravidão no Rio de Janeiro da primeira metade do século XIX (Vitória, ES: Lineart, 1993); and Manolo Florentino & José Roberto Góes, A paz das senzalas. Famílias escravas e tráfico Atlântico, Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790-c.1850 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1998). In his recent study of slave marriages, Slenes found that São Paulo had a much higher rate of slave marriages than the norm, and far higher than in Rio de Janeiro. Robert W. Slenes, Na senzala, uma flor. Esperanças e recordações na formação da família escrava: Brasil Sudeste, século XIX (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1999), pp. 82-86.

³⁷ The literature on the colored *cofradías* (brotherhoods) is quite extensive, see A.J.R. Russell-Wood, "Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil: A Study in Collective Behavior," The Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 54, no. 4 (Nov., 1974), pp. 567-602 ; Roger Bastide, (1995) Les religions africaines au Brésil. Contribution à une sociologie des interpénétrations de civilisation, (2ème édn. Paris: PUF, 1995); Julita Scarano, Devoção e escravidão: a irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos do Distrito Diamantino do século XVIII. (São Paulo: Cia. Editora Nacional, 1976). On the relationship of the Rosario devotion to Bantu religion see Juliana Beatriz Almeida de Souza, "Viagens do Rosário entre a Velha Cristandade e o Além-Mar". Estudos afro-asiáticos., vol.23, no.2 (2001), pp.1-17. For the Mexican experience see Nicole von Germeten, "Corporate Salvation in a Colonial Society: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Africans and their Descendants in New Spain," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2003).

³⁸ For a survey of the relevant literature on this subject see Herbert S. Klein, The Atlantic Slave Trade (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

³⁹ This is most evident when we compare the findings of Bastide, with those of Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), and Mechal Sobel, Trabelin'On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith (2nd ed: Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁴⁰ See Barbara Weinstein, “The Destruction of Slavery and the Construction of National Identity: Brazil and the United States South Compared,” in Don H. Doyle and Marco Antonio Pamplona, eds. Nationalism in the New World (University of Georgia Press, forthcoming). For a survey of the positive defense school see Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981)

⁴¹ On the relative deprivation of the Free Colored in the United States see the general assessment by Ira Berlin cited above. 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 vol. 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). All this is in sharp contrast to the relative prosperity and mobility in Brazil. On the wealth of the free colored in Brazil see the articles of Klein & Paiva cited above as well as Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, “Free Colored in a Slave Society: São Paulo and Minas Gerais in the Early Nineteenth Century,” Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 80, no.4 (2000): 913-942. The wealth of a sample of first-generation ex-slaves has been analyzed in Maria

Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, O liberto: O seu mundo e os outros, Salvador, 1790–1890 (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988).

⁴² This is the argument sustained by Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (2nd ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁴³ See Herbert S. Klein, A Population History of the United States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapter 4.