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**The Dark Soul of the People.
Slaves in Mauritius, 2000**

Rhodes University.

**CODEBOOK
SADA 0102**

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Slaves in Mauritius, 2000**

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Principal Investigator

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**South African Data Archive
2001**

BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION

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Valentine, Barbara. *The Dark Soul of the People. Slaves in Mauritius, 2000* [Computer file]. S0102. Grahamstown: Rhodes University [producer], 2000. Pretoria: South African Data Archive, National Research Foundation [distributor], 2001.

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STUDY DESCRIPTION

SADA 0102

TITLE: The Dark Soul of the People. Slaves in Mauritius, 2000

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study was to focus on a demographic interpretation of slavery in Mauritius. The slave-owning class left many documents that dealt with slavery, such as despatches, reports, newspapers, gazettes, and slave registers. These records were written from the perspective of the masters and the slaves themselves were silent about what their lives were like. A demographic analysis, although it is based on information from the slave owners, allowed a broader perspective. Each item of information about thousands of individual slaves, when aggregated into a whole, allowed a broader picture of slavery that neither the slaves nor the owners could possibly have seen.

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the collective experience of Mauritian slaves in that way. However, a purely demographic analysis has its limits: it focused on a "snap-shot" of a population at a particular time — in this case, part of the Mauritian slave population in 1835. Yet the shape and experience of a population is grounded in its history. This study therefore attempted to contextualise the 1835 slave population by reviewing the history of slavery in Mauritius from its introduction in the seventeenth century. Further, the demographic analysis itself was embedded in the literature of Mauritian and other slave systems. This study aimed, therefore, to integrate the literature with a demographic approach to Mauritian slavery.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: Mauritius

IMPORTANT VARIABLES: Owner's name, claim number, slave's name, sex of slave, age of slave in a particular year and height in feet and inches.

TYPE OF INSTRUMENT/S:

The data were collected from the Greffe De L'Enregistrement Des Esclaves in the Mauritius Archives (IG Series, Mauritius Archives). The data were collected by research students at the African Cultural Centre, Mauritius, for family reconstitution purposes, and the data set was kindly given to Dr Shell by Dr Vijaya Teelock of the History Department, University of Mauritius. The original documents from which the data were collected are certified registers of slaves per owner, drawn up for compensation purposes as on 1 February 1835, the day slaves were emancipated in Mauritius.

Each certificate of ownership gives the name of the owner, the claim number, the district, and a list of the slaves for whom the owner claimed compensation. The slaves are listed by name and surname, usually in family groups, with details of age in a previous census year (usually 1826, 1832 or by default in 1835), height in feet and inches, and origins. Children

born since the previous census year were listed at the end of the register, with their dates of birth or age in months.

A comparison of the 1826 census records for Flacq (KK 14, Mauritius Archives) with the slave registration documents in the Mauritius Archives showed that the registrar transcribed large parts of the 1835 slave registration directly from previous censuses. Details about each slave (or slave family) were transcribed verbatim, and the registrar made no attempt to update the information. This has important consequences for an analysis of the slave population: the data set must be treated as several discrete partial censuses for certain purposes, for example age/height calculations for a particular year. The full 1826 registration is in the Public Record Office at Kew Gardens, London.

Data from separate original documents that indicate the number of slaves and their estimated value per claim were not included in this data set. These documents classify the slaves per claim number - not individually - according to class of work, sex, and value in £ sterling, as well as the number and value of infirm slaves and children under six. In addition, they record the owner's name, the district, and the name of the owner's estate or domicile of the slaves.

UNITS OF OBSERVATION: Individuals

EXTENT OF DATA COLLECTION: 1 data file in SPSS and machine-readable documentation.

Number of records:	26 672
Number of records per case:	1
Logical Record Length:	80+
Number of variables:	35
Number of kilobytes:	6, 188 KB