

'Uteis a si e a sociedade': creolisation and states of belonging among urban women in nineteenth-century Salvador da Bahia.

Jane-Marie Collins

Introduction

Recent scholarship from across the Americas has emphasized two general principles for framing interpretations about creolisation in the New World. First, is to understand creolisation as an uneven process of adaptation and change as opposed to a linear route to absorption and acceptance of Christian-European cultural hegemony.¹ Second is the view that Africa was 'rediscovered' or 'recovered' by Africans (and their descendants) in the New World, as they inscribed (and then reinscribed) their own world view on a new and alienating environment.² Within these frameworks analysis has addressed a range of issues about the mechanisms of creolisation (demographic, cultural and structural) as well as the pace and extent of creolisation.

In this paper creolisation is regarded as a process of cultural adaptation operating within a larger context of socio-economic integration into a slave society that was predominantly black and where the prevailing culture was already creolised.³ In addition, integration is understood from an Africanist perspective, as adopted by Patterson and Thornton, in which the condition of

¹ Some of the key texts on North America and the Caribbean include: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: the first two centuries of slavery in North America* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Michael A Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: the transformation of African identities in the colonial and antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1998); Philip D. Morgan *Slave Counterpoint: Black culture in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1998); Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African American Culture: an anthropological perspective* (Boston, M.A.: Beacon Press, 1992).

² For Brazil see Linda M. Heywood, ed., *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially chapters by Elizabeth Kiddy and Robert Slenes. See also Robert W. Slenes, "'Malungo ngoma vem!' África encoberta e descoberta no Brasil', *Revista USP*, 12 (1991-2), pp. 47-8; Elizabeth W. Kiddy, 'Congados, Calunga, Candombe: Our Lady of the Rosary in Minas Gerais. Brazil', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 37:1 (2000), pp. 47-61; João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: the Muslim uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993); James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: culture, kinship and religion in the African-Portuguese world, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, (2003); Luis Nicolau Parés, 'O processo de crioulização no recôncavo baiano (1750-1800)', *Afro-Ásia*, 33 (2005), pp. 87-132.

³ For an overview of the tension in the scholarship between 'Africanisation' and 'Creolisation' see Parés (2005), pp. 93-7.

captivity was considered temporary and transmutable and the movement from slave to free a transition from a condition of marginality to one of belonging.⁴ The analysis in this paper focuses on the sector of the enslaved population most likely to successfully negotiate the transition from captivity to freedom - urban women - and examines the extent of integration measured materially through proprietorship and socially through marriage for freed *Africanas*, *crioulas* and their mixed race, freed and free born female descendants in nineteenth-century Salvador da Bahia.⁵

Using wills and testaments of African, black and mixed race Brazilian women it should be possible to trace the tracks left by different components of creolisation and examine how they shaped the lives of the women themselves. The documents reveal how cultural, demographic, social and material factors all contributed to the dynamics of adaptation and change that was creolisation. Furthermore, the coincidence of manumission, marriage and proprietorship, as revealed through wills and testaments, are interpreted as key cultural markers of creolisation in the sense that they represent measurable degrees of integration and statements about belonging. In addition, using creolisation as a way of accounting for the mechanisms of mobility and the extent of integration enjoyed, or not, by enslaved African women and their female descendants, allows for the inclusion of the material and social in ways overlooked in empirical studies of mobility in Brazilian slave society.⁶ Indeed, from the perspective of race and gender, the separation of material and social produces an inadequate analytical framework for understanding the positionality of black and mixed race women in an urban slave labour market on two counts. First, because such a framework is unable

⁴ John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a comparative study* (Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially chapters 7 and 8.

⁵ The Portuguese terms *Africana* and *Africanas* (female African/African females) and *Brasileira* and *Brasileiras* (female Brazilian/Brazilian females) are employed throughout. The term *crioulo/a* refers to a first generation black Brazilian male/female, *pardo/a* and *mulatto/a* and *cabra* all refer to light-skin coloured blacks.

⁶ 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*, 80:4 (2000), pp. 916-41.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

to account fully for the dynamics of the market where the material and social, that is occupation and marriage, were inextricably linked. Second, because such a separation produces a partial understanding of the role played by female labour in general, but more importantly because both productive and reproductive labour were indivisible components in the commodity that was enslaved female labour.

Finally, while it is not the aim here to prove that all “human social life is a response to practical problems of earthly existence”, (Harris) the findings do lend support to the idea that, for enslaved African and Brazilian women in particular, successful negotiation of the trajectory from slavery to freedom, and from *Africana* to *Afro-brasileira* prompted a range of practical responses to the material *and* social reality of life in Brazilian slave society.

Manumission, marginality and integration

For all slaves, the experience of liberty as a freedperson was determined by two factors. First, was the way in which manumission was obtained and second was the age at which it was obtained. As numerous studies have shown, the trajectory of manumission was strongly correlated to gender, skin colour, and race.⁷ This meant that the majority of those manumitted were female, and that enslaved Brazilians, particularly lighter skinned *pardos* and *mulattos*, were over represented among the freed in relation to their numbers among the enslaved. In addition, African women, as well as enslaved males in general, were more likely to purchase their freedom, whereas Brazilian born females were more likely to be freed through working off conditions or being freed as infants. Light skinned *pardos* and *mulattos* benefited most from baptismal manumission. Among baptismal manumissions gender ratios were

⁷ The studies of manumission in Brazil are far too numerous to mention here. For Bahia, see Stuart B. Schwartz, ‘The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: 1684-1745’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 54:4 (1974), pp. 603-35; Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, ‘A propósito de cartas de alforria. Bahia, 1779-1850’, *Anais de História*, 4 (1972), pp. 23-52; Mieko Nishida, ‘Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban Slavery: Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 73:3 (1993), pp. 361-91. For examples of studies of other regions see Mary C. Karasch, *A vida dos escravos no Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987), chapter 11; for Minas Gerais see Kathleen J. Higgins, ‘Licentious Liberty’ in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region; slavery, gender and social control in eighteenth-century Sabará, Minas Gerais (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), chapter 5.

comparable to those found among freed adults. In general, men were less likely to be freed than women, but the numbers of African women freed were relatively proportional to their numbers as slaves. Enslaved men were freed less frequently because of their higher market values relative to their skills and trades, but also because freeing African men from bondage was considered politically undesirable.⁸

For enslaved African women, whom whites at least discursively tended to trust least to work in their own homes, the route to freedom was generally through capital accumulation from income earning activities on the street. Enslaved Brazilian women, though, usually paid for their freedom through many years of servile labour in domestic service and loyalty and obedience to their owners. When *pardos* and *mulattos* were freed as infants it was usually in recognition of the services provided by the often still enslaved mothers.⁹ For all slaves, though, the way in which liberty was acquired determined the way in which liberty was experienced: gender and race, then, were the main variables in determining the route to freedom and the conditions under which that freedom could be exercised.

In terms of age at which freedom was attained, arguably, the younger a slave was freed the more distanced they would be as adults from the stigma of slavery, hence the better their chances for mobility and in turn integration. In sum, their status as freed persons was often quite distinct and distinguishable from their adult counterparts. The majority of Africans having been enslaved as adults were most likely to be freed as adults too. Enslaved Brazilians, though, stood a better chance of being freed as infants and therefore growing up in freedom rather than captivity. Moreover, in a

⁸ For an example of the ways in which the activities of African men in particular were policed and regulated after the 1835 Malês uprising see João José Reis, 'The Revolution of the Ganhadores: Urban Labour, Ethnicity and the African Strike of 1857 in Bahia, Brazil', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29:2 (1997), pp. 355-93. See also Reis (1993), Part IV, 'The Anti-African Backlash'.

⁹ Research of letters of liberty for the city of Salvador for the period 1830 to 1871 found 308 freed children and in 90% of these cases the mother remained in captivity. Higgins findings were similar for Minas Gerais. Higgins (1999), 163. See APEB, *Livros de Notas* (Salvador), for 1830-1831, 1840-1841, 1851-1852, 1860-1861, and 1870-1871. The *Livro de Notas* for 1850-1851 was not available for consultation at the time this research was conducted as it had been taken out of circulation to be *restaurado*.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

society where darkness of skin colour was always and everywhere associated with slavery and hence marginality, free born blacks would have still found it necessary to distance themselves from the stigma of slavery and the conditions of captivity to prove their free status. For *pardos* and *mulattos* – particularly those freed as infants and free born – the need to demonstrate that distance was not as compelling, as their status was less likely to be called into question than that of freed Africans or *crioulos*.¹⁰ As such, lightness of skin colour bestowed a form of social advantage denied to Africans and Brazilian blacks.

Lourença on liberty

Lourença da Cunha Pereira was the legitimate Brazilian daughter of an African father and *crioula* mother.¹¹ For sure, her parents had been sometime enslaved, but in all likelihood Lourença had been born free. Although her parents had married and had at least one other child, Lourença remained single and childless her entire life. In her will and testament of 1840, a part from the mention of her African father, there is no other overt reference to her African heritage. In fact, this document could be read as a sort of brief guide to creolisation in nineteenth century Brazil. Lourença, a single, childless black woman, worked and lived in the home of Senhor Vital Prudencio Alves Monteiro and his family, in the parish of Nossa Senhora da Penha.¹² Her occupational status suggests she was a poor woman. She had no home of her own and depended entirely on the good will and generosity of her employers. And, according to Lourença they were good employers who had always treated her well and taken care of her in ill health. But, Lourença somehow

¹⁰ Although reenslavement of Africans was particularly widespread during the phase of illegal slave trading (1831-1850), from 1850 onwards all *libertos* and free people of colour were vulnerable to the threat of (re)enslavement. See for example, Judy Beiber Freitas, 'Slavery and Social Life: attempts to reduce free people to slavery in the Sertão Mineiro, 1850-1871', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 26:3 (1994), pp. 597-619. See also Robert Edgar Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery, 1850-1888* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 12.

¹¹ APEB, Seção Judiciária, Livro de Registro de Testamentos, no. 28, folhas 169-71.

¹² This was a parish "dentro do perímetro do urbano da cidade", but located on the margins of the city both geographically and economically, populated in the main by "pessoas modestas, pobres, tanto branco como de cor." Ana Amélia Vieira Nascimento, *Dez Freguesias da Cidade do Salvador* (Salvador: Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia, 1986), p. 93.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

managed to acquire five slaves in the course of her working life. One of these was an African woman and the other four were male *crioulos*. It may well be the case that her enslaved males were the children of her enslaved African female, Joaquina (Angola), but it is not stated. Still, it is hard to image how Lourença acquired so many slaves otherwise.

In her will and testament Lourença has very clear ideas about how to deal with her assets. Although she has one living (although absent) sister, and a number of nieces and nephews, the main beneficiaries are her former employers and their family. In what now reads as an odd twist of fate, Lourença actually gives very explicit instructions to them as to how her former slaves should be treated. They should be given the opportunity to earn some money for themselves, they should be given clothes to wear and treatments when they became ill, and the new owners should take “todo o cuidado no seo procedimento.” All this should lead the slaves to become “uteis a si, [e] a sociedade.” Whether or not Lourença maintained an African appearance or mixed in African cultural circles, we cannot tell from this document alone. But for sure, in other respects, she adhered to certain codes of conduct associated with creolisation in which slave ownership played a key role, and where patronage was the defining feature of societal relations. Lourença, for reasons unknown to us, appears to have been more interested in acquiring slaves than a husband and children but she assumed a responsibility for those slaves in a way similar to a parent. They were to be chastised if they misbehaved and rewarded if obedient. In Lourença’s view, their greatest reward was to be freed, but only if they complied with the model of creolisation laid down by herself.

The will and testament of Lourença came to light as part of a study of the lives of enslaved, freed and free black women in nineteenth century Salvador. The study used letters of manumission, wills and testaments, as well as civil and criminal proceedings to examine the experiences of becoming and being freed. In addition, the study examines the momentum of mobility

generated by manumission down the generations for daughters of former slaves. It is this part of the study in which Lourença's will and testament emerged.

In the context of other free born black women, Lourença's life was in some ways typical, others less so. Her unmarried status is typical of most free women in Salvador at the time, regardless of colour, as was her form of employment as a domestic servant. On the other hand, as a free born black Brazilian (*crioula*), she belonged to a minority within the fastest growing sector of the population - the free coloured - which was predominantly mixed race. As such, Lourença's will and testament provides a useful focus for both comparative analysis of the different routes to and experiences of freedom for enslaved Africans and their descendants in Brazil as well as providing insights into specific ways in which gender and race determined those routes. Above all, when studied collectively, the wills and testaments of freed and free black women provide crucial evidence about the process of creolisation, and confirm the ways in which gender and race shaped the contours and confines of freedom in Salvador in particular and Brazilian slave society in general. Finally, as an historical source they expose the limitations of mobility made possible either economically through occupational opportunities or socially through marriage.

Nineteenth-century Salvador: the geography of gender and colour.

The geography of gender and colour in nineteenth century Salvador was the result of gendered and racialised occupational hierarchies obtaining in the urban slave market. Although the free always outnumbered the enslaved in nineteenth-century Salvador, the enslaved still accounted for around 42% of the city's total population in the 1830s.¹³ Predominantly male and African for most of the first half of the nineteenth century, from the mid 1850s onwards

¹³ Reis, (1993), p. 6. See Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, Bahia, Século XIX. Uma Província no Império (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1992), pp. 115-26 for a more complete analysis of the population of Salvador in the nineteenth century.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

Salvador's enslaved labour became more female and more Brazilian.¹⁴ Thus, as the enslaved population became less African it developed a better gender balance.¹⁵ In fact, by the time of the 1872 census, Salvador's enslaved populace, similar to that of Rio de Janeiro, was 51% female and by 1884 the total number of enslaved females for the province exceeded that of enslaved males for the first time.¹⁶ Moreover, while most of the enslaved were still black in 1872, the majority of the free population were mixed race.¹⁷ At the time there were approximately 60,000 free-coloured in the city of Salvador, representing 57.3% of the city's total population and most *libertos* were mixed race too.¹⁸ Among women, 47% were *mulatto* and 19% black, and among men the figures were 42% and 17% respectively, an almost inverse relation of race among the enslaved.¹⁹

Many of these women were concentrated in some of the poorer and more densely populated inner-city neighbourhoods which offered cheap places to rent and were located close to market places as well as the homes of the wealthy and middle sectors who hired them. In her study of ten parishes of Salvador at mid century, Nascimento found that six of these had populations that were predominantly female.²⁰ In addition, three of these parishes were home to the largest concentrations of freed persons in

¹⁴ According to Maria José de Souza Andrade the male slave population become more Brazilian in the 1850s, but only after the early 1860s did it remain predominantly so. The female slave population followed a similar pattern, although the differential between the African and Brazilian female slaves was never as great as among male slaves. Maria José de Souza Andrade, *A mão de obra escrava em Salvador, 1811-1860* (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988), pp. 115-18.

¹⁵ Salvador's female slave population became and remained predominantly Brazilian after 1853. See Andrade (1988), pp. 115-18. It should be noted that, due to a combination of incomplete census materials as well as the different types of primary sources used to produce data, opinion differs on the extent of gender imbalances as well as the relative size of each status group. See Nascimento (1986), pp. 96-9; Reis (1993), pp. 11-12; Nishida (1993), p. 366; Mieko Nishida, *Slavery and Identity: Ethnicity, Gender and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 142; Andrade (1988), p. 123.

¹⁶ Mattoso (1992), p. 96.

¹⁷ Mattoso (1992), p. 123. Karasch (1997), p. 471.

¹⁸ Nishida (2003), p. 142. In 1872 11.6% per cent of the population of Salvador remained enslaved. Mattoso (1992), p. 120.

¹⁹ Mattoso (1992), p. 124.

²⁰ Nascimento (1986). For 1855, the three parishes with the highest female populations were São Pedro (59 %), Sé (59 %) and Santo Antônio Alem do Carmo (55 %), for São Pedro see pp. 81-3, Sé p. 68, and Santo Antônio pp. 77-8; on housing see p. 43.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

Salvador.²¹ The geography of gender and colour that mapped the face of nineteenth-century Salvador, then, revealed how the legacy of slavery for female descendants of the enslaved brought economic constraints as well as social ones in ways distinct from their male counterparts.

Although the urban slave labour markets of cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Salvador became increasingly female after 1850, slave labour in general always produced a narrower range of occupations for enslaved women than men.²² In her study of slave labour in nineteenth century Salvador, Andrade found a range of 82 occupations for enslaved men and 16 for enslaved women, as cited in inventories.²³ However, the most commonly cited occupation for both enslaved men and women was 'serviço da casa' and 'serviço doméstico', at 16% and 40% respectively. Although the range of occupations for men was greater and their occupational concentration less pronounced, the top four male occupations accounted for 45% of all enslaved men. In the case of enslaved women they accounted for 80%.²⁴ Moreover, artisan trades were not available to women and the number and range of skilled and semi-skilled occupations was much narrower for women than it was for men.²⁵ Consequently, the potential for occupational mobility through skill acquisition was greater for enslaved men than women.

However, there were important differentials between African and Brazilian slave occupations. For enslaved men, Africans were much more likely to be sedan chair carriers, in *serviço da casa*, or street sellers. Enslaved Brazilian men on the other hand predominated in the more skilled positions of tailor, carpenter, stonemason and cobbler. In the case of enslaved females,

²¹ Mattoso (1992), p. 121 and P. 111. The figures are: São Pedro 51%, Sé 53%, Santo Antônio 53%.

²² Karasch (1997), p. 119. Sandra Lauderdale Graham found 90% of all enslaved domestic women worked in domestic service in 1870 Rio de Janeiro. Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *The domestic world of servants and masters in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), p. 186.

²³ Andrade (1988), pp. 129-30.

²⁴ Andrade (1988), p. 129. The male occupations were *serviço da casa*, *carregador de cadeira*, *serviço de roça/quintal*, and *ganhador*; the female occupations were *domestica*, *costureira*, *ganhadeira*, *lavadeira*.

²⁵ Andrade (1988), p. 130. Of the 16 occupations Andrade lists for female slaves 5 could be considered skilled: *cozinha*, *rendeira*, *doçeira*, *charuteira*, *bordadeira*. For enslaved male occupations, 78 out of a total of 82 were either skilled, semi-skilled or artisan trades.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

most were found in domestic service, but African women predominated as washerwomen and street sellers and Brazilian women as seamstresses, cooks and lacemakers.²⁶

As has been noted by Karasch for nineteenth-century Rio and Oliveria for nineteenth-century Salvador, freed men and women tended to make their living in freedom as they had in captivity.²⁷ In the case of *libertas* in general, Oliveira adds that manumission did not bring about ‘substantial’ changes in this respect, because the labour market :

“..tendia naturalmente a colocar as mulheres em condições desvantajosas de concorrência pelas ocupações livres e consequentemente a desvalorizar o preço de seu trabalho. [...] A escrava era duplamente aviltada: como mão de obra e como mulher. A alforria não modificava substancialmente esta situação. No mercado de trabalho livre, a-mão-de-obra feminina continuava a valer menos do que a masculina.”²⁸

In addition, as noted by Klein and Luna in their study of free coloureds in nineteenth century São Paulo and Minas Gerais, the level of ‘initial poverty’ upon becoming freed was a significant factor in determining the extent of mobility experienced in freedom.²⁹ As such, those slaves with the greatest chance of skill acquisition and capital accumulation in captivity were the ones most likely to experience mobility in freedom.

In general, Oliveira’s observations about Salvador’s urban labour market are correct. However, as the author herself notes, and as subsequent scholarship has confirmed, African women managed to monopolise the most lucrative positions allocated to enslaved women: that is the local

²⁶ Andrade (1988), pp. 147-48. For occupations among the enslaved in Rio de Janeiro see Karasch (1997), pp. 116-20.

²⁷ Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, *O Liberto: o seu mundo e os outros*. Salvador, 1790-1890 (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988), p. 32; Karasch (1987), pp. 470-74.

²⁸ Oliveira (1988), pp. 42-3.

²⁹ Klein and Luna (2000), p. 927.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

marketplace.³⁰ They were able to do this, in part, due to the racial prejudices and self-interests of white slaveowners in particular, as well the occupational ones of the free sector in general.³¹ However, this monopoly was largely facilitated by a combination of African ethnicity, enterprise and industry. For Luz Mena, it was the knowledge and skills *libertas* acquired through managing the terms and conditions of self-purchased manumission that “prepared them in their future role as entrepreneurs” in nineteenth century Havana.³²

As Cecília Soares has pointed out it was a sense of common cultural identity among African women streetsellers that made possible “a construção de um universo próprio, formado por elas mesmas, seus fornecedores e clientes africanos.”³³ Indeed, the 1849 census for the parish of Santana reveals that over 70% of all African women worked in petty commerce of one sort or another.³⁴ The majority of these women were described as Jeje and Nagô, regions from which the majority of enslaved Africans in Bahia originated in the first-half of the nineteenth-century.³⁵ In addition, the discriminatory practices of private individuals as well as public bodies against all Africans no doubt reinforced a sense of separateness which engendered a feeling of racial unity among Africans. For Brazilian born women, slave, freed, free black and mixed race, their common birth place was an inadequate condition around which to construct a comparable identity, and the discriminatory legal practices that operated in their favour pitted them against their occupational

³⁰ A similar situation prevailed in the urban mining centres of Minas Gerais as well as in the then capital city, Rio de Janeiro. See Sheila Siqueira de Castro Faria, *Sinhás Pretas, Damas Mercadoras: As pretas minas nas cidades do Rio de Janeiro e de São João Del Rey (1700-1850)*, unpublished PhD thesis (Niterói: Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2004) and Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Chica da Silva e o contratador dos diamantes* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003).

³¹ Luz Mena makes a similar case for nineteenth-century Havana. Luz Mena, ‘Stretching the limits of gendered spaces: black and mulatto women in 1830s Havana’, *Cuban Studies* (2005), p. 89 and p. 101.

³² Mena (2005), p. 91, is referring to free women of colour in general in nineteenth-century Havana. However, in the case of Bahia, as already shown, African women were more likely to purchase their freedom than Brazilian born women.

³³ Cecília Moreira Soares, ‘As ganhadeiras: mulher e resistência negra em Salvador no século XIX’, *Afro-Ásia* 17 (1996), p. 71.

³⁴ Soares (1996), p. 4.

³⁵ Reis (1993), see chapter 8 on ethnicity among enslaved Africans in nineteenth-century Salvador.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

peers, whether enslaved or free. Ethnicity and prejudice, then, served to strengthen the resolve of African men and women which, in many instances, cut across conditions of status.

Manumission , mobility and marriage

Hebe Mattos has demonstrated how the two main factors that brought slaves closer to liberty and distanced them from that of captive were mobility and family.³⁶ But, in nineteenth-century Brazil the potential to form a family and keep it together was difficult for all groups. For the enslaved family greatest stability was generally experienced on larger and older plantations.³⁷ Family life in urban contexts, as many studies have shown, was much more precarious, but for women, and in particular former slave women and their descendants, their chances of being lone parents and household heads were high.³⁸ Although levels of nuptuality were low for the whole of Bahia, and less than 20% for the city of Salvador at mid-century, whites were more likely to born legitimate and to marry than other racial groups.³⁹ Consequently, for women in general in Brazilian slave society, the restricted scope for economic mobility through occupation made mobility through social ascension in the form of marriage all the more crucial.

In addition, although marriage was most likely among whites in nineteenth-century Salvador scholars of the period have demonstrated that marriage was far from irrelevant to family formation among other groups.

³⁶ Hebe Maria Mattos, *Das Cores do Silêncio: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista, Brasil, século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1998), chapter 1.

³⁷ Studies of the slave family in Brazil are too numerous to mention here. On plantation slave families see for example, Mattos (1998), chapter 3. 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), chapters 1 and 2. Manolo Florentino and José Roberto Goés, *A paz das senzalas: famílias escravas e tráfico atlântico, Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790-c.1850* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1997), chapters 4,5,6,7; Sheila Siqueira de Castro Faria, 'Família escrava e legitimidade. Estratégias de preservação da autonomia', *Afro-Ásia*, 23 (1992), pp. 113-31; Katherine Holt, 'Marriage Choice in a Plantation Society: Bahia, Brazil', *International Review of Social History*, 50 (2005), pp. 25-41; Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society. Bahia 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 14.

³⁸ Maria Odila Leite da Silva, *Power and Everyday Life: the lives of working women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Donald Ramos, 'Single and Married Women in Vila Rica, Brazil, 1754-1838', *Journal of Family History*, 16 (1991), pp. 261-288; Karasch (1997), pp. 379-92.

³⁹ Nascimento (1986), p. 72; Mattoso (1992), p. 157.

On the contrary, marriage patterns reveal how those at the top and the bottom of society displayed similar attitudes and practices. For whites and Africans marriage was an endogamous affair which rarely crossed boundaries of race and class. Indeed, when Africans married, they preferred not only other Africans but Africans of the same nation.⁴⁰ So, as the daughter of married freedpersons, Lourença's life was atypical in a number of ways. First in the sense that she was legitimate, and second in that her African father had married a Brazilian born black woman.⁴¹ Finally, although at mid-century most *crioulas* still gave birth to children of the same skin colour, the tendency for miscegenation was much greater amongst *crioulas* than their African counterparts, freed or enslaved.⁴²

The higher incidence of miscegenation among *crioulas* is to be expected. The endogamous marriage practices of the two groups at opposing ends of society, whites and Africans, was paralleled by widespread concubinage and consensual unions among those from different social sectors. Moreover, in Brazilian slave society patronage was the *modus operandi* of all forms of relations - political, economic and social - and patriarchy provided the ideological framework in which those relations functioned.⁴³ Above all, it awarded a high premium to maleness *and* light skin colour, as a means of escaping the economic stigma of poverty, the social stigma of slavery, as well as the cultural stigma of African heritage. As Júnia Ferreira Furtado has pointed out in the case of seventeenth-century Minas Gerais, relationships of concubinage with 'noble' white men, as in the case of Chica da Silva and João Fernandes de Oliveira, were practically the only way for black women to gain access to 'white' society.⁴⁴ For those women whose access to resources was both restricted and restrained by occupational hierarchies obtaining in urban

⁴⁰ Oliveira, (1988), p. 57. For Rio de Janeiro see Karasch (1987), p. 384.

⁴¹ Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, 'Slave, Free and Freed Family Structures in Nineteenth-Century Bahia', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 25:1 (1988), p. 76.

⁴² Mattoso (1988), p. 82.

⁴³ Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), chapter 8. Patricia Ann Aufderheide, *Order and Violence: social deviance and social control in Brazil, 1780-1840*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Minnesota, 1976), pp. 1-21.

⁴⁴ Furtado (2003).

centres like Salvador, relationships (coercive or otherwise) with white or light skinned men offered an alternative avenue for mobility within a very limited range of options.⁴⁵

A gendered approach to understanding the patterns of manumission in Brazilian slave society, then, sees the experiences of captivity and expectations of 'freedom' as incisive in shaping the outcome of the process itself. Women's preponderance in manumission, then, was a result of a complex set of relations and one where women's own perceptions of their position in society played an important part.⁴⁶ Indeed, the perception of a hierarchied range of occupational opportunities has historically prompted women to seek out other opportunities for mobility regardless of period or place. In the case of nineteenth-century Salvador occupational hierarchies ordered by gender, race and status exacerbated competition for those occupational positions that maximised potential for skill acquisition and capital accumulation and in turn access to freedom. Consequently, the perception and experience of occupational mobility limited by race and gender resulted in increased pressure on social resources as a means of accessing mobility.

In line with findings by Klein and Luna documentary evidence used in this study confirms that access to economic mobility was decisive in determining the extent and experience of integration as a result of manumission. Moreover, analysis of wills and testaments of freed and free black women reveals how mechanisms for mobility were strongly correlated to racial identities, reflecting not only the range of experiences within the 'continuum of creolisation' but also the ways in which race and gender both differentiated expectations of belonging and reinforced notions of marginality.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Aufderheide notes how upward mobility for free women of color was possible "so long as they had informal liasons with white men." Aufderheide (1976), p. 15.

⁴⁶ Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory: the essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), p. xx.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth W. Kiddy, 'Who is the King of Congo? A new look at African and Afro-Brazilian Kings in Brazil', in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. by Linda M. Heywood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 154; Elizabeth W. Kiddy, 'Congados,

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

Africanas and Brasileiras, *libertos* and *livres*

The research of wills and testaments of slaves, *libertos* and Africans has been facilitated by the importance Brazilian slave society placed on those distinctions of status and colour. However, very few wills and testaments have been located for former Brazilian slaves. In Oliveira's study, she found for the whole period, 1790-1890, only 23 wills and testaments of freed Brazilian men, and only 19 of freed Brazilian women out of a total of 472 *libertos*.⁴⁸ As Oliveira notes, the *libertos* who made wills and testaments were "provavelmente ... exceções a regra" because these were freedpersons with something to bequeath or sort out in their lives before they died.⁴⁹ She goes on to comment how these documents are evidence of a higher level of 'integration' than was generally experienced by *libertos*.⁵⁰ However, the racial profile presented by the documents somehow contradicts this, in the sense that one would expect to find more Brazilian born *libertos* who, as Luis Parés notes in his study of creolisation in rural Bahia, were, "*a priori*, mais proclives à adoção dos costumes locais...".⁵¹

The research for this study of the period 1830 to 1888 found a total of 24 wills and testaments for Brazilian born *libertos* and daughters of *libertos*, and 59 for freed Africanas.⁵² In terms of African ethnicity, the majority of *Africanas* (28 out of 59, 47%) were described only as *Africana* (Table 2). However, a further 17 were described as 'da Costa' and another 10 as originating from West African nations, making the women from this region the largest single group.⁵³ Regarding freed Brazilian women, only 8 wills and

Calunga, Candombe: Our Lady of the Rosary in Minas Gerais. Brazil', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 37:1 (2000), p. 48; Elizabeth W. Kiddy, 'Ethnic and Racial Identity in the Brotherhoods of Minas Gerais, 1700-1830,' *The Americas*, 56:2 (1999), p. 226.

⁴⁸ Oliveira (1988), pp. 8-9. All but three of these were found for the period 1790-1850.

⁴⁹ Oliveira (1988), p. 9.

⁵⁰ Oliveira (1988), p. 9.

⁵¹ Parés (2005), p. 95.

⁵² Initially the search was done on a five year basis, but the difficulties encountered in locating wills and testaments for Brazilian women meant that the search was extended to years either side of the quinquennials simply to find any at all (Table 1). The same years were researched for both *Africanas* and *Brasileiras*.

⁵³ The levels of West African women found in this study are comparable to those found by Paiva for Minas Gerais and Faria for the south-east of Brazil. See, Eduardo França Paiva, *Escravos e Libertos nas*

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

testaments were found for Brazilian born *libertas*; the remainder were all for free born daughters of African *libertas*. Finally, only one will and testament was located for a free born *mulatta*, one for a free born *parda* and one for a free born *cabra*.

Given that light skinned women were over represented among the freed this is somewhat surprising. However, given that most were probably freed as infants, their absence becomes easier to understand. In a society where darkness of skin and slavery were so closely associated it may well be the case that mixed race women avoided identification of status and skin colour before the scrutiny of the state, particularly if they had white husbands. Although studies of marriage patterns in nineteenth-century Salvador suggests such marriages were not widespread, mixed race women who did manage to marry white men were, in all likelihood, judged by the status and colour of their husband and not their own.⁵⁴ Hence, only in marriages to black or other free coloureds would the colour and status of mixed race women be recorded.

Although colour was found to be mentioned in civil and criminal proceedings in Bahia during the second half of the nineteenth-century, the difficulty encountered locating wills and testaments for *pardas* and *mulattas* does lend support to Mattos' idea of the 'silencing' of colour in official documentation among the free population.⁵⁵ Regardless of whom we attribute that 'silence' to, the fact that it was not mentioned clearly represents an expression of the ideology of whitening.⁵⁶ As a result, the lives of first generation free born mixed race Brazilian women are harder to study than those of their enslaved foremothers because there is no way of distinguishing them in this type of

Minas Gerais do Século XVIII (São Paulo: Annablume, 1995), and Faria (2004).

⁵⁴ Aufderheide has described how women gained social recognition through their husbands. Aufderheide (1976), p. 4, p. 11, p. 217.

⁵⁵ Significantly, the colour of free women did not disappear from prison records either. See Marila Muricy Machado Pinto, *Criminalidade feminina na Bahia de século XIX*, unpublished masters thesis (Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1973).

⁵⁶ Mattos (1998).

documentation from any other free born woman.⁵⁷ It is both significant in the context of the history of Brazilian race relations, and for the study of slavery in Brazil that, in historical perspective *mulattos* and *pardos* are in fact more invisible than Africans and *crioulos*.⁵⁸

In wills and testaments it was normal practice to acknowledge parentage as a way of declaring an individual's status; that is as '*natural*' (illegitimate) or legitimate. It is only through this acknowledgement that it was possible to locate wills and testaments of freed and free born daughters of Africans. In fact, only 11 out of 24 Brazilian women found in this study identified themselves as *crioulas*, but 16 out of 24 had at least one African parent (Table 3). For example, Felippa Soares in her will and testament of 1854 did not describe herself as *crioula*, but acknowledged both her African (unmarried) parents.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Maria Lopes da Conceição, in her will and testament of 1834, did identify herself as *crioula* as well as declaring her legitimacy as the daughter of married parents, "*crioulo* Diego Joze Lopes e sua mulher Simplicia Custodia de Nação Gege."⁶⁰ However, the majority of Brazilian born women were '*filhas naturais*' (11 out of 24), who could only name their unmarried mothers, and in six cases parentage either was not or could not be identified by the women themselves.

Motherhood and marriage

Although almost half of all Brazilian born women in this study were *filhas naturais* of sole mothers, only 4 went on to become sole mothers themselves. In fact, only 7 out of 24 Brazilian women (29%) went on to have children, the majority (15 out of 24, 63%) remaining single and childless their whole lives.

⁵⁷ Karasch describes free women of colour as "the most invisible group in colonial Brazilian history." Mary C. Karasch, 'Free Women of Color in Central Brazil, 1779-1832', in *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas*, ed. by David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 234.

⁵⁸ To illustrate just how slippery some of the descriptors can be Joana da Cruz Gama, described as *crioula* in her will and testament of 1837, described her mother, Maria da Silva, as '*cabra forra*'. APEB, Sec. Jud., LRT no. 33, folhas 8-10. The lack of scholarly attention to free women of color in Brazilian history in general is commented upon by Barickman and Few. B. J. Barickman, and Martha Few, 'Ana Paulinha de Queirós, Joaquina da Costa and their neighbors: free women of color as household heads in rural Bahia (Brazil), 1835', in Gaspar and Hine, eds. (2004), p. 170.

⁵⁹ APEB, Sec. Jud., LRT, no. 37, folhas 92-93.

⁶⁰ APEB, Sec. Jud., LRT no. 24, folhas 57-59.

Only 5 *Brasileiras* ever married or had a partner, or as the many of the women themselves put it “sempre vivi em estado de solteira...e nunca tive filhos” (Table 4).⁶¹

In comparison, the wills and testaments of freed *Africanas* revealed similarly low levels of motherhood but much higher rates of marriage and unions. In total, 16 out of 59 *Africanas* (28%) were found to have ever had children and 31 (52%) ever married or had a partner. Also, the incidence of ever-married without children was higher among *Africanas* than *Brasileiras*. In comparison, levels of sole motherhood were almost the same among *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* at 18% and 17% respectively. The main difference in marriage patterns between *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* in this study, then, was the proportion of single women without children. As noted above, over two-thirds of *Brasileiras* never married or had children, whereas this was the case for only one third of *Africanas*.

Given that the majority of African women arrived in Brazil as adults, severely interrupting life cycles of marriage and motherhood, much lower levels of motherhood would be expected among *Africanas* than *Brasileiras*. In addition, as Oliveira has pointed out, many freed men and women obtained their liberty late in life and as result also married later.⁶² However, in terms of maternity, the average number of children per mother (including deceased children) was only marginally higher among *Brasileiras* than *Africanas* at 2.7 and 2.2 respectively and the average number of deceased children per mother was the same at 1.1 for both *Africana* mothers and *Brasileira* mothers. Although the number of children was more evenly spread across *solteiras* and ever-marrieds among *Africanas* than *Brasileiras*, married women in both

⁶¹ Using an 1835 census for rural Bahia, Barickman and Few found that among free coloured women *pardas* were more likely to be ever-married than black women, that black women were more likely to be single heads of households than *pardas*, and that *pardas* were more likely than black women to have children in residence. Rates of marriage among Brazilain-born blacks and Africans were found to be similar. Barickman and Few (2004), pp. 175-6.

⁶²In addition, Oliveira also found a significant proportion of freed couples who remained childless as well as higher numbers of children among unmarried women than married. Oliveira (1988), pp. 65-66.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

groups had proportionately more living children and fewer deceased.⁶³ This suggests that for both *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* marriage made motherhood more viable, stable and enduring. Moreover, the notion of marriage as a stabilising factor in the lives of these women is something reinforced in the findings for levels of material wealth.

Material wealth

Even though the majority of Africans, *crioulos* and mixed race Brazilians in nineteenth-century Salvador were poor and most of the women in this study could be described as poor, there are, nonetheless, clearly different levels of material wealth among these women.⁶⁴ Out of the 83 wills and testaments found for this study, only 7 *Africanas* and 1 *Brasileira* did not own either slaves or real estate (Tables 5a and 5b). Three of the *Africanas* had no possessions at all, and the other 4 owned only items of gold and silver. The one *Brasileira* who did not own any property left a few items of clothing and some religious items to her goddaughter and small sums of money to the church.⁶⁵

Proprietorship, then, was just as important a distinction among the poor free and freed of Salvador as it was for the rest of Brazilian slave society. Indeed, Oliveira found that around 50% of *libertos* owned some form of land or house, albeit in many cases very basic. However, 60% owned at least one slave.⁶⁶ Moreover, freedmen and women displayed different habits of

⁶³ For *Brasileiras*, 90% of all living children belonged to 3 ever-marrieds. For *Africanas*, the 3 married mothers (18% of all African mothers) had 42% of all living children. *Africanas* as sole mothers comprised 65% of all African mothers and had 38% of all living children and 63% of all deceased children.

⁶⁴ Walter Fraga Filho, *Mendigos, moleques e vadios na Bahia do século XIX* (São Paulo: Hucitec/Edufba, 1996); Reis (1993), see chapter 1.

⁶⁵ Items of jewellery, particularly gold, silver and coral were both symbols of powers of acquisition and wealth as well as ritual and religious value, especially for members of brotherhoods. See Oliveira (1988), p. 47; Jocélio Teles dos Santos, "'Incorrigíveis, afeminados, desenfreinados": indumentária, e travestismo na Bahia do século XIX', *Revista de Antropologia* (São Paulo, USP), 40:2 (1997), pp. 6-7, 28. For a discussion of inheritance practices among freed and free blacks in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais see Mariana Dantas, 'Inheritance practices among individuals of African origin and descent in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais', in *The Faces of Freedom: the manumission and emancipation of slaves in Old World and New World Slavery*, ed. by Marc Kleijwegt (Leiden and Boston, MA.: Brill, 2006), pp. 119-80.

⁶⁶ Oliveira (1988), p. 41 and p. 36. Levels of ownership and the proportions of those owning slaves were greater prior to 1850. For a comparison with slaveholding among free blacks in the United States see Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: free black society in colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 70-9.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

proprietorship and these habits were comparable across conditions of race and status. That is to say, although levels of ownership differed substantially between free and freed, white and non-white, urban based freedmen and freedwomen invested in slaves in ways similar to their free counterparts in as much as women tended to invest in enslaved females and men in enslaved males.⁶⁷

The patterns of proprietorship found for these women in nineteenth-century Salvador are consistent with some of the findings for eighteenth century Minas Gerais. Here, Kathleen Higgins found that freedwomen were more likely to own slaves than their male counterparts, were more likely to be slave owners than owners of real estate and as slave owners they were more likely to own female slaves.⁶⁸ These freedwomen were “concentrated in the urban centers” and supported themselves through slave ownership in petty commerce and marketing, in ways that “did not directly compete with White men [and] the small number of slaves owned by these women did not present an economic threat to owners of much larger slaveholdings.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, Higgins argues that former slaves became slave owners not only as a means of economic survival but as an act of self preservation, to avoid the threat of reenslavement. Slaveownership, in her view, would have acted as a “[t]he best proof to others that one was no longer a slave.”⁷⁰

As already noted, the need to demonstrate freed status was more pressing for Africans than any other sector of the free coloured. Nonetheless, however pressing the need to re-affirm free status among Africans may have been, this factor alone cannot account for the different levels of proprietorship between *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* studied here (Tables 6a and 6b). In total,

⁶⁷ Klein and Luna identified similar patterns for São Paulo and Minas Gerais. Klein and Luna (2000), pp. 935-7. Hanger found that in colonial New Orleans “free black women owned more slaves than free black men did and that libres owned more female than male slaves.” Hanger (1997), p. 75.

⁶⁸ Using a slave register for 1720, “three-quarters of the ex-slaves who were slave owners [...] were women and comprised 70 per cent of all women slaveholders at that time.” Similarly, inventories for the period 1760-1808 revealed how *forras* constituted 50% of the women who owned slaves. Higgins (1999), 82-83. Karasch found that *pardas* in Goiás owned more slaves than free black women. Karasch (2004), pp. 249-50.

⁶⁹ Higgins (1999), p. 82.

⁷⁰ Higgins (1999), p. 83.

71% of freed *Africanas* (42 out of 59), were slave owners. Collectively, they owned 195 slaves: 79 women, 39 men and 77 *crias* or children. On average, that is 4.6 slaves per *Africana*. Among *Brasileiras*, levels of slave ownership were much lower. In total, 54% of *Brasileiras* (13 out of 24), owned 35 slaves, an average of just under 3 slaves each. These comprised 13 women, 9 men and 13 *crias*. The patterns of ownership, however, were similar in two ways. First, in the origins of adult slaves owned. Sixty two per cent of adult slaves owned by *Africanas* were African and 68% of those owned by *Brasileiras*. Second, both *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* maintained similar levels of *crias* and adult female slaves; just under 40 per cent in each case. However, among *Africanas* those with the highest level of slave ownership were married women who owned an average of 6.2 slaves each, whereas married *Brasileiras* owned an average of 2 slaves each. Even single and widowed *Africanas* owned on average more slaves than *Brasileiras*. For single *Africanas* the average was 3.7, single *Brasileiras* 2.9. For widowed *Africanas*, 4.6 and widowed *Brasileiras* 2.

Lourença's level of slaveownership made her exceptional among the *Brasileiras* studied here. Only one other *Brasileira* owned as many slaves as Lourença, that was Josefa Maria da Conceição. In her will and testament of 1830 she declared ownership of one African, Ussa, female slave, Maria Vitoria, and her three "cioulas filhas", aged eight months, 3 years old, and 6 years old.⁷¹ Josefa's slaveownership typified the way in which slaveowners at the bottom end of the market increased their slaveholdings, in particular single and widowed women.⁷² Although Lourença makes no reference to the fact that her male slaves, some of which are described as being "de muito pouco idade", were the sons of her Angolan female slave, Joaquina, the free coloured in general, as well as rural smallholders, tended to rely on the natural reproduction of their enslaved women to increase the size of their

⁷¹ APEB, Sec. Jud., LRT, no. 19, folhas 194-99.

⁷² Higgins (1999), chapter 5.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

slaveholdings.⁷³ Both the economic uncertainties of the region during the nineteenth-century and the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1850 put the costs of imported enslaved Africans beyond the reach of the majority of this sector of society.

Indeed, this model of slaveownership, with one important difference, was adopted by Roza Maria da Conceição, the owner of the largest slaveholding among *Africanas* in this study. In her will and testament of 1838 she declared ownership of five African adult males, one of which was Nago, four adult African females, three Nagos and one Benin, plus sixteen *crias*.⁷⁴ The balance of male and female slaves is unusual, but the large number of *crias* suggests that these may well have been children of African slave couples. Significantly, Roza Maria was a married African woman with a husband of thirty-four years, Manoel Pereira Lopes. The couple remained childless for the duration of their marriage and neither of them had children before they married either. Although Roza Maria notes her own origin as “da Costa d’Africa” her husband’s origin is not mentioned at all. Although it is possible that this was one of those marriages that proved the exception to the rule, it would be unlikely that Roza Maria, being African, would have been married to a white man.⁷⁵ Beyond that, though, it is impossible to infer anything about her husband. It is worth noting that Roza Maria was the owner of a number of properties comprising four houses “de pedra e cal”, one of which was Roza Maria’s home, plus one “caza terrea” and one “de taipa.”⁷⁶ The relatively modest value of her real estate, though, meant that in terms of total value, Roza Maria assets were worth less than that of her nearest rivals in terms of proprietorship.

Maria Joaquina Vitoria da Conceição, the wife of Vitor Teixeira Barbosa

⁷³ B. J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780-1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 141-61. See also Karasch (2004), pp. 249-50.

⁷⁴ APEB, Sec. Jud., LRT, no. 27, folhas 148-50.

⁷⁵ See Mattoso, “Mixed marriages among free people were not numerous, (8.4 per cent of marriages) and never involved blacks.” Mattoso (1988), p. 70.

⁷⁶ The correspondence between the number of enslaved couples and number of homes owned by Roza Maria may well be a coincidence, but it an interesting one which lends support to the idea of her slaveownership being based around nuclear-type enslaved families.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

de Nazareth, both *Africanos libertos*, was the owner of four adult Africans, two males and two females, plus six *crioulos* ranging from 6 to 18 years of age valued in total at almost 6 contos.⁷⁷ In addition, Maria Joaquina owned four houses worth a total of 10 contos and an orchard worth 4 contos. In comparison, Justina Maria da Conceição, a grandmother of five and “solteira” mother of three grown-up married children, only one of which had survived as long as she had, was the owner of 13 slaves valued at 11 contos 300 mil réis, comprising two enslaved African women of similar ages, and nine *crioulos* aged 8 to 29 years of old.⁷⁸ In addition, Justina owned a very valuable property in the parish of Pilar. This building had three floors, including a basement and shop valued at 6 contos. Justina also had 1 conto 100 mil réis deposited in the Caixa Econômica. In terms of total assets, it is clear that all these freed African women were comparable as property owners and that all had similar profiles as slaveowners, with one possibly significant difference. The two married women appeared to have opted for African slave ‘couples’ to increase their slaveholdings, whereas the enslaved African women owned by Justina and Lourença, both *solteiras* themselves, were also *solteiras*. Could it be that the married status of Roza Maria and Maria Joaquina introduced an element of moral imperative to their ideology of slaveownership, or was this simply a coincidence of commercial common sense?

Mobility and Markets: Material, Social and Racial

For sure, there were many other aspects to the lives of these women that made their racial differences less relevant than they appear in this study. Particularly from a religious perspective as the majority of *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* professed to be devout Catholics and belonged to similar brotherhoods.⁷⁹ Many also owned items of gold jewellery and made

⁷⁷ Only two of these *crioulos*, Cosme (6) and Francisco (6) were noted as being children of the adult female slaves, respectively, Felicidade and Rita. APEB, Sec. Jud., Testamentos e Inventários, 04/1906/2377/02.

⁷⁸ Margarida’s age was noted as 50 and Rita’s as 49. APEB, Sec. Jud., Testamentos e Inventários, 04/1785/2255/03.

⁷⁹ On black brotherhoods in Brazil see Kiddy (1999) and (2000); Julita Scarano, *Devoção e escravidão: a irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosario dos Pretos no distrito diamantino de século VIII* (São Paulo:

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

devotions to saints in their homes. Nonetheless, even though they may not be that easy to explain, the different profiles that emerge around property, race and gender are there all the same.

First, it appears that there may be a very obvious and simple explanation for the differences between *Africanas* and *Brasileiras* that emerge in this study; that is, the married and more wealthier *Brasileiras* belonged a different socio-economic constituency in which status and colour were not mentioned or recorded. In this way, the racial identity of *Brasileiras* disappeared from the records. However, taking into account the patterns of manumission and occupational hierarchies obtaining in nineteenth-century Salvador makes this explanation less plausible, particularly for *crioulas*. In addition, findings from a study of female criminality in nineteenth-century Salvador indicate that *pardas* and *cabras* comprised 35% of women imprisoned between 1857 and 1888, and *crioulas* another 47%.⁸⁰ In comparison, the two groups of women at opposing ends of the social spectrum, African and white women, comprised 12% and 2% respectively. Clearly those inbetween belonged to what Aufderheide called the 'patronless poor' for whom the absence of a husband or *senhor* made their status both questionable and threatening.⁸¹ The predominance of black and mixed-race women in prisons in the latter half of the nineteenth-century, then, confirms that poverty rather than marriage to white men, was most likely destiny for the majority of these women.

Indeed, findings from this study confirm that marriage made a discernible difference in terms of mobility. Although *Africanas* had a demographic advantage in the marriage market, *crioulas* were at a comparative disadvantage, while light skinned *pardas* and *mulattas* enjoyed a greater degree of racial advantage.⁸² This suggests that the momentum of

Companhia Editora Nacional, 1976); Patricia A. Mulvey, 'Black Brothers and Sisters: membership in the black lay brotherhoods of colonial Brazil', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 17:2 (1980), pp. 253-79.

⁸⁰ Pinto (1973), p. 55, p. 63.

⁸¹ The phrase is taken from Aufderheide (1976), p. 14.

⁸² Parés (2005), pp. 124-25.

mobility generated through manumission was at its greatest for that first generation of African freed women, and it was momentum that could only be reproduced at the point which subsequent generations of females were sufficiently 'white' enough to attract white husbands. As such, the dynamics of the demographics of gender, race and status intersected in the marriage and occupational markets of the free coloured in such a way as to differentiate access to socio-economic ascension for each subsequent generation of Afro-Brazilian women. In this sense, married *Africanas* who made wills and testaments not only represented the more economically integrated and creolised sector of freed Africans in nineteenth-century Salvador as Oliveira points out, but in all likelihood they were economically more significant in this sector than were married Brazilian *libertas* among the free coloureds.

Consequently, the findings from this study reveal notable differences between the standards of living of freed *Africanas* and *Brasileiras*, whether free born or freed, the explanation for which can be found in the intersection of race and gender in the urban economy. The economy, in this instance, includes the markets for material as well as social resources, for productive as well as reproductive and restorative labour. In this sense, although the study of mechanisms of integration by scholars Klein and Luna is more expansive in its range of sources than this study, their framework for measuring mobility is restricted to an analysis of competition for material resources only. Furthermore, although the authors recognise women's disadvantaged position as an *outcome* of competition for land and labour in the market economy, they do not recognise the gender differentiated position of women in that market as a *cause*.

For the majority of women in nineteenth century Brazil when marriage did occur it clearly enhanced mobility and, for the majority, mobility was difficult to engender through occupation alone. In this sense social and material resources were inextricably linked. The high levels of poverty associated with single female headed households are testament to this, as are

the figures for female criminality in nineteenth-century Salvador.⁸³ Hence, the marriage market was as much a part of the 'market economy' as was labour and land. Indeed, the fact was not lost on socially aspiring and upwardly mobile men either. However, the prospects of marriage were not the same for all women. In fact, findings from this study suggest that the prospects of marriage for freed African women may have been better than for their Brazilian daughters and granddaughters.⁸⁴

As Mattoso has proposed in her study of family structures in nineteenth-century Bahia, African women enjoyed a 'privileged' status in a marriage market in which endogamy was the preferred pattern of marriage selection.⁸⁵ Because males outnumbered females among Africans, African women were more highly prized in their marriage pool than Brazilian born black women were in theirs. In general though, the freed as a social group was predominantly female, compounding the problems of mobility for freed *crioulas*, *mulattas* and *pardas* in this group. But, the 'omission' factor suggested by the invisibility of lighter skinned women in the sources indicates that those *pardas* and *mulattas* who did manage to marry were the least likely to declare their slave and African ascendancy through status or skin colour. The freed and free coloured Brazilians who did achieve racial integration were thus rendered invisible as a pre-requisite for such integration was the assumption of whiteness.⁸⁶ For Africans, though, racial integration was not an option.

Thus, although African women could not achieve racial or social integration to the same extent as their light-skinned descendants by denying or disguising their African heritage, they could achieve a higher degree of economic integration through their income earning activities in the local

⁸³ Karasch (2004), p. 257. See Barickman and Few take up of the question of independence versus poverty raised by Donald Ramos in his study of women in Vila Rica, Minas Gerais. Barickman and Few (2004), p. 193. Ramos (1991).

⁸⁴ Faria found the marriage market restricted for *crioulas* in general and higher levels of illegitimacy among *crioulas* than Africanas in rural parishes of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro. Faria, (1992), pp. 121-22. Parés arrived at similar conclusions for nineteenth-century rural Bahia. Parés (2005), p. 124.

⁸⁵ Mattoso (1992), p. 163.

⁸⁶ Mattoso found numerous inconsistencies between 1872 census materials for Bahia, for the categories of both race and gender which indicates a strong tendency for 'passing' among both men and women, black and *mulatto*. Mattoso (1992), pp. 97-8.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

marketplace where they were known to predominate.⁸⁷ Although it may well be the case that, as has been argued for other urban centres in Brazil, the relative economic success of African women in local markets made marriage less of an imperative for them than for women of other racial groups, African women in Bahia did have an advantage in the marriage market not enjoyed by other groups of *escravas* and *libertas*.⁸⁸ The combination of relative advantage in the marriage market with access to income earning activities as streetsellers, not only enhanced the prospect of marriage for African women but made the condition of marriage for them more prosperous.

However, it should be noted that this economic mobility operated along a horizontal axis of integration and was restricted in scope to a very specific set of occupational positions. In addition, because this mobility was engendered by the enterprising endeavours of African women and coalesced around their ethnic identities, their mobility did not pose a threat to the overall racialised and gendered hierarchy of Brazilian slave society, even if it did 'stretch the limits of gendered spaces' in urban centres as Mena has argued for nineteenth-century Havana.⁸⁹ As Higgins notes, the high numbers of propertied *fornas* in eighteenth-century Sabará were found to own land and slaves but not in those areas of the economy "perceived to be the most lucrative by the colonists."⁹⁰

Furthermore, although ethnicity has been interpreted as a primary tool of slave resistance, particularly in the case Brazil, for the African *ganhadeiras* of nineteenth-century Salvador their success in the market place was due to not just to their strong sense of ethnicity and industry, but also a strong element of creolisation, or as Reis has described it *ladinização*.⁹¹ As Soares found from adverts for enslaved and freed female labour in nineteenth-century Salvador,

⁸⁷ Paiva (1995), see chapter III, especially pp. 120-26.

⁸⁸ Silvia Maria Jardim Brügger, 'Legitimidade, Casamento e Relações ditas Ilícitas em São João del Rei (1730-1850)', in *Anais do IX Seminário sobre a Economia Mineira*, vol. 1, (Diamantina: Cedeplar, UFMG, 2000), pp. 37-64, and Faria (2004) both make a case for *fornas Africanas* 'rejecting' marriage and opting for single status so as not to have to divide their wealth with spouses.

⁸⁹ Mena (2005).

⁹⁰ Higgins (1999), p. 158.

⁹¹ Parés (2005), p. 93 in reference to personal comment made by João José Reis.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

in order to make a success of working in the street “era preciso ser muito “ladina”, astuta, que dominasse o português e ...conhecesse o serviço.”⁹² It is perhaps to be expected, then, that African freedwomen, who were both Christian and married were among the most prolific property owners in the freed and free coloured population.

Returning to an Africanist perspective, though, it is worth recalling how when enslaved Central Africans arrived in Brazil they came armed with a cultural arsenal that “already included significant mixing with European culture.”⁹³ Subsequently, they reinterpreted elements of Western Christianity within an African cosmological frame of reference in order to re-formulate an African racial identity in the New World which, in the case of Brotherhoods produced a degree of social integration through a sense of “civic belongingness.”⁹⁴ Likewise, it should perhaps be no surprise that West Africans in Brazil, from a region where women had a strong entrepreneurial tradition and one which had the longest history of slave trading across the Atlantic, were also adept at adapting Western concepts of proprietorship to their own material advantage as a way of moving from a position of economic marginality to one of economic belonging.⁹⁵

Conclusion: Lourença’s last words

Returning to Lourença, her own experience of freedom provided the cultural and political script for the terms and conditions of her own slaves’ freedom as well as their treatment as slaves. That script, though, is firmly routed in the language of patronage aimed at producing thoroughly creolised and integrated members of society (although not always ‘citizens’) who would prove ‘useful’ to that society and to themselves. That framework for integration emerged not just from the extent of exposure to white culture in

⁹² Soares (1996), p. 61.

⁹³ Kiddy (2002), p. 154.

⁹⁴ Kiddy (2000), p. 48.

⁹⁵ In this sense, the link between marriage and proprietorship among freed *Africanas* in this study provides a point of contrast as well as similarity with the Minas women found in Faria’s study of south-east Brazil, as freed married *Africanas* rather than *solteiras* were the most wealthiest here but both enjoyed similar levels of wealth. See Faria (2004), especially pp. 232-40.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

the form of her own employers' household, but also from the reality that 'free' society offered her few, if any, alternatives. Lourença, as a *crioula*, would have known that her chances for marriage were slim. Moreover, she would have known that as a single, black woman, economic independence would be accompanied by insecurities that could be difficult to endure alone. In addition, being unskilled and unmarried were distinct socio-economic disadvantages that Lourença, as well as the majority of former domestic slaves, experienced in the milieu that was the free coloured population.

But despite the fact Lourença lived with her employers and died in debt to them, she had managed to insert herself into the local economy in ways that were perhaps not unfamiliar to enslaved and freed African women. The way in which she bequeath her slaves indicates that Lourença's slaves worked 'ao ganho', in the street for her and maybe even her employers. This is made clear in the conditions set down for her sister's inheritance. Lourença leaves her one of her male slaves, Vicente, whom she has ten years to claim but she is only entitled to claim the 'products of his labour' from the time she claims ownership. Until then her former employers have the right to keep his earnings. In addition, although Lourença leaves small sums of monies to her nephews and nieces, she dies owing her employers money for her treatments for which she repays them with one of her male slaves. Significantly, she also owed 11 mil réis to Miguel Lopes for an unspecified amount of 'baleia' which she had bought.

Whale meat was highly seasonal, only available between June and September and therefore potentially a very lucrative business.⁹⁶ When other sources of meat were scarce and expensive (often the case in nineteenth-century Bahia), whale meat was particularly popular among the poor and

⁹⁶ Ubiratan Castro de Araújo, '1846: um ano na rota Bahia-Lagos. Negócios, negociantes e outros parceiros', *Afo-Ásia*, 21-22 (1998-99), p. 22. On whaling in nineteenth-century Bahia see Wellington Catellucci Junior, 'Pescadores e baleeiros: a atividade da pesca da baleia nas últimas décadas dos oitocentos Itaparica: 1860-1888', *Afro-Ásia*, 33 (2005), pp. 133-168. On the whaling industry in general during the colonial period see, Dauril Alden, 'Yankee sperm whalers in Brazilian waters, and the decline of the Portuguese whale fishery (1773-1801)', *The Americas*, 20:3 (1964), pp. 267-88.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

sold by *ganhadeiras* from *quitandas* or stalls on the street.⁹⁷ It was also used extensively for field slaves in the sugar plantations and was much sought after in times of shortages and droughts because it provided a valuable source of protein as an alternative to meat.⁹⁸ As a *crioula*, it would not be unheard of for Lourença and others like her to sell foodstuffs such as whale meat on the streets. But, as an owner of five slaves it probably meant she did not have to; she could send them out to work for her instead.

The findings from this study indicate that Lourença's penchant for petty commerce and her propensity for slaveownership were part and parcel of the legacy of both her gender and race in Brazilian slave society and represented key elements of her own personal trajectory of creolisation. Indeed, it was through her status as a slaveowner that Lourença expressed some of the strongest sentiments of creolisation. Residence with her employers surely shaped those sentiments too. But, it may well be the case that Lourença resided with her employers due to a lack of suitable alternatives for patronage and mobility, as opposed to a simplistic desire for a greater degree of integration into slaveowning society. Clearly too, integration was often the indirect result of the need to simply survive in a slave society like Brazil; permanent marginality often being the alternative. Whether or not Lourença made a conscious decision and concerted effort to integrate in the precise ways her will and testament suggests, we cannot be sure, but her decisions constituted a degree of integration none the less. Whatever the case may be, Lourença's version of integration drew on key components of creolisation that were material, social, economic and cultural. Moreover, this was a version of integration in which freed Africans as well as free born Brazilians endorsed slavery as an institution and acknowledged it as a necessary and even inevitable means of belonging.

⁹⁷ Soares (1996), 64.

⁹⁸ Kenneth F. Kiple, 'The Nutritional Link with Slave Infant and Child Mortality in Brazil', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 69:4 (1989), p. 638; Stuart B. Schwartz, 'The "Mocambo": slave resistance in colonial Bahia', *Journal of Social History*, 3:4 (1970), p. 316; Schwartz (1998), p. 138.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

Table 1: Dates of Wills and Testaments.*

Brasileiras (24)	Africanas (59)
1830	
	1831
1834	1834
	1835
1836	1836 (2)
1837 (2)	
	1838
1839	1839 (2)
1840	1840
1845	
1846	
1849	
	1850 (2)
1851	1851 (2)
1852	
	1853
1854	1854
	1855 (2)
	1856
	1857 (3)
1859	1859
	1860 (2)
1861	1861
	1862 (2)
1863	1863 (2)
	1864 (2)
	1865 (2)
	1866 (2)
	1867
	1868 (2)
1869	1869 (3)
1870	1870 (3)
	1872 (2)
	1873 (2)
1874	1874
1875	1875
1876	1876 (2)
	1879
	1880 (2)
	1882
1883	
	1885
1887	

* Numbers in brackets indicate number of wills and testaments found for that year. Years without numbers, only one will and testament was found. The same years were researched for both Africanas and Brasileiras.

Source: APEB, Sec. Jud. LRT and Testamentos e Inventários

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

Table 2: Africana origins.West Africa

da Costa	17
Mina	3
Gege	2
Nago	2
Guine	1
Ussa	1
Calabar	1
<i>Total</i>	27

Other

Congo	1
Angola	2
Marqui Sacomé (?)	1
<i>Total</i>	4

Africa	28
West Africa	27
Other	4
Total	59

Table 3: Brasileira parentage.*

African mother only named parent	11
African married parents	1
African unmarried parents	2
African & Crioulo married Parents	2
At least one African parent SUBTOTAL	16
Other	2**
Parentage not mentioned	6***
TOTAL	24

* Eleven out of 21 women identified themselves as 'crioulas'.

** Includes one 'crioula' daughter of a 'cabra forra' and a 'crioula forra' who names her mother by does not identify her by colour or origin.

*** Three were identified as 'crioulas' but no mention of parentage and 3 as 'libertas' but no mention of parentage.

Source: APEB, Sec. Jud. LRT and Testamentos e Inventários.

Table 5a:
Property: Slaves, Houses, Land - Africanas.

	Status			Total
	S	M/P	W	
No slaves or property	3 (5)	4 (7)	0 (0)	7 (12%)
Slaves only	16 (27)	5 (10)	2 (4)	23 (39%)
House &/or Land only	5 (8)	1 (2)	4 (7)	10 (17%)
Slaves, house, &/or land	5 (8)	9 (14)	5 (8)	19 (32%)
TOTAL	29 (49%)	19 (32%)	11 (19%)	59 (100%)

Table 5b:
Property: Slaves, Houses, Land - Brasileiras.

	Status			Total
	S	M/P	W	
No slaves or property	1 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4%)
Slaves only	8 (33)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (33%)
House &/or Land only	8 (33)	2 (8)	1 (4)	11 (46%)
Slaves, house, &/or land	2 (8)	1 (4)	1 (4)	4 (16%)
TOTAL	19 (80%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	24 (100%)

Key: S = single; M/P = married/partner; W = widow

Source: APEB, Sec. Jud. LRT and Testamentos e Inventários

Table 6a: Slave ownership – Africanas.

	Solteiras (19)	Married/ Partner (13)	Widow (9)	
African Male	4	12	4	20 (10%)
African Female	21	15	17	53 (27%)
Brazilian Male	6	12	1	19 (10%)
Brazilian Female	14	8	4	26 (13%)
Crias	27	34*	16	77 (39%)**
TOTAL	72 (37%)	81 (41.5%)	42 = (21.5%)	195 SLAVES

* includes one woman who owned 16 crias

** total = 99% due to rounding

Table 6b: Slave ownership – Brasileiras.

	Solteiras (10)	Married/ Partner (2)	Widow (1)	
African Male	4	0	0	4 (11%)
African Female	10	0	1	11 (31%)
Brazilian Male	5	0	0	5 (14%)
Brazilian Female	0	2	0	2 (6%)
Crias	10	2	1	13 (37%)*
TOTAL	29 (83%)	4 (11%)	2 = (6%)	35 SLAVES

* total = 99% due to rounding

Source: APEB, Sec. Jud. LRT and Testamentos e Inventários.

<http://mlpa.nottingham.ac.uk/archive/00000060/>

(November 2007)

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